

SCOPE OF WORK

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Joliet is working with the Joliet Area Historical Museum to establish a railroad themed exhibit at the former Union Depot Tower (UD Tower) and has received \$19,600 in grant funding from the State of Illinois, in the form of a Certified Local Government (CLG) Matching Grant, to establish the initial exhibit.

The three-story Union Depot (UD) Tower is now incorporated in the new Joliet Gateway Center Train Station. During the design of the new station, the City decided to preserve and incorporate the UD Tower into the new building, hoping to create a public showcase highlighting the overall influence of railroads on the Joliet region's historical development.

The impact of the railroads was so profound in Joliet that at one point during the latter 1890's the city had four separate passenger rail stations and myriad tracks that crisscrossed the downtown at grade level creating a confusing and unsafe situation for all. In what was perhaps one of the first major public-private partnerships in the area the railroads entered into an agreement with the City of Joliet and built a new station in 1914. The new Joliet Union Station consolidated all of the earlier passenger stations. The tracks were also realigned and elevated at that time, with the new UD Tower controlling the train movements through the main rail intersection.

The UD Tower housed the mechanisms for controlling the various rail switches. The purpose of the UD Tower was to ensure and coordinate the safe and timely movement of trains through this critical intersection of east-west and north-south rail travel. At that time the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe and the Chicago & Alton railroads were on the north/south alignment and Chicago Rock Island & Pacific and the Michigan Central railroads ran east/west.

Over time the rail intersection "Joliet Diamond" has seen the evolution of rail passenger and freight traffic. The UD Tower served as a vital component of the rail facilities and there is no better place for the public to learn about Joliet's railroad history.

In 2011, the City of Joliet began planning for a new multi-modal transit hub at the historic rail intersection and was awarded a grant from the State of Illinois to build the new facility. The City in partnership with the State of Illinois, Illinois Department of Transportation, Union Pacific, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Metra, Amtrak, Regional Transportation Authority, and the Federal Railroad Administration embarked on a large project to improve the efficiency and safety of rail traffic through what continues to be a major transportation hub. This was accomplished by realigning the tracks and relocating the commuter boarding platforms. As part of this project, the full mechanisms for controlling the various rail switches became computerized. The Union

Pacific Railroad now controls movements through the rail intersection remotely at its dispatch center in Omaha, Nebraska. April 26, 2015 was the last day of operation at UD Tower.

Although no longer operational, the UD Tower continues to house the mechanisms that once controlled the various rail switches at the intersection (Attachment E). This includes the following:

- The wood- paneled pistol grip interlocking machine (lockbed machine) that controlled train movement through the interlocking;
- The relay cabinet, which housed the relays that opened and closed circuits electromechanically or electronically;
- The voltmeter, which alerted operators when the circuit was drawing too much voltage, thus signifying a problem; and
- Bundles of cables.

In addition to housing the physical artifacts of the UD Tower's operations, the UD Tower offers unparalleled 360 degree views of the existing tracks. There continues to be constant movement through this high traffic rail intersection with the four north-south tracks and one east-west track carrying both freight and passenger service. Watching freight rail and passenger rail movement through this intersection is a unique experience.

It is important to mention that the construction of the Gateway Center Train Station allowed for the UD Tower to be renovated to current code and included the installation of a ramp and an elevator. **Therefore, the UD Tower is now ADA accessible.** The current floor plans are included as an attachment.

The City, in partnership with the Joliet Area Historical Museum (JAHM) and local volunteers, intends to undertake the following components to move the idea of a railroad themed exhibit at the unique UD Tower from concept to reality:

- programming of the space,
- development of the exhibit narrative,
- designing, fabricating, and installing the exhibit,
- establishing the operational framework of the space,
- reviewing long-term funding solutions,
- establishing the marketing plan, and
- overall project coordination.

The City proposes to utilize funding through the 2019 CLG Matching Grant program to hire a consultant to design, fabricate, and install the exhibit. City and museum staff along with volunteers will undertake the other project components identified above. The City owns Joliet Gateway Center Train Station, which was completed in June 2018. At the time of this writing, Metra, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, and Union Pacific railroads each own 1/3 of UD Tower;

however, they are concluding the process of transferring their share to the City of Joliet through an intergovernmental agreement.

