

News Release

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Graeser Park wayside in Robbinsdale deemed eligible for National Register of Historic Places

ROSEVILLE, Minn. – Graeser Park in Robbinsdale, a Minnesota Department of Transportation-owned historic wayside, has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places following a re-evaluation of the property.

The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office on Monday concurred with MnDOT’s evaluation that Graeser Park is eligible. The wayside, located at 4400 Lakeland Ave N, is known for its distinctive beehive fireplaces, stone tables and rock garden that were built as part of a Great Depression-era public works program authorized by President Franklin Roosevelt and funded by the Works Progress Administration and run by the then-Minnesota Highway Department.

“Graeser was a hidden gem in plain sight and the community in Robbinsdale never let us forget about it,” said Program Manager Andrea Weber, MnDOT Historic Roadside Properties and Waysides. “The recognition by the State Historic Preservation Office that it is eligible again makes a huge difference in its future preservation.”

Weber, a landscape architect, led the effort to rehabilitate and re-evaluate the property.

Highway 100 was first constructed in the 1930s between Highway 52 in Robbinsdale and Highway 5 in Edina, [becoming the first highway built in Minnesota with a cloverleaf interchange](#). It contained two lanes of travel in each direction with a wide, center median. The highway was known as “Lilac Drive” because it featured innovative landscape architecture with the namesake lilacs and became a source of pride for the burgeoning suburban cities of Golden Valley, Robbinsdale and St. Louis Park, where another beehive fireplace also sits.

Reconstruction of Highway 100 in the 2000s eliminated the Lilac Way Historic District and many of the waysides. The area was first identified as historic in the late 1990s. MnDOT salvaged and stored several stone tables and stones in Robbinsdale. They were meticulously restored starting in 2021 and served as the basis for the initial historic re-evaluation which was expanded to include the entire site.

The effort was led by staff from MnDOT’s Historic Roadside Property Program. [A group of dedicated volunteers](#), with assistance from the city of Robbinsdale, have also supported Graeser Park’s rehabilitation, which included accessibility improvements and weeding. MnDOT is in the process of conveying Graeser Park to the city of Robbinsdale.

“The City of Robbinsdale remains grateful for the work of our volunteer community members and direction from assisting agencies including MnDOT,” Robbinsdale City Manager Tim Sandvik said. “It’s a tremendous amount of work to reach this point, but we look forward to continued efforts to preserve such a wonderful amenity in our community.”

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