North Shore Scenic Drive Corridor Management Plan

The mission of the North Shore Scenic Drive Council is to cooperatively enhance the economic benefit of travel along Lake Superior’s North Shore and improve the quality of the route, while preserving its cultural, social, and natural integrity.

March 2015 Update
North Shore Scenic Drive
Corridor Management Plan
Updated - March 2015

Prepared by the
North Shore Scenic Drive Council

Assisted by
Arrowhead Regional Development Commission
Regional Planning Division
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INTRODUCTION

The North Shore Scenic Drive (Trunk Highway 61) spans 154 miles along the North Shore of Lake Superior between Duluth, MN and the Canada border at Grand Portage. The North Shore Scenic Drive is situated in an area rich in natural, cultural, historical, scenic, and recreational opportunities and is one of the most popular Scenic Corridors in Minnesota.

The North Shore Scenic Drive (NSSD) Corridor Management Plan (CMP) provides a vision, goals, and management recommendations for protecting and enhancing the 154 mile drive. This CMP identifies many of the features, qualities and attractions that encourage both tourists and long-time residents to travel this route. The CMP has not been adopted by local units of government. However, it is the desire of the North Shore Scenic Drive Council to assist local units of government by providing information and visions of the character and unique resources of the Byway corridor.

Description of the North Shore Scenic Drive Corridor

The NSSD is a journey through an unspoiled wilderness that travels along the shoreline of the world's largest freshwater lake. The breathtaking cliffs and beaches of Lake Superior's beautiful North Shore are bordered by the Sawtooth Mountains and thousands of acres of pine, aspen and birch trees. Rivers and streams make their way to Lake Superior, creating spectacular waterfalls along the way. Lighthouses reflect the power of the Lake, and dozens of trails allow visitors to experience the North Shore’s natural beauty up close. Many of the communities are home to cultural and historic museums and exhibits, as well as unique shopping, dining and lodging.
The North Shore Scenic Drive between Two Harbors to Grand Portage was originally designated as an All-American Road in 2000. In June 2002, the designation was extended to add the portion of County Highway 61 from Canal Park in Duluth to Two Harbors, an additional 27 miles of scenic roadway along the Lake Superior shoreline.

On its western end, the Byway begins at Canal Park in Duluth, Minnesota and continues 154 miles to the northeast at the Canadian Border. The Byway provides an opportunity not only for recreational travelers to explore the area, but it also serves as a major trade corridor route between the United States and Canada.

Travelers to this scenic drive are treated to spectacular views of Lake Superior to the south and a vast expanse of hardwood forests to the north. Recreational opportunities are numerous along the corridor. Visitors can ski, snowshoe, hike, bike, snowmobile, and photograph such animals as deer, moose, wolves, black bears, and birds. Visitors can also fish for trout in the streams and lakes adjacent to the highway and camp in the corridor’s eight state parks.

The National Scenic Byways Program was developed to allow the Secretary of Transportation to designate roads that have outstanding scenic, historic, cultural, natural, recreational, and archaeological qualities as All-American Roads (AAR) or National Scenic Byways (NSB). The program originally provided a discretionary grants program for scenic byway projects on an AAR, an NSB, or a State-designated scenic byway and for planning, designing, and developing State scenic byway programs. Currently the National Scenic Byways Program still recognizes designated byways as part of the “America’s Byways” collection, however the discretionary grant program for scenic byways has ended and is replaced the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

**Corridor Management Planning**

The Corridor Management Plan (CMP) is an opportunity to look at all of the roles that the highway plays in the economic health and quality of life of corridor communities. The CMP is a document of ideas for enhancement of the highway and for community development associated with the highway’s different roles.

The CMP reflects the vision of the community’s commitment to conserve and enhance the Byway’s intrinsic qualities. The CMP is a working document; therefore, it will be continually reviewed and revised as new information becomes available. An official NSSD Council comprised of interested individuals will work together with other organizations and local units of government to implement and update the CMP as needed.

**Purpose of a Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan**

As part of the Byway’s official designation, a Corridor Management Plan is required. This crucial planning document provides a local and consolidated long term vision for the
Byway. The plan provides a written history of the planning process and goals for the Byway. Further, it lays out strategies to promote the corridor while balancing the care and conservation of the valuable scenic, historic, and cultural sites. A Byway corridor management plan is an essential platform in forming partnerships, seeking funding, and gaining consensus for economic development activities.

Contents of the Plan
This CMP provides a vision for preserving and enhancing the NSSD. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) initially identified components to include into a CMP. This Plan complies with the FHWA and includes the following:

1. A map identifying the corridor boundaries and the location of intrinsic qualities and different land uses within the corridor.
3. A strategy for maintaining and enhancing those intrinsic qualities. The level of protection for different parts of a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road can vary, with the highest level of protection afforded those parts which most reflect their intrinsic values. All nationally recognized scenic byways should, however, be maintained with particularly high standards, not only for travelers' safety and comfort, but also for preserving the highest levels of visual integrity and attractiveness strategy for maintaining and enhancing each of those intrinsic qualities.
4. A schedule and a listing of all agency, group, and individual responsibilities in the implementation of the corridor management plan, and a description of enforcement and review mechanisms, including a schedule for the continuing review of how well those responsibilities are being met.
5. A strategy describing how existing development might be enhanced and new development might be accommodated while still preserving the intrinsic qualities of the corridor. This can be done through design review, and such land management techniques as zoning, easements, and economic incentives.
6. A plan to assure on-going public participation in the implementation of corridor management objectives.
7. A general review of the roads or highway's safety and accident record to identify any correctable faults in highway design, maintenance, or operation. General review of the roads or highway's safety and accident record to identify any correctable faults in highway design, maintenance or operation.
8. A plan to accommodate commerce while maintaining a safe and efficient level of highway service, including convenient user facilities, a plan to accommodate commercial traffic while ensuring the safety of sightseers in smaller vehicles, as well as bicyclists, joggers, and pedestrians.
9. A demonstration that intrusions on the visitor experience have been minimized to the extent feasible, and a plan for making improvements to enhance that experience.
10. A demonstration of compliance with all existing local, state, and federal laws on the control of outdoor advertising.
11. A signage plan that demonstrates how the State will insure and make the number and placement of signs more supportive of the visitor experience.
12. A narrative describing how the National Scenic Byway will be positioned for marketing.
13. A discussion of design standards relating to any proposed modification of the roadway. This discussion should include an evaluation of how the proposed changes may affect on the intrinsic qualities of the byway corridor.
14. A description of plans to interpret the significant resources of the scenic byway.

The FHWA also identified these three additional elements to be included for designated All-American Roads:

1. A narrative on how the All-American Road would be promoted, interpreted, and marketed in order to attract travelers, especially those from other countries. The agencies responsible for these activities should be identified.
2. A plan to encourage the accommodation of increased tourism, if this is projected. Some demonstration that the roadway, lodging and dining facilities, roadside rest areas, and other tourist necessities will be adequate for the number of visitors induced by the byway's designation as an All-American Road.
3. A plan for addressing multi-lingual information needs.

Further, there must be a demonstration of the extent to which enforcement mechanisms are being implemented in accordance with the corridor management plan.

**Benefits of all-American Road Designation**

In the United States, there are a total of 150 America's Byways, consisting of 31 All-American Roads and 120 National Scenic Byways (Historic Route 66 is listed in both categories). To receive an All-American Road designation, a road must possess multiple intrinsic qualities that are nationally significant and have one-of-a-kind features that do not exist elsewhere. The road or highway must also be considered a "destination unto itself." That is, the road must provide an exceptional traveling experience so recognized by travelers that they would make a drive along the highway a primary reason for their trip.

Having the NSSD designated as an All-American Road brings with it many benefits including:

- Eligibility to apply for competitive transportation funding for planning and projects that enhance the byway
- Heightened awareness of the highway route
- Serves to enhance local pride among communities along the byway
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The NSSD CMP was originally developed under the guidance of the All-American Road Steering Committee which included representatives from the Grand Portage Indian Reservation, Lake County, St. Louis County, Cook County, Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), historical, business owners, and residents.

Updates of the NSSD CMP are completed under the guidance of the NSSD Council. The Council includes representatives from the Grand Portage Indian Reservation, Lake County, Cook County, Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), U.S Forest Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (Mn/DNR), Lake County Historical Society, Visit Duluth, North Shore Stewardship Association, Two Harbors Chamber, Explore Minnesota Tourism, Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board, and residents.

A successful Scenic Byway Program depends on the support of community members and municipal officials. A Corridor Management Plan is intended to reflect the vision of the Byway and the surrounding area as developed collectively by the communities along the byway.

Continued public support and direct participation are essential to keep the CMP from just being another plan on the shelf. The NSSD Council meets regularly during the year, typically once per month. The Council has worked to establish an e-mail list for Byway correspondence and outreach to stakeholders with an interest in the NSSD. These individuals receive all meeting agendas, summaries, and other relevant updates concerning the Byway.

The Minnesota Office of Tourism led two strategic planning sessions with the NSSD Steering Committee in January and February of 2003. These strategic sessions provided individuals an opportunity to describe their visions of the desired future of the North Shore Scenic Drive and of the Planning Council itself. The NSSD Council still believes in these visions and works to make that desired future a reality.

The Council updated its strategic plan for the years addressing 2009–2014 planning. The Council feels this is a good strategy to turn ideas into reality, and helps guide development of an annual work plan.

The Council completed an update of the Corridor Management Plan which revisited the annual work plan and also identified investment priorities for 2015 and beyond. Included in these priorities are wayside improvement projects listed in the Investment Priority Addendum-(See Appendix A). The council will insure that design projects allow for public participation to help guide design projects for the byway.
VISION AND GOALS

The vision statement for the CMP describes the purpose, value, and future of the NSSD. It also provides a foundation from which to establish goals and management strategies that will protect the Highway’s intrinsic qualities. This is the mission statement of the North Shore Scenic Drive Council:

“The mission of the North Shore Scenic Drive Council is to cooperatively enhance the economic benefit of travel along Lake Superior’s North Shore and improve the quality of the route, while preserving its cultural, social, and natural integrity.”

NSSD GOALS AND ANNUAL WORK PLAN

Following are the North Shore Scenic Drive 2015-16 Work Plan goals and action items reviewed and revised at the December 12, 2014 and January 16, 2015 council meetings through a workshop led by Explore Minnesota Tourism’s, Tim Campbell. The updated plan was adopted at the March 13, 2015 meeting. The following 3 goals will be the focus of NSSDC efforts in 2015-16:

Goal 1: Be a Catalyst for Infrastructure Improvements and Development

1.1: Update and Maintain the NSSD Corridor Management Plan. Update the CMP to reflect current and long-term strategic planning efforts as needed.

