

## Comprehensive Plan Policies

### Principles, Policies, and the Future Land Use Map

The Comprehensive Plan includes general principles, land use policies, maps that depict desired future land use, and strategies and priorities for implementation. None of these components stand alone. Each component of the Plan must be considered in the context of the other components, and interpretation of any one component during application of this plan must include consideration of all components.

This section introduces the policies which give greater detail in the interpretation of the principles and future land use map. The policies are organized by linking them to relevant governing principles. The policies frequently reference land use map categories or specific places on the future land use map.

The policy categories are presented to provide structure to the wide range of issues that are addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. The categories are not, however, exclusive; the purpose of the policies is frequently to address the overlap between different issues. For instance, policies that affect decisions about trails may be found in the transportation, parks and recreation, housing, or preservation and protection categories.

### P&P (Preservation and Protection) Policies

The Plan's governing principles are clear and strong regarding protection of natural and cultural resources. Natural and managed open spaces, rare natural habitat, water courses and shorelines, historic buildings and cultural resources, prominent viewsheds, and similar assets are part of the City's heritage and values. The following policies, along with the governing principles and future land use map, define the protection and preservation priorities for natural resources, cultural resources, and viewsheds.

### Comprehensive Plan Policy Categories

- **P&P** (Preservation & Protection)
  - Natural resources
  - Cultural resources
  - Viewsheds
- **I&PS** (Infrastructure & Public Services)
- **UD** (Urban Design)
  - Mixed Use
  - Housing
  - Site Design
- **ED** (Economic Development)
- **P&R** (Parks & Recreation)
- **T** (Transportation)
  - Roads and Highways
  - Traffic Calming
  - Trails and Pedestrian Access
  - Parking
  - Transit
  - Commercial/Freight
- **DP** (Development Process)

## Policies

### Preservation and Protection Policies

#### *Principle #2 - Declare the necessity and secure the future of undeveloped lands.*

Undeveloped areas are an essential part of Duluth's municipal fabric - urban plazas, neighborhood parks, large tracts of public ownership and private lands zoned for minimal development. These minimally or undeveloped areas collectively create an open space system. These areas contribute to Duluth's cultural, health, recreational, and economic value and community identity. This open space system provides vistas, encourages active recreation, provides natural infrastructure as storm water retention, plant and animal habitat and water quality, and is the strongest visual element defining Duluth's sense of place.

#### Sense of Place

"A sense of place results gradually and unconsciously from inhabiting a landscape over time, becoming familiar with its physical properties, accruing history within its confines."

*Source: Ryden, K. C. (1993). Mapping the Invisible Landscape. Iowa City: U of Iowa Press: 38.*

#### Natural resources

Principle #2 – **Declare the necessity and secure the future of undeveloped lands** – describes the economic, cultural, and natural resource value of protecting public and open space areas, and creating new public spaces as development takes place. Similarly, Principle #6, **Reinforce the place-specific**, describes the importance of both cultural and natural resources in defining the 'sense of place' that distinguishes Duluth from other cities, and distinguishes places within the City from each other. Principle #11 – **Take sustainable actions** – identifies that decisions must protect land, water, and air, while Principle #4 – **Support emerging economic growth sectors** – includes Duluth's natural resources as an economic asset supporting the recreation and tourism industries.

In order to realize the natural resource and open space vision articulated in the Plan's governing principles, the City of Duluth will use the following policies to guide development, protection, and management decisions:

- P&P 1.** Water is a defining element in Duluth's physical and cultural landscape. Consistent with the sensitive lands overlay on all stream corridors and shorelines, the City will protect and enhance the quality of streams, rivers, and Lake Superior. The City will:
- A.** work to increase the number of public access points to Duluth's public waterways and Lake Superior,
  - B.** consider, in land use decisions, shorelines as critical protection areas, including beaches and shorelines of Lake Superior, Superior Bay, St. Louis Bay, St. Louis River, and stream and river corridors within the City,
  - C.** protect and reinforce the recreational, visual and cultural aspects of stream corridors as natural breaks in the development pattern,
  - D.** in land use regulations and actions managing public lands, identify and apply stream protection standards, including vegetative buffers, protective easements, watershed-focused performance standards, and other requirements in watersheds where water quality or watershed function are at risk,
  - E.** take steps through education programs, incentives, and regulation to improve water quality where nonpoint source pollution (erosion and sedimentation, temperature, nutrients, toxicants, debris) degrades water quality,

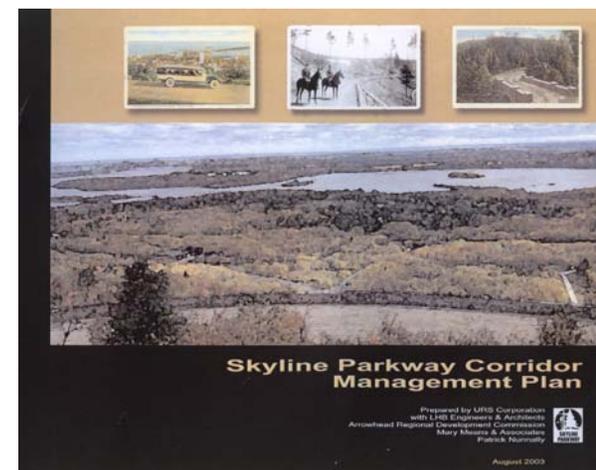
- F. in stream headwaters, buffers of stream corridors, and watersheds with limited storage capacity use wetland mitigation standards that maximize wetland protection and enhance or restore damaged wetlands to improve wetland functions.

**P&P 2.** Skyline Parkway is a historic, cultural, scenic, recreational, and viewshed corridor stretching across the city. Consistent with the protection corridor designated on the land use map, the City will treat Skyline Parkway and related corridors as a system to connect adjacent undeveloped lands, neighborhoods, recreation areas, natural parks, and scenic vistas in land management and development actions. The City will:

- A. treat lands adjacent to Skyline Parkway, 200 feet on the uphill side and 300 feet on the downhill side, measured horizontally from centerline, in a manner that strengthens the continuity of this corridor. The City will consider tools including; public acquisition of undeveloped private lands through transferable development rights and similar mechanisms with willing landowners, establishing development standards along the entire corridor, improving signage or other wayfinding devices to increase legibility of the Parkway through developed areas of the City, and incentives for owners of developed property to participate in reinforcing the continuity of this corridor,
- B. adopt and utilize recommendations of the Skyline Parkway Corridor Management Plan to prioritize viewshed and cultural resource protection, improve connectivity, and guide public investment,
- C. implement Parkway landscape treatments appropriate to the development intensity of each segment of the Parkway to create a greenway image along the entire corridor.

**P&P 3.** Duluth has an abundance of valuable natural areas, some in near pristine condition, others in need of restoration. To achieve preservation outcomes identified in the principles and on the future land use map, the City will utilize scientifically-based resource indicators in preservation priorities including:

- A. connectivity,
- B. water resource and ecosystem viability and diversity,



## Policies

### Preservation and Protection Policies

#### Viable Ecological System

An ecological system for which its “key ecological factors” are intact and functioning within natural ranges of variation. Key ecological factors include critical patterns of biological structure and composition and critical ecological processes, environmental regimes, and other environmental constraints that give shape to these patterns and their natural variation over space and time.

