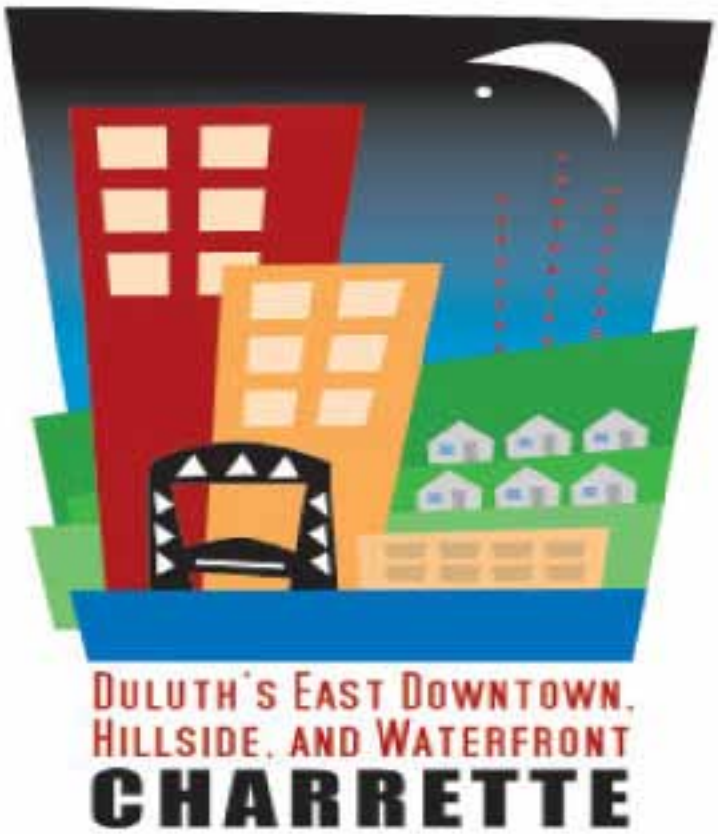
The Duluth Creative Corridor

Progress Advisory Panel Report for Duluth's East Downtown, Hillside, and Waterfront Neighborhoods



Prepared for the City of Duluth, Minnesota, the Duluth Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and the Greater Downtown Council. Based on the October 1-4, 2011, Site Visit by the University of Miami School of Architecture and a Team of Knight Community Building Fellows

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Executive Summary

In October 2011, Duluth city leaders, downtown businesses, and community organizations joined together to convene a mid-course review of progress in achieving the guiding principles and recommendations from its 2005 charrette. The review was sponsored by the City of Duluth, Duluth Local Initiatives Support Corporation (Duluth LISC), the Greater Downtown Council, and the University of Miami School of Architecture.

The 2005 Charrette

The charrette (an intensive, week-long public design workshop) enabled the 1,000-plus citizens, business leaders, and city officials who participated to reach agreement on a vision and plan that would help facilitate the revitalization of Duluth's East Downtown and the adjacent Hillside and Waterfront neighborhoods. They also agreed on 10 overarching principles to guide redevelopment. The principles and charrette plan recommendations provided a blueprint for enabling new development that sensitively blends into and enhances the community's character and sense of place. The charrette ended with establishing a Charrette Stewardship Group to coordinate implementation of the charrette plan. That decision, coupled with strong city leadership, led to the remarkable progress since 2005. The Charrette Stewardship Group, working with Duluth Mayor Don Ness, has continued to track and benchmark progress since the charrette and initiated the progress advisory review as well as the creation of a Charrette Update Committee.

The Progress Review

To receive the best advice possible, the progress review sponsors turned to the University of Miami team that spearheaded the 2005 charrette through the Knight Program in Community Building to assemble a panel of national experts to lead the review. Panel members came from different parts of the country and brought different areas of expertise and experience to the review process.

"The 2005 charrette enabled us to think big about our community and its downtown, neighborhoods, and waterfront. What has happened in the last six years since the charrette has put Duluth well on the way to becoming one of the best places to live in and visit in the country. It is now only a question of how far and fast we can go. The Progress Advisory Panel enabled us to appreciate how much we have done and be strategic about our next chapter."

Don Ness, Mayor, City of Duluth

Progress Advisory Panel members met with Duluth Mayor Don Ness and participants in the Duluth Progress Review Resource Group to report on progress and offer ideas for strategic next steps to advance the charrette vision and guiding principles.

The 2005 Duluth Charrette Principles

1. Boost Duluth
2. Evoke a sense of place
3. Foster public safety
4. Preserve and enhance heritage resources
5. Invest in the public realm
6. Establish and restore the unique urban ecology of the city's neighborhoods, districts, corridors, and downtown
7. Calm traffic and improve connectivity
8. Broaden the mix of uses
9. Expand housing opportunities for people from all walks of life to live downtown
10. Improve the regulatory framework

Three of the five advisors were members of the 2005 charrette team. The panel's work involved a three-step process to ensure that its recommendations were grounded in understanding the progress since the 2005 charrette, consider the next set of challenges to address, and identify new opportunities to build on. The three steps included extensive pre-visit homework (reviewing numerous studies and plans produced since the 2005 charrette), careful listening to a wide and varied cross-section of citizens and stakeholders, and on-the-ground observations. The panel members stayed in the area, toured it by foot and van, interviewed stakeholders, and heard progress reports. The panel was asked to focus on the areas of housing, connectivity, the arts, economic development, marketing and branding involving over 50 local organizations.

Panel Observations and Recommendations

Duluth's progress since the 2005 charrette has been remarkable. In six years the city has accomplished what would take many places two decades. It is also the right city at the right time. In today's economy, successful communities are those that can create distinctive, vibrant, walkable urban places capable of attracting and retaining businesses, investment, residents, and visitors. And that is exactly what the panel's overarching recommendation aims to build on and secure with the creation of what the panel dubbed "The Duluth Creative Corridor."

The Duluth Creative Corridor Vision

The Duluth Creative Corridor is where residents, visitors, and employers want to be: a cohesive, walkable urban place that contains and connects an interesting mix of arts, culture, and entertainment along with great public spaces (large and small) and all types of housing (for all incomes and stages, including students, artists, empty nesters, recent grads, and seasonal visitors). It is also a place that offers a spectacular view of – and connections to – beautiful Lake Superior.

A city at the right time

As captured by Richard Florida's groundbreaking research, cities that have shown an ability to attract and retain vibrant, knowledge-based industries and professions and the workforce they employ (dubbed the "creative class") have proven to be exceptionally competitive and have resilient economies. Creative class businesses and industries rely heavily on local quality of life, including natural and urban amenities, to attract and retain employees. Place making is now a city's best economic development tool.

Reversing what prior generations did (live where they could find work), today's work force works where they want to live. They prefer cities that offer beautiful, natural environments for active living and exciting, interesting urban environments – the connected walkable places where they can live close to work and have convenient access to education, the arts, transit, and good shopping, dining, and gathering places. Those kinds

The Duluth Creative Corridor (in yellow above) includes an urban living area that connects the downtown and waterfront with the Hillside campuses and arts and entertainment nodes along the corridor. A branded, high quality transit line (denoted in red above) connects the district and major destinations (yellow circles above) within it.

of places are attracting the country's two largest demographic groups (baby boomers and their children, the Millennials) and are what many consumers want.

As economist Chris Leinberger points out in a Brookings Institution article, "The Next Real Estate Boom," the next economic engine is providing the places that consumers coming out of the recent great recession want: "homes in central cities and closer-in suburbs where one can walk to stores and mass transit…." That is exactly the vision for the Duluth Creative Corridor. In the creative corridor concept, the panel envisions building on existing assets and amenities to propel Duluth to be an emerging success story for creative, knowledge-based industries in small-to-medium sized cities that can compete regarding quality of life.

"Duluth is sometimes called the 'San Francisco of the Midwest' because of its dramatic topography, proximity to Lake Superior, and abundance of historic architecture in its downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. This, combined with its location in the northern alpine wilderness, gives it a distinctive character among small U.S. cities. The charrette team was inspired by Duluth's stunning geographic setting juxtaposed with the traditional urban fabric imposed on the landscape."

2005 Duluth Charrette Report,
Knight Program in Community Building

The Duluth Creative Corridor provides a policy, design, and investment framework for investments in:

- Arts and Economic Development
- Housing
- Institutional Partnerships
- Marketing
- Planning, Urban Design, and Connectivity
- Leadership

A strong record of process to build on

The Duluth Creative Corridor builds on and expands the city's accomplishments since the 2005 Charrette. Those efforts have advanced the charrette principles that focus on the uniqueness of place, walkability, connectivity, a mix of housing choices, a great public realm, and protection (and restoration) of the city's distinctive heritage and urban ecology, its neighborhoods, corridors, and downtown. A major accomplishment has been the adoption of form-based districts in the new Unified Development Code that provides a critical implementation framework to guide the creation and maintenance of great urban places.

Other accomplishments, to name but a few, include the progress in growing a creative culture (the Zeitgeist Arts Center and purchase of the NorShor Theater, for example), a safer public realm during the daytime, and a number of new housing developments in and near the downtown, demonstrating a strong demand for close-in living. Also notable is a new spirit of cooperation between UMD and the city that also could grow the creative culture and downtown housing for students and faculty and further the use of transit. However, the most important achievement (that led to all the others) is the strong, consistent leadership and spirit of partnership that was demonstrated by the community in the 2005 charrette.

Specific actions to pursue

➢ *Arts and Economic Development* – Treat the arts (visual and performance) as a retail and entertainment anchor; create additional places where artists can live and work, and in the process, liven up the street. Cluster arts and synergistic residences, retail and educational facilities in nodes to maximize the economic spinoff, and

use public art and signage to connect nodes. Partner with area educational institutions to add to the arts mix.

➢ *Housing* – Duluth has benefitted from strong public, private, and non-profit sector partners led by LISC that have helped stabilize and diversify housing options within the downtown for a wide variety of household types and income levels. The panel advocates maintaining a strong commitment to expanding downtown housing opportunities, including the addition of more market-rate housing and getting the word out about the fun and sophisticated living options in and near the downtown. Duluth's economic and downtown development groups all need to help tell the story in addition to investing in making the Duluth Creative Corridor work even better as a regional economic engine. The city and its partners should set quantifiable goals, provide the incentives to achieve them, and document successes.

➢ *Institutional Partnerships* – Capitalize on the presence of anchor institutions, including hospitals, and universities, in or near the Duluth Creative Corridor that provide two of the essential amenities (access to good health care and education) that are always top drivers in the "best place to live" studies and reports. Four critical "to dos": 1) Create joint campus/neighborhood-friendly plans; 2) Provide incentives for employees to live near where they work (a household money-saver); 3) Encourage students to volunteer and live in the corridor; and 4) Invest in improving the off-campus environment.

➢ *Marketing* – Strengthen and tell the Duluth story, but not just in the Midwest. Duluth is ready to compete with great urban places like Boulder and Ashville that are mecca's for young creatives and outdoor enthusiasts. The identification and study of peer communities such as these and others can provide valuable insights into how communities of similar size and resources capitalize on their unique assets and strengths to compete. With its

As depicted above and on the next page, Duluth's many assets make it the right city at the right time to attract and retain vibrant, knowledge-based industries and professions and the workforce they employ, as called for in the recommendations for the Duluth Creative Corridor.

spectacular shoreline, dramatic topography, the Canal Park area, connections to northern vacation destinations, and burgeoning downtown nightlife and arts scene, Duluth has the natural and urban livability assets to become a national destination.

➢ *Planning, Urban Design, and Connectivity* – Adapt existing codes and adopt new regulations and review procedures that support and actively facilitate the realization of the Duluth Creative Corridor (treating street design in a context-based manner, for example). Great cities are defined by great streets. Connect the higher education campuses physically, visually, psychologically, and through branding efforts to the downtown and waterfront as one seamless, walkable urban living area. Invest in making Superior Street a cultural hot spot and a great street of urban stature.

➢ *Leadership* – Get institutional leaders more actively involved and invested in realizing the corridor vision. Establish a regular, ongoing coordinating group to keep the vision alive, assign actions with clear and trackable outcomes, monitor and document progress (the numbers are important), stimulate excitement and innovative thinking, and tell the Duluth story. The coordinating group must include community leaders from business, government, industry, non-profits, and academia that can take decisive actions that move implementation forward: marshaling resources, forging partnerships, removing obstacles, and empowering staff to effect change.

In short, the panel concluded, the Duluth Creative Corridor will reposition Duluth as one of the country's great urban places. As evidenced by its exceptional progress to date and the continued support for a bold, shared vision, the city has the requisite public and private leadership and fortitude to make that happen.

Context

A hallmark of any successful venture is monitoring progress, identifying and celebrating successes, and making adjustments that respond to changing conditions, new challenges, and new opportunities. Duluth city leaders, downtown businesses, and community organizations joined together to do just that for the October 2011 mid-course review of progress since the July 2005 East Downtown, Hillside, and Waterfront Neighborhoods charrette.

The progress review sponsors asked the University of Miami's School of Architecture, which organized the 2005 charrette, to assemble a panel of Knight Fellows in Community Building (called a Progress Advisory Panel) to lead the review and recommend priorities for next steps. Duluth Mayor Don Ness and the Charrette Stewardship Group (established to coordinate implementation of the 2005 charrette plan) were the impetus for the progress review. The review was sponsored by the City of Duluth, the Duluth Local Initiatives Support Corporation (Duluth LISC), the Greater Downtown Council (GDC), and the University of Miami School of Architecture – with key funding provided by the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation (DSACF) and Duluth LISC.

As outlined below, to begin their work, members of the panel of experts reviewed the current conditions in the East Downtown, Hillside, and Waterfront neighborhoods (the study area) and the recommendations of the 2005 charrette for those neighborhoods. They also learned about the goals for the Mid-Course Progress Review.

"The formation of a Duluth stewardship group with representatives from key stakeholders, decision-makers, and vision keepers following the charrette was identified as a best practice in the evaluation study performed for the Knight Community Building charrettes. The stewardship group transformed the plan and recommendations from the charrette into a continuous improvement process in which actions were prioritized, resources and responsibilities were identified, and the civic engagement process was institutionalized."

Dr. Charles C. Bohl, Associate Professor and Director, MRED+U Program

The Progress Advisory Panel credited the strong leadership of Duluth Mayor Don Ness and the continued support and driving energy of the Charrette Stewardship Committee with the impressive successes over the last six years.

The Study Area

The study area, members of the Progress Advisory Panel learned, is experiencing a renaissance thanks to significant investments in health care, the arts, entertainment, housing, and education.

Regional Context and the City's Growth

As Minnesota's fourth largest city, Duluth serves as the cultural, educational, medical, and commercial center of a metropolitan region with some 279,000 people in 2010 and a trade area of 333,000. Unlike many rustbelt communities, the city is transitioning into a vibrant urban center with a lively, diverse economy, and its popu-

lation has remained steady (instead of declining). In fact, the 20 to 34 as well as the 55 to 64 age segments of the population are increasing. [1]

A steady increase in the labor force is another indicator that Duluth has turned the corner. Following a period of stagnation from 2000 through 2006, the labor force grew by 3.45[2] percent from 2006 to 2010, a trend that continued into 2011. Much of that growth was jobs in the areas of health care and computer system design, and, to a lesser extent, architecture and engineering (all sectors are projected to increase). An additional positive is the rise in households in the trade area having incomes of $75,000 and above (a 21 percent increase for households with incomes above $100,000 and a 23 percent increase for those with incomes above $150,000).[3]

Underscoring the important role that health care plays in Duluth's economy, Essentia Health (top image above) and St. Luke's (lower image) are the city's two largest employers. The harbor (below) also continues to be a strong economic magnet, attracting freighters, cruises, and thousands of tourists each year.

Education, Health Care, Culture, and Distinctive Sense of Place: New Economic Drivers

Four of the greatest assets in Duluth (and the study area) – a strong higher education base, high level of health care, growing cultural arts community, and distinctive sense of place – are also drivers in today's knowledge economy and in the creation of the places that today's creative work force (and, therefore, their employers) are looking for.

➢ *Higher Education* – Downtown Duluth and the waterfront area are within a few miles of five colleges and universities: the College of St. Scholastica, the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), Lake Superior Community College, Fond du Lac Community College, and, across the bay, the University of Wisconsin-Superior. Collectively they enroll 25,000 students. The largest of those institutions is the University of Minnesota Duluth, which had 11,729 students in 2010, a significant increase over its 2006 student population of 10,800. The university emphasizes its connections to the community ("A Great University on a Great Lake" is its tagline), while the Office of Civic Engagement emphasizes partnerships with local community organizations and mobilizes students (approximately 2,000 a year) to contribute their time to the community.

The University of Minnesota at Duluth (image above) is the largest of the five higher education institutions within a few miles of the downtown.

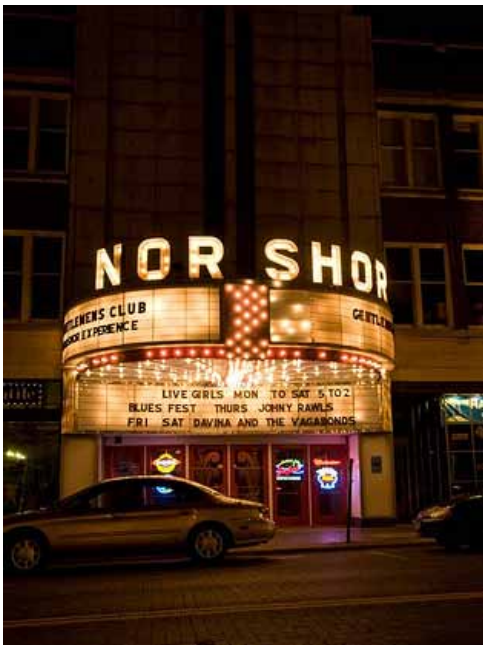
1 http://projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/map.
2 Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Local Area Unemployment Statistics).
3 Greater Downtown Council.

➢ *Health Care* – Today Essentia Health and St. Luke's are Duluth's two largest employers. Together they employ over 7,000 health care professionals and draw thousands of patients and visitors each year from outside the region. The growing importance of the health care industry cannot be underestimated. In 1980, it represented approximately 10-12 percent of the regional economy; in 2000, that had grown to 21.9 percent, and in 2010 it was 30.1 percent (by far the largest sector of the economy). The next largest sector is government workers, representing 16.9 percent.[4]

➢ *Culture* – From the educational institutions on the hill to the downtown and waterfront, Duluth is experiencing growth in the cultural arts (theaters, ballet, art galleries, and music, for example) and entertainment events and facilities. That growth is reflected in the following description by the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce, "Duluth's unique geography, historic downtown, easy access to Lake Superior, and its rich art and culture scene make the city an attractive tourist destination." Those assets also make it a desirable place to live, as demonstrated by an increase in downtown and waterfront living opportunities.

Growing the cultural community (the performance and visual arts) and cultural resources such as the Duluth Playhouse, Duluth Festival Opera, and Duluth Art Institute has been the focus of the A.H. Zeppa Family Foundation. Recently the Foundation has worked to develop the Zeitgeist Arts Building on Superior Street that houses a restaurant, an independent movie theater, and a black box theater.

The City of Duluth also supports the arts through the Duluth Public Arts Commission that administers Duluth's unique city ordinance requiring One Percent for Art in Public Places (funded by designating one percent of new construction for public art). Another program emphasizing the arts is the Duluth LISC Community Resources for Artists-to-Entrepreneurs (C.R.E.A.T.E) program operated by the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund with the goal of helping artists turn their work into viable income-producing businesses. The C.RE.A.T.E. program was called for in the Arts-Based Revitalization Plan for Duluth's Downtown and Hillside Neighborhoods that focused on using "…. arts and culture as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization in an area that is already a magnet for artists and audiences …."



Zinema (top image above) is one of three cultural arts facilities that are a part of the Zeitgeist Arts Building. An additional asset is the NorShore Theater (bottom image above) that is to be restored by the Duluth Economic Development Authority. Together, the Zeitgeist Arts Building and NorShore Theater will create an exciting arts and culture Superior Street hub. Those assets and easy access to and views of the lake serve as a draw for living in and near the downtown (as with the Sheraton Hotel condominiums located on the top five floors of the hotel, bottom image).

