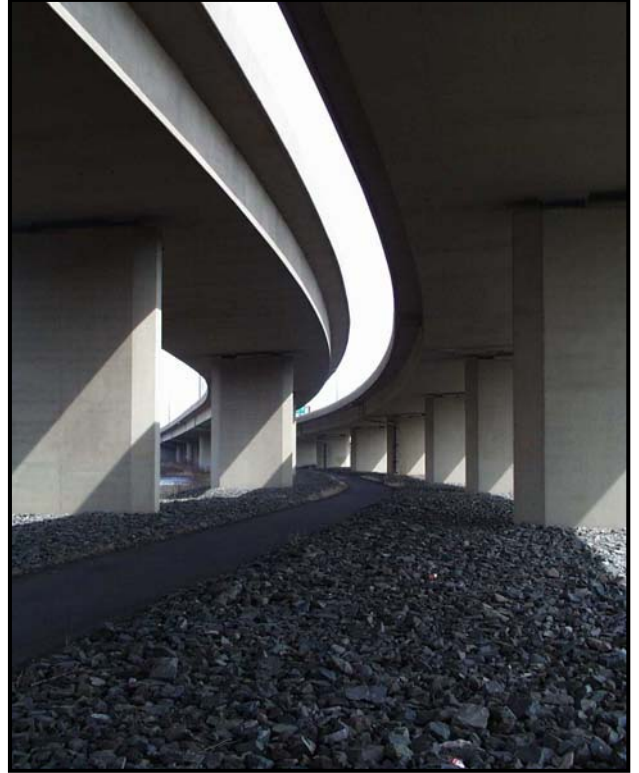


# Munger Trail to Lakewalk Connector



September 2007



Produced by the Metropolitan Interstate Council



# Munger Trail to Lakewalk Connector

September 2007

Prepared by the



## **Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council**

*Duluth and Superior urban area communities  
cooperating in planning and development  
through a joint venture of the  
Arrowhead Regional Development Commission  
and the  
Northwest Regional Planning Commission*



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## ACRONYM GUIDE

<b>BNSF</b>	Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad
<b>CDC</b>	Center for Disease Control
<b>CN</b>	Canadian National
<b>CP Rail</b>	Canadian Pacific
<b>DECC</b>	Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center
<b>DNR</b>	Department of Natural Resources
<b>DTA</b>	Duluth Transit Authority
<b>HPP</b>	High Priority Projects
<b>MIC</b>	Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
<b>MnDOT</b>	Minnesota Department of Transportation
<b>MPO</b>	Metropolitan Planning Organization
<b>RTC</b>	Rail to Trails Conservancy
<b>SAFETEA-LU</b>	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
<b>TEA-21</b>	Transportation Equity Act for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century
<b>TIP</b>	Transportation Improvement Program
<b>TRLF</b>	Transportation Revolving Loan Fund

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***Map Disclaimer***

*The information contained in the following maps is a compilation of data from various federal, state, county, regional, and municipal sources. Geographic information has limitations due to the scale, resolution, date and interpretation of the original source materials. Users should consult available data documentation (metadata) to determine limitations and the precision to which the data depicts distance, direction, location or other geographic characteristics. These maps and/or data are not legal survey documents to be used for describing land for the purpose of ownership or title.*



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# Introduction

## Cross City Connector Trail

The goal of this project is to develop a non-motorized trail connection from the current terminus of the Willard Munger Trail at 75<sup>th</sup> Avenue West to the Lakewalk, allowing users access to both trail systems. This off-street connector trail link would be approximately seven miles in length and would provide bicyclists, pedestrians, and in-line skaters access to Spirit Valley commercial district, Grassy Point recreation area, Wade Stadium, the Lincoln Park business district and Bayfront Park as it works its way eastward toward Canal Park. The new trail would also provide a non-motorized commuting alternative by connecting Duluth's west side with the downtown business district.

This trail connection will be a key link in a regional trail system that is envisioned to link Central Minnesota to the North Shore of Lake Superior. Future trail connections could link the Willard Munger Trail to the Lakewalk and eventually the Gitchi Gami Trail along Lake Superior's north shore.

