



Save the Northfield Depot

2024 Annual Report



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Mission

The mission of Save the Northfield Depot is to rescue and restore the Northfield depot through communicating its historical significance and identifying a new location, owner(s), and user(s) in order to retain an important part of our heritage. – Founding Document, 2008

Checks can be mailed to: *Save the Northfield Depot, P.O. Box 486, Northfield, MN 55057.* A check ensures that your FULL donation goes toward the project.

Online donations also accepted through:



Learn more at: northfielddepot.org/give/donate-money/

***Save the Northfield depot is an incorporated 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.
Our tax-identification number is 27-2081273.***



Greetings to the Northfield Community!

Save the Northfield Depot Board is pleased to share the major accomplishments and activities of 2024. The major themes of the year were the major shift in our work from the emphasis on repair/renovation to utilization; increased use by the community of a wider variety of events; and some necessary accommodations for the near-by construction of the new City asset, the Pavilion and Transit Hub.

It has been a very gratifying year for those of us involved in the activities at the depot, and we are reaping the rewards of years of work when we witness the satisfaction and pleasure of those using the depot. We are seeing repeat renters, and many referrals by satisfied customers. Unprompted after their event, one wrote the comment below suggesting we had permission to include it in our publicity.

“We found the space to be comfortable for our participants and everyone enjoyed the nostalgic nature of being in a place that connected the past to the present and looked ahead to the future. It fit well with the theme of our retreat. I would highly recommend this venue to others looking to have an event in Northfield!”

– Janiece Gray, JGray & Associates

Save the Northfield Depot Board is so very grateful to the community for your support in reaching this phase. We hope that you will find the following report reflective of another successful year, and of our commitment to the mission.

With gratitude,

Board Officers and Advisors of *Save the Northfield Depot* Board of Directors

Rob Martin

Chair

Alice Thomas

Secretary

Clark Webster

Treasurer

Judy Code

Landscaping

Don McGee

Technical

Pepe Kryzda

Architectural

Lisa Thompson

Communications &
Marketing

Matt Karl

Business Finance &
Bookkeeping

Ray Coudret

Events



Administration

The administrative work this year reflects a significant shift in the focus from *rehabilitation* to *utilization*. Reflecting that transition, three additional board members were added to the board.

- **Lisa Thompson** is a digital communications professional and graduate of Northfield High School and St. Olaf College who knows the depot project well, having served as a communications volunteer since 2010. She has long loved history and historical architecture and grew up with a fondness for trains.
- **Matt Karl** recently retired from his career in commercial real estate. He has a strong interest in railroads with three generations of his family having worked for the Great Northern/Burlington Northern/BNSF Railway. His understanding of business and finance is particularly valuable to our transition.
- **Ray Coudret** is a teacher, musician, and music producer who has organized dozens of music events for performers from 12 to 80 years old. He has a strong interest in using music to build community. Specific to the Depot, Ray hopes to support community events that utilize the Depot.

Welcome to these new members! They add the needed expertise to manage the increasing use of the depot and to secure the future role of the depot as a community asset. The transition is reflected in some of the administrative work below.

- Provided input to the City on the Transit Hub-Pavilion plans and various aspects of the construction that started in June. When necessary, communicated with City staff and the construction firm to coordinate the construction with the depot site and events.
- Obtained estimates and selected professionals to complete installation projects: gutters on north and part of east side, heat pump AC system, and cap on limestone wall.
- Periodically revised rental information and policies for the online Rental Information Sheet and Reservation Form guided by increased experience;
- Managed rentals (scheduled reservations, opened and closed depot for events, maintained supplies, cleaned when needed).
- Carried insurance policies for property, general liability, builders risk, and the board officers and directors.
- Maintained financial records, filed appropriate 501(c)(3) reports, and tax forms.
- Communicated the Board's support to the Minnesota Department of Transportation for retaining the top priority rating of the southern Twin Cities-Albert Lea Rail Corridor passenger rail option in the State Rail Plan.
- Drafted pro forma documents to assist in long-range planning. The Prospective Operating Budget reflects the anticipated expenses and income categories for the future functioning of increased usage, and some additional operational expenses that are now provided by volunteers.
- Considered the appropriate future model of administration and ownership of the depot.



