

5/14/24 City of Superior Business and Tourism (Targeted Stakeholder Consultation)

Description: MIC staff met with the director of the Superior-Douglas County Area Chamber of Commerce & Travel Superior to discuss future transportation issues, needs and opportunities from the perspective of the business and tourism interests in the City of Superior and Douglas County.

What We Heard – Comments:

Q: What do you believe are transportation issues for business and commerce in Superior (and the Duluth-Superior area) – both now and in the future (through 2050)?

- Make it easy to transport goods and services.
- Incorporating more multimodal options into our transportation system has been good.
- Need to improve mass public transportation.
- Funding is an issue.
- We have a lot of infrastructure per capita thus it's difficult to keep all of it well-maintained.
- Need to increase public/private transportation partnerships.
- Accessibility issues. All people need access to reliable transportation. We must accommodate all needs as much as possible. Accessibility is a significant need for the workforce, and workforce is currently the number one issue/problem/concern for businesses.
- Blatnik Bridge reconstruction concerns.
 - Doubts that most trucks will use the posted truck route down Winter Street due to poor railroad crossings and many stop signs.
 - Where will 1200-1400 workers on the Blatnik live and how will they move around (i.e., adding people and vehicles to the congestion)?
 - Concerned about the response times for emergency response.
 - Concerned businesses will be hurt due to extra travel time, access issues, and Duluthians not coming to Superior.
- All this said, believes the end result should be a benefit, especially in terms of allowing normal truck payloads to cross the bridge.
- EV chargers are needed in the area, especially for tourists.
- Vehicle parking is a need in some areas. In combination with an inadequate public transportation option in Superior, people are not willing to park further than 2-3 blocks away from a destination, and thus businesses are hurt. Inadequate parking is part of the reason the commercial space associated with the Central Flats project did not fill up.

Q: Which of the transportation issues mentioned in “1” do you believe are priority issues?

- Blatnik Bridge reconstruction concerns
- Accessibility issues
- Public transportation being inadequate in Superior – in general, but also specifically in regard to hindering the workforce

Q: What do you believe are potential solutions to the transportation issues mentioned in “1”?

- Sidewalks are valuable infrastructure.
- The Chamber supports the NLX.
- Despite the concerns noted above during Blatnik Bridge removal and reconstruction, the project is funded and the end result of the new bridge will be positive and a significant improvement.
- Expand STRIDE use in Superior.

- Seek and include new, innovative private-public partnerships (such as the current funding to SK Taxi to help fill gaps in STRIDE service).
- Help local businesses by improving and expanding transportation options and access. And ask for their input.
- Keep local transportation dollars as local as possible. This includes hiring local workers to plan, design, build, and maintain local transportation projects.
- Ensure trail systems exist for all types of users (motorized and silent sport). Include options for those with disabilities.
- Include better signage for trails, including using QR codes with valuable information related to using a specific trail.
- Keep our transportation system and trails as simple (to use, understand, and maintain) as possible.