## History and Connectivity

### Willard Munger Trail

The Willard Munger Trail is named after Willard Munger (1911-1999) who served in the Minnesota House of Representatives for 43 years. Munger was known for his efforts and strong convictions in making environmental changes. He was a pioneer in helping the state move towards its environmental position and in return for his efforts the trail was named in his honor.

The Willard Munger Trail was created in 1973 after legislation was passed by the Minnesota State Legislature to appropriate funds to create the Willard Munger State Trail. After land acquisition and planning was complete, construction of the Willard Munger Trail began in the early 1980's. The trail opened for use in the 1989.

The Munger Trail includes two segments. The Duluth Segment is a 63 mile paved surface trail that runs from Hinckley to Duluth. This is one of the longest paved trails in the nation. The trail was built by following an existing railroad bed. The path today follows the same railroad route that was used in 1894 to help evacuate citizens from Hinckley when a devastating fire swept through the town. The second segment of trail or Boundary segment is an 80 mile natural surface trail that passes through parts of remote forest connecting St. Croix State Park with the Chengwatana, St. Croix and

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Nemadji State Forests. The Munger Trail allows for multiple uses along its trail. Many people use the trail for biking, walking, running, cross country skiing, snowmobiling and even in some sections users horseback ride.

The Willard Munger Trail has had a few notable dedications in the past. In July of 2005 The Willard Munger Trail received national recognition when it was named the 50th rail-trail of the month by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. Along with this award the trail was honored in 2000 when the White House Millennium Council in partnership with the Department of Transportation and the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy named the William Munger Trail as a Millennium Trail. Sixteen trails in all were designated as Millennium Trails.

There have been several expansions and connecting trails that tie into the Willard Munger Trail over the years. Currently there are two other trail segments that interconnect with the Munger trail. The first segment that interconnects to make up part of the Willard Munger Trail is the Alex Laveau Memorial Trail. This trail was named after Alex Laveau who was a former county commissioner and long time advocate for using abandoned rail and developing public trails. This section of the trail is a 16 mile segment that connects Gary-New Duluth to Wrenshall into Carlton.

### **Duluth's Lakewalk**

The Duluth Lakewalk is a 4.2 mile bituminous trail located along the shore of Lake Superior near downtown Duluth. It also features an adjacent boardwalk for part of its length. Construction of the Lakewalk began in the early 1980's as a result of the construction of the I-35 extension. Much of the rock that was blasted to construct the interstate needed to be shipped out of the area. A local architect at the time recommended that the rock be used, instead, to fill in the shoreline and create a walkway and parkland along the lake. This was not the first time that a park along the lake was discussed. In 1927, the idea was put forward in the City's first comprehensive plan and had been discussed as early as 1910. It was the highway construction project that provided the fill material and the first section of the Lakewalk opened in 1988, a half-mile stretch between the ship canal and Corner-of-Lake Park.

The Lakewalk is a non-motorized facility available for use by bicyclist, inline skaters, joggers and walkers. The boardwalk sections of the Lakewalk are constructed of an extremely durable hardwood known as IPE. These boardwalk sections are regulated to walking and jogging. There is also a short segment of the trail that is used for horse and carriage in the summer months. The City of Duluth has developed a set of rules or etiquette for users to follow when using this facility.

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In 1993 the City of Duluth was awarded the national Waterfront Center's top honor award for "Excellence in Waterfront Development." This award honors the design and reconstruction of urban waterfronts along with their importance and special assets that, when redeveloped, contribute to healthy traditional communities.

Other dedications or attractions that are located along the Lakewalk are the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Korean Veterans Memorial, Leif Erickson Park and Rose Garden, Fingers Inn and Brewery Complex, and the popular Canal Park entertainment district.

Over the years the Lakewalk has expanded and nearby facilities have been constructed to enhance access. In 1992 Krech Ojard built the Minnesota Slip Bridge between Canal Park and the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center (DECC). This bridge was built to link the Lakewalk to the area that would eventually become the Duluth Aquarium and Bayfront Park. In 1996 the Lakewalk was expanded and another 1000 feet were extended to the east.