Depot Building and Grounds

Activity on the depot building and grounds was again limited in this second full year of occupancy; some work will resume after the Transit Hub and Pavilion construction are complete.

Building Activity

Volunteers

- Replaced attractive, but inefficient wooden registers (originally installed with the flooring) with metal registers.
- Removed and then replaced ceiling plaster board in basement for heat pump installation.
- Installed shelf in utility room.

Grounds Activity

Volunteers

- Engraved new geodetic disk placed in the newly poured concrete platform.
- Cleaned and prepared fountain for the summer months.
- Installed plaque for the donated and repaired order board.
- Installed plaques for the five Machacek artifacts donated and installed last year.
- Repainted wooden manhole cover.
- Continued on-going weeding/maintenance of sculpture garden, fountain, and grounds.
- Provided free snow removal this season (a professional).

Professionals

- Added a concrete cap to the sculpture garden limestone circle.
- Installed heat pump as source for AC.
- Installed gutters on north side, location of main entrance.
- Refinished period style, exterior post lantern lamps donated early in project.



Transit Hub Construction Collaboration

Save the Northfield Depot has been a long-time supporter of the City's construction of the new City Transit Hub facility at the selected site. During the 2024 construction, the City and Depot board members have made every effort to minimize the disruption on the functioning of the depot and to collaborate when possible on the project, as indicated below.

- The Depot responded to construction company's request of the Depot's personnel to temporarily rearrange Machacek display to prepare for the removal and replacement of north stairs (removed large plaque, added protective cover for four smaller plaques, and removed landscaping rocks).
- The City provided temporary ramp access to the Depot on the west side when the steps, ramp, and platform on the north side were removed for the construction. The new permanent platform is heated to prevent icing.
- The Depot worked closely with the construction company and the state representative of the National Geodetic Survey to install the new geodetic disk in a location consistent with the national regulations.
- The City built a shelter for refuse and recycle bins to serve both the Depot and Transit Hub.
- The Depot provided materials to the City for the Transit Hub that matched those of the Depot; i.e., fencing (Depot had purchased for the entire block) and an excess of donated depot shingles (recently used by City for the Pavilion).
- The City responded to the Depot's request to select a sidewalk poetry stamp with a railroad theme for their new sidewalk near the Transit Hub.
- The construction company accommodated the Depot's parking needs for large events during their work day and kept the parking near the depot open for event use.



Enhancements to Depot and Site

Interior

A few amenities have been added to enhance the use for the interior events.

- The new, donated sound equipment serves the depot needs for meetings and most musical events. Professional musicians bring their own.
- Flameless candles provide ambiance for events without creating fire danger.
- Six cushioned chairs were donated by SEMAC and are much appreciated, particularly by performing musicians or those attending all day meetings.

Grounds

Below are some the informational and functional elements that have been added to the Depot site.



The major ground's project was the instillation of a concrete cap on the 47-foot, semi-circle limestone wall in the sculpture garden around the plaza. The cap was needed to prevent further deterioration of the limestone during the winter. All limestone is from the original depot foundation. The cap also provides more comfortable exterior seating.



The new plaque (left) acknowledges the donor and explains the function of the order board (right) on the exterior of the station master's bay. The plaque was installed at eye level on the fence below the order board to maximize readability.





While the artifacts were installed earlier, the informative plaques were added this year for each explain the uses. Visitors are particularly interested in the massive turntable pivot stone; it was originally located in the turntable just north of 2nd Street.



The original geodetic disk (left), used by surveyors, was installed in the depot wall but decommissioned when the depot was moved. The agency gave us a new disk (right) to install on a permanent, horizontal surface open to the sky at the new site.



