

March 12, 2015

Re: Support for the proposed walkway connecting District 1 neighborhoods to the Pig's Eye natural areas along the Mississippi River

To: The St. Paul CIB

I live in the Highwood neighborhood in the southern area of District1. From the height of the bluffs, residents of the neighborhood can see the marshes and wildlife of Pig's Eye at a distance, but it is difficult to get close. We are cut off. The railroad in particular forms an imposing barrier to anyone wishing to witness the beauty of this natural wilderness up close.

We know there is a heron rookery just north of the Dunn yard. We know that somehow birds of all kinds, especially the heron, share living space with the human activity that is part of a vast national transportation network dedicated to profit. We know there are other animals sharing this space but we don't see them. We don't experience the river except in quick snatches as our cars speed along Highway 10-61.

To St. Paul citizens living in Highwood, Pig's Eye is most alive in anecdote and memory. Until a few years ago, a life-long neighborhood resident told tales of his childhood during the 1930s when he would go down into the shallows of Pig's Eye to fish and catch frogs, activities essential to his family's efforts to survive the Great Depression. His stories were filled with the excitement of being a kid exploring the wonders of Pig's Eye. A child today, growing up in the same neighborhood 80 years later, cannot experience that sense of wonder and adventure. Pig's Eye is still there, but most children cannot get to it.

We need to open up Pig's Eye again so that people of all ages can enjoy and treasure the wild spaces we have left. Building a walkway would be a great first step.

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