

SLR Corridor Legacy Designation Application

Legacy Parks and Trails Pre-Application**Name:** Lake Superior Corridor Recreation Area**Facility website:****Contact Name:** Lindsay Dean**Describe other project supporters:**

Minnesota DNR

Canal Park Business Association

Cyclists of Gitchee Gumee Shores

DXC Duluth Cross Country Ski Club

Duluth Climbers Coalition

Duluth Boat Club

Park Point Community Club

Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory

Friends of the Lakewalk

Northland Paddlers Alliance

University of Minnesota Duluth Outdoor Recreational Sports Program

Statement of Regional Significance (75 words)

The Lakewalk Recreation Corridor (Lakewalk) is a system of destination parks and multi-use trails. Major visitor hubs like Brighton Beach, Leif Erickson Park, and Canal Park connect visitors with forests and streams, Lake Superior's rocky North and sandy South Shores, and vibrant historical theatre, art, and restaurant districts. The corridor is a destination for enthusiasts as well as families who bike, fish, hike, cross country ski, and paddle among other outdoor activities.

Overview/Description (500 words)

Duluth has a comprehensive vision for outdoor recreation that connects people to Lake Superior and adjacent natural resource amenities and fosters sustainable economic development. The Lakewalk trail connects destination parks, provides access to specific recreation uses and neighborhoods, and connects to the Duluth Traverse and Lake Superior Hiking Trail. The Lakewalk is integral to Duluth's Cross City Commuter Trail as well as the proposed National Bicycle Route 41 from Texas to Canada. Upgrades to facilities/trails as well as new opportunities will complement the outdoor recreation experience.

- Dedicated bike lanes on Highway 61 extend the Lakewalk 4 miles from Brighton Beach to McQuade Road.
- Upgrade park facilities at Brighton Beach including picnic areas, playground, parking, and access to ADA accessibility standards. Brighton Beach is the most popular lake access point for Duluth visitors as well as those passing through to points further up the shore. Brighton Beach is popular for weddings, meetings, family reunions and environmental education activities.
- Upgrade park facilities at Leif Erickson Park including picnic areas, playground, parking, and access to ADA accessibility standards. Leif Erickson is located convenient to downtown Duluth and Canal Park and is a popular gathering space for weddings, meetings, family reunions, and family-friendly activities like Movies in the Park.
- Lakewalk trail system upgrades improve traffic flow and safety by separating users and increasing the width to meet ADA requirements.

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- Construct a safe access point over Superior Street from the Lakewalk Trail to Lester Park. Lower Lester Park is the staging area for many large scale events like the Lester River Rendezvous. Visitors to Lester amenities naturally migrate to Lake Superior just a block away.
- Lower Lester Park restrooms will be upgraded for ADA accessibility. Damage remaining from the 2012 flood to the steam channel and pedestrian bridges will be repaired.
- 2012 flood damage to lower Chester Creek and Tischer Creek will be repaired and trails that were damaged or washed away will be repaired or replaced.
- Connect the Lakewalk Trail to the University of Minnesota and College of St. Scholastica campuses. This connector will utilize and restore a historic trail system on the west side of the Glensheen mansion grounds that once connected the shoreline of Lake Superior following Tischer Creek up the hillside to Congdon Park. The trail will be reopened and the Glensheen grounds open to the public from 8am to 9pm.
- Stoney Point, the western terminus of the Lakewalk trail is popular for fishing, walking and biking and is a "go to" spot for cold water surfing. A WPA era retaining wall supporting the east parking area and an informal parking spot on the west used by surfers have collapsed and will be rebuilt. Public restrooms are necessary. Stoney Point is the site of a historical marker and will provide a crucial rest stop for National Bicycle Route 41.
- Standardized wayfinding throughout facilitates access and improves navigation of Corridor amenities as well as adjacent opportunities.

