



# Skyline Parkway Corridor Management Plan

Prepared by URS Corporation  
with LHB Engineers & Architects  
Arrowhead Regional Development Commission  
Mary Means & Associates  
Patrick Nunnally



June 2015 Update

# SKYLINE PARKWAY CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



City of Duluth  
Department of Planning & Development

in conjunction with

**URS**  
LHB Engineers & Architects  
Arrowhead Regional Development Commission  
Mary Means & Associates  
Patrick Nunnally

Updated – May 2015

This corridor management plan has been prepared with funding from the State Scenic Byways Program, Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the City of Duluth, Department of Planning & Development



**"Where in all this wide world could I  
find such a view as this?  
Samuel F. Snively**

It has been 100 years since Samuel Snively donated the road he built, with its ten wooden bridges crossing Amity Creek, to the Duluth Park Board in order to establish the eastern end of what was to become Duluth's famed boulevard parkway system.

During the ensuing century, this remarkable thoroughfare has had many names – Duluth's Highland Boulevard, Terrace Parkway, Rogers Boulevard, Skyline Drive, Snively Boulevard and, officially, Skyline Parkway – yet its essential nature has remained unchanged: "A drive that is the pride of our city, and one that for its picturesque and varied scenery, is second to none in the world ..." (1st Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners, 1891). From its inception, the Parkway has formed the common thread which has bound this community together, creating the 'backbone' of the city's expansive park system. Its 46 miles of road range from semi-wilderness to urban in context, and its alignment, following the geography which defines Duluth, provides a unique perspective on what one early twentieth century observer referred to as this "God-graded town".

Because Skyline Parkway grew with Duluth, its history – and the physical characteristics which reflect this history – must be preserved. In his historic landscape evaluation study of Skyline Parkway entitled *Jewel of the North: Duluth's Parkway System*, Patrick Nunnally laid the challenge before us: "it is vitally important that future construction, reconstruction, and development projects on and affecting the parkway system be conducted from a basis that is firmly grounded in historical knowledge about the resource and landscape". This report represents the first step in that process, constituting the corridor management plan which will serve as the foundation for the eventual designation of this unique resource as one of this country's pre-eminent national scenic byways.

Michael Conlan, Director  
Department of Planning & Development  
August, 2003

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# INTRODUCTION

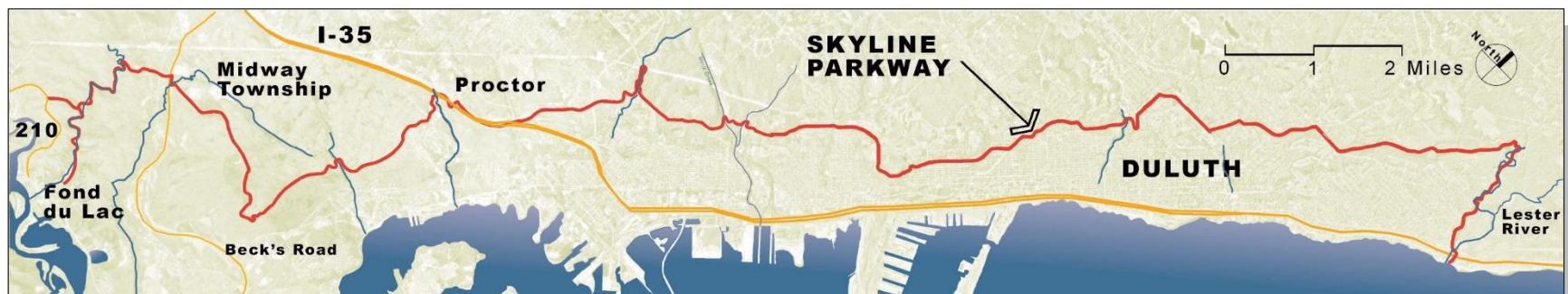
Few roads in North America combine the concepts of “urban” and “wilderness” as dramatically as Duluth’s Skyline Parkway, or offer such radical contrasts of experience. Running the full length of the city, the Parkway shifts from gravel road to urban street to winding park drive; its views meanwhile shifting from steep wooded valleys to a busy industrial port and then to historic residential districts that follow Lake Superior’s shoreline north. The Parkway itself appears to grow organically out of its rocky surroundings, with its guardstones, arched bridges, and massive retaining walls built of the same rock. It falls squarely within the picturesque tradition of landscape design, characterized by use of native materials and creation of a sequence of views along curvilinear paths, all for the purpose of enhancing a landscape’s natural and wilderness qualities.

The Skyline Parkway scenic byway corridor encompasses those portions of the system that can still be traveled by car, approximately 25 miles, largely within the City of Duluth but with portions in the City of Proctor and Midway Township. The byway extends from Beck’s Road on the west to the Lake Superior

shoreline at London Road on the east, near the Lester River. The westernmost “Mission Creek” segment, from Beck’s Road to Fond du Lac and Highway 210, is no longer maintained as a road, but has also been studied as part of the plan. Note that, in keeping with Duluth’s orientation to the Lake Superior shoreline, “east” in this report means “up the shore” in a northeasterly direction, while “west” is really southwest. Thus, the Parkway can largely be described as running east-west, although both the Mission Creek segment at the western end and Seven Bridges Road at the eastern end actually run north-south!

## CHALLENGES

The sheer length and diversity of the Parkway make it difficult to manage as a single resource. It is composed of many streets, with different names, configurations and landscape character. The Parkway was never constructed through the University of Minnesota – Duluth campus area, creating a gap where the route follows a series of city streets with few directing signs. Intersections with major highways are confusing, and it is easy to lose the Parkway route.





This rock wall at an overlook near 28th Ave. W. is deteriorating.



Native rocks are used as guard stones along the parkway.

Inconsistent route signs on different segments add to the confusion. No comprehensive maps or interpretive resources exist to guide the visitor.

The Parkway system's many structural elements are also difficult to manage and maintain. Structural elements include numerous stone-faced concrete arch bridges, retaining walls and culverts of native stone, overlooks and guard stones at vista points. Many of these structures are now deteriorating, and choices must be made about which ones should receive priority for restoration. Vegetation and landforms vary greatly, from heavily wooded ravines to grassed lawns and sparsely vegetated overlooks. Management of vegetation is a major issue for corridor residents and visitors: many views from overlooks have been lost as trees and brush have grown taller, while "up-slope" and "down-slope" residents have differing priorities regarding views and vegetative screening.

While the topography of the Parkway's corridor is its main attractions due to the natural and scenic attributes of the land scape, this topography also creates challenges during times of extreme weather. Two sections of Skyline Parkway are closed seasonally during the winter due to the challenges faced during Duluth's sometimes brutal winters. These two sections, one in the Bardon's Peak segment and the other in the Hawk Ridge and Seven Bridges Rd. segments, do not serve residences and contain road conditions that present challenges for plowing and maintaining during the winter months.

Flooding has also been a challenge faced in Skyline Parkway's history and caused by the topography of the corridor. A number of flooding events have drastically affected the Parkway including major flooding during the 1950's, 60's, and 70's that washed out sections of roadway and damaged bridges

in the Mission Creek and Fond du Lac areas. Recently, one of the worst floods in Duluth history occurred in June 2012. This flood caused significant damage to a number of sections along Skyline Parkway including: severe damage to the roadway and bridges in the Seven Bridges Road segment, a near complete washout of the Skyline Parkway and Haines Road intersection, additional damage to the already flood damaged Mission Creek segment, and a number of other road washouts along the entire corridor.

Many repairs have been made to Skyline Parkway since the 2012 flooding. The Skyline Parkway and Highland St./Vinland St. intersection, Skyline Parkway and Haines Rd. intersection and much of the Seven Bridges Road segment have been reconstructed to repair flood sustained during the flooding. Other repairs were made throughout the Skyline Parkway corridor, however, future planning for the impact of flooding on the Parkway could help prevent future damage of the roadway and subsequent spending on reconstruction.

## PRIOR STUDIES AND PLANS

Although the Parkway has not been the focus of prior planning studies, the road and associated open space resources have essentially functioned as a greenbelt in the City's planning framework, protecting it to some degree against sprawling development. Land use and management are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

There have been a number of historical studies and two recent films devoted to the Parkway. "Snively's Road," a 1994 article in *Minnesota History* by Minneapolis researcher Mark Ryan, focused on the role of Duluth Mayor Samuel F. Snively in realizing the vision for more than three-quarters of the Parkway and many of the City's other parks and boulevards.



Ryan also produced the documentary film of the same name. Another film, “Along the Boulevard,” was produced by public television station WDSE in March 2001; it focuses on the history of the Parkway and on the traveler’s experience, past and present. Both films are frequently shown at public meetings and have helped to raise public awareness of the Parkway as a resource.

In 1997 the City undertook a cultural landscape study of the Parkway, in preparation for local historic designation as a City Heritage Preservation District. This report, *The Jewel of the North: Duluth’s Parkway System. A Historic Landscape Evaluation Study*, provides a detailed record of the Parkway’s structures, vistas, and periods of development, including connecting routes and primary and secondary segments.

Report author Patrick Nunnally was part of the Corridor Management Plan study team and has provided direction on preservation strategies. Many of the historical photographs and images used in that study and this report are from the archive of the Northeast Minnesota Historical Center at

the University of Minnesota – Duluth.

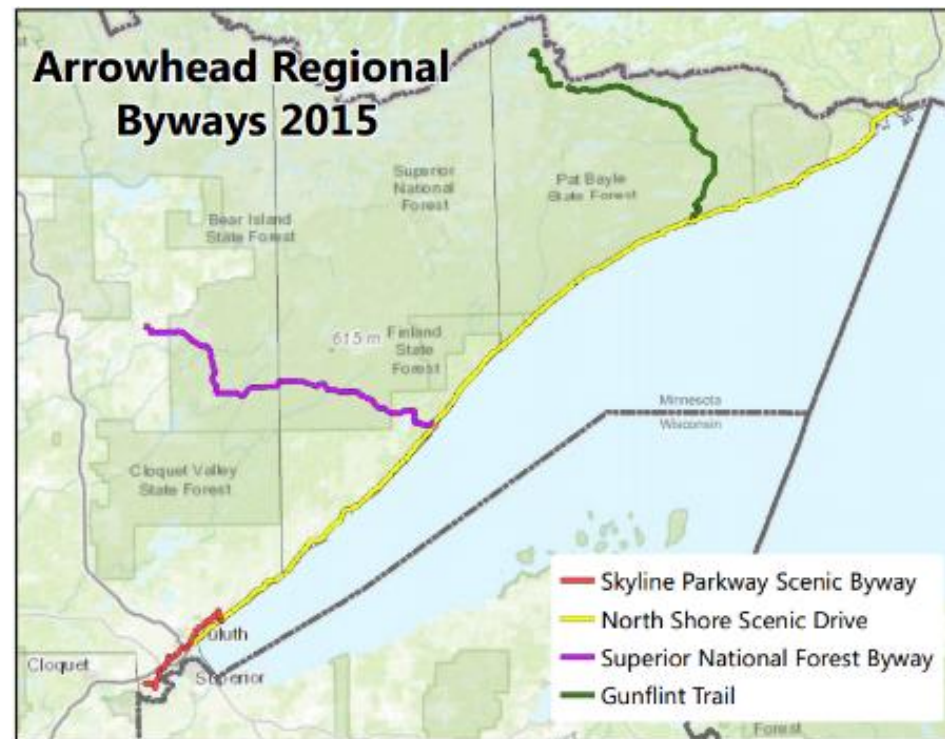
These and other references are listed in Appendix B, References.

## SCENIC BYWAYS IN THE ARROWHEAD REGION

Skyline Parkway connects at its northern terminus at London Road/Congdon Boulevard with the North Shore Scenic Drive, a 154-mile route that follows US Highway 61 up the Lake Superior shoreline from Duluth to the Canadian border. The route was recently designated an All-American Road, the highest category of the National Scenic Byways system, and was extended into the City so that it now terminates at Canal Park on Duluth’s central waterfront.



The Lester River Bridge carries both Skyline Parkway and the North Shore Scenic Drive in Duluth.



The Parkway's western terminus at Beck's Road is a few miles north of two other scenic byways. State Highway 210, the Rushing Rapids Parkway, runs for 28 miles through the forested hills of Jay Cooke State Park along the St. Louis River, from the city of Carlton to State Highway 23, also a scenic byway, in Fond du Lac.

State Highway 23 is known as the Veteran's Evergreen Memorial Scenic Drive. It runs for 50 miles, from Banning State Park near Askov north to Duluth, paralleling I-35. The byway terminates at the Veterans' Memorial at Stowe School in New Duluth, although Highway 23 continues northeast as Commonwealth Avenue, then as Grand Avenue. Features include the Kettle River valley, hardwood forests and evergreens, a series of small villages, and the Nemadji State Forest.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Parkway was designated a State Scenic Byway in 1998. Byway designation has made the road corridor eligible for funding for various studies and improvements, the first of which is this Corridor Management Plan, initiated in June 2001 with funding from the Federal Highway Administration and the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Oversight and citizen input throughout the planning process were provided through two groups:

- A Citizens' Task Force comprising over 20 people representing the broad spectrum of city commissions, adjacent jurisdictions (City of Proctor and Midway Township), environmental and preservation organizations, neighborhood associations, recreational users, and interested residents.
- A Technical Management Committee of city and agency staff, including representatives from St. Louis County, Mn/DOT, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the State Historic Preservation Office and other agencies.

A preliminary set of management strategies and recommendations was presented at a public open house in May 2002, and these were then refined for this report.

One of the strengths of this process has been the active role of the Citizens' Task Force members: many participated in a Viewer-Employed Photography exercise to identify features (sites, vistas, structures) that contributed to or detracted from the natural, scenic or historic character of the Parkway. These photos, accompanied by detailed annotations, became the foundation for many of the recommendations in this



Several parkways and scenic byways connect near Duluth.

report. (See sidebar for a summary of these features.) Task Force members also attended monthly or bimonthly meetings for more than a year, and assisted in hosting the Open House.

A note on names: Skyline Parkway was originally part of a larger parkway system, and was known, like many other roads, simply as a “boulevard,” then became known as “Skyline Boulevard.” This term has endured, as in the recent WDSE film “Along the

Boulevard.” In 1929 seven separate parkway segments were consolidated under the name “Skyline Parkway,” the winning entry in a contest to name the route. This, along with the accompanying logo (see page 52), became the official name and symbol of the scenic byway route. However, many Duluthians have always called the road “Skyline Drive,” and will likely continue to do so. A number of road signs reflect this confusion.

## RESOURCES AND CONDITIONS

This chapter provides an overview of resources and conditions along the Parkway corridor, under the following categories:

- General overview
- Historic resources
- Scenic resources
- Natural and recreational resources
- Road conditions

### GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Skyline Parkway as presently understood consists of seven segments of the original Skyline Parkway System that was constructed between 1890 and 1940. At its peak, the parkway system consisted of some 13 segments, totaling over 45 miles in length, and stretching between Fond du Lac and Jay Cooke State Park on the west all the way up the North Shore to the Lake County line on the east. The present segments of the parkway system include:

**Mission Creek (1920s):** An extension for the purpose of constructing a regional parkway network from Fond du Lac and Jay Cooke State Park to the North Shore.

### Viewer-Employed Photography Exercise: Summary of Main Themes

#### CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS

##### Overlooks:

- Bardon's Peak
- Rice's Point (30th Ave. W.)
- Enger Park
- Observation Road
- Hawk Ridge
- Lester River

##### Resources and structures:

- Guard stones and other stonework
- Remains of "green stripe" that once marked the road
- Hawk Ridge seasonal activities
- Mission Creek path and bridges
- Amity Creek path and bridges
- Creeks and waterfalls
- Adjacent or nearby parks:  
Chester Park, Chester Bowl, Enger Park,  
Jay Cooke State Park, Chamber's Grove

#### NONCONTRIBUTING AND DETRACTING ELEMENTS

- Closed and blocked overlooks
- Erosion problems - trails
- Dumping of trash, trash at overlooks
- Deteriorating bridges and structures
- Poor road surface; bad shoulders
- Dangerous intersections (such as  
Glenwood Street)
- Confusing intersections
- Concrete trail & road closure barriers
- Uncoordinated signage
- Heavy traffic
- Tour bus parking
- Lester Park hockey rink
- Oversized houses
- New residential construction - grading  
for driveways on steep slopes

#### NOT DEPICTED IN PHOTOS

- Commercial development
- UMD campus
- Residential street segments (largely absent)
- Mesaba Avenue or Highway 2 segments



No longer in use as a road, and not part of the designated byway, this segment is evaluated separately in this plan.

**Bardon's Peak** (1920s): Progressing south from the present Boundary Avenue intersection with I-35 around the knob of rock overlooking Gary/New Duluth and thence west to Beck's Road.

**Western Extension** (1905-1915): Extending the original Boulevard past Oneota Cemetery to a point near the present Thompson Hill Rest Area.

**Terrace Parkway**, also known as **Rogers Parkway** (1889-1895, with subsequent work up through 1940): This is the heart of the system, extending from Chester Park to Lincoln Park; it originally included some of the parkways through those parks as well (see below under "secondary segments").

**"UMD Gap"**: So called because there appears never to have been a parkway segment actually constructed through the area now home to the campus of the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

**Hawk Ridge** (1930s): Passing along the front of the bluff between Seven Bridges Road and Glenwood Street.

**Seven Bridges Road** (originally aligned c. 1903, redone 1910-1911): Climbing the bluff along the Lester River and Amity Creek.

**Secondary segments** that are no longer in use as roads, or that are no longer considered part of the Parkway, include the following:

**Knowlton Creek Boulevard**: Originally connected Fairmont Park with Bardon's Peak Boulevard; now a

trail that extends from behind the Lake Superior Zoo to the Spirit Mountain Recreation Area.

**Lincoln Park Drive**: West of Miller Creek, extending from 3rd Street to the Highway 53 intersection with the Parkway.

**Chester Park Drive**: From the Parkway to 6th Street on the east side of Chester Creek.

**Congdon Park Drive**: Connecting Vermillion and London Roads adjacent to Tischer Creek; paved but recently closed to traffic.

**Snively Boulevard / Amity Creek**: The original segment replaced by the Hawk Ridge segment, from Maxwell Road (north end of Seven Bridges Road) to near Jean Duluth Road, and still in use as a trail.

**Congdon North Shore Boulevard**: A segment of what is now Congdon Boulevard (the North Shore Scenic Drive), from Lester River to Knife River.

Figure 1, "Issues and Conditions," (following page 10) shows the Parkway's primary and secondary segments and locations of some of the key issues discussed below.

## THE TRAVELER'S EXPERIENCE

In terms of the Parkway's chronology, it was built outwards from the middle in both directions. The traveler's experience, however, can best be described from an endpoint. The following description begins at the western terminus of Beck's Road in Midway Township.



One of the stone-faced concrete arch bridges on the Amity Creek trail segment.



Amity Creek trail segment.



Skyline Parkway passes under this railroad bridge at Beck's Road.



A typical view of the Bardon's Peak segment.



Bardon's Peak overlook.



Stewart Creek bridge in late Fall.

### Bardon's Peak Segment

The Parkway, an unpaved road at this point, crosses under an old railroad bridge, part of the abandoned Duluth Winnipeg & Pacific rail line, and runs uphill through a small cluster of houses, set far apart on wooded lots. Narrowing to about 18 feet in width, it continues generally uphill through Magney-Snively Park: dense mixed hardwood forest crossed by occasional cross-country ski and snowmobile trails. It slowly winds upwards for the next 3 miles, gradually emerging on the west side of the Bardon's Peak ridge. The view opens up here, first to a series of rock outcrops and then the outstanding but not widely known Bardon's Peak overlook, constructed in the 1920s. Shored up by a mortared stone wall of over 600 feet in length, the road traverses a 270-degree view off the south extent of Spirit Mountain. The view encompasses the St. Louis River valley as well as the historic planned community of Morgan Park and the neighborhoods of Gary-New Duluth. Rocky ledges above the road offer additional places to climb or picnic.

Leaving the overlook the Parkway winds downward again through dense woodland, curving steeply as it approaches the Stewart Creek bridge. This stone arch bridge, known for the distinctive "dragon's teeth" stonework on its rail, is the only Parkway resource currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Just east of the bridge, on the north side of the road, are the ruins of a monument to Mayor and Parkway builder Samuel Snively, consisting of the remains of a low wall now overgrown with vegetation. The road winds uphill through a sparsely developed residential area, with a few unpaved roads leading to isolated homes on wooded lots, then enters the Spirit Mountain Recreation Area. The original unpaved road

alignment continues east across what is now a ski slope, then turns uphill to end in one of the ski area parking lots. The new alignment, constructed in the 1970s at a higher elevation on the ridge, is wider, and lacks the characteristic stonework of the historic segments. Parking lots and roads create frequent breaks in the tree canopy. The Bardon's Peak segment is closed seasonally between the Stewart Creek bridge and the residential area at Beck's Road.

### Western Extension Segment

The level of development increases sharply as the Parkway approaches I-35 and Boundary Avenue (the boundary between the cities of Proctor and Duluth), with a cluster of motels, franchise restaurants, and other highway-related commercial use. The Boundary Avenue bridge over I-35 is narrow, with no sidewalk or other pedestrian accommodation. On the north side of I-35 the Parkway turns sharply east again and continues as a frontage road following the contour across Thompson Hill, below the highway rest area and tourist information center. On the downslope side a small overlook with a crumbling wall provides views over the highway.

This section of the Parkway, like the Spirit Mountain section, was probably reconstructed in conjunction with I-35 and lacks the historical integrity of the original segments. The remains of rock walls between the Parkway and the interstate highway indicate possible locations of the original alignment, and the 1929 brochure for "Duluth's Highland Boulevard" indicates that the Parkway followed the route of Highway 1, later Highway 61, through this area.

The Parkway crosses US Highway 2, a busy four-lane highway at this point, with traffic moving rapidly downhill approaching the I-35 interchange. The

Parkway in this area is relatively lacking in character: none of the characteristic guard stones are in evidence, and the road has a fairly wide cross-section and standard metal guard rail. The surrounding landscape is largely second-growth forest, and there are few views downslope.

The character of the road changes markedly as one crosses the wide intersection of several County roads: Highland Street and Getchell Road (both designated CSAH 89) and Vinland Street. This intersection seems overly wide, with poor sight distance at stop signs, and little differentiation between the Parkway and the other roads. Just east of the intersection the Parkway narrows sharply and the characteristic guard stones reappear, as the road makes a sharp hairpin turn across Keene Creek. A new concrete bridge with molded stone veneer and a decorative iron railing was constructed here in summer of 2001. The Oneota Cemetery, which includes a World War I memorial, lies just downslope and east of the bridge. (The village of Oneota, founded in 1856, was an early settlement annexed into the city of Duluth in 1889.)

The next three miles of the Parkway have a rugged character, with large rock outcrops, stony hillsides and dense forest that frequently obscures views, making it feel distant from the West Duluth neighborhood below. It also feels neglected: a number of turnouts and overlooks have been blocked by the City due to dumping and vandalism, and low trees and shrubs now block views. The intersection with Haines Road/40th Avenue W. is located on a sharp curve and, like the Highland Street intersection, is excessively wide; the Parkway route jogs north here. A massive stone retaining wall covers much of the hillside below the road some distance east of Haines Road, and a

small stone culvert carries Merritt Creek under the Parkway. The stone wall was recently rebuilt using a form liner panel method of molding concrete.

A formal overlook with a marker, describing the Oneota settlement, is located west of 28th Avenue W. At this point, the Parkway enters a residential district typical of Duluth's hillside neighborhoods, with single-family houses spaced fairly closely on both sides of the road, narrow sidewalks on one or both sides and a parking lane on the uphill side. This pattern continues as far as Piedmont Avenue. This intersection, where Skyline crosses Piedmont, Trinity Road (Highway 53), Lincoln Park Drive and several local streets, is scheduled to be rebuilt beginning in 2003, with the Parkway relocated to a new bridge above the intersection. Lincoln Park Drive descends through the park along the valley of Miller Creek. This road segment was part of the original Rogers Boulevard parkway system and shares many of the Parkway's design features, including a massive mortared stone over concrete arch bridge that carries 10th Street across the road and creek valley. Lincoln Park includes a variety of other stone features, including small bridges and retaining walls for the creek.

