

Nord Family Greenway



- **Type:** All purpose
- **Length:** 0.4 miles
- **Cost:** \$15 million
- **Funding Sources:** Family of Jane and Eric Nord, Family of Curt and Sara Moll, Toby Devan Lewis, and the Cleveland Foundation
- **Date:** started Feb 2017; finished May 2018
- **Project Leaders/Managers:** Rick Pruden, CWRU
Chris Panichi, CWRU

Cuyahoga County District 7	Project Partners: Case Western Reserve University	Project Consultants: Sasaki Associates, Gilbane
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Begun as a project to ease pedestrian transit between the main and west campuses of Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), the 15-acre Nord Family Greenway today offers open-air spaces suited to everything from performances to picnics and quiet contemplation. It is a permanent, living invitation to those beyond its bounds to explore not only the Greenway itself but also the dozens of arts and cultural institutions that fill the roughly one-square-mile neighborhood of University Circle.

The seeds of the project were sown in 2010 when Milton and Tamar Maltz made their initial naming gift to transform the historic Temple-Tifereth Israel into a performing arts center. That project announcement quickly prompted questions about how students and faculty would be able to move easily between the new facility and main campus, as no direct pedestrian connections existed between the two at the time.

The bold and compelling project that became known as the Nord Family Greenway was the result of a collaborative design competition in 2013. Sasaki Associates, Inc. was selected as the winning design firm from that competition and was engaged to further refine their design concept, initially called the "The Great Connector." What resulted is the broad, ADA-accessible, tree-lined and terraced Greenway that now connects CWRU's Tinkham Veale University Center to the Milton and Tamar Maltz Performing Arts Center at The Temple-Tifereth Israel, through the Cleveland Museum of Art's Fine Arts Garden and previously overgrown sections of Wade Park.

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Nord Family Greenway



The Good Stuff

Amenities:

- 15 acres of walkways, stairs and picnic terraces, including new seating, stair runnels, bike parking, and lighting
- Doan Brook overlook
- RRFBs at crosswalks

Connections to other non-project assets:

- Connects to new 7-acre Smith Family Gateway at CMA

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At approximately six football fields long, the Greenway landscape includes a swath of publicly accessible walkways, stairs, and picnic terraces, all offering idyllic views of the surrounding park and area landmarks. Various tree species can be found throughout the park, including more than 150 mature trees that were preserved during construction and 275 new trees planted, resulting in a net gain of nearly 100 trees.

Technology abounds here too, but most of it is invisible to pedestrians. Wi-Fi service extends across the entire Greenway along with 360-degree cameras and emergency phones to provide security for visitors. A total of 160 lighting fixtures were installed, providing vibrant walkway lighting for visitors and dimmable lighting on the main lawns. All street crossings are also equipped with new crosswalk warning beacons to maximize pedestrian and bicycle safety.

As a primary partner, the Cleveland Museum of Art not only embraced the Greenway idea—they added to it. First, they allowed the Greenway to incorporate the Museum’s historic Fine Arts Garden and *Fountain of Waters*. From there, the museum partnered with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District to redirect the flow of Doan Brook just north of the Greenway and relocate an adjacent maintenance building to make way for their own 7-acre landscape project.

Nord Family Greenway



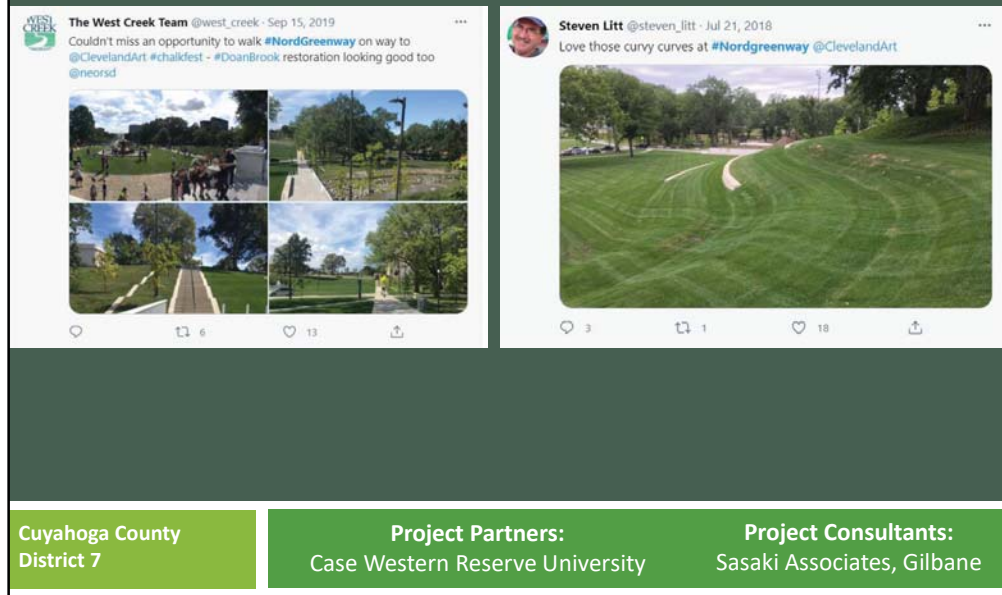
- Benefits to the Public**
 - Free Wi-Fi
- Environmental enhancements**
 - Net gain of nearly 100 trees, with 150 mature trees preserved during construction and 275 new trees planted
- Social Equity**
 - New public space on campus that is welcoming to surrounding communities

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The Nord Family Greenway provides an innovative approach to seamlessly connect geographically disparate portions of the Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) campus while embracing the surrounding community, a goal shared by universities and institutions across the country. This project provides a key example of how campus investments can become community assets by thoughtfully incorporating and connecting to existing resources and collaborating with community partners.

