

**DRAFT MITIGATION PLAN
to address**

**Adverse Effects of the Central Corridor LRT Project
on
St. Paul Union Depot**

November 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

This Mitigation Plan has been developed pursuant to stipulations in the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) project Programmatic Agreement, executed by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (MnSHPO) and the Metropolitan Council (Council) in June 2009. The Central Corridor LRT project is an approximately 11-mile LRT line that will serve the Minneapolis and St. Paul downtown areas, as well as the University of Minnesota (U of M) and the State Capitol complex. In downtown Minneapolis, it will integrate with the Hiawatha LRT line. There will be 20 stations along the line, including five shared with the existing Hiawatha LRT. Below-grade infrastructure to allow for later construction of three future infill stations will be provided and an operations and maintenance facility will be constructed as part of the project. The Central Corridor LRT project will be constructed by the Metropolitan Council. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the lead federal agency in this undertaking.

This Mitigation Plan has been developed to address adverse effects findings made by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (MnSHPO) regarding the Central Corridor LRT project's effects on the historic St. Paul Union Depot.

ADVERSE EFFECTS NOTED

Specifically, MnSHPO found, in a letter dated May 14, 2009 and addressed to the Federal Transit Administration, that:

“The drive and approach area of the depot, which were part of the depot's original City Beautiful design, will be adversely affected. The drive will be closed to vehicular traffic, and several feet of the central historic lawn area will be taken for station construction. In addition, the new LRT station structures will occupy a substantial part of the open space between the depot building and the opposing buildings across Fourth Street; this open space is an important aspect of the depot's historic setting. Again, to be sure, we are engaged in continuing productive consultations with project designers and other interested parties in an effort to reduce the effect through an appropriate station design. However, the effect is largely based on the placement of the new station mass within a historic area, and can only be reduced, not eliminated. Mitigation for this effect will need to be developed pursuant to Stipulation IV of this [programmatic] agreement.”

PROPERTY SETTING AND ASSOCIATION

As summarized in “Supplemental Historic Properties Investigations and Evaluations for the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Project,” the St. Paul Union Depot headhouse was completed in 1920 and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is also a contributing property in the Lowertown Historic District. The primary façade of the headhouse is set back from Fourth Street on a semi-circular vehicular drive that

encloses a green space between the drive and the sidewalk of the street (see photos in Attachment A).

Passenger rail service ceased at Union Depot in the late 1960s and the concourse and track level platforms associated with the property were sold to the US Postal Service in 1978. A private developer acquired the headhouse, separately from the concourse, in 1981. In recent years, the headhouse has been developed with a restaurant and coffee shop on the main (ground) level, and with spaces for offices and residential lofts in the second and third levels.

As part of a separate and unconnected action, the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) has acquired the Union Depot concourse and headhouse and is proposing to restore both properties to their former uses as active intercity passenger rail facilities. The project proposed by RCRRA was documented and disclosed for agency and public review and comment in an Environmental Assessment (EA) published in August 2009. This document is available online at www.uniondepot.org.

DESCRIPTION OF CENTRAL CORRIDOR LRT AS IT AFFECTS PROPERTY SETTING AND ASSOCIATION

The Central Corridor LRT alignment will pass in front of the Union Depot headhouse on 4th Street. Project infrastructure includes two sets of track placed within the existing 4th Street right-of-way, catenary poles and wires, which will be placed variously on city sidewalks or on the LRT station platform, and a passenger station, known as the Union Depot station (see plan sheets in Attachment B).

The design of the Union Depot station and the placement of catenary poles was the focus of extensive consultation and design review with MnSHPO and other parties. At the beginning of the Central Corridor LRT preliminary engineering process, the Union Depot station was proposed as a center-platform configuration. This configuration evolved at the request of MnSHPO and other parties to its present side-platform configuration in order to minimize right-of-way impacts associated with platform construction. Also at the request of MnSHPO and other parties, platform infrastructure was minimized on the south platform so as to limit visual impacts to the Union Depot headhouse. Finally, catenary poles, originally proposed to be placed in the center of the track right-of-way, were moved and will be placed as side poles, which was felt to be more consistent with the historic setting of the Union Depot headhouse and, in fact, are similar to the placement of the poles that provided power to the streetcar that historically operated along 4th Street at this location.