### Rogers Boulevard Segment

For the next several miles the Parkway runs through Enger Park, first through the municipal golf course and then along the park's southern edge. Central Park, a small undeveloped wooded area, is located on the downslope side of the Parkway. This section offers some of the most scenic views, looking out across the steep hillside known as Point of Rocks to the ore docks and grain terminals of the Duluth Harbor and the Blatnik Bridge. Hank Jensen Road curves north to the turnoff to Enger Tower and the



The new Keene Creek Bridge



The reconstructed Haines Road intersection



Twin Ponds





The Mesaba/Central Entrance intersection is difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to navigate.



Narrow sidewalk along the Parkway at Chester Bowl, an area heavily used by pedestrians.



College Street and Junction Avenue, a confusing intersection for Parkway travelers.

surrounding gardens, then joins the Parkway again at Twin Ponds. These small water bodies have been a visitor attraction since the Parkway's earliest days and include a small swimming area and fishing dock. Two formal overlooks are located in this area, one west of Twin Ponds and one at Observation Road.

The next road segment is largely residential, although the downslope side is open in some areas. Local streets climb the hill to meet the Parkway at sharp angles, creating a number of hazardous intersections. The Mesaba Avenue/Central Entrance intersection creates a substantial break in this segment. The Parkway has been realigned from 10th Street (now blocked at the intersection) to 9th Street in order to provide better sight distance and stacking area, but it is easy to lose the route in this area, and it is daunting for pedestrians and bicyclists. Commercial and office buildings, the "Coppertop" (First Methodist) Church and a public housing complex are clustered in this high-traffic area.

The residential area continues east of the intersection. In some areas a narrow sidewalk is present, sometimes following the slope at an angle to the road, while in others only a narrow gravel shoulder is available to pedestrians, in a segment that sees heavy pedestrian and bike use. Kenwood Avenue, a busy local street, crosses the Parkway at a confusing intersection. Several residential lots have recently been cleared and graded just west of Chester Park.

The winding Parkway section across Chester Creek at the Chester Bowl Recreation Area includes a complex of resources: a recently rebuilt bridge and massive stone retaining walls, both above and below the road. Chester Park Drive is another segment of the original parkway system, following the creek valley from Chester Bowl to 6th Street.

## UMD Gap Segment

This segment is undoubtedly the most disorienting to the first-time visitor, since sporadic signs are the only indications that the Parkway route continues through a diverse series of streets. Kent Road, a narrow, winding residential street, leads to 19th Avenue East, a busier collector street that leads straight uphill, across College Street to Junction Avenue, another collector street that runs close to the UMD campus boundary. Land uses include university offices and dormitories, and a residential district to the west. Junction Avenue leads into St. Marie Street, skirting the base of Rock Hill (part of the University's Bagley Nature Area), a wooded hillside with foot trails leading up to an overlook. St. Marie runs along the northern boundary of the campus to an intersection with yet another major street, Woodland Avenue, in the small Mount Royal commercial district. Woodland, a four-lane arterial street, has some of the highest traffic volumes in the Parkway system.

Woodland Avenue connects to Snively Road, a two-lane arterial with a wide paved shoulder, suitable for bicycling, and continues east through a largely residential district. Morley Heights, a small historic planned community developed c. 1919 around a small park and tree-lined boulevard, is located just to the north. The route continues from Snively Road to Glenwood Street, a four-lane collector with a wide cross-section that encourages high traffic speeds. The intersection of Glenwood with the Parkway "proper" has been identified as a hazardous intersection, due to the sharp contrast between the scale, speeds and traffic volumes of the two roads, as well as their vertical and horizontal alignments.

### Hawk Ridge Segment

The paved section of the Parkway continues for about one-half mile to a formal overlook with marker. Views from this segment encompass the northern neighborhoods of Lakeside and Lester Park and extend up the North Shore and across Lake Superior. The downtown and harbor are less visible to the west; residential neighborhoods under a dense canopy of trees dominate the view. Just past the overlook, the pavement ends and the Parkway becomes an unpaved road about 18 feet wide, seasonally closed between this point and the upper end of Seven Bridges Road. This is the core area of Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, City-owned open space managed by the Hawk Ridge Management Committee of the Duluth Audubon Society.

Established in 1972, Hawk Ridge has become known as one of the major sites for the observation of migrating raptors and other birds. During the fall migration, from August into November, Hawk Ridge provides a naturalist and displays for the visitors who gather at the primary observation overlook, located at a high point about midway along the ridge. Seasonal signs are posted and trails are open to the public. During the off-season, signs are removed, since vandalism has been a continuing problem.

The unpaved road continues gradually downwards from the Hawk Ridge overlook, emerging at the junction with Maxwell Avenue and Seven Bridges Road. A wide unpaved area provides trailhead parking for the Amity Creek segment, the original Snively Road segment of the Parkway. Battered concrete sections of highway barriers are used to keep this and other trails closed to vehicles. The Amity Creek trail runs along the landward side of Hawk Ridge, across sever-

al stone-faced bridges, emerging on a local street near Jean Duluth Road. The seasonally-closed segment ends at this point.

### Seven Bridges Segment

Seven Bridges Road is one of the primary visitor destinations along the Parkway, and many visitors focus on it and Hawk Ridge rather than attempting to follow the entire route. Only about two miles long, this segment has a character all its own, not duplicated elsewhere on the route with the exception of some stretches of the Mission Creek trail segment, described below. Whether descending the steep hill from Hawk Ridge or climbing it from Superior Street, the experience is one of constantly shifting views of wooded hillsides, waterfalls and rapids, and the bridges themselves. The stone-faced concrete arch bridges (actually eight in number) cross the creek on a series of sharp turns, which combine with narrow road cross-section (about 18 feet) to slow traffic down. Numerous small unpaved turnouts provide limited parking. Several trailheads provide access to the Lester-Amity cross-country ski trail and to snowmobile trails. The pavement on much of Seven Bridges Road is quite deteriorated, helping to slow automobile traffic but making the road less pleasant for bicycles.

The Lakeview Sports Arena, located about halfway down the hill, consists of an ice hockey rink, warming house and surrounding cleared area, all of which appear dilapidated and out of context with the historic landscape character of this segment. This area once included a sledding and snow-tubing hill and ski jump, now closed. Continuing downhill, a small recreational area, part of Lester Park, includes trails bordered with distinctive stone walls, a footbridge and a gazebo overlooking the creek.



The view from Hawk Ridge.

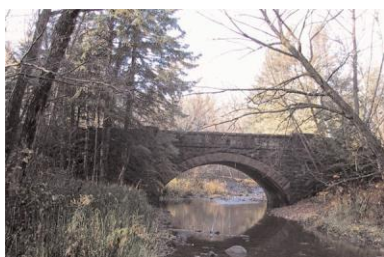


Overlook at east end of Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve.



Bridge over Amity Creek on the Seven Bridges segment.





Historic bridge #4 on the Seven Bridges segment.



The railroad bridge carries the Mission Creek segment over the Munger Trail.



The Munger Trail passes under the Mission Creek trail segment.

Seven Bridges Road becomes Occidental Boulevard, which borders a wooded residential area to the west. The road emerges at Superior Street, where Amity Creek joins the Lester River. The easternmost terminus of the Parkway is difficult to find, and many people think that it ends here. However, the Parkway route continues east and crosses the Lester River. The route then turns immediately south on 61st Avenue East, crosses a rail line, and follows the river south for about a block to London Road. Several recently constructed overlooks provide views over the river's deep gorge, and informal trails provide access to fishing spots below.

The intersection with London Road has been identified as hazardous for motorists and pedestrians, given high traffic speeds and seasonally heavy traffic. The historic Lester River Fish Hatchery, constructed in 1885, is located on the west bank of the river. The Parkway route ends just east of the intersection at the Brighton Beach Overlook, a small wayside on Lake Superior. Here a marker describes the Parkway itself, and provides the traveler with some basic instructions on how to reach Seven Bridges Road.

Just past this point, London Road merges with US 61, a limited-access highway to Two Harbors. However, the old Congdon North Shore Boulevard route continues along the lakeshore, initially as Brighton Beach Road, then as Congdon Boulevard. This road is historically considered to be the easternmost segment of the parkway system, but it is not part of the Skyline Parkway scenic byway; instead it is part of the North Shore Scenic Drive. Brighton Beach (a former tourist camp, now Kitchi Gammi Park) was clearly designed as part of the parkway system, with guard stones, picnic areas and a fieldstone fire shelter.

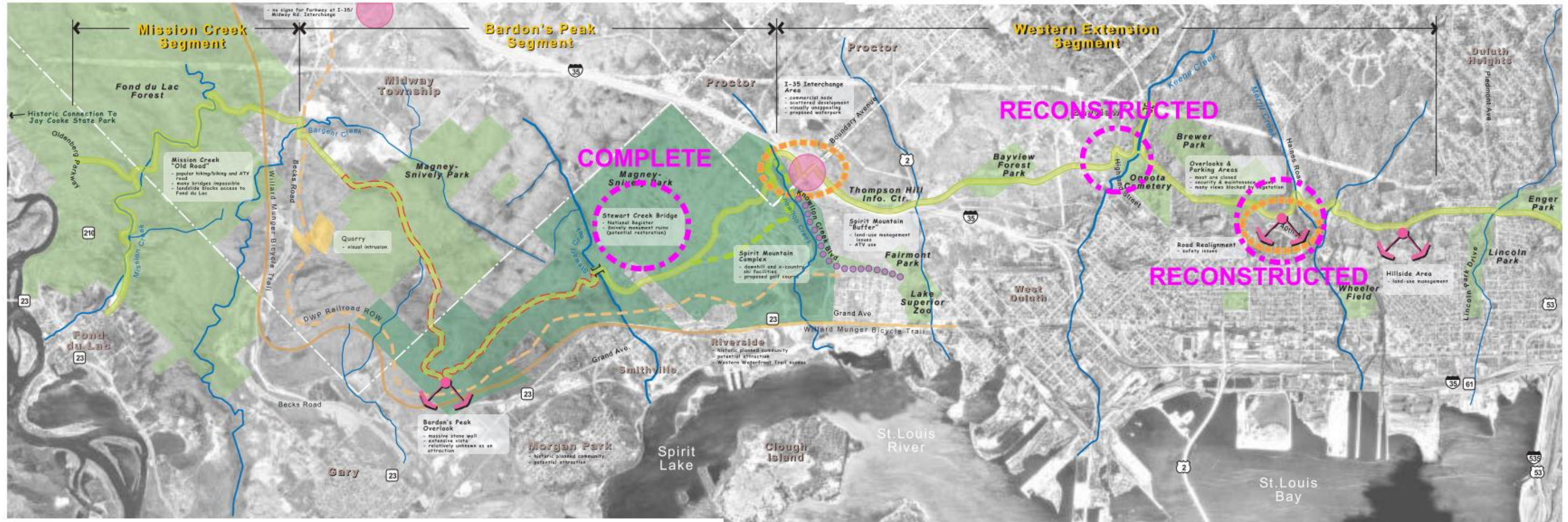
## Mission Creek Trail Segment

This westernmost segment is treated separately, since it is not part of the state scenic byway and has been closed to automobile traffic for almost 40 years. It lies largely within the Fond du Lac Forest, owned by the City of Duluth but located in Midway Township. This segment was designed in the 1920s to connect the Parkway to Fond du Lac and to Jay Cooke Park, by way of Oldenberg Parkway (Highway 210). Fond du Lac residents state that the road was washed out by floods in the early 1960s. However, it continues to exist as a path used by hikers, mountain bikes, horses, snowmobiles and (illegally) by all-terrain vehicles.

Access to the trail segment from Beck's Road is a few hundred feet north of the main Parkway intersection. The trail then crosses the Willard Munger Trail, a former rail line, on a high concrete deck girder bridge, built in the late 1920s. Access from Fond du Lac is via a trailhead at the end of 131st Avenue W., close to Mission Creek. A hiking trail called the Mission Creek Trail also begins at this trailhead but takes a different route over the hills, rather than up the creek valley. The connection from Highway 210 is unmarked and largely obscured by vegetation, but is still accessible on foot.

The design and scenic character of this segment are quite similar to that of Seven Bridges Road, in a far more remote wilderness setting. It winds back and forth across Mission Creek on a series of stone-faced concrete arch bridges, about five of which remain in varying stages of deterioration. Others have been completely washed out. The creek can be forded at some of these locations. However, a mudslide in the





1

## CONDITIONS & ISSUES



### Legend

- Skyline Parkway
- Skyline Parkway (closed seasonally)
- Original Parkway Alignment

- Connecting Links to Parkway
- Major Overlook
- Problem Intersection

- Lack of Wayfinding
- Park/Open Space
- Updates as of 2015

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winter of 2000-01 diverted the creek, creating a deep pool that blocks access near the turn-off to Highway 210.

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

### Historic Road and Scenic Byway

It is important to recognize that the Parkway is significant within two overlapping categories – as a state scenic byway and as a historic road (although it is not currently listed as a city, state or national historic resource or district). Not all scenic byways are historic roads, nor are all historic roads designated as scenic byways. Historic roads may be listed in the National Register of Historic Places while others are designated in local or state registries.

This distinction becomes important when discussing goals and strategies for protecting and enhancing a road's intrinsic qualities. For example, the scenic byway goal of “improving the byway for all modes of travel” may need to be reconciled with the equally important scenic byway goal of “maintaining the historic integrity of the landscape.”

### History

The Skyline Parkway system was developed over an extended period of time, beginning in the 1880s and reaching probably its fullest and most complete development in 1940. There were three primary periods in the parkway system's development:

#### Early years: the vision of W. K. Rogers

In the 1880s Duluth was booming. The port was expanding, with iron ore, lumber and grain outbound, and building supplies such as hardware for the new towns on the plains inbound. In keeping with its vision of itself as a great city, (the “Zenith City of the

Unsalted Sea”) Duluth civic leaders developed a vision of a parkway system that would encircle the town. Led by W.K. Rogers, the Duluth Park Commission was established in the mid-1880s, with the authority to raise money for land acquisition by levying taxes on neighboring property holders.

The original conception of the parkway system was simple: a boulevard across the beach ridge of glacial Lake Duluth (the present route of the Skyline Parkway above the downtown area) would provide commanding views of the city and harbor and would connect boulevards along Chester and Miller Creeks. The fourth leg of the system, a planned lakeshore boulevard for the downtown, was never built. Land acquisition, surveying, and construction (by the City's Public Works Department) got under way in the 1890s, and the vision soon began to grow to encompass additional areas. The Seven Bridges Road segment was added in 1903 (the bridges were constructed in 1910-11, replacing wooden structures), and a long extension of the system to the west, past Oneota Cemetery to the present Thompson Hill Rest Area, was finished in 1914.

#### The era of Snively and Paine

The 1920s and 1930s were key decades for the Duluth parkway system. Under the inspired leadership of Mayor Samuel Snively and Parks Department Superintendent F. Rodney Paine, the system grew to an extent rivaling the greatest parkway systems in the country. Moreover, an extensive improvement project that ended in the 1940s widened the roadway and straightened the most dangerous curves on the oldest parts of the system, upgrading the parkway system to a standard acceptable to modern auto traffic. By World War II, motorists, tourists and residents alike



Early photo of the Parkway, place and date unknown; note rail fencing. Source of photos this page: NEMHC.



Bardon's Peak segment under construction in the 1920s. Photo: F. Rodney Paine.



Horseback riding along the Parkway, date unknown. Note sparse vegetation.



Stewart Creek Bridge in snow, date unknown. Source of photos this page: Northeast Minnesota History Center, UMD.



The Parkway viewed from Bardon's Peak, date unknown.

could travel a system of parkways that stretched from Fond du Lac and Jay Cooke State Park on the west, all the way to the Lake County line and the beginning of the “North Shore” on the east.

Many of the parkway system’s most visible segments were added during this period. The road at Hawk Ridge was completed in 1935, bringing the sweeping views of the lake into the system and replacing the old section that ran behind the bluff along Amity Creek. On the western end, the Bardon’s Peak segment, stretching across the slopes of Spirit Mountain and featuring a spectacular overlook of the St. Louis River and Gary-New Duluth, was added in the mid-1920s. The Mission Creek segment, with its own series of rock-faced arch bridges, was added to the system in 1927. On the east, the present “North Shore Scenic Drive,” County Road 61, was connected in the mid-1920s.

### Post-World War II

After World War II, Parks and Recreation Department funding and priorities changed. Responding to population increases and changes in lifestyle represented by the “baby boom,” department leaders channeled more resources into playgrounds and active sports such as hockey and Little League baseball than into maintaining or upgrading the extensive parkway system. The system remained heavily used, by recreational users of many types (cross country skiing, off-road bicycling in some areas, as well as people driving up for the views) as well as by commuters across town seeking a shortcut. In the 1960s, the Mission Creek segment was closed to automobile use, as were some of the smaller ravine and creekside segments.

Although the parkway system remains an important part of the city’s landscape, changes in priorities mean

that it is no longer the focus of the Parks Department’s attention. Today, the Parkway is informally recognized as a special place by the City’s departments of Parks, Public Works, and Planning, but there is no formal collaborative arrangement, no “Parkway Commission” or similar group to ensure that city departments work together to protect this “crown jewel” of the city.

### Historical Significance

The Skyline Parkway is a designed historic landscape in the Picturesque tradition, featuring sweeping views of the lake, the city, the harbor/bay, and (from Bardon’s Peak) the estuary and valley of the St. Louis River. Other key elements of this landscape design include the Parkway’s combination of urban and “wild” ambiance, the curvilinear road alignment, which allows users a constantly varying series of views and perspectives, and, in the Parkway’s more natural segments, the relationship of the roadway to adjacent natural vegetation. More tangible components of the landscape include the use of natural materials in construction and a large number of particular structures such as bridges, walls, and culverts.

The Skyline Parkway was apparently always thought of and designed as a system, the whole of which is greater than the sum of its parts. That remains true today: the experience of the whole, or at least extended stretches of the Parkway, is more powerful and more important than a shorter stretch experienced by itself. Consequently, erosion of the landscape’s character through unsympathetic renovation, poor planning, or neglect does greater damage than just harming the immediate environment.



One of the most outstanding features of the system, which is also the most difficult to describe, is the variety of visual and recreational experiences that it provides. Nearly wild segments such as the upper Seven Bridges Road or Bardon's Peak stretches contrast vividly with the sweeping views of city and harbor that are available in the more centrally-located areas. These contrasts between sweeping views and dense forest enclosure, combined with the sheer diversity of the landscape below, expose users to the full range of urban and rural land uses that make up the city. The road's alignment emphasizes these diverse environments, while highlighting the outstanding scenic views (see below) that were such an important part of its original conception.

Today the Skyline Parkway is a distinctive and important landscape element for the entire city of Duluth. Five components of that landscape, in particular, define it:

- The roadway alignment;
- The use of native stone in both ornamental and structural construction;
- Views and overlooks, as they have been identified through constructed overlook points, turnouts, or other built expressions in the physical landscape;
- Natural vegetation in those segments of the parkway that retain a "rural" or "wild" ambiance;
- Key locations.

### **Alignment**

The Parkway's alignment retains its overall integrity in most places, despite having been widened and

resurfaced at particular points, even during the period of significance (1890-1940). The only area of substantial realignment extends from Spirit Mountain and along the I-35 corridor to U.S. Highway 2.

### **Views**

From the beginning, the parkway system has been focused on providing outstanding view points for users. In the 1880s and 1890s, large parties in hired horse-drawn carriages known as "tally hos" took people up onto the Parkway to admire the views. A favorite spot was the pair of small ponds known as Twin Lakes, near Enger Park. In the 1930s, the entire Hawk Ridge segment was created in order to provide better views than the original alignment did. Presently, paved turnouts at a number of points across the entire system provide viewpoints for people, much as they did 100 years ago. Some of these turnouts date to the Parkway's original period of construction (1890-1940), while others appear to be later adaptations. While the turnouts are perhaps the focal points for the important views along the Parkway, they are not the only locations where the view from the roadway is an essential component of the parkway experience. Conversely, some areas, such as the western end of the Bardon's Peak segment, appear never to have been designed with scenic views in mind.

### **Use of Stone**

Stone has been an important design element of the Parkway throughout its development and across most of its geographical expanse. Walls and bridges of stone are among the most significant individual structures on the entire Parkway. Rows of large "guard stones" marking the bluff line at turnouts are among the Parkway's most distinguishing visual features.



Public sightseeing tours have always been popular.



Native stone is used along the entire parkway in bridge and wall construction.



The Twin Ponds bridge.



Stone footbridge along Seven Bridges Road.

The stone is both ornamental and structural, and reinforces the appearance of the stone on the bluffs through which much of the Parkway passes.

### Natural Vegetation

Natural vegetation is an important element of the Parkway's design and character primarily at its eastern and western ends – the Mission Creek, Bardon's Peak and Seven Bridges Road segments. Here the dense forest enclosure provides dramatic contrasts with occasional open views, as the roadway's curving alignment crosses creeks or climbs to the Bardon's Peak overlook. The Western Extension segment also retains much of this heavily vegetated wilderness character, although many of the designed overlooks here are obscured by new growth.

### Key Locations

In a landscape system as large as the Skyline Parkway, it is perhaps inevitable that some particular places, or "nodes," are better known, or are more visible. The most visible or prominent nodes, as revealed through the historical record, include:

**Twin Ponds.** The two water bodies known as Twin Ponds or Twin Lakes appear always to have attracted a great deal of visitor interest and use. Postcards show dozens of "tally hos" pulled up at this spot in the late 19th century, and later photographs document sightseers at this spot through at least the 1940s. Recent construction of a swimming beach, parking lot, and other amenities are a continuation of historic uses of this particular location.

**Seven Bridges Road.** For some people Seven Bridges Road "is" the Skyline Parkway. The steep climb to the ridge level from Superior Street, the pine parkland at the foot of the hill giving way to mixed deciduous

woodland, and the ever-changing views and perspectives of rock, water, and forest, all combine to create a definitive experience of the North Woods landscape in this region. The seven bridges that give this segment its name were designed by the famed Minneapolis firm of Morell and Nichols (also important in the design of Glensheen, Morgan Park and other Duluth area landscapes). Constructed in 1910-11, they replaced a series of wooden bridges carrying the early roadway over Amity Creek and the Lester River.

This segment was added to the system in the first decade of the 20th century, as a gift from Samuel Snively, acting as a private citizen well before his tenure as mayor. Snively personally approached many of the landowners and persuaded them to donate land for the roadway, and he had the bridges built as well.

**Bardon's Peak.** The Bardon's Peak segment, stretching generally west from the juncture of I-35 and Boundary Avenue to Beck's Road, was added to the system as part of the great expansion of the 1920s. It is noteworthy for several elements: the quarter-mile long overlook described above, the Stewart Creek Bridge, and the quality and extent of the City-owned forest land that borders much of this segment. The segment is also the location of two separate monuments to Mayor Samuel Snively: a small turnout with a fountain, now in ruins, at the east end of the Stewart Creek Bridge, and a shelter, no longer extant, on the rock outcrops above the Parkway at Bardon's Peak.

### SCENIC RESOURCES

It is difficult to separate scenic resources from historic ones, since the intentional creation of viewpoints was such an important part of the Parkway's design. It is important, however, to document the road's scenic fea-

tures in more detail in order to identify major views (the viewshed) and determine which aspects of the natural and built environment within the corridor contribute to the visual experience of driving the road.

The viewshed can be considered as the larger scenic envelope of the Parkway – anything occurring within the viewshed has the potential to affect the scenic quality of the road. Of course, with a viewshed that extends in many locations across Lake Superior to the horizon, management strategies must necessarily focus on features within a narrower corridor, generally no more than one-quarter mile on either side of the road.