*Source: Conserving The Integrity Of Ecological Systems: A Proposed Conservation Area Planning Framework (draft). The Nature Conservancy. 2001*

#### Duluth Natural Area Program

##### Section 2-148 Statement of Purpose

The City Council finds that the City of Duluth is the owner of a substantial number of tracts of real estate, both inside and outside the City, some of which are of special or unique ecological or environmental significance to the community, which properties should be considered for conservation designation in order to protect those values. Said council further finds that there may be other tracts of land in private ownership or owned by other governmental entities which should be similarly protected if the cooperation of those owning such tracts can be secured. The purpose of this Article is to create a program to protect and preserve the natural heritage of the Duluth area which will include mechanisms for identifying those properties, whether owned by the City or by others, and for establishing a means to protect such properties from development or exploitation inconsistent with such values.

*Source: 2002 Duluth City Code, Article XXVIII*

- C. water resource protection for both quality and flood control,
- D. presence of endangered, rare or threatened species,
- E. high quality plant and animal communities, and
- F. compatibility of protected areas with nearby development or infrastructure.

**P&P 4.** The City will prioritize for permanent protection viable (self-sustaining) ecosystems and areas critical for sustaining those ecosystems but in need of restoration. The preservation areas and the sensitive lands overlay areas on the future land use map identify areas with high natural resource value qualities. The City will consider a variety of protection strategies including, but not limited to:

- A. fee acquisition of undeveloped land through purchase or land exchange,
- B. transfer of development rights,
- C. third party conservation easements, and
- D. regulatory and incentive programs to promote low-impact recreational land uses.

**P&P 5.** The qualities of natural lands can frequently be preserved in conjunction with land development. To meet the preservation goals of the sensitive lands overlay, the City will create and use appropriate development standards that protect the natural functions of the land regardless of ownership patterns. Standards should protect or enhance:

- A. watershed functioning for both water quality and flood control,
- B. targeted watersheds, such as Miller Creek, suffering from degradation,
- C. wetland areas and headwater areas,
- D. high value ecosystems, rare or unusual plant or animal communities and urban forests (defined as sum of all woody and associated vegetation in and around dense human settlements),
- E. resources defined by Duluth’s Natural Area Program (DNAP),
- F. areas critical for maintaining connectivity between high value eco-systems.

- P&P 6.** Open space, natural areas, and recreational areas are more valuable if interconnected. The City will strive to connect its green space and recreational areas through natural corridors on public or private land, trail systems, and creation of boulevard corridors on public right-of-ways.
- P&P 7.** The City will develop, in consultation with the Duluth Tree Commission, an urban forest management plan, to include priorities, standards and strategies for enhancing tree cover in developed and undeveloped areas, on public and private lands.
- P&P 8.** The City will consider performance standards and incentives related to site design, building design, building materials and use of consumable materials to contribute to protection of natural resources through reducing production of toxic materials and their discharge into air, soil and water.
- P&P 9.** The City will work cooperatively with institutional land owners in development of physical master plans which address the ways that the institution interfaces with the larger community, including elements that meet natural system goals. Plans should address:
  - A.** effects on natural resources, both within and outside of the institution’s ownership,
  - B.** inclusion of public trail access and strong bicycle and pedestrian connectivity,
  - C.** sale of any surplus land in a manner which contributes to the desired future land use identified in this plan,
  - D.** in the case major vehicular traffic generators, detailed consideration of traffic movements to and from the institution, both at the immediate edges of the institution as well as city and regional-wide considerations.
- P&P 10.** The City should initiate a transfer of development rights (TDR) program that creates a market for development rights through use of selected tax forfeit parcels or surplus public lands as receiving areas for development rights.

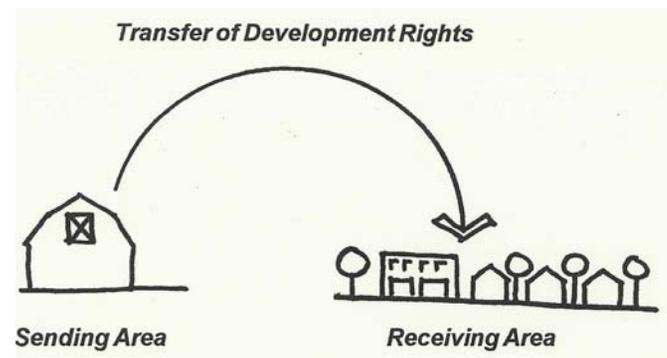
**Institutional Land Uses**

Public buildings and government offices, fairgrounds, military facilities, prisons and jails, performance centers, orphanages, group homes, museums, churches, service organizations, and community clubs.

*Source: Duluth Land Use Categories*

**Transfer of Development Rights**

The removal of the right to develop or build, expressed in dwelling units per acre or floor area, from land in one zoning district to land in another district where such transfer is permitted.



## Policies

### Preservation and Protection Policies

#### Cultural Resources

Definite locations of past human activity, occupation, or use. . . The term includes archaeological, historic, or architectural sites, structures, or places with important public and scientific uses, and may include definite locations (sites or places) of traditional, cultural, or religious importance to specified social and/or cultural groups.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Land Management [www.blm.gov/nbp/pubs/rewards/1999/5es.htm](http://www.blm.gov/nbp/pubs/rewards/1999/5es.htm)

#### Standards for Rehabilitation

These standards address the most prevalent type of preservation: “rehabilitation, which is defined as “the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.” Originally developed for use in the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program, the Standards are now widely used by state and local officials in reviewing both Federal and nonfederal rehabilitation proposals.

Source: U.S. Sec. of Interior, 36 CFR 67, [www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/rhb/stand.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/rhb/stand.htm)

#### Cultural resources

Cultural and historic resources, as noted in the Plan’s governing principles, also define Duluth’s sense of place and create both economic and social value. *Principle #1 - Reuse previously developed lands* – calls attention to “adaptive reuse of existing building stock and historic resources.” *Principle #9 – Support private actions that contribute to the public realm* – notes the importance of matching private building form to surrounding assets, including cultural assets. *Principle #6 – Reinforce the place-specific* – states that cultural features define Duluth’s sense of place, while *Principle #4 - Support emerging economic sectors* - speaks to the economic value of cultural resources.

The City will, in its regulations, actions and promotions, implement the following policies protecting and enhancing cultural resources.

- P&P 11.** The City will encourage reinvestment in Duluth’s primary and secondary central business areas through historic designation of districts and individual buildings that provides incentives for private investment through tax credits, and take preservation actions adhering to the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.
- P&P 12.** The City will inventory historic resources to establish a base line, prioritize public investment in the City’s cultural heritage and promote nomination of eligible buildings and districts for appropriate designations, whether national or local.
- P&P 13.** The City will consider historical context of the area or neighborhood in public projects or in evaluating developments where the City is a financial partner and will use design, materials and detailing consistent with the surrounding character.
- P&P 14.** In historic overlay areas the City will establish building standards to protect and enhance cultural resources while allowing for economic use of buildings and land. Techniques could include:
- A.** allowing for vertical mixed uses in historic structures to enhance market opportunities,
  - B.** working with state officials on building code flexibility to maximize opportunities while limiting risks of property owners,

- C. providing pre-approved façade design templates to minimize regulatory risk in adapting historic buildings or creating new buildings adjacent to historic sites,
- D. use of façade easements,
- E. use of transferable development credits.