Classification

- ☒ Natural Resource Based Regional Park
- ☐ Special Recreational Feature Park
- ☐ Regional Trail (Non-Motorized)
- ☐ Regional Trail (Motorized)
- ☐ Regional Trail (Motorized and Non-Motorized)

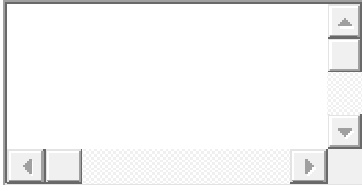
Existing Facilities

- ☐ Camping-cross-section of camper types
 - ☐ Electric/water/sewer RV sites
 - ☐ Electric/water campsites
 - ☐ Electric campsites
 - ☐ Non-electric campsites
 - ☐ Group campsites
 - ☐ Tent only sites
 - ☐ Camper Cabins
- Other (please describe):

Proposed Facilities

- ☐ Camping-cross-section of camper types
 - ☐ Electric/water/sewer RV sites
 - ☐ Electric/water campsites
 - ☐ Electric campsites
 - ☐ Non-electric campsites
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- Other (please describe):

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- ☒ Picnicking and picnic shelters
- ☒ Walking Trails (paved)
- ☒ Hiking Trails (natural)
- ☒ Biking Trails (paved)
- ☒ Mountain Biking Trails (natural)
- ☒ Cross-country Skiing Trails
- ☒ Horseback Riding Trails (natural)
- ☒ Swimming
- ☒ Lake Access for power boats
- ☒ Canoeing Facilities
- ☒ Fishing Piers
- ☒ Visitor Center
- ☒ Nature Center/Interpretation Trails
- ☒ Play areas, with an outdoor theme
- ☒ Outdoor Amphitheater
- ☐ Dog Parks
- ☐ Archery/Shooting ranges
- ☒ Climbing (natural/man-made)
- ☐ Zip Lines
- ☒ Restrooms/sanitation building
- ☒ Roads and Parking Areas
- ☒ Asphalt paved trail (10 feet or more)
- ☐ Asphalt paved trail (less than 10 feet)
- ☒ Aggregate surfaced trail (10 feet or more)
- ☐ Aggregate surfaced trail (less than 10 feet)
- ☒ Aggregate surfaced trail
- ☐ Natural-surfaced trail - user created
- ☒ Natural-surfaced trail - purpose built for



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- ☒ Asphalt paved trail (10 feet or more)
- ☒ Aggregate surfaced trail (10 feet or more)
- ☐ Aggregate surfaced trail
- ☒ Designated natural-surfaced trail - purpose built for specific use
- ☒ Natural-surfaced trail - purpose built for specific use

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specific use

☐ Underdeveloped natural-surfaced trail - user created

☒ Designated natural-surfaced trail - purpose built for specific use

☒ Trailhead parking

☐ **X** Trailhead information kiosks

☒ Trailhead restrooms

☒ Benches along trail

☒ Picnic shelters at trailhead

☒ Trailhead parking

☒ Trailhead information kiosks

☐ Trailhead restrooms

☒ Benches along trail

☐ Picnic shelters at trailhead

Master Plan status

X No Master Plan is Available

Existing Master Plan is Available (but needs to be updated to meet strategic plan)

Master Plan meeting requirements of strategic plan is available Complete Master Plans will be uploaded through the Master Plan portal. Check back here for a link when that portal becomes available.

Describe other supportive information

The Lakewalk Corridor connects visitors to a natural resource without comparison for size or quality in Minnesota or the Midwest. The area includes:

- Lake Superior, the world's largest freshwater lake by area
- 20 miles of Lake front in nearly continuous public ownership
- Extensive parks and trails system
- Regional and national fishing destination for Coho salmon and lake trout
- 7 designated trout streams cascading down the mountain slopes
- Old growth hardwood forests and mature red and white pine forests
- Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, a global Important Bird Area and Park Point and the Harbor, State Important Bird Areas
- Moose Mountain and Park Point Scientific and Natural Areas
- The largest US continuous sandbar that stretches for 7 miles and is 500 feet wide

The cultural resources are equally significant:

