

N-Circle Railroad Update 28 – October 23, 2025

Fast Food T-Trak module for the NWV

In a departure from the usual discussion of projects for the N-Circle Railroad, this Update will describe developing a T-Trak module for the NWV Model Railroad Association. The scene is built on a 1x length straight module made by Tab-Tech, purchased from CMR Products, to which we attached the two standard Kato UniTrack mainline tracks. The module kit was easy to assemble from five tab-in-slot laser-cut wood pieces using wood glue.

The plan is to model a typical railfanning trip with other NWV members, which inevitably included multiple stops at Tim Horton's and McDonalds! The idea was inspired when I found on eBay fast food restaurant buildings from Crossing Print. They were 3-D printed plastic and pre-painted. They can be seen here in their original state on the bare module at the start of this project.

This Update will also be released as “Fast Food 1x Module Project” in the “NWV T-Trak Modules Development” section of the Education page on the NWV’s website.

[NWV_25-07-31_FastFood_1](#)



The dimensions of the area from the inner track roadbed to the rear of the module are 12.0 inches wide X 9.0 inches deep, or 305 mm wide X 230 mm deep. The two buildings are identical, with bases 108 mm wide x 96 mm deep, the buildings are 95 wide x 87 deep. So there is not a lot of open area to work with.

I wanted a street in front of the restaurants, parallel to the tracks, to align to the street on another member's modules seen here

[2024-03_NWV_Show_Setup](#)



The street alone is about 55 mm wide, I designed one in PowerPoint using the techniques discussed in N-Circle Update 2, then printed them on decal paper, followed by three spray coats of Testor's DullCote to protect the ink from running, per the instructions with the paper.

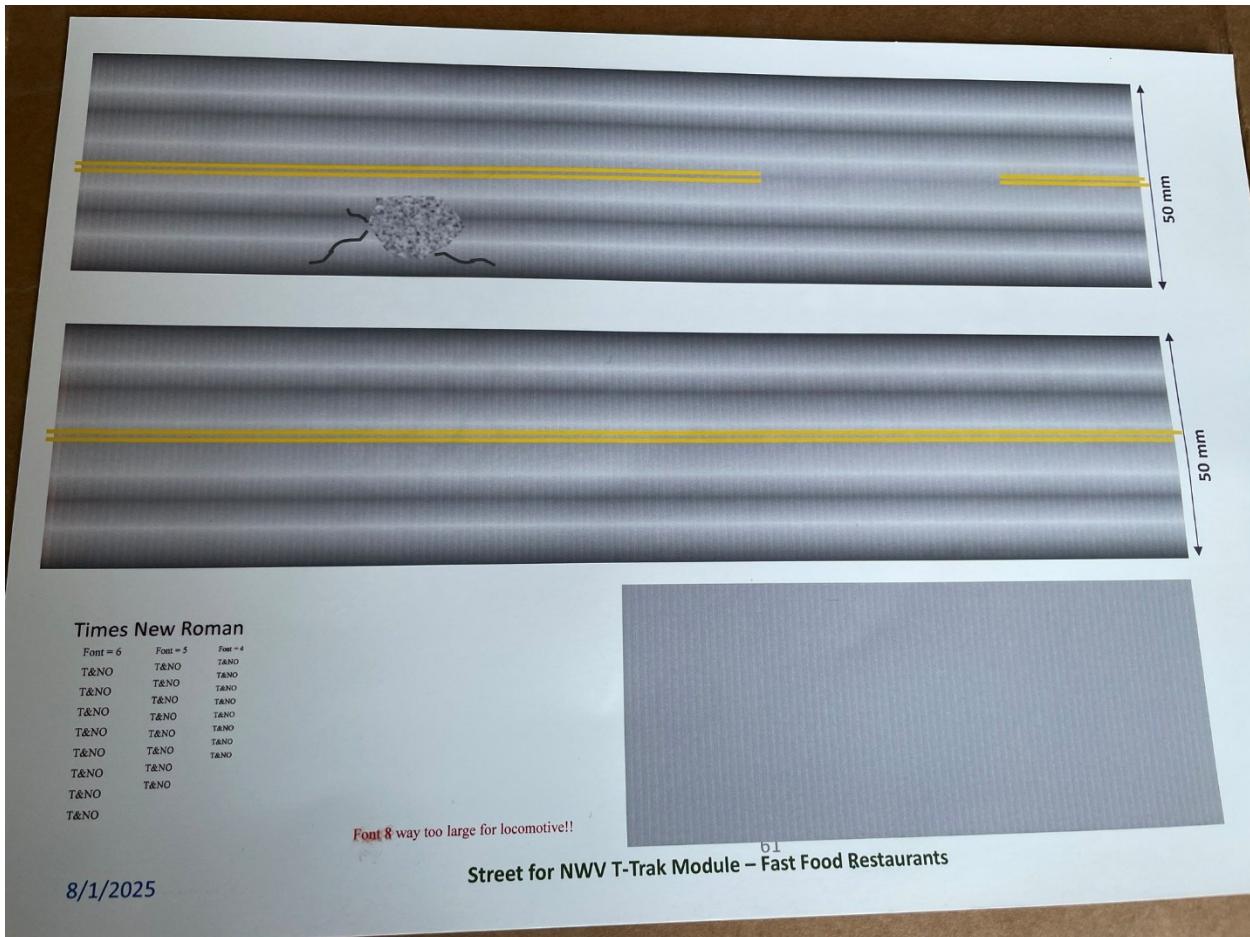
In the next photo we see the sheet after spraying. The pavement came out a little lighter than I expected the first time, so I redid it for this final version. It will not be an exact match to the module above, which used different techniques. (The text in the lower left of the sheet is for another project...saving on decal paper...!)