4 Minnesota DEED Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, second quarter, 2010.

➢ *Distinctive Sense of Place* – The 2005 Charrette Report captured Duluth's uniqueness: "The charrette team was inspired by Duluth's stunning geographic setting juxtaposed with the traditional urban fabric imposed on the landscape." That comment was inspired by the:

- City's dramatic topography (it climbs from 605 feet at the Lake Superior shoreline to 1,485 feet above sea level) and its location in the northern alpine wilderness (the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness/Quetico Canadian Provincial Park is a little over an hour's drive away).
- Abundance of historic architecture in the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods and the fine-grained, interconnected urban street grid featuring short blocks, an essential component of creating highly desirable walkable places.

Also contributing to a walkable, human-scale environment is the relationship of the buildings to the street in the older East Downtown area of the city. Most of the buildings there are lower-scale (generally two-to-five stories tall) and are pulled close to the sidewalk, creating a feeling of enclosure.

Surface parking and parking structures (top image) along the street diminish the pedestrian environment and connections between places. Although designed to bridge the divide between the downtown and waterfront created by the construction of I-35, Lake Park Place still feels isolated from either place.

The 2005 Charrette

In 2005, Duluth was at a crossroads. It had made real progress over the past decade in transitioning from a declining Rust Belt community to one with a lively, diverse economy and was beginning to rediscover the value of its traditional urban character. Facilitating that transition was the impetus for Duluth's successful proposal for a community charrette led by the Knight Program in Community Building at the University of Miami's School of Architecture.

The purpose of the charrette (an intensive week-long public design workshop held in July 2005) was to build on prior planning initiatives and ad hoc local community building efforts and assist the community in the development of a shared vision and plan to help facilitate the revitalization of the East Downtown and adjacent Hillside/Waterfront areas of Duluth. Its local importance was evident in the participation of more than 1,000 citizens, business leaders, and city officials in the charrette process.

The 2005 Duluth Charrette Principles

1. Boost Duluth
2. Evoke a sense of place
3. Foster public safety
4. Preserve and enhance heritage resources
5. Invest in the public realm
6. Establish and restore the unique urban ecology of the city's neighborhoods, districts, corridors, and downtown
7. Calm traffic and improve connectivity
8. Broaden the mix of uses
9. Expand housing opportunities for people from all walks of life to live downtown
10. Improve the regulatory framework

The charrette was co-sponsored by the City of Duluth, Duluth LISC, and the Duluth Tribune News, with major financial support from the DSACF and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The importance of the charrette to the city was underscored by the active participation of then-Mayor Herb Bergson. Two former University of Miami School of Architecture Knight Program Fellows served as community liaisons and coordinators. They were Pam Kramer, Executive Director of Duluth LISC, and Tom Cotruvo, at the time the Executive Director of the Duluth Economic Development Authority.

The 2005 Duluth charrette involved more than 1000 citizens in developing a shared vision and plan designed to help facilitate the revitalization of the East Downtown and adjacent Hillside and Waterfront areas of Duluth.

The charrette master plan proposed a set of recommendations for two goals: preserving what citizens love most about the city's character and its past and enabling new development that blends with and enhances the community's character and sense of place. That emphasis on the uniqueness of place is reflected in 10 broad overarching principles that emerged through the charrette process and were articulated to help guide current and future community building and place- making initiatives beyond the detailed recommendations of the charrette (highlighted below).

Urban Design

The urban design recommendations proposed a matrix of enhancements – some that could be implemented fairly easily and others that were more intensive and, therefore, more transformative and catalytic.

- Heritage and Urban Ecology – Encourage growth that is sensitive to and fits within the context of the surrounding neighborhoods, and incorporate historic preservation in re-development activities and in the city's economic development and tourism initiatives.
- Connectivity – Convert one-way streets to two-ways, calm traffic, improve the pedestrian experience on Lake Avenue where it crosses over the I-35, and make stronger connections between the lakefront, downtown, and Canal Park.
- Pedestrian-Friendly Streets – Establish a context-based approach to the street network. Streets should no longer be treated uniformly; rather, each street would be assigned different characteristics based on its function and the adjacent land uses.
- Public Safety and the Public Realm – Improve the attractiveness of public spaces and provide more "eyes on the street" by encouraging mixed-use development that brings 24-hour activity and sponsoring events that bring people to public spaces.

- Housing and Mixed Use – Tap the market demand for a variety of housing types (condos, townhomes, live-work units, urban apartments, and small lot single-family homes, both detached and attached) and cluster mixed-use development.
- Health Care – Promote the continued growth and diversification of the health care industry as an economic driver and integral part of the downtown, and encourage complementary collaborative planning with surrounding neighborhoods

"By working together over the last six years much has been accomplished. The timing of the charrette re-visit is to celebrate those successes and assess our current challenges. That was why we timed the Progress Advisory Panel now – to view the changes since the 2005 charrette and offer recommendations for the next stage of development."

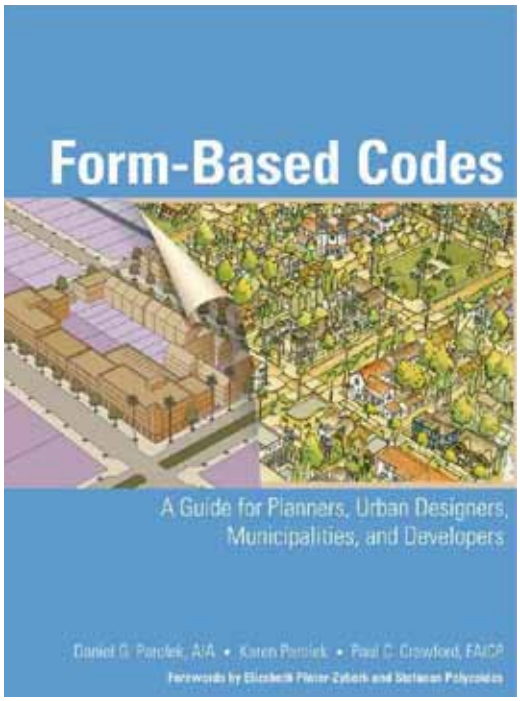
Pam Kramer, Executive Director, Duluth LISC

Policy

The recommended policy actions promote more predictable private buildings, thus providing greater assurance of long-term value for property owners and investors.

- Form-Based Regulating Code – Replace the outdated, 50-year old zoning ordinance with a pilot form-based code that encourages development consistent with the downtown's historic character and pedestrian scale and at the same time allows for more intensive, urban, mixed-use development in appropriate locations.
- Incentives – Put in place incentives (a new streamlined planning review and approval process, for example) to encourage quality development consistent with the charrette master plan and the form-based code.

Improving the pedestrian realm of Lake Avenue (above) as it crosses the interstate will greatly strengthen the connection between the downtown and the waterfront. The adoption of a form-based code (image below) provides a visual language to guide new development that, when built, reflects the Duluth Charrette Principles.



Implementation Capacity and Commitment

The recommendation to create a Charrette Stewardship Group charged with keeping the charrette vision alive, making sure that the plan recommendations were implemented, and ensuring that citizens remained involved, proved to be a particularly important step that would become a "best practice" in future charrettes. The impetus for the creation of the group was the shared recognition that more could be accomplished by working together as one community.

The Mid-Course Progress Review

With six years of accomplishments in place and a lot of on-the-ground learning, city leaders, downtown businesses, and community organizations decided the time was right for a mid-course

assessment of progress. That led to the decision to invite a group of national experts, including some from the 2005 charrette, to revisit the study area, document progress, and recommend priorities for the next stage of development. The timing of the check-up was important: it coincided with the work of the City of Duluth's Community Development Division and Duluth LISC to update the 2007 "At Home in Duluth" Hillside Quality of Life Plans, as well as the recent passage of the City's Unified Development Code and development of a Higher Education Small Area Plan. Specific topics for the Progress Advisory Panel focused on the following:

Unique in the Midwest, Duluth is distinguished by a striking topography that extends uphill from Lake Superior (image above). Its traditional urban core (image below) features a tight street grid and human-scale buildings that contribute to a comfortable walking environment.

- Anchor institutional partnerships – encouraging student housing and more university presence, activities, and functions downtown and looking at ways to integrate medical institutions into their neighborhoods.
- Housing and the arts – reviewing projects completed and others that are close to moving forward, including potential housing for artists and support for the arts community, and using arts, culture, and entertainment as a basis for development in the East Downtown and Hillside neighborhoods.
- Livable, Complete Streets and connectivity – enabling a "complete street" approach in the downtown and improving connectivity to the university and college campuses and between the original charrette study area and the rest of Duluth.
- Branding – evaluating a potential branding program for the downtown as well as a multi-district approach and how such branding/marketing approaches might be implemented.
- Implementation Capacity Improvements – identifying opportunities for funding sources, leadership participation, communications strategies, and prioritization of strategies for implementation of initiatives in the most strategic, cost-effective, and timely manner possible.

The Progress Advisory Panel's Recommendations: The Duluth Creative Corridor

Duluth has done what too few communities do: Turn a plan (the 2005 charrette plan) into reality. That is all the more significant because much of the progress occurred during tough economic times – a testimony to strong public and private leadership and a deep commitment to and faith in the city's future. The catalyst for the next push forward and new round of investments is the creation of the Duluth Creative Corridor.

> *"What has been accomplished in only six years is amazing. That amount of progress in many places takes 25 years. That is a testament to the strong leadership and level of civic mindedness. The foundation and momentum are in place for moving forward."*
>
> The Progress Advisory Panel

The corridor connects the institutional campuses and neighborhoods to the downtown and waterfront areas physically, visually, psychologically, economically, and from a branding/marketing perspective. It focuses on:

- Recognizing the many existing creative people, institutions, and enterprises within the corridor, new ways to connect them, and strategies to attract even more of them.
- Concentrating new growth and investment in key strategic nodes at neighborhood centers and along key corridors, as called for in Duluth's 2006 Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the new Unified Development Code, adopted in 2010
- Enhancing the public realm with art, Complete Streets, and improved connectivity, including places where there are already great walkable urban neighborhoods and the streets that connect them.
- Developing the strategies that will create a variety of urban living options where owning and driving a car are convenient and affordable options rather than necessities. That requires ensuring that a full range of multi-modal transit options are conveniently accessible and, beginning in this district, designed and maintained to be reliable, safe, comfortable, dignified, and convenient.

The Duluth Creative Corridor (in yellow above) includes an urban living area that connects the downtown and waterfront with the Hillside campuses and arts and entertainment nodes along the corridor. A branded, high quality transit line (denoted in red, above) connects the District and major destinations (yellow circles above) within it.

The Duluth Creative Corridor concept builds on and furthers the exceptional progress to date and provides the framework for addressing the next set of challenges while capitalizing on new opportunities. It also serves as the context for the panel's recommendations. The recommendations were the result of an advisory panel process that involved considerable pre-visit homework, careful listening, and on-the-ground observation (described below).

The Panel Process

The role of the Progress Advisory Panel was to visit (for some, revisit) the charrette focus area, note progress since the 2005 charrette, identify new challenges and opportunities, and recommend priorities for next steps. The panel members (see Appendix B for bios) brought experiences from various parts of the country and the different areas of expertise needed for the progress review: transportation, urban planning, urban design, housing, the arts, economic development, institutional partnerships, and communications. As summarized below, the panel organized its work around pre-visit homework and on-the-ground listening and observing.

Pre-Visit Homework

The panel's work began long before its check-up visit. That included reviewing numerous studies and plans produced since the 2005 charrette. Collectively those documents provided insights into the progress made, a clearer community vision, the priority action steps, and the evolving capacity of the community to implement the charrette plan. The panel also reexamined the 2005 charrette plan and scanned news articles and the websites of numerous Duluth organizations and the city to get a feel for their current activities and focus as they related to the charrette goals and recommendations.

On-The Ground Listening and Observing

The panel members hit the ground running when they arrived in Duluth. They based themselves at the Sheraton Duluth Hotel to be near what they needed to learn more about: the East Downtown, Hillside, and Waterfront neighborhoods. When not in meetings, panel members were out exploring on bikes and on foot, taking pictures, and discussing their observations with one another.

The panel's schedule (Appendix C) is testimony to its four intense days on the ground in Duluth.

Day One, October 1: The panel arrived to settle in and take a look around. That included self-guided walking and biking tours. Panel chair Ken Stapleton also met with Pam Kramer of Duluth LISC who served as Chair of the Charrette Stewardship Group to review goals and process details.

The Progress Advisory Panel

Ken Stapleton, Panel Chair and President of Ken Stapleton and Associates, a firm specializing in university-community partnerships, urban revitalization and planning, and innovative urban safety initiatives. Ken is also the founder and president of the Safedesign Institute with offices in Miami, Cleveland, and Cincinnati.

Rick Hall, P.E., President of Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc., a firm with professional engineering registration in over 15 states and specializing in transportation planning, design, and zoning for complete, walkable streets based on the established neighborhood vision, scale, and context.

Peter Musty, Peter Musty LLC, an expert in context-based planning, design, and visualization of new towns, suburban infill, and downtown redevelopment projects and in form-based design guidelines, master planning, and urban design at the block and building-scale levels.

Mary Newsom, a lifelong journalist and Associate Director of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte Urban Institute, where she works on strategic community and university partnerships and oversees the institute's online communications.

Jean Scott, Strategies for Livable Communities/ SLC, LLC, who specializes in designing project-tailored outreach and communication strategies and messages, building collaborative partnerships, and synthesizing complex planning issues into language that is easy to digest and understand.

Stuart Sirota, the founding principal of TND Planning Group, a consulting firm dedicated to the integration of sustainable transportation, land use, and civic engagement and helping communities become more pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-friendly.

Day Two, October 2: The panel began the day with an orientation lunch with the local group coordinating the event. A comprehensive tour followed. Through a combination of walking and touring in a van, the panel experienced east and west downtown, Canal Park and Bayfront Festival Park, the Armory, the near-downtown hospitals, and the Hillside neighborhoods and campuses. The tour was followed by a meeting with representatives of the University of Minnesota at Duluth and a working dinner with Duluth's Mayor Don Ness and members of the Duluth Progress Review Resource Group. Several panel members also took walking tours after dinner to observe conditions related to entertainment businesses and safety.

> *"Duluth is in position to compete with the Boulders and Ashevilles. It offers the same proximity to spectacular natural resources and related recreational opportunities, in addition to having a highly desirable and walkable downtown with a variety of places to live and have a business, experience the arts, and linger over a drink or good meal."*
>
> The Progress Advisory Panel

The Progress Advisory Panel members toured the study area and met with numerous community groups prior to developing their recommendations.

Day Three, October 3: The panel started off by meeting informally with members of the Duluth Progress Review Resource Group. That was followed by three sector meetings to learn more about progress and issues that still need to be addressed. Two sectors aligned with top charrette recommendation topics: housing and connectivity. An additional sector group focused on marketing and branding (telling the Duluth story). Each sector meeting was well-attended, and participants were ready with facts and insightful observations. More than 50 local organizations were represented (Appendix E). The panel also met with a group involved with the arts. That evening, panel members attended a public celebration of charrette progress and listened in on topical roundtable discussions about future directions and the next implementation steps.

Day Four, October 4: The panel members spent time digesting what they had learned and beginning to crystallize their observations about progress, the next set of strategic issues, and new opportunities. From there, they developed preliminary ideas for panel recommendations that were presented at a media event. That was followed by a closing debriefing with the Duluth Progress Review Resource Group and a meeting with representatives of St. Luke's

Post-October Check-Up Visit: Panel members followed their Duluth visit with extensive exchanges of information and observations via multiple conference calls and drafted detailed written recommendations for inclusion in the progress advisory report. Individual draft recommendations were then consolidated by principal author Jean Scott, and a complete draft report was reviewed by all team members. The draft report was next edited by Ken Stapleton, Progress Advisory Panel Chair, and Dr. Charles Bohl, Director of the Knight Program in Community Building at the University of Miami School of Architecture, who led the original Duluth Charrette team in conjunction with Dean Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. The graphic design and layout of the final report were then completed at the University of Miami.

Progress Observed

Duluth's progress since the 2005 charrette is remarkable. "We have been energized and inspired by your progress, your teamwork, and your optimism," panel Chair Ken Stapleton observed. "Duluth is clearly poised to become the next great city success story." Those activities and investments have created substantial momentum that continues to attract private real estate development, help Duluth's institutions grow, and activate an increasingly engaged and optimistic group of residents, businesses, non-profits, and civic leaders. Described in more detail in the following sections and Appendix A, those accomplishments have set the stage for Duluth's next wave of prosperity. The task now is to keep building on what has been accomplished.

The Panel organized its observations about progress around the topics important to charrette plan implementation: Sustained Leadership, Arts and Economic Development, Housing, Institutional Partnerships, Marketing, and Planning, Urban Design, and Connectivity.

Duluth's proximity to the lake (top image above) is a major asset as a great place to visit, live, and have a business. Its increasingly walkable downtown with active public spaces (bottom image above) and places to live. Illustrated below, the redeveloped historic Weiland Block on Superior Street now offers unique multi-use space for offices, retailers, and restaurants. Residential uses are being planned for the upper floors.

Sustained Leadership and Momentum

The consistent leadership and vision of the city's top leaders and the energy and partnerships spawned by the Charrette Stewardship Group have enabled Duluth to accomplish a wide variety and number of goals and objectives in a short period of time. That strong support by community leaders is evident in the significant project investments, policy changes, regulatory improvements, and a new pride in place.

Important to that success was the city's quick action after the 2005 charrette to formally establish the Charrette Stewardship Group recommended by the charrette and charging it with spearheading implementation of the charrette plan recommendations and maintaining citizen involvement and vision awareness. The Stewardship Group led to two other early achievements that laid the foundation for future successes: the endorsement from the city and five key civic organizations of the Charrette Guiding Principles and completion of a process to prioritize the charrette recommendations and identify responsibilities and timelines for each. Another success was the involvement of the Charrette Stewardship Group in

creating a tool that could be used by city planning staff and others to evaluate development proposals using the charrette principles.

The importance of strong local leadership in Duluth, including the top city official and the Charrette Stewardship Group from the early stages of planning through post-charrette implementation, was highlighted in a previous evaluation of the five Knight Program in Community Building community charrettes. Securing and building local charrette capacity early in the process are essential and represent an investment that will pay dividends when post-charrette implementation begins. Duluth demonstrated that such a group should include potential charrette implementers (the heads that need to nod for something to happen) and custodians who keep implementation on course and up front in the public's mind.

Illustrated above, the strong relationship between buildings and the street is reflected in the residential neighborhoods.

Continuing that same strong leadership, a number of key partners have helped create a positive momentum toward implementing the Charrette recommendations and other important programs. A number of those partners and some of the accomplishments of their organizations are highlighted in the list on page 18.

The Zeitgeist Arts Center complex (image above) demonstrates the powerful role that the arts can play in revitalization and activating the street. The classic revival style of the historic Greysolon Plaza (image below) is itself a form of public art that contributes to the street level experience.

Arts and Economic Development

Duluth is well on its way to having the concentration of arts and cultural facilities and activities required for a dynamic creative corridor that will serve as a major draw and help drive the city's economy. Some key observations regarding the city's commitment include:

- Progress in support of a growing creative culture. The Zeitgeist Arts Center complex is up and running and has a very positive influence on the blocks nearby. In addition, the purchase of the NorShor Theatre was bold and sent a strong signal that civic leaders are committed to continued cultural development downtown.
- New energy created by the Amsoil Arena at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC) and the ability of the Fitger's Brewery Complex to maintain its strength despite the economy.
- The creation and funding of several arts organizations for arts-related prosperity initiatives seem to have increased. That is coupled with a broadening recognition of the important role that arts can play in stimulating economic investments and attracting new residents and visitors.

Acknowledgements

This list was created in consultation with the Duluth Charrette Stewardship Group and the local host committee for the advisory panel.