Currently, three extensions of the Lakewalk are programmed: (1) 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue East to 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue East scheduled to open in spring 2008, (2) 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue East to 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue East scheduled for 2008, and (3) 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue East to 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue East scheduled for 2010. Future plans including connecting the Lakewalk to the Gitchi Gami Trail along the North Shore of Lake Superior. As a complete trail network, the Munger Trail, the proposed Munger Trail Extension, the Lakewalk, and the Gitchi Gami Trail would allow travel from central to northern Minnesota (Hinkley to Grand Marais) by paved trail.

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# The Value of Trails

## Recreational Benefits

For the Twin Ports community, the ability to enjoy our beautiful surroundings is an important aspect of living in the northland. Paths and trails are an excellent way to provide inexpensive, convenient places for physical activity as well as the opportunity to explore and enjoy Duluth's unique environment. Other recreational benefits of developing paths and trails in our community include:

- Walking, jogging, running, and hiking.
- Rollerblading/in-line skating.
- Mobility scooter and wheelchair recreation and access to nature.
- Bicycling.
- Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.
- Access to fishing areas.
- Access to canoeing or kayaking on water trails.

## Health Benefits

Paths and trails in neighborhoods can provide health benefits for community members. An increasing number of Americans are overweight or obese, and development patterns that increase dependence on automobiles contributes to the problem. There are also potential health costs associated, as being overweight or obese is a large factor in a multitude of diseases.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), More than 60 percent of American men and women do not get enough physical activity to provide health benefits. Scientific evidence shows that physical activity done at a moderate-intensity level can produce health benefits. People of all ages who are generally not active can improve their health through physical activity, which can help to:

- Provide opportunities for people to begin and continue to exercise.
- Control weight.
- Control high blood pressure.
- Reduce risk for type 2 diabetes, heart attack, and colon cancer.
- Reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Reduce arthritis pain and disability.
- Prevent osteoporosis and falls.

CDC's Active Community Environments Initiative promotes walking, bicycling, and the development of accessible recreation facilities. It was developed in response to data

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from a variety of disciplines, including public health, urban design, and transportation planning. These data suggest characteristics of our communities such as proximity of facilities, street design, density of housing, availability of public transit and of pedestrian and bicycle facilities play a significant role in promoting or discouraging physical activity.

## **Community Benefits**

### **Connectivity**

One of the key components for good trails is connecting linear trails to urban centers and destinations. Extending the Munger Trail would connect the existing trailhead in West Duluth with downtown, the Lakewalk and Canal Park. The Munger Trail extension would not only benefit Duluth by providing a recreational opportunity, it would also allow residents and tourists to enjoy a unique point of view of the city and waterfront. The extension could also have the potential to create jobs, enhance property values, expand local businesses, attract new or relocating businesses, increase local tax revenues, attract more tourism, and promote the local community.

### **Property Values and Marketability**

A National Parks Service study, *The Impacts of Rail-Trails*, found that for the three trails studied landowners reported that "proximity to the trails had not adversely affected the desirability or values of their properties." Also, a survey of Denver residential neighborhoods by the Rocky Mountain Research Institute, reveals the public's increasing interest in greenways and trails. From 1980 to 1990, those who said they would pay extra for greenbelts and parks in their neighborhood rose from 16 percent to 48 percent.

In a survey of adjacent landowners along the Luce Line rail-trail in Minnesota, the majority of owners (87 percent) believed the trail increased or had no effect on the value of their property. Fifty six percent of farmland residents thought the trail had no effect on their land values. However, 61 percent of the suburban residential owners noted an increase in their property value as a result of the trail. New owners felt the trail had a more positive effect on adjacent property values than did continuing owners. Appraisers and real estate agents claimed that trails were a positive selling point for suburban residential property, hobby farms, farmland proposed for development, and some types of small town commercial property.

### **Special Events**

Special events not only generate revenues to sponsors and the community, they could promote the trail itself to residents and visitors. Potentially, there is the possibility of

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connecting the Munger Trail and the Gitchi Gumi Trail. Thus, the trail would extend from Hinkley to Grand Marais. With promotion from biking and hiking enthusiasts through websites, publications, and maps, the extended trail could be a significant draw for tourists.