The study team drove the full length of the designated Parkway (not the Mission Creek or other trail segments) and identified various types of views – fully open, partially screened, and fully screened. This was done in late summer, when vegetative cover was most complete, with the understanding that many additional views open up from late fall through late spring. Major view corridors and overlooks were also identified and classified:

- “Formal” overlooks with a paved turnout, usually a stone guard rail and, in most cases, an interpretive plaque (these were installed by the Lions Club in the 1970s to interpret geologic features, area history and key views).
- “Informal” overlooks or turnouts distinguished by a paved pull-off or parking lane.
- Closed overlooks, mainly along the Western Extension, where the City Public Works Department has closed a number of overlooks in recent years to prevent vandalism and dumping. Guard stones were moved to the edge of the road, blocking the parking area, and vegetation has been allowed to obscure the views.
- View corridors not associated with an overlook, ranging in size from narrow power line rights-of-way to extensive road segments, for example, much of the Parkway through Enger Park.

Figure 2 and Table 1 present this information. The figures also indicate those residential neighborhoods where the road runs between houses, front yards, and



Interpretive plaques installed by the Lions Club in the 1970s are placed at various turnouts.



View from Bardon's Peak Overlook.





Power line rights-of-way can provide view corridors along the Parkway.

parked cars, and the commercial nodes found at a few intersections with arterial streets.

Another part of this analysis was to define six different “parkway types,” characterized primarily by surrounding land uses, vegetation, and roadway design. As shown on Figure 3, these include:

- **Recreational Parkway:** Where the Parkway passes through designated or developed recreational areas as the primary land use; examples include Enger Park and Chester Park.
- **Residential Parkway:** The Parkway functions as a neighborhood street, with housing on one or both sides, occasional views or open areas down-slope. Intersections with other local streets and driveways create hazards; pedestrian facilities are limited. Examples: much of the Rogers Boulevard segment.
- **City Streets:** As distinct from the previous category, these are streets that continue the route but were not designed as part of the system, primarily in the UMD Gap area. Features may include greater street width, alignment that diverges from the primary hillside location, no stonework or other features, higher traffic volumes and speeds.
- **Forest Parkway:** Areas where forest cover is dense and with few designated land uses, often within the City’s forest parks or conservation lands. The road section is often at its narrowest in these areas, and may be unpaved. Examples: Bardon’s Peak, Hawk Ridge.
- **Commercial Nodes:** Pockets of intense commercial or other nonresidential development, such as

the Boundary Avenue and Mesaba/Central Entrance areas.

- **Transitional Areas:** There are some sections of the route that have been extensively altered and are now difficult to categorize, such as the Spirit Mountain area or the section between Thompson Hill and Highland Avenue, or that provide short linkages between other segments, such as 61st Avenue East and Superior Street.

Each type tends to have similar issues and similar management recommendations, as discussed in the following chapter.



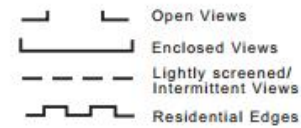


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Figure 1  
SCENIC ATTRIBUTES



### Legend



**Skyline Parkway Corridor Management Plan**  
**URS**  
 LHB Engineers & Architects  
 Arrowhead Regional Development Commission  
 Mary Means & Associates  
 Patrick Nunnally





## 2 SCENIC ATTRIBUTES



### Legend

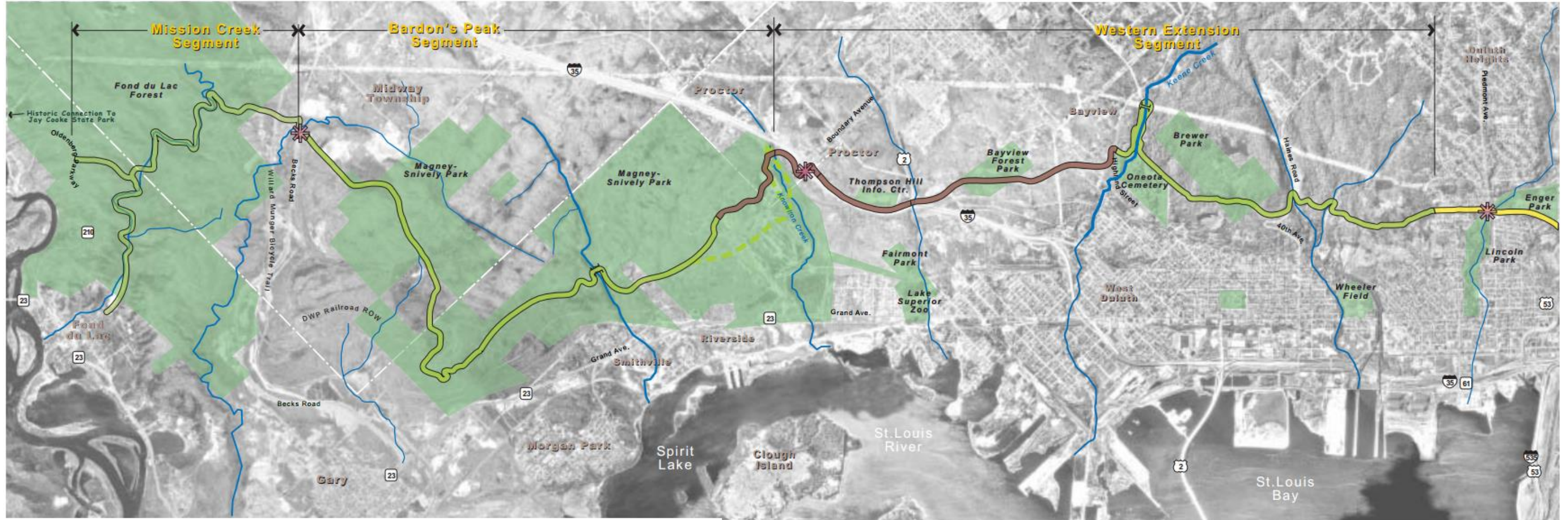
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|--|--------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|------------------|
|  | Formal Overlooks   |  | Significant Views |  | Open Views                          |  | Commercial Nodes |
|  | Informal Overlooks |  | Blocked Overlooks |  | Enclosed Views                      |  | Skyline Parkway  |
|  |                    |  |                   |  | Lightly screened/Intermittent Views |  | Mile Marker      |
|  |                    |  |                   |  | Residential Edges                   |  |                  |

**Skyline Parkway Corridor Management Plan**

**URS**

LHB Engineers & Architects  
 Arrowhead Regional Development Commission  
 Mary Means & Associates  
 Patrick Nunnally





## 1 PARKWAY TYPES



## Legend

- Forest Parkway
- Recreational Parkway
- Residential Parkway
- City Street
- Transitional Parkway
- Commercial Node

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**2 PARKWAY TYPES**



**Legend**

 Forest Parkway	 Residential Parkway	 Transitional Parkway
 Recreational Parkway	 City Street	 Commercial Node

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**Table 1: Inventory of Overlooks, Turnouts & Views - page 1**

Mile	Description
2	Informal turnout, overlook toward Gary/New Duluth, Fond du Lac, rock outcrops Bardon's Peak overlook – massive stone retaining wall, no marker or formal parking area
3.7	Stewart Creek bridge – views up and down slope, no pull-out (needed here to allow views of bridge, Snively Monument)
4.0	View down former alignment, now dead-end road across ski slope
6.0	Informal gravel turnout
6.7	Formal overlook, low wall (not original stonework - deteriorating)
7	Gravel lot, lightly screened view of railroad bridge and beyond
7.5	Small paved lot, view blocked by trees
7.8	Blocked view, paved area
8.5	Residential area, view down power line right-of-way
9	New – small gravel parking lot, southwest side of new Keene Creek bridge; views of creek, surrounding woods
9.7	Past Oneota Cemetery – view downslope, minimal pull-off space
10.2	Parking area blocked by rocks; views blocked by trees
10.4	Parking area blocked by rocks; views blocked by trees
10.8	Small turnout just east of hairpin curve – excellent view of curved wall, rock outcrops
11.5	Formal overlook, wall and marker – “Oneota”
11.9	Views downslope, edge of residential district
13	View uphill across Enger Golf Course



**Table 1: Inventory of Overlooks, Turnouts & Views - page 2**

<b>Mile</b>	<b>Description</b>
13.7	Potential overlook – paved shoulder wide enough to pull off; panoramic view of harbor
13.9	Formal overlook, edge of Enger Park; marker – “Rice’s Point”
14.2	Twin Ponds – can turn off into parking lot
14.4	Formal overlook, Observation Road; marker – “Duluth-Superior Harbor”
14.8	Long stretch of open views; residential street with curb – a popular place to stop, but no formal parking area
15.2	Long stretch of open views; residential street with curb – popular stopping place, no formal parking area
15.7	Coppertop Church parking lot – one of the most panoramic views over downtown, bayfront and Park Point
15.8	Curbed residential street, no parking; similar views
16.2	Views toward lakefront; residential district west of Chester Park
16.6	Views over residential district, new lots, below Chester Park
17	Views down Chester Creek valley, curving stone walls (can park in Chester Bowl lot; parkway very constricted here)
17.9	Trail leads uphill to overlook platform at Rock Hill (Bagley Nature Center); parking often difficult around UMD campus
21.1	Formal overlook near western edge of Hawk Ridge and seasonally closed segment; marker – “Lake Superior”
21.9	Seasonal overlook – primary location for Hawk Ridge birdwatching and interpretation; seasonal signs, informal roadside parking
23 - 24.9	Seven Bridges Road – no formal overlooks; numerous small pull-offs at ends of bridges, trailheads, Lakeview Sports Arena; views of creek valley, rapids and rock formations
25.1	Overlook platforms over Lester River, parking spaces at 61st Ave. E. near London Road
25.2	Terminus and “wayside” at Lake Superior shoreline; marker: “Skyline Parkway” gives directions to Seven Bridges Rd.

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## NATURAL RESOURCES

The Parkway runs through a variety of ecosystems and contains an array of natural resources, primarily consisting of:

- streams that cross the route, many of which are high-quality trout streams;
- forests of various types bordering or surrounding the road;
- geologic resources – rock outcrops and other geologic features that can reveal the process by which this distinctive landscape was created;
- wildlife habitat, most notably the unique migratory bird habitat at Hawk Ridge.

### General Landscape Classification

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Trail and Waterways Unit has developed descriptions of Minnesota's recreational landscape regions in order to assist scenic byway applicants and managers focus on the regional, natural and cultural resources along their routes. These descriptions focus on features that travelers currently see on the landscape, rather than what was there previously. The Arrowhead region includes six recreational landscapes:

- Northern Pines and Lakes
- Central Peatlands
- North Shore Highlands
- Iron Range
- Agassiz Lowlands
- Border Lakes

The Parkway marks the southern and western limit of the North Shore Highlands landscape, which extends northeast up the Lake Superior shoreline. As described by the DNR, "This rugged shoreline is known for its exposed cliffs and steep stream valleys featuring cascades and waterfalls; the original conifer forests have been replaced by secondary growth of aspen and birch, and clear shallow lakes dot the hilly uplands." This is of course a generalized description; landscapes along the Parkway have their own unique mix of urban and wilderness characteristics.

### Ecological Classification

The DNR has developed an Ecological Classification System (ECS) for Minnesota that integrates climatic, geologic, hydrologic and topographic, soil and vegetation data with the goal of improved resource management. Three of North America's ecological regions representing the major climate zones converge in Minnesota: prairie parkland, deciduous forest and coniferous forest. The coniferous forest, now mixed with hardwoods, is known as the Laurentian mixed forest province. According to a DNR website description:

Glaciers sculpted this landscape, leaving relatively thin deposits of till blanketing the bedrock in the northeast and deeper deposits in the southern and western portions. Boulders, outcrops, hills, numerous lakes, bogs, and vast tracts of forest land comprise Minnesota's scenic and much beloved "up north."

Duluth falls within the North Shore subsection of the Laurentian mixed forest province, an area that roughly parallels the North Shore Highlands described above. In ecological terms, it includes:



Forests bordering Skyline Parkway in Hawk Ridge



An avian radar system in Hawk Ridge tracking bird activity



Rock outcrops are found in many locations; this one near Chester Park.



Forest types found along the Parkway include old growth northern hardwoods within the Bardon's Peak forest.



Aspen-birch forest types are dominant along the Parkway.

- gently rolling to steep topography, with many bedrock outcrops and shallow soils;
- a climate moderated by the influence of Lake Superior;
- bedrock geology consisting mainly of Upper Precambrian basalt, rhyolite, gabbro, diabase, anorthosite, granite, sandstone and shale;
- numerous short streams, 10-15 miles long, leading directly from the highland to the shores of Lake Superior; many have waterfalls near the shoreline;
- heavy forest cover – following logging, the extensive white pine-red pine forests have been largely replaced by forests of aspen and birch.

### Vegetative Cover

Vegetative cover throughout the City of Duluth has been mapped and analyzed as part of a Natural Resources Inventory currently being completed by the Planning Department and the Natural Resources Research Institute. The inventory will include maps and narrative covering the City's forests, wetlands, streams, floodplains, geology, soils, and other relevant natural and scenic features. Forest cover has been analyzed within the City's parks and forest parks (see discussion below under Land Use), including most of the open space lands bordering the Parkway. The dominant vegetation types in these areas are:

- Aspen-Birch (also including Northern Hardwood and Oak)
- Northern Hardwoods (Yellow Birch, Sugar Maple and Basswood, also including Aspen, Birch, and Oak and Red Oak)

- Upland Conifers (including Red, Jack, Scotch and White Pine, White Spruce and Balsam Fir)

The aspen/birch types are the most common in Duluth's hillside areas. These "early successional" growth species tend to dominate where older growth forests have matured or been removed by logging or development. Interestingly, early photographs of the Parkway show largely unvegetated slopes where these species now grow. There are also substantial stands of old growth forests in most of the forest parks near the Parkway. Specifically, 150-year old stands of white pine are found just inland of the Parkway at Hawk Ridge and along Amity Creek (Seven Bridges Road), and stands of old growth northern hardwoods occur in the Bardon's Peak Forest Park (including both Magney-Snively Park and Spirit Mountain).

This area, known as the Magney Hardwoods, was identified in 1964, 1979, and again in 1986 as a potential Scientific and Natural Area (a state designation). The 1986 report states that "the Magney-Snively stands have long been known to represent one of the best remaining old growth northern hardwood forests in Minnesota." A subsequent evaluation in 1999 confirms the presence of four patches of old-growth Northern Maple-Basswood Forest, totaling about 520 acres, set within about 3,000 acres of fairly undisturbed mature forest, "with a diverse mosaic of wetlands, uplands, and rock outcrop communities." The area includes several rare plant populations and several tributaries of a designated trout stream (Stewart Creek).

### Geology

The North Shore Highlands have been heavily sculpted by glaciers, but the underlying bedrock is among the oldest in North America, mainly of Precambrian

age (the interval of geologic time which ended 600 million years ago). These rocks carry the record of volcanic activity, deposition of sediments, erosion, and other events over a time span of almost three billion years. The other era that shaped this landscape is far more recent – the Pleistocene, or Ice Age, when glaciers scoured the region repeatedly, their meltwaters creating a far larger Lake Superior, known as Glacial Lake Duluth. The Parkway generally follows the upper beach of this glacial lake, which was formed at the southern edge of the glacier covering what is now the Lake Superior basin.

Gabbro and basalt are the dominant Precambrian rocks in the Duluth area. The Duluth Complex is a much-studied mass of igneous rock – an intrusion of molten rock through a large rift in the earth’s crust - which underlies much of the North Shore highland. As described in *Minnesota Underfoot: A Field Guide to Minnesota’s Geology*, most of the Duluth Complex consists of weathered, dark, gray-green gabbro and troctolite, unusual rocks that lack the common mineral quartz but contain many other minerals, including traces of copper, iron, nickel and titanium. The field guide states: “Today the Duluth Complex is believed to be wedge shaped, confined to a complicated set of related fractures along a large rift, a continent-sized fault system.”

The rocks of the Duluth Complex crop out in many locations along Skyline Parkway, but are most visible and accessible at the Bardon’s Peak overlook, where the field guide recommends “miles of open rock hiking.”

Traces of glacial activity are equally visible along the Parkway. As the field guide states: “Shorelines hundreds of feet above the present lake are seen in the

immediate vicinity of Enger Tower and elsewhere. The Skyline Parkway follows the highest beach, approximately 560 feet above the present lake. Gravel ridges, gravel pits, and wave-cut bluffs mark its presence.” Enger Tower and the overlooks in and around Enger Park also offer excellent views of the Duluth-Superior Harbor, a drowned estuary of the St. Louis River. “After glacial retreat, the land rose slowly, more to the north, where the ice load had been greatest, than to the south. The Lake Superior basin thus tilted southward, and its waters flooded the lower portions of the St. Louis and other south shore rivers. The tilting and flooding continue today.” The two major sandspits that mark the harbor mouth, Minnesota and Wisconsin Points, were created by river-borne sand dispersed by wave action and shore current. The remains of earlier points also jut into the harbor further upstream.

Many of these geologic features are described in a series of interpretive markers erected in the 1970s by the Lions’ Club at a number of Parkway overlooks. Some of the text on the markers is in need of updating, however, and the many resources of Bardon’s Peak are unmarked.

### Streams

Numerous streams cross the Parkway route, draining to either Lake Superior or to the St. Louis River, many on very steep gradients. A January 2000 inventory and assessment of watersheds within Duluth by Camp Dresser & McKee indicates that there are 43 separate drainage areas in the City, of which 17 drain at least one square mile. The following 14 streams, as well as a number of smaller watercourses, cross the Parkway. •

- Mission Creek\*
- Sargent Creek\*



Skyline Parkway generally follows the upper beach of Glacial Lake Duluth.





The streams along the parkway provide numerous recreational opportunities.

- Stewart Creek\*
- Knowlton Creek
- Kingsbury Creek\*
- Keene Creek\*
- Merritt Creek
- Miller Creek\*
- Clarkhouse Creek
- Brewery Creek
- Chester Creek\*
- Tischer Creek\*
- Amity Creek\* (joins Lester River)
- Lester River\*

\* designated trout stream (see [www.duluthstreams.org](http://www.duluthstreams.org))

Many streams have cascades and waterfalls in their lower reaches as they approach the lake. Common watershed management issues citywide include erosion and washout of culverts and roads during intense rain. Low water flow in summer is a problem in some locations. Dumping of construction debris and other trash in stream valleys is also a problem. As with many of the Parkway's other resources, there are no signs identifying any of the streams along the route.

### Migratory Bird Habitat

While the streams and forests along the Parkway provide a diversity of wildlife habitats, the most well-known and documented is the migratory bird area at Hawk Ridge. As described in a Nature Reserve brochure:

Migrating raptors, originating from summer breeding areas as far north as the Arctic and with wintering destinations as far south as points in South America, concentrate in impressive numbers at the western tip of Lake Superior. Reluctant to cross a large body of water, the raptors funnel down the

North Shore, riding the updrafts formed above the ridges parallel to the lake shore.... Beginning in mid-August with American Kestrels, Sharp-shinned and Broad-winged hawks, migration continues into December with the last of the Red-tailed and Rough-legged hawks. Peak migration occurs from the second week in September through the third week of October. The most favorable winds for viewing migration blow from a west or northwest direction. Hundreds to thousands of raptors may migrate on these winds, particularly following the passage of a cold front.

During the migration season the Nature Reserve maintains a banding research station and a naturalist program, a portable information display and trail and directional signage. It is one of the premier seasonal visitor attractions along the Parkway.

Bird congregation areas for the spring migration are found along the western reaches of the Parkway, in the Bardon's Peak – Spirit Mountain area. No interpretive facilities for the visitor currently exist in these areas.

### RECREATIONAL AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

For a city of its size, Duluth is exceptionally rich in public open space: some 11,000 acres that includes City parkland, tax-forfeit County conservation lands, and recreational complexes such as Spirit Mountain (see discussion below under Land Use). The large City-owned Magney-Snively Park actually lies partially outside city boundaries in Midway Township. This open space has functioned as a de facto greenbelt that has defined and limited the City's growth, while providing diverse recreational opportunities within a short distance of every City neighborhood. The Skyline Parkway traverses and links the majority of these park and forest lands, providing access to many recreational



Activity at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve during fall migration includes a naturalist program.

**Table 2: Skyline Parkway Parks and Public Lands, page 1**

Parks/Public Lands	Acres	Address/Boundaries	Facilities	Distance from Skyline (mi)	Management	Segment/ Location
Chambers Grove	13	Hwy 23 & 137th Ave	pavilion, picnic, grills, fishing, boating, playground, restrooms, hiking, mountain biking, parking, accessible	0.25	City Parks	Mission Creek
Fond du Lac Park	1	131st Ave W (N of 9th St)	playground, soccer field, basketball, tennis, parking	0	City Parks	Mission Creek
Fond du Lac Forest	Forest Park / Conservation Lands, Frederick Rodney Paine Forest – trailheads at the end of 131 <sup>st</sup> Avenue West, hiking, mountain biking			0	City	Mission Creek
Magney/Snively Park	2776	Skyline, W and S of Spirit Mtn.	XC skiing, hiking, biking, parking, snowmobiling, Bardon's Peak overlook	0	City Parks	Bardons Peak
Spirit Mountain Recreation Area	Downhill and XC skiing, snowboarding, snow-tubing, mountain biking, hiking, restrooms, parking, picnic areas, miniature golf, disc golf, adventure park, camping, accessible			0	Spirit Mountain Authority	Bardon's Peak
Fairmont Park/Lake Superior Zoo	69	72nd Ave. W & Grand	zoo, pavilion, picnic area, playground, restrooms, hiking, parking, accessible	0.5	City Parks	Western Ext.
Bay View Forest	966	75th Ave. W & Skyline	hiking, open space, snowmobiling	0	City Parks	Western Ext.
Oneota Forest Park	n/a		hiking, open space, mountain biking, parking	0	City Parks	Western Ext.
Brewer Park	41	Skyline & 55th-61st Ave W	hiking, open space, mountain biking, snowmobiling, parking	0	City Parks	Western Ext.
Piedmont Park	1,200	Hutchinson Rd. & Adirondack St.	hiking, mountain biking, XC skiing, snowmobiling, restrooms, parking	0	City Parks and St. Louis County	Western Ext.
Lyman Park	2.7	Skyline & 29th Ave. W	undeveloped--functions as extension of Parkway	0	City Parks	Western Ext.
Lincoln Park	37	4th St. & 25th Ave. W	pavilion, picnic, grills, playground, restrooms, soccer, football, & softball fields, basketball court, hiking, biking, parking, accessible	0.25	City Parks	Rogers Blvd
Enger Park	130	Skyline & 16th Ave. W	Enger Tower, pavilion, picnic, grills, restrooms, trails, ornamental gardens, parking, accessible	0.25	City Parks	Rogers Blvd
Enger Golf Course	200	1801 W. Skyline	golf course, restrooms, parking, club house	0	City Parks	Rogers Blvd
Enger - Twin Ponds	10	Skyline & 14th Ave W	picnic, fishing, parking, hiking	0	City Parks	Rogers Blvd
Central Park	32	1st-4th St & 14th-17th Ave W	undeveloped (downslope extension of Enger Park), hiking, mountain biking	0.25	City Parks	Rogers Blvd
Observation Rec Center	6	3rd St. & 9th Ave W	picnic, playground, open space, basketball court, dog park	0.5	City Parks	Rogers Blvd
Hillside Sport Court		408 E 8 <sup>th</sup> St.	basketball court	0.25	City Parks	Rogers Blvd
Grant Rec Center / Central Field	3	11th St. & 9th Ave E	picnic, playground, restrooms, soccer, baseball, & softball fields, basketball courts, accessible, community center	0.5	City Parks	Rogers Blvd
Lakeview Park	5	Skyline & 12th Ave E	undeveloped--no access	0	City Parks	Rogers Blvd