Community Use

In its second year of occupancy, the depot continues to be a popular venue for a variety of community events. The range of uses can be seen in the images below. The depot has been the site for meetings of organizations (chiefly non-profits); public events (concerts, historical tours, poetry readings, dance recitals, markets), and private social gatherings (showers, birthday parties, reunions).

The Arts



Top left: Music concerts such as instrumental soloists and small groups

Bottom left: Film such as the premier showing of locally produced film

Right: Dance recitals such as ballet, tap, and modern



Tours



Out-of-town visitors (above), families, organizations, and school and college classes



Social Gatherings



Top left: Family gatherings such as holidays and reunions

Bottom left: Organizations' annual social gatherings

Right: Special occasions such as birthdays, showers, graduations, and wedding party dinners

Non-profit/Small Business Events



Left: Meetings such as monthly/quarterly meetings, retreats, and workshops

Right: Setting used by professional photographers for family photos (above) and graduation photos

Public Awareness

Various modes of communication were used to keep the community informed of the public events at the depot, and its availability for public use.

- **Rental availability.** The dept website was updated to include information about rental conditions and amenities, an online rental interest form, a venue photos page, and a form to request depot tours. The online rental interest form was eventually moved to an offsite form to allow for advanced functionality. A yard sign indicating the depot can be rented was placed on the grass near the south sidewalk.
- **Online event calendars.** The online calendar was made accessible directly from the home page, helping event planners check when the depot is available and for attendees for see what events are being held. For public events, a description is provided in the calendar, added as a Facebook event, and submitted to the City's Community Events Calendar.
- **Program Presentations.** A board member spoke at an organization's regular meeting about the availability and use of the depot and about the renovation project at their holiday party at the depot.
- **Newspaper.** The *Northfield News* published several news articles about upcoming events at the depot.
- **Radio.** A Board member interview on the KYMN Morning Show provided a project update and details about reserving the depot.
- **Social media.** Progress updates and upcoming events were posted on Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter).
- **Email Newsletter.** *Save the Northfield Depot* subscribers received newsletters and updates sent using MailChimp.

Future Plans

- **Pavilion and Transit Hub.** *Save the Northfield Depot* continues to collaborate with the City in the uses of the Depot-Pavilion-Transit Hub complex, including the scheduling of events held in the Depot and Pavilion.
- **Long-range Planning.** The current board will continue to plan for a strong, successful future of the Depot as a community asset. That includes considering an appropriate future model of administration and ownership of the depot.



Funding

Fundraising continued and reduced the remaining loan from \$23,000 to \$18,000 by the end of 2024.

- **Give to the Max.** *Save the Northfield Depot* participated again this year in Give to the Max. At the request of a donor of \$2,000, the donation was earmarked for the reduction of the loan.
- **Event Participants.** In addition to paying a rental fee, some organizers of meetings or public events have provided a “Donations for Depot” jar in support of the depot.
- **Rentals.** Revenue generated from renting the depot for public and private events, the latter of which has increased from last year.
- **Tours.** Compared with tours in previous years provided chiefly for local groups interested in the project, tour efforts now focus on visitors to the community and can be requested from the depot website. Donations are requested in lieu of charging a fee.
- **In-kind Donations.** As in the past, donated items and labor were critical to the progress of the depot project. That includes board members and other volunteers who bring their professional expertise to the project.

Financials

Revenue

Donations	\$12,674
Rent	\$1,990
Total revenue	\$14,664

Expenditures

Mortgage interest	\$3,850
Building work & materials (gutters, AC, fire extinguisher)	\$16,409
Grounds & sculpture garden (pole light, wall cap, plaques, snow removal)	\$4,436
Interior amenities (Wi-Fi, vacuum)	\$350
Cleaning supplies	\$8
Fund development & marketing (PO box, GiveMN usage & processing fees)	\$233
Insurance (property, general liability, Directors & Officers)	\$ 4,997
Utilities (City, County)	\$1,529
Administration (non-profit registration)	\$32
Total expenditures	\$31,844





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