Conclusion

Next Steps.

Photo: Waves at Tofte Town Park - by Doug VanValkenburg
Project Summary

This project serves as a tool to assist local communities, governmental agencies, and planning organizations in their efforts to increase interpretive and recreational opportunities along the North Shore Scenic Drive All-American Road in ways that preserve its aesthetic character, stimulate its economic vitality, promote community livability, and are environmentally sustainable. This project identifies an overall theme or concept with which to organize those efforts into a single unified approach for the entire North Shore. The “Superior 61 Trail” concept is based on the availability of existing resources and amenities and their contribution to the unique character of the North Shore. Design standards and construction guidelines are proposed for the road corridor and its viewshed that use local materials to enhance interest in the North Shore Scenic Drive All-American Road. This vision for the North Shore is the result of a community design process and reflects the opinions and desires expressed by local residents.

- Background information is provided on Lake Superior, the North Shore, the Scenic Byway program, and a profile of visitors who have used the North Shore in recent years.
- The intrinsic qualities of the North Shore are described in terms of its geology, topography, hydrology, native vegetation, rare habitats, history, settlements, infrastructure, historic structures, landuse, land ownership, archeological sites, recreational opportunities, and scenic views.
- The North Shore’s character is described in five distinct districts based on local differences in the unique combinations of intrinsic qualities that occur along the North Shore.
- Six nodes and 62 stopping areas are identified, analyzed, and prioritized for their potential to increase interpretive and recreational opportunities along the North Shore.
- The “Superior 61 Trail” concept creates an overall design theme to promote the existing character of the North Shore.
- A materials palette and plant palette suggests using local building materials and native plant species along the North Shore Scenic Drive All-American Road to enhance character and reinforce its sense of place.
- A design vocabulary for road signs, informational kiosks, and cairn trail markers is developed to strengthen the corridor’s sense of identity and unify the traveler’s experience.
- Road alignment is analyzed in 10 locations along the North Shore in conjunction with road profile to establish a set of ideal road layouts that balances safety with aesthetics to preserve the road’s trail-like character.
- Environmentally sensitive design standards are proposed to manage stormwater runoff, control shoreline erosion, reduce habitat destruction, and restore the diversity of native plant communities in order to protect the region’s ecological health.
- Three proto-typical examples show how these aesthetic and ecologic design guidelines might be used to influence the construction of public boat launch facilities, residential developments, and commercial properties.
- Information on potential partnerships, possible funding sources for future projects, and additional sources of information is gathered.
- All the above information is made available in this written report and electronically in a PDF format.
Next Steps in the Process

Decide the first activities on which to begin working:
- Improving the infrastructure at interpretive and recreational priorities
- Installing identity-reinforcing signs and cairn trail markers along the road
- Implementing design standards into local building and zoning codes
- Incorporate road alignment guidelines into MnDOT policy

Identify potential partnerships to pursue including, but not limited to the following:
- Mn/DNR
- Mn/DOT
- Superior Hiking Trail
- Gitchee Gamii Trail

Acquire funding sources:
National Scenic Byways discretionary funds for:
- State Programs
- Corridor Management Plan
- Safety Improvements
- Byways Facilities
- Access to Recreation
- Resource Protection
- Interpretive Information
- Marketing

Mn/DOT Transportation Enhancement Program for:
- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Scenic or historic highway programs
- Landscaping and scenic beautification
- Historic preservation
- Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation structures
- Acquisition of scenic easements
- Conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails
- Control or removal of outdoor advertising
- Archeological planning and research
- Environmental mitigation of runoff pollution and provision of wildlife connectivity
- Establishment of transportation museums

Minnesota Lake Superior Coastal Program for:
- Balance land use needs with conservation, preservation, and public access for recreation
- Landuse planning efforts, studies, education, and interpretation
- Low-cost construction of paths and walkways
- Urban waterfront revitalization and public access to coastal areas
- Rehabilitation of cultural and historic buildings and structures
- Land easement acquisition
CONCLUSION

Bibliography

Geology

Hydrology

History

Ecology

Archeology
Environmental Sustainability

General
Arrowhead Regional Development Commission. Application for All-American Road Status.
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation and the Office of Planning and Research. 1978. North Shore Recreation Study.
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Minerals and the Office of Planning and Research. 1979. North Shore Characterization Study.
"Concrete is heavy; iron is hard - but grass will prevail."

-Edward Abbey

"Education is thinking, and thinking is looking for yourself and seeing what's there, not what you got told was there...Once your own eyeballs start working, then you can see what's around, you can can see history isn't a thing of the past."

-Alice V. Middleton