Viewsheds

Duluth’s viewsheds are among its most defining features and distinguish the city from all other urban areas in the upper Midwest, if not the nation. The view corridors provide identity to city and neighborhoods alike. The Plan’s governing principles attend closely to protecting Duluth’s sweeping vistas and its subtler avenue view connections in the historic street grid. *Principle #6 – Reinforce the place-specific* – notes the importance of view corridors in providing context. *Principle #2 – Declare the necessity and secure the future of undeveloped places* – describes Duluth’s vistas as a defining element of its open space system.

The City of Duluth adopts the following policies to guide protection of unique view corridors, vistas, and sightlines.

- P&P 15.** The City will implement development standards to protect Duluth’s viewsheds, both looking down from above and up from below, including retention or selective clearing of tree cover, maintaining prominent rock faces, bluffs and historic stone-built walls and bridges, and using building form standards to provide for a strong presentation of Duluth’s urban and natural lakefront qualities.
- P&P 16.** The City will create standards for land owner access to elements that provide economic value to individual properties, such as views and solar access.

*Principle #9 – Support private actions that contribute to the public realm.*

Private building construction and site design influences activity in adjacent public areas. Building form, height, setbacks and detailing affect the adjacent areas. The uses and activity contained in the buildings directly impacts the surroundings. Public areas should benefit from adjacent private investment.

*Principle #6 - Reinforce the place-specific.*

Public and private actions should reinforce cultural, physical and economic features which have traditionally defined Duluth, its open space and its neighborhoods. This includes commercial areas providing neighborhood goods and services, ravine parks and other natural features that define neighborhood edges and view corridors to the Lake or River which serve to provide location and context.

## Policies

### Infrastructure and Public Services Policies

#### *Principle #12 - Create efficiencies in delivery of public services.*

The costs of public service must be considered in land use decisions. Street construction and maintenance, utilities, libraries, fire, police, snowplowing and recreation facilities are services directly related to the physical location of development. Infrastructure should help prescribe development location rather than react to it.

#### *Principle #2 - Reuse previously developed lands.*

Reuse of previously developed lands, including adaptive reuse of existing building stock and historic resources, directs new investment to sites which have the potential to perform at a higher level than their current state. This strengthens neighborhoods and is preferred to a dispersed development pattern with attendant alteration of natural landscapes and extensions of public services. Site preparation or building modification costs are offset by savings in existing public infrastructure such as streets, utilities, and transit, fire and police services.

### I&PS (Infrastructure and Public Services) Policies

The Plan's governing principles emphasize the relationship between land use decisions and public services. Public services frequently have defined minimum levels of service that need to be maintained. Land use choices, for both development and preservation, affect the quality and cost of public services. Land use choices can erode or enhance the level of service on Duluth's roads, in police and other emergency response times, and in the performance of water, wastewater, and gas utilities.

**I&PS 1.** Prioritize areas for development, restoration, or adaptive reuse that increase utilization of Duluth's existing infrastructure and favor maintenance and reconstruction of older infrastructure over infrastructure expansions. Priority areas include:

- A. vacant or underutilized industrial areas such as the U.S. Steel, Cement Plant, Clyde Iron, Rice's Point, and scattered infill sites,
- B. waterfront industrial areas for uses requiring water-borne transportation,
- C. commercial properties in the primary and secondary downtown areas,
- D. redevelopment sites for more intensive housing and mixed use development in areas where existing development is underperforming its potential.

**I&PS 2.** Land that will ultimately support some form of development should be developed in a staged, orderly manner. The City will set standards for the staging of development on greenfield sites (undeveloped land) that:

- A. encourage appropriate investment on previously developed lands. The City should consider the use of adequate public facilities standards and minimum density standards to codify its staging goals,
- B. recognize market opportunities and market limitations when creating or modifying the zoning map or considering public infrastructure extensions,
- C. prioritize public infrastructure extensions that minimize both construction and operating costs,
- D. consider that impact of greenfield development on the cost and level of service for police, fire, and emergency response services,
- E. favor infill development over greenfield development when staging development or providing public support or investment.

2006 City of Duluth Comprehensive Plan

- I&PS 3.** Public investment in streets and other infrastructure should support continued private reinvestment in housing stock, neighborhood commercial districts, and new mixed use areas, emphasizing that:
- A.** priority for public investment should be in existing systems that promote reuse of developed lands and infill projects, including mixed neighborhood redevelopment,
  - B.** public investment supporting greenfield development should focus on neighborhood extensions and expanding existing commercial and industrial areas.
- I&PS 4.** Priority should be given to development where required utility services can be provided at average or less than average cost, while development in locations where the initial installation and provision of utility services is more costly than average or requires lengthy extensions without intermediate connections should be discouraged.
- I&PS 5.** Air emissions of toxics such as mercury, fine particles, and other pollutants disperse throughout the City and the region. The City will provide leadership through its management of City facilities and programs to provide for better, cleaner air both locally and regionally and to mitigate short and long term impacts on human health and the natural environment.
- I&PS 6.** Implement the City's stormwater management goals and policies (adopted by City Council, 2005) through:
- A.** staging of development and use of design standards,
  - B.** education programs demonstrating the connection between impervious surfaces on private and public lands and water quality,
  - C.** wetland mitigation within the same major stream or river watershed as the impacted area,
  - D.** protection or restoration of wetlands,
  - E.** review of best management practices to address specific conditions of Duluth's topography, soils, and infrastructure carrying capacity,

### Duluth's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program

The City of Duluth has developed a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP) as part of their submission to be part of the State of Minnesota's General Permit MNR04000 Authorization to discharge storm water associated with municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)/State Disposal System (SDS) Permit for Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems.

Duluth's SWPPP contains 61 Best Management Practices (BMPs) that address the six minimum control measures (MCMs) as specified in the permit. As outlined in the SWPPP, table of contents many BMPs have elements related to several MCMs.

The Stormwater permit is a City wide permit and City personnel in various departments are participating in managing specific BMPs. To reduce duplication and paperwork, data is compiled by the responsible party and maintained at the appropriate departmental location. Responsible parties will provide summaries as appropriate and locations of data as part of their SWPPP review for the annual report. Each year prior to the annual report a staff meeting will be held with all responsible parties to insure data is collected. Where appropriate procedures and programs will be filed with permit data. However all master copies will be maintained in the responsible department in order to keep information readily available for review and keep data files current.

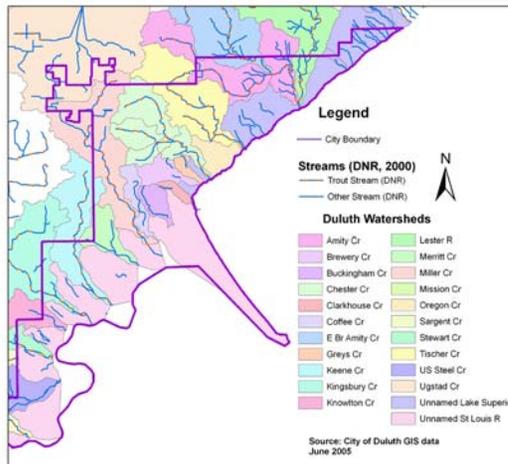
*Source: City of Duluth 2006 General Stormwater Permit (MS4s), P. 70*

## Policies

### Urban Design Policies

#### Major Stream Watershed

Major stream watersheds include the watersheds that wholly encompass each of the 43 major streams as identified in the City's current natural resource inventory (for a larger version of the map see the Natural Resources Profile).