**Table 2: Skyline Parkway Parks and Public Lands, page 2**

Parks/Public Lands	Acres	Address/Boundaries	Facilities	Distance from Skyline (mi)	Management	Segment/ Location
Chester Park / Chester Bowl Rec. Area	109	14th Ave E to Chester Park Drive	picnic, grills, playground, restrooms, softball field, soccer field, gardens, hiking, XC skiing, downhill skiing, snowboarding, parking	0	City Parks	Rogers Blvd
Bagley Nature Area	n/a	N of Junction Ave. & St. Marie St.	XC ski trails, picnic area	0	University	UMD Gap
Congdon Park	34	33rd Ave E & Hawthorne	Hiking, biking	0.25	City Parks	UMD Gap
Hartley Park	975	Hartley Road	hiking, biking, snowmobiling, XC skiing, nature center, parking, canoe rental, boating access	0.5	City Parks	UMD Gap
Hawk Ridge	70	Skyline & 52nd Ave E	hiking, mountain biking, snowmobiling, parking, nationally recognized as a migratory raptor "hot spot," accessible, equestrian on old Amity Trail	0	Hawk Ridge Mgmt Committee	Hawk Ridge
Lester/Amity Park	307	Superior St. & Lester River Rd	pavillion, picnic, grill, playground, restrooms, soccer field, hiking, biking, snowmobiling, XC skiing, gardens, parking, accessible	0	City Parks	Hawk Ridge
Lester Golf Course	153	1860 Lester River Rd	golf course, restrooms, parking, club house, skjoring trails	0.25	City Parks	Hawk Ridge
University Park	3	60th Ave E & Superior St	turf area, open space	0	City Parks	Hawk Ridge
Kitchi Gammi Park	153	Congdon Blvd & 63rd Ave E	pavillion, picnic, grill, playground, restrooms, hiking, parking, accessible, Lakewalk trailhead	0.25	City Parks	Hawk Ridge



**Table 3: Skyline Parkway Recreational Activity Inventory**

Segment/Location	Walking Running	Interpretive Trails or Programs	Hiking	Biking	Bird Watching	Golf	Camp	Fishing	Picnic Area	Rock Climbing / Bouldering	XC Skiing	Downhill Skiing / Snow boarding	Snowmobile Trails	Snow-shoeing	Ice Skating	Sledding	Disc Golf	Geocaching
All of Skyline	X		X	X	X													X
Fond du Lac Park	X		X	X	X				X					X				X
Magney/Snively Park	X		X	X	X					X	X		X	X				X
Spirit Mountain	X		X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Fairmont/Lake Superior Zoo	X	X	X	X	X				X				X	X				X
Oneota Park (Bay View Forest)	X		X	X	X								X	X				X
Lincoln Park	X		X	X	X				X	X				X	X		X	X
Piedmont Park	X		X	X	X					X	X		X	X				X
Enger Park	X	X	X		X				X	X				X				X
Enger Golf Course						X					X							
Twin Ponds	X		X	X	X			X	X					X				X
Chester Bowl Rec Center	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X
Congdon Park	X		X		X									X				X
Hartley Park	X	X	X	X	X			X	X					X				X
Hawk Ridge	X*	X*	X*		X					X				X				X
Amity/Lester Parks	X		X	X	X			X	X		X		X	X		X		X
Lester Golf Course					X	X					X			X				
Kitchi Gammi Park	X		X	X	X			X	X									X
* Hawk Ridge trails are seasonal																		

**Table 4: Skyline Parkway Trail Inventory**

Trails	Length/miles	Trailhead Location	Management	Type
Superior Hiking Trail (SHT)	296 (38.5 in Duluth)	Magney/Snively, Spirit Mountain, Fairmont Park, Keene Creek, 24 <sup>th</sup> Ave W, Twin Ponds, Rosegarden, Hartely Nature Center, Martin Rd.	Superior Hiking Trail Association	Hiking
Mission Creek (Mission Creek segment)	3.25	end of 131st Ave W., N. of Hwy 23, Fond du Lac	City Park	Will be rebuilt in 2015, hiking and biking only
Magney/Snively (Bardons Peak)	8.7	Skyline W. of Spirit Mtn. near Stewart Creek bridge	City Park	Hiking (SHT), skiing through northern hardwood forest, cross country skiing
Spirit Mountain (Bardons Peak)	12	Skyline at Spirit Mountain	Spirit Mountain Authority	Snowmobile, mountain biking cross country skiing
Willard Munger (Bardon's Peak, Mission Creek segments)	63 (Hinckley-Duluth segment)	Becks Road, Grand Ave, Pulaski Street	DNR	Hiking, biking, horseback riding, in-line skating, mountain biking, snowmobiling
Kingsbury Creek (Bardon's Peak segment)	1.3	Fremont Street - Fairmont Park (zoo parking area)	City Park	Hiking (SHT trailhead), snowmobile
Piedmont Ski Trail (Western Ext.)	2.5	Hutchinson Ave. W. of Piedmont Ave.	City Park	Mountain biking, hiking (SHT), snowmobile, XC, skiing
Lincoln Park (Rogers Blvd. segment)	1.5	4th St & 25th Ave W	City Park	Hiking (SHT) paved bike trails
Chester Park (Rogers Blvd. segment)	2.5	Parkway at 19th Ave./Kent Road St	City Park	Hiking (SHT), XC and downhill skiing
Congdon Park (UMD Gap segment)	1.5	32nd Ave. E. and Superior St., or Vermillion Rd.	City Park	Hiking trails
Hartley Park (UMD Gap)		Hartley Rd.	City Park	Hiking, mountain biking, Superior Hiking Trail, XC skiing
Hawk Ridge Trails (Hawk Ridge segment)	2.25 (Includes only interior trails in Mgmt. Area)	Hawk Ridge main overlook	Hawk Ridge Mgmt Committee	Hiking, equestrian, snowmobiling, mountain biking
Lester/Amity Parks (Hawk Ridge/Seven Bridges segments)	13.1-total	Superior St. & Lester River Rd or Seven Bridges Road for Lester-Amity ski trail	City Park	Hiking, skiing, snowmobile, horseback riding, mountain biking, XC skiing, skijoring
Lakewalk	3	61 <sup>st</sup> Street E	City Park	Hiking, paved biking
Duluth Traverse				Mountain biking
Cross City Trail		In development		Hiking, paved biking

opportunities. At the same time, the Parkway itself is used recreationally for walking, running, biking, and, in some locations, horseback riding and seasonal snowmobile riding. Touring the route by car with stops at parks or overlooks is, of course, a popular recreational activity. Table 2 lists the parks located adjacent to the Parkway and their facilities, while Table 3 lists recreational activities at these parks. Many other parks are located a short distance away.

Many trails cross the Parkway or originate at trailheads along its length, including hiking trails, cross-country ski trails and snowmobile trails, as shown in Table 4.

The **Superior Hiking Trail** through Duluth has been completed. This long-distance trail now comprises over 200 miles and is largely complete from Duluth to the Canadian border. The Superior Hiking Trail Association maintains the trail which now extends through the city to Jay Cooke State Park and the Wisconsin border, where it connects with the North Country National Scenic Trail. Like Skyline Parkway, the Superior Hiking Trail through Duluth connects many city parks, other public lands and existing trails. The Superior Hiking Trail's route through Duluth parallels the Parkway for much of its length and short segments of the trail share the shoulder of Skyline Parkway or use its bridges in some locations. The trail therefore provides valuable opportunities for hikers to follow the Parkway route or take side trips free of conflict with vehicular traffic.

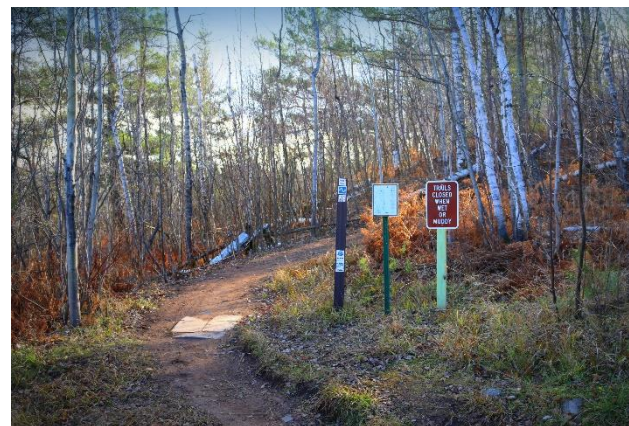
The **Duluth Traverse** is a multi-use, singletrack mountain bike trail that is being jointly developed by the Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores (COGGS) and the City of Duluth. The trail will be purpose-built for mountain biking and will traverse the entire 26 mile length of Duluth. Similar to the Superior Hiking

Trail, the Duluth Traverse will also parallel Skyline Parkway. The Duluth Traverse Trail System will feature trail centers with more extensive trail networks in Lester Park, Hartley Park, Piedmont-Brewer Park, Spirit Mountain, and Mission Creek, all along the Parkway. The system is currently in the planning and development stages and once complete will become the first 100+ mile system of singletrack mountain bike trails all within an urban environment.

In addition to the Superior Hiking Trail and Duluth Traverse, Duluth's **Lakewalk** and **Cross City Trail** will provide additional connections and recreational opportunities for visitors of Skyline Parkway. The Lakewalk is a fully developed walking and biking trail from 60<sup>th</sup> Ave E, where a trailhead connects with Skyline Parkway, to Canal Park. The Lakewalk is a very popular paved walking and biking path for residents and tourists of Duluth and this popularity has led to the planning and development of the Cross City Trail that will connect the Lakewalk with the Lake Superior Zoo and provide access to residents in Lincoln Park and West Duluth neighborhoods.



Superior Hiking Trail trailhead near Skyline Parkway in the Magney-Snively Natural Area



COGGS mountain bike trail in Lester-Amity Park



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## LAND USE AND MANAGEMENT

To the Parkway traveler it appears that at least half of the lands along the corridor are undeveloped, whether they consist of City parks or natural forested areas.

Developed areas along the corridor are largely in residential use, with a few widely scattered commercial nodes at major road intersections.

### Open Space

The classification and ownership of “open space” along the Parkway is more complicated than it may appear to the casual observer. Open space lands fall into several categories:

- Developed city parks, such as Enger or Chester Park, with a wide variety of recreational facilities and natural landscapes.
- Undeveloped city parks, such as Lakeview or Brewer Park; some have informal hiking trails.
- Undeveloped forest parks such as Fond du Lac Forest or Bayview Forest Park. These are primarily tax forfeit lands, owned by the State but held by St. Louis County and managed by the City as “conservation” lands.
- Publicly-owned lands managed by quasi-public or nonprofit entities, such as Spirit Mountain Recreation Area and Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve.
- Privately-held but undeveloped lands.

While these areas may appear equally wild or natural, the level of protection differs for each type. In planning for the scenic byway corridor, it is important to delineate each type of open space and the degree to which each is protected or potentially developable.

In most areas along the Parkway the City of Duluth

owns the right-of-way, which is generally 100 feet wide. This is the case both within Duluth and within Proctor and Midway Township.

**Dedicated City parks**, wholly owned by the City of Duluth, adjacent to the Parkway include the following:

- Magney-Snively Park (partially within Midway Township)
- Brewer Park (undeveloped)
- Lincoln Park
- Enger Park
- Chester Park
- Congdon Park
- Lester Park

There are also a number of smaller parks that are undeveloped for recreational use, lack vehicular or pedestrian access, and essentially function as open space. These include Lyman Park (29th Ave. W.) Central Park (below Enger Park) and Lakeview Park (12th Ave. E.).

**Forest Parks or Memorial Forests** consist primarily of tax-forfeit lands managed by St. Louis County, but also include City-owned land and private inholdings. These areas, not all of which are fully mapped, include:

- Fond du Lac Forest
- Bardon’s Peak Forest
- Bayview Forest Park (covering much of the hillside between Highway 2 and Keene Creek)
- Oneota Forest Park
- Other lands adjacent to Lester Park

The St. Louis County Land Department manages about 900,000 acres of tax-forfeit land within the



Enger Park Golf Course is an example of a special-purpose facility in a developed City park.



The Parkway through Bardon's Peak Forest, a largely City-owned forest park.

wide. This is the case both within Duluth and within Proctor and Midway Township.

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- Fond du Lac Forest
- Bardon's Peak Forest
- Bayview Forest Park (covering much of the hillside between Highway 2 and Keene Creek)
- Oneota Forest Park
- Other lands adjacent to Lester Park

The St. Louis County Land Department manages about 900,000 acres of tax-forfeit land within the

county (held in trust by the state but under county management under Minnesota Statute 282). Most of this land is forested and is held "in conservation" in one of 10 memorial forests. The County sells other land parcels, primarily small parcels located within city and town boundaries, through public land sales three times a year.

Other publicly-owned lands have specific management arrangements:

**Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve:** Hawk Ridge was transferred from County to City ownership in the early 1970s, with a trust agreement for management by the Duluth Audubon Society. The Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, now in its 30th year, continues to be managed by the Audubon Society's Hawk Ridge Management Committee. The reserve includes a 115-acre core area and a 250-acre buffer.

**Spirit Mountain Recreation Area:** Spirit Mountain is a downhill ski and snowboard area developed by the City beginning in 1974. It is managed by the Spirit Mountain Recreation Authority, an authority created by special state statutes. Containing 1,123 acres (1,038 acres in Duluth and 85 acres in Proctor), the recreation area includes ski slopes, parking areas, lodging facilities and campground, as well as wooded areas used mainly for cross-country skiing and mountain biking.

### Private Landholdings and Development Potential

Some of the undeveloped lands along the Parkway are in private ownership and are potentially developable, primarily for residential use. It is difficult to assess the full extent of these parcels, since publicly-held landholdings within the City have yet to be fully

mapped. However, “for-sale” signs indicate potentially developable parcels within the Western Extension segment and between Kenwood Avenue and Chester Park.

Development potential is determined in part by zoning classification, as well as by the presence of municipal utilities such as water and sewer service. Most of the lands bordering the Parkway west of Piedmont Avenue are within the Suburban zoning district, the City's lowest-density residential district, with a minimum lot size of five acres. This classification likely reflects the lack of sanitary sewers in this area. (A few sewer lines cross the Parkway at 97th Ave. W., Highway 2 and Vinland Street.)

The residential areas around Piedmont Avenue and east of Enger Park are sewered and are zoned for residential use, reflecting existing lot sizes. The R-1A, R-1B and R-1C districts permit single- and two-family dwellings on lots ranging from 4,500 square feet to 15,000 square feet. The R-2 and R-3 districts, found mainly in downslope areas and throughout the UMD Gap, also permit townhouses and apartments (R-3).

Commercial nodes along the Parkway are zoned either C-1, a fairly broad commercial category, or C-2, a district that adds highway-oriented uses such as lodging and auto sales. Both districts require a 2-acre minimum lot size if unsewered, but no minimum if sewered. Commercially zoned areas along the Parkway are found west of Highway 2, at Piedmont Avenue, Mesaba Avenue, Woodland Avenue and St. Marie Street, and E. Superior Street.

The Boundary Avenue commercial node is located largely within the City of Proctor and is zoned C-2 Commercial, a highway-oriented district. This zoning

extends the length of I-35 and south to the City boundary, including some of the parking areas for Spirit Mountain (owned by the City of Duluth).

### Commercial Sign Controls

The Parkway within the City of Duluth is a designated scenic area with regard to signs: no off-premises signs of more than 60 square feet in size can be posted within 450 feet of the edge of the Parkway's right-of-way. This provision (which applies to many of the City's parks, parkways and shorelines) essentially prevents billboards. Typical on-premises signs (freestanding or on buildings) are permitted within commercial districts along the Parkway. There are relatively few such commercial districts: the Mount Royal area at Woodland Avenue and St. Marie Street, the Mesaba/Central Entrance area, and the Boundary Avenue area, divided between Duluth and Proctor, where the Parkway functions as the frontage road for I-35.

Proctor's sign controls allow freestanding, wall and roof signs (including signs with changeable messages), equal in area to 2 square feet per foot of street frontage, or up to 100 square feet per sign. Outdoor advertising signs are permitted along the north side of I-35, with a maximum size of 700 square feet and a maximum height of 50 feet and with a minimum separation of 1,000 feet between signs.

### Current Planning Efforts

The City of Duluth is currently engaged in a multi-year comprehensive planning effort. The City's last full-scale comprehensive plan dates from 1960, but many more recent plans for neighborhoods and specific districts have guided development since that time. As part of the current planning initiative the City was divided into ten Neighborhood Planning Districts,



The Parkway near Boundary Avenue functions as a frontage road for I-35 with highway-oriented commercial services and signage.





Typical residential street segment with sidewalk on both sides and one parking lane.

most of which include more than one established neighborhood. Each district has completed an inventory and goal-setting process, culminating in conceptual district plans. Many of the recommendations in these plans relate to the Parkway and surrounding lands, with an emphasis on protecting existing open space and improving pedestrian connections.

The City of Proctor recently adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan (December 2002). The plan focuses economic development efforts on the City's downtown district along U.S. Trunk Highway 2 and on the Boundary Avenue/I-35 interchange area. Businesses in the area have expanded, and a water park is proposed for development just north of the interchange. The potential for increased highway-oriented development is an issue to be considered in terms of both the visual image of this area and the need for improved pedestrian/bicycle access. The interchange area is often the entry point for the Parkway (identified on I-35 exit signs), but offers little in terms of visitor orientation until one reaches the Thompson Hill Visitor Center.



Modernized parkway segment near Highway 2

Proctor's Comprehensive Plan does not refer to Skyline Parkway or to the issues of wayfinding, aesthetics or pedestrian/bicycle access. The City does, however, plan to initiate a corridor study of Boundary Avenue, working in cooperation with the City of Duluth, which may provide an opportunity to address these issues.

## ROADWAY CLASSIFICATIONS & CONDITIONS

Roads can be classified according to their jurisdiction (what level of local, state or federal government owns the road) and their functional classification (the role each road plays within the transportation network).

Skyline Parkway, as a route made up of numerous separate road segments, falls under many jurisdictions and functional classifications.

**Road jurisdiction.** Although the right-of-way of the Parkway "proper" (those segments identified and signed as Skyline Parkway) is owned by the City of Duluth, road jurisdiction over these and other segments varies. Most of the corridor is classified as Municipal State Aid (MSA) route – a local street classification that is eligible for state transportation funds – although some sections are non-MSA local streets. Other limited segments of the Parkway are County State Aid Highways, generally in locations where these County-owned roads intersect with the Parkway. Jurisdictional classifications are shown in Table 5.

**Functional classification** is a system that classifies roads according to their function, from freeways to local streets. "Function" is measured in terms of traffic flow (freeways maximize traffic flow) and access to adjacent property (local streets maximize access). Table 6 shows functional classifications of Parkway segments. Much of the Parkway route consists of local streets, but significant segments are also classified as collector and arterial streets: not only major thoroughfares such as Woodland Avenue, but also some of the more residential sections in the Rogers Boulevard segment.

Traffic volumes on the Parkway range from 350 average vehicles per day (termed "AADT," Average Annual Daily Trips) in the most rural areas to very heavy volumes on the major thoroughfares (15,800 AADT on Mesaba and 14,000 on Woodland). However, traffic volumes on most of the route are below 5,000. Traffic forecasts for 2025 show that only

**Table 5: Road Jurisdiction**

Local MSA Street	Local Non-MSA Street	County State-Aid Highway	State Trunk Highway
US Hwy 2 to Woodland Ave.	Becks Rd. to I-35 frontage road		Mesaba from 9th St. to Central Entrance (1 block)
Snively Rd. to Maxwell Rd. (Glenwood St. and Hawk Ridge segment)	Boundary Ave. to US Hwy 2	Haines Rd. (1 block)	
	7th Street to Mesaba Ave.	Mesaba Ave. (1 block)	
	Seven Bridges Road (Maxwell Rd. to Superior St.)	Woodland Ave. to Glenwood St.	

**Table 6: Road Classification**

Local Street	Minor Collector (City)	Minor Arterial (City)	Minor Arterial (County)
Beck's Road to I-35 frontage	Boundary Ave. to Haines Rd.	E. 13 <sup>th</sup> St. to Kenwood Ave.	Haines Rd.
Rice Lake Rd. to E. 13 <sup>th</sup> St.	Haines Rd. to Mesaba Ave.	Glenwood St.	Rice Lake Rd. (Central Ent. to E. Skyline Pkwy.)
Glenwood to E. Superior St.	Kenwood Ave. to Arrowhead Rd.	E. 60 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	Snively Rd. (Arrowhead Rd. to Glenwood St.)
		<b>Principal Arterial, Trunk Highway</b>	
		Mesaba Ave. (W. 9 <sup>th</sup> St. to Central Ent.)	
<b>Minor Collector (County)</b>	<b>Major Collector (County)</b>		
E. Superior St to E. 60 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	1-35 frontage Rd. to Boundary Ave.	Congdon Blvd. (E. 60 <sup>th</sup>	

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a few segments of the Parkway are nearing their capacity, and these are the major thoroughfares with already high volumes: Mesaba, Woodland and Snively.

A major reconstruction of Piedmont Avenue (US Highway 53) from 4th Street to approximately 15th Street has been completed. The Parkway was routed over the intersection with Piedmont and Trinity Road on a new bridge. The bridge is a molded stone-patterned concrete bridge with a decorative iron railing, and includes a six foot sidewalk and stair connection to Piedmont and a sidewalk along the southern side of the bridge.

Problems with traffic safety tend to arise where the Parkway intersects a street with significantly higher traffic volumes and speeds. These include the Haines Road, Mesaba/Central Entrance, Kenwood Avenue and Glenwood Street intersections, as well as others shown on Figure 1, Issues and Conditions. These and other intersections are overly wide, fostering higher traffic speeds, and are poorly signed.

Pedestrian and bicycle safety is a major issue throughout most segments of the Parkway, given the route's popularity for walking, running and biking. The narrow road width and curving alignment in the more rural segments does offer the advantage of keeping traffic speeds generally low, allowing pedestrians and bikes to share the road. However, hazards increase in the residential areas where there are frequent intersections with driveways and higher-volume streets, and intermittent or very narrow sidewalks. The Parkway from east of Mesaba Avenue to Chester Bowl has been identified as a particularly dangerous area.

The Arrowhead Regional Development Commission is currently completing a bike route plan for Duluth-Superior, and has designated some portions of the Parkway as signed bike routes, without a bike lane or separated path:

- Piedmont Avenue to Mesaba Ave.
- Mesaba to 11th Ave. E.
- St. Marie Street between Carver and Woodland Ave.

The Parkway is accessible via public transit at most of the major intersections: bus routes follow Highland Street, Piedmont Avenue, Mesaba Avenue, Kenwood Avenue, and most of the major streets in the UMD Gap segment. The Route 14 bus runs along the Parkway itself from Observation Road to 7th Street. The Bardon's Peak, Hawk Ridge and Seven Bridges Road segments have no direct transit access.

## SEGMENT PROFILES

Appendix A consists of a series of tables summarizing the main characteristics and relevant issues found in each Parkway segment. These have been adapted from the *Jewel of the North* report and updated with additional information that has emerged in the course of this study.



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## ISSUES

As the study team met with the Citizens Task Force, interviewed City and agency staff and experienced the Parkway, it became clear that there were certain core issues that the plan needed to address. Issues are grouped in three broad categories: interpretation, resource stewardship, and road improvements for all modes of travel.

### Interpretation

- What interpretive strategies can be developed to tell the Parkway's story to residents as well as visitors?
- What kind of on-site facilities can withstand harsh weather conditions and the threat of vandalism? Where might displays and other facilities be sited (overlooks, etc.)?
- What kind of visitor guides (maps, brochures) will be most effective? These materials need to complement and enhance existing visitor guides produced by the Convention and Visitors Bureau, and other state scenic byway guides produced by the Minnesota Office of Tourism.
- What kind of signs and markers would be most effective in "wayfinding" – helping visitors navigate through the Parkway's many street segments and confusing intersections – while also highlighting other City resources and attractions?
- How might existing or new overlooks be redesigned? Can the aesthetics of the overlooks be improved? How can overlooks best be managed and maintained?

