

# Public Engagement Plan for the

DULUTH-SUPERIOR

# METROPOLITAN PEDESTRIAN PLAN

April – November 2020

## 1. Introduction and Purpose

The *Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Pedestrian Plan* will create a framework for action to ensure that walking is a safe, convenient and desirable transportation option for people of all ages and abilities throughout the Twin Ports. The *Public Engagement Plan* will serve as a guide for its development.

Community engagement will be a core aspect in (a) identifying issues and barriers that exist for walking as transportation and (b) developing a range of policy recommendations and investment strategies to improve the pedestrian environment.

*NOTE: As input is gained into this Plan from the Advisory Committee (PPAC) and stakeholders, and as the COVID19 guidelines for social distancing evolve over the coming months, other strategies may be added to address a given community, neighborhood and/or cultural group.*

## 2. Public Engagement Plan Goals

The Public Engagement Plan will identify audiences, outreach activities and tools to:

- A. Build awareness of the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Pedestrian Plan and its goal of supporting walking as a transportation option
- B. Gain active participation and input from a variety of stakeholders and community members, with special focus on those traditionally underserved
- C. Provide transparency during the planning process
- D. Create a positive acceptance of the plan as being based on a credible and inclusive process

## 3. Pedestrian Plan Advisory Committee (PPAC)

The Advisory Committee for this plan will be formed at the beginning of the project and will represent a broad array of community interests (see committee list, next page).

Members of the PPAC will meet six times throughout the project to serve as the voice of key stakeholders and to provide input and direction on project priorities. The PPAC will approve the final plan before it is sent on to the MIC policy board for adoption.

## Pedestrian Plan Advisory Committee Members

| Name              | Representing                        |  | Name                       | Representing                     |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Carol Andrews     | St. Louis Co. Engineering           |  | Ben Margeson               | CHUM Center                      |
| Gary Anderson     | Duluth City Council                 |  | Shawna Mullen              | Essentia Health - Transportation |
| Eleanor Bacso     | City of Duluth Economic Development |  | Nancy Nelson               | Resident - Duluth                |
| Chris Belden      | DTA - Planning                      |  | Theresa O'Halloran-Johnson | Resident - Duluth                |
| Brian Bluhm       | St. Louis Co Public Health          |  | Dena Ryan                  | WisDOT                           |
| Amy Demmer        | Zeitgeist Community Dev             |  | Doug Stevens               | Resident - Duluth                |
| Judy Gibbs        | Resident - Duluth                   |  | Tom Szukis                 | DTA - Board                      |
| Susie Green       | Community Action Duluth             |  | Rachel Thapa               | Duluth Public Schools            |
| Russell Habermann | ARDC, SRTS Planner                  |  | Alice Tibbetts             | We Walk in Duluth                |
| Holly Kostrzewski | MN Toward Zero Deaths               |  | Maren Webb                 | MnDOT                            |
| Kris Liljeblad    | City of Duluth Planning             |  |                            |                                  |

## 4. Audiences

The following have been identified as key audiences for this plan. *An early task for the Advisory Committee will be to assist in identifying who's missing and providing contacts and serving as liaisons to those individuals or groups.*

### A. General Project Stakeholders

1. MIC-area residents, businesses and visitors

### B. Targeted Stakeholders

1. Elected officials from the Cities of Duluth and Superior; and St. Louis County and Douglas County
2. Duluth and Superior business communities
3. Transit users
4. Senior citizens and advocacy organizations

5. K-12 and College students
6. People with disabilities and advocacy organizations
7. Pedestrian and active transportation advocacy organizations
8. Health promotion organizations
9. Realtors
10. Public arts organizations
11. Low-income (people and/or advocacy organizations)
12. Minority population (people and/or advocacy organizations)

## 5. Outreach Techniques

The following outreach techniques will be utilized throughout the project. MIC Staff members will meet weekly to evaluate and plan implementation of stakeholder outreach. The techniques and schedule of engagement will be evaluated and modified as needed throughout the project to meet stakeholder needs. A draft schedule/timeline is included in Section 7.

### A. In-Person Engagement

#### 1. Pedestrian Plan Advisory Committee meetings

As described in #3, above, PPAC members will be the primary source of input and feedback throughout the plan's development and will meet 6 times.

#### 2. One-on-One Conversations

MIC staff will extend invitations to meet in person, or online, with individuals (or organizations representing them) who are not part of the usual decision-making processes, to listen and learn about pedestrian-related issues facing them.

Targeted stakeholders may include elderly/aging (groups or individuals); mobility-impaired (groups or individuals); low-income (groups or individuals); minority population (groups or individuals); and transit users.