## Safety

Issue: Do recreational trails and other types of greenways cause crime, vandalism, and other disturbances? What evidence is there to support or to alleviate the concerns of adjacent land owners?

Facts: There is little evidence to support the fear that greenway trails will produce disturbance to private landowners. In fact, the evidence is to the contrary:

- The Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC) issued results from their 1998 survey Rail-Trails and Safe Communities, that out of 372 nationwide trails, including 7,000 total miles and 45 million estimated users, only 3% of trails had experienced major crime.
- Four separate studies conducted between 1979 and 1997 concluded that rail-trails do not increase crime. The Rails to Trails Conservancy reports that “all four studies found that while some residents were apprehensive about rail-trail projects, most did not experience problems after the trail’s opening”.
- A study of Burke-Gilman Trail found that adjacent property owners experienced little or no crime or vandalism. The study surveyed property owners, realtors, and police officers. According to the realtors, property “near” the trail is significantly easier to market and sells for an average of 6% more than similar properties located elsewhere. Nearly two-thirds of adjacent landowners believed that the trail “increased the quality of life in the neighborhood,” and not a single resident thought the trail should be closed. (Evaluation of the Burk Gilman Trail’s effect on Property Values and Crime, Seattle, WA Engineering Dept., 1987).
- A 1992 National Park Service study of the impacts of rail-trails on nearby property owners found that “a majority of landowners reported no increase in problems since the trails opened, living near trails was better than they had expected it to be, and that living near the trails was better than living near unused railroad lines before the trails were opened”.

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# Trail Alignment

The alignment described here is a section by section account of the preferred long term trail alignment. This approximately seven mile connection to the Lakewalk will provide trail users with an off-street trail system crossing the city and potentially connecting to a North Shore trail system (Gitchi Gammi Trail). The sections described begin at the current eastern terminus of the Willard Munger Trail and continue east toward Canal Park and the Lakewalk. Each section includes a description of the preferred trail alignment, potential issues, other route options, facility needs and connectivity opportunities. See the attached maps on for a visual representation. **Costs and other issues associated with acquiring right-of-way may change the final trail alignment.**

Some of the trail segment ends represent targeted landmarks in the trail development process. They are also areas that provide trail access opportunities for trail users. (Click on section headers to view map of trail segment)

## [Section 1 – Pulaski St. to 63rd Avenue West](#)

Route: Follow rail right of way from 75th Avenue West and Pulaski Street to 63rd Avenue West south of Sherburne Street.

Approximate Length: 0.8 miles

Issues: Obtaining ROW from rail companies and fitting trail next to rail tracks.

Other Route Options: NA

Facility Needs: Trail gate, rail crossings and fencing

Connectivity Opportunities: Lake Superior Zoo and Western Waterfront Trail

## [Section 2 – 63rd Avenue West to Recycle Way](#)

Route: Follow rail right of way and old rail right of way to 59th Avenue West. Continue along Waseca Industrial Road to Grassy Point bike trail and use bridge to cross over rail yard. Develop new trail to existing CP Rail right way behind Stora Enso. Follow CP right of way to city owned right of way to Recycle Way

Approximate Length: 1.75 miles

Issues: Expensive right of way to be acquired. Conflicts with truck traffic on Waseca Industrial Road bridge over rail yard. Working with Stora Enso to locate the trail near their property. Potentially expensive section of trail with new segments, rail crossings, and fencing needed.

Other Route Options: Route the trail around the west side of Stora Enso Paper Mill.

Facility Needs: Rail crossings, bridge improvements and fencing

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Connectivity Opportunities: Grassy Point Natural Area Trail, Irving Recreation Area and Spirit Valley Business District

### **Section 3 – Recycle Way to I-35 Crossing near CN Ore Docks**

Route: Follow rail right of way to 40th Avenue West. From 40th Avenue West follow Oneota Street right of way to rail bridge over 37th Avenue West. Continue on old rail right of way to bridge over I-35. If it is not feasible to use the former rail bridge, use pedestrian bridge to cross I-35.