LISC Duluth – Pam Kramer

- Chair and facilitator, Charrette Stewardship Group
- Facilitated At Home in Duluth Collaborative for Hillside neighborhoods, At Home in Duluth Plans, New Market Tax Credits for Duluth Sheraton Hotel, Village Place, and San Marco Apartments
- Financial and technical support for Hillside Arts Corridor and Charrette, LISC AmeriCorps members, and the Duluth Community Safety Initiative
- Served on Citizens Advisory Committee for new Unified Development Code

Greater Downtown Council – Kristi Stokes

- Member, Charrette Stewardship Group
- Creation of Special Service District and oversight of Clean and Safe Programs, district marketing, promotions, and events
- Supported creation of Historic District and historic tax credit training
- Lead effort to create new parking commission and staffing and developed Retail Market Study and "Go
- Downtown, Grow Downtown" Program

Zeppa Foundation – Tony Cuneo

- Member, Charrette Stewardship Group
- Zeigeist Arts development
- Affordable housing and commercial investments in the Hillside including the Fourth Street Market Support for Sustainable Duluth

One Roof Community Housing – Cliff Knettel

- Member, Charrette Stewardship Group
- Administration of Hillside Homeownership Incentive program, single family rehab/homeownership, Community Safety Initiative, and Hillside Plan citizen involvement and arts investment.
- Lead partner on redevelopment of 4th Street and Lake Avenue housing (with the Zeppa Foundation)

City of Duluth – Mayor Ness and several staff

- Member, Charrette Stewardship Group
- Adoption of new Unified Development Code and Complete Streets policies
- Extension of skywalk system
- Downtown and Canal Park Storefront Improvement Program
- Primary facilitation for Sheraton Duluth Hotel, Greysolon, Weiland Block, and First Street Medical District projects
- Purchase of NorShor Theater for redevelopment

Essentia Health - Harvey Anderson and

St. Luke's Medical Centers – Ron Franzen

- Members, Charrette Stewardship Group
- Expansion of medical facilities into the Downtown and Hillside, creating jobs, increasing regional health care access, and connections to the skywalk system
- Continued investment in employee homeownership programs for the area

LHB Architects and Engineers – Bill Bennett

- Member, Charrette Stewardship Group
- Created framework for evaluating proposals and compliance with Charrette Principles
- Led efforts to plan and implement Multi-Modal Center, pedestrian rail, transportation enhancements, and improvements in the downtown
- Leader in partnership with the City and GDC in efforts to secure federal and state funds to implement infrastructure plans and elements of the charrette

Private businesses

Many businesses and developers took the initiative to invest in the Downtown and Hillside through the development of market-rate housing, retail, office, and other commercial projects; provision of arts and entertainment programming; and volunteering in events and programs.

- The greater acceptance and growing support for historic preservation as a form of public art. This includes the creation of the Downtown Historic District and availability of matching state historic tax credits, both of which have helped create new interest in investing in Duluth's historic buildings.
- Use of space by creative sector businesses in many buildings downtown (typically space behind and/or above empty shopfronts). Examples include graphic design, web, and architectural/engineering firms.
- Robust discussions are under way regarding arts partnerships with the UMD, and it seems likely that some UMD programs will begin to become active in the downtown and the Duluth Creative Corridor. In addition, UMD Arts faculty members are actively engaged, and student activities are likely to expand going forward.

The strong demand for housing is evident in the renovation of Fire House No. 1 for housing.

Housing

The past six years have seen a significant increase in the development of housing in and near the downtown and in the Hillside neighborhoods, demonstrating a strong demand for close-in living. That is especially remarkable given the state of the economy over the last several years.

One particularly promising area is the market for off-campus student housing. The student population is showing more interest in living off campus and using transit. That is encouraging given the growth in student population. According to the City of Duluth's most recent Housing Indicator Report (released April 24, 2012), the student population of the three major higher education institutions' (UMD Duluth, College of Saint Scholastica, and Lake Superior College) grew by 29 percent since the 2009-2010 school year. As noted in the report, "The number of students has grown to over 23,000, making this an important demographic for the City of Duluth."

Several successful new student housing projects have been developed (although they are outside the study area), and strong transit ridership by college and university students indicates a desire to live an urban, affordable, and green/sustainable lifestyle. Transit, biking, walking, and car sharing programs also provide essential support for downtown lifestyle choices. Car sharing (e.g., "Zipcar") programs have also been successfully implemented in downtowns and college campuses around the U.S., including the University of Miami.

Two recent market analyses reached slightly different conclusions about the exact nature of demand for off-campus student housing. The Danter Company student housing study concluded there is significant demand for student rental housing in east Hillside locations as part of the Armory Arts and Music Center/Plaza Mixed-Use District Plan in the East Hillside neighborhood. A more recent study completed as part of the

Higher Education Small Area Plan examined a broader geography. It concluded that although student housing demand is already being met, there may be an "interest pool" for a different kind of housing product, such as urban mixed-use housing, that is easily accessible to campuses. Given strong national trends of students moving into mixed-use urban housing projects and the stated goals of attracting more students and artists to live in the Creative Corridor, the next projects supported by demand are likely to be located in the Duluth Creative Corridor.

At the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida, students and faculty have 24/7 access to Zipcars parked right on campus. The cars can be reserved on-line and used for one- or two-hour trips or all day outings. In addition to convenience, benefits include the need for less parking and reduced traffic congestion.

Other housing observations:

- New housing projects with a good mix of market-rate and affordable units are planned.
- There are indications of an emerging market for lower maintenance, high amenity, downtown urban living as a primary and secondary housing alternative.
- Of the multiple projects completed in the study area, only two, which were both condominium developments, failed to sell or lease-up on schedule during a very difficult economic period.
- Gentrification has been minimal and housing for seniors, low income, and working families continues to be part of the mix.
- Emerging arts and entertainment nodes are a key amenity for Duluth Creative Corridor residents.
- There is a strong demand from young singles and couples for downtown and near-downtown housing. Anecdotal reports indicate that there is an organic trend of small residential rehabilitation projects.

Growing partnerships with medical, educational, and arts institutions is a critical component of making the Duluth Creative Corridor a reality.

Institutional Partnerships

The evidence supports the progress in the area of institutional partnerships.

- Anchor institutions in Duluth are generally healthy and prepared to lead growth.
- Institutional relationships with city government continue to improve and grow, and non-profit housing and arts groups are making real progress.
- New advocacy groups have been established, and new community partnerships with institutions are beginning to emerge.
- UMD executives (both academic and administrative) are ready to be a strong partner. Their enthusiastic interest in creating partnerships in the corridor, including nearby neighborhoods, the downtown, and Hill-

side neighborhoods is promising. In addition, UMD's new strategic plan contains a clear statement about its commitment to such partnerships.

- Hospitals and other public health advocates are beginning to understand the connections between vibrant urban places, walkability, and preventive health efforts. The central role that healthcare institutions will continue to play in the city's economy and the transformation of downtown and in-town neighborhoods was a key focus of the 2005 charrette. Healthcare institutions represent critical partners whose ongoing participation and collaboration in community building efforts will be of the utmost importance.
- Duluth's Hillside Homeownership Incentive Program, the employer-assisted housing program with Essentia Health and St. Luke's, continues to have an impact on attracting moderate income employees to live in those Creative Corridor neighborhoods.

The panel recognized the city's substantial progress in achieving the 2005 charrette goals. That included adoption of the form-based Unified Development Code and receiving the national MetLife grant award for innovative policing approaches.

- Increasing transit ridership by hospital employees indicates the potential to attract them to a similar urban and green lifestyle. The extension of the skywalk system to better serve hospital employees during inclement weather has also been highlighted as an area for continued improvement and connectivity.

Marketing

The panel's observation about marketing summed it up: "Wow! You really do have it all." Duluth has made impressive progress in making itself an even more desirable place to visit, do business, and live.

- Population growth of the 25-34 age group is a very positive sign of the city's attractiveness to young professionals and creatives.
- Visitor spending is healthy and growing. The city's visitor numbers are up since the 2005 charrette (currently some 3.5 million tourist visitors a year).
- Duluth has positioned itself in the upper Midwest as a vacation destination and is ready to compete nationally. Local media say the Duluth brand is strong.
- Canal Park is an amazing asset to market, as is the whole lakefront area.

Planning, Urban Design, and Connectivity

The panel's observations about the significant progress in planning, urban design, and connectivity are organized around the focus of its recommendations: promoting urban living, walkability, creative culture, and

greater connectivity from the Hillside campuses to the downtown and waterfront area. Signs of progress regarding planning and urban design include:

Two other accomplishments were the adoption of a Complete Streets Program and the University of Minnesota at Duluth's commitment to promoting transit.

- The city's development and adoption of the 2010 Unified Development Code that includes form-based districts (a top charrette recommendation that was subsequently voted the number one priority by the Charrette Stewardship Group). The 2006 Comprehensive Land Use Plan contains many charrette concepts of walkability and place- making.
- Substantial improvements to the development review process, including a One Stop Shop at City Hall.
- Some view corridors are being preserved as recommended in the 2005 charrette plan.
- The Greater Downtown Council's Clean and Safe Team has had a noticeable effect on the ambience downtown, with families and strollers of all ages out on the sidewalks.
- Police and their partners have begun to use more innovative approaches, and the At Home in Duluth Community Safety Initiative recently earned a national MetLife award. Several nuisance businesses have also moved away from key locations.
- Maintaining the existing pedestrian-friendly streets with pavers and wide sidewalks.
- Positive steps to retain buildings important to the city's heritage (protection of the Armory and continued efforts to plan for its adaptive reuse and activation of the Greysolon Ballroom and restoration of the Greysolon Plaza, Old City Hall/Jail, Zeitgeist, and Weiland Block, for example).
- The development and urban-friendly design of the Sheraton Duluth Hotel and 311 condominiums on a former parking lot along Superior Street. The design contributes to the pedestrian quality of the street and overall downtown ambience.
- The development of a master plan for the redevelopment of properties immediately west of the Union Depot.

Additional successes recognized by the Progress Advisory Panel included retaining the pedestrian-friendly downtown streets and sidewalks and an improved public realm thanks to the GDC's Clean and Safe Team.

Signs of progress in favor of connectivity:

- Completion of the Duluth Trail and Bikeway Master Plan.

- Duluth City Council adoption of a Complete Streets resolution in 2010 and establishment of a City Complete Street Task Force.
- The growing understanding of the value and benefits of creating stronger connections between campuses, downtown, and the waterfront.
- The proposed development of a transportation multi-modal center by the Duluth Transit Authority.
- Improved connections to the DECC because of the Clean and Safe Team's park patrol.
- UMD's steps to promote transit among students include providing them with free bus passes (paid for by tuition/fees).
- City staff and civic volunteer recognition of the importance of transit and the fact that reducing the costs related to owning a car translates into more dollars for housing and living.

The Progress Advisory Panel noted that Duluth is well-positioned as a desirable vacation location. That included Canal Park.

Strategic Challenges and Opportunities

Recognizing that the progress to date has been substantial, thereby putting the city well on its way to achieving the charrette goals, the panel also pointed to several issues that need to be addressed in order to maintain momentum and move to the next level of success. The panel organized its observations about progress around the same topics as in the prior section (Progress Observed): Sustained Leadership, Arts and Economic Development, Housing, Institutional Partnerships, Marketing, and Planning, Urban Design, and Connectivity.

Sustained Leadership and Momentum

The panel offered a number of observations about current challenges and opportunities, emphasizing the need to better measure and document the progress that has been made in order to tell the Duluth story and understand the steps that are needed to achieve charrette plan goals. The issues related to the need to reenergize charrette vision leadership and maximize impacts, work across silos to most effectively use resources and achieve vision goals, evaluate and document progress, and understand and capitalize on the lifestyle needs and interests of growing niche populations.

Challenges to address include the need to:

Re-energize leadership: A normal decrease in energy has occurred with regard to the shared vision articulated through the charrette and documented in the original plan and report – a decrease that has been exacerbated by the economic downturn. However, at the same time, new energy is emerging regarding the arts, university

partnerships, and student and mixed-use, mixed-income housing. The charrette principles and vision can provide the framework needed to coordinate those important new initiatives and avoid a piecemeal approach in which the collective impact of individual efforts could become a missed opportunity.

Work across, not in, silos: Most of the charrette partner organizations still tend to operate primarily in silos or have a narrow focus. They need to recognize and concentrate more on shared goals to increase effectiveness. Private and public resources are limited, and it is crucial that each project and each public and private investment embrace Duluth's charrette principles and contribute toward the larger, collective goals that will strengthen the Creative Corridor and the community as a whole.

Major art facilities are often used to stimulate the concentration of art-related venues and events that collectively create a popular destination that intensifies the economic impact for arts organizations, nearby businesses, and the broader community. The Cleveland Playhouse Square Theater District and the Miami Beach New World Symphony provide a good example.

Evaluate and document progress: A better understanding of progress is needed. Progress has been primarily communicated by talking about one project at a time, and few collective numbers that measure progress were available to the panel. Measures such as total private investment and total public investment since the charrette were not readily available. Also needed are data on market share as well as raw numbers showing investments, visitor spending, new housing, etc. Those numbers can be difficult to track, but without some estimate of market share, it is difficult to understand real progress and market an area as a sound place for investment. For example, if regional visitor spending increases by 10 percent and visitor spending in Duluth increases by two percent, then the Duluth Creative Corridor is not competing as effectively for those dollars and should make adjustments. Such metrics should also support requests for additional funding to manage partnerships and collaborative projects. Carefully collected and utilized, they provide a credible case for "Return on Investments" by foundations and other civic funding sources.

Understand and capitalize on the lifestyle needs and interests of growing niche populations: Drill down and understand the needs and interests of niche populations, including student and ethnic groups, those visiting and working at nearby healthcare facilities, arts patrons, Gen X and Gen Y cohorts, the various types of tourists who come to and pass through Duluth, and other subgroups. That was the key point hammered home by leading demographers and survey researchers at the 2011 Urban Land Institute fall meeting in Los Angeles where they presented one example after another of housing, retail, entertainment, and hospitality projects that catered to narrow, previously understudied populations rather than generic mass market ghosts. Single women, for example, now represent some 40 percent or more of new homebuyers and their priorities for housing features and amenities differ from those of couples and families. Asian- and Spanish-oriented retail centers are thriving, even where

those populations are relatively small. Key shifts in lifestyle preferences are emphasizing simplicity, multi-generational households, health and wellness, social connectivity, and community aesthetics (see, for example, the Knight Foundation's study *The Soul of the Community* <www.soulofthecommunity.org> that included Duluth). Cities that can identify and anticipate such trends and the opportunities they represent to grow and sustain their communities will be the big winners in the coming decades. A quick review of that list of trends also reinforces just how well positioned Duluth is to take advantage of those opportunities if it can sustain the partnerships and collective action needed to leverage them.

Plans for institutional campuses need to be integrated with and designed to enhance the surrounding neighborhoods. An example is the Master Plan for the Georgia State University Campus.

Arts and Economic Development

Panel concerns about using the arts as an economic development tool focused largely on the need to concentrate, not disperse, arts-related activities and market them more effectively. Other challenges relate to increasing, not shifting, the number of visitors, encouraging area businesses to recognize the benefits of having arts nearby, and strategically offering arts events at times when people are already visiting for other reasons.

Concentrate, not disperse, arts-related investments: Many of the existing arts projects and programs have a low profile due to their location and minimal marketing efforts. One reason is that arts-related projects are being developed and planned in multiple areas, including those beyond the corridor. Art sponsorships or grants are often driven by personal relationships, personal preferences, and past performance rather than their economic impact on a small geographic area. The outcome is a pattern of geographically dispersed investments rather than the needed focus on specific districts or nodes to create a critical mass of arts experiences and enable more collective marketing. That dispersed style of investment can lead to less viable nodes or districts because of competition for civic funds and consumer market share and reduce the positive impacts of arts-related activities on the surrounding urban environment. Strong civic leadership will be needed to achieve a pattern of focused investments.

Increase, not shift, visitors: Visitors can be a great source of market support for the arts. Strategically, it is important to schedule events, performances, and other initiatives to carefully coincide with the visitation patterns of art patrons. Also, attracting more of those arts visitors beyond Canal Park will require coordinated and strategic efforts, recognizing that the goal is to increase the total number of visitors (expand the pie and regional market share), not just shift visitors from Canal Park to other parts of the corridor.

Encourage businesses to recognize the benefits of having arts nearby: Institutions can be great supporters of the arts, andtheir employees often constitute a significant portion of the local arts customer base. However, many institutions are typically focused on their core missions (education, health, or research, for example) and do not easily perceive the value of an arts district at or near the edge of their campuses.

Strategically offer arts events at times when people are already visiting for other reasons: Arts districts and programs thrive through synergetic relationships with commercial businesses, institutions, government, and non-profit groups.

Combining the arts with sporting events, conferences, special downtown dining and entertainment weeks, and monthly gallery nights can create cultural, artistic, and economic activities that become a regular part of residents' and visitors' calendars. The phenomenon of newly invented events such as Art Basel in Miami (which brought a low-key arts event from Switzerland and blended it with the vitality of Miami) to generate international attention, spur investment, and create new traditions can also provide the connective tissue that brings artists, institutions, businesses, and government together in a common cause.

In Crocker Park, lining large structures with housing units (or small retail shopfronts) contributes to a positive and safer pedestrian environment.

Housing

Although the progress in housing development has been significant, the panel pointed to several remaining challenges that include the need to:

Document progress: The story of Duluth's housing progress can be more powerfully told if it is properly tracked and measured. That ties back to the earlier observations about tracking investments as well as the number, type, and size of units.

Carefully locate student housing: Student housing can be disruptive in some locations, particularly relative to for-sale housing, so a student housing location plan is essential to overall progress. This is not to suggest the clustering and isolation of student housing; however, such housing should be sensitively located. For example, locate student housing in and near the more active and vibrant areas of downtown/Hillside, where a growing number of students prefer to live, and outside of quieter, largely residential neighborhoods populated by year-round residents, young families, and older residents. Undergraduate student housing can also be distinguished from housing that caters to the needs of graduate students, married students (with and without children), medical interns, and doctoral students, all of whom could be more successfully blended with a variety of non-student housing.

Develop and communicate a mixed-income housing vision: Several recent housing developments have consisted largely of affordable units that can create misperceptions about the community's goal of actively creating housing options for all income levels, ages and life stages. Such misperceptions will often inhibit private investment unless a clear mixed-income vision is developed and strategically communicated and supported.

Demonstrate to employers and employees the benefits of employee housing near the work place: Institutional leadership does not yet fully support encouraging employees to live in the corridor, despite national trends and the obvious benefits to the hospitals, colleges, and universities. Data support the fact that employees as well as students are better able to afford the urban living experiences they desire in larger cities when they can spend less of their disposable income operating and maintaining a car. The extra income can then be spent on a wide variety of retail, entertainment, and leisure time activities. (How would an additional $300-400 or more per month per person, currently spent on car payments, insurance, gas, and maintenance, impact economic activity downtown?). Until that option exists more readily in Duluth, the city will be at a competitive disadvantage.

Address investor and developer concerns about the market: Because a limited number of projects failed to be absorbed on schedule, developers, civic lenders, banks, and others will be cautious or skeptical about investing in new projects. Studying and learning from the relative performance of recent projects will be important for fine-tuning new proposals, as will convincing key stakeholders that new projects are viable.

Involve all sectors in telling the story: The story of living in the Duluth Creative Corridor is hard to find on various websites that feature Duluth. Many public, private, and non-profit actors have a stake in helping that story rise to the surface, with the ultimate goal of enabling individuals living the story to contribute to the storytelling through a variety of communication channels. The most important vehicle would be the web (e.g., "Downtown Duluth" blogs, events calendar, self-appointed arts and entertainment observers, student and healthcare worker housing sites with independent reviews and information, etc.). In addition to formal marketing and public relations efforts, there should be opportunities for institutional actors to help launch and support those types of web-based networks, commentators, and information sources that ultimately take on a life of their own and continuously update the Duluth Creative Corridor story.

Use housing around large structures to improve the walking experience: Housing liner buildings (housing units designed to surround and hide interior parking ramps or large buildings) are a great way to address cold and bleak car ramps and institutional buildings. Such housing, when properly designed, also creates safer and more walkable pedestrian routes.