RAILROAD EXHIBIT AND LOCAL PLANNING PRIORITIES

The establishment of a railroad themed exhibit at UD Tower promotes several local planning priorities. The first is that it will offer a space for educating and celebrating the unique role that Joliet has played in regional passenger and freight movement—both past and present. Five railroad companies operated in Joliet in the early 20th century. Four of them –the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, the Chicago & Alton, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific and the Michigan Central railroads—all ran through Union Depot in downtown Joliet. The Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway (EJ&E) operated about one mile northeast of Union Depot maintaining a huge switchyard. Today, Metra, Amtrak, Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific railroad companies all converge at UD Tower. The EJ&E also still operates their large switchyard.

Secondly, a railroad themed exhibit at UD Tower will complement the City’s growing list of unique and important historic resources such as the Old Joliet Prison, Joliet Ironworks Historic Site, the Joliet Area Historical Museum, the East Side National Register Historic District, and the following nearby properties that are located on the National Register of Historic Places: Union Station, Jacob Henry Mansion, Joliet Township Central Campus, U.S. Post Office, and Louis Joliet Hotel.

Thirdly, the exhibit will support the City’s growing heritage tourism industry by creating another destination for which visitors can extend their stay. The Joliet Area Historical Museum is open daily from April through October and six days a week the remainder of the year. The Museum started offering tours of the Prison in the summer of 2018. The Prison is located about 1.8 miles north of UD Tower. The Forest Preserve District of Will County’s Joliet Iron Works Historic Site, which is located on the northern end of downtown Joliet, offers trails and led tours during the warmer months. Other planned developments that will also support heritage tourism in the City include at least one new downtown hotel and an Illinois Rock and Roll Museum.

Finally, the exhibit will make use of an existing, City-owned resource, which already houses the equipment that controlled rail movement through the intersection and continues to offer unparalleled 360 degree views of freight and passenger rail movement through this intersection. In addition, UD Tower is within the bustling Joliet Gateway Center Train Station which has frequent commuter rail service on two Metra lines as well as Amtrak passenger service. Therefore, the exhibit will be easily accessible to visitors without a car or who would like to visit before they board their train. In addition, the second floor waiting area located directly outside the lobby offers additional space should there be a temporary exhibit.

LOCAL SUPPORT FOR A RAILROAD EXHIBIT AT UNION DEPOT TOWER

There is great interest and local support for a railroad themed exhibit at UD Tower. Joliet is already known as a worldwide destination for railroad enthusiasts, or “railfans.” The City of Joliet – and specifically, the immediate area surrounding the UD Tower - was named among the Top Ten Train Watching Spots in the Chicago area, known worldwide as the “Railroad Capital” in TRAINS Magazine.

The City and Museum have been approached by several local rail enthusiasts about serving on the programming and exhibit narrative committee. The Blackhawk Railway Historical Society, Inc., a chapter of the National Railway Historical Society has extensive archival holdings of railroads that have served Will County, including the six railroads that operated in Joliet over the years. Members of the Blackhawk chapter have indicated their strong interest in assisting with the documentation of the history of the UD Tower and providing photographs and other exhibit content.

At the building’s June 6, 2018 dedication, the UD Tower was open to the public and temporary displays on the history of this building and rail movement through this rail intersection were available to view (see attached). This temporary exhibit was well-received, and City has been fielding numerous inquiries about allowing public access to this space (Attachment F).

The Joliet Area Historical Museum supports this public education project. The City of Joliet has a historic legacy as a transportation hub dating back to its founding. Railroads have been a particularly important part of this legacy, and remain vital to the local economy in the present day. Educating the public on the importance of transportation to the region’s economic development, as well as opportunities to incorporate STEM educational components in the interpretation of the UD Tower’s physical components would allow a unique learning experience that is unrivaled in the area. The Museum’s strategic location along the I&M Canal, Route 66, and Lincoln Highway tourist corridors also ensure a reliable constituency of visitors and supporters. It’s for these reasons that the Museum has committed to be a partner in this project.