MITIGATION OF ADVERSE EFFECTS IDENTIFIED

Staff from the Central Corridor Project Office, MnSHPO, Ramsey County, City of St. Paul, St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission Staff, and other parties to the Section 106 process met extensively over the first and second quarters of 2009 to discuss

means of minimizing adverse effects of the Central Corridor LRT project to the Union Depot headhouse through the design process. Understanding that some adverse effects could not be avoided (as summarized in MnSHPO's comments in the Introduction), the discussions also focused on design responses to mitigate impacts. The results of these discussions focused on restoration of the historic symmetry and balance of the landscaped components in front of the Union Depot headhouse, maintaining the historic patterns of pedestrian circulation focused on the semi-circular access drive that has been part of the headhouse since its construction, and providing enhancements to offset the impacts of severing access for vehicles from the historic semi-circular access drive.

The attached figures illustrate the results of discussions with MnSHPO and other parties to the process. This plan, upon acceptance by MnSHPO and FTA (as stipulated in the Programmatic Agreement) will become part of the construction documents for Central Corridor and the improvements described will be constructed concurrent with construction of the Central Corridor LRT project. The plan consists of the following components and is illustrated in the figures that follow:

- Reconstruction of the semi-circular vehicular drive and adjacent pedestrian sidewalk
 - Reconstruction of the existing semi-circular drive and sidewalk will be done in such a manner to delineate the drive as an important feature of the structure. Although future uses will be limited to pedestrians, there will be a delineation of the sidewalk area through the use of pavement scoring as a means of referencing the historic design and use of this feature of the Union Depot headhouse.
- Replacement of existing lighting complimentary to the Lowertown Historic District
 - Four lighting fixtures that are currently in place in front of the Union Depot headhouse and adjacent to the front stairs leading into the headhouse will be reused. These features are consistent with the Lowertown design standards for pedestrian lighting.
 - Two new pedestrian light fixtures will be installed alongside the semi-circular drive. These will be identical to the existing lights at the front of the headhouse, namely single-globe fixtures.
- Relocation of existing stone piers on either side of the drive
 - The existing stone piers that are integral to the historic landscape and define the edge of the historic landscape will be relocated along with reconstruction of the retaining walls on the east and west sides of the semi-circular drive.
- Restoration and reconstruction of the grass and landscaped circular area in the center of the drive, including replacement of the existing irrigation system.
 - The mitigation plan seeks to maintain the overall massing, symmetry and relationship of the landscaped area in the center of the semi-circular drive and to encourage historic patterns of pedestrian access into the Union Depot headhouse. The plan includes construction of a seat wall, with

shrubbery, to discourage any pedestrian access directly across the landscaped area and into the headhouse.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The actions summarized above and illustrated in the figure that follows are intended to respond to adverse effects of the Central Corridor LRT project on the St. Paul Union Depot Property. This mitigation plan, as accepted and approved by the FTA and MnSHPO pursuant to obligations stipulated in the Central Corridor LRT Programmatic Agreement will be implemented coincident with construction of the Central Corridor LRT project.

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SIBLEY ST.

4TH ST.

WACOUTA ST.