Institutional Partnerships

Panel comments focused on the need for campus plans that are integrated with neighborhood plans and developing an institutional appreciation of the quality of life and health benefits of a lively, walkable urban location with nearby housing opportunities at a variety of price points. Challenges include the need to:

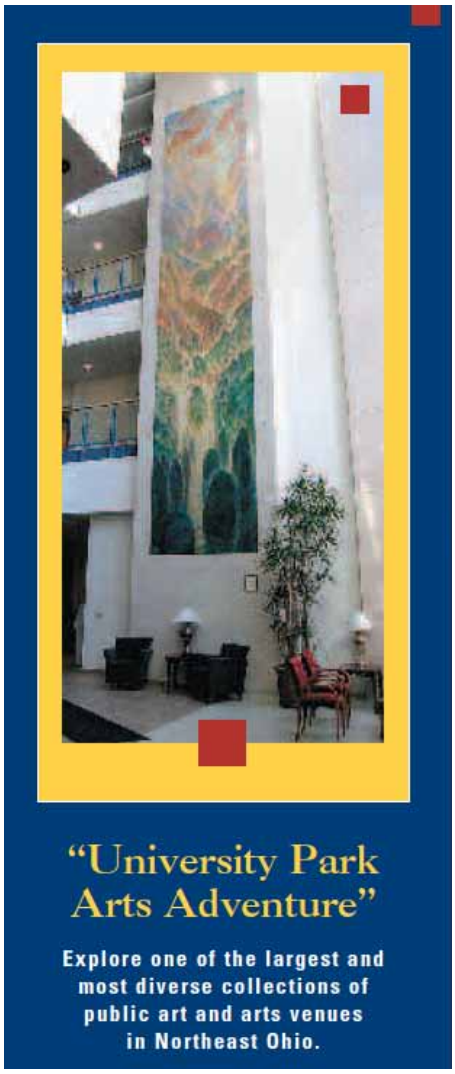
Address institution-community design and joint planning concerns: Design and development regulations, complete street initiatives, and one-way street adjustments continue to cause concern for hospitals (their need for quick emergency vehicle access). Another design issue is that campus plans continue to be developed separately from community plans in general, and the urban design of campus walkability could be better meshed with the nearby community transportation systems.

Make the talent pool-urban living link: Many institutions do not understand the strong relationship between vibrant urban places and their future employee talent streams and pools. Existing efforts to attract institutional employees to live in the corridor have not been effective at attracting market-rate households into the area. Those efforts need to be strengthened and broadened to include all income levels and household types, particularly young professionals.

Address safety concerns: Safety continues to be an issue for hospitals and will become a greater one for colleges and universities (and parents) as more students migrate into downtown and the Hillside neighborhoods. Safety is another area where data and benchmarking can play an important role to address the realities and perceptions of safety issues in various downtown locations.

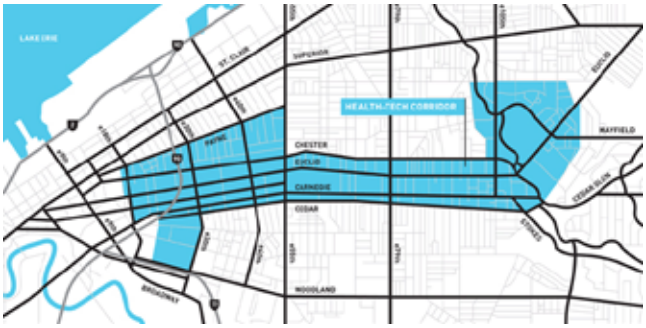
Marketing

Obstacles to a strong marketing program included the lack of a clear vision and different approaches for distinctive market segments. Data to back up marketing claims are also important.



Clarify what downtown is: Downtown, Old Downtown, and Canal Park appear to have different visions of whether they are one place or three. The downtown place-brand beyond Canal Park is at best unclear, and there is limited consensus about what the community wants it to be. Survey results clearly indicate that the marketplace sees Canal Park as a distinct place and stakeholders clearly market it as such. Efforts to similarly position the rest of downtown or the Duluth Creative Corridor are limited, although the Fitger's Brewery Complex/ Downtown Waterfront area and increasingly the entertainment district near the Sheraton Duluth Hotel have some presence. Coming up with a shared marketing vision and simple, unified marketing message is all the more difficult because of the long linear form and diversity of the downtown. The overarching Duluth Creative Corridor provides a mechanism for achieving the shared definition of place needed for effective marketing. In that approach, the corridor umbrella is punctuated with distinctive districts and corridors that reflect their unique assets and appeal. Denver, for example, has an expansive downtown, but visitors and residents alike all know about "LoDo" (Lower Downtown) and the dining, entertainment, and nighttime activity associated with that section of the downtown.

Develop the data needed to tell the story: As noted earlier, the panel was not able to find good data that measure the increase (or decrease) in the number of corridor housing units. Gathering solid numbers that show progress will help market downtown Duluth to developers, along with providing good information for other marketing campaigns.



The Duluth Creative Corridor and the businesses within it would greatly benefit from a coordinated branding and marketing program. The University Park Arts Adventure (top image) and Cleveland Health Tech Corridor (bottom image) that connects nine neighborhoods are two examples.

Achieve greater marketing synergies by enabling those in marketing to coordinate and improve the message: The city would benefit from bringing together all marketing players on a regular basis. At the panel focus group meeting with those involved in marketing, several people noted that they could not recall everyone being in the same room previously.

Develop messages for different markets: Not all target markets need the same marketing messages or strategies. Twenty-something "creatives" look for something besides marketing slogans, for instance. Empty-nesters

respond to some approaches, and vacationing families to others. It will be important to identify those market niches and design a distinct marketing approach for each. A strong place identity (whether one or several) can be marketed in distinctive, fine-tuned ads targeting each of those market segments and other market niches.

Strategies for Lake Place Plaza should address the big hole between it and Superior Street (above). They also need to address the trees that obstruct views of the park (top image below) and change its out-of-date design that attracts vagrants and illicit activity (bottom image below).

Planning, Urban Design, and Connectivity

Like its observations on progress, the panel's comments about obstacles and potential opportunities are organized around the focus of its recommendations: promoting urban living, a creative culture, and greater connectivity from the Hillside campuses to the downtown and waterfront area. Challenges related to planning and urban design include the need to:

Address the amount of surface parking in Canal Park: The dominant land use in Canal Park is surface parking, and that is limiting its full potential as a destination. Parking is a fundamental necessity; surface parking lots are not. A parking management plan and long-term strategy to convert surface lots to structured parking concealed within blocks and introduce centralized valet systems can unlock a much greater development potential for Canal Park that will build on and enhance the existing assets.

Refine the form-based districts in the Unified Development Code and advance Complete Streets plans: The form-based districts in the Unified Development Code need refinements (discussed in Recommendations), and new developments that visually demonstrate the code's benefits will help communicate new opportunities. That will take courage and political will. Also important is advancing the Complete Streets policy, which seems to have slowed down.

Pay attention to the design of the Downtown Multi-Modal Transportation Terminal and passenger rail links: To ensure its future success, the terminal design should be more clearly articulated and the focus of rigorous planning. Multi-modal centers can be great urban assets, but they often suffer from inadequate urban design due in part to overcompensating traffic infrastructure to service the flow of automobiles in and out of the center rather than emphasizing the seamless connection for pedestrians between the center and transit. The terminal should incorporate elements of the urban architecture and urban design features from the best examples of multi-modal centers. Complementary to the terminal is implementing a viable passenger rail link to the Twin Cities that will help attract more residents, businesses, visitors, and students.

Activate empty storefronts: Vacant or uninteresting storefronts significantly reduce the walkability of a number of pedestrian pathways. While traditional retail may not return in the short term, other solutions are needed

to provide an interesting and safe walking experience. There may be opportunities to locate a variety of non-profits, service businesses, startups, artists' spaces, galleries, and other uses that can help reactivate and build support for retail while providing a revenue stream. A window treatment program can also fill vacant windows with large prints conveying the preferred vision of the street.

Vacant storefronts should be occupied to create the sense of a safe walking experience, as in these examples from Coral Gables, Florida, (image above) and Seattle, Washington (image below).

Challenges related to connectivity primarily focused on Lake Place Park and Complete Streets and generated the following observations and recommendations.

Make Lake Place Park more visible, accessible, and safer: The panel offered the following observations about Lake Place Park.

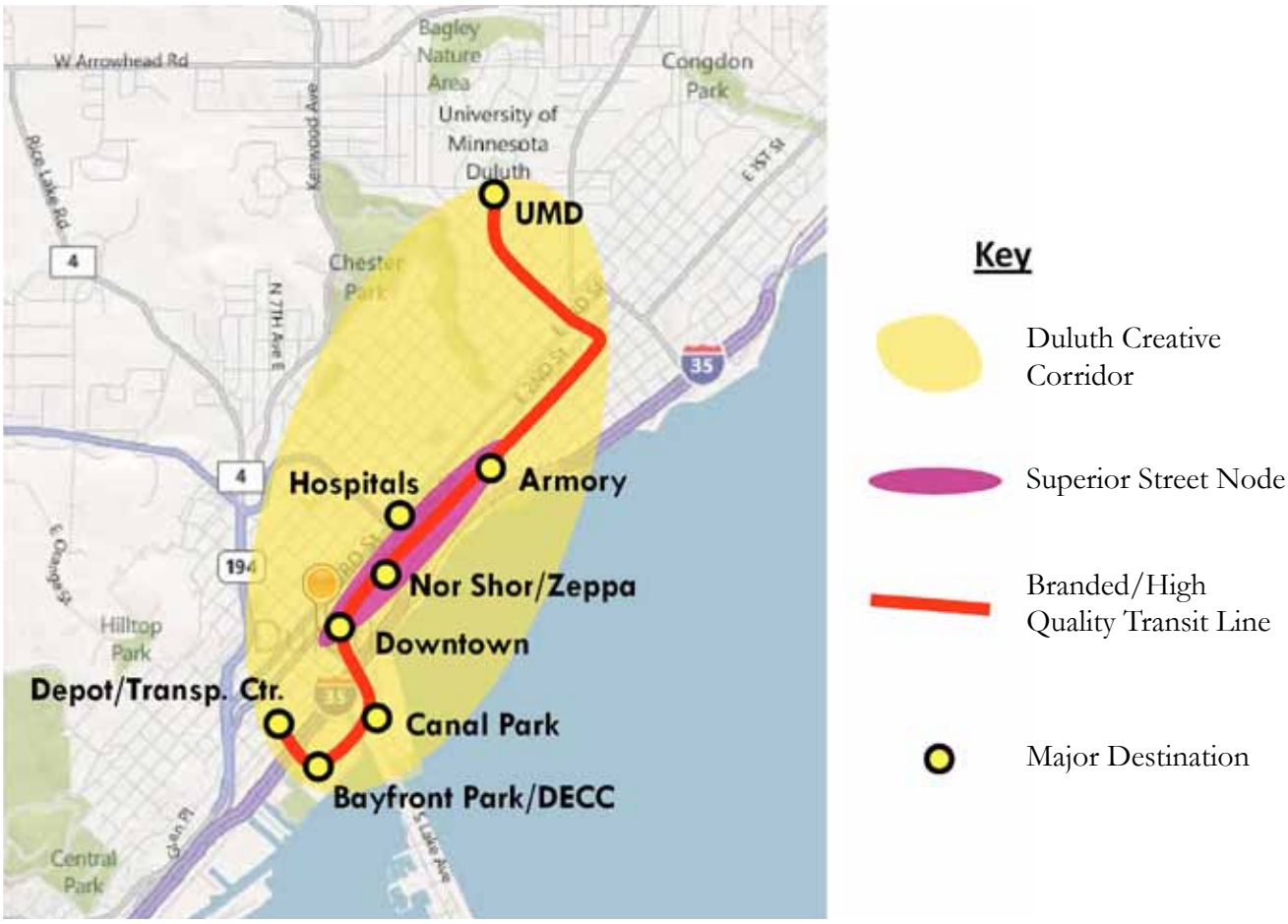
- Better connections are needed from the Downtown to the waterfront, DECC, and Lake Place Park. The Lakewalk is also too hard to get to unless one looks for it, and access is consistently too informal and circuitous. At certain places, it should be easy, obvious, more public and formal, and more direct. Any such connections should be sheltered from the wind without isolating pedestrians. There also should be more visual connections. For example, many vistas through to the lake are cut off unnecessarily by very tall and dense vegetation in Lake Place Park or by the interstate trench.
- Since the 2005 charrette, a prominent opening was created when buildings on Superior Street that back up to Lake Place Park were razed in preparation for a future connection. While funding allocated for that project is not currently available, the need remains to create a strong connection. (Discussed in the panel's recommendations, the LHB conceptual plan at this location addresses that problem by creating a better connection between Lake Place Park and Superior Street with new infill buildings, while a paseo/arcade presents an opportunity to further connectivity.)
- Walkability depends on a sense of safety. The early '80s-era design of Lake Place Park created many out of sight and hidden spaces that provide convenient cover for illicit activity, even during daylight hours.

Implement Complete Streets: The extent to which the Hillside neighborhoods embrace Complete Streets concepts, make streets more bikeable and walkable, and accept new infill housing and mixed-use development compatible with the surrounding neighborhood is important. Also critical are the commitment and ability of the Duluth Transit Agency (DTA) to embrace Complete Streets concepts and work with cyclists to integrate their operations.

Panel Recommendations

> *"The Duluth Creative Corridor would benefit from greater collaboration among institutions and between those institutions and the surrounding neighborhoods and larger community."*
>
> The Progress Advisory Panel

The panel's overarching recommendation to create the Duluth Creative Corridor achieves multiple goals: connect the Hillside neighborhoods and campuses to the downtown and the waterfront area, grow an emerging creative culture as an economic engine, and actively support an area ripe for urban living. The vision for the corridor is that it will become a cohesive, urban living opportunity driven by knowledge-economy workers and businesses. Diverse new housing developments (for all incomes and stages, including students, artists, empty nesters, recent grads, and seasonal visitors), mixed-use infill and redevelopment, streetscape improvements, and Complete Streets would be concentrated in that area. Also within the corridor is a series of nodes where arts-related investments and activities should be concentrated to create a critical mass that maximizes their synergy for the entire corridor. One such node is the area along Superior Street that includes the Zeitgeist Arts Center and the evolving NorShor Theater complexes.



The Duluth Creative Corridor (in yellow above) establishes an urban living area that connects the downtown and waterfront with the Hillside campuses and arts and entertainment nodes along the corridor. The Superior Street node (in purple above) is the largest and most intense of the arts and entertainment nodes.

✓ Gearing Up

Some homework is needed to get ready for the next big push: refresh and refine the vision, expand the partners, ramp up coordination and action assignments, stimulate excitement and innovative thinking, tell the story, and keep up the market research.

Refresh and Refine the Vision

As with any vision and successful plan, regular check-ins and updates are essential. For Duluth, that means clarifying and updating the bold, shared vision and related action plans. To do that, use the 2005 Charrette Report as a starting point and conduct an extensive and open updating process to reach consensus on key issues such as housing goals and income mix, hospital growth locations and designs, conversions of one-way streets, student housing locations, lakefront connectivity, and two initial arts activity nodes. That can and should include internal meetings and consultations with key institutions and stakeholders where a variety of options and "blue sky" proposals can be freely examined and discussed, as well as public meetings that are covered by the media and communicated throughout the entire community.

Expand the Partners

Reach out to and more fully involve those who are important to promoting and implementing the vision.

- Regional economic development groups need to recognize and enthusiastically promote the Duluth Creative Corridor as the vibrant urban center of the region. It is in everyone's best interest to invest significant resources to help make the Duluth Creative Corridor the best it can be.
- Given the critical importance of their institutions and how inseparable their future is from that of downtown Duluth, hospital and higher education CEOs should be encouraged to be more proactively involved in leadership positions with community nonprofit organizations involved in creating and achieving the goals for the corridor. Advisory Boards (the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce, GDC, Duluth LISC, etc.) should also be more extensively cross-pollinated to enhance the interconnectivity and awareness between partners.
- The retention and attraction of knowledge workers and creative talent should be recognized as a strategic regional economic goal that is reflected in the strategic plans of all appropriate institutions and economic development groups. (The story of the engineering firm that relocated to Duluth because the talented workers it needed liked Duluth's amenities and location should be told over and over.)

Ramp Up Coordination and Action Assignments

There are two prerequisites for implementing an ambitious vision with a number of parts: a lot of coordination to share the work and keep everyone in sync and a method to ensure that assignments are clear and trackable. Given the expanded geography of the Duluth Creative Corridor beyond the original charrette study area, along with the need to better engage UMD, St. Scholastica, and the medical institutions, the panel recommends:

- The temporary formation of a group of leaders to identify the top three to five initiatives they consider critically important and examine how to best organize the various stakeholders for quick and effective implementation. That coordinating group may be established under the auspices of the city, GDC, or another nonprofit. If it exists separately, care must be taken to provide adequate resources to help it accomplish important coordination and tracking roles.
- The strengthening of coordinated planning efforts between the city, nonprofit groups (the A. H. Zeppa Family Foundation, Duluth LISC, DSACF, GDC, and institutional campus planners, for example), transportation agencies such as the Duluth Transit Authority and Minnesota Department of Transportation, and economic development and cultural organizations.
- The creation of a new matrix that shows the metrics, funding sources, assignments, and timelines for each implementation action item. That is particularly important for actions related to market-rate housing, institutional partnerships, and real and perceived safety.

Regular market studies are key to attracting new investments. The Lexington, Kentucky, Downtown Development Authority recently completed a downtown market inventory. It also offers a web-based wayfinding display and 3-D interactive downtown map and features successful mixed-use and residential developments.

Stimulate Excitement and Innovative Thinking

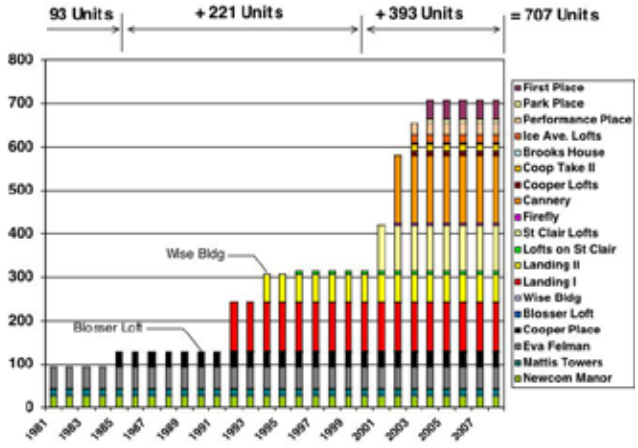
Use an ongoing speaker series as part of the process to explore new thinking, gain insights into success stories beyond the region, and generate excitement and support. Use as many private developers and investors as possible, including foundation representatives and other private civic investors, as a way to establish credibility with skeptics. Don't just have speakers speak. While they are in town, pair them up with individuals or local groups who would benefit from their in-depth knowledge and one-on-one time (that could lead to implementation of something related to the speaker's topic). Providing media time with a speaker also helps seed new ideas and innovative approaches. (See Appendix E for a sample list of speakers to consider.)