   Action Steps:
   1.1.1: Complete 2015 updates to the CMP
   1.1.2: Add appendices or other supporting documentation related to CMP work-related projects that have been completed.
   1.1.3: Utilize Appendix A for priority infrastructure projects to complete and timeline for implementation. Update annually.

1.2: Provide support for implementation of completed design projects through a technical assistance respective to the needs of the potential project sponsor.

1.3: Develop appropriate messages when interpretive opportunities along the byway arise. Look for opportunities to add value to existing pull-off areas by adding information on the NSSD to existing or planned kiosks.

   Action Steps:
   1.3.1: As interpretive opportunities arise along the byway (i.e., kiosk development, or other projects) work with partners to develop the messages as they relate to the byway.
   1.3.2: Create a promotion piece (e.g., color flyer) about the NSSD and look for opportunities to include it on kiosks at waysides where possible
Goal 2: Promote achievements and activities of the Council and other DMO’s

2.2: Work to increase awareness of and promotion of the NSSD to Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and businesses along the NSSD.

*Action Steps:*

2.2.1: Create a NSSD email blast to go out to all relevant, and encourage them to share it with their respective business contacts and stakeholders.

2.2: Develop Facebook page focused on celebrating successes of the council, promoting attendance to public meetings or events affecting the byway, and support other organizations along the byway.

2.3: Explore feasibility of small, single, logo oriented merchandise item(s) for various promotional opportunities (i.e. window cling, key chain, plastic highway sign, etc.).

Goal 3: Plan for NSSD Council Organizational Sustainability

3.1 Keep the NSSD Council strong and vibrant. Maintain a dynamic North Shore Scenic Drive Council with a cross section of interests, agencies, and organizations along the North Shore.

3.2 Determine long-term sustainable strategies for the NSSD Council.

*Action Steps:*

3.2.1: Increase activity in seeking and obtaining local / regional funds to support the planning and implementation of byway projects and Council staffing.
ADDITIONAL ACTION ITEMS & GOALS

The Council has identified the following to take action on as appropriate:

1. Be aware of legislation and public policy decisions in best interest of the North Shore Scenic Drive Council to achieve identified goals and objectives. Council members shall seek to remain aware of and support any pertinent legislation to this end.

2. Cairn Sign Construction. Support community efforts to continue to build cairn signs along the Byway as needed.

(Potential Locations include: Tofte, Schroeder, Lutsen, Beaver Bay TH)

4. Public Restrooms in Grand Marais-Seek to find collaboration opportunities and strategies to implement the construction of public restroom facilities in Grand Marais.

3. Schroeder Lakeside Park Project-Provide support to Schroeder Township in efforts of leveraging funding to implement design project completed for Lakeside Park in Schroeder.

5. Indicate the importance of the Byway to state and federal agencies. Continue to ensure that all planning or implementation of projects along the Byway are clearly communicated to Mn/DOT and engage their feedback and assistance as needed.

6. Provide on-going support to efforts to complete and improve regional, recreational trails that parallel and intersect with the byway. Provide on-going support of efforts to complete all trails various by modes from in proximity to the byway, as well as the improvement or development of other recreational trails within the byway corridor through letters of support and other efforts. Seek further collaboration with other trails associations and management entities when possible.

7. Be aware of view sheds, forest health, and invasive species issues along the shore and support partnerships with land managers, owners, and other entities involved in practices that enhance the overall scenic experience.

8. Follow opportunities for gateway interpretive center on the western end of the byway. Be aware and collaborate with any future interest for implementation of interpretive center near Duluth as outlined in past design project.
FUNDING

The North Shore Scenic Drive Council works to identify, apply for and be awarded grant or other funds to sustain the work of the Council to implement the Corridor Management Plan and supporting annual work plans each year.

The Council recognizes the importance of broad-based funding in order to sustain work by the Council. Funding is sought at the national, state, regional, and local level. The Council seeks distributed funding sources in order to raise awareness of the value of the work by the Council by the communities and various partners in tourism and natural resources along the byway corridor.

Funding is most commonly sought to support projects related to the following:

• Corridor Management Plan
• Safety Improvements
• Byway Facilities
• Access to Recreation
• Resource Protection
• Interpretive Information
• Marketing and Promotion

The Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC), which provides staff support to the Council, regularly provides grant writing and grant management on behalf of the Council. In many cases, ARDC will help to secure the required local financial match for a grant award.
GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND EXISTING LAND USE

Ownership
The NSSD corridor is primarily rural with a large percentage of the land managed by the USDA Forest Service, the State of Minnesota, and the Grand Portage Indian Reservation.

National Forests
National Forest lands within the corridor are managed for a variety of uses, but primarily for recreation and wildlife habitat. The Superior National Forest has land and resource management plans that establish goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines for management of forest resources such as wildlife, vegetation, wilderness, timber, minerals, soils, water, wetlands, and recreation.

State of Minnesota
State Parks along the North Shore provide bountiful interpretation of the areas natural resources. There are a total of eight State Parks along the North Shore Scenic Drive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cook County</th>
<th>Lake County</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temperance River</td>
<td>Gooseberry Falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cascade River</td>
<td>Split Rock Lighthouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge C.R. Magney</td>
<td>George H. Crosby Manitou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Portage</td>
<td>Tettegouche</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources manages State Parks and uses many techniques to balance preservation with recreation. Each state park has developed its own management plan.

Counties
Cook County, Lake County, and St. Louis County each own significant portions of land along the Byway. Each of these counties has adopted comprehensive land use plans.

Strategy enhancing existing development along the corridor and how to accommodate new development:
The NSSDC will work closely with all units of government along the byway corridor, and also land use partnerships like the North Shore Management Board to be aware of new development concerns while striving to continue to improve existing facilities along the byway.
Management and protective strategies

Protecting air and water resources, providing access to parks and natural areas, and sustaining and enhancing fish and wildlife species and habitat depends on planning and commitment from government, business and residents. It is the goal of the CMP to protect, conserve, and enhance resources found along the corridor. The CMP also realizes that land in and around the corridor has traditionally been used for a variety of purposes, and that many of the activities which occur along the corridor are part of the cultural history of the region.

This Corridor Management Plan does not suggest that change is inevitable or that it is not desired, but rather to suggest that the NSSD has opportunities for preservation, growth, and development that can all be accommodated through strategies that recognize the special appeal of the scenic corridor. Other activities and tools could be explored to determine their usefulness and effectiveness. Some examples are conservation easements, purchase of development rights, acquisition of sites, and land use controls.

Lake Superior has been recognized for years as an area with significant scenic and historical qualities. These positive attributes, however, contribute to increased development pressure. In response to this, citizens and local government officials along the North Shore have completed several proactive planning initiatives to address these issues. The plans summarized below all discuss ways that the scenic, historical, and recreational qualities of the North Shore will be preserved for generations to come.

The North Shore Management Plan serves as a guide to future land use in the corridor and also provides the state shoreland regulations for the Lake Superior corridor. The plan was completed in 1988 and has seen several revisions. The goals and policies strongly promote the preservation and enhancement of scenic and historic areas. The Lake Superior North Shore Corridor Management Plan, developed after the completion of the previous plan, provides more specific recommendations that serve to carry out the goals and objectives of this plan.

The North Shore Management Plan is overseen by the North Shore Management Board (NSMB), a joint powers board consisting of ten local units of government along the North Shore. This unique joint powers board offers local units of government a chance to communicate with each other regarding land use issues along the North Shore corridor.

The Lake Superior North Shore Corridor Management Plan was completed by the North Shore Management Board and was adopted in July, 1997.

“It is the intention of the Lake Superior North Shore Corridor Management Plan to provide a comprehensive tool for the efficient management of resources located within the corridor. The plan will address cultural, scenic, historic, archeological, natural,
recreational, economic, and transportation, among other resources. Goals, strategies, and policies for the management of these resources will be developed to ensure sustainability so that future generations will be provided the same opportunity to experience firsthand our North Shore.”

In the Plan, resource inventories were made for recreational, cultural, historic/archeological, and natural resources. Goals for managing these resources were then formulated and recommendations addressed intrinsic qualities. Among the recommendations for addressing impacts on critical habitat areas is through conservation easements. Conservation easements also can help to maintain scenic vistas.

The North Shore Land Use Plan: Lester River to Two Harbors was completed in December 2001, addressing the corridor from the Lester River in Duluth to the City of Two Harbors. This plan, which was done as a precursor to a new wastewater line that was constructed along a portion of the North Shore, brought four local units of government together to conduct one plan to address land use issues along the North Shore.

In summary, the land use goals of the plan support the preservation of viewsheds and recommends that scenic vistas be considered during any type of development. Secondly, the plan supports low-impact recreation opportunities such as hiking, kayaking, and cross-country skiing.

The Duluth Comprehensive Plan has been updated and the process was based on neighborhood planning principles. The neighborhoods created their own goals and objectives which city staff and consultants were brought together to form a comprehensive plan.

It is clear from this plan that protecting green space, improving access to Lake Superior, preservation of historic buildings, and the extension of the Lakewalk are important to the residents of Duluth.

Old Downtown Strategic Plan (Duluth)

This plan mainly serves to promote the preservation of historic elements and the promotion of open space in the Old Downtown Duluth area along Superior Street on the North Shore Scenic Drive. There are many historic structures in this area that can be preserved. In addition, the reconstruction of Interstate 35 has opened this area up to the waterfront.

Zoning for Duluth Waterfront Mixed Use-Design Review District

This portion of the Duluth Zoning Ordinance is included to show the commitment the
city has made to attractive design and preservation of historic elements in the Canal Park area, which is the western terminus of the North Shore Scenic Drive. This area, which is the major destination for tourists in Duluth, has undergone a remarkable renaissance since the mid-1980’s. An area that was once an industrial center now offers fine restaurants and hotels in addition to the interpretive opportunities and lake views associated with the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center, the Aerial Lift Bridge, and Duluth Ship Canal.

Two Harbors Comprehensive Plan

The Two Harbors Comprehensive Plan (2011) promotes the rejuvenation of the waterfront historic district along the byway. In addition, the construction of a marina and improved waterfront access is one of the action steps associated with the plan.

Secondly, the plan also calls for the creation and expansion of recreational trails throughout the city.