### Resource Stewardship

- What policies should be developed for vegetation management at overlooks so that key views of the city and lake are preserved or restored? Are there other Parkway segments where vegetation should be managed? Are there other objectives for forest management that need to be considered (e.g., biological diversity)?
- What priorities should be established for restoration of historic bridges, retaining walls and culverts?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of seeking National Register historic district designation for all or portions of the Parkway?
- Should methods be considered for limiting the size and height of new houses along the Parkway in the interest of preserving views and neighborhood character?
- How should undeveloped lands along the Parkway be managed? Are some locations appropriate for housing (as envisioned by some neighborhoods)? Should tax forfeit "conservation lands" predominantly remain as open space?
- What is the best use and management of the "trail segments" such as the Mission Creek segment and connecting routes such as Knowlton Boulevard? Should any of these segments be restored as roads or trails? Should washed-out bridges be restored or replaced?
- What solutions might be considered for the problem of dumping in remote locations?



Bicycle lanes and pedestrian paths are lacking in many high use areas.



An old sign along the Western Extension, a relic of a previous wayfinding system of the 1970s.



Can bridges along trail segments such as Amity Creek be restored?

- Are existing park facilities and recreational activities along the Parkway suitable for their locations? Should any be expanded, enhanced, reduced in size or relocated?
- What kind of recreational activities are most appropriate, and in which locations? (Examples include horseback riding, running, walking, biking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and ATV use.)

#### Road Improvements for All Modes

- Can facilities for pedestrians be improved without losing the Parkway's character? Can bicycling conditions be improved?
- How could traffic management be improved at intersections with arterial streets?
- Should city street segments be redesigned to convey more of a "parkway" character?
- In what locations, if any, might road surface improvements be desirable? How might improvements be made without encouraging speeding? Should traffic calming measures be considered?
- Should additional curb cuts be permitted along the Parkway? Under what conditions?
- How best to assure continuing maintenance of the Parkway as part of the city's road system?

#### GOALS

The goal statements that follow establish a foundation for the management strategies in the following chapters. These goals were developed and refined during meetings of the Citizens Task Force, reviewed by the

Management Committee, reviewed at meetings with agency staff and at a public open house in Spring 2002. The goal statements establish broad targets to guide the development of the Plan and its future implementation. They are organized by major issue or topic, as a framework for thinking about the Parkway as a cluster of diverse resources and opportunities.

#### General Goal:

**Restore and maintain Skyline Parkway as a major scenic, historic, natural and recreational resource and attraction for visitors and residents alike.**

**Interpretation:** Interpret the Parkway's significant resources to visitors and residents, using maps, way-side exhibits, and other media.

**Visitor Materials:** Create a readable map/brochure that links Skyline Parkway to other city attractions.

**Wayfinding Signs:** Signs should highlight entry points in a subtle but identifiable way and should enable visitors to know their location.

**Overlook Design and Use:** Overlooks should be improved with better policing and security; overlooks should be constructed with natural materials, especially native stone. Lighting may be appropriate in selected locations. Overlooks should be designed to encourage visitors to get out of their cars.

**Vegetation Management:** Manage vegetation to frame views from overlooks and at other selected locations; also consider views from below.

**Forestry Management:** Manage forested segments for diversity of habitat and for scenic quality.

**Bridge Restoration:** Focus on bridge arches and

abutments as well as road surfaces. Emphasize the use of native stone wherever possible.

**Walls and Other Structures:** Seek funding and set priorities to restore and preserve major stone walls before deterioration is irreversible.

**Historic Designation:** Explore historic designation as a means of achieving National Scenic Byway status and ensuring adequate review of road improvement and other projects.

**New Construction:** New buildings should be compatible with surrounding buildings in size and scale, and should not block important views. Design guidelines would help in limiting incompatible structures.

**Conservation Lands:** As part of City's comprehensive planning efforts, identify and prioritize conservation lands that should be permanently protected and those that might be suitable for limited development.

**Residential Development:** Limit residential development where it can damage steep slopes, important views, other natural resources or neighborhood character. New development should be a logical extension of existing neighborhoods and street patterns. Avoid lake side (downslope) development whenever possible.

**"Trail Segments":** Maintain and improve the Amity Creek/Snively Boulevard and Mission Creek trail segments for non-motorized recreation.

**Dumping Problems and Vandalism:** Work to improve surveillance (by police and citizens) to prevent dumping. Encourage "adoption" of overlooks or road segments. Seek relatively indestructible materials for signs, overlooks, markers, etc.

**Existing Park and Recreation Facilities:** Signage and signage systems should be consistent throughout the corridor. Signage and interpretive materials should link these facilities to the Parkway, and vice versa. Signs should identify other resources such as the streams that the Parkway crosses.

**Shared Use of Roadway:** Encourage shared use of roadway between automobiles and non-motorized recreation (see specifics below).

**Street Redesign:** Seek opportunities to better convey "parkway character" on city street segments, through landscape plantings and other improvements.

**Road Surface Improvements:** Prioritize locations where road surface improvements are needed. Avoid creating "speedways" through excessive widening.

**Roadway Design Standards:** Develop consistent street design standards for each segment of the Parkway, to guide in planning future City, County or State road improvements.

**Continuing Maintenance:** Seek ongoing funding and set priorities for regular maintenance of road surfaces, bridges and structures.

**Problem Intersections:** Seek opportunities to redesign problem intersections for improved aesthetics, wayfinding and pedestrian safety. Consider establishing standards for regulating new curb cuts.

**Recreational uses:**

- **Walking, running:** Safe walking/running paths should be made available to the degree feasible.
- **Biking:** Continue to encourage bicyclists and



Graffiti under the Bardon's Peak Overlook.



A wayside exhibit example, Minneapolis Park System.



motorists to share the road safely with the possibility of expanding the road section to accommodate users.

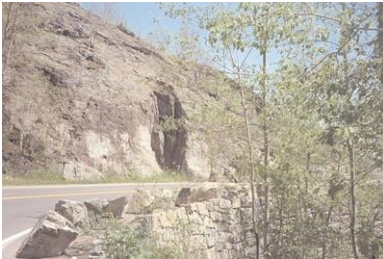
- **Horseback Riding:** Horseback riding should be encouraged west of Beck's Road and possibly in the Seven Bridges Road area.
- **Snowmobiles:** Snowmobiles should be encouraged in the seasonally-closed Bardon's Peak segment, the Mission Creek segment and on trails in the Seven Bridges Road segment.
- **All-terrain vehicle use:** ATV use should be strongly discouraged.

## MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The next four sections of this report present a series of recommendations for management strategies in the following areas:

- Interpretation
- Resource Management
- Road Improvements
- Recognition and Stewardship

Figure 3, Proposed Improvements, graphically depicts those recommendations that are geographically specific.



The road responds to surrounding landforms.

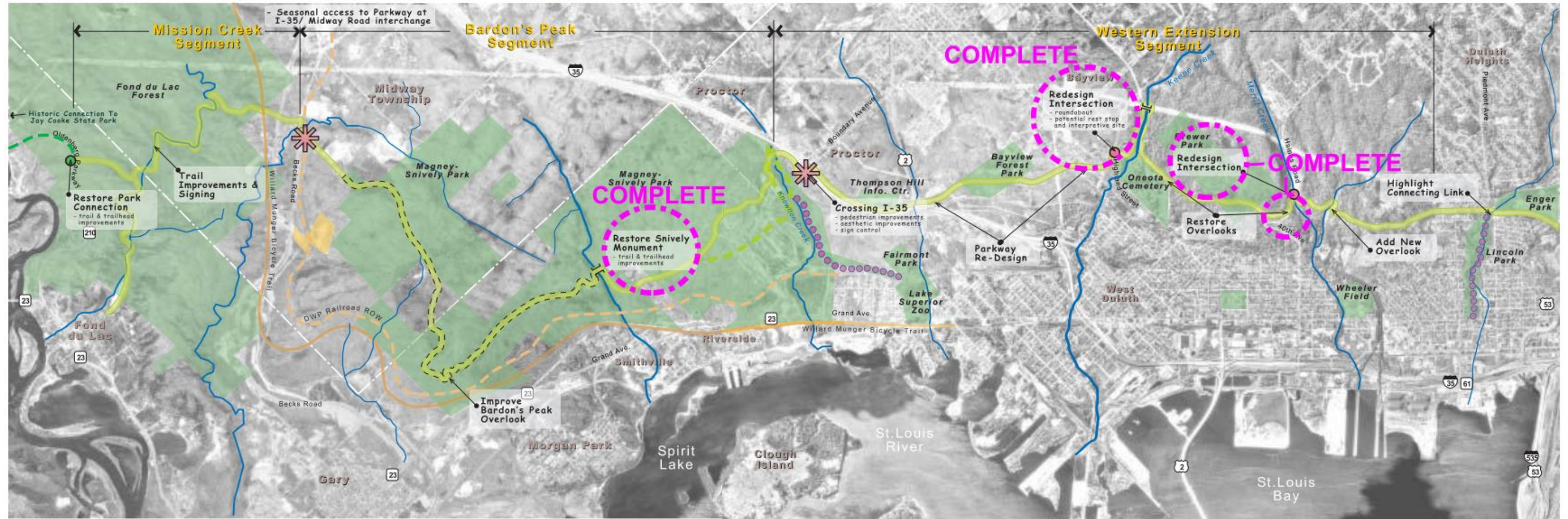
## INTERPRETATION

### EXPERIENCING THE PARKWAY

Visits to Skyline Parkway by city residents often produce a reaction of surprise – a realization that they may have never known about the Parkway's wealth of resources. Many residents are familiar with only a few segments that have their own identity, such as Seven Bridges Road, Hawk Ridge or Twin Ponds. The more remote Western Extension and Bardon's Peak segments are especially obscure to most residents and Parkway users. People who remember the Parkway as one of the City's premier visitor attractions are surprised at its current obscurity. Many residents along the Parkway have also had the experience of giving directions to confused motorists, and are keenly aware of the difficulties in finding and following the route.

#### An Interpretive Framework Plan

As a first step in the process of rediscovering the Parkway, **an interpretive framework plan should be developed.** Many stories about the Parkway's past and present are waiting to be told, or have already been expressed through publications, films, and other media. The Parkway's landscape itself, however, reveals little to the traveler today. An interpretive framework would provide a strategy for identifying these stories, how they fit into a larger context, and their relevance for the present. It should make the Parkway experience accessible, understandable and meaningful to visitors. It should also enrich residents' understanding of their own region, fostering a sense of pride and stewardship over the Parkway's resources.



1

**PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS**

0 .25 .5 1 mile

**Legend**

Original Parkway Alignment

Connecting Links to Parkway

High Traffic Area

Skyline Parkway

Park/Open Space

Updates as of 2015

**URS**

LHB Engineers & Architects  
Arrowhead Regional Development Commission  
Mary Means & Associates  
Patrick Nunnally







A major component of an interpretive framework is the identification of primary and secondary themes, and target audiences. The Corridor Management Plan process has resulted in preliminary identification of themes, as follows:

**Main Theme: Duluth and the Skyline Parkway are unique responses to a distinctive natural environment.** The road alignment that follows the contours of the bedrock ridge overlooking Lake Superior, the routes along the stream valleys that connect the bluff to the lake, the use of native stone in both ornamental and structural forms, the relationship of the road to adjacent landforms and vegetation – all are designed to take maximum advantage of a succession of viewpoints and to afford the visitor a variety of experiences within a relatively short distance.

#### Secondary Themes:

- **What is the geology that created this place?** The ridge upon which the Parkway is built is the shoreline of Glacial Lake Duluth and contains some of the oldest rocks in North America. The Parkway can be interpreted as a response to that geology – its alignment, viewpoints and materials, and the process of building it out of solid rock. Existing markers, erected at overlooks by the Lions Club in the 1970s, discuss bedrock geology in terms that now need to be updated.
- **The era of Samuel F. Snively and F. Rodney Paine.** The Parkway as a designed landscape in the picturesque tradition.
- **Continued tourism/visitor use.** Focusing on locations such as Twin Ponds that were historic tourist attractions; linking the Parkway to other

attractions and to the secondary road segments that once made up the Duluth Parkway System.

- **What do the views from the Parkway reveal?** Each Parkway overlook provides an opportunity to interpret the stories connected with Duluth, its harbor and Lake Superior. City-related themes might include the international seaport, the mining industry, World War II war production, Indian and immigrant settlements, existing neighborhoods, and individual resources such as Park Point and the Aerial Lift Bridge. Themes related to the broader natural environment might include lake and lakeshore geology, tributary streams and their resources, migratory birds, wildlife, and so on. Clearly, the large number of potential themes would need to be refined through the interpretive planning process. Using the Parkway to reveal these stories could strengthen the relationships and connections among the City's historic and recreational resources.

**Target Audiences:** Additional research would be needed to identify the primary audiences for interpretation, but it is clear that an interpretive strategy needs to address local residents as well as tourists. Residents of the Duluth-Superior region are among the primary users of the Parkway at present, especially for outdoor recreation. How can their experiences be enhanced to the point where they will bring out-of-town visitors to tour the Parkway, as was once a common practice? Another issue is which segments of the tourist market should be targeted – environmental tourists (expanding on the popularity of Hawk Ridge), families, motorcoach tours, cultural heritage tourists, etc. An interpretive plan would explore these issues in greater detail.



Touring and tourism played a major role in Skyline Parkway's past.



Interpretive signs must be weather-resistant and historically appropriate. Example: Omaha Boulevard System.



Remnants of green stripe that once marked the route can still be found.

## IMPROVE WAYFINDING AND INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES AND MEDIA

Interpretive themes and target audiences provide a meaningful starting point for organizing information, but not a visual identity. Strengthening the Parkway’s identity will make it more readily understandable and usable by visitors and residents.

### Wayfinding Signs and Markers

Develop a family of wayfinding signs and markers, distinguished by consistent materials, colors, graphics and use of an updated Parkway logo.

The Parkway is currently identified by a variety of signs, some of which carry its historic logo and many of which do not. Another identity marker, now almost vanished but faintly visible in some locations, was the “green stripe” that once marked the center of each

lane. This simple wayfinding device is often cited by residents as something they would like to see restored. Unfortunately, the green stripe could be mistaken for a centerline under poor visibility conditions and thus becomes a safety hazard. Current highway safety standards also appear to preclude a colored stripe that is not an official yellow centerline. Alternatives to the green stripe could include stencilled logos or arrows on the pavement at intersections.

The other identifying feature of the Parkway, as with other parkways in Duluth, is the use of native stone in construction, especially the “guard stones” that line the edge of the road. Use of this stone should be continued whenever possible in markers, displays and other interpretive facilities.

The original Parkway logo was developed in 1929 when the route was named, and residents continue to



The original Parkway logo, now poorly-reproduced on directional signs.

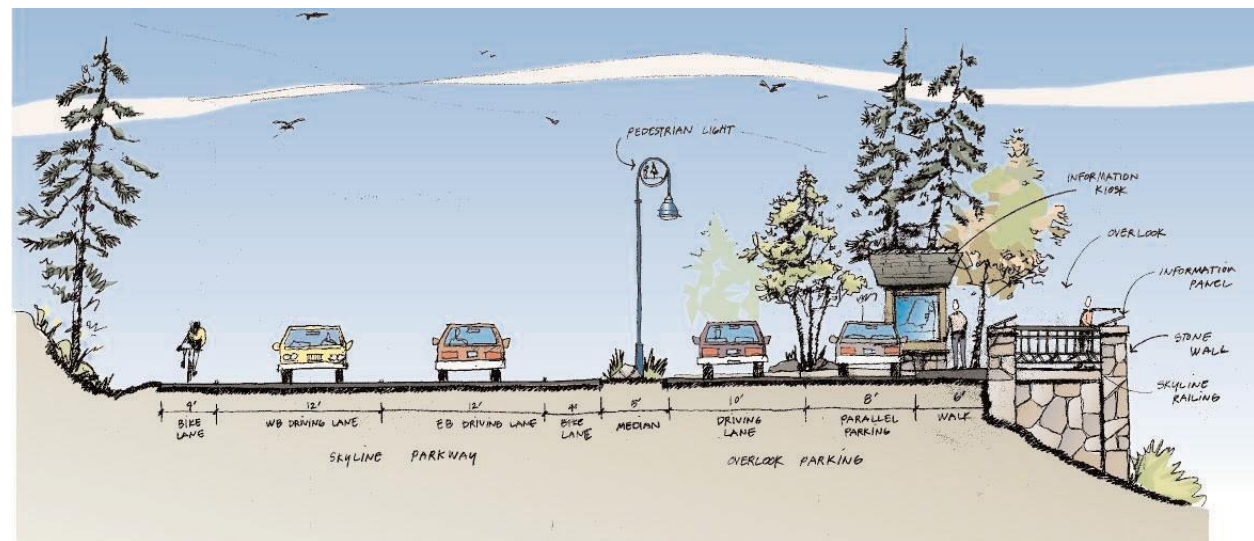


FIGURE 5: Parkway overlook section

strongly identify it with the Parkway. Unfortunately, its graphic quality has suffered from poor-quality reproductions on undersized signs, and the green color scheme makes it appear identical to most free-way signs. Minor updating of the lettering and color scheme would again make it a distinctive Parkway symbol.

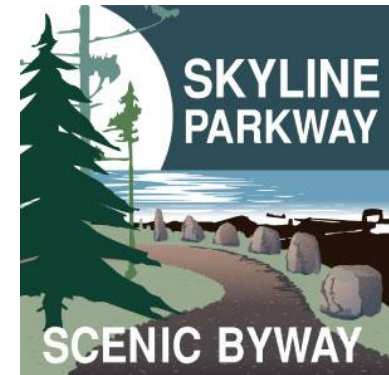
### Initiate Overlook Improvements

In addition to signs, the major interpretive sites along the Parkway are its overlooks, both formal and informal. The formal or improved overlooks currently consist of a few elements: a pull-out with enough room to accommodate several vehicles, a low retaining wall, a trash receptacle and, in some cases, a Lions Club marker describing some prominent feature of the vista, the geology or the location. Overlooks are frequently marred by litter and are sometimes the location of late-night parties that result in more litter, noise and annoyances to neighbors.

An **overlook enhancement program** should be developed as part of the interpretive framework plan. The sketches below represent a sample conceptual design for an overlook with decorative lighting, exhibit markers, landscaping, and other elements that could be implemented at specific overlooks. The level to which these locations can be enhanced will depend in part on the degree of surveillance and security that can be provided, and this will differ by location. The most visible, well-used overlooks should receive the highest level of improvements. Lighting, for example, is only feasible where city utilities are present, and only appropriate in or near residential areas where street lights already exist.

### Create Defined Routes

Create a series of well-defined **road linkages** between the Parkway's major attractions and Duluth's other visitor attractions, especially the Lakewalk and Bayfront. According to Convention and Visitors Bureau staff, the most common questions from visi-



#### **\*SIGN UPDATE\***

A new Skyline Parkway Scenic Byway logo was developed by Visual Communications and 127 new signs with the new logo were installed along the Parkway in 2011. The old signs with original logos were auctioned off and sold out within 20 minutes.

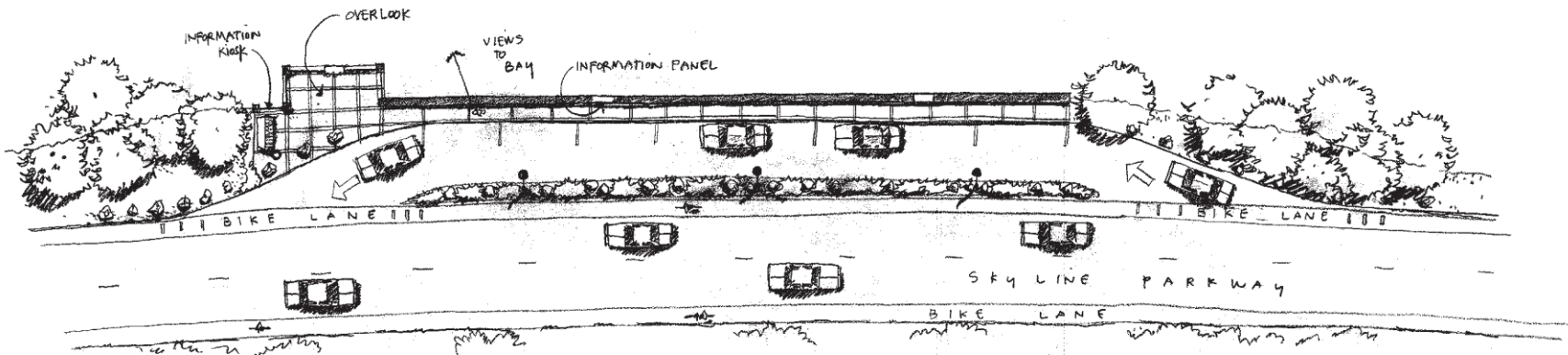


FIGURE 6: Conceptual design for Parkway overlook, plan view





Tour buses tend to park along certain residential Parkway segments such as here near 8th Street.

tors involve how they can reach specific locations along the Parkway, such as Hawk Ridge and Enger Tower, from the Lakewalk or other downtown or Bayfront locations. There are many potential routes, but few are continuous or easy to follow. A series of defined routes between these places would simplify access to the Parkway and lessen confusion. Routes could be signed; visitors could also be guided by a map or brochure (see below). Management of tour buses is also an issue; parking and stopping areas for buses should be located to avoid impacts to residential neighborhoods.

### Improve Printed and Online Visitor Information

The other major category of media is printed and online material – maps, guides and itineraries for the visitor. While a number of maps and brochures have been developed for the Parkway in the past, these are no longer available. Their design and development is an essential piece of the interpretive framework. Materials should orient the first-time visitor, link the Parkway to the City’s other attractions, convey the same identity as the other media, and also enable the visitor to access more detailed information from online or printed sources.

### A Single Map/Brochure

Develop a **single user-friendly map/brochure** for use by the travelling public, showing the entire primary route, secondary and trail segments, overlooks and nearby attractions. Such a map could be distributed at visitor centers and highway rest stops, complementing the array of scenic byway brochures currently available. Eventually, depending on visitor interest and funding, it may be desirable to have a series of brochures on particular attributes of the Parkway – history, natural/scenic resources, and recreational

activities (summer and winter).

### Integrate Parkway Information with Other Visitor Resources

The Duluth Convention and Visitors Bureau (DCVB) will share information about the Parkway to the extent that they are provided with appropriate materials. The DCVB should work to **integrate the Parkway’s resources into the totality of visitor attractions in Duluth**, based upon the information in this report. Likewise, information about the Skyline Parkway needs to be integrated into state scenic byways resources, as marketed by the Minnesota Office of Tourism. A new web site for scenic byways of the Arrowhead Region, [www.superiorbyways.com](http://www.superiorbyways.com), offers one relatively simple, low-cost method of integrating visitor resources.

### Skyline Parkway Interactive Story Map

As a part of the 2015 update process, the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission developed an interactive map tour tool using Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri) GIS software. The story map, titled “Skyline Parkway Interactive Map Tour,” features photo points, 360 panoramic photo spheres, and video recorded from a driver’s perspective along each of the byways previously defined segments. The tool allows users to navigate Skyline Parkway virtually by browsing areas of the map and choosing points to explore through video, pictures, and photospheres. The tool also incorporates Google Street Maps technology that allows users to explore beyond Skyline Parkway.

While this map tour is valuable as a promotional tool for users and visitors of Skyline Parkway, it is also a valuable piece to the planning efforts of the byway as it provides a seamless visual feedback on the roadways conditions and traffic flow. The tool brings together GIS



Many views along the Western Extension are blocked by vegetation.

data and visuals such as photos and video to develop a one-stop-shop for remotely and accurately locating and visualizing specific areas of the road.

Beginning on the Parkway's western end at Becks Road, the interactive journey along Skyline Parkway includes eighty eight points of interest. These points include seven video segments, nine 360 degree photosphere points, and seventy two photo points. Video segments record the drive along each of the motorist accessible segments of Skyline Parkway in addition to the prior route of the byway between Superior Street and London Road via 61<sup>st</sup> Ave E. Photosphere points include 360 panoramic views from a few of the major outlooks along the route. These outlooks include outlooks in the Bay View Forest area, near Enger Tower, and a number of others along the eastern end of the byway. Two additional photosphere points were added using Google Street Maps that allow users to venture down two parkway connections with Lincoln Park Drive and Chester Park Drive. The Chester Park Drive photosphere point also provides supplemental visual coverage for a portion of Skyline Parkway that was closed to traffic for construction during the time that video was taken for this interactive map tour. Various points were also added to the map

and additional points can be added, or removed, as changes occur throughout the parkway. The photo points are intended to provide additional visuals of key points, features, or issues along the byway.