Tell the Story

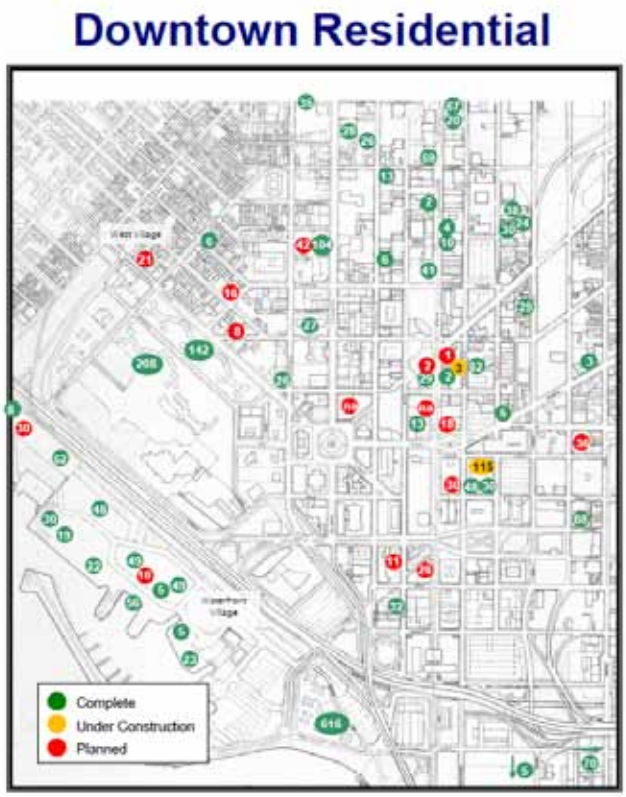
Whether attracting private investments, going after grants, or retaining public and political support, telling (and retelling) the story is essential. That means regularly tracking, quantifying, and reporting on progress and communicating that progress as part of a cohesive and continuing narrative about the Duluth Creative Corridor. The vision, and the strategies and plans associated with it, become extremely valuable tools that can be used to visually communicate the story and market the corridor. While various groups clearly track aspects of the story and organizational efforts, there needs to be a more coordinated and strategic compilation of information to help communicate progress in clear terms that are relevant to developers, investors, and new businesses and residents.

Some of the benchmarks that can be used to track, quantify, and report on progress include:

- Private investments ($, units, square feet)
- Public investments ($, linear feet, fixtures)
- Safety perceptions (survey and focus group results, with emphasis on women)
- Visitor numbers (for various downtown districts, hotel occupancy trends)
- Employment growth by type at major employers
- Pedestrian and bike counts (both day and night by geographic area)
- Location (pin maps work well for this) of institutional employees and students who live in the Duluth Creative Corridor (more than people think)
- Innovative measures – stroller counts, bike rental trends
- Regional market share whenever possible
- WalkScores and Walkability Assessment Criteria[1]



Documenting new housing developments is essential in order to tell the story and track new investments. Two examples are from Dayton, Ohio, (image above) and Winston Salem, North Carolina (image below).



Create better visual representations of results and strategies. The expression that one good picture is worth a thousand words applies to the Duluth Creative Corridor.

- Show different kinds of investments on maps using distinct colors, shapes, and shading (for example, for housing, arts, Complete Streets).
- Use graphs to show trends (illustrated in the Dayton housing chart to the right).
- Note important areas of focus and connectivity on maps.
- Invest in high-quality renderings that communicate energy and vision.
- Illustrate materials with images of people from varied and targeted demographic and lifestyle niches in businesses, activities, and places that convey the essence of the Duluth Creative Corridor experience.
- Make such images easy to find on various websites (broader than the GDC's).

1 For example, the Walkability Checklist (www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/walkability-checklist); Walkability Rankings developed by Christopher B. Leinberger, visiting fellow at the Brookings Institute (www.brookings.edu/papers/2007/1128_walkableurbanism_leinberger.aspx); and advisory panelist Rick Hall's Walkability Index (www.hpe-inc.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=40tH6vnOe%2Bk%3D&tabid=754).

Conduct Regular Market Research

Research to understand and document the market should be part of the regular routine. Research should include:

- Annual online surveys – a consumer survey of major employers' staff (housing, retail, entertainment) and another consumer survey of college students and their parents related to housing and safety.
- Formal housing market research beyond students – bankable, don't skimp.
- Visitor research – should recognize a distinct place-brand for Canal Park (versus other parts of downtown) and better analyze responses from females because they make more than 80 percent of the decisions relative to purchases.

It might be possible to partner with universities, real estate and realtor organizations, and others to help generate, track, and report the data in a standardized format on a quarterly schedule. That could be supplemented with niche studies that are critically important for identifying gaps and opportunities in the market.

✓ Arts and Economic Development

The number of recommendations to grow the arts and, in turn, the economy, underscores their importance in making the Duluth Creative Corridor work.

Institute a Connected Multi-Node Strategy

The centerpiece is a connected multi-node strategy that involves centering art-related activities in nodes and creating strong connections between them. Nodes should have easy access to transit and offer urban living opportunities.

Concentrating new growth and investment in key strategic nodes along key corridors is consistent with Duluth's 2006 Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the 2010 Unified Development Code.

Specific strategies include:

- Build on existing assets, strengthening two nodes at a time with civic investments while keeping in mind the concept of a retail

Various types of arts expressions and arts facilities are used to bring life and visitors to public spaces and create those memorable destinations that residents and visitors want to visit.

district that offers an appealing shopping and dining mix combined with housing and strong public realm improvements.

- Blend public space, civic institutions, commerce, and the arts rather than treating them as separate ingredients (think of nodes as "melting pots" of activities and spaces, not "salads" with separate pieces). Commercial activities linked to and accommodated within streets and public spaces add vitality, convenience, visual interest, and safety to urban places.
- Invest in a signature annual arts event for each node (target of 10k+ attendees/day), and preferably have events that last after dark to enhance real and perceived safety.
- Use public art strategically to link and highlight places of interest and nodes of activity. Be sure to creatively light those installations and the buildings that house them.

Superior Street from downtown to the Fitger's Brewery Complex is already experiencing major investments in growing the creative culture and a lively urban lifestyle.

Consider an arts trail between UMD and Canal Park (optimally something arts-related every 150-250 feet) and promote it using maps and tours. The colleges and universities could also consider art exhibits in vacant spaces or storefronts along East Superior Street around the NorShor Theater and the Zeitgeist Arts Center, or in the other selected Arts Node. (The organization <www.nolongerempty.org> provides an inspiring model for that concept.)

The Superior Street Arts Node (which extends from the downtown to the Fitger's Brewery Complex) is the largest, most intense node and should be the initial area of focus for the arts-based efforts within the Duluth Creative Corridor. It is a place that offers a creative urban lifestyle to serve as a cutting edge regional economic development asset. Incentives should be considered to cultivate the area as home to the myriad elements of Duluth's burgeoning creative sector (the full spectrum of the visual and performing arts community) and a place worth visiting, relocating to, and living in or near, and meriting continued care and investment. In the words of a panel member: "From all indications we've seen, from its set up to its architecture to its location along the lake, our team thinks Superior Street has the ingredients to become a truly great street of national stature. At night there are music, performing arts, funky bars, cool hotels, grand theaters, and ballrooms all lit up. During the day there are coffee shops full of creatives and dealmakers and studio spaces full of large screen computers and/or artisans. So much so that it attracts people, just to watch it all go down. That urban experience taking place within a few minutes of incredible immersive natural experiences down the shore, up the river, onto the lake, or over the hill is plenty to build on."

Along with the initial work on Superior Street, Duluth leaders need to determine which one or two of the other emerging arts nodes should receive strong support in the first wave of such development. That should

include giving strong consideration to the 4th Street Corridor, the Plaza and Armory, and other locations in the Duluth Creative Corridor.

Good medical campus/neighborhood connections and joint planning are important for the success for each. That includes good signage into and around the campus and creating a pedestrian-friendly street environment and campus neighborhood edge.

Use the Arts as a Retail Anchor

- Consider arts venues and collections as non-traditional retail anchors. Make sure they have visible and interesting signage or other ways to communicate their presence.
- Provide a combination of visual and performing arts, including art for purchase and use at home.
- Treat art as entertainment retail, with a key component being people-watching. Outdoor and open-door dining are critical aspects of the experience. Very little of it exists beyond Canal Park, and it needs to become more prevalent.
- Pursue and support affordable "incubator" live-work-sell space for local artists in key locations – visible, along a path, near other entertainment retail. (That is consistent with the previous plans.)
- Place art in storefront windows and feature artful displays of merchandise.

Use a Market-Based Approach to Attracting People to the Corridor

- Identify key target markets, which may vary seasonally and by node, and figure out the most effective messages and communication mediums to strategically reach those markets using a variety of traditional and new media channels as appropriate. Arts and culture should be treated as a strong feature of the overall downtown brand and the sub-district brands of Canal Park and the Duluth Creative Corridor.
- Keep children involved, particularly younger ones, because they bring adults and help improve perceived safety. With many households having two working, time-limited parents, activities that involve kids get the priority.

Make It Easy to Get to and Move Around in Arts Nodes

- Use well-designed wayfarer signs to get visitors and residents to the arts nodes, including to parking and from parking to arts facilities. Wayfarer signage guides visitors to their destination, giving them directional cues as they are needed along the way.

- Consider free or discounted parking at city facilities for arts patrons for a limited time in order to build up market share. Also explore district valet parking for arts nodes, particularly in the evenings.
- Encourage artistic signage within the districts or nodes; that may require design code adjustments or flexibility.Be sure to have signage that shows the way back to major roadways, a very important feature for visitors, particularly after dark. Lighted signs are best.

✓ Housing

Promoting housing of all types and attracting a large number of new residents are essential to the corridor's success. That involves a host of strategies:

Kick-Start the Process

- Recruit experienced urban housing developers, including those involved with historic tax credit housing. If necessary, look outside the region in order to kick-start activity.
- Create an employee housing incentive program (with a dedicated funding pool) among all the partner institutions. Make the incentives more substantial for a three-year period coinciding with new construction and market-rate housing projects of at least 20 units. Attract matching funds from the city, philanthropic foundations, and others. Include incentives for rent-to-own scenarios or for long-term renters (over three years).
- Create an employee housing incentive program (with a dedicated funding pool) among all the partner institutions. Make the incentives more substantial for a three-year period coinciding with new construction and market-rate housing projects of at least 20 units. Attract matching funds from the city, philanthropic foundations, and others. Include incentives for rent-to-own scenarios or for long-term renters (over three years).

Housing strategies should focus on producing different housing types for a variety of markets. That includes loft housing that works well for students, as in the Cleveland State University example (top image above). At Ohio State University, student housing lines a parking garage (upper image below). Spicer Village in Akron's University Park (bottom image below) has attracted a number of medical interns (another niche market) from three nearby hospitals.

Provide for a Variety of Housing Types and Goals

- Set some aggressive and quantifiable new housing goals for the Duluth Creative Corridor, and align civic investments to accomplish those goals. That should include income diversity goals. Currently there are very limited middle- and upper- middle-income products and residents; changing that should be a primary focus, especially for new construction.
- Identify niche markets. For example, universities need to think about housing that can serve increasing numbers of tourists in the summer. Student populations are also composed of niche markets: including families who might invest in a property while their son or daughter attends school, graduate students, medical students, married students, international students with different cultural and religious backgrounds, and professional and graduate students (all of whom have different budgets, housing needs, and preferred amenities). Also consider kiddie condos as a unique offering – they can be rented to tourists in the summer, provide significant value through second home tax breaks, and create equity growth during the holding period. Properly structured, the approach can also help make higher education more affordable. Recruit the current student housing developer to create a new urban-style student housing node closer to the downtown; extending the bus shuttle system to include the new housing (provide incentives if necessary) should be a part of the package.
- Recognize the typical evolution of downtown housing in smaller Midwest cities – young men and students (and sometimes artists/creative class types) in the first wave followed by young couples followed by young women followed by empty nesters. Renting condominium units for at least five years and then putting them up for sale can also be a good product for that market if the units are designed accordingly.Recognize that housing initiatives led by affordable housing agencies are often perceived as "low income" even when they are not, and that will impact market interest and absorption. The Creative Corridor concept will require a mix of housing types and market niches that can deliver a variety of options for the market-rate housing that is currently lacking and can blend with affordable and workforce housing.

Recognize and Capitalize on the Advantage of "Location, Location"

- Being able to touch the water, conveniently go boating, walk to interesting places, and people-watch a diverse group of neighbors every day is a significant amenity that accompanies living in the corridor.
- Make sure new housing projects have great views, even if that occasionally means removing a few trees (you can transplant those trees or plant new ones in alternative locations that do not impact viewsheds). Views from the hillsides of the shipping and boating activities are particularly important. A "room with a view" is in demand year-round, through all seasons.

Views of the lake are an asset that should be emphasized when promoting living in Duluth – and a signature feature of new housing developments.

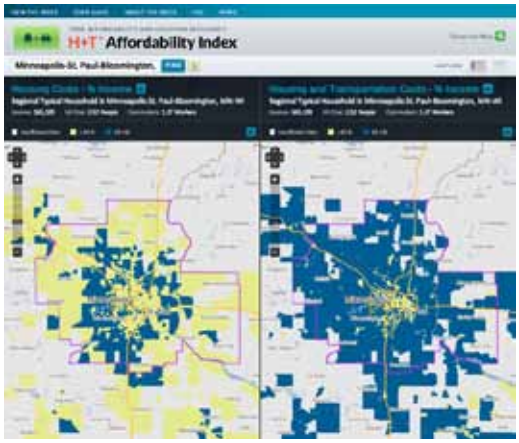
Address Concerns about Real and Perceived Safety

- Address lingering concerns (real and/or perceived) about safety because that still seems to be an issue for potential residents and others who would spend significant time downtown after dark. A more focused approach is needed to deal with perceptions, wayfinding, physical environment, innovative programs, and strategic communications.
- "More police" approaches are not affordable, and Block Watch and Clean & Safe initiatives are not equipped to do that kind of sophisticated work. "Eyes on the street" that incorporate windows and doorways along pedestrian-oriented streets are a good initial step and should be fully embraced as an urban principle for all new construction (residential, commercial, civic, entertainment, and parking facilities) as well as rehab opportunities to reduce and eliminate blank walls and dead spaces.

The design of buildings and forms of street life, including outdoor dining along the street, can play an important role in creating a feeling of safety, as shown in this example from Montreal (image above). In Westlake, Ohio, the design features of Crocker Park (bottom image) that improve real and perceived safety include storefront lighting, outdoor and open door dining, balconies and bay windows, and a mix of uses that provide street life during the evening as well as the day.

Put in Place a Comprehensive Communication Program about Corridor Housing

- Update the GDC website to highlight fun and sophisticated living options in and near downtown in the Duluth Creative Corridor. Adjust the Visit Duluth, Area Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX), and Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce websites to help tell the Duluth Creative Corridor urban living story and provide links to the GDC site for details.
- Understand the link between visitors and residents; every visitor is a potential future resident of the corridor – permanent, seasonal, or retirement.
- Create an annual housing tour of "great homes and apartments" and use it as a fundraiser for the institutional housing incentives program. Target net funds at $100,000 per year.



The Neighborhood Technology Center's H + T Index documents the cost savings of living close to work.

- Hold a regular Duluth Creative Corridor housing development workshop to highlight successes, opportunities, financing incentives, and recent market research. Having one every three years is usually enough. Provide a progress report like one from St. Louis (www.downtownstl.org/docs/2008%20Housing%20Report.pdf) and include a variety of graphs showing progress (as with the Dayton example provided earlier). Feature developers, builders, architects, financiers, and interior decorators who share practical, how-to knowledge and methods with local counterparts.

- Conduct regularly updated and "bankable" housing market analyses that can be shared with potential developers, lenders, civic leaders, and investors. Studies more than three years old are usually no longer relevant or reliable.
- Conduct in-depth, post-construction, one-on-one interviews with experienced developers, builders, and architects in order to identify specific hurdles and cost-inducing regulations that do not serve a clear public purpose and reduce or eliminate them.
- Have seasoned planning, building, and zoning staff conduct periodic information sessions for developers, builders, and architects to educate them about the public review and permitting process and provide materials and schedules to help them avoid problems.

✓ Institutional Partnerships

Building and strengthening partnerships with the corridor's medical and higher education institutions has great potential.

Put in Place Partnership Strategies Common to Medical and Educational Institutions

- Develop joint efforts to provide affordable living options for entry-level professional employees of those institutions. As mentioned earlier, that should include documenting the ability to walk or take transit to work as a major cost savings – a plus in helping attract and retain staff if appropriately structured. The cost savings of living close to work is well documented. A primary resource is the Neighborhood Technology Center's H + T Affordability Index < http://htaindex.cnt.org>. The index offers the true cost of housing based on its location by measuring the transportation costs associated with place.
- As with corridor housing, address real and perceived safety. That should be a shared goal to use in expanding partnerships with institutions; however, it will take innovative approaches to get beyond "more police" solutions. For example, strategically located windows and balconies with flower boxes can significantly impact criminal behavior and safety perceptions. In addition, carefully designed storefront lighting can make a pedestrian pathway much more appealing, even after a business closes, and dining areas with views to the street – particularly through open windows or doors – have a major impact on safety.
- Work with institutions to create a safe, welcoming, pedestrian-friendly campus edge, preferably with mixed-use housing and campus-related retail.

Pursue Initial Hospital Specific Steps

- Expand the definition of integrated health care to include the creation of healthy neighborhoods, with a special focus near an institution's facilities, as part of the "total healthcare environment" that patients, visitors, employees, and residents all share.
- Encourage hospitals to pay greater attention to and invest in their off-campus environments, something that the best systems are doing in significant ways in their own enlightened self-interest (Cleveland Clinic,

for example). Institutions must recognize and develop their near-campus environments as assets or they will continue to be a liability.

- Create a plan to use area improvements as part of hospitals' community benefit calculations – either to help them show greater benefits or motivate them to do more. The city should consider engaging a special consultant to develop the strategy because there is a need to understand both urban revitalization and hospital operations (Adrian Byrne from Cleveland, for example).
- Create a downtown/Hillside advisory group composed of front-line hospital employees (rather than administrators who will be involved and well-represented in other partnership activities and dialogues). The group can help identify issues and opportunities related to doctors, staff, and visitors. They can also provide feedback about new housing, safety, retail needs, parking, and other kinds of issues from an employee perspective.
- Improve wayfinding signage systems as a way to address hospital concerns and set the stage for more two-way streets. Once the hospitals realize that a good wayfinding system can solve problems, they might become less resistant to the two-way conversions.
- Actively recruit security staff from hospitals to lead community safety groups and help them learn more about innovative ways to address safety perceptions. That should be carefully coordinated with Duluth's Community Safety Initiative work.

Vibrant and mixed use campus edges like this Mercer University project in Macon (above) benefit both the institution and the community, as do the many student volunteer efforts in neighborhoods (top image below) at the University of Akron. Also at the University of Akron, a Chihuly polyester sculpture (bottom image below) creates a dramatic point of interest.

Pursue Initial Higher Ed-Specific Steps

- Locate what could be an emerging demand for student housing in the downtown and East Hillside away from traditional single-family neighborhoods. No one wants to live next to "animal house," but the different types/categories of students discussed above, such as graduate students and married students, can blend well with some for-sale products.
- Expand student engagement activities, including getting schools to agree to focus on the Duluth Creative Corridor. That should go beyond the arts and have at least some focus on tutoring and after-school activities in the K-12 system because great schools are a key amenity.

- Expand co-marketing efforts with student organizations – invite and welcome them more openly. A wide variety of student organization activities could bolster corridor vitality, and initiatives such as annual design competitions involving art, architecture, engineering, and other creative fields could provide talent, ideas, and energyCreate a college/university student advisory council for the Duluth Creative Corridor to provide feedback, ideas, and volunteer development strategies.
- As with hospitals, recruit security staff from colleges and universities to lead community safety groups and help them learn more about innovative ways to address safety perceptions. Such efforts should supplement and coordinate closely with efforts by the City of Duluth Police Department.
- Put a UMD logo on the DECC and invite UMD and other colleges to place banners around downtown (rotated) as part of a co-branding and partnership building approach.

Top Five Recommendations

Brand ≠ Slogan. Convene all groups with a role in marketing Duluth (the GDC, Downtown Council, Visit Duluth, Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce, Duluth Economic Development Authority, Visit Duluth, etc.) to (A) determine Duluth's "brand" or "essence" and (B) devise the best strategies to capitalize on or, if necessary, change that brand.

Downtown Is Downtown, Old or New. Begin treating downtown, Canal Park, and the lower Hillside areas as all part of one "downtown."

By the Numbers. Begin to quantify successes (or lack of) in attracting residents to downtown and in dollars reinvested in the charrette area. That gives heft to marketing and points to areas in need of attention.

Authenticity Matters. After creating the Duluth Creative Corridor, use it to illustrate and market Duluth's future as a home for young creatives, families, and empty-nesters in search of city life.

Capitalize on the Big Mo. Act quickly, before the energy generated by the charrette team's return visit dissipates.