Note the use of Power Point gradient fill patterns to create the wear patterns in the pavement.

I did not use these as actual "decals," I just cut them out and attached them with double-sided tape to a strip of thin corrugated cardboard as a base. I used the decal paper because I thought

it would be more robust to stand up to travel than the regular copier paper I use on the N-Circle Railroad scenery panels. We will see how that works out over time. They may need to be replaced with more traditionally fabricated streets at some point.

NWV_25-08-02_FastFood_1



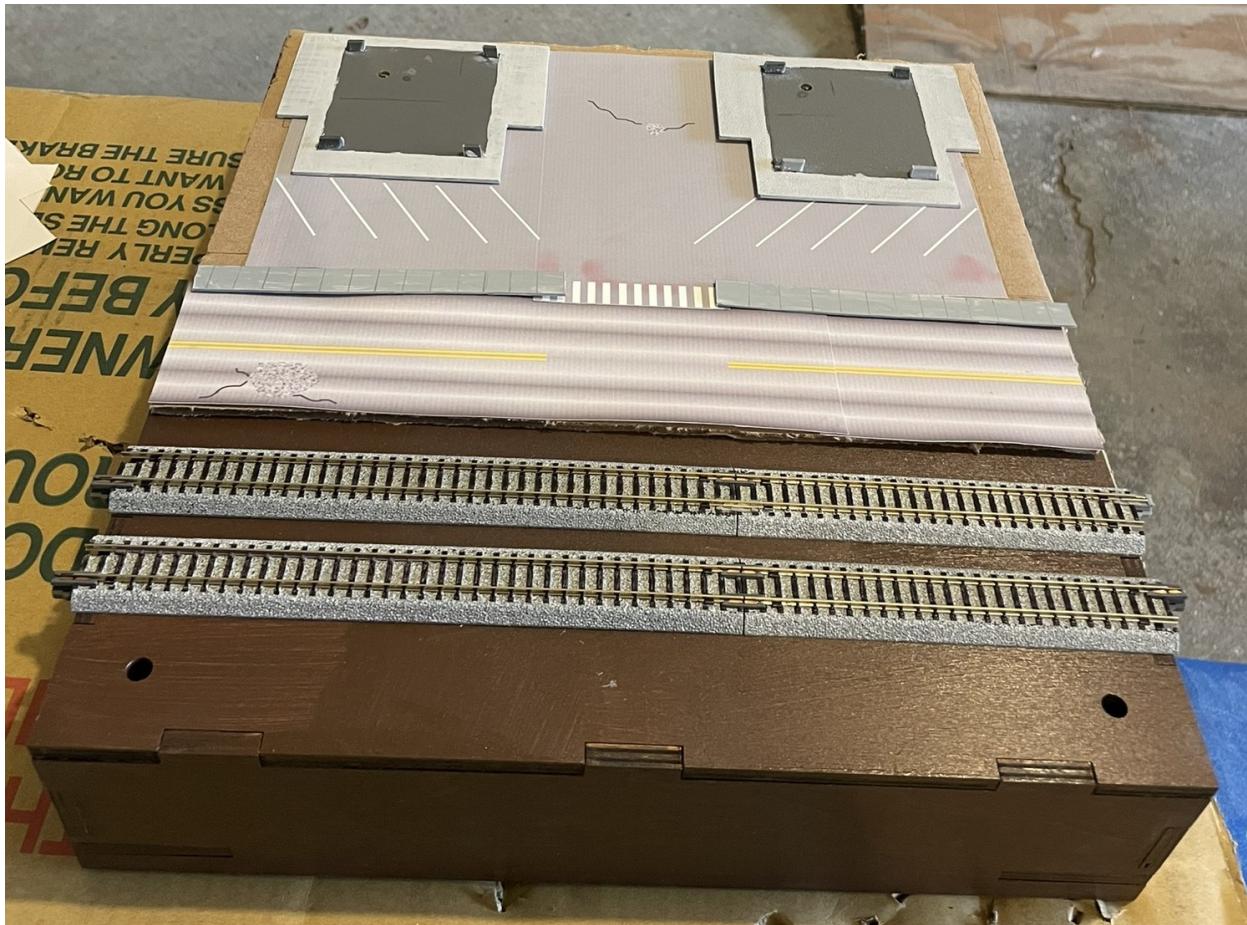
I then glued the cardboard base for the street to the module with white glue.