- The North Shore Scenic Railroad along the lakefront, an excursion railway to historic Two Harbors
- 7-bridges Road highlights WPA stone arch bridges crossing Amity Creek before connecting with Skyline Parkway – a State scenic byway
- Historic lighthouses and the Lift Bridge at Canal Park
- Many historic districts including Canal Park, Fitger's Brewery Complex, and the Historic Arts, Theatre and Restaurant District
- Chester Congdon Trust parkland and Glensheen Mansion and Museum
- A Viking ship replica
- Ruins throughout the Lakewalk Corridor highlight Duluth's industrial and maritime past
- WPA park facilities and bridges made with Lake Superior bluestone

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Recreational resources

- 23 miles of hiking trails that connect to 310 miles of the Superior Hiking Trail
- 20 miles of mountain biking trail system that connect to 100 miles of the Duluth Traverse
- The 6.6 mile multi-use Lakewalk along Lake Superior from Brighton Beach to Park Point
- 55 kilometers of groomed cross-country ski trails, some with lights and warming chalets
- State water trail
- Unlimited paddling (kayaking, canoeing standup paddle boarding) on the Lake Superior Water Trail that connects to 22 miles of State water trail along the St. Louis River
- White-water kayaking
- Cold water surfing
- Cold water diving to shipwrecks
- Pole, small craft and charter fishing
- Motor boating/McQuade Small Craft Safe Harbor
- Premier bird watching
- 27 hole golf course with stunning views of Lake Superior that doubles as a 300 acre skijoring park
- Urban Alpine Ski Hill in one of Duluth's hillside neighborhoods
- Cascading waterfalls through trout streams with meandering spur trails that are nestled into historic neighborhoods on the hill

Support services

- Nearby restaurants, hotels, museums, art galleries, and attractions like Canal Park, Bayfront Park and Downtown Duluth provide a range of services.
- Trailheads and connections utilize existing park facilities that provide access & parking, water, ADA accessible restroom facilities, running water, and way-finding.
- Duluth has a number of top tier websites that connect visitors with attractions, lodging, dining, activities, sporting events and maps.
- University and colleges provide recreation and education programs
- Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center

Alignment with the criteria associated with the selected classification

Criteria #1: Provides a High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience (300 words)

- Relevant facilities/amenities

A full range of facilities and amenities exists from plush accommodations and fine dining to rugged trail experiences for the expert enthusiast. Example: fishing opportunities range from pole fishing from shore fishing to chartering a luxury cabin cruiser with guide. Sporting goods stores and programs rent or provide equipment.

- Expands outdoor recreation to new or extended populations

Duluth, businesses and user clubs work together and are open and flexible to accommodate new and emerging nature based trends and group based recreational opportunities. Examples: Duluth is responding to standup paddle-boarding, surfing and climbing/bouldering activities that are increasing in popularity. Upgrading and extending the Lakewalk as part of National Bicycle Route 41 will increase access to Brighton Beach, McQuade Harbor, and beyond.

- Regional and national tourism destination

Duluth serves 3.5 million visitors annually. Outdoor recreation opportunities can be found on national sites including <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com> and <http://www.xtremespots.com/>. CBS News featured professionals surfing the waves at Stoney Point. Lester River is the site of national whitewater races. The Tall ships fest and Tour of Lights at Bentleyville at Bayfront draws tens of thousands.

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- Provides a quality of experience

Activities meet the differing outdoor recreation needs of people of all abilities and include universal design, family friendly facilities, levels for various skill sets, and extensive support network of lodging, restaurants, outfitters, special events such as mountain bike races, and fishing and ski tournaments and whitewater racing.

- Emphasizes innovation, uniqueness and new ways of engaging residents and tourists in outdoor activities. Duluth identifies and supports emerging trends. Recent examples include cold water surfing and stand up paddleboarding. Past examples include mountain biking. As this sport was emerging, Duluth formed a partnership with stakeholders to build trails. There are now 100 miles of these trails in Duluth.