North Shore Scenic Drive Strategic Plan

This plan is compiled of statements of long range vision and interim goals. The document was used to help guide the All American Road Steering Committee into the future. This plan was updated in February of 2003 and again in 2009. It was originally adopted after the successful All-American Road application was submitted for the Two Harbors to Canadian Border segment. The plan provides guidance for development of the goals and action items for the annual NSSD Work Plan.
HIGHWAY AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Overview
The NSSD is a two lane State Highway (Highway 61) and is functionally classified as a principal arterial. The NSSD is a varying road, with heavy traffic between Duluth and Two Harbors, but gradually decreasing as one travels northeast. Tourist congestion in Two Harbors is common on weekends and in the summer months. Truck traffic is heavy along the corridor as this route connects to Canada, Minnesota’s largest trade partner. The pavements and shoulder width along the route are highly variable due to several reconstruction projects along the route. The corridor also has two tunnels at Silver Creek and Lafayette Bluff. Geological challenges along the corridor result in some of the highest costs for highway construction in the State of Minnesota.

TrafficVolumes
The average annual daily traffic (AADT) volumes for the NSSD can be seen in Figure 1. The data gathered is a tabulation of traffic counts from MnDOT in 2013, and includes both east and west traveling vehicles.

Traffic volumes vary from highs of over 16,100 between Duluth’s Canal Park and Brighton Beach to as few as 6,350 vehicles between Grand Marais and the Canadian Border. The total count of AADT for the byway is over 86,000 vehicles. Traffic volume steadily decreases as one heads northeast on Highway 61.

![2013 MnDOT Traffic Volume - North Shore Scenic Drive](image)

Figure 1
**Level of Service**

The level of service (LOS) is a measure of the roadway’s adequacy considering the amount of traffic present. Level of service is usually measured at worst traffic times, or the peak hour, and is commonly thought of as an evaluation of the amount of delay that a motorist experiences due to the roadway geometry under the existing traffic volumes. Three parameters are used to describe LOS for a two-lane rural highway: the average travel speed, the percent time delay, and the capacity of utilization. Based upon the factors of traffic volume and roadway geometrics, a value for the LOS for several segments of TH 61 has been calculated. Observing traffic on the NSSD, the traffic volumes will be well within the capacity of the facility. Levels of service are anticipated to be adequate with motorists able to travel at comfortable speeds without many restrictions due to roadway or traffic volumes.

Ideal conditions for a two-lane rural roadway would be to accommodate speeds of at least 55 mph, lane width of 12 feet, shoulder width of six feet, without no-passing zones, with cars only, a 50/50 directional split, level terrain, and lastly, no impediments to through traffic (no turning vehicles). Unfortunately, this type of roadway does not exist in large continuous segments.

The perfect roadway has a capacity of 2,200 passenger cars per hour in both directions. The scenic byway does have trucks, no passing zones, narrow shoulders, inclines, and intersections. All these features are unavoidable and will degrade the LOS on portions of the byway. The NSSD, with its imperfections, generally has traffic volumes low enough to allow motorists the freedom of movement and, consequently, LOS values are high.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highway</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>LOS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TH 61 (London Rd)</td>
<td>Rose Garden</td>
<td>Brighton Beach</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 61</td>
<td>Brighten Beach</td>
<td>Two Harbors</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 61</td>
<td>Two Harbors</td>
<td>Silver Bay</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 61</td>
<td>Silver Bay</td>
<td>Grand Marais</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 61</td>
<td>Grand Marais</td>
<td>Canadian Border</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Minnesota Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan**

The Minnesota Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) lists the intended projects scheduled for all roadways in the State of Minnesota under the jurisdiction of the Mn/DOT. The STIP is a document that prioritizes the needed projects within Minnesota and sets a project schedule with funding for the implementation of the plan. Those locations on TH 61 within the scenic byway that are listed for improvements are shown below with their construction year and construction cost:
2015
1. **Ped/Bike Bridge**: Gitchi-Gami Trail - Beaver River Bridge and W Road Segment, Project cost: $1,644,500
2. **Bridge Replacement**: 6 miles south Grand Marais at Cut Face Creek replace culvert with single span bridge along with channel adjustments - Project cost: $2,500,000
3. **Bike/Ped Improvement** **SB** Gitchi-Gami Trail, Temperance River Road access Project cost: $157,756

2016
2. **Bridge Replacement**: Approach work and replacement for TH 61 BR8910 over Devil Track River 4.0 mi NE of Gunflint Trail. Project cost: 1,304,000
3. **Bike/Ped Improvement** **NB** North Shore Scenic Drive, Shoulder widening from Brighton Beach Blvd. to McQuade Safe Harbor (NE Duluth City Limit) Project Cost: $600,000
4. **Concrete Pavement Rehab**: NB from Homestead rd to South end BR# 9341 at Knife River Project Cost: $200,000

2017
1. **Bridge Repair**: **Ella****HB** MN 61, Over Beaver River, Rehabilitate Project Cost: $3,000,000
2. **Bike/Ped Improvement** **SB** North Shore Scenic Drive, Shoulder widening from Brighton Beach Blvd. to McQuade Safe Harbor (NE Duluth City Limit) Project Cost: $900,000
3. **Bike/Ped Improvement**: Lakewalk construction along Water Street; between 20th and 23rd Ave E Project Cost: $231,809 (TIP-Duluth Area-ARDC-MIC)

2018
1. **Mill and Overlay/Traffic Signal Inst.**: 5th st in Two Harbors to .7mi N Silver Crk Tunnel Project Cost $3,400,000
2. **Mill and Overlay**: From .15 mi S Lafayette bluff tunnel to 3.2 mi N TH 1 (various locations) Project Cost $3,300,000

**Roadway Safety and Maintenance**
Maintaining and improving the NSSD to ensure adequate roadway safety is the most important aspect of managing the route. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) provides all maintenance on TH 61 from Duluth to the Canadian border.

Because of the extreme topography of the route, certain areas of the highway have deteriorated and are extremely costly to reconstruct. Some portions of the highway have insufficient shoulder width and sharp curves creating problems for motorists who must pull over for emergencies and bicyclists who often share the road with automobiles. To address these hazards several reconstruction projects are scheduled for the future.
These proposed projects will help maintain an efficient transportation link between Duluth and the Canadian Border. Roadway surface, road alignments, shoulder width, and pullouts are some of the elements that will be improved. These projects will safely accommodate current and future traffic. In addition to road reconstruction, the Gitchi-Gami Trail is being constructed alongside the Highway to provide pedestrians and bicyclists an opportunity to enjoy the route while avoiding motorists.

**Multi-Modal Transportation**
The communities along the Byway will benefit from the visits tourists make to the NSSD Scenic Byway. One important mode along the Byway, which is sometimes overlooked, is the recreational bicyclist.

The NSSD, located along the shores of Lake Superior, is a desirable route for cyclists. A characteristic needed to create a premier destination for cyclists is adequate roadway facilities. Currently, TH 61, with moderate traffic volume and varying shoulder width, conflicts with the recreational use of cyclists.

The Gitchi-Gami State Trail is a separated bicycle/pedestrian trail currently under construction along the NSSD. The trail when completed will consist of a ten-foot paved surface between the cities of Two Harbors and Grand Marais. When completed, this trail will serve an important safety facility along the byway as it will separate motorists and bicyclists/pedestrians. The NSSDC will strive to include all modes of transportation when completing design improvement projects and make considerations for all modes of transit when making other planning decisions.

**Wayside Rest Areas**
Along the Byway there are over 60 public waysides ranging from simple pull-off areas to paved or landscaped areas with amenities such as parking, picnic areas, trail access, lakeshore access, restrooms, interpretive kiosks, and visitor information facilities. The North Shore Scenic Drive Council recognizes the critical value that these diverse wayside rests hold for providing a safe, fun, and memorable experience for travelers along the byway.

The NSSD Council works to continually identify improvements for safety and visitor amenities at these wayside rests. **Additional CMP Reference Materials** are referenced on page 38, and provide an overview of two key resources that inform and guide the Council’s work to improve these waysides: the *NSSD–Wayside Rest Improvement Plan* and *NSSD–2012 ADA Accessibility Assessment*.

**Public Safety**
Law enforcement along the corridor is provided by the Minnesota State Patrol, St. Louis County Sheriff, Lake County Sheriff, Cook County Sheriff, Grand Marais Police Department, Silver Bay Police Department, Two Harbors Police Department, and the
Byway commerce

The NSSD connects 11 communities along the North Shore. Many of these communities provide for year round shopping and recreation. Private businesses provide for many recreational opportunities, shopping, dining, and lodging. Full service campgrounds provide byway users the opportunity to camp and experience the outdoors. There are campsites, lodges, resorts, cabins, RV hook-ups, and bed and breakfasts along the NSSD. The Minnesota Department of Transportation provides several lookout and wayside rests with rest rooms along the NSSD.

The NSSD provides an important commerce connection to Canada. Over 33,079 commercial trucks entered the United States through the Grand Portage Border Crossing. Canada is Minnesota’s largest trading partner accounting for an annual $3.8 billion in exports. Eighty-seven percent of Canada’s merchandise exports cross the U.S.-Canada border.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VEHICLE TYPE</th>
<th>TOTAL YEARLY CROSSINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Commercial</td>
<td>33,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Vehicles</td>
<td>216,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passengers in Personal Vehicles</td>
<td>654,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrians</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data only reflects vehicles, passengers or pedestrians that have entered the United States along the US-Canadian border. The US Customs Service does not collect comparable data on outbound vehicles.

The primary economic activities in the region are agriculture, industrial manufacturing, iron ore mining and pellet production, shipping, commercial and sport fisheries, and recreation and tourism.

The Lake Superior Circle Route is a four to six day drive of 1,526 miles. The circle tour travels through Minnesota, Canada, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Many visitors travel along the tour route in the fall during peak fall color time. Several commercial tour buses travel this route and local area Chambers of Commerce promote the area to tour companies.
SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Demography
The NSSD has seen moderate growth over the past decade after a moderate decline in population from 1980-1990 in which the area lost nearly seven percent of its population. The estimated current population along the NSSD is 49,901.

The area with the most significant population growth was Cook County. Cook County experienced 33.6 percent growth from 3,868 residences in 1990 to 5,168 residences in 2000. Much of the development in Cook County is due to the seasonal influx of tourism and seasonal residences along the shore.

Along the North Shore, persons age 25 to 54 years of age represented 42 percent of the total population. The median age of North Shore residents is 41.9. This is considerably higher than the statewide average of 35.4. Those age 35 to 44 represented 15 percent of the population, the largest percent growth among age groups. Those age 65-74 year represented nine percent of the North Shore’s population in 2000.

Economic Characteristics
The corridor is very unique with both natural and recreational resources, but challenged by its own success. The original economy of the corridor was based on resource extraction and processing-primarily mining, forestry, and fishing. However, in the 1980’s, recreational resources of the corridor began to come into their own. Recreation and tourism activity centers along the corridor are now substantial economic generators, challenging or even eclipsing the traditional resource extraction industries. Traditionally, the recreational use of the corridor was based on the ski resort industry and snowmobiling in the winter months and fishing, hiking, and camping in the summer months. However, the recreational industry has grown and expanded in the corridor and now operates year round, minimizing shoulder seasons.