✓ Marketing

Duluth has done a remarkable job re-positioning itself among residents of the upper Midwest as a family vacation spot and destination for outdoor enthusiasts. With its spectacular shoreline, unusual hilly topography, tourist-centered Canal Park area, and burgeoning downtown nightlife and arts scene, Duluth could become a national destination for vacationers and new residents – if the city is able to use both creative marketing and authentic place-making. As Mayor Don Ness told the editorial board of the Duluth News Tribune, Duluth should aim to join cities like Boulder, Colorado, and Asheville, North Carolina, as a nationally known mecca for outdoor enthusiasts and young creatives.

The city boasts 3.5 million tourist visitors a year, so clearly its marketing team has done its job well. But the city's messaging could be better grounded through a more unified strategy. That does not mean one big slogan for all marketing messages. It means that the many agencies and people who help shape the city's marketing must work together with a common understanding of their purpose. Studying the motivations and profiles of the many different types of people and groups attracted to Duluth and determining the appropriate branding for places within the city, the downtown, and the Duluth Creative Corridor will take time and intellectual rigor. (For example, an outdoor enthusiast and an urban arts visitor may require a different approach.) When that analysis is completed, the appropriate agencies and leaders must use those brands as their guideposts for deciding on their underlying goals, the markets they are targeting for each of the goals, and how to strategically craft messages and campaigns for each different target market.

Brand ≠ Slogan

Courtesy of John Stromquist

Those engaged in marketing should join together to develop a shared understanding of what Duluth means and use that as part of individualized messages. They should also promote Canal Park (image above) and the downtown (image below) as one place.

Figuring out the brand is not the same as coming up with a marketing slogan. That task is difficult and requires understanding the city's positive and negative images. It also means that many different interests and segments in greater Duluth must work together to determine just what that slogan should communicate.

Scott Doyon of the firm PlaceMakers wrote in a recent piece, "Defining the City: On Being and Becoming" for the online journal Terrain.org:[2]

" ... Who am I? Contrary to what all-too-often defines municipal branding efforts, it's this question, not the wishful thinking of swooshes, tag lines, and color schemes – that lies at the heart of what branding is all about. But that's not the way it typically plays out, which reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of what branding a city really means. Talk of 'creating a brand,' as one might do with the roll-out of a revolutionary new shaving cream, suggests some sort of blank slate, a point of ground zero where the process of definition can begin. But cities are living organisms, built upon evolving visions with a legacy of past behaviors and no shortage of current, on-the-ground realities, which means – like it or not – they already have a brand."

In other words, it is not up to a group of outside consultants to tell Duluth what the essence of the place is. The panel glimpsed it, in the physical sense of place and experiencing the funky rebirth along Superior Street, and in hearing Duluth's residents talk not just about the water, the hill, and the history, the architectural heritage, and the charm, but also about fog and foghorns, bricks and ships, and frigid winters.

After all the different marketing groups come together to define the brand or brands, they will not arrive at a single slogan per se but at the shared understanding of what their city means. Visit Duluth, the GDC, the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Duluth Economic Development Authority appropriately have differing missions. Each party will use that shared understanding in different ways (different missions produce different target audiences). However, each marketing approach and slogan should support, not undercut, the city's underlying brand messages.

No single slogan or campaign will work for all audiences over the long term. Prospective tourists look for something different than what a prospective manufacturing company seeks. And twenty-something graphic designers and jewelry artists seek other attributes in a place to settle. (Research from Yankelovich, for the non-profit CEOs for Cities, found that 68 percent of college-educated 25- to 34-year olds choose the city they want to live in before looking for a job.)[3]

2 <www.terrain.org/columns/28/guest.htm>
3 <www.arts.gov/artworks/?p=9493>

Downtown Is Downtown, Old or New

Canal Park, downtown, Old Downtown, and Hillside are too close to one another to be separated by marketing terms. Unite them as one cohesive place: the Duluth Creative Corridor.

Credit: Boulder Convention and Visitors Bureau

Credit: ExploreAsheville.com

The creative class is seeking places that are authentic and full of unique local businesses and places to live – attributes that the Duluth Creative Corridor has to offer. Examples of such places include Boulder, Asheville, and Austin, respectively.

- Bid farewell to the "Old Downtown" designation because it does not work as a meaningful geographic term any longer. The east end of downtown has a distinct flavor, to be sure, and as it attracts more arts-related businesses and more nightlife and residents, a neighborhood name might emerge organically. Under the Duluth Creative Corridor umbrella, distinguishable district place names and sub-brands may start to stick or remain (Canal Park, for example).
- Build on progress in the Old Downtown and work to continue to bring more of Canal Park's activity and energy into the rest of downtown. Even though Canal Park teems with activity, it does not seem to be considered as "downtown." The I-35 barrier between Canal Park and the downtown creates a physical separation that even the best marketing would have a tough time bridging.
- Make sure downtown has a visible and attractive heart. The panel heard almost complete unanimity among those at the marketing focus group that the heart of downtown is Lake Avenue at Superior Street. That should be a key connection to Canal Park. But today that intersection is neither welcoming nor special. There is an unattractive park with an undistinguished fountain and a corporate-esque plaza. The Farmers' Market is a good way to humanize the corner, but what about all the other times of the day and week? The Knight Foundation is interested in an initiative that focuses on identifying the public spaces – often singular, iconic, centrally-located urban squares, plazas, and parks – that act as the "soul of the community" (described in the earlier section, Sustained Leadership and Momentum).
- Identify which urban public space(s) represent the "soul of Duluth" and concentrate efforts to reinforce them. Ensuring that downtown has a visible and attractive heart can make marketing work hand-in-hand with strong place-making (downtown means Canal Park, too).

By the Numbers

As discussed earlier, the panel found a need for more thorough and quantifiable data on downtown housing construction, income levels of downtown's new residents, and the average price point of the new housing.

While various groups clearly track aspects of the story and organizational efforts, a more coordinated and strategic compilation of information is needed to help communicate progress in clear terms that are relevant to developers, investors, and new businesses and residents. Market research can add heft to marketing efforts for downtown and the Duluth Creative Corridor. And if the data are not so positive, they point out areas in need of attention. Survey data are also important. Visitors, newcomers, students, downtown residents, businesses, and developers should be surveyed with regard to their likes and dislikes about the downtown. Also useful is gathering census data on household income, education levels, etc., and how they may be changing over time.

The intersection of Lake Avenue and Superior Street serves as Duluth's heart, and yet the area is currently an uninviting and undistinguishable anywhere place. Converting the area to an inviting public place where people want to gather and that communicates the soul of Duluth should be an important investment.

Authenticity Matters

Marketing to the creative class means not looking as if one is just sloganeering or marketing. Marketing Duluth as a destination for living and working means capitalizing on the sense of place that can only be created and sustained by unique local businesses and experiences. The Duluth Creative Corridor, even if it is created bit by bit, will appeal to students, twenty- and thirty-somethings, empty nesters, and artists of all ages. But the district has to be real, not just a faux-urban "development project." The new Unified Development Code (zoning code) with its form-based districts can and should provide the framework for implementing and protecting that sense of place.

The sense of activity and energy found in Canal Park needs to be brought into the rest of the downtown. In Hollywood, Florida, lights are used to provide more energy (and a feeling of safety) at night (top image). Art events in Rochester, New York, (bottom image) bring people and activity to the street.

Newbury Street in Boston, and King Street in Charleston. But chain-dominated tourist areas will not succeed in attracting the creative class the city hopes for. Successful place- making means finding strategies to assure that the place you are marketing remains the place you want to market. Austin, Texas, and its "Keep Austin Weird" campaign, as well as the city's practice of opting for local businesses at its Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, are examples Duluth might look to in order to support its locally owned and operated businesses. Asheville, North Carolina, revitalized its downtown by rehabbing existing buildings rather than tearing down old buildings to build glossy new projects. North Carolina has adopted a rehabilitation building code that makes rehabs much less expensive. It is a fiscal prudence issue, among other things, but it also points out the fact that Duluth's historic buildings are part of its unique place-making and brand.

In other words, if you want to market something, make sure that something really IS what you're marketing.

Capitalize on the Big Mo

The post-charrette visit brought together an impressive number of agencies and voices focused on the next steps for this remarkable city. Do not lose that energy and momentum. The panel recommended updating the city's messaging and communications as soon as possible. The point is not to wait. Many good ideas were put forward by participants, some of whom mentioned that it was rare for them all to be in the same room at the same time. Take advantage of that spirit. The U.S. economy is reviving, if slowly. As it rebounds, Duluth should be ready for it.

The Duluth Creative Corridor (in yellow above) includes an urban living area that connects the downtown and waterfront with the Hillside campuses and arts and entertainment nodes along the corridor. A branded, high quality transit line (denoted in red above) connects the district and major destinations (yellow circles above) within it.

✓ Planning, Urban Design, and Connectivity

Various improvements to planning processes and urban design and development regulations and expanded public improvements for connectivity will help achieve the goals and vision of the Duluth Creative Corridor, the Superior Street and other arts nodes, and other urban living opportunities (depicted to the right). In addition to the progress already made, the panel provided a number of additional recommendations in the areas of planning and urban design actions, corridor connectivity, and development policies and implementation capacity.

In Delray Beach, Florida, attention to design details facilitated development that retained the city's traditional character and promotes the balance of uses needed to promote compact, pedestrian-oriented growth that benefits small businesses. The city focused on how buildings address the street and used parallel parking and street trees to shield pedestrians from vehicles. The wide sidewalks enable leisurely walks and outdoor dining.

Planning and Urban Design

The panel recommended a series of planning and urban design actions for the Duluth Creative Corridor and, within it, the Superior Street Arts Node as the first of several strategic focus areas within the corridor. For the full corridor, recommendations were to:

- Formally adopt (both a city and Metropolitan Planning Organization [MPO] action) the Duluth Creative Corridor as a distinct, mapped, Compact Urban Area for application within the functional classification system used in transportation planning. (The functional classification system groups streets and highways into classes or systems based on their most logical use and how they function in a larger road network.) Discussed in more detail in the Unified Development Code, form-based district recommendations, that adoption brings land use and transportation planning together in a legal way that has not been done before and enables the walkable streets that are essential for an urban district.

- Develop and adopt a public realm improvements plan that enables the desired walkable urbanism by improving parks, sidewalks, pedestrian and bike pathways, public art, and similar physical enhancements of public property.

Credit: thecycler.net

In Trondheim, Norway, a bicycle lift takes cyclers up a steep incline.

- Identify and codify into zoning several neighborhood centers that are connected by and include a sophisticated network of Complete Streets. The code should target specific urban living areas and include a package of regulatory incentives aimed at providing a full range of attractive housing choices that support diverse lifestyles in those areas (for example, allowing more accessory uses/live-work and ground level commercial spaces in unlikely places as an incentive for good design). It should also allow the commercial market to provide a range of daily commercial services within comfortable walking distances of housing and workplaces. That should be accomplished through the careful mapping of different types of commercial nodes spaced strategically throughout the district and should be coordinated with the development of the arts nodes.

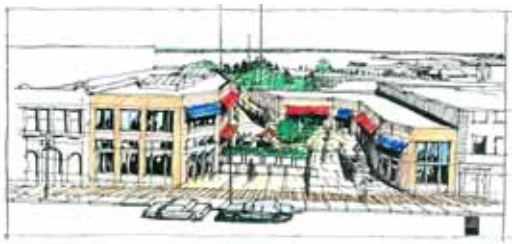
- Take aggressive steps to make sure that developers fully understand and can visualize the range of urban building typologies that the Unified Development Code allows by right. That more specific direction could be adopted as part of the Unified Development Code or, alternately, by developing easy-to-understand pattern books or design primers that display successful local examples of good urban frontage types (building-to-street relationships). Incentives to attract new residents to the area should be part of the package (discussed in the housing recommendations), including the use of Historic Tax Credits.

- Embrace the idea of filling in frontages along the streets in Canal Park with mixed-use infill development where surface parking now exists. That will have clear economic development benefits for the city and Canal Park business establishments. The visitor experience will be enhanced by the improved quality of walkable streetscapes in Canal Park over time. In order to achieve that outcome in an orderly fashion and not negatively impact public accessibility to Canal Park, the panel recommended developing a Canal Park Master Plan. That would include a detailed analysis of the economic and social benefits, a parking management plan to assess current and future parking demand and broader use of garages/ramps, improved pedestrian connectivity to downtown, inclusion of plazas and other strategic pedestrian open spaces, establishment of Complete Streets standards, and improved transit circulator systems. The plan would also include a phasing strategy to show how the transition could happen over time and the benefits maximized at each milestone.

- Strengthen multimodal transportation options. That should include establishing a bike sharing program and putting in place a reliable urban circulator to increase the creative corridor's transit quality. Brand and market the circulator to maximize use. An additional innovative option is to install a version of the Norway bicycle incline (illustrated above) or some other unique physical connection between UMD and downtown alongside Chester Creek Park.

- For all places (Superior and Michigan Streets and Lake Place Park), support continued investment and attention to creating a 24-hour sense of security that allows pedestrians of all kinds to move freely without fearing that they will be approached, solicited, or intimidated. Successful urbanism means no one person or single group can get away with claiming "ownership" of a sidewalk or a park where all people belong at any time, if they are behaving. Longer-term improvement should focus on continuing city efforts to attract new building investments and activate storefronts that feature a diversity of businesses. Creating that 24-hour sense of security should also be part of the design and configuration of public spaces and the connecti between them.

New York City's High Line (above) is transforming an abandoned elevated railroad trestle into green connecting paths. A Duluth plan developed by LHB, Inc., (illustrated below) would provide greater connectivity between Superior Street and the lake by filling in a vacant lot in order to improve the Lake Avenue overpass.



The recommendation for the Superior Street Art Node was to prepare an aggressive urban design and implementation plan that would establish a more clear and commanding relationship and connection (discussed in the section on connectivity below) between the street and the lake. The view of the lake is unnecessarily obstructed at too many points, and there are way too few (and too timid) places where the street opens up prominently to the lake (also true for Canal Park).

Connectivity

The Duluth Creative Corridor is all about connectivity for all modes – walking, biking, driving, or using transit. All modes should enjoy seamless connections between downtown to the lake, downtown to the campuses, and students to the downtown and on to the lake. Those same connections are required to and between the arts nodes. Other important connections are regional ones, calling attention to the importance of the proposed passenger rail service, the Northern Lights Express (NLX for short), between Duluth and the Twin Cities. That link could also spur revitalization around the Union Depot.

The panel gave particular attention to creating greater connectivity between Superior Street and the lake. They developed recommendations for both short- and long-term strategies.

Short-Term: Strengthen the physical and visual connections to the Lake, DECC, and Lake Place Park.

- Replace tall vegetation and evergreen trees that obstruct viewsheds with lower, more appropriate landscaping to improve views of the lake and improve visibility and eyes on the park.
- Take advantage of backs of buildings in creating an appealing urban experience along the Lakewalk. The High Line in New York City <www.thehighline.org> represents a good model for creating an attractive "green" pedestrian experience along a former elevated rail line that backs up to urban buildings.

Long-Term Connectivity: Long-range strategies emphasize connecting the downtown and the waterfront (specifically Canal Park) through a route of continued seamless walkable urbanism. The growing together of those two areas emerged as the overwhelming number one connectivity priority during the panel's visit. Canal Park should be considered the primary waterfront area, with the DECC and Bayfront Festival Park secondary.

Changing the current Lake Avenue I-35 bridge crossing (top image) that creates an unfriendly pedestrian environment should be a high priority. For example, in Columbus a prominent bridge crossing is lined with retail stores (bottom image) that contribute to a friendly walking experience. Such a crossing will promote greater connectivity between the downtown and Canal Park.

The core issue revolves around Interstate 35, the key thoroughfare in the heart of Duluth. The team understands and appreciates much of the history leading to its construction. During the 1960s, downtowns throughout America faced serious competition from outlying shopping centers and malls. "Happy Motoring" in the fashionable suburbs threatened to shut down Main Streets across the nation, and Duluth was no exception. A bypass was even suggested that could have drawn vital energy to a western commercial corridor. The almost free funding from the Highway Trust Fund at 90 percent federal to 10 percent local/state match provided a further incentive to select the Eisenhower Interstate Program as the preferred solution to maintain a vibrant downtown. Publications such as The Freeway in the City (U.S. Federal Highway Administration, 1968) and The Freeway in Your City (distributed by the National Highway Safety Council, 1970) strongly supported construction of new free-flowing arteries through the established downtown fabric.

Given the best information of the day, Duluth made the difficult decision to build I-35. However, much has happened to enhance the understanding of urban design and urban mobility since the Motor Age was at its peak. Noise and air quality impacts were not foreseen. (A Chicago report even suggested that freeways would introduce healthy light and air into the urban environment.) Destruction of historic buildings and separation by the castle wall effect was not anticipated, and Lake Superior at the time was not clean enough to be regarded a desirable place for recreation.

When quality of life is added to the mix with financial considerations for the freeway design analysis, the land at the water's edge turned out to be a very expensive way to achieve urban mobility in San Francisco, New York, Portland, Milwaukee, and Duluth. Complete Streets and multimodal planning reflect current thinking about mobility. The country's youngest generation of workers includes many who do not own a car. Increasingly, many people consider bicycling basic transportation, and many others would like to bike but find the transportation networks too threatening.

Based on the above, the team recommends a short pause in the current activities so Duluth can complete an in-depth look at the basic central decision of I-35. Changed financing levels, economic sustainability, and ur-

ban living culture are among the many reasons to re-evaluate that central assumption. Thoughts on the topic lead to a preliminary conclusion that two levels of intervention be studied and prioritized:

- Focus on improving existing conditions
- Examine transformative improvements

The Advisory Panel recommended improvements to the 5th Avenue West bridge to Festival Park (image above) and passenger rail improvements in and near the planned Downtown Multimodal Transportation Terminal (middle image), which, the panel noted, should be integrated into the downtown urban fabric. Michigan Street (bottom image) should also be a focus of reinvestment and attention to creating a 24-hour sense of security.

Improve Existing Connections: Renovate the existing infrastructure (improvements to decking and skyways, including wider sidewalks, better sightlines, improved lighting, vendors, etc.). An example is the LHB, Inc., plan for improving the Lake Avenue overpass and filling in missing buildings with a paseo/arcade that creates a link between Superior Street and Lake Place Park.

Make Transformative Improvements: Two very different approaches were outlined.

> *Option One:* Complete and extend the current bridging/decking concept, including additional bridging and decking over I-35, perhaps with air rights and private development opportunities along the edge of the bridges. If prioritizing, the Lake Avenue-I-35 crossing should be the highest priority when making overall investment decisions (ones related to the crossing should not be made in a vacuum of other investments).
>
> Other strategies are available:
>
> - Provide more formal and direct lake experiences through better direct connections, both physical and visual, on Superior Street, emphasizing the area from Lake Avenue to the Fitger's Brewery Complex.
> - Redesign the landscape and hardscape from top to bottom to make Lake Place Park more functional, attractive, safe, and appealing as a place to visit.
> - Plan improvements for the 5th Avenue West Bridge to Bayfront Festival Park in conjunction with passenger rail infrastructure enhancements in and near the planned Downtown Multi-Modal Transportation Terminal.
> - Conduct a more detailed study of the planned terminal, focusing on updating the likely programmatic elements and creating an optimal urban design solution for integrating the facility into the fabric of downtown.

- Conduct a full study of future DECC, Great Lakes Aquarium, and Bayfront Festival Park pedestrian traffic. That will be necessary to effectively develop a good design for improved bridging there. The potential expansion (if technically possible) of the Northwest Passage skywalk to the DECC should be part of that study.

Option Two: Reclaim and upgrade I-35 as a multi-way, four-lane boulevard with at-grade crossings and more open circulation via "T" intersections occurring more frequently than the current interchanges. It is not necessary to remove the tunnels as they include substantial decking and access to lake views. The primary objective is substantial improvement to lake access with a tolerable reduction in north-south capacity for through movements. The proposed approach could reallocate portions of the MPO's $90 million in planned I-35 improvements for 2011-2030. Some of those funds could be used for the "Lakeside Boulevard upgrade." It could begin with restoring the streetscape and frontages along Michigan Street and the Union Depot and rediscovering the at-grade crossings to the Canal Park area. The design emphasis would add pedestrian, bicycle, and transit capability to the current motor vehicle-only mobility.

