

IDENTIFYING, EVALUATING,
AND
PRESERVING MINNESOTA'S
HISTORIC
ROADSIDE FACILITIES

Overview

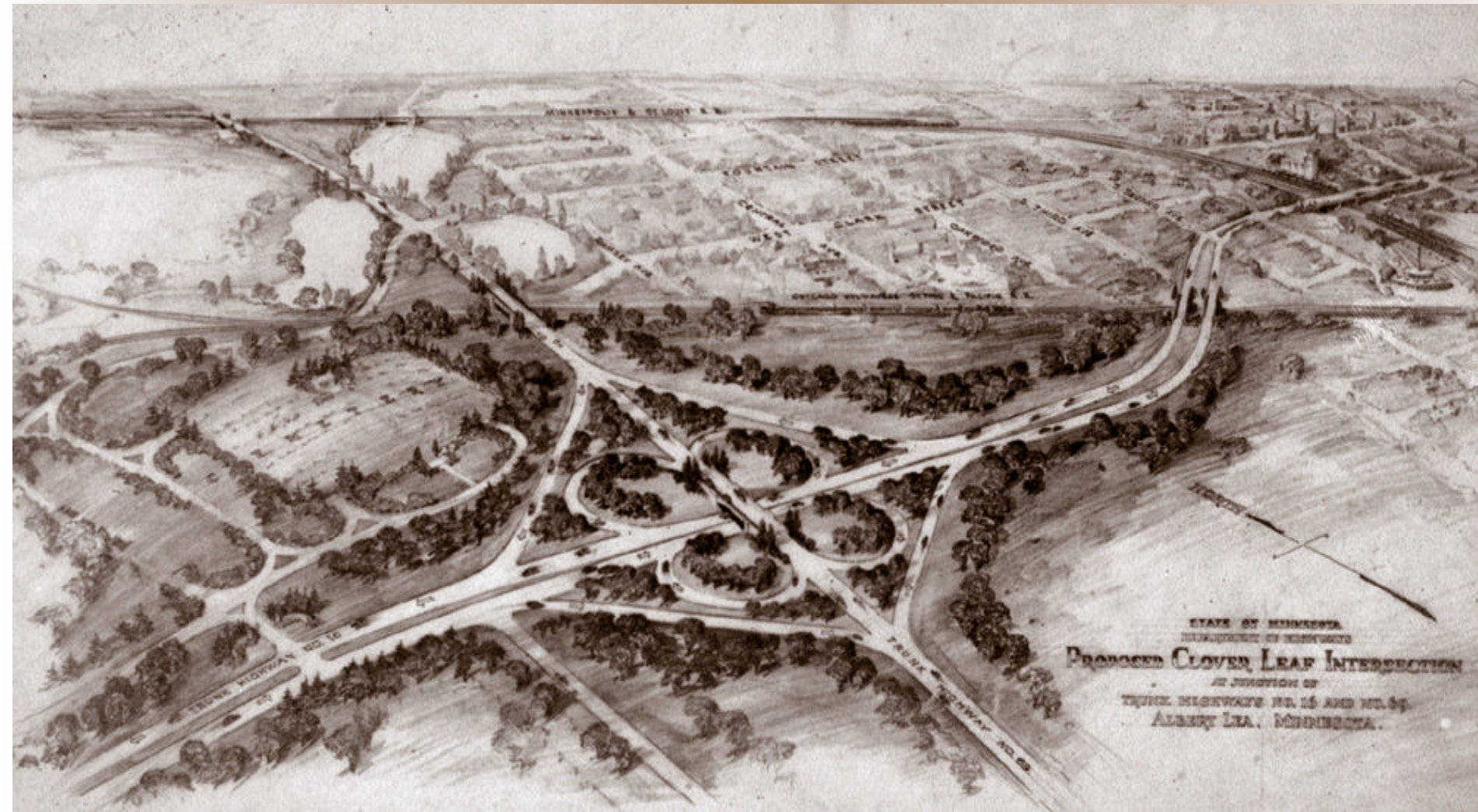
- Minnesota built many wayside rest areas during 1930s & '40s (New Deal-WPA, CCC)
- Many are now threatened
- Limited knowledge of waysides
- Developed inventory of Mn/DOT properties & identified those eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)
- Inventory 1st phase of time & money-saving planning documents

Historical Background

- 1920s - auto tourism popular
- Roads were poor & few roadside amenities existed
- As result, modern highway design emerged:
 - Increase highway safety & enhance tourism
 - Included early planning, sound engineering, & landscaping
 - Included “roadside development facilities”

1930s roadside development sketch

Goals: safety & aesthetic qualities



Roadside development facilities:

- Contain variety of features (43 types)
- Local materials – often stone
- Designs blended with nature

Roadside features are...

