

Economic Study: LS&M Railroad has a \$1.3 million impact

□ 5:27 pm □ February 7, 2019(<https://kbjr6.com/2019/02/07/>)

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DULUTH, MN- The fight to save the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad continues.

A recent economic impact study shows the popular tourist attraction brings a million-dollar benefit for Duluth.

The study was commissioned by the Friends of the Western Duluth Parks and Trails community and conducted by the U-M-D Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

And according to their research, in 2018 alone out-of-town visitors riding the train brought in \$1.3 million dollars to Duluth, in one way or another.

That's not including locals spending money to ride the train.

The study surveyed more than 8-hundred groups that rode the train from mid-June through the end of October.

Officials say roughly 3-thousand people's responses were represented, which is roughly half of the train's ridership.

The study found more than 41-hundred out of town visitors rode the train. And overnight visitors spent an average of \$130 dollars per day.

17 jobs throughout the city were supported by the train annually. The study also looked at the impact of the city's proposal to shorten the ride to Mud Lake.

According to researchers, if that were to happen it would result in an \$800-thousand dollar economic impact, which is a 40% decline in economic benefits.

“What I think needs to be said most is, if you haven’t ridden this train, you won’t truly understand what value it brings to our community. For instance, I ride the train more than I used to, and when I’m on the train I observe three generations of family sharing a space at the exact same time. It’s a wonderful thing to see,” said Mike Casey Jr., chair member of the Friends of Western Duluth Parks and Trails.

The study comes amid concerns that a popular portion of the tracks might have to be removed, in order to clean up decades-old pollution along the St. Louis River Corridor.

Officials say they will be sharing the study with city councilors and all the decision makers in the near future.



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