

Meeting Summary Transportation Focus Group #1 Tuesday, October 11, 2016, 4:00pm Room 303, Duluth City Hall

Guests Present: James Gittemeier, Kaitlin Werner, Chris Belden, Hadrian DeMaioribus, Carmel DeMaioribus, Rosemary E. Hampton, Shawna Mullen, Todd Campbell, Tom Werner, Terry Guggenbuehl, Heather Wright Wendel, Jim Foldesi, Duane Hill, Janet Kennedy, Jenny Van Sickle, Richard Haney, Mark Bauer, Danielle Goldfarb, Dena Young, Josh Gorham, Dan Belden, Gary Eckenberg, Susan Coen, Jennifer Gelo, Ian Vincent, Dennis Jensen, Aaron Kelly, Zandy Zwiebel, Alicia Cyr, Tony Cuneo, Cindy Voigt

1. Welcome and Introductions

City staff and participants introduced themselves.

2. Brief Overview – Timeline and Process

City staff reviewed the four phases of updating the 2006 comprehensive plan. Phase one was just completed and included data analysis and collecting the public's input. In June, a needs assessment survey was created to collect input from the public. In September, the survey closed and a total of 4,175 surveys were collected. Phase one also included creating social media pages, the creation of the Vision Committee, and attending over 65 community events throughout Duluth. Phase two began in September with a Kick-off Event that took place at Denfeld High School. Phase two will launch focus groups around four topics: economic development, housing, open space and transportation.

3. Review 2006 Implementation Strategies.

Staff shared a graphic showing the number of policies from the 2006 comprehensive plan that were implemented. Of the transportation policies, roughly 40% were implemented, with another 50% in progress. The summary of the policies includes:

- Prioritize use of existing infrastructure
- Coordinate with governmental partners on water, wastewater, transportation, energy, and infrastructure
- Develop multi-modal transportation options (including transit and light rail), increase pedestrian and bicycle safety

- Preserve neighborhood character
- Enhance views and legibility of Skyline Parkway
- Meet parking needs with shared parking, structured parking, and other solutions
- Protect freight corridors and intermodal facilities, maintain shipping channels and port facilities

Staff asked if these policies are still relevant. Comments from attendees include:

- To prioritize existing infrastructure, that leads to antiquated values because the city is built without current input and built to accommodate vehicles which favor the rich
- Multimodal options increase bike and pedestrian safety but also need policies (work with agencies to develop plans)
- Preserve the neighborhood character we know more now than we did, and things have changed such as quality of life/standards of living
- There needs to be a better connection to outside communities through stronger infrastructure
- More bike parking infrastructure example: Maurices needs bike parking, DTA has
 parking but it is not free to the public, no publicly secured bike parking
- Infrastructure would be hugely destructive/expensive if it catered explicitly for peak use times
- Comfort level and safety should be focus when accommodating for bikes
- Compare to communities of similar size for bike infrastructure (can also relate to other transportation/infrastructure)
- **4. Review research questions for the Imagine Duluth 2035 process.** Participants were asked whether any questions needed changing, or whether other questions should be asked. Ideas include:
 - ¼ miles to transit is too much for elderly or in winter conditions
 - Enhancing the visitors experience, increase wayfinding, and transportation options
 - Trail connections eliminate the "trail" definition and them "connections"
 - Connect sidewalks first
 - Congestion and circulation issues around the DECC during peak times
 - Distinction between bike, bike/ped, and vehicle infrastructure
 - Identify the uses of each street: some are useful for truck traffic while others are better utilizes as bike routes or places for kids to play on
 - Having transportation options that accommodate all users regardless of private vehicle ownership
 - Utilize our biggest resource; the lake!
 - Find out what works, then base the future plans on what works something that can save money while being maintained
 - Are some streets being underutilized? I.e. is a maintained street that worth keeping if it only serves one or two houses
 - DTA routes are restrictive for low-income
 - Does current zoning limit or restrict DTA routes

- Benefits to changing transportation options people having those options
- Are people in the habit of driving, how to make people feel less guilty to walk short distances
 - Equal priorities for all options
- Character of places we walk or bike
- Not everyone can walk or bike, parking is the only option
- Not about capacity, it's about value
- How will we be funding these ideas? And if we can't have the funding, what tradeoffs will people be willing to make?
- Private vehicles are the most expensive form of transit for the tax payers
- Tapping into all resources to help focus our goals for the future
- Form a transportation committee for city transportation projects
- MNDOT address ADA requirement, how does Duluth meet those req's?
- Urban Safety plans

5. Review preliminary data gathering / identify other potential resources

Results from the Imagine Duluth survey were shared. Questions 1, 3, 8, 9, and 10 had information related to transportation, as can be seen in the powerpoint and attached summary of Question 3.

In addition, staff shared a number of transportation plans and small area plans that are being reviewed for transportation recommendations.