Approximate Length: 1.35 miles

Issues: Constricted area near businesses along Oneota Street. Deciding whether to use rail bridge to cross 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue West

Other Route Options: Pedestrian bridge across I-35 near CN Ore Docks

Facility Needs: Fencing and bridge upgrades

Connectivity Opportunities: Wade Stadium, Hockey Heritage Center

### **Section 4 – I-35 Crossing near CN Ore Docks to 18th Avenue West**

Route: Begin north from I-35 crossing to first rail grade. Turn east and follow rail grade through rail yard to rail grade near DTA building. Continue on rail grade to I-35 “Can of Worms” area along backside of Michigan Street businesses to connect with New Michigan Street right of way. Follow along New Michigan Street to 18th Avenue West.

Approximate Length: 1.6 miles

Issues: Trail runs adjacent to an operating rail yard. Area from 23rd to 21st Avenues West is constricted with potential trail alignment running through business parking lots. The area adjacent to Lower Michigan Street is constricted.

Other Route Options: Near WLSSD, continue along southeast side of I-35 through rail yard to Railroad Street.

Facility Needs: Fencing and bridge upgrades

Connectivity Opportunities: Lincoln Park Business District

### **Section 5 – 18th Avenue West to Bayfront Park**

Route: Follow Lower Michigan Street to Superior Street to the pedestrian bridge. Cross I-35 on the pedestrian bridge and use ramp and existing bike trail to Bayfront Park area.

Approximate Length: 1.1 miles

Issues: The area adjacent to Lower Michigan St. and Superior St is very narrow. Locating trail close to I-35 would cause snow removal from freeway to potentially fall on trail.

Other Route Options: Route the trail on the southeast side of I-35 to Railroad Street.

Facility Needs: Fencing



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Connectivity Opportunities: Lincoln Park Business District, Bayfront Park and Downtown Duluth.

## **Section 6 – Bayfront Park to Lakewalk**

Route: Follow existing bike trail from Bayfront Park Area along Railroad St. to Lakewalk. The existing bike trail could be upgraded.

Approximate Length: .75 miles

Issues:

Other Route Options: Route through Bayfront Park to area behind DECC, across pedestrian bridge and along waterfront to the Lakewalk.

Facility Needs:

Connectivity Opportunities: Bayfront Park, DECC, Canal Park and Downtown Duluth

## Trail Cost Estimate

The trail cost information contained in this section is construction costs and does not include right of way acquisition costs. The construction costs are rough estimates based on average costs of developing other trails in northern Minnesota. The purpose of including this information is to get a rough estimate of trail construction costs. The estimates are broken down by trail sections as described in the previous trail alignment section. The construction cost estimate uses \$165 per linear foot for a trail with the following basic properties - 10 foot width, 3 inch bituminous surface and 6 inches of gravel base. The additional facility costs incorporate facilities such as bridge improvements and rail crossing gates.

### Trail Cost by Section

SECTION	LENGTH	CONSTRUCTION COST	ADDITIONAL FACILITY COST	TOTAL
1	4,200 ft	\$693,000	\$0	\$693,000
2	9,300 ft	\$1,534,500	\$777,000	\$2,311,500
3	7,200 ft	\$1,188,000	\$50,000	\$1,238,000
4	8,800 ft	\$1,452,000	\$75,000	\$1,527,000
5	1,440 ft	\$237,600	\$75,000	\$312,600
6	3,960 ft	N/A*	\$10,400	\$10,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,900 ft (6.61 miles)</b>	<b>\$5,105,100</b>	<b>\$987,400</b>	<b>\$6,092,500**</b>

\*Section 6 has a paved trail connecting the pedestrian bridge over I-35 to the Canal Park area. This section would not need new trail construction unless a new trail alignment is chosen. However, signage will be necessary to accommodate trail users.

\*\*Not including right-way acquisition and design engineering.

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# Trail Funding Options

## Currently Programmed Munger Trail Funding

In the most recent federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, High Priority Projects (HPP) were identified and earmarked for federal funding. One of these projects is the connection of the Munger Trail to the Lakewalk in Duluth. A total of \$2,169,237 in federal funding is earmarked which requires a local match of \$433,847 for a total of \$2,603,084. Of this total \$400,000 plus local match is dedicated to preliminary engineering. Given the difficulty of terrain and length of trail, the HPP funding will not cover the proposed seven mile trail. This chapter outlines additional funding sources that could assist in completing the trail.