The largest three industries along the North Shore in 2000 were education/health and social services, arts/entertainment/food /recreation, and retail trade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Household Income</th>
<th>Family Income</th>
<th>Per Capita Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>23,493</td>
<td>29,018</td>
<td>11,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>37,783</td>
<td>47,769</td>
<td>20,113</td>
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</table>
### NSSD Resident Estimated Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/Organized Township/Reservation</th>
<th>2010 Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand Portage Reservation</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Marais</td>
<td>1,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutsen</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofte</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schroeder</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Bay</td>
<td>1,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver Bay</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Harbors</td>
<td>3,745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NSSD Total Population</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,598</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duluth</td>
<td>86,265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S Census Bureau 2010

### NSSD Resident Estimated Median Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/Organized Township/Reservation</th>
<th>2010 Median Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand Portage Reservation</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Marais</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutsen</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofte</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schroeder</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Bay</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver Bay</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Harbors</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NSSD Median Age Estimate</strong></td>
<td><strong>47.4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duluth</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S Census Bureau 2010
Median Household Income

Map and Data Source: Northland Connection.com/realestate

Total Business Establishments

Map and Data Source: Northland Connection.com/realestate
Population by Block Group

Map and Data Source: Northland Connection.com/realestate
INTRINSIC QUALITIES

According to the original nomination form for an All American Road, an intrinsic quality "means scenic, historic, recreation, cultural, archeological, or natural features that are considered representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of an area."

Scenic

There is no question that one of the main draws of the North Shore Scenic Drive is its reputation as one of the most scenic drives in the United States.

For as long as people have been able to travel along the North Shore, the road, Lake Superior, the forest, and rugged landscapes have been linked. If one wants to best experience the scenic beauty of the North Shore, the first and best place to do it from is the North Shore Scenic Drive.

The road is perfectly positioned between Lake Superior and the ridgeline, offering views of waves crashing on the rocky beaches and forested hills rising along the ridges. In addition, there are multiple rivers that cascade down from the Lake Superior highlands to meet Lake Superior.

The North Shore Scenic Drive is also a four-season route. The change of seasons brings a new and refreshing appearance to the Byway throughout the year. Each fall, there is an explosion of color along the route. Visitors come from all around to see the display of red, yellow, and gold. In the winter, the close proximity of the road to the lake allows for even more views to be exposed once the leaves have fallen from the trees. Winter is also an excellent time to look for wildlife such as deer as they travel along the frozen portions of the lake. In spring, the break-up of ice shows another side of Lake Superior as huge mountains of ice are driven up the shore. Finally, the summer brings residents and visitors alike to the lake to enjoy a respite from the heat.

To begin a journey along the North Shore, there is no better experience for a first-time visitor to Lake Superior than strolling out on the piers that serve as the entrance to the Twin Ports of Duluth-Superior. The Aerial Lift Bridge frames these piers, which are located just a few feet from the beginning of the Byway. Standing on the piers offers a chance to look out upon the expanse of the North Shore. If they are lucky, the visitors can also witness a 1,000-foot long freighter pass close by as it maneuvers through the ship channel.

Another point of scenic interest is the Duluth Lakewalk, which allows the visitor to walk over four miles along the lakeshore.

As visitors continue along the route, they encounter the beautiful homes that line
London Road. These homes display a wide variety of attractive architectural styles. In addition, this tree-lined street offers a wonderful transition on the Byway from the working hub of the Twin Ports to the more rural area where the route begins to hug the coastline.

Charming communities dot the route from Duluth to Two Harbors. Most of these communities began as small fishing villages. Some, such as Two Harbors, also shipped ore and timber. Another example of a small community is Knife River, located just a few miles south of Two Harbors. It is only a short walk to the mouth of the Knife River where relaxation is a must as the lake unfolds.

The North Shore Scenic Drive remains unmatched as the only route in the nation that offers an opportunity to experience Lake Superior’s rugged shoreline and forests in such an intimate manner. There are many roads that take people around lakes in the United States. However, only the North Shore Scenic Drive offers people such a personal experience with the scenic beauty of Lake Superior, the world’s largest freshwater lake.

Natural
Natural qualities generally apply to features that are in an undisturbed state. These features include geologic formations, fossils, landforms, water bodies, vegetation, and wildlife.

Geology
The diverse geology along the Byway offers excellent educational and interpretive opportunities for all levels of interest. Lake Superior is located in a downward fold, or trough, of Precambrian rock. The basin resulted from a combination of geologic events. The gradual processes that formed the Lake Superior basin began during the Late Precambrian Period some 1150 million years ago when the earth’s crust split apart, with great floods of molten rock spewing forth on the surface as lava flows or cooling off and hardening below. This activity continued for some 20 million years. As the flows congealed into new earth crust, the bedrock beneath gradually sank, tilting the overlying mass eastward. The depression continued to sink even after the volcanic period, developing into an impressive basin. Wind and water erosion over the next millions of years laid down a thick layer of mud, sand, and gravel until the basin was a broad low plain.

About a million years ago, the great glaciers of the Ice Age began their slow work of carving the coast. Four successive waves of mile-thick ice gouged out the basin, exposing the intricate and varied volcanic formations of the basin rim while depositing the sediments hundreds of miles to the southeast. During glacial retreat, meltwaters filled this basin far above present levels. The Lake Superior of that time (about 12,000 years ago) is called Glacial Lake Duluth by
geologists. As outlets to the south and east opened, the lake level subsided. Eventually the lake reached its present surface elevation of 602 feet above sea level.

Virtually all of the bedrock of the North Shore consists of Upper Precambrian volcanic rocks poured out from a giant rift about 1.1 billion years ago, as the continent started to tear itself apart. A few intrusive rocks exist, such as the massive jointed sill at Silver Cliff, and irregular intrusive bodies such as the diabase at Silver Bay and Beaver Bay. These diabase bodies host very large inclusions, such as the white one at Split Rock Lighthouse.

Vegetation
The Byway travels through the three million acre Superior National Forest, the vegetation ranges from older mature forests to younger stands. Upland areas along the byway contain aspen, birch, maple, spruce, balsam fir, and pine. The variation in vegetation types along with the difference in age classes, provides for a variety of scenery for the traveler.

Wildlife
Wildlife is abundant in the corridor, especially whitetail deer. Other wildlife sightings include black bear, fishers, pine martins, coyote, red tail fox, grey wolf, and moose. Bird watching is excellent along the corridor with species such as hawk owls, grouse, northern goshawks, blacked-backed woodpeckers, and grey owls. The American Bird Conservancy named the Superior National Forest one of America’s Globally important bird areas in 2001. With nesting species the Forest has the greatest number of breeding birds of any national forest.

Recreational
Lake Superior and the North Shore Highlands provide a unique array of all-season recreational experiences that is unmatched. Fortunately for travelers, the North Shore Scenic Drive offers excellent access to many of these opportunities for the traveler who wants to augment their journey by pursuing recreational opportunities. People have been escaping to the natural beauty of the North Shore since the route was completed early in the century. The many points of interest along the route give visitors a reason to come back again.

Areas near the North Shore Scenic Drive from Duluth to the Canadian Border have well-developed facilities for camping, hiking, biking, skiing, snowmobiling, golfing, canoeing, kayaking, and boating. In addition, activities such as bird-watching and fishing are popular. Hawk Ridge, a renowned place to view migrating birds is less than five miles from the Byway. The trout streams that line the route are often full of hopeful anglers.
Duluth is renowned for its park system. Leif Erikson Park and Kitchi-Gammi Park, both along the North Shore Scenic Drive, offer great opportunities for picnics and leisurely strolls along the lake. Both are points of interest on our North Shore Scenic Drive map. In addition, the traveler who does not participate in any of the recreation opportunities can still leave their vehicle at one of the twelve pullouts located along the North Shore Scenic Drive to stretch and view the lake.

While we could compile a seemingly endless list of recreation facilities, the one-of-a-kind nature of the recreation opportunities is best expressed by summarizing the linear recreation experiences for the traveler. In addition to recreational driving, we count ten ways people can travel a linear route and experience the beauty of the North Shore Scenic Drive from a place other than their vehicles. All of these types of opportunities either currently or are planned to run a route that roughly will parallel the North Shore Scenic Drive. The other routes are accessible from the northern terminus of the North Shore Scenic Drive in Two Harbors and will parallel the existing All-American Road.

**Boating**- There are several small craft harbors and protected accesses along the North Shore. These sites include the Duluth Harbor Entry, McQuade Access, Knife River Harbor and Marina, Two Harbors Access, Twin Points Access, Silver Bay Harbor and Marina, Taconite Harbor Small Craft Harbor and Access, Tofte Access, Grand Marias Access and Marina, Horseshoe Bay Access, and Grand Portage Access and Marina. Each of these accesses offer a variety of services and are spaced out along the North Shore. Recreational and boats can commonly be seen along the shoreline from Duluth to the Canadian Border.

**Kayaking and Canoeing**- For those more ambitious about water travel, the Lake Superior Water Trail is available. This non-motorized state water trail will have access points and campsites from Duluth to the Canadian Border. The Minnesota State Legislature passed an act to create the trail in 1993. The Minnesota portion of the trail extends from the St. Louis River Bay in Duluth to the Pigeon River on the Canadian border. The approximately 150 mile trail is a joint effort of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Lake Superior Water Trail Association of Minnesota. The trail has been broken into four sections with maps and detailed route information. These sections are the St. Louis River in Duluth to Agate Bay in Two Harbors, Two Harbors to Caribou River, Caribou River to Grand Marais, and Grand Marais to Pigeon River at the Canada border.

**Rail**- The North Shore Scenic Railroad offers travelers a chance to enjoy the scenery of the North Shore from a historic train as it travels between Duluth and Two Harbors.

**Hiking and Snowshoeing**- The Superior Hiking Trail is a spectacular 220-mile
trail that when completed will extend 300 miles from Wisconsin south of Duluth to the Canadian Border. "Backpacker" magazine named the Superior Hiking Trail one of the nation's greatest and one of the top 25 in the world. The trail will eventually become part of the North Country National Trail, which will extend from New York to North Dakota. The trail climbs through the ridges and forests that rise above the North Shore Scenic Drive, offering spectacular views of Lake Superior. In recent years, the rise in popularity of snowshoeing has given the Superior Hiking Trail a new all-season identity.