Criteria #2: Provides a Natural and Scenic Setting Offering a Compelling Sense of Place (limit to 300 words):

- Provides a compelling sense of place and uniqueness

The attraction of Lake Superior and St Louis River and estuary for visitors is unique in the Upper Midwest, the Great Lakes and around the world. Stunning vistas and the lake's power and majesty have awed humans for millennia. Significant bird and wildlife watching and fishing opportunities draw visitors from around the country. Trails and roads cross cascading streams that create dramatic waterfalls and spectacular wave action captivates. The State Scenic Shore Drive parallels Lake Superior from Duluth to Thunder Bay and is considered one of the most scenic coastal highways in the nation.

- Water access and historically/culturally-significant features

Duluth is the primary access point to Lake Superior for visitors from much of the United States south of Duluth. Visitors have many avenues to access the lake on the corridor including two ADA accessible motor boat launches, multiple paddle put-ins (ADA accessible at McQuade, the main harbor and Park Point), 25 miles of sandy or rock beach and multiple points of access on foot.

Duluth has converted much of its industrial past into new uses. Historical buildings abound, ruins of the past are easy to find and explore and many beautiful WPA structures remain. Canal Park provides many opportunities to explore its past and present maritime culture.

- Impacts to the land resource

Recreational development along the Lake Corridor not only "takes care of what we have" but improves it. Duluth is committed to protecting its natural resource base to promote quality of life and economic development. Duluth is restoring much of the lakefront amenities, restoring degraded trails, shorelines, parks, and access points to protect the water resource as well as removing exotic species and replanting with natives.

Criteria #3: Well-located to Serve a Regional Need and/or Tourist Destination (limit to 300 words):

- Located by a well-established tourist destination

There are facilities for every interest including museums and historical sites, arts and nightlife, shopping, parks and trails, sporting events, as well as the outfitters to connect visitors with their ideal amenity. Duluth provides the most comprehensive range of facilities for visitors to access Lake Superior and the St. Louis River and estuary. Tourism destinations on the Lakewalk include the Great Lakes Aquarium, Canal Park/Park Point, Duluth Convention Center, Tall Ships event, North Shore Scenic Railroad, harbor cruises, Glensheen Mansion, and special seasonal events like Bentleyville Tour of Lights.

- Connected via local, regional, or state-level trails

Duluth trails connect to the Munger State Trail and the Cross City/Lakewalk and Superior Hiking Trails. Loop trails across the city include parks and trails at Lester-Amity Park, Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, Hartley Park, Central Park, Piedmont Recreation Area, Brewer Park, Spirit Mountain Recreation Area and the F.R. Paine Forest Preserve and Jay Cooke State Park. The Cross City/Lakewalk Trail is part of the planned National Bicycle Route

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41 that will travel from Texas to Canada. Vertical connector trails are important links between the recreation amenities on the shore and those "over the hill."

Criteria #4: Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within the Region (limit to 300 words):

- Need for regional recreational opportunities not otherwise available

No other city north of the Twin Cities provides the quality, depth and breadth of outdoor recreation opportunity as well as multiple access points to Lake Superior. The area provides something for everyone as well as options to explore new activities at every skill level. Visitors can plan multiple activities in a day, weekend, or longer and know that whatever support facilities they need to be successful will be available. It is the perfect situation to engage residents and visitors in new or expanded outdoor activities as well as provide education and outreach about these fragile and critical resources.

- Fills a critical gap in an area with a recreation opportunity shortage

Few places have the varied elevation, topography, scenic destinations, extensive public land base and close proximity to the well-established tourism infrastructure as does Duluth. Gaps filled include:

- Extensive public access to Lake Superior via nearly 20 miles of public ownership from the end of Park Point to Stoney Point. Visitor experience can range from complete solitude to large public events drawing thousands.
- Cold water surfing
- Bird watching: Mississippi Flyway in combination with Park Point and Hawk Ridge provide opportunities unavailable elsewhere, Hawk Ridge is a global designated Important Birding Area
- Cold water diving to shipwrecks