The need to connect the downtown and waterfront was an overwhelming panel recommendation. Three examples, above, illustrate how Milwaukee (top image), Portland (middle image), and Cleveland (lower image) have done that.

Although the Lakeside Boulevard option would require major changes in policy, with careful exploration it could emerge as a viable way to achieve more cost-effective, vibrant, and economically sustainable connectivity. If that option is selected, further decking projects would yield to much less expensive at-grade solutions for reaching the lake and Canal Park area. The Congress for the New Urbanism offers a variety of good examples for converting highways to boulevards (www.cnu.org/highways) as a way to reclaim urbanism. New York City, Portland, San Francisco, and Milwaukee replaced elevated highways with boulevards and parks. Another source of information is the Urban Land Institute's Top 10 Metro Highway Removal Projects < http://urbanland.uli.org/Articles/2011/September/SpivakTopTenHighway>.

Over 50 years ago, Duluth leaders carefully studied the need to connect the downtown to a growing number of people in the suburbs and made the difficult decision to create an innovative new approach in I-35. We now know that decision disconnected the city's core from a major asset, Lake Superior. Today, with new knowledge about how similar cities have revitalized themselves by bringing people back to live, work, and shop in urban

places, the panel recommends that Duluth leaders once again carefully study the corridor and consider an innovative new approach in Lakeside Boulevard. Once again there is a difficult decision for Duluth's leaders to make, and the panel is hopeful Duluth will once again take the long view.

Development Policies and Implementation Capacity

Both the Unified Development Code and new Comprehensive Plan were major steps forward for Duluth, but additional transportation policy changes and capacity building are necessary for achieving the Duluth Creative Corridor's vision of creating a walkable urban district.

Policy Changes: The panel's policy recommendations centered on the city's Complete Streets Program and form-based districts in the UDC. Transit recommendations and redesign changes to 6th Avenue were also offered.

Complete Streets: A more extensive local planning and community engagement process is needed immediately to move forward the Complete Streets resolution adopted by the City Council in a context-based manner. Complete Streets should be based on the context of the surrounding area, as defined in the Compact Urban Area designations from the Unified Development Code form-based districts. That approach, the panel emphasized, will:

- Serve as an educational process for those who do not yet understand the benefits of walkable, bikeable streets.
- Help overcome the pushback that the city engineering department has experienced from neighborhoods.
- Assist in resolving conflicts between transit and bike constituencies.
- Help create consensus on specific street types and standards that will form the basis of the Complete Streets policy and implementation plan that the city called for in 2010, but which has never been brought to fruition.
- Empower city traffic engineers to implement the Complete Streets policy in a consistent, context-based, and predictable manner. That should be undertaken and completed in 2012-2013 and become the foundation for bringing context-based, Complete Street design standards into the Unified Development Code form-based districts during the 2016 update to the Comprehensive Plan that will encompass both land use and transportation.

Over the shorter term (prior to the expected 2016 completion of the comprehensive plan update), Complete Streets strategies should include visible street changes, particularly to enhance walkability and cycling, and streetscape improvements in the Duluth Creative Corridor. Specific projects could consist of working with the MPO to create a bicycle network plan (the signed bike routes that form the basis of the current plan are inadequate), implementing several demonstration pilot projects, and converting the now one-way 2nd and 3rd Streets to two-ways in order to calm traffic, increase neighborhood livability and safety, and enhance economic development and housing opportunities.

Form-Based Districts: Conduct a detailed review of the new Unified Development Code. That should include clarifying the matrix and calibrating and coding each district through urban design (assign the desired built

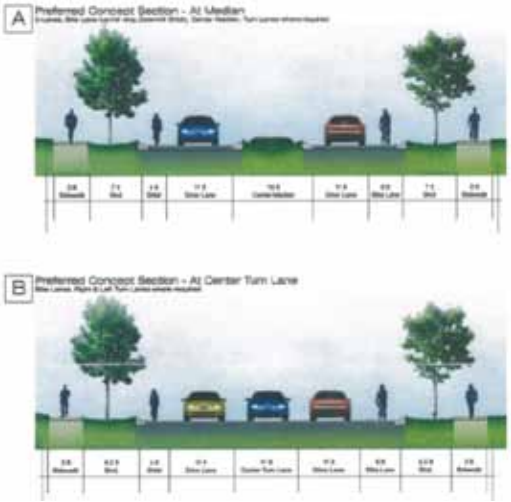
form through development of small area plans or district regulating plan(s)). Also important for the 2016 update is the development of the unified transportation and land use comprehensive plan specified earlier in these recommendations. The plan must be strongly tied to the context- and form-based districts and MPO policies supporting pedestrian-friendly planning in the Compact Urban Area. Specific actions are to:

- Emphasize, map, and establish the context area as three separate and unique community types within the code. The combined three areas would be known as the Compact Urban Area, a subpart of the Urbanized Area (a designation in the functional classification system used for all thoroughfare and transportation design for the city).
- Develop language to incorporate the new Compact Urban Area in the street and highway functional classification policies.

Once that process is completed, the Duluth City Council, MPO, and other partners such as hospitals and universities should pass resolutions in full support and recognition of the combined context designations as the Compact Urban Area. Finally, the form-based code could include examples of unique and appropriate walking-friendly thoroughfare sections for each of the three community types within the Compact Urban Area.

As noted earlier, the procedure would bring together land use and transportation in a legal framework within the form-based code. Urban development patterns undertaken by public and private entities (city, university, hospital) would have full knowledge of the positive design style and essential elements necessary to create great walkability, bikeability, and transit-friendly design within each Context Urban Area. The context-sensitive form-based districts could be coordinated with planning at the city and MPO levels. All thoroughfares planned within the Compact Urban Area would be pedestrian-focused as opposed to the more suburban area planning focused on motor vehicles.

Transit: As part of moving ahead with creating the high quality circulator route described earlier in the Duluth Creative Corridor recommendations, look at rebranding the Duluth Transit Authority to appeal to urban living target markets. That could include its vehicles, bus stops, website, and marketing materials. Reexamining the proposed Downtown Multi-Modal Transportation Terminal is also important and should include a stronger analysis of potential users and how the center can be integrated into the downtown fabric and designed to help activate the streetscape.



The 6th Street Road Redesign: The Sixth Avenue East Schematic Re-Design Study Report, reviewed by the Progress Advisory Panel, was completed on February 1, 2011. It describes an excellent effort of synthesizing input from multiple stakeholders for the redesign of an urban thoroughfare. Concerns about walkability, stormwater treatment, vehicular traffic flow, and overall safety are well documented and effectively addressed in the recommended solutions. All participants in the study should be commended for the high quality of analysis and conclusions in the report. (The participants included the City of Duluth Community Development Depart-

ment, Neighborhood Housing Services, Fit-City Duluth, and Duluth LISC, its Technical Advisory Group and its consulting team, Public Solutions, Inc. and Short, Elliott and Hensrickson, Inc.)

The Progress Advisory Panel recommended a number of actions to augment that good report and make the redesign happen sooner. When redesigning 6th Avenue East (or any urban thoroughfare), the city and appropriate transportation agencies should take the following steps.

1. Clearly define the desired operational characteristics for thoroughfares in the area (in this instance, the 6th Avenue East area). For example, should speed be managed to a level that makes pedestrians much more comfortable? As part of that and to achieve the character goals for 6th Avenue East, the city and the appropriate agencies should add an area type that reflects the desired compact, walkable urban context to the functional classification system used in transportation planning and engineering. That action strengthens the overall guidance to designers and assists in the justification of more pedestrian-friendly design specifications to engineers in responsible agencies.
2. Enable the desired urban character type by formally establishing the Compact Urban Area type within the U.S. Census-designated Urbanized Area. The remainder of the Urbanized Area would be labeled Suburban. That division of the Urbanized Area into Compact Urban and Suburban Areas, as discussed in the section above, is best justified via comprehensive plans, MPO plans, and form-based codes (the regulatory framework that should reflect the established community vision). The City of Duluth's form-based districts include categories of Downtown, Medium Intensity, and Low Intensity Areas that would all qualify as Compact Urban Areas.
3. Establish pedestrian-friendly design standards for the Compact Urban Areas. Managing the speed of motor vehicles is more critical in the presence of pedestrians, bicycles, and transit riders than sizing facilities for faster traffic flow. Traffic flow considerations are primary in suburban areas. Maximum speeds of 25 mph desired (and 30 mph top speed) are essential in walkable urban districts. Design and posted speeds should be the same. That speed management goal requires lane widths of 9, 10, and, on rare occasions, 11 feet. Other design elements also require adjustment to assist in the speed management goal.

Designation of the area surrounding 6th Avenue East and its connecting streets as Compact Urban would greatly facilitate justification of the speed management design features documented in the study report.

The comments listed below are offered for potential consideration when 6th Avenue East advances to the final design phase.

General comments:

- Daily Traffic Profile - a measure of daily traffic variation by hour of the day greatly informs the final design.
- After a project is completed, traffic flow characteristics often adjust to the street geometry.
- Turning movement forecasted 20 years out is often statistically unreliable.

- Zebra-striped crosswalks, as mentioned in the study, work well in walkable urban districts to show where substantial numbers of pedestrians cross without any other traffic control device. They are also effective when added visibility of the crosswalk is desired.

The Raleigh, North Carolina, Re-Imagine Raleigh project included the on-site development of an interactive model that captured the city's urban form, including key geographical features, street patterns, and cultural landmarks. Decorated one-inch scale buildings are used to capture the essence of the actual ones.

Bicycle comments:

- Bike lanes are not usually synonymous with traffic calming, since they provide the appearance of wider traffic lanes.
- Sharrows are specified for lanes where vehicles and bicycles share the lane and are not used where bike lanes are included.
- The "uphill" bike lane is an excellent design concept.
- Bus pull-out bays might only be necessary in the "uphill" direction.Recommended design comments:
- The median should be broken at each street crossing 6th Avenue East to prevent an inordinate number of left turns and U-turns.
- Sidewalks should be a minimum of six feet wide.
- All dimensions should be measured to the curb face since speeds are low.
- To reduce costs and encourage infiltration, curbs should be eliminated adjacent to the median. Greater infiltration of road surface runoff to the median is a healthy solution to the current high level of untreated water going into Lake Superior during rain events. (At present, over 110,000 gallons of untreated rainwater run directly into Lake Superior for each one-inch rain fall event.)
- Between 2nd Street and 5th Street, the two-way left turn lane should have a coarse paving material to inhibit speed.
- The lane should be pervious if possible, yet drain to the edge when saturated.
- Concrete pavers have structural integrity and can provide permeability.
- An additional signalized intersection would help manage motor vehicle speeds.

In summary, the Progress Advisory Panel supports the process and the design section (with the slight modifications noted) described above. The next step, using those recommendations, is for the city and the appropriate agencies to communicate with the Department of Transportation and advance a scope of services for 6th Avenue East design. (See Rick Hall's presentation, To Walk, Or Not to Walk … <www.slideshare.net/CongressfortheNewUrbanism/rick-hall>, for more information on designing walkable streets in urban areas.)

Capacity Building

To make the Duluth Creative Corridor urban design approach work, a lot of education and technical assistance will be required, especially in the early years until the changes on the ground make the benefits clear. Specific recommendations are to:

- Build an informed grassroots constituency for walkability, Complete Streets, sustainable urbanism, and transportation. Coalitions could be created by bringing together groups such as the Healthy Duluth Area Coalition, Safe Walkable Hillside, At Home in Duluth, and cycling advocates.
- Use the speaker series (described earlier) to bring in people who can talk about good examples that relate to the Duluth experience.
- Engage twenty-somethings via marketing campaigns and in corridor-related activities.

Particular emphasis should be given to hiring an urban designer for the city's planning staff and/or creating a new design center (as was established in Memphis following the 2006 charrette with support from the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the local Urban Land Institute District Council, the City of Memphis, and the University of Memphis). Examples of important work tasks include:

- Enlivening empty storefronts on Superior Street.
- Engaging the public in design and offering educational sessions and materials about good urban design and its benefits to Duluth residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Adding heft to the importance the community should be giving to the issue of community design.

If a design center is created, it could ultimately be its own 501(c) (3) with membership shared among city planners, the GDC, perhaps the A. H. Zeppa Family Foundation, Duluth LISC, and other interested parties. It could be located in a shopfront, another symbol of the city's commitment to investing in the corridor. Services could include (but not be limited to) the following:

- A scale model of Duluth (as in the Raleigh example).
- Photo displays of before-and-after-street-diets (computer-enhanced depictions of a tamer 2nd Street or 6th Avenue, for example). Such displays work well as a significant community education tool.
- Visual preference exhibits that enable visitors to vote on what they like or don't like about what they see.
- Pedestrian-safety statistics and other facts showing how important speed limits and street designs that support lower speeds can be.A video talk-back booth to get people to record what they think of Duluth and its downtown.
- A sticky-note wall to pull in reactions to whatever exhibits are shown.
- Historical photos of old downtown (not Old Downtown) and what is there now.
- Regular discussion forums and serving as the location of the guest speaker series described earlier.
- Regular lectures (draw from the speakers' list, Appendix E).

Good design center examples to study and learn from include the following:

- The Nashville (Tennessee) Civic Design Center – a partnership among the design profession, University of Tennessee's College of Architecture + Design, the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies, the

Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission, the Metro Planning Commission, the Metropolitan Housing and Development Agency, and private foundations. <www.civicdesigncenter.org>

- The Raleigh (North Carolina) Urban Design Center – run by the city's planning department, operating from a storefront space on the downtown's main street. Its mission is to be "a thought center for the discussion and testing of design and planning theories and the impact they have on the urbanization of the city." The Raleigh center has a good scale model of downtown Raleigh that is always a fun attraction for people. <www.raleighnc.gov/urbandesign>
- The Saint Paul on the Mississippi Design Center – a13-year collaboration between the Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation and the City of Saint Paul. The center is in a downtown shopfront and has a small multidisciplinary urban design and development staff team. It was started after a Downtown Master Plan was developed and uses 10 principles for city building (the Saint Paul Riverfront Development Framework) as a guide for all its work. The center often acts as an arbiter with developers and is frequently used as an informal review for developers testing ideas with the city. Housed within a larger development corporation, the center has been instrumental in guiding the 1990s and 2000s revitalization of downtown Saint Paul and the riverfront, has taken on dozens of special projects across the city, and is expanding its scope to assist other districts. <www.riverfrontcorporation.com/?page_id=567>

Conclusions

Duluth is the right city at the right time. In today's global knowledge economy, it's all about distinctive, walkable urban places attracting and retaining top talent. And that is exactly what Duluth has to offer and what its next bold act – creating the Duluth Creative Corridor – seeks to secure.

> *"Downtown Duluth has it all. The exceptional accomplishments over the last six years are impressive and are creating an incredibly desirable place to live and invest in. The creation of the Duluth Creative Corridor will be that next big push that makes the difference."*
>
> The Progress Advisory Panel

The tailwind to capture: Today's companies want to be where they can find and retain talented, creative employees, which means that place-making is an essential component of any economic development toolbox. And that workforce works where they want to live and that is in cities that offer an exciting and interesting urban environment – the connected walkable places where they can live close to work and have convenient access to education, the arts, transit, great outdoor spaces, and good shopping, dining, and gathering places. As economist Chris Leinberger points out in a Brookings Institution article, "The Next Real Estate Boom,"[1] the next economic engine is providing the places that consumers coming out of the recent great recession want: "homes in central cities and closer-in suburbs where one can walk to stores and mass transit…." That is exactly the vision for the Duluth Creative Corridor.

The Duluth Creative Corridor Vision -- A place where residents, visitors, and employers want to be: a cohesive, walkable urban place that contains and connects an interesting mix of arts, culture, and entertainment along with great public spaces (large and small) and all types of housing (for all incomes and stages, including students, artists, empty nesters, recent grads, and seasonal visitors). It is also a place that offers a spectacular view of – and connections to – beautiful Lake Superior.

A remarkable foundation of progress to build on: The creation of the Duluth Creative Corridor builds on and expands the city's exceptional accomplishments since the 2005 charrette. Those efforts have advanced the charrette principles that focus on the uniqueness of place, walkability, connectivity, a mix of housing choices, a great public realm, and protection (and restoration) of the city's distinctive heritage and urban ecology, its neighborhoods, corridors, and downtown. Important accomplishments include the adoption of form-based districts in the new Unified Development Code, progress in building a new spirit of cooperation between UMD and the city, growing a creative culture, creating a safer public realm during the day, and increasing the demand for close-in urban living. Most notable, and the underpinning of all the other (past and future) successes, is the strong consistent leadership and spirit of partnership that was demonstrated in the 2005 charrette and Charrette Stewardship Group and continues today.

1 <www.brookings.edu/articles/2010/11_real_estate_leinberger.aspx>

The Duluth Creative Corridor Recommendations:

➢ *Arts and Economic Development* – Treat arts (visual and performance) as a retail and entertainment anchor; create places where artists can live and work and, in the process, liven up the street. Cluster arts and synergistic residences, retail, and educational facilities in nodes to maximize the economic spinoff, and use public art and signage to connect nodes. Partner with area institutions (UMD is a good place to start) to add to the arts mix.

➢ *Housing* – Add more market-rate housing and get the word out about the fun and sophisticated living options in and near the downtown. Duluth's economic and downtown development groups all need to help tell the story in addition to investing in making the Duluth Creative Corridor work even better as a regional economic engine. The city and its partners should set quantifiable goals, provide the incentives to achieve them, and document successes.

➢ *Institutional Partnerships* – Capitalize on the presence of the anchor institutions, including hospitals, colleges, and universities, that provide two of the essential amenities (access to good health care and education) and are always top drivers in the "best place to live" studies and reports. Four critical "to dos" are (1) create joint campus/neighborhood-friendly plans; (2) provide incentives for employees to live near where they work (a household money-saver); (3) encourage students to volunteer and live in the corridor; and (4) invest in improving the off-campus environment in partnership with the city, Duluth LISC, GDC, and others.

➢ *Marketing* – Strengthen and tell the Duluth story, but not just in the Midwest. Duluth is ready to compete with great urban places like Boulder and Asheville that are meccas for young creatives and outdoor enthusiasts. The identification and study of peer communities such as those and others can inform Duluth's efforts and provide valuable insights into how communities of similar size and resources capitalize on their unique assets and strengths to compete. With its spectacular shoreline, dramatic topography, the Canal Park area, connections to northern vacation destinations, and burgeoning downtown nightlife and arts scene, Duluth has the natural and urban livability assets to become a national destination.

➢ *Planning, Urban Design, and Connectivity* – Adapt existing codes and adopt new regulations and review procedures that support and actively facilitate the realization of the Duluth Creative Corridor (treating street design in a context-based manner, for example). Great cities are defined by great streets. Connect the Hillside campuses physically, visually, psychologically, and through branding efforts to the downtown and waterfront as one seamless, walkable urban living area and invest in making Superior Street a cultural hot spot and a great street of urban stature.

"Duluth is sometimes called the 'San Francisco of the Midwest' because of its dramatic topography, proximity to Lake Superior, and abundance of historic architecture in its downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. This, combined with its location in the northern alpine wilderness, gives it a distinctive character among small U.S. cities. The charrette team was inspired by Duluth's stunning geographic setting juxtaposed with the traditional urban fabric imposed on the landscape."

The 2005 Duluth Knight Program in Community Building Charrette Report

Core Elements of the Duluth Creative Corridor

- Arts and Economic Development
- Housing
- Institutional Partnerships
- Marketing
- Planning, Urban Design, and Connectivity (the design details of the Duluth Creative Corridor)
- Leadership

➢ *Leadership* – Get institutional leaders more actively involved and invested in realizing the corridor vision. Establish a regular, ongoing coordinating group to keep the vision alive, assign actions with clear and trackable outcomes, monitor and document progress (the numbers are important), stimulate excitement and innovative thinking, and tell the Duluth story. The coordinating group must include community leaders from government, business, industry, non-profits, and academia that can take decisive actions that move implementation forward: marshaling resources, forging partnerships, removing obstacles, and empowering staff to effect change.

