



Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council

Guiding the Future of Transportation for the Twin Ports Area

February 17, 2023

Howard Hill
Office of Infrastructure Finance and Innovation
Office of the Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Duluth Lakewalk RAISE Grant Application

Mr. Hill,

On behalf of the Metropolitan Interstate Council (MIC) I am writing in support of the City of Duluth's application for funding through the RAISE Grant Program.

As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Duluth-Superior area, the MIC is charged with transportation and land use planning for the urbanized area. The MIC concurs with the City of Duluth that the project will be beneficial for maintaining and/or improving numerous modes of transportation, and thus be important in moving people and goods within and through the area, bolstering our local and regional economy, enhancing environmental protections, and encouraging improved health and wellness of residents and visitors. The proposed project supports the MIC's long-range planning goals, including the following:

- Rebuilding the Lakewalk from the corner of Lake Ave to 24th Ave E. This will include widening the pathway, reducing the grade of steep slopes, and increase curve radii (i.e. reducing sharp curves) to meet ADA standards. This will also improve safety for the projected increasing volume of scooters and e-bikes. Additionally, the path alignment will be as far away from Lake Superior as property bounds, easements, etc. will allow. This project also proposes a bypass around Leif Erikson Park for commuters, scooters, and e-bikes.
- Improving connectivity from the Lakewalk to the Duluth downtown and residential areas. This may include, but is not limited to, more access points and better wayfinding to the existing access points. Additionally, this may include Essentia installing a connection from their new construction to the Lakewalk path, open to the public. These improvements would also positively benefit equity by helping to make the Lakewalk a better resource for commuting and public health for the Hillside neighborhoods.
- Structurally reinforcing the Lakewalk at 3 key points that are currently failing and are at risk of completely failing in the near future. This will add resiliency by adding additional protection for the freeway, railroad, utilities, and businesses that are immediately adjacent to the lakeshore, especially at the pinch-point adjacent to the Fitger's building which is separated from the lakeshore by just 60 feet.

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- Improving the Lakewalk to include cultural and historical interpretation to make the Lakewalk more welcoming and inclusive for Hillside and Lincoln Park residents. This may also include wayside rests and picnic space for Lakewalk users.

For the above reasons, the MIC encourages your consideration of the City of Duluth's funding request for their Lakewalk RAISE Grant. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter of support. You may contact me at 218-529-7506 if you desire additional information.

Sincerely,



Director
Duluth-Superior
Metropolitan Interstate Council

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cc: Wayne Boucher, MN MIC Policy Board Co-Chair Nick Baker, WI MIC Policy Board Co-Chair