**Snowmobiling and Cross Country Skiing** - No list of recreational opportunities would be complete in Minnesota without snowmobiling. The North Shore State Trail is a 150-mile long multiple use trail that is usable during all four seasons. It has become a very popular snowmobiling route. In addition, the trail offers cross-country skiing. There are also parts of the trail available for hiking and horseback riding. The trail winds through the rugged bluffs that overlook Lake Superior.

**Bicycling and In-Line Skating** - The final piece to this list of recreation along the North Shore is the Gitchi-Gami State Trail. This trail will extend from Two Harbors to Grand Marais near the existing All-American Road. As Trunk Highway 61 is being reconstructed over the next decade, the trail will be built parallel to the highway. The ten-foot wide bituminous path will allow pedestrians, bicyclists, and families to travel in complete safety.

There are no other places in the country that can surpass the linear recreation opportunities to be found along the North Shore of Lake Superior.

**Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological**

If the traveler is not too fatigued from the many recreation opportunities or is able to pull away from the scenic vistas, the history along the North Shore Scenic Drive is rich and waiting to be told.

From the Twin Ports to the Canadian Border, there is a tremendous amount of history already interpreted. The North Shore Scenic Drive Committee has completed an Interpretive Plan for the North Shore Scenic Drive that will enhance these opportunities.

The first people to settle the North Shore region arrived about 10,000 years ago. These Native Americans entered the region during the final retreat of the Wisconsin glaciation. Many waves of Native American people inhabited the North Shore prior to European contact. The first Europeans, French explorers and fur traders, reached Lake Superior country around 1620. By 1780, the Europeans had established fur trading posts at the mouth of the St. Louis River near Duluth and at Grand Portage Bay at
Grand Portage. The recent history of the North Shore encompassing fur trading, logging, fishing, and mining, among many other activities, begins here. Many of these historical industries are linked by the shipping and rail industry, which has dominated the economy for over a century. Because the Twin Ports is the farthest inland seaport in the world, 2,342 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, the railroads have a rich history in bringing goods to Duluth for shipment around the world.

The bookends of interpretation along the North Shore Scenic Drive are the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center and the Grand Portage National Monument. The Maritime Visitor Center offers a wealth of information on the shipping industry. Meanwhile, the Grand Portage National Monument was established to commemorate and preserve the Ojibwe heritage and the major trade route of the 18th century fur trade in North America.

Finally, there are several historical markers along the route that offer some additional perspective on the history of the area. The NSSD Interpretive Plan serves to help in identifying sites and what types of additional interpretive sites are appropriate. Implementation of this plan will add to the existing ways in which visitors learn or participate in these historic elements.

It is clear from the existing interpretation and the supporting documents that the history of the North Shore is unique in the region.

This assessment of the byways intrinsic qualities and their context will be utilized when making improvement decisions and incorporated into design plans in order to preserve the elements of the North Shore Scenic Drive which create an experience unlike any other.
INTERPRETATION

Interpretation will provide travelers with information about the resources of the byway and their value in an educational and interesting matter. Interpretation gives the visitor a reason to stay longer, to learn, and then to spread the word about their experiences, which translates into positive economic impacts for the NSSD.

The NSSD offers an opportunity for visitors to see wildlife in its natural surroundings, beautiful Lake Superior scenery, evidence of glaciation, Native American culture, and a rich history of logging, mining, fishing, and other cultural resources. Interpreting these and many other recreational, cultural, and historic qualities along the NSSD are keys to helping visitors fully understand and appreciate the Byway’s resources.

The Council, business owners, and residents have discussed the need for additional interpretive sites along the NSSD.

**Purposes of Interpretation**
Interpretation is not equivalent to marketing. It may be used as a marketing tool designed to create a sense of place in visitors and make them want to learn more about a special resource or return to that place. Interpretation alone, however, cannot promote a destination.

Interpretation is *not* information. Visitors will gain knowledge through interpretive media but the way information is presented makes it interpretive. There are a variety of interpretive media and all have advantages and disadvantages. It is important to understand enough about the resources, the visitors and the message that the three can be blended into a plan that includes themes, locations and types of media that provide the best solution for each interpretive site.

Effective interpretation results in better-informed and more respectful visitors. It does not necessarily attract new visitors. It is important that visitors understand resource protection and their role in protecting the cultural and natural resources they are there to enjoy.

**Existing Interpretation**
An inventory of personal and non-personal interpretation along the NSSD has been completed. The categories of interpretation types include:
- Historical/Geological Markers
- Museums and Centers
- Outdoor Experiences
- State Parks
Historical/Geological Markers
These informational signs have been erected by the Geological Society of Minnesota, or the Minnesota Historical Society. They are stone structures with the following topics and locations:

In Place
- Skyline Drive—Located at Lester River
- French River/Clifton—Located at the French River Road and Highway 61
- Buchanan Townsite—Located along Scenic Drive south of Knife River
- Dock for steamer America—Located at the Bluefin Bay parking lot in Tofte
- Lake Superior Agate—Flood Bay Wayside Park

Proposed
- Silver Creek Cliff—Located on the NE end of the Silver Creek tunnel
- Lava Flows Complicate Bridge Foundation—Located at the Gooseberry River bridge
- Lava Flows Become Stairstep Waterfalls—Located at the Gooseberry River bridge
- Geology of the Split Rock Region—Located at the Split Rock Historical Site

Museums and Centers
Museums and Centers along the route provide additional interpretation opportunities for the traveler. Along the North Shore Scenic Drive there are three prominent subject areas: transportation, natural resources, and historical/cultural resources.

Transportation
Transportation museums and centers include a variety of transportation types. The Edna G. is a retired tugboat now moored in Two Harbors, but at one time it was the prime mover of ore carriers into and away from the massive ore loading docks. Today, it is the last coal-fed, steam powered tug on the Great Lakes. Shipping interpretation is also found in Canal Park at the Lake Superior Maritime Museum and aboard the William A. Irvin, a steamship that at one time entertained VIPs and carried cargo, but is now a floating museum. Aboard the permanently anchored vessel, visitors can tour this cargo ship, explore its cargo bays, view the Captain’s quarters, and learn what it might be like for employees onboard. The Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center is a focal point in Canal Park. It is here visitors can explore the history of shipping in the region, learn how the ships function, and watch ships move through the canal.

Trains are another interesting topic for interpretation in northeastern Minnesota. A stop at the Lake Superior Museum of Transportation gives visitors an overview of regional railroad history. Located in the St. Louis County Heritage and Arts Center, visitors can climb into historic locomotives, cabooses, and other rail cars restored to their original time period. The Two Harbors Depot is the site of the Lake County Historical Society Museum. Here the former passenger depot hosts
the Mallet steam engine, the largest type of locomotive ever built in this county. Beside it rests the “3 Spot”, the smallest engine ever built which hauled the first iron ore from Northeastern Minnesota mines over 100 years ago.

Natural Resources

There are a handful of museums and centers focused on natural resources in the area. The Great Lakes Aquarium in Duluth is the only fresh water aquarium in the nation. Visitors can learn about freshwater lakes and fish while gaining an understanding of freshwater systems and the Great Lakes. The Department of Natural Resources manages a fish hatchery at the French River. This hatchery has both indoor and outdoor self-guided interpretative services geared to teach visitors about a cold water fish hatchery. Farther up the shore, there are two environmental learning centers. Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center is a residential program that offers environmental education services. It is located just off the NSSD near Finland, Minnesota. Sugarloaf Interpretive Center, located just five miles south of Schroeder, offers monthly nature programs to visitors and locals alike. It also offers self-guided interpretive trails.

Historical/ Cultural

In Duluth, the St. Louis County Historical Society maintains exhibits within the St. Louis County Heritage and Arts Center. Interesting storefronts depict retail life in years past and are located within the mock town setting of the historic Duluth Depot. Refurbished trains of all shapes, sizes, and functions are also available to tour. Glensheen is a mansion constructed in 1908 and owned by the University of Minnesota Duluth. Tours are given year round. Chester A. Congdon built the mansion and was involved in shipping, mining, and the timber industry. His family donated the mansion to the University in 1979.

In the community of Larsmont, just east of Knife River, the local residents maintain the one-room Larsmont schoolhouse built in 1914. The well-maintained school acts as a community center today. The RJ Houle Information Center in Two Harbors maintains signs and historical markers. Also in Two Harbors is the Two Harbors Lighthouse Station where tours are offered, along with signs and a touch screen kiosk with harbor history. This station is the oldest operating light station on Minnesota’s North Shore. It has operated at the harbor entrance since 1892. Tours are offered May through October, and the station has bed-and-breakfast accommodations.

Further up the shore the Minnesota Historical Society maintains the Split Rock Lighthouse just south of Silver Bay. The personal interpretive tours of this majestic Lighthouse along with interpretive signs round out the visitor’s experience. In Silver Bay, Northshore Mining offers summer tours of the taconite processing facility. There are also signs on site for off-season visitors. Farther
east the visitor may stop at the Tofte Commercial Fishing Museum where exhibits and interpretive signs tell the story of commercial fishing on the North Shore. Grand Portage National Monument includes a reproduction of the Great Hall of the original Fort. Historic interpretation of the fur trade era includes both self-guided and personal interpretation and signage. These eastern elements provide an idea of topical interpretation farther along the Drive.

Outdoor Experiences
These types of interpretation are typically signed areas that are self-guided for the visitor. The Duluth Lakewalk beginning in Canal Park incorporates interpretive sign panels for visitor’s enjoyment.

There are also opportunities for travelers to take in a program, such as the series of hiking events the Lake Superior Hiking Trail Association offers each year. The University of Minnesota Duluth Outdoor Program also offers outdoor and nature related programming on a regular basis. Other opportunities include birding and hiking at the Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve that is owned and managed by the Duluth Audubon Society, the Vista Fleet harbor tours, North Shore Scenic Railroad train tours, and the Great Lakes Aquarium.

Father Baraga’s Cross, John Beargrease’s burial site, and Palisade Head are each areas along the North Shore Scenic Drive which include interpretive signs.

State Parks
State Parks along the North Shore provide bountiful interpretation of the areas natural resources. There are a total of eight State Parks along the North Shore Scenic Drive and, it is important to note their importance to the overall interpretive plan.

