

Information Provided by North Loop Board member Mike Binkley re the building plaque project.

1. Finances

- The North Loop Neighborhood Association paid the cost of the plaques. Money was set aside in a designated fund. The city had the fund reviewed by the neighborhood liaison, and it was approved.
- The signs cost approximately \$200 each. One of the NoLo Board members had connection with a printing company and reduced the cost to \$31 for the aluminum signs and printing. The installation hardware cost another \$100 per sign. The installer (Hang It) charged \$100 per hour and averaged two installations per hour.
- Photos were purchased from the MN Historical Society and obtained on-line through the Hennepin County Library. A one-year membership with newspapers.com cost \$99/year and was an additional source of photographs.
- Building owners and HOAs did not pay for the plaques or installations. Both were more responsive when told that there would be no charge.
- To date, 14 plaques have been installed, and another dozen will be installed in the spring.

2. Plaque Size and Permission

- The plaques were made small enough (21 inches square) that they fell below the threshold in which the city would have to give official signage approval.
- Despite the lack of need for signage approval, North Loop reached out to the Minneapolis Planning and Economic Development to describe the project, and they were supportive.
- Personal contact was made with building owners and HOA building managers (who consulted with HOAs).

3. Installation

- One cannot drill into the brick on historic buildings, only the mortar.
- Because every building is different in terms of how far apart the bricks are spaces, large margins were placed on each sign so that the installer could drill into the sign to line up with the mortar and not cover up the text or image.

4. Selection

- The buildings selected were all on the National Register of Historic Buildings. The North Loop district is on the NRHP.
- To date, the buildings have been selected based on which had the most interesting stories, those most likely to generate interest. Those selected to date have been Model T Ford plant, Creamette, Mars Candy, Studebaker, Deere Webber, etc.
- There are several historic buildings in the area that do not have interesting stories or had duplicate uses.

5. Plaque Content

- The content is about the building's original or primary use with colorful details added. Mike worked to keep the number of words on each sign approximately the same. There is a QR code in the upper right-hand corner that leads viewers to on-line entries on the NLNA website which has more information, images, and some videos.
- Mike Binkley initially did the research, but another person has since volunteered to help.