Scenic overlooks



Historic markers



Picnic areas





Fireplaces

Springs



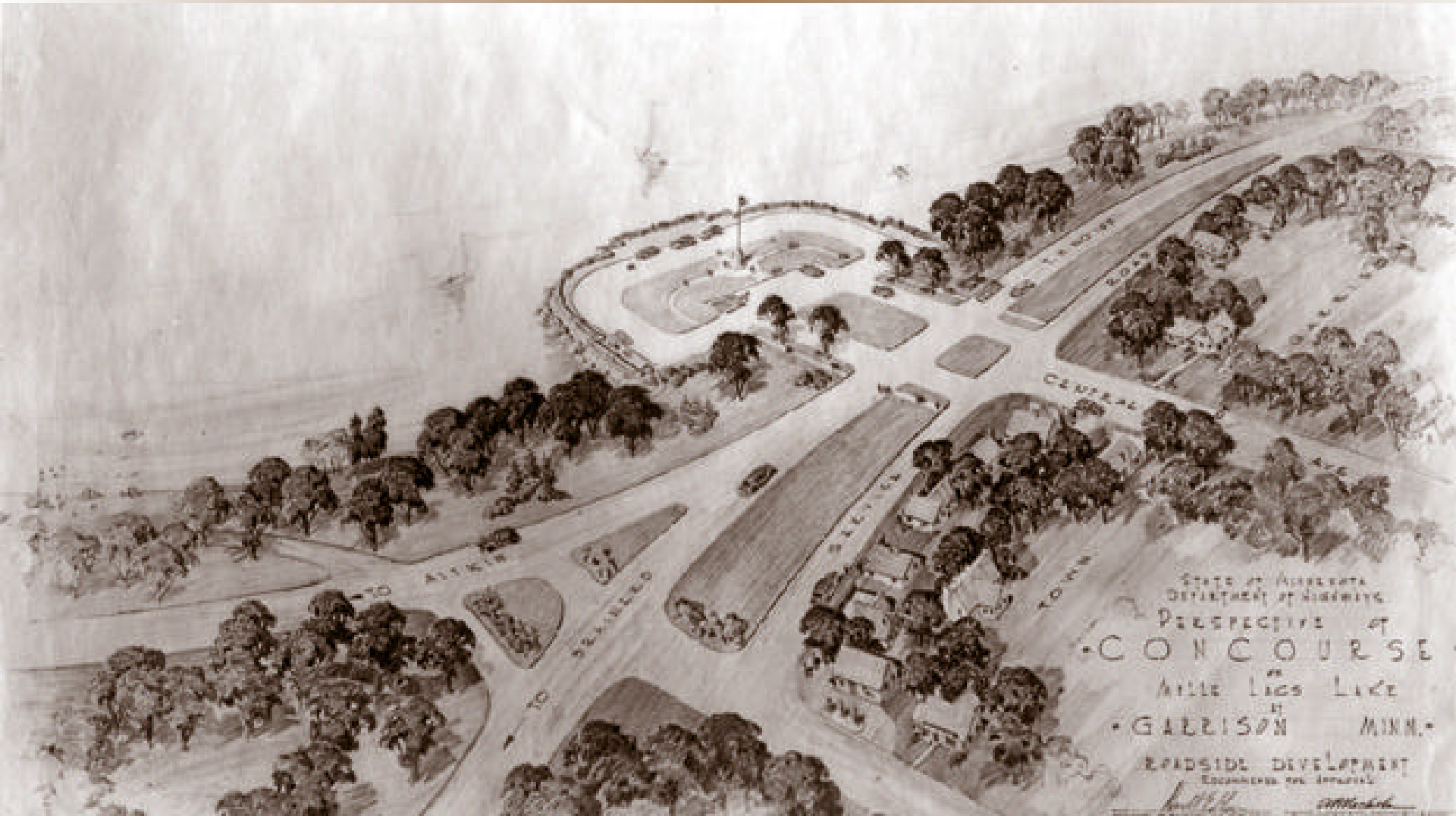


Entry signs

And bridges



Popular tourism corridors sometimes included many facilities



Existing Conditions

- Mn/DOT recognized need to understand and centrally manage these waysides.
- Today, highway projects adversely affecting waysides through:

