



To: Duluth City Council
Fr: Wheels On Trails Organization
Re: Historic Preservation - LSMR 1870 Rail Route

6/17/2019

The protection of historic entities is guaranteed under the 1966 Historic Preservation Act. As the City of Duluth has already admitted that the 1870 rail route into Duluth is historically significant - we strongly support the City Council's approval of the recent HPC Recommendation, that passed the Planning Commission on a unanimous voice vote. This is important for the future generations!

Three years ago one of our co-chairs (Dwight Morrison) initially listened to the need for this protection of the historic LSMR route into the city of Duluth, that crosses Mud Lake's causeway. After extensive research for two days at the Minneapolis Railroad Museum, the documentation provided there confirmed that this route was indeed the original rail route built by Jay Cooke in 1867 - 1870. This rail route opened land based trade with Minneapolis, and also gave tourists and business travelers access to Duluth on the best transportation available at the time. Yes, the route over the Mud Lake Causeway is historically significant and needs to be preserved, not destroyed!

One only has to ride the LSMR train out to Boy Scout Landing to understand the significance and beauty of this single remaining historic route into Duluth. The train ride over the Mud Lake Causeway is the pride of the tourist trip, and is unique in its travel right through a portion of the St. Louis River in W. Duluth. The value of this tourist attraction to West Duluth has recently been verified by a recent independent study by UMD. Yes, the tourist train provides over \$1,600,000 in benefits to the city and area. Why would this benefit be destroyed in order to put a trail on this rail bed. W.O.T. believes that it is un-ethical to destroy a functioning tourist trail, to replace it with a trail! As a member of the 'Rails-to-Trails Conservancy', we realize that abandoned rail beds make for very accessible trails because of low grades. But, they reject the idea of destroying a functioning railroad as un-ethical and costly!

The Historic Preservation Act of 1966 was put in place to prevent cities in America from actually destroying the historic entities in their towns! The HPC recommendation is just what Historic Preservation is all about. It is about preventing the destruction of American History. It is specifically created to deal with the cities that attempt to destroy their history for financial gain. Our community values are tied to the HPC recommendation to preserve the historic LSMR route in Duluth. But, not to the city staff's attempt at getting rid of the Mud Lake Causeway and destroying the LSMR route forever!

Dwight Morrison

W.O.T. Co-chairs

Randall Vogt