No video was taken through the Mission Creek segment of Skyline Parkway due to its access restrictions for the vehicles. There are, however, capabilities for including additional video, photo, and photosphere points along the Mission Creek section via bike similar to ARDC's Gitchi Gami State Trail Interactive Tour Map.

Video taken through the remaining segments of the Parkway highlight some of the recent conditions and changes present along the Parkway route. A few points located in the map tool comment on road surface conditions as the road surface changes from gravel to paved and from deteriorating to recently repaved. Notable recent changes are also highlighted through photos and video included in the tool.

Major changes that can be seen in the map tool include:

- Snivley Monument restoration
- Highland/Vinland St. intersection reconstruction
- Haines Rd. intersection reconstruction
- Piedmont Ave/Trinity Rd Bridge
- Chester Park improvements
- Seven Bridges Road reconstruction
- Superior St. to Congdon Blvd. re-routed section

Other changes such as repaved segments, signage improvements, and connections with new trails such as the Superior Hiking Trail, and other development and redevelopment along the way can be noticed as users view Skyline Parkway via this interactive map tool.



A motorist and bicycle crossing the new Skyline Parkway bridge over Piedmont Ave/Trinity Rd. (US 53.)



Improvements seen in the interactive map tool include on-going improvements to the Chester Creek Bridge

The Skyline Parkway Interactive Map Tour will be available online at ARDC's webpage and the Friends of Skyline Parkway's Facebook page. Other locations could be considered for distributing the tool among a larger network of Skyline Parkway advocates.

A brochure with map was developed as planned in the interpretation strategies of the 2003 Corridor Management Plan.

The brochure (as seen on the right) was developed by the City and includes a tri-fold map of the entire Parkway with key features (Parks, overlooks, streams, and scenic highlights) shown along the route.

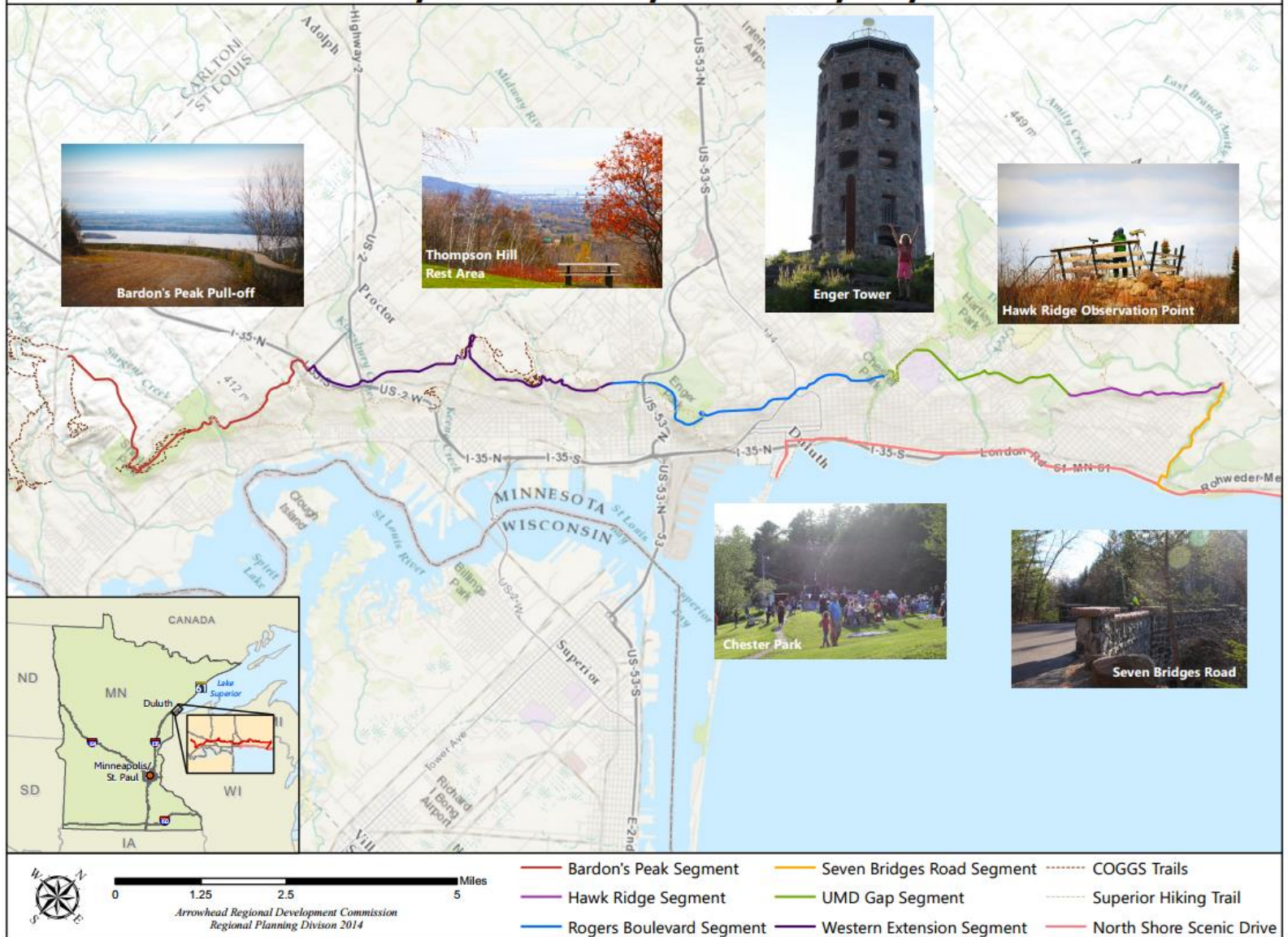
This valuable tool can be picked up free of charge at a number of locations in Duluth including the Thompson Hill Information Center, Visit Duluth office, and City Hall. It is also available on Skyline Parkway's dedicated page on the City of Duluth's website.

ARDC also developed an updated map as a part of the Corridor Management Plan update process. This map (see next page) includes the recently developed Superior Hiking Trail and COGGS Trails as they relate to Skyline Parkway's path through Duluth.





## Skyline Parkway Scenic Byway



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

This section of the Corridor Management Plan discusses management strategies in the following areas:

- Vegetation Management
- Land Use Management
- Commercial Sign Controls
- Historic Resources
- Parks and Recreation

### VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

**Manage vegetation at key overlooks and other important viewpoints to maintain or restore the views traditionally associated with Skyline Parkway.**

Initially, management of vegetation at designated overlooks should be given priority. This process is not as simple as it may appear. The accompanying photographs, taken by a resident at the same locations in 1979 and 2002, show a remarkable diminishing of views from the overlook at Observation Road east of Enger Park. Interestingly, some of the tallest vegetation is not in the foreground but some distance downslope. Should any of these trees be trimmed or removed? There seems

to be general consensus that increased tree growth in the past several decades has softened views from above and has many other aesthetic and ecological benefits.

Beyond preservation of views, vegetation management can serve a variety of goals, including wildlife habitat and ecological diversity. A set of vegetation management guidelines should be developed that will enable residents and City forestry staff to assess the variety of conditions along the Parkway and develop solutions that balance these goals and address residents' concerns. An initial list of priorities for vegetation management would include:

1. **Keeping views from all existing “formal” overlooks clear.** These are the overlooks with defined pull-off areas and, in many cases, interpretive markers, as shown in the Inventory of Overlooks (Table 1).
2. **Re-opening and clearing the overlooks that have been closed along the Western Extension segment.** This step would require a suitable maintenance and monitoring system to protect them from further vandalism and dumping, relying on a combination of City law enforcement, volunteer monitoring and periodic clean-ups.
3. **Identifying specific view corridors** not associated with overlooks, for example, along Rogers Boulevard between Enger Park and Chester Park, where some views should be re-opened.



1979



2002

Photos by Mark Jennings



Historically, the Parkway had more open views than it does today.



New residential lots are being created along the Parkway west of Chester Bowl.



Houses below the ridgeline block views in a few locations.

Where vegetation blocking these views is located on City property or on County-owned conservation lands, the City should assume responsibility for periodic clearing or trimming.

Clearance of vegetation on private property to date has involved a process established by the City Forester that includes the following steps:

- Property owner meets with City Forester on site to evaluate the vegetation of concern, potential erosion problems, aesthetic issues and other environmental concerns;
- City Forester meets with other abutting property owners;
- If a consensus can be reached among abutting owners, property owner may hire a qualified tree service or contractor to perform the work, with monitoring by the City.

In cases where the City has the primary interest in keeping views open, a process for negotiation with property owners should be established, including replacement of specific trees with lower-growing species, where feasible.

## LAND USE MANAGEMENT

**Manage land use to ensure that new development is compatible with traditional development patterns and does not intrude upon key views or the landscape as a whole.**

While much of the land along the Parkway is City parkland or protected open space (tax forfeit lands), there are a few locations with potential for extensive development. Any new development should be designed to meet several goals:

- preserve key views from the Parkway and from neighboring properties;
- preserve mature trees and other high-quality vegetation, stream corridors and other significant natural resources;
- limit the number of driveways and streets that take direct access from the Parkway;
- limit the amount of grading necessary on slopes above and below the Parkway.

Most of the Parkway corridor is zoned for fairly low-density residential development, but trends in residential construction have recently increased the size of houses to the point where they are beginning to block views from adjacent roads and (on the downslope side) from some overlooks.

The above goals could be achieved through a **view protection overlay district** that would establish standards for building height and bulk, limit grading and encourage siting of new buildings in a context-sensitive manner. To implement such a district, the City would need to review site development plans showing building elevations as viewed from the Parkway, building footprints and driveway locations. Design review could be the responsibility of the Planning Commission, of City staff (with appeal to the Planning Commission) or of a separate design advisory committee like the one that reviews development in the Canal



Park area (the Downtown Waterfront Mixed Use-Design Review District).

**Develop one or more zoning classifications that recognize and protect City parks and open space.**

City residents in some neighborhoods have raised the issue of the lack of a designated district that covers the City's park and forest lands. These areas are generally zoned for residential use. Therefore, lands that are not City-owned, such as the County conservation lands, are potentially developable. Furthermore, there are no restrictions on the types of recreational use that can occur in parks, nor any process for evaluating impacts on fragile environments or historic and scenic corridors like the Parkway.

One alternative would be a **park and open space overlay district**. Such a district could be designed to permit typical park, passive recreation and wildlife management uses. New active uses such as ballfields, community buildings, ice rinks, etc. might be treated as special permit uses.

An overlay district has several advantages compared with a conventional "base" district:

- It can apply to non-City-owned lands, such as conservation lands, without removing all potential for future development and creating a regulatory "taking."
- It could also apply to privately-managed open space such as Hawk Ridge or to privately-owned recreational areas such as golf courses.
- An overlay could be designed to require protection for key resources as a condition for more intensive development.

## COMMERCIAL SIGN CONTROLS

**Consider signage controls in the Boundary Avenue area of the City of Proctor.**

In Duluth, no large off-premises signs may be posed within 450 feet of the Parkway's right-of-way (see discussion on page 39). These sign restrictions do not apply within the City of Proctor, where large highway-oriented signs have been erected around the I-35/Boundary Avenue interchange. Although this section of the Parkway obviously has lost its historical integrity, its aesthetic quality could certainly be improved through sign controls and other improvements. Controls on new signs would prevent further visual clutter in this area. Possible aesthetic improvements are discussed in the next chapter.

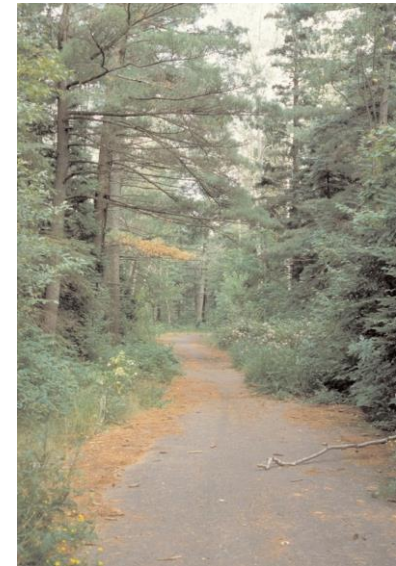
## HISTORIC RESOURCES

### Historic District Designation

**Pursue local and national designation of Skyline Parkway as a single historic district.**

Clearly, historic landscapes such as the Skyline Parkway pose much more complex issues than those raised by historic houses. Landscapes are usually much larger, and the property is inherently a growing, dynamic resource rather than a static, fixed, object. Issues of scale, "authorship," integrity, and resource management are much more complex with landscapes than they are with houses.

That said, there are some advantages to a full and careful historic preservation plan for a property as complex as the Skyline Parkway:



Connecting segments such as Congdon Park Drive, now closed to traffic, are historically significant as part of the original Parkway system.

- Designation is an important recognition of the property's historic significance. Being listed in the National Register is a "seal of approval" that the property meets recognized standards of significance and integrity.
- A property that is listed has a broader scope for review of projects that may affect it, ensuring a greater sensitivity to design and management issues.

The Parkway has been recognized as eligible for nomination to the National Register, which means that it receives some review of "Federal undertakings" that may affect it. Letters from the Minnesota SHPO office reference eligibility, but make no formal declaration of eligibility; the Parkway is listed in their "Considered Eligible" database, however.

The Parkway is not locally designated as a historic district or resource, although the issue has been discussed periodically. Local designation would reinforce national designation and would provide a means for review of private development projects, which is not afforded by the National Register.

**The Skyline Parkway should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as a designed historic landscape of statewide significance.** Such a designation would elevate the historic character of the landscape to its deserved preeminence in the public eye and would ensure that ongoing management and planning for the Parkway always retain a foundation in the area's historic character. It is recommended that the landscape be considered a single district, rather than a series of discontinuous districts, because the Parkway's original intent – providing a driving experience through the varied topographic, scenic, and

built environments of Duluth and the immediate area – can still be achieved despite the loss of integrity in some areas. These areas include the I-35 crossing and frontage road, the Mesaba/Central Entrance section, and the UMD Gap. Both in places where the original Parkway has lost integrity and areas where original plans seem never to have been constructed, the parkway system retains a unity of function that makes it an integrated whole for planning purposes.

The Parkway's diversity means that for management purposes, there are "districts within a district" with different management and resource protection emphases. This approach allows a context-based approach toward preservation.

Local designation of the Parkway as a historic district should also be considered. The City's Certified Local Government status means funding might be available for both efforts to move forward simultaneously.

It is further recommended that subsequent historic preservation studies be conducted in the following areas:

*Historic Preservation Technical Planning Study:* This should be conducted to address technical issues such as boundary demarcations, issues of analytical scale for historic resources, precise delineation of contributing and non-contributing elements of the district, and appropriate themes, areas, and periods of significance per National Park Service Preservation Planning Guidelines.

*Historic Resource Management Guidelines:* These should be considered as part of a general set of Management Guidelines that also address land use, vegetation management, and roadway design and



Stone gutters in Enger Park are an example of small-scale contributing structures of historic value.

maintenance. Guidelines should be developed in consultation with appropriate state and local agencies to identify particular management strategies for the diversity of historic resources contained in this historic district. The guidelines would deal with issues such as vegetation management, road surfacing, road width, and structural rehabilitation of particular structures on a segment-by-segment basis in order to best address the needs of the resource. A simplistic “one size fits all” is not recommended as a management approach for as varied a resource as the Parkway.

### Historic Resources Protection

**Continue to restore historic bridges while devoting increased attention to protection and restoration of retaining walls, drainage swales, and other stonework.** State bridge funding is available for continuing bridge restoration, but funding for other structures should be explored. The massive stone retaining walls in locations such as Bardon’s Peak and Chester Bowl need preventive maintenance now in order to avoid wholesale replacement in the future. Transportation enhancement funds may be available for restoration of walls and other structures.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

### Recreational Resource Enhancements

Link the recreational resources of the Parkway itself to the recreational facilities and resources of the City’s many parks and trails that adjoin or cross the Parkway, through improved wayfinding and interpretive signage and pedestrian connections. Improved park signs and integrated visitor brochures would give Parkway travelers a greater range of places to explore and a greater appreciation of the City’s parks and trails.

**Consider relocating specific recreational resources or activities** that detract from the Parkway’s scenic and historic character. The primary facility in this category is the Lakeview Sports Arena (consisting of ice rink and warming house) in Lester Park on Seven Bridges Road. While the facility serves both neighborhood and regional needs, its appearance and functions are incompatible with the character of this Parkway segment. Bus access to the facility for events is problematic due to the narrow width, shifting alignment, and even narrower bridges that characterize Seven Bridges Road. Bridge rails and abutments are vulnerable to damage by buses, and bus and vehicular traffic to the site accelerates road surface deterioration. Locations in other City parks, City forest or school sites should be explored as alternatives.

If the arena cannot be feasibly relocated, options for its redesign should be explored. Landscape screening of the perimeter, exterior improvements to the warming house, and better-defined and landscaped parking areas would do much to improve the facility’s appearance and compatibility with its natural setting.

### Trailhead and Road Closure Improvements

The current use of concrete highway barriers, often in damaged condition, to block seasonal trails, block vehicles from non-vehicular trails, and to provide seasonal road closures, is an unattractive solution that is inconsistent with the Parkway’s scenic and natural qualities. Options might include simple gates or bollards on permanent footings – after the initial expense, these would be easier to manage and maintain on a seasonal basis than the existing barriers. Closure structures need to be sturdy enough to stop large vehicles, but flexible enough to be moved to allow access by park and road maintenance vehicles and emergency vehicles.



These stone walls at Chester Bowl are in need of repair.



The Lakeview Sports Arena hockey rink is an example of a recreational structure not compatible with the historical integrity of Seven Bridges Road.



## IMPROVING THE ROAD FOR ALL MODES OF TRAVEL

This section of the Corridor Management Plan covers the following topics:

- Parkway-Specific Design Standards
- Accommodating Pedestrians and Cyclists
- Improving Safety and Aesthetics of Problem Intersections

### DEVELOP PARKWAY-SPECIFIC ROADWAY DESIGN STANDARDS

Skyline Parkway encompasses a great variety of County and City roads and streets, ranging in scale from minor arterial to local. Almost none of these streets – and certainly none of the true “parkway” segments – are designed to current road standards. Lane width, horizontal and vertical alignment (the curves, hills and valleys along the route), shoulder width, bridge width, and many other features of the road were designed for an earlier era of travel and are a major part of the road’s historic character. Another positive result of this type of roadway design is that it tends to keep traffic speeds low, although it can result in safety hazards for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists.

One of the main problems for City public works staff is the need for “variances” from state and county road design standards, as typically expressed in the AASHTO “Green Book” (*The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials – A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*). While MnDOT staff have been flexible about granting variances for bridge design, the process would be greatly simplified if the Parkway had its own set of roadway

design standards, to be accepted as an alternative to the “Green Book” standards, based on the road’s historic character. Roadway design standards should be developed as part of the general Management Guidelines discussed above under Historic Resource Protection. Guidelines specific to each roadway segment should be developed by the Public Works Department in consultation with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the State Historic Preservation Office, and other agencies and interest groups. They should address roadway width and lane configuration, shoulder or sidewalk standards, paving materials, bridge design, and related topics.

### PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE IMPROVEMENTS

Existing conditions along the 26-mile primary route vary greatly. Pavement widths range from an average of 18 feet with intermittent shoulder along much of Seven Bridges Road to over 40 feet (four lanes) along roads such as Woodland Avenue. Shoulder width varies from negligible to a full paved shoulder with bike lane (e.g., parts of Snively Road).

The challenge for this planning effort is **how best to retain the Parkway’s historic character while accommodating new uses?** Designed as a scenic carriage road in the pre-automobile era, Skyline was widened, regraded and otherwise improved over the following decades to accommodate motorized vehicles, from private automobiles to motorcoaches. By 1940, the end of the Parkway’s period of significance, many of the central sections of the roadway had been widened from about 16 feet to 24 or 26 feet. Sidewalks were added along some residential blocks as those areas developed.



Bicycle and pedestrian improvements would improve the usability of some segments of the Parkway.

While pedestrians, cyclists or equestrians were not specifically considered as beneficiaries of these improvements, it would obviously have been easier for a variety of modes to coexist in an era of far lower traffic speeds and traffic volumes. At present, motorized and non-motorized recreational users of the Parkway must compete for the same, undifferentiated paved surface or its largely unimproved shoulders.

Later widenings and realignments, notably at Mesaba and Piedmont Avenues, have generally lessened or even eradicated most of the Parkway's character, turning it into just another leg of a busy intersection or a segment of a frontage road. These changes have generally made the roadway less safe and less suitable for pedestrians and cyclists.

Therefore, this plan recommends addressing pedestrian and bicycle needs through **improvements in a limited number of locations with the greatest**

**pedestrian usage and/or greatest safety hazards.**

These areas are:

- **Mesaba Avenue to Chester Bowl;**
- **Snively Road and Woodland Avenue;**
- **Seven Bridges Road;**
- **Boundary Avenue**, notably the I-35 freeway bridge.

**Mesaba Avenue to Chester Bowl:** This area has very high pedestrian use on roadway sections that vary from block to block. Improvements would thus vary by location. In the sections where the roadway is widest (e.g., some 36-foot areas between Mesaba and Kenwood Avenues), improvements might include **striped bicycle lanes on both sides and a sidewalk on one side**, as shown in Figure 7.

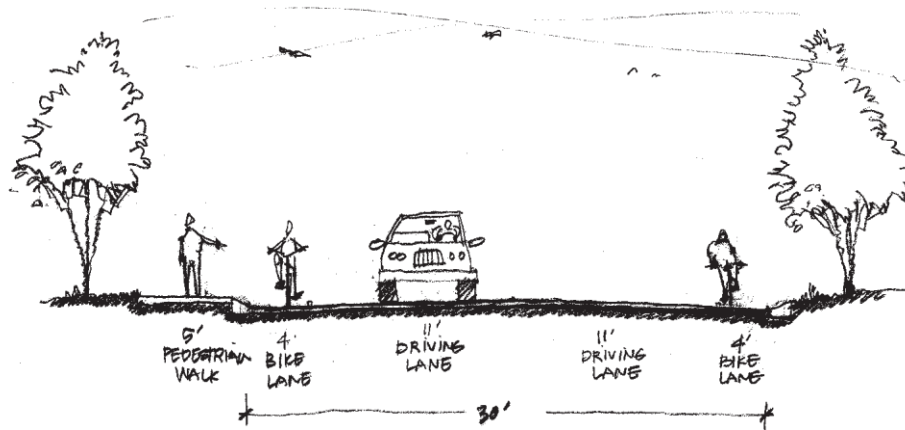


FIGURE 7: Skyline Parkway 30-foot roadway section. Example with bike lanes and sidewalk.

Where the roadway is narrowest, as in the area between Kenwood and Chester Bowl, improvements could include a **curb-separated sidewalk on one side**, replacing the existing shoulder, as shown in Figure 8. Travel lanes could be narrowed slightly to 11 feet. Signs could indicate that cyclists and motorists must “share the road” in these constrained areas.

More detailed analysis and engineering studies would be needed before undertaking any improvements.

**Snively Road and Woodland Avenue: An alternate pedestrian and bicycle route** is proposed and shown on Figure 3, bypassing parts of Snively and Woodland in the UMD Gap area. This route would follow St. Marie Street to Lakeview Drive, a traffic-calmed local street, and uphill to Snively Road. (Vehicular access between Lakeview and Snively Road is limited, but pedestrian/bike access could be provided.)

**Seven Bridges Road:** This segment, one of the narrowest on the route, should receive priority for **pavement upgrading**. Failing pavement should not be relied upon as a traffic calming device, since it essentially makes the segment unpleasant and hazardous for cyclists. Traffic can be calmed through the already narrow roadway profile and frequent curves; improved signage and enforcement are also needed.