Through its careful planning of pedestrian and cycle paths, the Greenway also supports the continued development of University Circle as a multi-modal district. The bike lanes of the Euclid Avenue corridor currently extend from Downtown to the western boundary of University Circle, but end before reaching the heart of the neighborhood. The Greenway's bicycle infrastructure provides off-road trail connections that make cycling a more attractive and feasible alternative for users moving east-west throughout the district. The project stairways also feature "runnels" – flattened channels along the stairs to ease bike transit. The project's new ADA pathways further support pedestrian movements with the creation of new, accessible routes that were previously impossible to traverse for people with disabilities. **These pathways are of special significance to the senior residents of nearby Judson Manor** who actively use the surrounding greenspace for recreation and leisure. The project also required close collaboration with the City of Cleveland to ensure user safety at three roadway crossings. Pedestrian and cyclist crossings at East Boulevard, Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and East 105th Street feature new pedestrian-actuated Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFB). At East 105th Street, the project installed a pedestrian-activated red light at a midblock crossing to further help users cross this four-lane arterial roadway. Pathways were also extended through an existing surface parking lot with permeable pavers and landscaping, further gesturing toward the Hough neighborhood.

Nord Family Greenway



To quote Cleveland Foundation President and CEO Ronn Richard, “This project is not only useful and beautiful, but it also advances the guiding principle of the Greater University Circle Initiative: to connect residents from neighborhoods including Upper Chester and Hough to the cultural, economic, and educational opportunities in University Circle.” He added that it will “allow University Circle institutions and employees to benefit from the wisdom, gifts, and energy of their neighbors.”

After observing a visitor slide down a gleaming stainless steel railing at the new Greenway, Steve Litt of the Cleveland Plain Dealer wrote that the space demonstrated “how a well-designed public space can elicit spontaneous moments of fun, even of joy.”

Cleveland City Councilman Kevin Conwell further lauds the project as a true community gathering space, which makes the connections between campus and community feel “seamless.”

Cleveland Museum of Art Director William Griswold says “The Nord Family Greenway enlivens the area outside our front door and improves visitor access to the Fine Arts Garden, one of the great public spaces in this country. The Greenway will provide a locus for events for the entire community and is a testament to what can be achieved when two great institutions work together in the interest of the common good.”

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CWRU has been studying how best to connect its main campus with its western holdings for nearly 10 years. As plans were coming together for the new Milton and Tamar Maltz Performing Arts Center at the Temple-Tifereth Israel, it was uncertain how users would get to and from the space which was at the far-western extents of the 267-acre CWRU campus. In 2013 the Cleveland Foundation, who is deeply involved in University Circle and its surrounding neighborhoods through their landmark Greater University Circle Initiative, worked with CWRU to fund a \$70,000 design competition to foster creative solutions from diverse design perspectives. Designers were tasked to not only show how best to link disparate parts of CWRU's campus, but also how best to connect the campus with the community. The proposal by Sasaki Associates, Inc. was the clear winner with a plan that was bold and innovative in its simplicity. While earlier designs contemplated a pedestrian bridge due to challenging grades and major arterial roads, Sasaki's proposal envisioned "The Great Connector," a project that would create a 300-foot wide and 2,200-foot-long greenway intended to enhance and extend the existing landscape rather than rising above it. With those new pathways and open spaces also came the creation of new vistas, which highlight the adjacencies of the campus and surrounding communities and provide a welcome mat of verdant public space.

With a design that called for the incorporation of so many existing spaces, this project would not have been possible without extensive community collaboration. Its first and primary partner was the Cleveland Museum of Art, whose permission was needed to incorporate the historic Fine Arts Garden, designed by the Olmsted Brothers architecture firm to serve as the grand entrance to the 1916 building, and *Fountain of Waters* by Chester Beach. The museum not only became an eager project partner, they further enhanced the Greenway with a project of their own.

Along with Cleveland Museum of Art, Case Western Reserve University worked closely with Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) and Doan Brook Watershed Partnership to optimize the opportunity to daylight sections of the Doan Brook. The Doan Brook drew New England farmers to this area in the late eighteenth century in a settlement that became known as Doan's Corners, but within University Circle today most of the brook is culverted underground and there are limited opportunities to engage with this historic waterway. The Nord Family Greenway benefitted from being adjacent to one of the few nearby areas where Doan Brook is daylight. In order to further daylight the brook and protect the adjacent hillside, the project realigned the culvert outlet to reduce conflict with the embankment. This investment set the stage for further investment, too. NEORS re-channelized the brook itself, improving the stream's stability, hydrology, and flood capacity, while the Cleveland Museum of Art is currently renovating the adjacent 7 acres of Wade Park greenspace as an extension of the Fine Arts Garden. The Nord Family Greenway's design celebrates the brook restoration with a stunning cantilevered bridge, including a rail with angled balusters that maximizes views to the riverbed and garden below.

The project also resulted in a strong partnership with the Chinese Cultural Garden, the southernmost of over 30 such gardens that celebrate the rich cultural diversity of Cleveland. The Greenway created a new stone pathway and landscaping to provide an enhanced connection to this cultural gem.

The Nord Family Greenway became a cornerstone of the 2015 University Master Plan, a major goal of which was to knit campus districts and city neighborhoods into a clear, safe, and vibrant environment. The project set the stage for additional greenspace and corridor investments on CWRU's campus, such as the Lucia Smith Nash Walkway (2020), East Bell Commons (2019), and improvements to the historic Case Quad (2018).