#### *Principle #8 – Encourage a mix of activities, uses, and densities.*

Cities have evolved as a mix of land uses, building types, housing types, and activities. Accommodating choice while protecting investment is a balance to strike in land use regulation. Mixed uses provide opportunity for a diversity of activity that segregated, uniform uses do not provide.

- F. establishing appropriate conditions for a reduced street width standard to reduce impervious surface,
- G. public investment in areas to support carrying capacity of stormwater infrastructure.

**I&PS 7.** The City will work with governmental units sharing in watersheds which pass through Duluth to protect and enhance natural resources in the entire watershed, through education, enforcement, incentives, and acquisition.

**I&PS 8.** The City will work with adjacent units of government and County, regional and state entities to ensure efficient provision of water, wastewater, transportation, energy, and communications infrastructure.

#### UD (Urban Design) Policies

Urban design is an orientation toward the physical environment as well as a professional discipline. It touches almost every aspect of the built and natural physical form of the city including land use, housing, transportation, parks and open space. More so in Duluth than many other cities, the natural landforms – Lake Superior, St. Louis River, creek ravines, hillside and escarpment – create both opportunity and difficulty in construction. How design of built features responds to this context makes urban design in Duluth an exercise in large scale massing as well as intricate detail. *Principle #6 – Reinforce the place-specific* – is the underpinning for all urban design policies. *Principle #9 – Support private actions that contribute to the public realm* – addresses the need for private investments in building and site improvements to support broader city-building goals. The following policies address certain aspects of urban design: mixed use, housing, and site design. Other urban design concepts are addressed in other sections, including cultural resources, viewsheds, and transportation.

#### Mixed Use

*Principle #8 – Encourage a mix of activities, uses, and densities* – is consistent with historical development patterns, although much of the planning and zoning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century focused on separating uses. The following policies encourage compatible mixed use development.

- UD1.** To ensure that different land uses “mix well,” compatible building scale and sensitivity to neighborhood context is essential. The City will develop form-based standards and design guidelines that:
- A.** allow a variety of land uses to coexist within buildings when the building is of appropriate size and character,
  - B.** recognize and reflect unique or traditional neighborhood building patterns and street and block layouts,
  - C.** provide adequate transitions to lower-density neighborhoods and districts,
  - D.** keep sufficient separation between clearly incompatible uses, such as between intensive industrial or auto-oriented commercial and residential neighborhoods.

- UD2.** Large mixed-use development sites, such as the U.S. Steel site, the tower farm, and other sites identified as master-planned areas on the future land use map, will require master planning as market forces start to define possible new uses in these areas. Master plans should:
- A.** be developed in close collaboration with affected neighborhoods and other stakeholders,
  - B.** protect critical natural functions,
  - C.** enhance off-site natural systems where possible,
  - D.** include internal open space and trail corridors and connections to external trail corridors,
  - E.** protect cultural resources and viewsheds,
  - F.** provide for neighborhood recreation or open space areas in residential or commercial areas,
  - G.** provide a transition from more intensive to less intensive adjoining uses neighborhoods through stepping-down of building heights, reduction in building bulk, and similar techniques.

**Form-Based Code**

A method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form. Form-Based Codes create a predictable public realm by controlling physical form primarily, and land uses secondarily, through city or county regulations.

*Source: Form-Based Codes Institute website, [www.formbasedcodes.org/](http://www.formbasedcodes.org/)*

**Figure PO-1: U.S. Steel Master Plan Area**



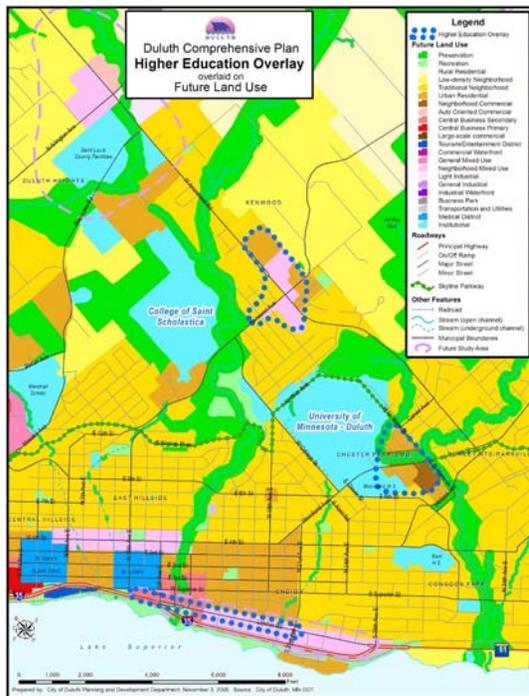
## Policies

### Urban Design Policies

#### Principle #5 – Strengthen neighborhoods.

The present city is an historical amalgam of villages and other independent units of government, contributing to the present condition of Duluth being strongly defined by its neighborhoods. This condition should be reinforced through land use, transportation and public service delivery patterns which strengthen neighborhood identity. New institutional expansions, major public infrastructure or large commercial or industrial uses should not divide historic neighborhood patterns.

Figure PO-2: Higher Education Overlay



### Housing

Residential land uses occupy more land area than any other general land use category in the City. Duluth’s housing density ranges from a single home on many acres to multi-family high-rises. Where new housing investment is made and at what densities will have a tremendous impact on overall land use patterns and infrastructure needs.

Most of the governing principles provide guidance on the preferred shape of the housing ‘system’ that sets housing priorities in the land use plan. For instance *Principle #8 – Encourage a mix of activities, uses, and densities* - describes a mix of housing types not only within the City, but within neighborhoods. *Principle #5 – Strengthen neighborhoods* – identifies the importance of maintaining neighborhood integrity and historic neighborhood patterns. *Principle #10 – Take sustainable actions* – identifies the importance of designing buildings that reduce each household’s impact on the environment. Principles 1, 11, and 12 identify how Duluth’s housing investment should be geographically directed: prioritizing previously developed lands for new development, conjoining housing and education facilities, and recognizing the impact of housing development choices on the performance and cost of City infrastructure and services.

The following policies direct housing investment, new construction, rehabilitation and build-ing conversions for public and private benefit.

**UD3.** The City will encourage a mix of housing densities and housing types within existing neighborhoods to diversify housing stock and bring new vitality to existing neighborhoods. Considerations that affect the appropriate mix of housing types within neighborhoods include:

- A. achieve a mix of housing types and densities while respecting neighborhood character and continuity of building styles, such as the historic street layout of Morgan Park, the architectural diversity of single family building styles in East Area neighborhoods, or the massing and historic look of Central Hillside’s building stock,
- B. carefully distribute higher-density housing and new housing types in limited quantities within residential neighborhoods, to sustain the primary land use and housing style and limit impacts from more intensive uses. These might include accessory dwellings, small groups of attached units, or small multi-family buildings designed to resemble single-family houses,

- C. in designated areas, create form and material standards based on an area's context, as established by predominant building character, street pattern, and land use,
- D. develop standards for off-site institutional and rental housing to allow for choice of housing types and neighborhoods, accommodate institutional growth and protect or enhance neighborhood integrity.