In short, use the Duluth Creative Corridor to reposition Duluth as one of the country's great urban places. The remarkable progress over the last six years and the continued support for a bold, shared vision are proof that the city has the public and private leadership and the fortitude to keep a singular focus on doing just that.

Appendix A: 2005 Charrette Mid-Course Successes

(Provided by Duluth LISC for the Progress Advisory Panel's Mid-Course Review)

The following lists key planning and community building progress since the 2005 Charrette.

Development

- Sheraton Hotel & Condos - new construction with NMTC and mixed use
- Purchase of Red Lion Bar and conversion to Zeitgeist Arts Center
- Blackwater Lounge redevelopment at Greysolon Plaza
- Purchase of Carlson Book Building for future reinvestment with an arts focus
- Purchase of NorShor Theater by the Duluth Economic Development Authority for historic redevelopment into a community theater (study and business planning underway in partnership with the Duluth Playhouse)
- Old City Hall restoration to Tycoons Restaurant
- Coney Island Building redevelopment retaining historic character
- Weiland Block redevelopment with NMTC retail, offices, and condos
- YMCA renovation
- Radisson reinvestment
- Comfort Suites expansion in Canal Park
- Canal Park Lodge development (tear down and rebuild)
- Bayfront District planning process with city and private development for mixed use with marina component
- San Marco Apartments development (new construction of 70 supportive housing units in place of a vacant, blighted block which was a major crime issue)
- Skywalk expansion from Lake Avenue to Tech Center, across Superior Street from the Weiland Block to the Tech Village and from Greysolon to Medical District Ramp serving the downtown, hotel, and medical district. This also links the downtown and Hillside.
- St Luke's expansion with new construction on East 2nd St.
- Essentia expansion with new LEED approved medical complex on East 1st St.
- YWCA historic preservation and conversion to the Gimaajii permanent supportive housing and American Indian Center facility scheduled to open in 2012
- Redevelopment of the Fire House #1 Property and the 100 block of East 4th St. adjacent to the 4th St. market and Hemlock garage into 40 units of workforce, high quality rental housing. Construction will begin in Nov. 2011.
- Planned redevelopment of the 100 Block of West 4th St. on the upper side into the Hillside Apartments, a 44 unit apartment building, with extensive support services and a family emergency shelter (6 units) to be developed by NCLT, Center City Housing, and CHUM. Scheduled for 2013 opening.

- Investment in historic properties on West 4th St. (Damiano Center, Sacred Heart Music Center, and Center for American Indian Resources)
- Continued study, upgrading, new partnerships, and fund development for restoration of the historic Armory facility. $1 million anonymous donor and redevelopment and marketing partners secured
- Multi-million dollar investment in the expansion of the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center with the new Amsoil Arena

Key Planning and Community Building Progress

- Approval of the City of Duluth Comprehensive Plan (in June 2006)
- Approval of a new zoning code, the Unified Development Code, which includes form-based districts; it was approved in 2010.
- Approval of a Complete Streets Policy and establishment of a Complete Streets Task Force (2010)
- Approval of a new Park and Recreation Master Plan
- Creation of At Home in Duluth Neighborhood Revitalization/Quality of Life Plans in the Central and East Hillside neighborhoods, with extensive investment in housing rehabilitation and home ownership initiatives achieved. The plans are being revisited and merged into one Hillside Neighborhood Plan.
- Extensive planning work on development of a new multi-modal center, cross-city trail, connectivity in the downtown, and plans for passenger rail from the Twin Cities area
- Completion of an Arts-based Revitalization Plan for the Hillside neighborhoods with investment in artist-designed banners, benches, and trash receptacles and development of an Arts Corridor Planning Committee in the Hillside. Also opening of a Music Resource Center for youth at Sacred Heart

Public Safety

- Extended hours and patrolling of the skywalk system by the Clean and Safe Team
- Segway patrolling of streets and parking structures by the Clean and Safe Team
- Community volunteer efforts to clean Lake Place Park and trim overgrowth
- City-wide surveys show an increase in the percentage of people feeling safe in the downtown during the day
- Successful Blight Team to deal with problem property issues and Blighted and Nuisance Properties Collaborative established to coordinate dealing with vacant and blighted properties citywide with focus on the LISC At Home neighborhoods
- Creation of a number of new city ordinances, including Crime Free Multi-Housing, Social Host, Vacant Properties registration, and development of a nationally recognized MetLife Police Community partnership, the Duluth Community Safety Initiative

Landscape/Walkable Design/Streets

- GDC has funded additional trees and landscaping that were planted downtown
- Clean and Safe Team clears snow from crosswalks and handicapped accessible areas and has strong public support with renewal of the Special Service (aka BID) District

- City Council pursues the conversion of one-way avenues. A new study is soon to get underway. To date, two avenues in the East Hillside neighborhood – 12th And 14th Avenues East – have been converted to two ways.

Historic Preservation

- State Historic Tax Credit is approved and used to date for the Gimaajii and the upcoming Old Fire House development
- Historic credits have been used on the restoration of the Greysolon Plaza, Bridgeman Russell Building, and Alicia's Place Apartments
- Creation of Downtown Historic District

Parking

- City and GDC partner on study of Parking Management in Downtown
- Revised Parking Commission to be recommended to Council

Retail

- Go Downtown Grow Downtown, the Great Space Giveaway produces three new downtown retail businesses
- Growing Neighborhood Businesses program developed by the Entrepreneur Fund as a part of the City/ Duluth LISC Duluth At Work initiative to support small businesses

Events

- Eat Downtown -- Duluth Restaurant Week
- Weekly Farmers Market downtown
- Movies in the Park
- LakeWalk Festival in early September
- Bayfront Festival Park offers events throughout the summer into fall
- HillFest event in September that celebrates the Arts
- Homegrown Music Festival held in early May with live music at venues throughout downtown and other neighborhoods
- Juneteenth Event at the Central Hillside Community Center
- LISC/At Home in Duluth Connecting the Dots Event -- Nov. 5th will be the Fifth Annual showcase of progress in implementation of neighborhood plans and celebration of neighborhood heroes (This covers five Duluth core neighborhoods)

Appendix B: Progress Advisory Panel Biographical Profiles

Ken Stapleton

Team Leader
Progress Advisory Panel

Ken Stapleton & Associates

President

With over 27 years of urban revitalization and economic development experience, Ken provides program strategy and project management services related to university-community partnerships, innovative urban safety programs, and urban redevelopment to a variety of public and private clients including Mercer University, the Ohio Board of Regents, and Florida International University.

Previously, Ken served as Senior Economic Development Advisor and Executive Director of the award-winning University Park Alliance for The University of Akron; Senior Vice President of Planning, Safety and Design for the Downtown Cleveland Partnership; and as a redevelopment expert in several South Florida communities. Ken holds a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Illinois. He is a Knight Community Building Fellow and part of the class that led the Duluth Charrette in 2005.

Rick Hall

Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

President

Rick Hall is a practicing, registered transportation engineer and for 14 years, President of Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc. He is registered in 13 states and is committed to understanding the established neighborhood vision and context before transportation design is undertaken. Since becoming a consultant in 1980, Mr. Hall has worked on a variety of projects including Urban Transportation Plans, Developments of Regional Impact, hurricane evacuation planning, level of service analysis, scenic highway planning and Transportation / Land Use interrelationships. Mr. Hall assisted in the planning of Seaside and has participated in over 75 TND charrettes with Dover Kohl & Partners, DPZ and other leading firms performing New Urbanism designs. He is a Knight Community Building Fellow and a member of the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) and was part of a team that authored a joint ITE-CNU Street Design Manual. He has served as a visiting professor at Florida State University's Department of Urban and Regional Planning has also served as President of the Florida Section, Institute of Transportation Engineers.

Peter Musty

Peter Musty LLC

Chief Manager

Peter Musty is an expert in the planning, design and visualization of downtown, suburban infill and new urban projects.

Based in Minneapolis, he has extensive public sector consulting experience working on design and planning project teams with and for municipalities. Peter has led several design and project teams; recent project leadership includes the Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan (Minneapolis), 2010-2011. Other current municipal work is in St Paul (Ford Site), Nisswa MN and Hastings MN. Private sector experience includes work for developers on master plans and project design for building, block and neighborhood scale projects. Peter's plan for Mixson, an infill neighborhood under construction in North Charleston, SC, was awarded a 2008 Charter Award for Neighborhood Design from the Congress for the New Urbanism.

Other past experience includes urban infill & building project designs, historic reuse studies, LEED for Neighborhood Development, planning/ urban design charrette teams, and work on form based district design & development guidelines. Peter has a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture and was a 2001 Knight Fellow at the University of Miami School of Architecture. PETER MUSTY LLC bases collaborative projects from a studio in St Paul.

Mary Newsom

UNC Charlotte Urban Institute

Associate Director

Ms. Newsom is a lifelong newspaper journalist who, as an editorial board member and columnist at The Charlotte Observer, concentrated her writing on Charlotte regional urban and suburban growth, planning, urban design, transportation and land preservation. She joined the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute in June 2011, where she works on strategic community and university partnerships and oversees the institute's online communications. She had a year-long Nieman Fellowship at Harvard University and was a Knight Fellow in Community Building at the University of Miami. Ms. Newsom has considerable expertise in the areas of urban and suburban issues, Charlotte region and North Carolina politics and government, writing, editing and journalism.

Jean Scott

Strategies for Livable Communities

Managing Partner

Jean Scott, the owner of Strategies for Livable Communities and Managing Partner of SLC/LLC, specializes in communications, outreach, and consensus building in public planning processes. She has 40 years of experience in managing complex planning and public outreach processes, building collaborative partnerships among diverse interests, and synthesizing complex planning issues into language that is easy to digest and understand and provides a foundation for action. Scott brings to a project the unique perspective of someone who has worked at the local, state, and federal levels of government in the areas of planning, housing, and community and economic development, and directed a civic- and business-led organization that convened, and worked to implement, a seven-county regional visioning initiative in the Bluegrass region of Kentucky. Her work on outreach and communication has been featured in presentations to groups such as the American Planning Association, the Florida Chamber of Commerce Short Course on Growth Management and Environmental Permitting, and the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association (Florida APA). Her articles on best practices in Florida visioning, the use of peer review panels in planning and visioning processes, and features of successful charrettes were published in Florida Planning, the newsletter of Florida APA.

Stuart Sirota

TND Planning Group

Founding Principal

Stuart Sirota is the founding principal of TND Planning Group, a consulting firm dedicated to the integration of sustainable transportation, land use, and civic engagement. Stuart leads and participates in projects in the Mid-Atlantic and throughout the U.S., helping communities become more pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-friendly. He assists governments and community-based organizations seeking to enhance livability through transformative change. Some of the areas in which he specializes include designing "complete streets", walkable community and corridor master plans, transit oriented development planning, and safe routes to school programs. Before starting his firm, Stuart was a professional associate with Parsons Brinckerhoff, where he led the land use-transportation integration group in Baltimore. Prior to that, he was a senior planner with the Maryland Transit Administration, where he advanced initiatives to connect public transit as a tool for community revitalization. Stuart is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, and was a 2003 Knight Fellow in Community Building at the University Of Miami School Of Architecture. He was recently featured in the new book, "Becoming an Urban Planner" (American Planning Association and Wiley Press, 2010), which profiles the innovative work of leading American planners.

Appendix C: Progress Advisory Panel Schedule

Sunday, October 2

Noon-12:45 p.m.	Quick Start Orientation Lunch (Duluth Progress Review Resource Group & panel)
12:45- 4:30 p.m	Tours --Walking tour of East Downtown --Van tour of West Downtown, Bayfront, Hillside, Armory/Plaza/St. Luke's
5- 6 p.m.	Meeting with UMD (Bill Payne, Interim Dean, School of Fine Arts, and Professor, Directing and Acting, Department of Theater; Sue Banovetz, Director of External Affairs and Elaine Hansen, Director Center for Economic Development)
7 p.m.	Dinner with Mayor, Kristi Stokes, and Pam Kramer (Midi Restaurant)

Monday, October 3

(Except as noted, Sector Meetings at Minnesota Power)

8:15- 9 a.m.	Informal welcome w/ Charrette planning group at MN Power (refreshments)
9- 10:30 a.m.	Sector Meeting 1 (Housing)
11- 11:45 a.m.	Meeting with News Tribune at the News Tribune
Noon- 1:00 p.m.	Sector Meeting 2 (Arts and Economic Development) at Zeitgeist
1:15- 2:45 p.m.	Sector Meeting 2 (Connectivity)
3:00- 4:30 p.m.	Sector Meeting 4 (Coordinated Marketing and Branding)
4:30- 5:30 p.m.	Public meeting preparation and Panel planning time
5:30- 7:30 p.m.	Public celebration at the Greysolon Plaza
7:30 p.m.	Panel informal working dinner

Tuesday, October 4

(Except as noted, Panel meetings at Zeitgeist)

8:30- 9 a.m.	Duluth Progress Review Resource Group debrief with Panel
9 a.m.- Noon	Working Session for Panel
Noon- 1:00 p.m.	Working lunch with Duluth Progress Review Resource Group
1- 2:00 p.m.	Press Event (Atrium)
2:00- 3:00 p.m.	Final session with Duluth Progress Review Resource Group
3:00- 4:00 p.m.	Working Session for Panel
4:00 p.m.	Meeting at St. Luke's Hospital (Ron Franzen, Vice President Support Services; John Simpson, Facilities Manager; and Rebecca Lewis, Architect DSGW)

*The Duluth Progress Review Resource Group is a subset of The Duluth Charrette Update Committee. Its members include Pam Kramer, Kristi Stokes, Cindy Petkac, Drew Digby, Tony Cuneo, Pakou Ly, Jessica Smith, and Bill Bennett.

Appendix D: Duluth Participants in the Progress Advisory Panel Meeting

Sector Meetings

Connectivity

Bryan Anderson, State of Minnesota
Jody Anderson, DSGW
Bill Bennett, LHB Corp.
David Bjerkness, LHB Corp.
Drew Digby, State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Chuck Froseth, City of Duluth Community Development Office
Judy Gibbs, City of Duluth Parks and Recreation
James Gittemeier, Arrowhead Regional Development Center
Keith Hamre, City of Duluth Community Development Office
Jim Heilig, Duluth Transit Authority
Sandy Hoff, F.I. Salter
Frank Holappa, Holappa Co.
Heidi Jaros, Community Action Duluth
Suzanne Kelley, City of Duluth Community Development Office
Pam Kramer, Duluth LISC
Steve LaFlamme, Oneida Realty
Tom Livingston, ProVideo Productions
Pakou Ly, City of Duluth
Andy McDonald, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission
Mark McShane, City of Duluth Business Development
Cari Pederson, City of Duluth Engineering
Cindy Petkac, City of Duluth Planning
Kristi Schmidt, Essentia Health East Region
Christine Seitz, Duluth Playhouse
Jim Sharrow, Duluth Port Authority
Jim Skoog, St. Louis County Health Department
Kristi Stokes, Greater Downtown Council
Cindy Voigt, City of Duluth Engineering

Housing/Mixed-Use

Jody Anderson, DSGW
Rick Ball, Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Duluth

Cathy Bergh, Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota
Mona Cheslak, East Hillside resident
Pat Connolly, Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota
Jeff Corey, Northern Communities Land Trust
Kim Crawford, Life House
Tony Cuneo, Zeppa Foundation
Keith Hamre, City of Duluth Community Development Office
Jodi Harpstead, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota
Frank Jewell, St. Louis County
Suzanne Kelley, City of Duluth Community Development
Pam Kramer, Duluth LISC
Erich Lutz, Life House Youth Center
Angie Miller, Community Action Duluth
Karen Olesen, City of Duluth Community Development Office
Steve O'Neil, St. Louis County
David Peterson, Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Duluth
Cindy Petkac, City of Duluth Planning
Mark Poirier, LHB/Armory Arts and Music Center
Sandy Robinson, East Hillside resident
Vicki Sanville, Citizen Federation
Elizabeth Simonson, Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota
Jessica Smith, City of Duluth Mayors Office
John Vigen, Ramsland Vigen
Andy Weyrauch, ShipRock Management Company
Doug Zaun, Wagner Zaun Architects

Branding and Marketing

Nikki Anderson, Inn on Lake Superior
Sam Black, Arrowhead Regional Arts Council
Patrice Bradley, Swim Creative
Tony Cuneo, A.H. Zeppa Foundation
Gina Esterbrooks, Downtown Computer
Elissa Hansen, APEX
Brian Hanson, Duluth Economic Development Authority
Monica Hendrickson, Maurices
Jody Jersett, Nelson Jersett
Linda Kratt, Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce
Pakou Ly, City of Duluth
Mike Malone, Swim Creative

Darlene Marshall, GDC

Terry Mattson, Visit Duluth

Mark McShane, City of Duluth

Roz Randorf, Duluth News Tribune

Dave Sadowski, Swim Creative

Kristi Schmidt, Essentia Health

Gene Shaw, Visit Duluth

Tami Tanski Sherman, Fitger's Brewery Complex

Jessica Smith, City of Duluth

Jessica Stauber, Westmoreland Flint

Kristi Stokes, GDC

Roger Wedin, Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce

Lee Zeigler, Swim Creative

Discussion Group Meetings

Arts and Economic Development

Sam Black, Arrowhead Regional Arts Council and local artist

Tony Cuneo, A.H. Zeppa Foundation

Bob DeArmond, Arrowhead Regional Arts Council

Drew Digby, State of Minnesota Duluth Employment and Economic Development

Brian Hanson, Duluth Economic Development Authority, City of Duluth Business and Community Development

Pat Heffernan, Wheeler and Associates and Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce Board

John Heino, Duluth Economic Development Authority, KCCI ArtWorks

Pam Kramer, Duluth LISC

Ed Newman, Artist

Nancy Norr, Minnesota Power/Allete

Bill Payne, UMD School of Fine Arts

Christine Seitz, Duluth Playhouse

Appendix E: Suggested Speaker List

- Jack Boyle – former Finance Vice President for Cleveland State University responsible for over $200 million in partnership projects on or near campus
- Tony Brown – former CEO of the UpTown Partnership in Cincinnati and a New Markets Tax Credit expert; currently Executive Director of the Riviera Beach, Florida, Community Redevelopment Agency
- Kathy Coakley – former Executive Director of Cleveland's Warehouse District and Cleveland Public Art; currently a consultant with Dennis Barrie regarding arts initiatives
- Carol Coletta – former CEO of CEOs for Cities; current President of ArtPlace, and a Knight Fellow
- Bill Conwsidine – CEO of Akron Children's Hospital, Chairman of the Board of the Austen BioInnovation Institute, and Knight Foundation Board member
- Robert Gibbs – expert on storefront retail and what Main Street can learn from the mall
- Roberta Brandes Gratz – a Jane Jacobs-inspired author (and a longtime friend of Jacobs) and specialist in "urban husbandry" which means valuing the little things and using them as the basis for urban regeneration instead of waiting for gigantic catalyst projects that can unintentionally screw things up
- Rick Hall – a walkability expert and member of the Duluth team (if it isn't a conflict for him to be recommending a speaker series that then hires him). The community could use as much education as it can get on walkability. Dan Burden is also good.
- Ben Hecht – CEO of Living Cities
- Alberto Ibarguen – CEO of the Knight Foundation
- Chris Leinberger – Urban Land Institute housing and urban development and market expert
- Ari Maron – with MRN Development of Cleveland, involved in several mixed use and arts district projects
- Marty Mehall – with Richland Properties and building mixed-use student housing in downtown Akron
- Joe Riley – longtime Charleston, South Carolina, (also a waterfront city) Mayor and a great speaker about the value of connections, both physical and metaphysical
- Dennis Scholl – Arts Program Officer for the Knight Foundation
- Mitchell Silver – Raleigh Planning Director, national president of the American Planning Association, and an excellent and engaging speaker, with a lot of interesting data at his command about housing trends, the importance of an honest-to-goodness comprehensive plan, etc.
- Lori Volk – urban housing market analyst and a Knight Fellow