- Gooseberry Falls State Park
- Split Rock Lighthouse State Park
- Tettegouche State Park
- George Crosby Manitou State Park
- Temperence River State Park
- Cascade River State Park
- Judge C.R. Magney State Park
- Grand Portage State Park

These eight State Parks have various interpretive facilities. The most developed park is Gooseberry Falls, located on the Gooseberry River just north of Castle Danger. Here interpretive programs are offered Memorial Day through Labor Day and weekend programs are scheduled on a monthly basis from October to May. These programs focus on the natural resources and recreational opportunities
found in northeastern Minnesota. Gooseberry Falls State Park has a visitor center with displays, park specific handouts, and a few interpretive signs along the trails. Future interpretation planned for the park may cover the following topics:

- Lake Superior and it’s watershed
- Lake Superior shipwrecks, natural resources
- The Civilian Conservation Corps

On the other end of the State Park spectrum is George Crosby Manitou State Park, where occasional personal interpretive programs are held within the Park. Topics interpreted at the other parks include geology, state biomes, glacial ridge, deer enclosures, plan identification, Ojibwe life, Lake Superior as a water highway, and logging.

**Interpretative Planning Objectives**

The purpose of the NSSD interpretive plan is to create interpretation that will enhance the traveler’s experience. This interpretation of the area’s natural, cultural, historical, and ecological elements will be designed in a unique fashion that will provide travelers with a thematic, easily identifiable pattern that will be available for their use along the byway. The interpretive planning objectives are:

1) Orient the visitor to the facilities and attractions of the area.
2) Educate visitors about the Byway’s intrinsic qualities.
3) Enhance visitor enjoyment by interpreting natural resources, scenic attractions, and the natural and cultural history of the area.
4) Identify recreational resources and educate visitors about responsible recreational use.
5) Obtain public involvement in protecting and conserving the cultural and natural resources of the area.
6) Inform visitors of the resource management activities within the highway corridor.

**Interpretive Planning Implementation**

Interpretation can utilize a variety of media. For example, to inform travelers about the sights along the Byway, visitors may use a driving tour-guide in the form of a brochure with numbered stops or an audio-cassette tape. This type of guide could direct visitors to other places of interest or to adjacent sites or facilities. Visitors wishing to hike may be encouraged to take advantage of walks around historic sites, self-guided nature trails, or wildlife viewing sites. Interpretive programming might also include guided walks, living history demonstrations, and slide or video programs. The sites and frequency of programs of this sort could be rotated according to visitor use patterns. Strategically located interactive videos could become a popular option to a staffed information center. The variety of interpretive media is endless. Planning will link the most appropriate interpretive stories and media to locations that best depict the stories. To communicate
consistency to Byway visitors, messages must not conflict with one another and the visual quality of facilities and improvements must be consistent. Although implementation of the plan may take place in phases and can use existing facilities where appropriate, visitors should leave with the impression that the Byway is a unit unto itself and has consistency from one stop to the next.

The Council will continue to incorporate interpretive opportunities into their design projects and other identified improvements when possible. Future potential interpretive opportunities could take form of mobile/web-based technological and/or social applications which can provide additional content or experience to travelers on the byway. Additionally, NSSDC will continue to look for new interpretative opportunities and fill gaps where additional interpretation could enhance the experience of the specific wayside/area along the byway.
SIGNAGE

There are several types of signage located along the NSSD. These include directional, interpretive/educational, commercial and environmental. The NSSD Council recognizes that a uniform design and placement strategy is important for the byway.

The NSSD sign plan is intended to improve the visitor experience through the use of continuous signage along the byway. Signage recommendations include the following:

**Logo**

The logo is very colorful and is intended to be easily identifiable to all travelers, including those who may not speak English fluently. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) fabricated the signs and they are installed along the entire NSSD Corridor.

The size of the signs conforms to Mn/DOT design guidelines so as not to interfere with the scenery of the route. The sign placement strategy calls for signs to be placed at all major intersections along the route to guide the traveler. In addition, the signs will be posted below Highway 61 signs along the route. This again follows standard sign placement strategy for all the local units of government. If implementing new signage, insure placement will have little to no impact on traveler’s view of scenery and experience of intrinsic qualities along the byway.

**Gateway and Trail Blazer Signs**

Gateway signs inform visitors when they have reached or are leaving the byway. They are placed at each end of the Byway. It also is important to note the widespread use of blue “trailblazer” signs along the route. These signs, which are relatively small, are put up by local units of government and offer directions to private businesses along the route. These signs help to reduce the number of commercial signs along the route, therefore minimizing anomalous intrusions along the byway. The NSSDC will work to identify any gaps in these signs that may confuse the traveler and work to provide adequate signage while insuring the experience of the byway is minimally impacted.

**Outdoor Advertising Control**

The one federal regulation that applies to designated Scenic Byways is a prohibition on new billboards when the route is part of an Interstate, National Highway System, and former federal-aid primary road. Designated Scenic Byways on other road types can establish billboard control through local, county, or state laws. Generally, the zoning that affects outdoor advertising is controlled by local units of government.
MARKETING, PROMOTION AND TOURISM

Marketing is the process or technique of promoting, selling, and distributing a product or service. The marketing of a byway involves promoting a byway as a tourism product to identified population or target markets. One of the North Shore Scenic Drive Council’s main goals is to promote economic development and tourism. This is done through supporting local and regional marketing and promotion of the Byway and its intrinsic qualities.

The North Shore Scenic Drive and its attractions are currently marketed from local to international levels. Groups such as the Minnesota Office of Tourism, Northern Lights Tourism Alliance, the Duluth Convention and Visitor Bureau, and the North Shore Scenic Drive Association currently market the route. These organizations are very skilled and successful in their efforts. The North Shore Scenic Drive Council supports and encourages the marketing and promotion of the byway by these groups and others. One example of successful marketing and promotion is the development of a website for the four interconnected state and national byways in the Lake Superior Area of Minnesota. This project, funded by a grant from the FHWA, resulted in the creation of the SuperiorByways.com website.

The NSSDC will continue to seek opportunities to enhance its online presence as future opportunities emerge including social media and other web/mobile based oriented improvements. Recent example of these efforts include the National Geographic ‘Heart of the Continent’ project which aims to boost international visibility and tourism to the area through compiling an interactive web based map showcasing amenities on the byway.

The NSSDC target audience includes residents in the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota, age 35 to 65 who earn over $48,000 and have the ability to travel. Secondary audiences would include people who live in the Midwest, the greater United States, and the World. The byway offers outdoor recreation, wildlife, and scenic country, to these visitors. In 2001, Duluth was rated as one of America’s Top Dream Towns by Outside Magazine. Scenic Byways were an important factor in the award designation. Lake Superior and outdoor attractions have become a leading factor in visitor interest in the area. The roadway is a destination itself with the North Shore of Lake Superior as the number one destination of visitors within the state of Minnesota and number two to visitors from outside the state (the Mall of America is number one).
As well as attracting visitors to the area, ongoing promotion of the corridor can generate opportunities to support stewardship of the corridor, serve to protect its important natural resources through education, and generate opportunities for economic growth. With tourist facilities and responsible stewardship for the corridor in place by managing entities, the NSSD will be appreciated for generations to come while protecting its intrinsic qualities.

Tourism is the mainstay for the many of the businesses located along the NSSD. The tourism industry is well established along the corridor.

This CMP focuses on enhancing the current tourism resources and encouraging the existing movement toward value-added services. The local chambers of commerce are also focusing their tourism development efforts on facilities, services, and other resources that center on historic interests and eco-tourism activities. Communities along the NSSD corridor receive nearly 100 percent of their tourism dollars from automobile based tourism.

Travel throughout the U.S. has been significantly affected by the events of September 11, 2001 and the economic slowdown that followed. Business travel is down, and leisure travelers are watching their pocketbooks more closely. Many travelers are choosing destinations closer to home. Since Minnesota draws most of its travelers from its own residents and the Midwest, it’s both an opportunity and a challenge to promote Minnesota at a time when travel patterns have changed and competition for near-market travelers has increased.

With its federal designation as an All American Road, marketing and promotion of the NSSD corridor has become more significant. The economic benefits associated with increased tourism clearly create an advantage for the area and local communities.

The NSSD Council regularly identifies actions for supporting marketing and promotion of the byway and increasing visitor tourism its annual work plan.
ADDITIONAL CMP REFERENCE MATERIALS

North Shore Scenic Drive—Wayside Rest Improvement Plan
Along the byway there are nearly 70 public waysides ranging from simple pull-off areas to paved or landscaped areas with amenities such as parking, picnic areas, trail access, lakeshore access, restrooms, interpretive kiosks, and visitor information facilities. The North Shore Scenic Drive Council recognizes the critical value that these diverse wayside rests hold for providing a safe, fun, and memorable experience for travelers along the byway.

The North Shore Scenic Drive Council has worked to play an active role in developing design projects and identifying other key improvements that will help to enhance the safety, accessibility, recreation, interpretation, and aesthetics of the byway’s important wayside rests. The North Shore Scenic Drive Council has been a leader and key partner to other State agencies and local organizations in these efforts, including the development of design plans, implementation of the plans, and celebration and promotion of improvements once completed. The Council seeks to annually review and plan for how they can continue to support improvements to the visitor experience at these waysides.

The NSSD Wayside Rest Improvement Plan includes information on completed wayside rest improvement projects that the NSSD Council has been either a leader on or involved in, projects that are currently underway, and an inventory of all of the wayside rests and associated improvements that may be made to them in the future. The Plan is intended to act as a supporting resource for the Council in the identification of future projects that they Council may be in a position to help provide project management on and to help promote for tourism along the NSSD. It is considered a living document and should be updated by the Council on a regular basis as improvement projects are identified or completed.