**Boundary Avenue:** This road corridor will be the subject of a study in the next several years, and the I-35 freeway bridge will eventually warrant replacement. It should be planned to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians and to convey some elements of the Parkway’s aesthetic character, as exemplified by the new Piedmont Avenue bridge design.

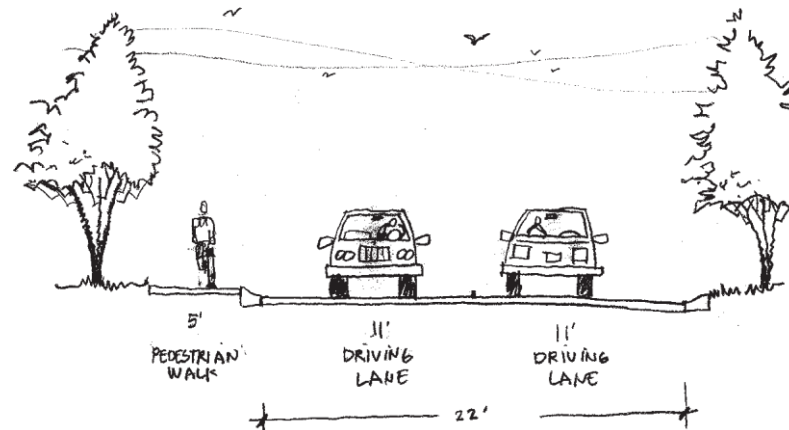


FIGURE 8: Skyline Parkway 22-foot roadway section. A curb-separated sidewalk could be added to replace the current shoulder.



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## IMPROVE THE SAFETY AND AESTHETICS OF PROBLEM INTERSECTIONS

**Initiate traffic calming or safety improvements at intersections between Skyline Parkway and higher-classification routes.** Typically, traffic on the intersecting roads is moving rapidly up and down the hill, and there are few visual signals for the motorist on either route as to the location of the crossing. Many of these intersections are overly wide, encouraging high traffic speeds. Improvements might include narrowing of the intersection through planted islands or medians, as well as improved signage.

Specific locations and recommendations are as follows:

- The need for a **pedestrian crossing at Mesaba Avenue** has been discussed for some time. Traffic volumes here are daunting to cyclists and pedestrians, and many Parkway users simply avoid the area. The image below shows an example of how the Parkway could cross this segment from east to west, crossing the lower parking area

of the Coppertop Church and the small triangle of land between Central Entrance and Mesaba. (The City already holds an easement across the parking area for view protection.) This would bring pedestrians and cyclists to the end of 10th Street, the original Parkway alignment (later relocated to 9th Street.)

There is also a need for a north-south crossing in this area, to serve the Harborview public housing complex located north of the highway. This issue needs to be explored in greater detail. However, a project of this nature should be included whenever improvements to Mesaba Avenue/Central Entrance are contemplated.

- Another potential safety improvement at this intersection that could be undertaken immediately would be to divide the Parkway route west of the intersection, so that the **east-bound route follows 7th Street** (a signalized intersection) while the **west-bound route remains on 9th Street**. This realignment would solve safety and sight distance problems for east-bound traffic.



A pedestrian bridge over Mesaba Avenue/Central Entrance would significantly improve bike and pedestrian mobility through this high-traffic area.



The Kenwood Avenue intersection is confusing and hazardous.



The Highland/Getchell Road intersection offers an opportunity for a traffic-calming roundabout and an interpretive rest stop.

- The **Haines Road/40th Avenue West** has been reconstructed since the 2012 flood washed out sections of Haines Road. Improvements were made during this reconstruction including a sidewalk connection between Skyline Parkway and W 8<sup>th</sup> Street.
- The **Highland/Getchell Road** intersection, excessively wide with poor sight distance, had been proposed for reconstruction with a traffic roundabout. The intersection has since been reconstructed but without the roundabout included. The redesigned intersection rerouted the Skyline/Vinland intersection further east to eliminate an awkward three way intersection. A group of volunteers from the Skyline Planning and Preservation Alliance has been working with County transportation planners and City staff to plan for a **full interpretive rest stop** at this location, to include parking, interpretive signs, picnic facilities and a trailhead for the Superior Hiking Trail. Parking has since been added as part of the resigned intersection and other elements of the interpretive rest stop are still a priority. As an entry point to a relatively little used Parkway segment, this site would be ideal. It may also provide an opportunity to restore and interpret the large concrete-arch relic bridge that crosses Keene Creek just south of the Parkway (see Appendix A, Segment Profiles: Western Boulevard Extension).
- The **Kenwood Avenue** intersection should be studied for improvement in conjunction with a pending City traffic study of the East Hillside neighborhood. Possibilities might include a small roundabout (landscaped traffic circle) to slow and channel traffic from the multiple intersecting streets.

- The **Glenwood Street** intersection should be traffic-calmed. Options to be considered include lowering posted speeds on Glenwood from 40 mph to 30 mph and realigning the Parkway route to intersect with Glenwood slightly to the west, below the crest of the hill, to improve sight distances.

## IMPROVE THE AESTHETICS OF ALTERED OR NON-PARKWAY SEGMENTS

As discussed earlier in this report, a number of segments of the Parkway route were never constructed as “parkway” or have been altered to the point that their parkway character has been lost. These include the I-35/Boundary Avenue area and the UMD Gap.

The **Boundary Avenue area** may appear to have limited potential for improvements, given the character of existing commercial development and plans for additional development. However, a redesigned bridge over I-35, discussed above under “Pedestrian and Bike Improvements” could do much to change the character of the area. The City of Proctor intends to undertake a corridor study of Boundary Avenue. This study should closely involve the City of Duluth and the ARDC and should focus on the aesthetic enhancement of the entire interchange area as a true regional gateway. Examples of freeway and interchange enhancements can be seen along the I-35 corridor in downtown Duluth, along I-94 in Saint Paul’s Capital area, and at other locations along Minnesota highways.

The streets around the UMD campus are utilitarian in character and dominated by heavy traffic, but still offer some attractive views of the campus and the lake. University’s *Campus Master Plan Update* (2000) calls for several changes that could affect the Parkway route in the Gap area. The Master Plan calls

for an expansion of the campus north of St. Marie Street to create a new student housing complex just west of Carver Avenue. A new main entry from Woodland Avenue a short distance north of College Street would provide a clearer image and direct access to the heart of the campus. The plan specifically refers to the Parkway (mis-named “Skyline Drive”) with the following recommendation: “a cooperative effort should be undertaken to design a road which reflects both interests” [those of UMD and the City]. “The new road should be residential in scale with intermittent parking pullouts. The area near Rock Hill must be as unobtrusive as possible with parking moved downhill. The road should introduce curves to slow traffic and allow nature to dominate the image.”

This type of redesign would be consistent with the goals of the Corridor Management Plan, as a means of creating a “parkway” character on this segment of roadway. Specifically, the Parkway route around the campus (Junction and St. Marie Streets) should be redesigned with the following features:

- narrower roadway width (preferably 2 lanes throughout);
- parking pullouts, interspersed with curb extensions at corners;
- continuous street tree plantings;
- continuous sidewalks on at least one side;
- Parkway signage; including an interpretive sign or marker directing Parkway travelers to Rock Hill trails and overlook.
- addition of stonework elements such as the guard stones found along other segments of the Parkway.

#### CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR MISSION CREEK SEGMENT REOPENING

Many Fond du Lac residents and others have expressed a desire to see the Mission Creek segment reopened as a road segment of the Parkway. Others have stated a desire to maintain the remote wilderness qualities of that segment, which they fear would be

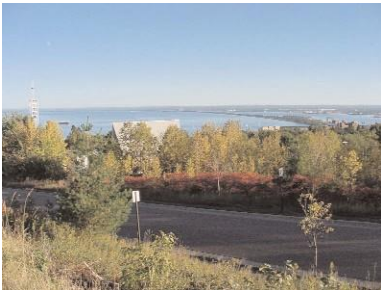


View from Rock Hill of the UMD campus down St. Marie Street, part of the UMD Gap segment.





Entrance to Mission Creek trail (a city hiking trail) as well as the parkway remnant in Fond du Lac.



View at 11th Ave. E. illustrates the attractiveness of existing vegetation, as well the extent to which it blocks views. Photo by Brian Fredrickson.

lost if it were opened to vehicular traffic. Many also favor improving it for trail use by reconstructing bridges and re-opening the landslide-damaged section. These issues can best be resolved by conducting a feasibility study that would evaluate the actions needed to accomplish either objective and the estimated costs of these. There is no doubt that either course of action would be costly – the area's very steep and rugged topography is conducive to the kind of spring freshets that have washed out the road in the past. However, either road or trail reconstruction might be eligible for highway enhancement funding. Under either scenario, the existing stone-faced concrete arch bridges should be restored to the extent feasible, while the missing bridges could be replaced by simpler but compatible structures.

## RECOGNITION, STEWARDSHIP AND IMPLEMENTATION

### DEVELOP A PERMANENT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

In order for the recommendations of this plan to be carried forward, the Parkway needs advocates at a variety of levels in City, County and State government as well as the private non-profit community. Currently, one advocacy group exists: the Skyline Planning and Preservation Alliance. The Alliance was originally organized to focus on the most neglected western segments of the Parkway, but has now broadened its focus, in conjunction with this planning effort, to take in the entire corridor. The group organizes monthly hikes and periodic clean-ups, screenings of films about the Parkway and talks on various

aspects of its history and environment. Other environmental advocacy and recreational user groups have a strong interest in various aspects of Parkway management, but no others focus on the route as a whole. The Hawk Ridge Management Committee of the Audubon Society focuses intensively on that segment and has been actively involved through the planning process.

Clearly, the Alliance will continue to play an active role in promoting stewardship of the Parkway and advocating for its improvement. The group should be included in any future decision-making process that involves the road.

Many other byway organizations have developed a **formal non-profit structure** and now receive state funds to conduct byway improvement projects. There may be interest in expanding the Alliance's role in this manner, including project administration, fund-raising and grant-writing activities. This will depend on the Alliance's goals, its capacity and resources. Whether or not the Alliance chooses to expand its role, it should continue to work in close partnership with all levels of government to further the goals of this plan and others that may emerge.

At the government level, the picture is more complicated. While the City's Planning Department has taken the lead role in obtaining State Scenic Byway status and in the development of this plan, many other City departments and commissions and other governmental agencies have been involved to varying degrees and should continue to be involved in the future. These include:

#### City Departments:

- Public Works and Utilities: City Forester, Street and Park Maintenance

- Engineering
- Parks
- Police (not heavily involved so far, but should be brought in to coordinate enforcement efforts)
- Duluth Convention and Visitors Bureau

#### **City Boards and Commissions:**

- Planning Commission
- Heritage Preservation Commission
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Environmental Advisory Council
- Tree Commission
- Neighborhood Planning Districts

**City of Proctor:** Planning Commission and Council

**Midway Township:** Board of Supervisors

#### **St. Louis County:**

- Land Commissioner's office
- Historical Society
- Public Works

#### **Regional:**

- Arrowhead Regional Development Commission

#### **State:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Department of Transportation
- Minnesota Office of Tourism

#### **Other:**

- Spirit Mountain Recreation Area
- University of Minnesota – Duluth
- Duluth Preservation Alliance
- Hawk Ridge Management Committee
- Skyline Planning and Preservation Alliance

How can these multiple agencies and organizations work together to implement the actions outlined in this Corridor Management Plan and ensure continued stewardship of this resource? Several options exist, but all seem to involve the creation of some type of **intergovernmental partnership**.

- The City could take the lead in creating a **Skyline Parkway Commission** that would include representatives of the above-listed organizations, including Proctor and Midway Township. A commission should also include members of the Citizens Task Force for the corridor management plan. Many of these members represent boards or commissions or are interested and knowledgeable citizens. Their background and level of commitment should be carried forward in any new organization.

The Commission could be staffed by the Planning Department, but ideally it would draw from the resources of its constituent groups to seek funds and initiate and manage improvement projects. One advantage of this arrangement is that it seems most likely to coordinate the efforts of the City agencies that are the “front line” of Parkway maintenance and improvements.

- Alternatively, the City could broaden its scope to create a **(Greater) Duluth Scenic Byways Commission** that could take in the North Shore Scenic Drive, the Evergreen Memorial Highway (23) and Highway 210 in Fond du Lac and Carlton. Such a commission would have a broader mandate and could perhaps do more to integrate and link these routes. However, it would have correspondingly less of a focus on Skyline Parkway, which appears most in need of improvements.



This sign is installed seasonally by the Hawk Ridge Management Committee.



Typical street conditions west of Chester Bowl.



Dumping near Keene Creek.  
Photo by Brian Fredrickson.

- Any commission established should be closely coordinated with the **ARDC**, since that agency works closely with all scenic byways in the Arrowhead Region and may have additional funding sources.
- As mentioned above, the role of the **Skyline Planning and Preservation Alliance** is still in the formative stages. It may be that the Alliance could eventually evolve to become the “umbrella” organization that coordinates city, county, regional and state efforts. However, this will likely not occur in the short term.

In deciding on an appropriate management organization, the following factors should be considered:

- **Flexibility:** Any management entity should be able to form strategic relationships with partners in the public, private and non-profit sectors.
- **Public Involvement:** A management entity should represent the interests of a broad range of stakeholders, as well as agencies, potential funders, and individuals who understand the issues. An “entrepreneurial” perspective can help to move projects forward.
- **Decision-Making Protocol:** Because of the multi-jurisdictional nature of the Parkway and its resources, it will be key to establish open, clear decision-making protocols and rules of organization.
- **Resource Availability:** The resources needed for implementation are dispersed among multiple agencies, organizations and individuals. However, some initial commitment of staff time

or funds will be needed to maintain momentum for plan implementation.

## PURSUE NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY NOMINATION

This Corridor Management Plan fulfills one of the prerequisites for National Scenic Byway designation. There is ample evidence that the Parkway has intrinsic features of national significance, presented in this report and in previous extensive historical research. This information, combined with the library of slides compiled for this and other studies, and the collective expertise of Parkway advocates, should contribute to a credible application.

There are currently six national scenic byways in Minnesota: Edge of the Wilderness, Great River Road, the Grand Rounds, Historic Bluff Country, Minnesota River Valley, and the North Shore Scenic Drive (an All-American Road, the highest designation). Designation has brought with it not only higher visibility but a guaranteed source of seed money for byway organizations, as well as the assistance of the America’s Byways Resource Center, headquartered in Duluth. The next call for nominations may not occur until 2004 or 2005, and progress on implementation of the Corridor Management Plan by that time may help increase the likelihood of designation.

## IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS AND VOLUNTEER MONITORING AT OVERLOOKS

As with many of Duluth’s other visitor attractions such as Canal Park and the Lakewalk, physical improvements tend to encourage increased “legitimate” use by visitors, with a corresponding decrease in undesirable uses. The remoteness of many Parkway overlooks,



however, will require an increased level of vigilance by police and concerned residents. Problems with dumping and vandalism at Parkway overlooks, while of long duration, could be alleviated through a combination of efforts:

- Establishing regular police patrols of parks and overlooks along the Parkway;
- Arranging for occasional trash pick-ups of large items that might otherwise be dumped;
- Organizing neighborhood watch patrols in residential areas;
- Organizing “Adopt-an-Overlook” or similar programs that would involve residents, associations and businesses in overlook improvements and monitoring.

## IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Implementation of the Corridor Management Plan will be an ambitious and long-term undertaking that will involve efforts by many public agencies, organizations and individuals. The projects and initiatives listed in Table 7 are organized by topic area as a way to summarize the many recommendations in this plan. Primary and secondary responsibilities for each initiative are noted, although it is possible that responsibilities will shift as the management structure for the Parkway becomes better defined.



Small commercial districts like this one at Woodland and St. Marie could be enhanced to attract Parkway visitors.



View from Keene Creek bridge illustrates the wilderness character of much of the corridor. Photo by Brian Fredrickson.

**TABLE 7: Implementation Framework**

Priority	Action	Lead and Coordinating Agencies
<b>Management Framework</b>		
1	Adopt Plan as official guidance for City policies and actions. Plan adoption is not intended to commit the City to funding or implementing every recommendation in the plan, but rather to provide a policy foundation for further implementation actions.	Duluth City Council
1	Create a Skyline Parkway Commission. A Commission, if provided with sufficient support and technical assistance from its membership, may take on primary responsibility for many of the actions listed below.	Duluth City Council Planning Department Partner agencies and SPPA (see previous discussion under "Management Structure")
<b>Interpretation and Recognition</b>		
1	Pursue National Scenic Byway nomination. Use this plan, other studies and selected images of the Parkway to prepare a credible and well-supported nomination.	Skyline Parkway Commission Planning Department ARDC SPPA
1	Initiate Interpretive Framework Plan. This plan could encompass a variety of improvements, including overlook design, wayfinding sign design, creation of a single map/brochure, and better integration of Parkway information with other visitor resources.	Planning Department Dept. of Public Works and Utilities Duluth Convention and Visitors Bureau Partner agencies
2	Pursue nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, while also considering the benefits of local historic district designation. Duluth's Certified Local Government status may provide an opportunity for funding of both efforts.	Skyline Parkway Commission Heritage Preservation Commission Duluth Preservation Alliance St. Louis County Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office
<b>Management Guidelines</b>		
2	Develop a comprehensive set of management guidelines for the Parkway's natural and built resources, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· vegetation management</li> <li>· historic resources management</li> </ul>	Planning Department Public Works & Utilities Dept. Skyline Parkway Commission

**TABLE 7: Implementation Framework, cont.**

Priority	Action	Lead and Coordinating Agencies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· roadway design guidelines</li> <li>· roadway maintenance standards (seasonal closures, barriers, grading, etc.)</li> </ul>	Heritage Preservation Commission
3	Develop zoning districts for view protection and park and open space protection, as part of comprehensive Zoning Ordinance update.	Planning Department
3	Initiate Boundary Avenue Corridor Study, to include consideration of aesthetic, pedestrian and bike improvements, land use and signage.	Cities of Proctor and Duluth ARDC
	<b>Physical Improvements</b>	
1	Continue to pursue bridge reconstruction, maintaining the historically-appropriate design standards developed for Seven Bridges Road and other	Public Works & Utilities Dept. Mn/DOT
1	Establish priorities and seek funding for pavement, wall and other structure reconstruction.	Public Works & Utilities Dept. Skyline Parkway Commission Heritage Preservation Commission
2	Pursue clearing of vegetation at overlooks and reopening of closed overlooks, if continuing maintenance and monitoring can be put in place.	Public Works & Utilities Dept. SPPA and neighborhood organizations Police Department
1	Seek funding for pedestrian, bicycle and intersection improvements, in conjunction with planned road improvements, bike route plans or neighborhood safety improvements.	Public Works Department Planning Department ARDC
	<b>Maintenance and Enforcement</b>	
2	Improve enforcement against dumping and vandalism at overlooks; reduce dumping through community policing, large item trash pickups, neighborhood watch programs, and public awareness campaigns. An "Adopt-an-Overlook" program may offer opportunities for neighborhood residents and businesses to improve the level of maintenance and monitoring at overlooks.	Police Department SPPA and neighborhood organizations/ Planning Districts



**TABLE 8: Top Priorities – Physical Improvements**

Priority	Action	Cost
<b>Road Improvements</b> The City has made significant process since the completion of the 2003 Corridor Management Plan in regards to road improvements. Current top priorities for road improvements include the following:		
1	24 <sup>th</sup> Avenue West to 40 <sup>th</sup> Avenue West	\$875,000
2	Rice Lake Road to Kenwood Avenue	\$400,000
3	100 <sup>th</sup> Avenue West to Spirit Mountain	\$900,000
<b>Wall Repairs</b> In addition to the paving improvements needed, there are numerous rock retaining walls that were constructed over 100 years ago that are starting to show major deterioration. Without the walls we won't have a road, or the "Scenic Byway." A majority of the work includes tuck pointing, reconstruction of some areas, and also the replacement of missing stones above the cap. Current top priorities for wall repairs include:		
1	Oneota Overlook at approximately mile 11.5	\$200,000
2	Bardon's Peak between mile 2 and 3	\$200,000
3	Section 3 Pull-off at approximately mile 13.5 (just before Twin Ponds)	\$500,000
4	Twin Ponds at approximately mile 13.8	\$100,000
5	Merritt Creek culvert restoration	\$150,000

## APPENDIX A

### SEGMENT PROFILE: **MISSION CREEK SEGMENT**

Endpoints	Fond du Lac/ TH210 (2 branches) to Beck's Road
Character-Defining Features	Numerous stone-faced concrete arch bridges over Mission Creek, many washed out or in disrepair
Adjacent Land Use	Forest park, undeveloped
Land Ownership	Public, city and county-owned Fond du Lac Forest
Spatial Organization	Sense of enclosure, relative isolation, shifting visual perspectives
Circulation Patterns and Road Condition	Closed to automobile traffic; some bridges out across Mission Creek; used by snowmobiles, hiking
Major Intersections and Entry Points	Beck's Road, 131st Street in Fond du Lac, State Highway 210 (Jay Cooke SP)
Structures and Objects	Series of bridges (similar to Seven Bridges Road)
Topography / Grade	Graded through Mission Creek valley
Vegetation	Regrowth forest of mixed species
Views and Vistas	Shifting views of creek valley
Water Features	Mission Creek; numerous crossings
Era of Construction; Historic Resources	Built in 1920s to complete regional parkway system; abandoned to vehicular traffic in 1960s (approximate)
Recreational Resources and Uses	Snowmobiles, horseback, hiking, mountain bikes, ATVs
Resources in Proximity	Jay Cooke State Park to west; Willard Munger bike trail
Adjacent Neighborhoods and Planning Districts	Fond du Lac (District 1); Midway Township
Key Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Desired level of use; automobile or recreational; motorized or non-motorized</li> <li>-Extent and cost of improvements</li> <li>-Desire for improved linkage to Jay Cooke State Park</li> </ul>

## SEGMENT PROFILE: **BARDON'S PEAK SEGMENT**

Endpoints	Beck's Road to I-35 interchange
Character-Defining Features	Wall and major overlook at Bardon's Peak, Stewart Creek Bridge, old-growth hardwood forest
Adjacent Land Use	Largely forested parkland; recreation area at north end; scattered rural residential at either end
Land Ownership	Public (Magney-Snively Park, Spirit Mountain Recreation Area) and private
Spatial Organization	Shifting pattern of enclosure and openness
Circulation Patterns and Road Condition	Narrow gravel road, rural in character, closed seasonally. Original alignment crossed current ski slopes; new alignment is uphill through recreation area
Major Intersections and Entry Points	Beck's Road, I-35 and frontage roads
Structures and Objects	Stone arch bridge at Stewart Creek listed on National Register; massive mortared stone wall at Bardon's Peak; ruins of Snively Monument at Stewart Creek
Topography / Grade	Constructed roadway prism, some cut and fill at Bardon's Peak overlook
Vegetation	High-quality old-growth mixed hardwood forest, aspen, northern hardwoods
Views and Vistas	Bardon's Peak overlook offers wide view of St. Louis River, Morgan Park, Gary/New Duluth
Water Features	Crosses Stewart Creek; small wetland north of alignment near Becks Rd.
Era of Construction; Historic Resources	Constructed 1920s; Spirit Mountain segment extensively altered
Recreational Resources and Uses	Cross-country ski trails, mountain biking, horseback riding, camping
Resources in Proximity	Spirit Mountain Recreation Area; Willard Munger Trail; planned communities of Riverside and Morgan Park; Lake Superior Zoo, DWP railroad r.o.w. with tunnel
Adjacent Neighborhoods and Planning Districts	Norton Park, Riverside, Smithville, Morgan Park, Gary, New Duluth and Fond du Lac (all District 1). Small areas of City of Proctor, Midway Township
Key Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Vegetation management, accessibility, maintenance (trash dumping), interpretation.</li> <li>-No directional signs from I-35 (Midway Road)</li> <li>-Restoration of Snively monument? Use of abandoned DWP rail line?</li> </ul>