**UD4.** Expand housing opportunities in and around the primary downtown district through various public actions, including code changes to support rehabilitation, mixed use goals, or change of use of historic building stock.

**UD5.** Housing development should be staged to follow governing principles and infrastructure policies. The City will promote new infill development, consistent with a designated density, enhancing residential character and housing choice within neighborhoods, and promote neighborhood extensions that efficiently use public infrastructure.

**UD6.** The City will promote a mix of affordability ranges in housing stock:

- A. include an affordability element in subdivisions or major redevelopment projects utilizing public subsidy or other public action to assemble land or other form of project assistance,
- B. encourage private investment in support of affordable housing,
- C. ensure that affordable units are designed to be compatible in size, scale, materials and building form with market-rate units,
- D. support the creation of permanently affordable owner-occupied housing.

**UD7.** The City will identify priority areas and set standards for conservation and low impact development. Areas designed within the Sensitive Lands Overlay shown on the future land use map should enhance the qualities of the landscape and natural systems:

- A. protect the connectivity of undeveloped lands adjacent to stream corridors and that protect core areas of high quality natural stands,
- B. provide a buffer between development and public preservation areas,



### **Sensitive Lands Overlay**

High resource value lands or natural resources that may be developed under conservation design standards, TDR program designs, or low-impact performance standards.

- Varying densities and land uses
- Intensity is concentrated where natural carrying capacity is sufficient, or moved to other parcels via TDR-type program
- Conservation subdivision and design
- Natural resource performance standards.

## Policies

### Urban Design Policies



#### Place Making

Community design is about place-making. The physical layout of the community can and should connect people with each other, with the community, and with the surrounding countryside.

Source: Daniels, T. (1999). *When City and County Collide*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press: 87.

#### Context Sensitive Design (CSD)

The process of creating public works projects that meet the needs of the users, the neighboring communities, and the environment. CSD integrates projects into the context or setting in a sensitive manner through careful planning, consideration of different perspectives, and tailoring designs to particular project circumstances. Most commonly used in transportation planning, context sensitive design is also applicable to other infrastructure and development projects.

Source: [www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm57.htm](http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm57.htm)

- C. ensure that new subdivisions or neighborhood extensions include access to trails or alignments for designated trail extensions,
- D. retain reasonable tree cover on development sites to protect viewsheds and mitigate stormwater risk,
- E. create parkland dedication standards for areas with limited access to appropriate park and recreation facilities.

#### Site Design

Successful place-making, mixed use developments, and mixing of varied housing types all require high standards for site planning and design. Site and design standards should include building and parking placement, pedestrian connections, signage and landscape improvements. The City will adopt site design standards or guidelines that enhance place-making:

- UD8.** Strengthen pedestrian movement between compatible land uses with sidewalks in street rights of way, sidewalks and paths independent of streets, and attractive connections to parking areas and building entrances. Institutional land owners should be encouraged to connect with pedestrian systems on the perimeter of their properties.
- UD9.** Encourage site design which shares elements pedestrian access, parking, coordinated landscaping, linked open space and green infrastructure for stormwater management and water quality improvement.
- UD10.** Protect natural features and systems, as discussed above under Natural Resources, including protection or enhancement of public realm natural systems such as the urban forest (street trees).
- UD11.** Avoid surface parking between buildings and the street to reduce the visual impact of parking lots and provide landscape screening from public areas for all surface parking areas.

- UD12.** Create pedestrian-oriented environments by placing buildings and building entrances close to the street, providing windows along street frontages, and enlivening building facades with creative use of architectural detail or materials.
- UD13.** Encourage transit and bicycle use by providing facilities such as transit stops, comfortable shelters, and bicycle access and parking in convenient and visible locations.
- UD14.** Implement ‘light pollution’ standards for street and security (parking lots and buildings) lighting through:
- A.** the use of downlighting design that directs light toward sidewalks, streets, parking lots, building entrances, and yard features, and away from neighboring properties and the sky,
  - B.** the use of street, parking lot, and building security lights designed to direct light toward only the security points and away from the night sky,
  - C.** addition of shields to existing lights.



### Light Pollution

Any adverse effect of man-made light including sky glow, glare, light trespass, light clutter, decreased visibility at night, and energy waste.

### ED (Economic Development) Policies

Land use and infrastructure decisions affect areas of the City that are attractive for economic investment. The Plan’s governing principles identify the importance of both the City’s traditional economic base and emerging economic opportunities. *Principle #3 – Support traditional economic base* – recognizes the necessity of preserving Duluth’s location-dependent economic infrastructure (port facilities, access to shipping channels, railroad, airport). *Principle #4 – Support emerging economic sectors* – recognizes Duluth’s current economic engines and that land use and infrastructure must be responsive to new economic opportunity.

Other principles also guide land use relating to economic activity. *Principle #9 – Support private actions that contribute to the public realm* – prioritizes investment that enhances the physical form of Duluth’s streets, public areas, and open space. *Principle #10 – Take sustainable actions* – encourages economic development that minimizes its ecological footprint through better site design, waste minimization, and continuously reducing risks to air, water, and land.

### Principle #3 - Support traditional economic base.

Supporting Duluth’s traditional economic foundation maintains jobs, tax base, and opportunity. Economic activity with specific location requirements may be subject to displacement or site competition with changes in real estate values. This traditional economic activity faces change as result of global economic patterns, changing markets, new regulation and aging of extensive infrastructure. Nevertheless, fundamentals remain and the economic contribution, sometimes taken for granted, is significant.

## Policies

### Economic Development Policies

#### *Principle #4 - Support emerging economic sectors.*

Emerging economic sectors add economic, cultural and social diversity. These include higher education, medical, value-added manufacturing, commercial outdoor recreation, historic resources interpretation, arts and music, information technology and visitor services.



#### Higher Education Overlay

Institutional expansion or ancillary commercial or residential development is accommodated, regulated, and balanced with Plan preferences. Includes institutional planning areas and larger impact zone of land uses associated with university or college markets.

- Varying densities and land uses
- Commercial, residential higher intensity uses are regulated to buffer owner-occupied areas
- Related to institutional master plans.

The following policies enhance Duluth's economic opportunities and reduce economic risk from land use decisions.

- ED1.** Duluth will encourage economic expansion and increase economic diversity to support the local and regional economies.
- ED2.** Duluth will protect location-dependent economic uses, including port, railroad, and airport facilities, from encroachment by uses that are incompatible or not location-dependent.
- A.** reserve areas for expansion of airport facilities,
  - B.** reserve or require buffer areas between waterfront industrial areas and other waterfront uses,
  - C.** establish the primacy of port operations and water transportation-dependent uses in designated areas of the lower and upper harbors,
  - D.** work with the Port Authority, natural resource agencies, community groups, recreational interests and other related parties to monitor and improve the coexistence of recreation, port operations and enhancement of natural resources in the St. Louis River estuary, St. Louis Bay, Superior Bay and Lake Superior.
- ED3.** The City encourages economic growth consistent with the staging of development identified in the Comprehensive Plan. Priority will be given to investment that reuses previously developed lands, limits increases in utility operation or maintenance costs, and takes advantage of underutilized utility or transportation capacity and funded capital improvements.
- ED4.** The City will work cooperatively with higher education institutions on development within the Higher Education Overlay to include institutional expansions and housing, commercial or other uses appropriate to an area with strong student orientation. Policies addressing the overlay include:
- A.** encourage master planning to enhance public benefits, create opportunity for private investment and reduce risk to community character,
  - B.** make transportation and infrastructure investments that better integrate institutions into the community fabric,

- C. encourage campus improvements that contribute to the public realm and sustain the City's natural and social assets,
- D. enhance campus neighborhoods by planning for new housing and commercial investment that retains neighborhood integrity and preserves the primary land uses identified on the future land use map.

