

From: John Harris [mailto:mail4j_t@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2015 1:52 PM
To: Council
Subject: Morgan Park pollution cleanup and RR/Train discussions

To: Duluth City Councilors/City Hall
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From:
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To: Duluth City Council Members;

We are writing concerning the upcoming cleanup of pollution caused by the old US Steel plant in Morgan Park and the discussion about the future of the riverfront corridor, especially the railroad right of way utilized by the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad.

We are very supportive of the pollution cleanup effort, as we have been and will be of other river and bay area projects of the St. Louis River. I (John) was raised in Smithville, the son of two generations who had worked at that steel mill, and saw firsthand the pollution results caused by “dumping” of so much waste by municipalities and private corporations in the river. We are very grateful that so much has already been done and that this cleanup project is scheduled.

We are concerned about future railroad corridor usage and realize this is a complex issue. We have ridden both the LS&M RR and the North Shore Scenic RR several times and appreciate them both. In our opinion the “River” train overall provides a much more scenic and historically informative trip. Once out of the downtown and near east end of Duluth the NS SR is essentially a train ride in the woods. But the LS&M finds it hard to compete with the NS SR which begins at the historic depot in the heart of the tourist area of Duluth and is heavily advertised and promoted. We do support replacement of the tracks for the LS&M RR and would like to see some discussions to hopefully better support both of these RR. IF the LS&M could begin further east (ideally at the Depot) it could provide an incredible scenic ride through Duluth with wonderful historical narrative. Obviously this would take some major discussions with existing RR using the tracks in Duluth, but it does not seem an impossibility.

Biking is an important part of our recreation and we regularly use the Willard Munger Trail and the Western Waterfront Trail. We support the discussions to use the cleanup and restoration efforts for more than just “replace the tracks”. The discussions about a “through the city” trail are vitally important for both short rides and those persons seeking a scenic path through the city.

Therefore we support planning for the replacing of the LS&M RR tracks together with discussions and planning for a multi-use trail along the river corridor.

John and Trina Harris