**SEGMENT PROFILE: WESTERN BOULEVARD EXTENSION**

Endpoints	I-35 (Boundary Ave.) to Lincoln Park Drive
Character-Defining Features	Sweeping views of harbor, rock retaining walls and bridges over creeks, rock outcrops
Adjacent Land Use	Some urban residential areas, aspen woodland, mostly rocky slopes and forests cut by small creeks. I-35 area to US Hwy 2 largely altered, developed
Land Ownership	Forest park lands (tax-forfeit open space) and private lands; Oneota Cemetery
Spatial Organization	Generally open perspectives, shifting road alignment
Circulation Patterns and Road Condition	Paved road, varying width; intermittent curb and sidewalk. Junctions with county roads and some city streets
Major Intersections and Entry Points	Haines Rd., Highland St./Getchell and Stebner Roads, US Hwy 2 and I-35
Structures and Objects	Several substantial stone retaining walls (some dry-laid), stone-faced culverts and bridges. Large concrete arch bridge across Keene Creek for unbuilt subdivision
Topography / Grade	Cut and fill to create roadway along general line of glacial beach ridge
Vegetation	Residential lawns to east; second growth forest and woody undergrowth, many rock outcrops
Views and Vistas	View from overlook west of 28th Ave. W; other paved turnouts w. of 40th are blocked by guard stones or views are blocked by tree growth
Water Features	Crosses several small creeks: Merritt, Kingsbury, Keene
Era of Construction; Historic Resources	Built 1904-1914; substantial changes near I-35
Recreational Resources and Uses	Walking, biking. Cross-country ski trails north of road
Resources in Proximity	Forest parks; Thompson Hill Information Center, Brewer Park
Adjacent Neighborhoods & Planning Dist.	Lincoln Park, Piedmont Heights (District 3); Bayview Heights, Cody, Fairmont (District 2)
Key Issues	-Suitability of street segments for walking and biking -Vegetation management to enhance views -Potential for continued land development - Need for aesthetic and pedestrian improvements, Boundary Avenue area -Use of overlooks -Maintenance, dumping

## SEGMENT PROFILE: **ROGERS BOULEVARD / TERRACE PARKWAY SEGMENT**

Endpoints	Lincoln Park to Chester Park
Character-Defining Features	Rock-faced bridges at Chester Creek and Twin Ponds, several overlooks, rock outcrops, street sections, with broad views of city and harbor
Adjacent Land Use	Varied: urban residential streets, parks, some areas of steep rocky slopes, several overlooks
Land Ownership	Private and public - Chester Bowl Recreation Area, Enger Park, Lincoln Park; residential lots commercial and institutional parcels
Spatial Organization	Generally open perspective with many long views, rapidly changing character, shifting perspectives from road alignment
Circulation Patterns and Road Condition	Paved road, intermittent parking lane, shoulders, sidewalks. Many intersections with city street system
Major Intersections and Entry Points	Mesaba Ave./Central Entrance; TH 53 (Piedmont) and Lincoln Park Drive, Kenwood Ave.
Structures and Objects	Stone-faced concrete arch bridges at Chester Creek and Twin Ponds (both rebuilt), massive stone retaining walls at Chester Bowl
Topography / Grade	Cut and fill to create roadway along general line of glacial beach ridge
Vegetation	Urban lawns, open brushy lots, forested parks
Views and Vistas	Marked overlooks at Observation Road and Enger Park; several additional overlooks, some with guardstones
Water Features	Twin Ponds (artificial construction), Chester Creek, Miller Creek, Coffee Creek, Buckingham Creek
Era of Construction; Historic Resources	Oldest segment, constructed 1889-1904
Recreational Resources and Uses	Park facilities - swimming, trails, golf, skiing, picnicking, etc. Walking, biking along city street segments
Resources in Proximity	Many park resources - Chester Bowl Recreation Area, Enger Park (tower, gardens, golf course), Lincoln Park
Adjacent Neighborhoods & Planning Dist.	East Hillside (District 6); Central Hillside (District 5), Lincoln Park (District 3), Piedmont Heights (District 4)
Key Issues	-Suitability of street segments for walking and biking -Dangerous confusing intersections with local streets -Mesaba/Central Entrance intersection - Pedestrian safety and wayfinding -New development west of Chester Park - Variances for driveways, clearance and grading on slopes -Oversized houses detract from views in some areas - Vegetation management

### SEGMENT PROFILE: **UMD GAP SEGMENT**

Endpoints	Chester Creek to Glenwood Street
Character-Defining Features	Urban residential streets and major thoroughfares; abuts University campus
Adjacent Land Use	Urban residential, limited commercial and campus uses
Land Ownership	Private and university
Spatial Organization	No overall organizational pattern
Circulation Patterns and Road Condition	Variety of road widths and conditions - minor arterials (Snively Road, Woodland Ave.), major and minor residential streets; many intersections
Major Intersections and Entry Points	Snively Road at Glenwood; Snively and Woodland
Structures and Objects	None
Topography / Grade	City street grading; bluff line is downslope of Snively Road
Vegetation	Wooded hillside (Rock Hill) north side of UMD campus
Views and Vistas	Overlook at Rock Hill above St. Marie Street
Water Features	Tischer Creek
Era of Construction; Historic Resources	Not historically constructed in this section
Recreational Resources and Uses	Walking, biking along some streets
Resources in Proximity	University, Rock Hill (Bagley Nature Area) ski trails, open space and overlook, historic planned neighborhood of Morley Heights north of Snively Rd.
Adjacent Neighborhoods and Planning districts	UMD / Chester Park (District 10); Congdon Park and Endion (District 7) south
Key Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Might alternate routes be preferable? Feasibility of alternate routes</li> <li>-Wayfinding</li> <li>-Adding "parkway character" to city streets</li> </ul>



**SEGMENT PROFILE: HAWK RIDGE SEGMENT**

Endpoints	Glenwood Street to Maxwell Road
Character-Defining Features	Long bluff with sweeping views from overlooks; enclosed by forest at either end
Adjacent Land Use	Sparsely to heavily forested nature preserve; residential development downslope; a few homes upslope near Glenwood
Land Ownership	Public - City forest - and private. Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve is city-owned; managed by committee of Duluth Audubon Society
Spatial Organization	Generally straight road with progression from enclosure on east to open vistas in center
Circulation Patterns and Road Condition	Gravel road from Maxwell to near west overlook; closed seasonally. Paved between west overlook and Glenwood
Major Intersections and Entry Points	No major thoroughfares
Structures and Objects	Guard stones at overlooks, bridge over Amity Creek
Topography / Grade	Widened roadway grade on steep hillside
Vegetation	Primarily aspen, upland brush, pine plantation, maple woods
Views and Vistas	Two designed overlooks provide broad views of lake and residential neighborhoods, wooded ridge
Water Features	Amity Creek
Era of Construction; Historic Resources	Constructed 1935-36; replaced Amity Creek Segment
Recreational Resources and Uses	Major fall migratory bird observation and research area. Walking, running, biking; overlooks used for picnics, gatherings. Marked hiking, cross-country ski, snowmobile trails
Resources in Proximity	Lester Park, Northland Country Club (private), trails link to other open space resources
Adjacent Neighborhoods & Planning Dist.	Lakeside / Lester Park (District 9) south; Morley Heights / Parkville (District 8) north
Key Issues	Prevention of vandalism; Improve safety of Glenwood intersection. Is seasonal closing necessary?

## SEGMENT PROFILE: **SEVEN BRIDGES ROAD SEGMENT**

Endpoints	Maxwell Road to London Road
Character-Defining Features	Narrow, winding road; stone-faced concrete arch bridges
Adjacent Land Use	Urban park, forested; residential at southern end
Land Ownership	Public - Lester Park and City forest land - and private, residential and limited commercial, southern end
Spatial Organization	Shifting views of woods and creek as road turns; short visual perspectives; semi-enclosed feel
Circulation Patterns and Road Condition	Narrow paved road without curb, gutter or sidewalk; occasional pull-outs; intersections with city streets at lower end; route beginning can be difficult to find
Major Intersections and Entry Points	Superior Street, London Road
Structures and Objects	Eight stone-faced concrete arch bridges, one culvert
Topography / Grade	Gentle slope at bottom of hill becomes steep ascent
Vegetation	Mixed species, primarily aspen associations
Views and Vistas	Occasional views down Amity Creek
Water Features	Amity Creek - multiple crossings
Era of Construction; Historic Resources	Constructed 1901-03; donated to city 1905; bridges by Morell & Nichols, 1910
Recreational Resources and Uses	Trails, fishing, overlooks at south end. Ice rink at mid-point detracts from scenic character
Resources in Proximity	Lester Park trails and golf course
Adjacent Neighborhoods & Planning Dist.	Lakeside / Lester Park (District 9)
Key Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Wayfinding around eastern terminus, Superior Street to London Road</li> <li>-Dumping, deteriorating pavement conditions.</li> <li>-Bridge maintenance and reconstruction.</li> <li>-Compatibility of ice rink use?</li> </ul>

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## APPENDIX B: REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX C: OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS

The following summaries reflect comments and discussion among small groups at an Open House on the preliminary Parkway plan, held in May 2002.

### Group 1: Chester Park Neighborhood

Traffic volumes and speed: 8th Ave. E. at Skyline – no sight distance for driveways

Vegetation control: residents are paying a “view tax” – need policy on citizen trimming – should city-owned property on downslope side be trimmed as a rule?

“Chainsaw Massacre” from Chester Park Drive east to 8th or 9th – reasons for cutting vegetation?

Safety at Chester Bowl vicinity: could retaining wall be moved outwards to fit in a bike/ped lane? (Some say gravel is in character, more natural, historic). Current problems with closure of 9th Street bridge – all traffic diverted to parkway

Need for parking enforcement in ped. lane

Traffic calming at Chester Parkway, Kenwood and Kent – speed humps, stop signs – 4-way – at Kenwood and Kent

View protection – could heights of trees be controlled?

Informal pullouts – Peace Church – 11th Ave. E. – formalize

Confusion following route – try a stencil?

Logo – needs update of color, font; increase size, but basically sound

Note existing pedestrian route – paper street? – leading from Chester Park up to Aftenro property, connecting to UMD (College and 19th)

### Group 2

Maps: future extension of Lakewalk should be linked to Skyline

Concerns: speed limits reduced around curves – pedestrian caution (signs)

Introduce legislation to allow parkways to reduce speeds to 25 mph

Hiking trails could be developed below parkway

Lincoln Park Drive washing out – close to automobiles?

Vegetation: clear overlooks – Duluth Vo-tech could clean out and replant to avoid overgrowth – potential Eagle Scout project

Bike trail connection between Zoo and Spirit Mountain

Lighting: limit so that lights shine down and out to lake. Reflective markers could be used at intersections

Don’t place any improvements that can be vandalized.

Enforcement against dumping needed. Off-road vehicles an issue

Historic designation: may impose demands that people don’t want – need to see pros and cons laid out – proceed with caution

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Logo: like the historic logo – plant more white pine, spruce, to enhance that character

Bridge over Mesaba – may be needed. May need more work; this is a good start. Wind on bridge will be a problem. High cost may not be worth the improvement.

Need to improve pedestrian, hiking and biking opportunities – parallel trail?

Oppose one-way idea.

### Group 3

Vegetation:

- neighborhoods should determine degree of clearing
- view is most important aspect of parkway
- may need height limit on some trees
- most byways (national) have a veg. management plan

Pedestrian/bike use:

- improvements should include pedestrian paths
- dangerous or inaccessible
- incorporate route in marathons, etc.
- no change at Hawk Ridge
- intersections with Haines are serious safety issues

Overlooks:

- proposed overlook over-designed
- view speaks for itself
- lights would interfere with night view; would be shot out
- simpler the better – wide enough for bus pull-off
- need bike racks, especially at trailheads
- keep character, stonework, etc.

Preservation:

- National Scenic Byway would be preferable to historic district
- City spent \$200,000 on Lakewalk – would go a long way on Skyline
- scenic view overlay
- limit development to protect integrity
- retain character

Logo:

- keep original logo
- use small logo signs or stencil to designate
- use signs sparsely, where needed at intersections
- need a really good brochure

Goal should be to be able to bike entire route

Oppose one-way designation

### Group 4

The City of Duluth should:

- keep up what we have – maintain logical approach to upgrades
- narrow their focus – just fix/repair just like 30 years ago
- focus on road surface, keep it simple
- repair bridges and roadways
- make this safer for children
- trim overgrown areas – plant more white pine above (as before?)
- keep road width as is – keep signage standard
- plant more low growing greens in overlook areas
- plant more indigenous trees that attract birds
- restore what is there (bridges) – do not widen road – move hockey rinks
- keep accessibility in mind; high walls restrict views

- keep roads at similar width - and add bike lane
- go for “designation” if it can help with funding

Frustration with congestion at Mesaba

Liked green stripe idea for making boulevard

Concern large overlooks will be hangouts for kids (bottles)

Concern about vandalism, dumping of garbage

Believe Skyline is a natural resource – glad city continues to improve it

Mission Creek should be kept open – even developed

Boy Scouts can help with planting projects

Logo Reviewed by Group: Keep similar, maybe less trees, more stonework, and possibly include the lake

Final Thoughts:

- Create “Skyline Watch” neighborhood approach to monitoring – have a phone number?
- Don’t overdo the lighting

## Group 5

### 1) Introductions & major interest/concern

Tim – preserve aesthetic quality, natural resources, and access to recreation (e.g. birding, skiing).

Roger – believes the authentic “rustic” beauty is best; concerned that tour buses stop for extended periods and fill areas with exhaust fumes; has concerns about littering.

Randy – walks to work on it every day; sees boulevard as multi-modal – driving, biking, access to trails and recreation.

Jodi – Agrees overgrowth has led to diminished views; likes painted line showing you're on blvd.

Doug – likes hiking trails off Skyline – concerned they should be marked better; believes Mission Creek should become a nature/hiking trail, perhaps link to the Superior and/or Munger Hiking Trail systems.

Luke – Believes many tourists use Lakewalk – but that Skyline is the “spine” for Duluth’s citizens – he wants to be able to walk and bike on it safely.

Margaret – Believes the buses are OK (they go slow - that’s good) but that we don’t need to cater to them. Make it safer for all to walk & bike, as well as drive.

Wayne – lives near Mesaba, moved here for the greenspace – jogs on Skyline, likes the rustic road; has concerns about resident tree cutting that creates erosion – replanting important

Wendy – most concerned that historical significance of Skyline be maintained.

### 2) Issues we missed?

Desire for non-polluting lighting (eg. vapor lights, pointed down – as in Tucson, AZ)

Need for speed limits – “Take your Time” zones; believed narrow lanes made for slower driving & could provide for needed pedestrian lanes in certain areas especially west of Twin Ponds area.

Perhaps have Skyline be “No cars on Sundays”

Aesthetics need more consideration when replacing retaining walls



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Sidewalks near Chester Creek and Twin Ponds are too narrow.

Comprehensive plan vital – keeping historic considerations a high priority

Boundary Avenue by exit 249 very unsafe for bikes/pedestrians.

One member not in favor of lights being added west of Twin Ponds.

Logo Reviewed by Group: Nearly everyone agreed the logo should be kept close to its original design

Pedestrian Bridge at Mesaba Avenue: Almost perfect balance between those in favor, those opposed, and those undecided about a pedestrian bridge over Mesaba. Concerns were raised about how it would interrupt people's lake view. Consensus much greater towards building a tunnel – which meets both needs for safety and preserving aesthetics.

### 3) Final Thoughts

It's believed many properties are in foreclosure on West Skyline, and that the city should help protect these from becoming developed. In addition, city should keep greenspace a priority.

More connection routes to the lake are needed.

More educational literature needed that outlines the historical significance of Skyline.

Cement barriers used around edge of roadways need to be anchored better – some are being pushed over.

## APPENDIX D: PRIORITY WALL REPAIR LOCATION MAPS

1





2



BARDON'S PEAK



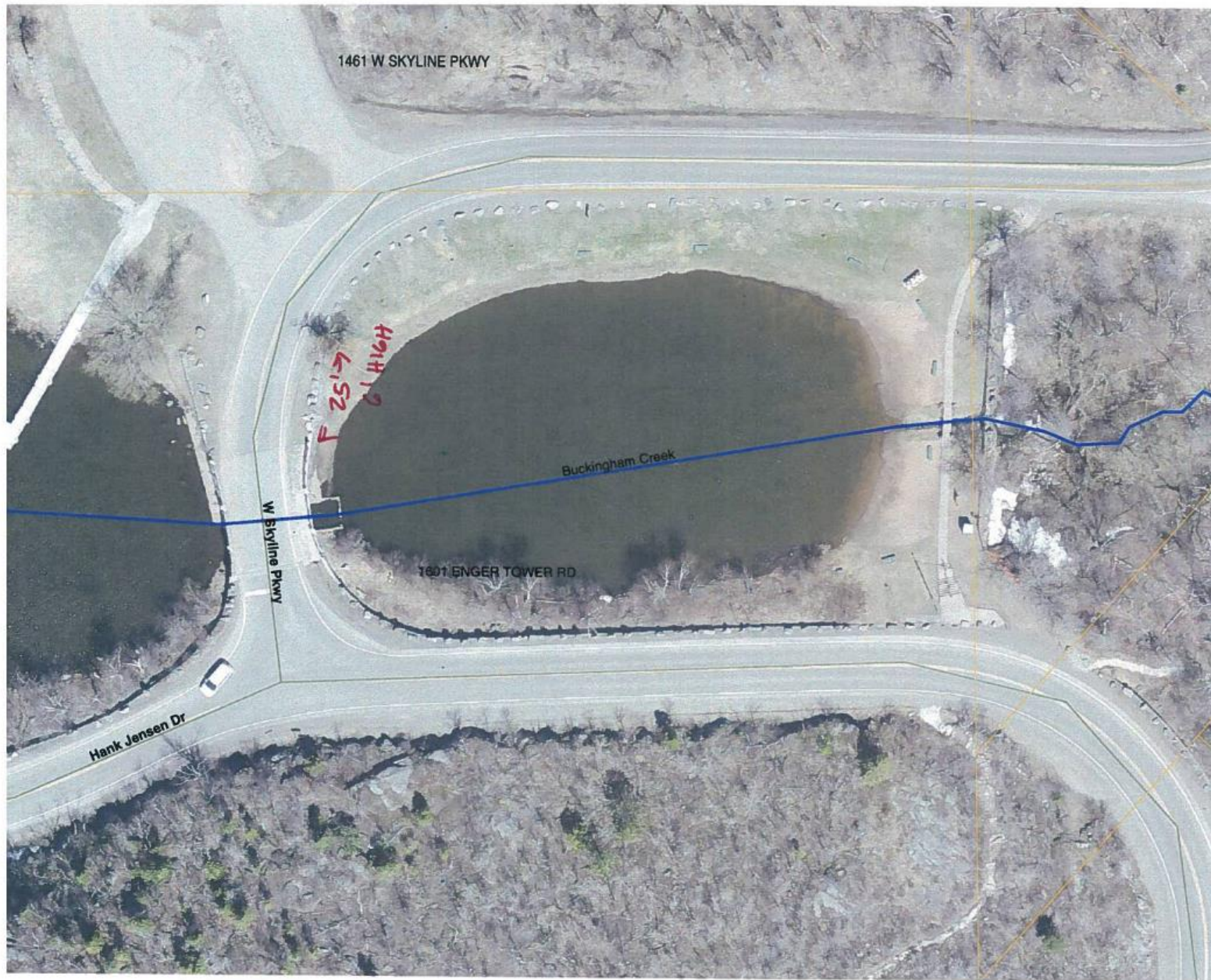
3



SECTION 3 TURN OUT



4



needs cap plates  
placed  
6 or 50  
Twin ponds - Sand mt



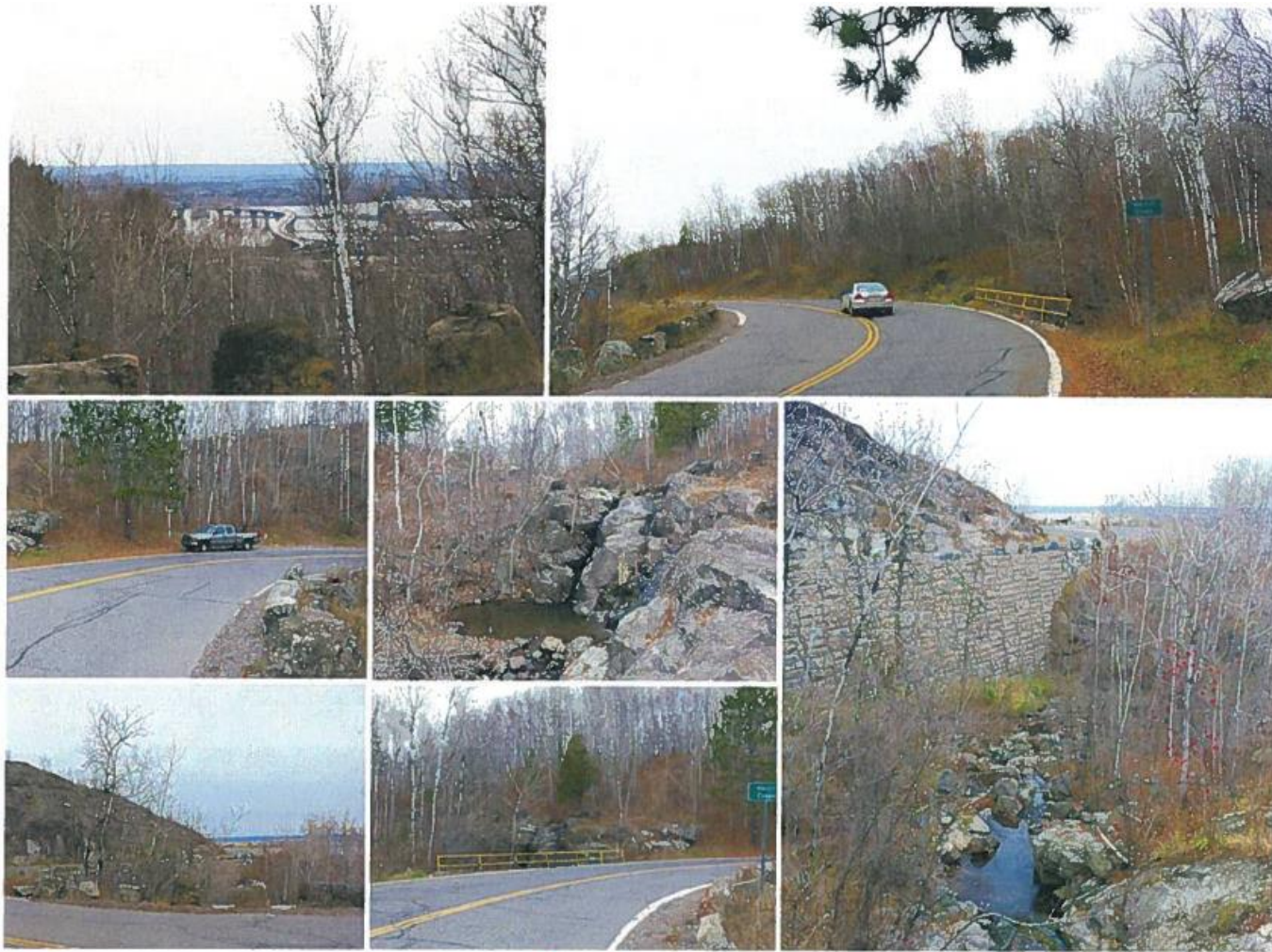
5



STONE TUNNEL REPAIR



5



↑ Rock Arch  
CULVERT  
work



Duluth, Minnesota is situated on the far western edge of the greatest of the Great Lakes, Lake Superior. A busy port city since the 19th century, it has an exceptionally rich cultural heritage in a dramatic natural setting. Skyline Parkway, winding for some 25 miles along the hillsides above the city, is a historic road designed in the picturesque tradition, combining the best aspects of an urban and a wilderness experience.