**ED5.** The City will work cooperatively with medical institutions to accommodate their growth within medical districts, including the following policies:

- A. support new investment within the medical district,
- B. improve physical, social and business connections with the larger community,
- C. support housing affordability and choice within and adjacent to the medical district,
- D. support medical district improvements and neighborhood transitions identified in sub-area plans developed with significant public involvement,
- E. preserve, restore, and reuse historic structures.

**ED6.** The City will work with private landowners, other units of government and institutions in areas with significant changes in land use or large redevelopment projects, such as U.S. Steel site, antenna farm, Stryker Bay remediation area, Bayfront to Rice's Point area of the waterfront, and other areas where master planning is justified, to create master plans that:

- A. address community stakeholders and neighborhood concerns for institutional expansion,
- B. create mixes of new land uses that sustain investment over the long term,
- C. use existing infrastructure capacity,
- D. meet the goals of the sensitive lands and higher education overlays (SLO and HEO),
- E. include natural area corridors through or around development and consider community and public uses including, but not limited to parks, recreational facilities, and schools or educational facilities.



## Policies

### Economic Development Policies

#### Brownfield

... 'brownfield site' means real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

*Source: Public Law 107-118 (H.R. 2869), 2002.*

#### Eco-Industrial Development

Networks of businesses that work with each other and in conjunction with their communities to improve resource productivity, expand markets, eliminate pollution, and catalyze economic growth through enhanced profits, wages and local investment.

*Source: Eco-Industrial Development Council membership brochure, [www.eco-industry.org](http://www.eco-industry.org)*

#### Local Historic Designation

Ordinance 8938 (Chapter 28A of the Duluth City Code) authorizes the Heritage Preservation Commission to recommend designation of heritage preservation landmarks and district to the City Council, who is responsible for the actual designation. Since 1989, when the ordinance was adopted, seven properties have been designated as Duluth Heritage Landmarks, and 8 additional properties on the National Register have also been given local designation.

- ED7.** The City will use its resources and influence to direct private investment towards redevelopment in older industrial areas and brownfields to reduce blight, create economic and social activity in the central corridor of the city and promote preservation or reuse of historic commercial or industrial structures.
- ED8.** The City will support expansion of industrial parks where infrastructure capacity exists.
- ED9.** The City will apply eco-industrial principles in economic redevelopment and in creating mixed use areas with industrial, commercial, and residential uses whenever possible.
- ED10.** The City will continue to enhance tourism and recreation business opportunities;
- A.** emphasize tourism and recreational development which brings visitors in late fall, winter weekdays and early spring and, which creates longer visitor stays as a means to increase private and public revenue spread more consistently throughout the year without adding to service and infrastructure needs at peak visitor times,
  - B.** cluster recreational and tourism businesses to maximize pedestrian and non-motorized access,
  - C.** identify recreation or tourism opportunities along Duluth's waterfront that work in synergy with port operations and waterfront neighborhoods,
  - D.** identify historic commercial structures, encourage their preservation and promote adaptive reuse, and include interpretation of the original use of the structure, to promote awareness of and education about Duluth's rich commercial and industrial past.
- ED11.** The City will work to sustain primary and secondary downtown areas, neighborhood commercial nodes, commercial corridors, large scale regional commercial assets, and mixed use commercial/residential development with:
- A.** land use regulation which distinguishes types of commercial uses that are appropriate for surrounding land uses, such as specific retail or entertainment activities that integrate well with traditional neighborhood areas,

- B. a mix of commercial uses at commercial nodes that create synergy and sustain the nodes over the long term,
- C. planning for potential expansion area for regional commercial areas, such as the Miller Hill Mall area, while buffering adjacent neighborhoods,
- D. housing density in UR and TN neighborhoods at the higher end of the density range near commercial nodes to enhance local market size and better sustain commercial investment,
- E. preservation, restoration, or commercial reuse of historic structures by creating flexible restoration and reuse standards,
- F. allowing low-intensity commercial uses in residential neighborhoods, designed with attention to context and subject to performance standards. Land use regulation should acknowledge the desirability of mixed use in most neighborhoods, while retaining the primary protection for the preferred land use designated on the future land use map,
- G. areas of mixed land use that allow higher residential densities along with commercial land uses and vertical mixed use buildings,
- H. form-based standards to enhance the character of prominent commercial areas, such as primary and secondary downtown areas, Plaza district and nearby residential areas in downtown and East Hillside.

**Commercial node**

A grouping or cluster of commercial land uses that spread outward in all directions from a single point or center, usually an intersection of two streets.

**Commercial corridor**

A grouping of commercial land uses that spread outward in two directions, typically along a road and not necessarily having a clear center or focal point.

**P&R (Parks and Recreation) Policies**

Duluth’s parks and recreation areas enhance residents’ quality of life, provide economic opportunity for Duluth’s businesses, and attract tens of thousands of visitors each year. Several of the Plan’s governing principles address park and recreation goals. *Principle #2 – Declare the necessity and secure the future of undeveloped places* – emphasizes the critical role of Duluth’s park areas as the backbone connecting other undeveloped land and private open space. *Principle #4 – Support emerging economic growth sectors* – speaks to the economic importance of recreational and open space areas. *Principle #7 – Create and maintain connectivity* – describes how trail systems serve not only recreational needs but provide connectivity and the doorstep connections that help make for healthy lifestyles.

The following policies enhance park and recreation opportunities and guide future planning efforts and public investment.

**Preserving and Enhancing the Environment**

- Duluthians will preserve the “Natural Heritage System” of Lake Superior, woodlands, wetlands, St. Louis River, creeks, hillsides - and expand the system for future generations.
- Doorstep recreation opportunities will provide activities and promote healthy lifestyles. Resources, which provide for the study and enjoyment of nature, will be accessible to all.

*Source: 2001 and beyond guiding principles*

## Policies

### Parks and Recreation Policies



**P&R1.** Duluth has a great deal of open space and unbuilt land. But not all open space is parkland, access to some parks is limited, and some neighborhoods have few park options within typical park service areas. The City will:

- A.** work to ensure reasonable access to parks and levels of service for recreational programs by type of park: passive (wilderness) parks, playgrounds, community centers, and recreational fields,
- B.** create a level of service goal for access to various types of parks,
- C.** assess the need for a park dedication provision that serves to improve recreation and open space levels of service in underserved neighborhood areas,
- D.** consider modifying the functional classification of its park areas to better meet the needs of residents and visitors,
- E.** consider land exchanges that improve recreation, park, and open space levels of service.

**P&R2.** Create a park and recreation plan to identify specific needs and investments to serve those needs, create level of service standards for parks and open space access, and develop design guidelines for high priority recreation facilities.

**P&R3.** Create a Master Plan for guiding investment, recreation, restoration, and protection for the Spirit Mountain Recreation Area.