Later, I created a second PowerPoint scenery panel on decal paper using the same process for the parking lots area around the restaurant, then glued that to a larger cardboard base which covers the main area of the module.

Here we see the scenery panels attached to the module, with the restaurant bases not attached yet, but testing for alignment.

For the sidewalk between the street and the parking lot I used strips of styrene plastic to provide a solid base on which to glue figures. I painted it with a grey primer and added quick and lazy cement division lines with a straight edge and No. 2 pencil. In this photo they have not been glued down yet.

[NWV_25-08-18_FastFood_Cropped](#)



Given these buildings have a lot of large windows, I decided to get ambitious and add interiors, like the Dew Drop Inn in N-Circle Update 10. I captured authentic images of McDonald's and Tim Hortons counters from the web – looks like it is still the breakfast menu at McDonald's...!

[McDonalds-counter](#)



Hope they still have a maple-crème doughnut left at Tim Hortons!

[Tim-Hortons-Counter](#)



The tops of the windows on the buildings are about 15 mm high, so I inserted these images into a Power Point slide and shrunk them to this height to print, then glued them to interior walls cut from thin white styrene.

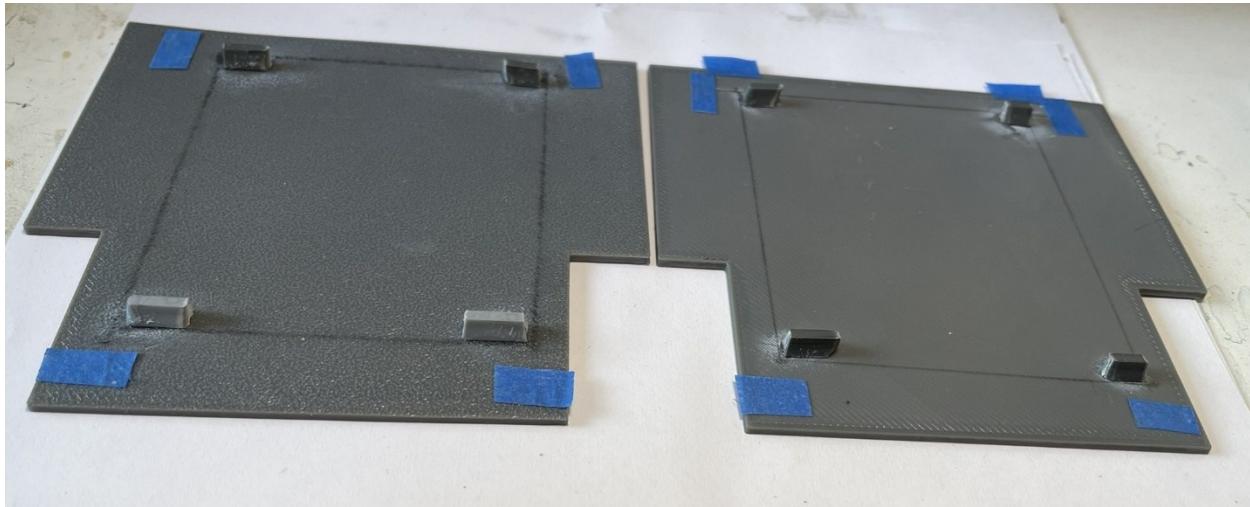
To decorate the dining area, I purchased a large set of 3-D printed plastic booth benches and tables from All 3D Prints on eBay. I applied a coat of Vallejo primer paint to everything, then painted the bases of the tables dark grey, leaving the tops white. I painted the backs and sides of all the benches dark brown, then ever striving for prototypical correctness, I painted the seat cushions red for McDonald's and light brown for Tim Hortons. Here we see them fresh from painting. There are more here than will be needed for the two restaurants – I will store the remainder away for use in a diner kit for the N-Circle Railroad someday.

