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Lakeshore Boulevard project gains needed momentum

Where we stand

September 13, 2014
Mining Journal

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The city of Marquette appears to be moving in the right direction in its efforts to revamp a stretch of Lakeshore Boulevard that skirts the Lake Superior shoreline.

And as if right on cue, last week's storm demonstrates that work along the stretch needs to be done.

Over the years, Lake Superior has been working its way closer and closer to the section of roadway roughly between Wright and Hawley streets.

A large pile of rocks has been constructed along the stretch over the years to protect Lakeshore Boulevard from wave action and currents

Phase I of the project to revamp the road involved gathering public input and developing draft plans, with a city appointed committee and the Superior Watershed Partnership undertaking the effort.

Those plans were presented to the public and Marquette City Commission at a special meeting of the commission on Tuesday.

At the crux of the plan are moving the roadway inland, raising it, installing manmade stone armor to break wave action and shoreline restoration.

The shoreline restoration work has already begun, with the SWP planting native beach grass in a demonstration area and removing invasive plants from another.

Also planned are developing a new multi-use pathway away from the road, boardwalks, lookouts, parking areas and a roundabout at Lakeshore and Wright.

The proposal was greeted warmly by commissioners and city officials, as well as residents who have been complaining for years about the tall rock piles blocking the view of Lake Superior. Support was also voiced for continuing the effort into the next phases.

And this is where it may get a little more challenging.

The planning stages of the effort were funded through grants from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Coastal Zone Management Program.

While city officials said they are ready to jump right into the real work, they must pursue grants to pay for the estimated \$8 million project. A major chunk of that cost - \$4.5 million - would be for the stone armor.

We're confident, though, that funding will be secured for this project that is not only worthy for its aesthetics and enhanced access and recreational opportunities residents and visitors to the city would have, but for the restoration of the shoreline and surrounding dunes and beaches, as well.

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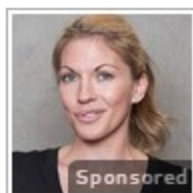
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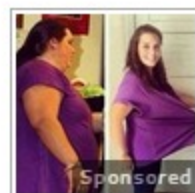
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