## Minnesota DNR Options

### Federal Recreation Trail Program

The purpose of the Federal Recreation Trail Program is to encourage the maintenance and development of motorized, non-motorized, and diversified trails by providing funding assistance. Projects that are eligible for the Federal Recreation Trail Program are motorized and non-motorized trail projects. Along with the maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails; development/rehabilitation of recreational trail linkages including trail side and trail head facilities. Along with environmental awareness and safety education programs relating to the use of recreational trails and redesign/relocation of trails to benefit/minimize the impact to the environment. The Federal Recreation Trail Program is open to all projects that are sponsored by a unit of government, preferably in cooperation with a local trail organization.

Priorities for this program consider the following criteria of the projects during the selection process. The Minnesota Recreational Trail Users Association annually prioritizes funding categories prior to the selection process. Projects that involve urban youth corps workers such as the Minnesota Conservation Corps will be given special consideration. The level of assistance requires a 50% "cash match" for eligible elements of the project proposal. Costs must be incurred and paid for before reimbursement. Only contract services, materials and supplies are reimbursable; neither funding source nor matching funds can be used to meet existing payroll. Approximately \$1,000,000 is available for projects annually. Minimum funding for this program is \$5,000; maximum is \$100,000. Federal funds can in some cases be used as match for this program.

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### **Regional Trail Grant Program**

The purpose of the Regional Trail Grant Program is to help promote the development of regionally significant trails. Projects that are eligible for funds pertain to land acquisition and trail development outside of the metro area only. All land acquisition requires a perpetual easement for recreational trail purposes. Trail development requires a twenty-year maintenance commitment by the project sponsor. The application process for the Regional Trail Grant Program is open to cities, counties, and townships.

Priorities for this program consider criteria such as length, expected use, and resource quality/attractiveness of the project along with demonstrated local/area support. The level of assistance for this program ranges from \$5000 to \$50,000. There is a 50% "cash match" for eligible elements of the project proposal. Neither this funding source nor the "cash match" may be used to meet existing payroll. Matches may not include other state funds, Metropolitan Council Grants, or Federal Recreational Trail Grant Program. Costs must be incurred and paid for before reimbursement. This grant may serve as a partial local "match" for a TEA-21 Enhancement Project.

### **Local Trail Connections Program**

The purpose of the Local Trail Connections Program is to promote relatively short trail connections between where people live and desirable locations, however it is not to develop significant new trails. A secondary purpose of this program is to develop linkages to existing trail segments. Projects that pertain to this program are projects that deal with land acquisition and trail development. Projects must result in a trail linkage that is immediately available for use by the general public along with local/area support. The acquisition of trail-right-of-way is eligible only when proposed in conjunction with trail development. Lands purchased with this fund require a perpetual easement for recreational trail purposes and a twenty-year maintenance commitment by the sponsor. The Local Trail Connections Program is open to cities, counties, and townships.

The selection process gives priority to projects with residential connections to state and regional facilities. The second priority is given to the development of linkages to existing trail segments. The level of assistance for this program ranges from the following: minimum grant- \$5000, maximum grant- \$50,000. There is a 50% "cash match" for eligible elements of the project proposal. Neither this funding source nor the "cash match" may be used to meet existing payroll. Matches may not include other state funds, Metropolitan Council Grants, or Federal Recreational Trail Grant Program.

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Costs must be incurred and paid for before reimbursement. This grant may serve as a partial local "match" for a TEA-21 Enhancement Project.

\*All applications that are filed for Minnesota DNR trail funding are reviewed by the Minnesota DNR and the states trail advisory council, the Minnesota Recreational Trail Users Association (MRTUA).

## **Minnesota DOT Options**

MnDOT administers a Transportation Revolving Loan Fund (TRLF). The TRLF operates much like a commercial bank providing low interest loans to cities, counties, and other governmental entities for eligible transportation projects. When the loans are repaid, the funds are returned to the TRLF and used to finance additional transportation projects. The TRLF is an innovative finance tool that can be used to finance transportation projects that may not get financed through traditional transportation funding methods.