The Joliet City Council supports this public education project. They see it as another draw to retain visitors and an opportunity to educate the public about the role of rail in historical development of the City. At their April 1, 2019 meeting, the City Council adopted a resolution authorizing City staff to apply for a CLG grant to establish a Railroad Themed Exhibit at Union Depot Tower. The City’s desire to preserve its history and heritage is evidenced in the adaptive reuse of the historic Joliet Union Station. The new Gateway Transportation Center and UD Tower coupled with the historic station are part of the vision for revitalizing downtown Joliet.

The Joliet Historic Preservation Commission (JHPC) supports this public education project. The JHPC identified “Investigate the development of a railroad transportation themed exhibit at the former Union Depot Tower” as an action item to promote historic resources in the City in their 2019 Goals and Action Plan. In sum, there is great local support to establish a railroad themed

exhibit at this location, which would utilize and make available to the public this unique historic resource.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

The project to establish a railroad themed exhibit at Union Depot Tower has five components.

PROGRAMMING: The City in partnership with the Museum will convene a working group to refine the intended program of the space. There is no shortage of information as well as artifacts that can be used to interpret the history of the UD Tower and the history of railroads as a whole in Joliet. The challenge will be thoughtfully curating the information to be manageable to the public. To that end, towards the end of the programming phase, the City and Museum will bring in the selected consultant who will work with the working group to bring the vision of a railroad themed exhibit at UD Tower to a reality.

EXHIBIT NARRATIVE: The Museum in partnership with the City will develop the exhibit narrative based on the selected programming of the space. Staff has already been provided with the names of local residents who worked in the UD Tower for interview purposes. The Museum also has research files related to Joliet railroad history. The working group will also assist with refinements to the exhibit narrative when needed. Staff will work with the selected consultant to ensure timely coordination of the completion of the exhibit narrative with the design, fabrication and installation of the exhibit.

OPERATIONS: The City in partnership with the Museum will establish an operations plan that will outline, at a minimum, hours of operation, access, security, and housekeeping.

LONG-TERM-FUNDING SOLUTIONS: The City in partnership with the Museum will identify suitable public and private partners in order to assess the establishment of a dedicated fund to underwrite the long-term costs of staffing and operating the site.

DESIGN, FABRICATION AND INSTALLATION: The City intends to hire a consultant to design, fabricate and install the exhibit. The design of the exhibit will take into account the proposed programming of the space and exhibit narrative.

MARKETING: The City in partnership with the Museum will establish a marketing plan for publicizing the exhibit space. The process to develop this plan will involve the following stakeholders: Heritage Corridor Convention & Visitors Bureau, City Center Partnership, Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce, and the Blackhawk Railway Historical Society.

U.D. Tower Façade Timeline

Circa 1950



Circa 2016



April 2019



Union Tower Depot
2013
Before construction on the
Joliet Gateway Center Train Station started



Union Tower Depot
2017
During construction of the
Joliet Gateway Center Train Station



Union Depot Tower (U.D. Tower)

Current photos of the exterior and interior

U.D. Tower with BNSF Train about to cross the intersection (04/08/2019)



Main Entrance to U.D. Tower from the second floor waiting area of the Gateway Center Train Station.
Blank wall space and space and open area may also be used for permanent or temporary exhibits and/or related functions.



Front room of UD Tower. Has vacant wall space for future exhibit



Front room of UD Tower. Has vacant wall space for future exhibit



View of Relay Cabinet, Cables and Elevator



Exterior door leading to handicap accessible ramp. Accessible elevator just out of view.



Stairs leading to the third story of U.D. Tower



Third Story of U.D. Tower looking south. Lockbed Machine and Voltmeter shown. Tower offers exceptional views of rail activity at this busy rail intersection.



View of rail intersection from U.D. Tower.