**P&R4.** Trails provide both recreational opportunities and alternative travel modes to the automobile. The City will enhance its trail system to improve connectivity, including:

- A.** connecting the major trail networks with each other, including the Munger Trail, Lakewalk and Superior Hiking Trail,
- B.** connecting neighborhoods, parks and commercial areas to the major trail network through the use of trail spurs,
- C.** improving trail connections to major institutions, particularly higher education facilities, but also destination retail (such as Miller Hill and Lincoln Park's secondary downtown area) and employment centers (such as the medical district and primary downtown area),

- D. protect designated trails with easements or other legal definition of the corridor.

**P&R5.** Create a trail plan to identify a hierarchy of trail types based on their function, standards for each class, priorities for corridor acquisition and trail build-out for each class of trail.

**P&R6.** The City will evaluate capital improvement and maintenance needs of the park system in order to ensure quality active and passive recreational and cultural opportunities:

- A. consider maintenance of existing community and recreation facilities before expanding the system,
- B. create maintenance standards and procedures based on type of park and level of usage,
- C. work to maintain, restore and interpret historic structures in parks and on trails, including buildings, retaining walls, and bridges.

## **T (Transportation) Policies**

Duluth's transportation system has a strong relationship to the City's land use pattern. The location and capacity of transportation infrastructure acts in synergy with the location, type, and density of land uses. Transportation decisions can enable or prevent land use goals from being met. *Principle #7 – Create and maintain connectivity* – emphasizes the importance of addressing transportation issues, including both automobile and non-motorized modes of travel, in development decisions. A frequent planning dilemma is that enhancing connectivity for some people or businesses may limit connectivity for others; a busy highway creates connectivity along its path, but simultaneously creates a barrier across its path.

Connectivity concepts are also advanced in other principles: *Principle #6 – Reinforce the place-specific* – uses pedestrian accessibility as a defining element of what is a “place,” emphasizing that pedestrian movement has a higher priority than automobile movement in some locations. Neighborhoods are similarly defined in *Principle #5 – Strengthen neighborhoods* – in that public infrastructure such as roads or highways that divide neighborhoods can diminish neighborhood quality of life. Principles 11 and 12 address the environmental and



### *Principle #7 – Create and maintain connectivity.*

Connectivity is established through our streets and highways, transit system, sidewalks, bikeways and trails, (local and regional). The non-vehicular modes should be considered more than recreation. They are important components of an overall transportation system. Winter maintenance of sidewalks and other public ways is critical to creation of usable pedestrian systems.

## Policies

### Transportation Policies

#### *Principle #11 - Include consideration for education systems in land use actions.*

For K-12 and higher education both, there is a connection between land use patterns and educational facilities. School locations in neighborhoods and housing opportunities for higher education students require consideration of impacts on transportation systems, housing densities, parking and non-student uses.



#### Level of Service

A standardized measure of infrastructure operating conditions, eg, traffic flow on a highway; generally defined with reference to a benchmark; a measure of effectiveness.

Source: [www.ecostructure.com/res\\_glossary.html](http://www.ecostructure.com/res_glossary.html)

social aspects of transportation decisions, from making sustainable transportation decisions to ensuring walkable connections between families and schools. Finally, *Principle #3 – Support traditional economic base* – emphasizes the importance of maintaining economic connectivity by protecting access to shipping channels and protecting intermodal industrial connectivity (railroad, trucking and air transportation).

The following policies guide transportation decisions, transportation investment, and land use choices to result in rational connectivity outcomes.

#### Roads and Highways

The road system is designed to meet a variety of distinct functions. Roads provide both local neighborhood access and move vehicles through or around neighborhoods to destination areas such as employment or shopping centers. An interconnected network of local streets, as is found in most of the City's traditional neighborhoods, offers a variety of travel routes for all modes of travel while keeping local traffic off the arterial road network. The City will balance the need for maintaining traffic flow on arterial roads with the importance of maintaining a high level of service and safety for neighborhood travel and pedestrian and non-motorized travel.

- T1. Coordinate road and regional non-road improvements with the Metropolitan Interstate Commission's (MIC) Long-Range Plan.
- T2. Road and traffic planning investments should address cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods. The City will support creation of new arterials, such as the Joshua extension in Duluth Heights, and will study other areas where cut-through traffic degrades quality of life.
- T3. The City will develop a pedestrian level-of-service standard.
- T4. Arterial roads should move traffic along the edges of neighborhoods rather than within neighborhoods. The City will preserve arterial functions by managing land use along arterial roads and utilizing access limitations along arterial corridors.

- T5.** Road construction and street improvements plans shall consider retaining existing trees and leaving adequate space for tree planting.
- T6.** The network of one-way streets in and around the primary and secondary downtown areas and the medical district are a vestige of pre-Interstate traffic planning. The City will limit or reduce one-way streets in these areas, including:
- A.** participating with MIC in modeling the effects of eliminating one-way streets on vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle movement,
  - B.** reviewing commercial parking and loading limitations to converting one-ways to two-way in the primary downtown area and similar areas where commercial uses predominate.
- T7.** Interstate 35 ends at 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue E., channeling a large volume of commercial traffic into a residential neighborhood. The City will continue to evaluate options for reducing risk to the neighborhood and to the arterial function of London Road. All mitigation options come with high costs, as does the ‘no-action’ option. Actions should include evaluation of alternative alignments/routes and working with state and federal agencies to secure funding assistance that recognizes the need for risk mitigation.



### Traffic Calming

The purpose of traffic calming is to increase neighborhood livability and slow traffic to create a safe environment, particularly for children, seniors, and the disabled. While traffic calming measures are usually applied to local residential streets, traffic calming is also appropriate for functionally classified streets in residential areas, pedestrian activity areas, and older commercial areas where buildings and sidewalks are close to the street.

- T8.** The City will evaluate traffic calming strategies as a means of reducing cut-through traffic and increasing pedestrian safety. The City will focus traffic calming strategies in appropriate situations, including:
- A.** where requested by residents,
  - B.** when needed to address new development in an existing neighborhood,
  - C.** when considering Street Improvement Program guidelines in areas of the City with narrow streets and mature street trees,

2006 City of Duluth Comprehensive Plan

**Traffic Calming**

Traffic calming is “the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users.”

*Source - The Institute of Transportation Engineers*

## Policies

### Transportation Policies

#### Wayfinding

What is wayfinding? Wayfinding exists in many scales and environments. It navigates readers through a city, hospital corridor or airport, calls attention to a storefront, or provides information about an exhibit.

Wayfinding is essentially a succession of clues comprising visual, audible and tactile elements. The components of any visual wayfinding system exceed signs to encompass architecture, lighting, landscape and landmarks. Good wayfinding helps users experience an environment in a positive way and facilitates getting from point A to point B. When executed successfully, the system can reassure users and create a welcoming environment, as well as answer questions before users even ask them.

However, too much information can be as ineffective as too little. Developing a hierarchy of information is a critical component of wayfinding, with users being the primary consideration. The speed, visual environment and distance from which the information will be viewed are key considerations.

Less information on a sign can be read by a driver at 50 mph than by a pedestrian standing 3 ft. away. This may seem obvious, but consider how many times you've driven past a sign that bears more information than you could absorb. "More" is not necessarily better; even a well-designed program can get lost in visual clutter.