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, pre-design studies; acquisition of right-of-way; road and bridge maintenance, repair, improvement, or construction; enhancement items; rail safety projects; transit capital purchases and leases; airport safety projects; and drainage structures, signs, guardrails, and protective structures used in connection with these projects. An eligible borrower's possible sources of TRLF loan repayment include, but are not limited to, special assessments, property tax levies, tax increment financing, local government option sales taxes, future federal funds, and future state funds.

If a proposed TRLF project is located within an MPO area, the applicant must also obtain the MPO's approval for the TRLF Application and ensure the project is included in the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

## **Federal Options**

### **Federal Transportation Enhancement Program**

-Transportation Activity 1- Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Transportation Enhancements activities are federally funded, community-based projects that expand travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historic, aesthetic and environmental aspects of our transportation infrastructure. Projects that use Transportation Enhancement funds must qualify as one or more of the 12 designated activities and relate to surface

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transportation in order to meet basic federal eligibility requirements. The purpose of using Transportation Activity 1 is to help develop new trails that allow people to commute from one point to another. This fund is set up primarily for commuting purposes and not recreational activity.

In northeast Minnesota, a competitive process begins each year in November and successful projects are programmed for funding five years out. The application process involves a series of steps for project review:

- Preliminary application due in November.
- Committee pre-approves application.
- Final application is due in December.
- In February, task group is formed to begin reviewing final applications.
- Selected projects are announced in April.

The program has roughly \$1.5 million dollars a year that is available for projects. Historically, 15-18 projects apply annually for funding from this program. The success rate of the program has been about 30%. Upon receiving funds each project must identify a fiscal agent to control disbursement of funds. The level of assistance for this program awards a maximum of \$400,000 per phase. Projects can be broken down into multiple phases where the project then receives \$400,000 for each phase. The Duluth Lakewalk has been a project that has received enhancement funding in the past by utilizing the phased approach.

The program specifies that a sponsor must provide 20% of the project cost (local match). However the local match can be in-kind. The value of donated property, materials, and services; the labor of state and local government employees; and the costs of preliminary engineering may count towards the matching requirement. Another option to use as a matching fund is the use of DNR trail program funds.

However when funds are received for the project, they cannot be used for the purchase or easement of property to build the trail. The funds also cannot be applied to engineer/engineering costs or be applied to the regular maintenance of the trail.

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## Trail Development Strategy

The trail will be developed in a phased approach as funding becomes available. The Federal funds currently earmarked for the trail must be committed by 2009. Beginning on the western end and working toward Canal Park, the current amount of High Priority Project (HPP) funding earmarked for the trail will allow the trail to be built to the end of Section 1 and possibly most of Section 2.

The first step in the trail development process is to identify the property owners on the entire preferred route and begin to acquire right of way. Property owners should also be identified on alternative route sections. The focus of the right of way acquisition should concentrate on the first two sections of trail so construction can proceed with currently programmed funding. All costs associated with right of way acquisition should be documented to determine if they are eligible to be counted as local match for the federal funding. All federal funds require a 20% local match.

As the first segment of trail is under development, funding for additional phases of trail should be applied for. The City of Duluth should develop a city-wide trail development strategy that prioritizes which trails will apply for the different funding options. Given that most of the Lakewalk will soon have funding dedicated for its completion to Brighton Beach, completing the Munger Trail to Canal Park should be a high priority. Again, right of way should be acquired for future trail development.

As the trail is developed in phases, some obvious end points for trail segments include the following:

- Completing the trail from its current terminus to Recycle Way (Sections 1 & 2).
- Complete Recycle Way to I-35 near the Ore Docks and Wade Stadium (Section 3).
- Complete Ore Docks to 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue West area in Lincoln Park (Section 4).

These end points would allow access to the signed on-street bike routes that could be utilized for connectivity until the entire trail is developed.

An alternative strategy to consider would be to complete a connection from Canal Park to Lincoln Park. This would provide a commuter option for bicyclists from the Lincoln Park area to downtown Duluth and Canal Park.

As each segment of trail is completed, connector opportunities should be pursued to business nodes and areas with attractions and dense housing. This will provide trail users with opportunities to easily access businesses and attractions.