NOTE: Project staff met with the following organizations:

- CHUM – Outreach Coordinator
- Community Action Duluth – Transportation Advocate
- AICHO – American Indian Community Housing Organization

#### 3. Community/Stakeholder Hosted meetings

Throughout the project, MIC staff will offer to attend meetings hosted by stakeholder groups to give presentations and take comments. These may include:

- a. Metropolitan Interstate Council (MIC) Policy Board  
(6 presentations w/discussion)
- b. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)  
(6 presentations w/discussion)

- c. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)  
(4 presentations w/discussion)
- d. Duluth Transit Authority Board (1 presentation w/discussion)

#### **4. Public Meetings**

At least two public meetings will be held to provide information to the general public. The meetings will provide project information and solicit feedback from community members. The location and timing of the public meetings will be determined by the availability of public spaces and the need for continued social distancing

The option of online meetings via Microsoft Teams will also be considered as an option.

NOTE:

Two virtual public open houses were held in October during Fall Bus, Bike Walk Month event to discuss the Plan. One session focused on Pedestrian Safety and the other session focused on Pedestrian Accessibility.

Two additional virtual public open houses were held during Winter Active Transportation Week event to discuss the draft Plan.

#### **5. Public Survey**

The location and scheduling of pop-up events will be determined over the coming months depending on the availability of public spaces and the need for continued social distancing

NOTE: Total Responses = 627 responses

Responses were received proportionally from all geographies of the Duluth-Superior area.

#### **6. Pop-Up Displays at Public Events**

The location and scheduling of pop-up events will be determined over the coming months depending on the availability of public spaces and the need for continued social distancing

Pop-up events will be targeted to specific stakeholders or geographic areas in order to create welcoming opportunities for participation. In the past, pedestrian-focused events have included Downtown Duluth Sidewalk Days, Safe Routes to School events, Duluth Transit Center events.

NOTE: From July 17 thru August 10 a public input survey was open primarily online. MIC staff attended 3 community events and handed out paper survey. These events were located in neighborhoods with higher numbers of priority population.

- Damiano Meal Center
- Hillside Farmers Market
- Harrison Farmers Market

### **B. Written Engagement Tools**

#### **1. Plan Web Page [www.dsmic.org/pedplan2020](http://www.dsmic.org/pedplan2020)**

A project-specific page will be hosted on the MIC website to present project information and updates, including project background and goals; project updates and meeting notices; steering committee members and meeting materials; link to online survey; staff contact information; sign-up for project updates and ability to submit comments and questions.

## **2. Information Sheets**

One-page handouts will be created as needed to disseminate project information. The flyers will be topic-specific and utilize a consistent flyer template.

## **3. Displays**

Displays will be developed for public outreach activities (as described in section 4) and will include concise information from the fact sheets as well as a 'call to action' to take the Project survey.

## **4. Press Releases**

At key points during the project, press releases will be used to provide project updates to the general public.

## **5. Email**

An email distribution list will be developed to maintain contacts who wish to be updated on project progress. Email will be used to share project updates, surveys and meeting announcements.

## **6. Social Media**

Social media will be utilized to share project updates, surveys and meeting announcements. The MIC's Facebook page and Twitter accounts will be utilized, and information can also be shared on other local organization's pages if they choose.

## **7. Executive Summary**

An executive summary document will be created to serve as a concise way to understand the Pedestrian Plan recommendations. It will include maps and graphics in an easy-to-read format and will be available in printed and PDF formats.

# **6. Documentation**

Documentation of stakeholder outreach efforts throughout the project will be critical to demonstrate community input into the final Plan. The documentation will provide a history and record of the process and comments received.

## **A. Meeting Documentation**

All meetings will include succinct meeting summaries that document the points of discussion and action items. Meeting summaries will be distributed to all meeting attendees for review, comment and concurrence, and will be posted on

the Plan web page.

**B. Feedback/Comment Documentation (What We've Heard)**

MIC staff will document stakeholder feedback and the manner in which the comment or question was responded to or incorporated into the final Plan.

## 7. Project Messaging

Project information will be created using plain language with minimal use of acronyms or jargon. Easy to understand definitions and explanations will be included for technical terms. The communication tone will be direct, honest, collaborative and welcoming.

## 8. Public Engagement Timeline

### April

- PPAC Meeting

### May

- PPAC Meeting

### June

- PPAC Meeting

### July

- PPAC Meeting
- Post public survey online
- Pop-up displays at public events – to promote public survey

### August

- PPAC Meeting
- Post public survey online
- Pop-up displays at public events – to promote public survey

### September

- PPAC Meeting

### October:

- Draft Document for review at Public Open House
- Draft Document Available to PPAC, TAC and MIC

### November:

- PPAC Approval of final document

### December:

- MIC Policy Board adoption of final document
- Distribution of final document to MIC-area jurisdictions

### January-March, 2021:

- Presentations about the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Pedestrian Plan to MIC-area jurisdictions