[NWV_25-08-15_FastFood-2_Cropped](#)



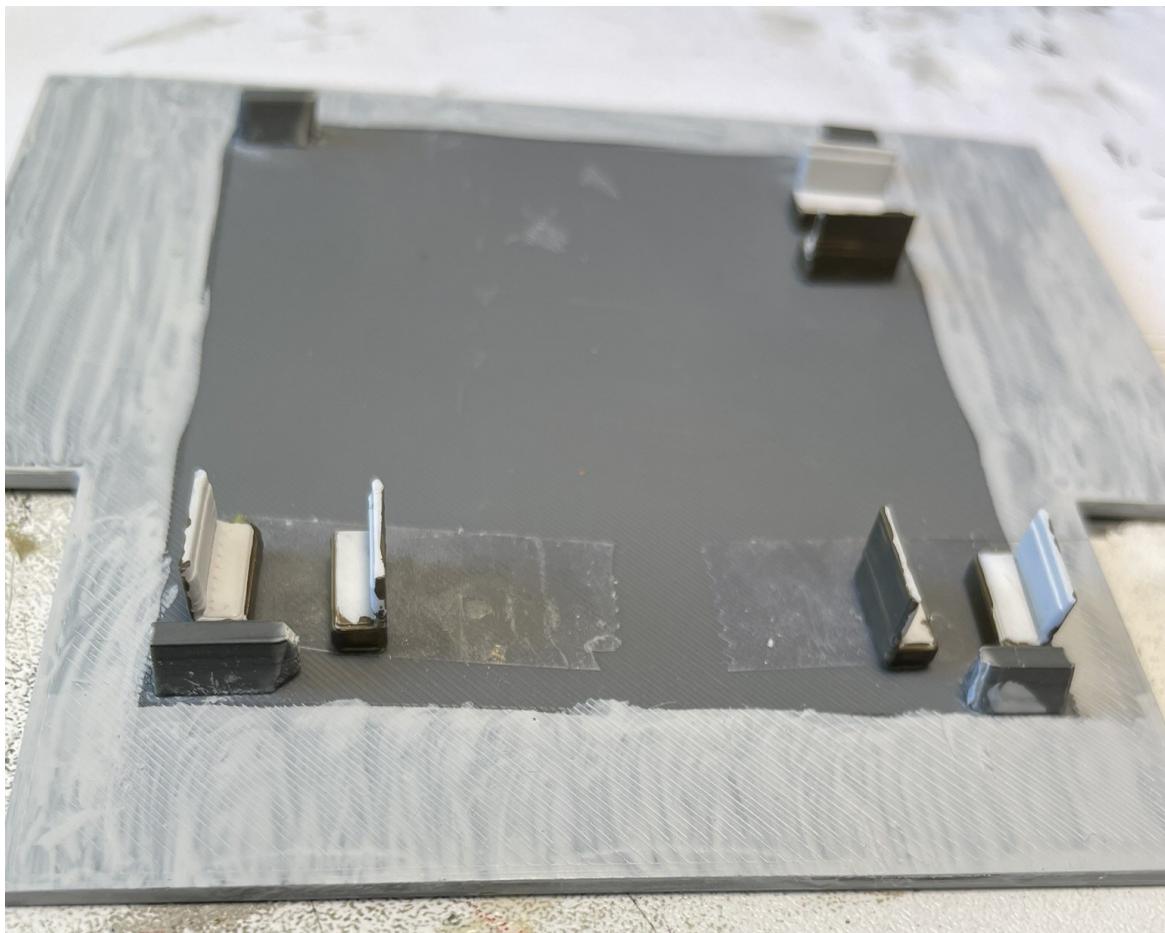
Having invested all this effort in creating interior detail, I decided to construct the structures so that the building can be lifted off, to reveal the interior detail. I superglued alignment pegs onto the four corners of the base just inside the interior edge of the walls. The pegs are segments cut from the plastic sprue from a styrene structure kit (again, never throw anything away that might be used for something...) They can be seen here in an on the two bases. I used pieces of blue painter's tape to mark the outer edges of the walls with the building aligned on the base, then measured in the thickness of the wall to locate the peg positions. Amazingly, this worked on all eight corners the first try...