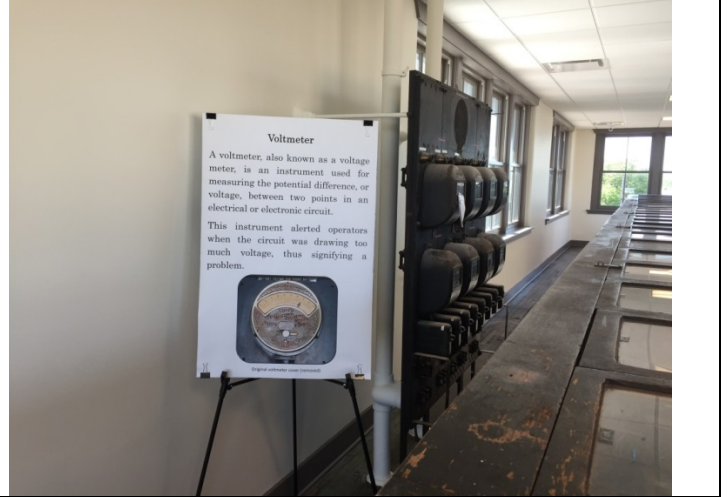
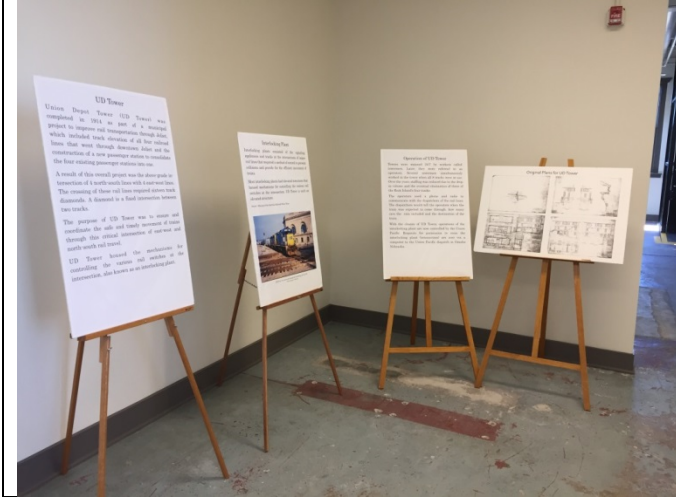
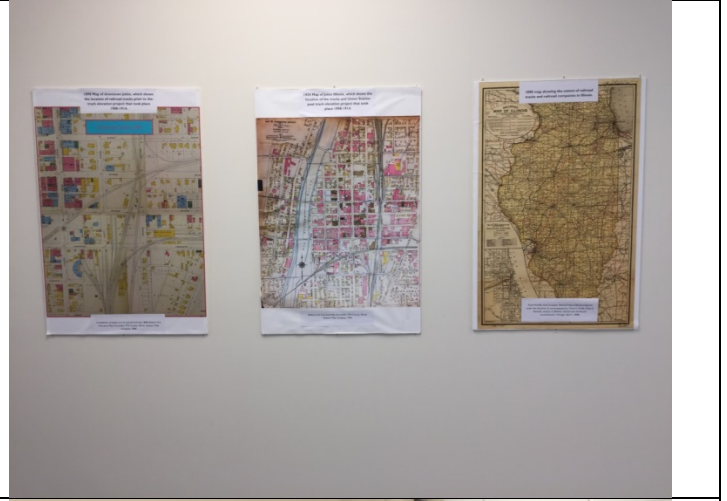
Third Story of U.D Tower. Wall space available for displays. Elevator also in this picture.



View of third story of U.D. Tower looking north.



Photos of the UD Tower Temporary Exhibit Joliet Gateway Center Train Station Building Dedication (June 6, 2018)



**Photos of the UD Tower Temporary Exhibit
Joliet Gateway Center Train Station Building Dedication (June 6, 2018)**

Interlocking Plant

Interlocking plants consisted of the signaling appliances and tracks at the intersections of major rail lines that required a method of control to prevent collisions and provide for the efficient movement of trains.

Most interlocking plants had elevated structures that housed mechanisms for controlling the various rail switches at the intersection. UD Tower is such an elevated structure.

Source: Museum of the American Railroad Prices Texas



CSX Train 1512 moves over through the interlocking. Aug. 25, 1987.
Photo courtesy of The Day

Union Station

The Beaux-Arts style Union station was completed in 1912. The station was designed by architect Jarvis Hunt. The Adam Groth Company, a Joliet firm, was the contractor.

Union Station replaced the four separate passenger stations operated by Rock Island Railroad, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, the Chicago & Alton Railroad, and the Michigan Central Railroad.

Upon completion in 1912, passenger traffic reached a peak of 100 trains daily.

Source: Illinois Historical Surveying Record



View looking at the building from the street. Photo by the Illinois Historical Surveying Record.