Widespread threats:

- Growing transportation demands
- Highway expansion
- Development pressures/land use changes
- Public's needs changed, yet little done to adapt facilities
- Improper repairs
- Vandalism
- Deterioration/neglect

For example, site use was diminished, maintenance & repairs were delayed; site is a victim of benign neglect



Assessment & Analysis

Mn/DOT:

- Found few precedents to determine historical significance
- Discovered inventory was groundbreaking (one of 1st studies of its type in the U.S.)

Because little precedent existed, Mn/DOT developed a new historic context to understand the properties and evaluate their significance

The new context developed as part of the inventory is

“Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960”

Results of the inventory are ...

- 102 properties studied
- 51 properties & 1 district determined eligible under new context (about ½)
- Mn/DOT realized they own significant collection of roadside development facilities
- Additional planning documents

The inventory is:

“ ... not only ambitious ... serves as a model for other state-level landscape survey initiatives ”

(Charles Birnbaum of NPS's Historic Landscape Initiative)

Inventory was:

- Thorough
- Statewide
- Comparative

Planning documents

Additional documents will save time and money

- Management plan
- Programmatic agreement

Management plan will:

- provide preservation direction to staff
- allow for early planning decisions
 - Allows Mn/DOT to better analyze alternatives & avoid or minimize adverse affects
- allow time to obtain restoration or maintenance funding
- help Mn/DOT invest wisely
- prevent benign neglect

Mgmt. plan **includes**:

- Treatment reports - 3 preservation levels + cost estimates (final 2003)
 1. Stabilization (immediate/critical need)
 2. Preservation
 3. Restoration
- Priority ranking (statewide comparison)
- Comprehensive maintenance guidelines include:
 - proper masonry repairs
 - vegetation management plan

And...

- District input
- List of properties to nominate for NRHP
- A "conservation zone"
 - buffers historic property from elements that may distract/detract.

Mn/DOT plans to restore the most significant properties, such as ...

Orr Roadside Parking Area – already under construction (all work meets Sec. of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties)



By studying these properties together, Mn/DOT saved money

	Cost
▪ Individual National Register-eligibility surveys.....	\$5,000
▪ Collective survey (per property)..	<u>-\$1,866</u>
▪ Est. savings per property.....	\$3,134

**Estimated savings of approx.
40% per property**

\$3,134 x 102 properties = \$319,668

Mn/DOT plans to develop programmatic agreement with partner agencies

(ex. FHWA, State Historic Preservation Office)

Programmatic Agreement should:

- Establish preservation commitments
- Eliminate some external individual reviews
- Save time & money on individual reviews

Outreach & Education

- Mn/DOT realizes one of best preservation tools is communication - both with its staff and public
- As more people become aware of significance of these facilities, more efforts taken to preserve properties

- District staff have inventory & report
(www.dot.state.mn.us/tecsup/site/historic).
- Database available to Mn/DOT on web
- All staff asked to consult Cultural Resources Unit before undertaking projects near the properties.
- District personnel participating in preservation planning documents

Other Mn/DOT initiatives:

Participate in joint promotional efforts with tourism groups & historical societies.

Develop program where local groups can "adopt" a historic wayside rest.

Develop communication tools about historic roadside facilities.

Install interpretive signs

An important item to note:

Mn/DOT received Honor Award from
Preservation Alliance of Minnesota
(statewide non-profit preservation advocacy group).

Award recognizes inventory report for
innovation as planning document and
honors Mn/DOT's stewardship

Summary

Mn/DOT's roadside facilities study began as simple inventory & became a much more comprehensive undertaking.

Mn/DOT is committed to responsibly caring for these properties so the traveling public can continue to experience their unique historic qualities.



Thank you