North Shore Scenic Drive—ADA Accessibility Assessment of Waysides (2012)
Waysides along the North Shore Scenic Drive that provide accessible visitor amenities are an important part of the byway experience for all visitors. In 2012 the North Shore Scenic Drive Council worked to complete an assessment of 16 public waysides along the byway for recommended accessibility improvements. The assessment project engaged the land owners of each of the selected waysides (Minnesota Department of Transportation, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, local governments and private organizations) in evaluating the sites and making recommendations for potential future projects. Some examples for improving wayside visitor resources to ADA design standards include providing accessible parking spaces, picnic tables, benches, and addressing surface areas and pathways for improved mobility. Implementation of recommendations will begin at many waysides by 2013 and into the future.
Appendix A:

Existing and Future Project Overview &
Long-term Investment Prioritization
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Project Partner</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Caribou River Wayside</td>
<td>Seeking Funding for Implementation</td>
<td>MN DNR</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Awarded DOT Scenic Byway Construction Funds-Slated for Fiscal Year 2017 Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Brighton Beach</td>
<td>Seeking Funding for Implementation</td>
<td>City of Duluth</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>City of Duluth applying to extend lakewalk project through TAP 2014 Solicitation-2019 Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Schroeder Lakeside Park (Father Baragas Cross)</td>
<td>Design Completed-Beginning to Phase Project for Implementation</td>
<td>Schroeder TWP / Cook County</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>After phasing, beginning acquiring funds for implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Stoney Point</td>
<td>Seeking Funding for Implementation</td>
<td>St. Louis County</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Project ready for implementation if grant found and awarded, local match is available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Lester River</td>
<td>Unfunded-May not be leveraged</td>
<td>City of Duluth</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Currently behind Brighton beach extension project in local priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Cascade River</td>
<td>Unfunded-May not be leveraged</td>
<td>MnDOT</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Implementation difficult due to historic corridor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Knife River</td>
<td>Unfunded-CURRENTLY lower local priority</td>
<td>Knife River / Lake County</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Currently low priority at local level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Temperance River</td>
<td>Unfunded-Traffic Concerns limit implementation</td>
<td>MnDOT</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Implementation difficult due to high bridge construction costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Potential Design Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Project Partner</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Tofte</td>
<td>Kicked Off-February 2015</td>
<td>Tofte Township / Cook County</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Hovland</td>
<td>Kicked Off-February 2015</td>
<td>Cook County / Cook County Historical Society</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>French River</td>
<td>Kicked Off-February 2015</td>
<td>St. Louis County / DNR</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Burlington</td>
<td>Applying for MN Lake Superior Coastal Program Funds for Design Project</td>
<td>City of Two Harbors</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Funding Pending-Late 2015 desired start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Lutsen Trailhead</td>
<td>Project may require private partnership, interest currently unknown</td>
<td>Lutsen Township / Cook Co.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Continuing to follow up to be aware of design project implementation interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Identified Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Project Partner (Potential)</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Public Restrooms in Grand Marais</td>
<td>Identified Need</td>
<td>City of Grand Marais / Cook County</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Seeking opportunities for design / implementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wayside Profile & Recommendations

**Title:** Caribou Falls Wayside

**Status:** Completed-(January-October 2014)
- In need of final engineering & construction funds.

**Summary:**

The design project was led by CJ Fernandez of Aune-Fernandez, Landscape Architects with three meetings facilitated by ARDC on behalf of the NSSDC. The first two meetings engaged local stakeholders to discover existing conditions, desired components of a new design, and also gather feedback on preliminary design ideas. Additional meetings with both MN DNR and MnDOT to gather specific feedback on components of the project were also held. The third and final meeting consisted of a public presentation summarizing the planning process and describing in detail the final design.

The final design moves the footprint of the existing, undersized, and dangerous wayside to a new, larger facility in a clearing away from the river. Traffic improvements were incorporated into the final design to make access to the site safer and easier, one of the most significant issues with the existing site. Project design ensured meeting ADA requirements for all visitor amenities (parking, walkways, etc.) included in project.

**Partners Involved:**
- MN DNR
- MnDOT
- Cook County
- Lake County
- Schroeder Township
- North Shore Scenic Drive Council
- Superior Hiking Trail Association
- Sugarloaf: The North Shore Stewardship Association
- Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program (Funding Source)
- Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB) (Funding Source)

**Next Steps:**

MN DNR was awarded $575,000 from the MnDOT Scenic Byways solicitation for assistance in construction slated for fiscal year 2017. NSSDC and ARDC will provide any needed additional technical assistance desired by the DNR regarding leveraging additional funding.
Title: Gateway Designs for Lester River, Duluth MN

Status: Completed-(2005)
- In need of final engineering & construction funds.

Summary:
The design project was led by The Center for Changing Landscapes at the University of Minnesota involving a number of public meetings to identify issues and review proposed designs. The final design project report outlines four separate improvement projects in a project area from the Lester River Community through the intersection of the NSSD and highway 61 to the first rest stop location just beyond Brighton Beach/Gitchi Gami Park.

The design report outlines existing conditions and design plans for: The Lester River Neighborhood, Brighton Beach (Gitchi-Gami Park), Scenic Drive Intersection, NSSD rest area. Design plans include site layouts, interpretation opportunities, and kiosk / facility design elements, among other components specific to each site. Some improvements from this project have already been implemented, including a safe pedestrian crossing/tunnel underneath the byway. (See design report for more details)

Partners Involved:
- University of Minnesota Duluth
- Saint Louis County
- City of Duluth
- MnDOT
- The Northeast regional Sustainable Development Partnership
- North Shore Scenic Drive Council
- Sugarloaf: The North Shore Stewardship Association
- Lester River Neighborhood Residents
- Arrowhead Regional Development Commission

Next Steps:
City of Duluth is submitting MnDOT Transportation Alternatives Program application to leverage 80% of construction costs, for extending the Lakewalk through the Brighton Beach/ Gitchi-Gami Park, resurfacing the road, and other associated amenities/improvements included in the project.

The nearest construction date if awarded would be fiscal year 2019. Letter of Intent submitted fall 2014. Local priorities on other improvements are lower, but may increase when enhancements in area are completed.
Title: Schroeder Lakeside Park (‘Father Baragas Cross’ Wayside)

Status: Completed-(2014)

- In need of final engineering & construction funds.

Summary:

The design project was led by CJ Fernandez of Aune Fernandez Landscape Architects with three meetings. The first two meetings engaged local stakeholders to discover existing conditions, desired components of a new design, and also gather feedback on preliminary design ideas. The third and final meeting consisted of a public presentation summarizing the planning process and describing in detail the final design.

The final design report outlines an improved site design including picnic tables, fire pit, improved pedestrian access, 4 paneled kiosk, ADA accessible toilet, rain garden/filtration basin, and tree and shrub plantings, among others. Details of amenities like shelters, kiosks, restrooms, benches, and signage are also included in the design final report.

Partners Involved:

- Cook County
- Schroeder Township
- North Shore Scenic Drive Council
- Northeast Minnesota Sustainable Development Partnership (Funding Source)
- Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program (Funding Source)

Next Steps:

The Schroeder Township is currently collaborating with Cook County, North Shore Scenic Drive Council, and Arrowhead Regional Development Commission in order to implement improvements identified in the design project. Currently, the project is in the process of being phased, in order to make the financial requirements for improvements more feasible, continued support of exploring grant opportunities is expected.
Title: Stoney Point Wayside Rehabilitation Project

Status: Completed-(2006)

- Construction documents completed, in need of construction funds for implementation.

Summary:

Construction documents for the rehabilitation project were completed in 2006 through a grant from Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program. LHB Designers Joe Litman, Gary Vonasek, and Lisa Marynik, collaborated with St. Louis County and MnDOT to complete the design process.

Improvements highlighted in the construction documents include: stone veneer retaining wall, stone masonry reconstruction, tuck pointing, stone paving, bituminous pavement, stone curb reconstruction, and landscaping improvements. The major component of these improvements involve the resurfacing and leveling of the wayside, cost estimates for all improvements are included in the project’s construction documents.

Partners Involved:

- MnDOT
- St. Louis County
- LHB Inc.- Engineering
- Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program (Funding Source)

Next Steps:

St. Louis County expressed that they are currently in need of matching grant dollars for construction funds in order to be able to undertake the project. If leveraged, match dollars are available from the county. This project was identified by the NSSDC in 2014, and was incorporated into investment priorities during the Corridor Management Plan Update process.
Title: Cascade River Wayside

Status: Completed (April 2011)

- In need of final engineering & construction funds.

Summary:

The design project was led by CJ Fernandez of LHB with three meetings facilitated by ARDC on behalf of the NSSDC. This project seeks design strategies that could be implemented to improve the condition of 2 major issues: One, safety and two, access. The focus area is along Hwy. 61 from Cascade Lodge to the State Park Entrance. The design strategies are to provide conceptual design solutions for improved safety and access at the Cascade River Overlook.

The final design includes management of vehicular traffic and strategies to slow speeds and raise awareness of pedestrian activity are integral to improved pedestrian conditions. Key strategies are readdressing parking, resolve congestion, improved signage, interpretation, and connection to other way finding strategies implemented by the North Shore Scenic Drive (NSSD) Council.

Partners Involved:

- MN DNR
- MnDOT
- Cook County
- Gitchi-Gami State Trail Association
- USFS Superior National Forest
- Lake Superior Water Trail
- Cascade Lodge
- North Shore Scenic Drive Council
- Arrowhead Regional Development Commission
- Superior Hiking Trail Association
- Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program (Funding Source)
- Northeast Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (Funding Source)

Next Steps:

The listing of the overlook area on the National Register in 2003 requires design solutions are subject to historical review and approval for corridor improvements to features at this site. At this time, costs and other obstacles associated with the historical designation have been the major obstacle for project implementation.
Title: Knife River Village

Status: Completed-(November 2003)

- In need of final engineering & construction funds.

Summary:

The design project was completed by a group of landscape architects collaborating out of the Center for Changing Landscapes, University of Minnesota and incorporated public input meetings to gather feedback regarding existing conditions and proposed design components.

The final design includes a site analysis of existing conditions, and also outlines improvements which include fishing pier and kiosk designs, signage and other components designs, kiosk content, and larger, long term plans of an interpretive park and marina with interpretive trail system, enhanced gateway entrance, and additional rest stops.

Partners Involved:

- Center for Changing Landscapes - University of Minnesota
- MnDOT
- Knife River Community Residents
- Arrowhead Regional Development Commission
- Northeast Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (Funding Source)

Next Steps:

The details of the project include both large and small improvements, the larger of which will require large amounts of investments and development. While some components of the design plan can be utilized for improvements to the area, some of the long term improvements are on such a large scale, that currently, local priorities have been placed elsewhere as financial feasibility is quite difficult. NSSDC will continue to monitor availability along with long desire to move forward with project recommendation(s) implementation.
Wayside Profile & Recommendations

**Title:** Temperance River Wayside

**Status:** Completed-(June 2013)

- In need of final engineering & construction funds.

**Summary:**

The design project was led by CJ Fernandez of LHB with three meetings facilitated by ARDC on behalf of the NSSDC. The first two meetings engaged local stakeholders to discover existing conditions, desired components of a new design, and also gather feedback on preliminary design ideas. The third and final meeting consisted of a public presentation summarizing the planning process and describing in detail the final design.

The final design incorporates traffic improvements to make access to the site safer easier, and more efficiently one of the most significant issues with the existing site. Additionally, full ADA accessibility is provided from parking areas to all proposed overlooks and gathering spaces. Amenity details, parking enhancements, kiosk, signage, and other improvements are all addressed in the projects final report.