*Source: Patrick Gallagher, President of the Society for Environmental Graphic Design, [www.signweb.com/index.php/channel/6/id/1426/](http://www.signweb.com/index.php/channel/6/id/1426/)*

- D. when evaluating on-street parking standards,
- E. when traffic calming will slow traffic to appropriate speeds and not divert traffic from one neighborhood street to another,
- F. where a lack of street trees contributes to excessive speeds.

#### Trails and Pedestrian Access

Trail systems create vital connectivity and sustain property values by linking housing, commercial and open space destinations. Dedicated pedestrian access along neighborhood streets and between destination businesses will reduce short automobile trips and lessen congestion. Such access must be planned into new development and redevelopment projects, and existing trail and pedestrian routes must be maintained as important infrastructure.

- T9.** Create a trail network to encourage non-motorized commuting and errand trips, as well as recreational activities. To implement this policy, the City will work with non-profit trail groups to secure trail connections and trail construction, and to enhance existing trail systems.
  - A. develop connections through trails and corridors linking neighborhoods to the parks and green spaces offered for recreational enjoyment,
  - B. create trail right-of-ways and links to existing or planned trail systems in new subdivisions, recognizing that informal trails on undeveloped land often demonstrate a neighborhood need for recreational use or connectivity,
  - C. connect Duluth trails to trail systems in neighboring communities.
- T10.** Adopt procedures and enforce ordinances to keep sidewalks adjacent to public and private property clear of obstructions, snow, and ice.
- T11.** Identify standards for improving bicycle safety and encouraging greater bicycle commuting through street design improvements, identification of bicycle arterial routes, and maintenance needs to extend bicycling seasons.
- T12.** Skyline Parkway, as the scenic transportation connection across the city, requires increased legibility though developed portions of the city, view protection

(especially on the lower side), a wayfinding system for visitors, and better maintenance, all with pedestrian and bicycle users as well as vehicles in mind.

- T13.** The City will create a schedule for improving pedestrian access in critical pedestrian areas as identified in Metropolitan Interstate Commission pedestrian access plans.
- T14.** The City will emphasize Duluth's stream corridors as natural non-motorized access corridors that define and link neighborhoods, and connect people to the Skyline Parkway corridor and the St. Louis River/Lake Superior corridor.

### Parking

Parking is both a land use and a transportation issue. An average parking space and the drive-ways serving it consume about 320 square feet of land. Large surface parking lots can act as barriers to pedestrians and discourage walking and transit trips.

- T15.** The City will meet parking needs through use of shared parking facilities, buildings that incorporate parking within the building footprint, and co-funding of public parking facilities with private development partners.
- T16.** Within areas of higher density, the City will work with land owners and businesses to attempt to meet parking needs through transportation planning that incorporates creative parking solutions, use of transit, accommodation of shared vehicles or bicycles, and pedestrian access.
- T17.** Within existing business or mixed use areas, the City will encourage the use of vacant lots, rear yard areas, institutional lots, and other creative solutions for providing public or shared off-street parking.
- T18.** The City will encourage incorporating parking into the building footprint for higher density developments and as part of infill opportunities that take the place of surface parking areas.



## Policies

### Transportation Policies



### Transit

Public transit works best when housing is clustered within a convenient and comfortable walking distance of transit stops, and major employment, retail and entertainment destinations are located in a pedestrian-oriented environment with good connections to transit. The greater the density of activity, the more cost-effective it is for transit to serve. Therefore, implementing the land use plan, as shown on the future land use map, will increase the attractiveness and viability of public transit in Duluth.

The City will encourage and reinforce transit use through the following policies:

- T19.** Incorporate pedestrian and public transit options in regional commercial areas when developing or redeveloping and when making transportation system improvements.
- T20.** Assess the potential for transit service to future development, especially on new ‘greenfield’ sites, and work with the DTA to extend transit service to new development where feasible.
- T21.** Evaluate parking policies and decisions, public and private, for their impacts on the viability of public transit. Subsidized parking, when provided to commuters and consumers, lessens their incentive to walk, bike or use transit. The City’s parking authority should work with the DTA to promote transit use among commuters and maximize efficient use of both parking and transit investments.
- T22.** Investigate the potential for light rail, streetcar or commuter rail in and around the City of Duluth, including the potential for new transit-oriented development that can help to sustain these new transit options.
- T23.** Evaluate inter-community transit options, such as commuter rail options both north and south and a rail connection with the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Commercial/Freight Transportation

Duluth started as a commercial transportation center. The construction of the Sault Ste. Marie canal in 1855 allowed ships to move from Lake Superior to the rest of the Great Lakes, and a hundred years later allowed Duluth to become a seaport. The construction of the railroad in 1869 similarly made Duluth the focal point of grain, timber, and ultimately iron ore shipping. Duluth continues to be a shipping center for the upper Midwest, and the City’s transportation policies must address the port, rail, and airport facilities that support Duluth’s economic base.

Duluth is also a regional retail center, the gateway to some of the most popular tourist destinations in Minnesota, and a major tourist destination in its own right. Maintaining a reasonable level of service on Duluth’s inter-regional corridors is an ongoing challenge given the limitations of Duluth’s topography and regional traffic that is growing more quickly than local traffic demands. The following policies address freight, shipping, and commercial-oriented transportation issues:

- T24.** The City will continue to work with the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, Army Corps of Engineers, Coast Guard, and stakeholder groups to maintain Duluth’s shipping channels and intermodal port facilities. The City will work to protect the shipping corridor while also supporting environment- and community-sensitive solutions to dredging, water traffic conflicts, and water quality issues of ongoing port operations.
- T25.** Freight movement needs ready access to both water and land-based freight movement systems. The City will continue to protect freight corridors and intermodal facilities that link water-borne shipping with rail and truck shipping.
- T26.** The Duluth International Airport (DIA) is planning for expansion. The City will work with the DIA to implement the DIA Master Plan (2000) and the Duluth Airport Land Use Plan (MIC, 2001), balancing expansion goals with the noise, natural systems, and road transportation issues associated with expansion.
- T27.** Congestion associated with commercial activities such as tourist traffic in and around Canal Park and on London Road (U.S. Hwy 61) are identified in MIC long-range modeling as likely long-term problems. The City will consider public investments to reduce tourist-related bottlenecks through improved signage to alternative routes, improved pedestrian access in tourism/entertainment areas, and selected road improvements.

**Figure PO-3 Shipping Protection**



## Policies

### Development Process Policies



#### DP (Development Process) Policies

Development and redevelopment is an element of long-term sustainability, and the development process must have clear guidance as to how to value and incorporate important natural and cultural resources. As part of the rewrite of its zoning, subdivision, shoreland, floodplain, and other development and protection regulations, the City will identify a clear and consistent development standards and development approval process through the following policies:

- DP 1.** Ensure that land use regulation sets clear expectations for development, redevelopment, and protection of Duluth's natural, cultural, economic, and social assets.
- DP 2.** In order to keep the regulatory burden reasonable, the City will implement the Comprehensive Plan through cooperation, incentives, and education in addition to regulation,
- DP 3.** Explicitly base land use decisions, including development and environmental review, Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment administrative decisions, and public realm investment, on Comprehensive Plan principles and policies,
- DP 4.** Provide for public review and comment on development, preservation, and investment proposals, and meaningfully address public responses.