[NWV_25-08-14_FastFood_Cropped](#)



I tested the alignment of the tables and benches to the windows using double-sided tape to temporarily attach them to the base, then placed the restaurant over them to view the alignment from outside.

[NWV_25-08-15_FastFood-1_Cropped](#)



After super-gluing the interior walls and furniture to the base I added some people figures from the detail parts box. Here we see the completed Tim Hortons interior.

[NWV_25-08-26_FastFood-3](#)



And the McDonald's interior.

[NWV_25-08-26_FastFood-2](#)



And I couldn't resist adding on the sidewalk a dog and fire hydrant recently purchased from Whistle Stop Models....!

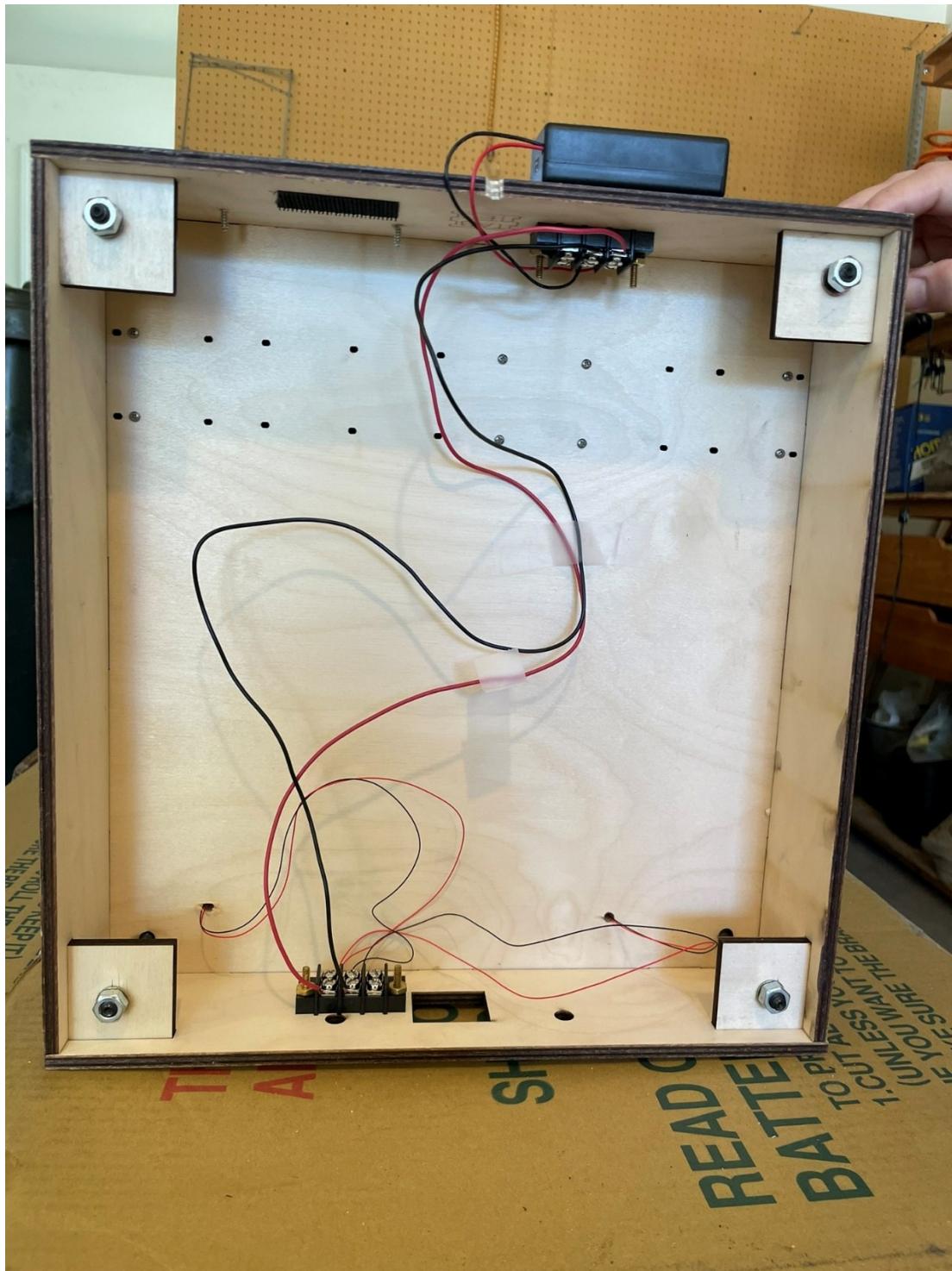
[NWV_25-08-26_FastFood-4_Cropped](#)



