PROJECT OF THE YEAR
HISTORICAL RESTORATION/PRESERVATION
MORE THAN $75 MILLION

Union Depot

Managing Agencies: Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority
Primary Contractor: Mortenson Construction
Primary Consultant: Hammel, Green and Abrahamson
Nominated By: Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority

Union Depot in downtown St. Paul has been revitalized into a multimodal transportation hub with regional and national significance. The 33-acre site has been transformed from a defunct rail station to an active transportation center in the heart of a thriving Lowertown neighborhood.

Currently, Metro Transit buses and Jefferson Regional Bus Lines are arriving and departing from Union Depot. In 2013, One on One Bicycle Studio will open a state-of-the-art bike center and Amtrak will relocate all passenger activity from its current station in the Midway to Union Depot. In 2014, Central Corridor Light Rail will serve Union Depot.

Owned by Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA), Union Depot, originally built in the 1920s, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. RCRRA secured federal, state and county funding to finance the $243 million restoration project.

The project began in 2011 with Mortenson as the design-build contractor, Hammel, Green and Abraham (HGA) as the building architect and engineer of record, and URS Corporation as transportation design and engineering. The renovation generated approximately 4,400 jobs.

Having just reopened following two years of construction, the revitalized Union Depot features a green overlook to the Mississippi River with views up and downstream to an active working riverfront. It connects to the river physically and visually as barriers were removed and new views opened up.

Air raid blackout paint from World War II was removed from massive skylights in the 27,000-square-foot vaulted waiting room where passengers choose light rail, local and intercity bus service, taxis, Amtrak service—and in the future—commuter rail and high-speed rail to Chicago. These modes, together with motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrian traffic, will create a magnet for shopping and entertainment.

The mixed-use transportation center includes condominiums and restaurants and is blocks away from a year-round farmers market and lofts. The project is seeking LEED Gold certification, utilizing some of the most innovative environmental and energy efficient techniques available.

Successful public engagement has built support from multiple constituencies under the leadership of the RCRRA. An innovative design-build delivery system met an aggressive funding and construction schedule.

Construction Photo: HGA Architects and Engineers
Post-Construction Photos: Paul Crosby