**Partners Involved:**

- MN DNR
- MnDOT
- Cook County
- Tofte Township
- Schroeder Historical Society
- Schroeder Township
- North Shore Scenic Drive Council
- Arrowhead Regional Development Commission
- Sugarloaf: The North Shore Stewardship Association
- *Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB)*
- *Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program*
  (Funding Source)

**Next Steps:**

Implementation of this project is out of the NSSDC’s hands, as the site is within MnDOT right of way, while on State Park land. At this time, while MnDOT would like to make safety improvements to the location, it feels the larger improvements would attract an even greater amount of users and further increase the existing traffic safety concerns.
Appendix B:
Funding Resources
DNR Legacy Funds

**Minnesota State Park and Recreation Area Development**
2014 Fiscal Year Funding Amount: $2,165,500
2013 Fiscal Year Funding Amount: $2,273,100
2012 Fiscal Year Funding Amount: $1,190,000
Source: Parks & Trails Fund

There are 67 Minnesota State Parks and 7 Minnesota State Recreation areas that each have facilities to serve outdoor recreation users as well as operations and maintenance facilities. Funds in this category are used for maintenance, repair, and upgrade to these facilities and include visitor centers, trail centers, roads, parking lots, bridges, campgrounds, and so on.

**Enhancing ADA Accessibility**
2013 Fiscal Year Funding Amount: $350,000
2012 Fiscal Year Funding Amount: $400,000
2011 Fiscal Year Funding Amount: $760,240
Source: Parks & Trails Fund

Increase access for individuals with disabilities to outdoor recreation facilities that are managed by the Division of Parks and Trails.

Projects include: Croft Mine Access Route, Statewide Accessible Campfire Ring Installation, Statewide Accessible Picnic Table Installation, Statewide vault toilet riser installation, Temperance River Wayside ADA Trail
Transportation Alternatives Program

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) authorized under Section 1122 of MAP-21 (23 U.S.C. 213(b), 101(a)(29)) provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for the planning, design or construction of boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

A. FUNDING

Period of Availability: TAP is funded by contract authority from the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund. TAP funds are available for obligation for a period of 3 years after the last day of the fiscal year for which the funds are authorized (23 U.S.C. 118).

Federal share: The Federal share for TAP projects is governed by 23 U.S.C. 120. The Federal share generally is 80 percent, subject to the sliding scale adjustment. Recreational Trails Program (RTP) projects funded under the RTP set-aside shall use the RTP Federal share provisions under 23 U.S.C. 206(f), which allows some additional flexibility, especially for the non-Federal share.

B. ELIGIBILITY

Funds apportioned to a State to carry out the TAP may be obligated only for the activities described below. There is no requirement for TAP projects to be located along Federal-aid highways. SRTS projects must be within approximately two miles of a school for kindergarten through eighth grade as specified in SAFETEA-LU Section 1404. (23 U.S.C. 402 note)

Eligible Activities: Under 23 U.S.C. 213(b) eligible activities under the TAP program consist of:

   A. Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
   B. Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
   C. Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other nonmotorized transportation users.
   D. Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
   E. Community improvement activities, including-
      i. inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising;
      ii. historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities;
      iii. vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control;
iv. archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under title 23.

F. Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to-
   i. address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff, including activities described in sections 133(b)(11), 328(a), and 329 of title 23; or
   ii. reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.

Ineligible Activities: Section 1103 of MAP-21 eliminated the definition of transportation enhancement activities in section 104 of title 23 and inserted in its place a definition of transportation alternatives, which does not include eligibility for certain activities that were previously eligible as transportation enhancements:

   Scenic or historic highway programs (including visitor and welcome centers). Note: A few specific activities under this category (construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas) remain eligible under section 101(a)(29)(D) of title 23.

E. ELIGIBLE PROJECT SPONSORS

Under 23 U.S.C. 213(c)(4)(B), the eligible entities to receive TAP funds are:

- local governments;
- regional transportation authorities;
- transit agencies;
- natural resource or public land agencies;
- school districts, local education agencies, or schools;
- tribal governments; and
- Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails (other than a metropolitan planning organization or a State agency) that the State determines to be eligible, consistent with the goals of subsection (c) of section 213 of title 23.

Under TAP, nonprofits are not eligible as direct grant recipients of the funds. Nonprofits are eligible to partner with any eligible entity on an eligible TAP project, if State or local requirements permit.
Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program Grants

Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program (MLSCP) offers federal grants for projects that address coastal issues. These projects help achieve regional and state goals for managing land and water resources in the coastal area.

Grant funds are offered on a competitive basis. Funding originates from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

Eligible applicants include:
- Local units of government, including municipalities, townships and counties within the coastal boundary
- Area-wide agencies, including county and regional planning agencies
- State agencies
- Colleges, universities and other institutions of higher learning
- Coastal community public school districts
- Conservation districts and port authorities
- Tribal governments
- Joint powers boards
- Sanitary sewer boards
- Nonprofit organizations

**Annual Grants** ($100,000 limit per project)
MLSCP offers annual grants to support a wide variety of activities in five basic interest areas including:
- Coastal Habitat Protection and Restoration
- Public Access
- Historic Preservation
- Community and Natural Resource Planning
- Coastal Education and Training

Applications are solicited each autumn for project to commence the following summer.

MLSCP requires a minimum match of 50% non-federal funds for all Coastal Habitat Protection and Restoration and Public Access and Historic Preservation grants. Applications for Community and Natural Resources Planning and Coastal Education and Training grants with up to $20,000 in total project costs may be eligible for a reduced match amount of 25%.

**Short Term Action Request Grants (STAR)**

Small (<$7,500) grants for community and natural resources planning or coastal education and training projects that can be completed in six months. Applications are taken on an on-going basis throughout the year.

**Great Lakes AOC Land Acquisition Grants**

Land acquisition grants offered directly by NOAA local governments and state agencies to support the delisting of fish and wildlife habitat-related beneficial use impairments in Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOC)
MN DOT – Corridor Investment Management Strategy

Future Solicitations
Once the 20-Year Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan 2014-2033 is adopted, MnDOT anticipates using future rounds of the CIMS Solicitation to program a portion of the revenue allocated to the Regional & Community Improvement Priorities investment category.

Next Solicitation: Anticipated Spring 2015 (for FY 2016 funds)

2013 Info
Maximum Award: $10 million
Minimum Award: $200 thousand
Match: MN DOT will provide up to 90% of funding, but projects with high match score better.

What is CIMS?
CIMS is a corridor-based initiative that brings MnDOT together with its local, modal and state partners to identify opportunities for collaborative and innovative investment. It offers a means to share information and identify opportunities to apply MnDOT’s suite of lower cost, high benefit investment strategies that address safety, access and mobility.

MnDOT will facilitate annual CIMS meetings and an interactive website that brings MnDOT together with its partners to exchange information and discuss opportunities for collaborative and sustainable investment. Investment opportunities identified through the CIMS process will be considered for a competitive solicitation to be launched in 2013. Additionally, for each corridor MnDOT will channel input received through the CIMS process into a 10-year Corridor Outlook, which will be updated annually.

Laying the Foundation
MnDOT’s sustainability initiative ensures MnDOT business practices, services and facilities support economic opportunity, community well-being and the natural environment. Sustainable transportation practices respect, support and regenerate environmental systems, the economy and society over many generations.

In 2011, MnDOT adopted the Minnesota GO Vision that set out to keep Minnesota’s transportation system on a sustainable track for the future.

- Leverage public funds to achieve multiple purposes
- Ensure accessibility
- Build to a maintainable scale
- Ensure regional connections
- Integrate safety
- Emphasize reliable and predictable options
- Strategically fix the system
- Use partnerships
Operationalizing Minnesota GO through CIMS

Given the magnitude and condition of our current transportation system, the state and federal funding realities, and the unlikely reality of additional funds (i.e. earmarks), MnDOT seeks collaborative, sustainable transportation strategies that leverage investments to achieve multiple public purposes.

CIMS provides MnDOT and its partners an ongoing process to:

- Share information about investment programs and the needs, issues and opportunities at a corridor-level; and
- Identify opportunities to collaborate around a suite of lower cost, high benefit strategies to project design and system management.

Aligning to Quality of Life (QOL)

MnDOT recently completed extensive market research where Minnesotans defined what quality of life means and how transportation contributes to it. MnDOT learned that some key quality of life factors are linked. For example, Minnesotans identified Transportation, Employment, Education, Environment and Housing as related QOL factors.

The CIMS process will incorporate this market research by asking MnDOT partners to consider quality of life factors when describing what they envision for a corridor.

In addition, MnDOT is inviting state agencies to help drive the conversation and share their expertise related to these contributing factors to quality of life along the corridors.

Toward Zero Deaths

Minnesota’s Toward Zero Deaths initiative uses a combination of proven safety strategies – the four E’s – to drive the number of fatalities on Minnesota roads down to zero. The four E’s are:

- Education
- Engineering
- Enforcement
- Emergency Medical and Trauma Services

CIMS is an opportunity to apply Minnesota’s TZD approach at a corridor level.
**Other Grant Opportunities**

**MN DOT Scenic Byway Grants**
- Eligibility requirements similar to TAP grant, but restricted to projects within 1 mile of byway corridors.
- 2014 Solicitation: Approximately $2 Million  Expected Solicitation in Spring of 2015
- Unlike TAP, these projects must be ready to be constructed in the following Fiscal year of their award.

**IRRRB Grant Opportunities**
- Culture and Tourism Grant Program: Program Contact: Mary Somnis

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**Culture and Tourism Grant Program**

**FY14 Report**

**Projects by Key Performance Area**

- 50% Capital Improvements
- 33% Marketing
- 17% Recreational

**Purpose**
To stimulate tourism and enrich communities through support of artistic, heritage-related, tourism or recreational activities.

**Why is this important?**
Cultural arts, tourism and recreational activities support local economic vitality by attracting new and visiting populations.

**Key performance areas**
- Presence of opportunities for cultural participation at events, venues and parks
- Improvements to or construction of exhibits, structures or recreational amenities and support for marketing and promotion initiatives.

**How are we doing?**
- $150,000 program budget
- $145,466 allocated
- 12 grants awarded
- $516,082 total project investment

**What are we doing?**
Instead of an annual application deadline, grant applications are now accepted throughout the year so the number of grants awarded to date in 2014 varied from previous years. We expect to receive new applications, equal to or exceeding 2013 requests through the end of fiscal year 2014.
Appendix C:

Byway Map
North Shore Scenic Drive

Points of interest
- Split Rock Lighthouse State Park
- Gooseberry Falls State Park
- Grand Portage State Park
- North Shore Scenic Drive
- Other Scenic Byways
- Major Highways

State Parks
- Split Rock Lighthouse State Park
- Gooseberry Falls State Park
- Grand Portage State Park
- North Shore Scenic Drive

State Forests
- Superior National Forest

National Forests
- Superior National Forest

Other Scenic Byways
- North Shore Scenic Drive
- Other Scenic Byways

Major Highways
- North Shore Scenic Drive
- Other Scenic Byways