If all this interior detail is to be seen, we need Interior lighting! I used 9 volt Warm White Room Lighting LEDs from Evan Designs powered from a 9 volt battery holder with switch purchased from Amazon. I only installed one LED in the center of each restaurant – we will see how that looks when the project is completed. The hole drilled through the base is large enough to accommodate more wires in the future if more LEDs are needed.

To allow future modifications to add more lights or use a different battery holder, I connected the wiring using two screw terminal strips – one mounted on the interior of the back wall of the module and the other on the front, as seen here.

[NWV_25-09-30_FastFood_1](#)



I did not repaint the exterior walls of the buildings, I just left them with the tan color of the original plastic. From web searches, this is okay for both restaurant chains in the 1990s. While there is a lot of variation in how the restaurants were painted, it appears that many were a similar tan color. Probably why Crossing Print printed them this color.

The structures do not come with windows, just openings on the sides. To ensure that this interior detail would be visible, I used clear plastic sheet glaze from other kits for the windows, attached with Micro Scale Kristal Klear from the inside. The glaze provides better clarity than using Kristal Klear alone to fill the window openings.

Diverging from the plan above, I decided that I should attach the buildings to their bases so they will not be dislodged when this module is transported to public displays. I just used a couple of drops of white glue in two opposite corners, which can be loosened with water if there is ever a need to service the lights inside.

After the buildings and electrical wiring were completed, I added ground cover using Woodland Scenics Scenery Cement and standard techniques for scenery. I use official Kato ballast between the mainline tracks to match the color of the roadbeds and Woodland Scenics earth and green turf blends along the tracks and sides of the buildings and a few clumps of green scenery foam for shrubbery.

I applied a bead of water-proof caulk along the edge of the cardboard base under the street before adding ground cover between the street and the tracks, to prevent the moisture from the ground cover glue from damaging the street structure, then painted the caulk brown so the white would not show through the ground cover.

With the scenery base complete, I then added detail parts:

- 3-D printed trash cans to the front entrances of both restaurants, and benches and planter boxes from my detail parts cabinet
- 3-D printed dumpsters and two utility sheds from Skyline Creations that I detail painted
- Various automobiles from my collection for the N-Circle Railroad layout

In this closeup of details, we see Paul exiting his favorite dining establishment in his green NWV attire, headed for the "Green Hornet," an Atlas 1996 Ford Taurus. The real "Green Hornet" was a Mercury Sable, but close enough to represent the railfanning vehicle back in the day! The interior lights were off for this photo.

[NWV_25-10-21_FastFood-3](#)



This photo captures all the added scenery details with the lights on.

[NWV_25-10-21_FastFood-6_Cropped](#)



For public displays, I added a nameplate to the front of the module using a clear acrylic plate purchased from eBay and a label designed in Power Point. This allowed me to easily include the NWV logo, as they own the module. So here we see the final, completed module, with the lights battery and control box Velcroed to the front.

[NWV_25-10-21_FastFood-4_Cropped](#)



And finally, we see the completed module in use in a T-Trak layout in the NWV's N-scale room, functionally verified for use in future NWV public displays!

[NWV_25-10-22_FastFood-4_Cropped](#)



The ground scenery techniques used for this module were basic and easy, as used for the current N-Circle Railroad layout. The roadways could be removed and reworked with more traditional techniques in the future if desired. I also did not add detail to the exterior of the buildings, like brick mortar or filling in the corners on the awnings. So while this project does not present the highest craftsman quality techniques, the interior details add interest while still producing a physically robust module which will get a lot of handling for transport to public displays.

This module required about 24 hours to complete over 35 sessions of work, not including the time to assemble the wood module base. Most of this time was consumed with the interior details for the restaurants and the details added around the buildings.