OCS POLE WITH BASE
EXISTING STONE
PIER (RELOCATED)
RETAINING WALL
SOD

CURB (24" WIDE)
LIGHT
SEAT WALL

PLANTING AREA
CONCRETE CURB
SIDEWALK
SIDEWALK/PLAZA,
CONCRETE WITH
SAND-BLAST FINISH

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

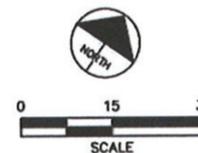
Central Corridor
Light Rail Transit



SAINT PAUL UNION DEPOT

SITE MASTER PLAN CONCEPT

OCTOBER 28, 2009



Attachment A
Historic Photos



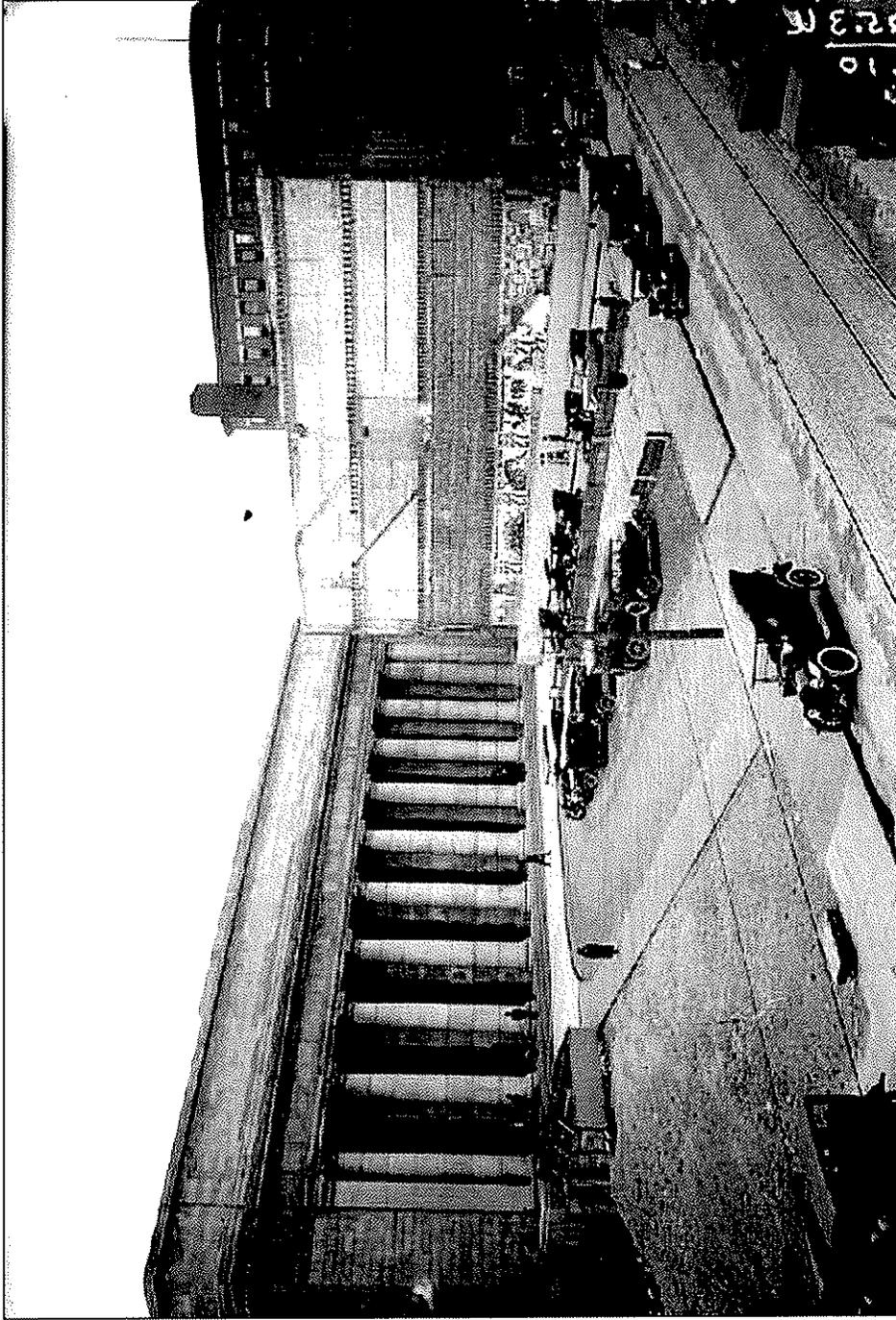
Union Depot, Fourth Street at Wacouta Street , 1924 or 1925.
Note streetcar tracks and grass in median.

Photo: Minnesota Historical Society Collections



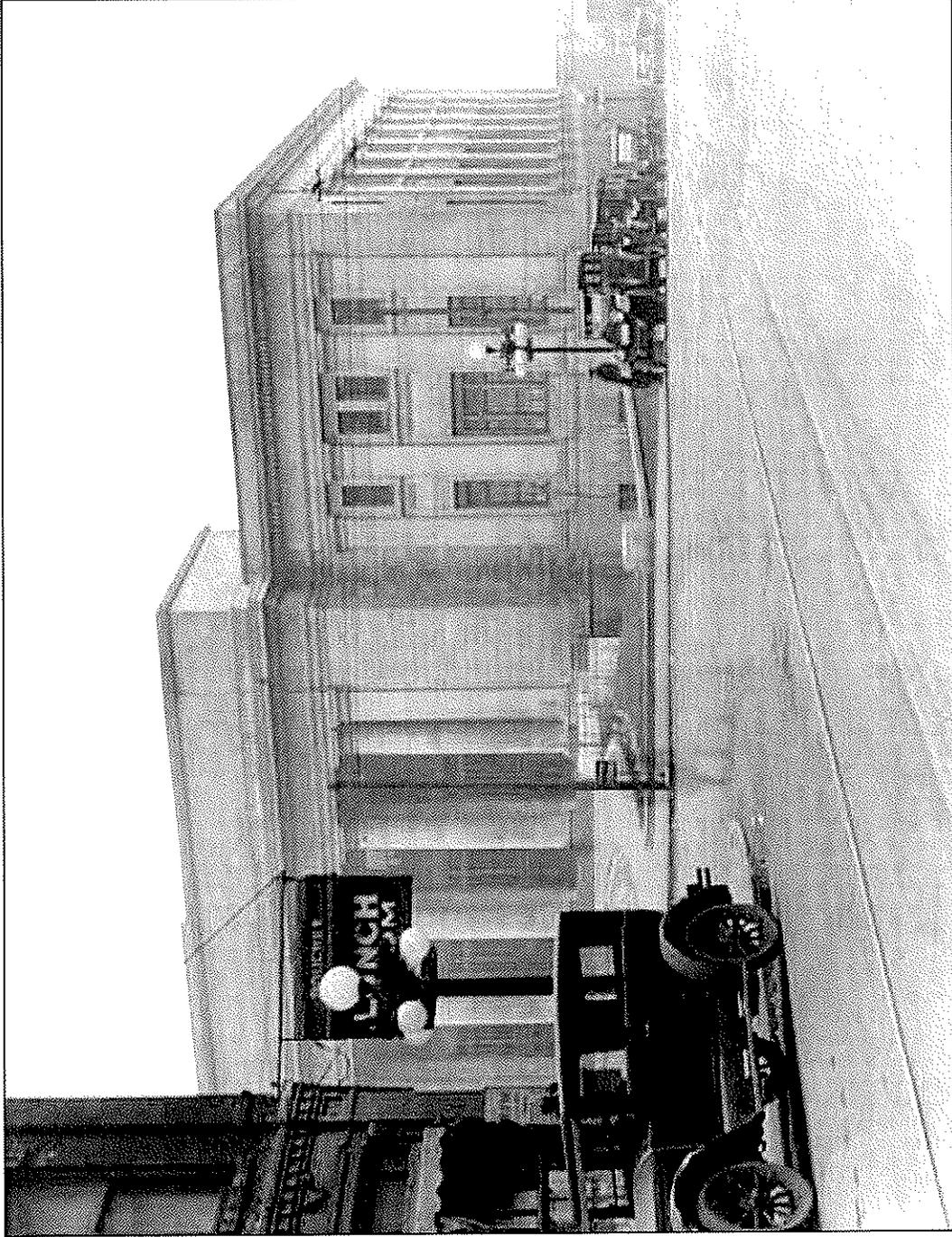
East Fourth Street looking east from Wacouta Street, Union Depot at left, ca. 1925.
Note altered facades of buildings across Fourth.

Photo: Minnesota Historical Society Collections



Union Depot, Fourth Street facade, under construction, 1920

Photo: Minnesota Historical Society Collections



Union Depot, Fourth Street at Sibley Street, 1924 or 1925.
Note original facade on building at left edge of picture.

Photo: Minnesota Historical Society Collections

*Supplemental Historic Property Investigations and Evaluations for CCLRT Project:
Union Depot Photo Chronology
Hess, Roise and Company—Page 21*

**Attachment B
Central Corridor LRT
60 Percent Design Sheets**