6. Discuss other emerging issues

Some ideas from the survey results include:

- A tram/funicular up the hill
- Using beet juice to melt ice
- Closed streets events on Superior Street and Skyline Parkway
- A water taxi or "river bus"
- Reducing road widths to save pavement costs
- Implement a complete streets policy

Participants were asked what else should be considered when we think about emerging issues:

- What roles do emerging issues/technology play in our plans
- What are the health impacts for active transportation?
- Utilizing management, right fix at the right time
- How to best utilize the density for transit, parking is too easy/cheap so bus isn't used
- How to best change wayfinding to help out of towners
- How are we covering spaces that do not have transit?
- The bus should be easier if I knew where, when, and how I get places

7. Wrap-Up & Next Steps

The comments from this meeting were a first step in identifying what the focus group will be working on through the next two phases of updating the plan. All of the comments taken from this group will be analyzed before the next meeting. Next steps will be emailed to those who attended the first focus group in addition to be posted on www.imagineduluth.com

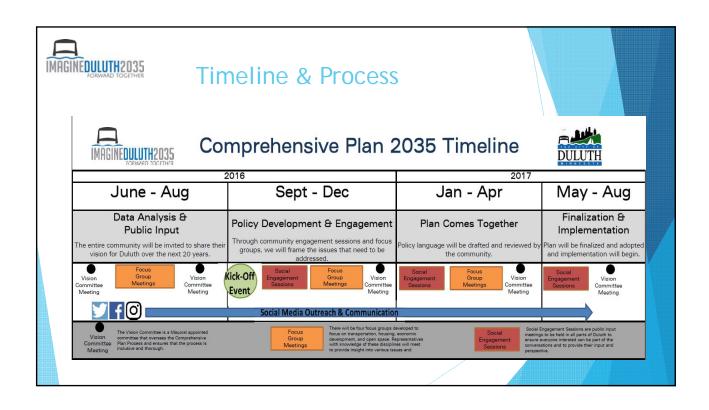
The second focus group will be in January 2017. Once a date is set it will be posted on www.imagineduluth.com and emailed to those that signed in at the meeting.

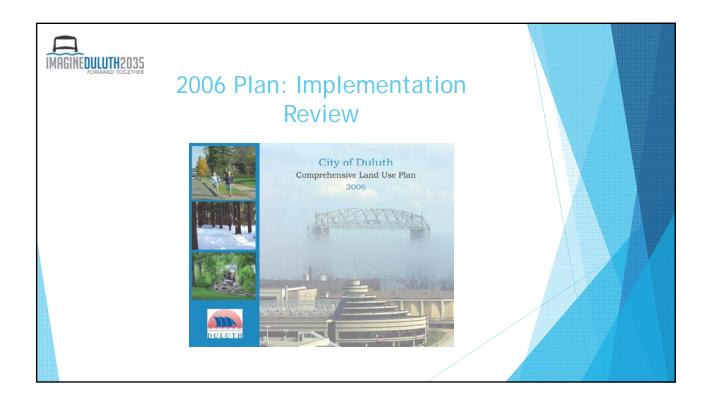


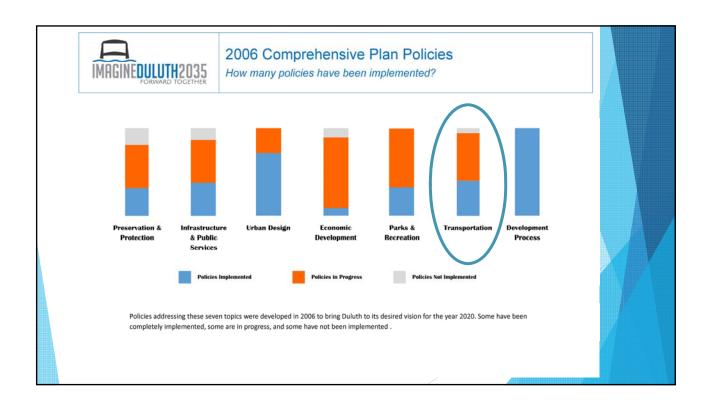


Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Brief Overview Timeline & Process
- ▶ Review 2006 implementation strategies
- Review research questions
- Review preliminary data gathering/identify other resources
- Discuss other emerging issues
- Wrap-up & Next Steps









2006: Transportation Policy Highlights

- Prioritize use of existing infrastructure
- Coordinate with governmental partners on water, wastewater, transportation, energy, and infrastructure
- Develop multi-modal transportation options (including transit and light rail), increase pedestrian and bicycle safety
- Preserve neighborhood character
- ▶ Enhance views and legibility of Skyline Parkway
- Meet parking needs with shared parking, structured parking, and other solutions.
- Protect freight corridors and intermodal facilities, maintain shipping channels and port facilities

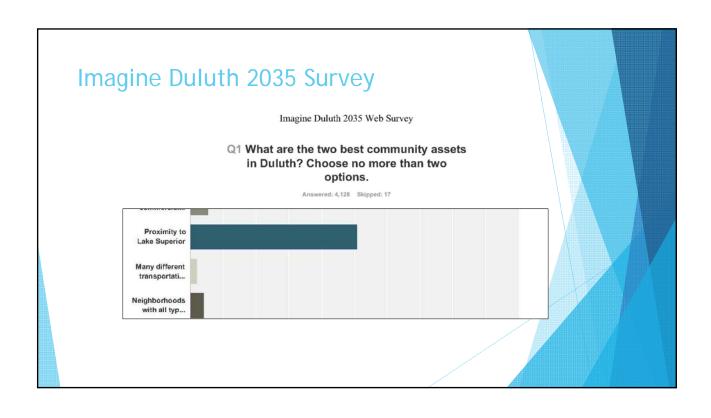
Are these still relevant?

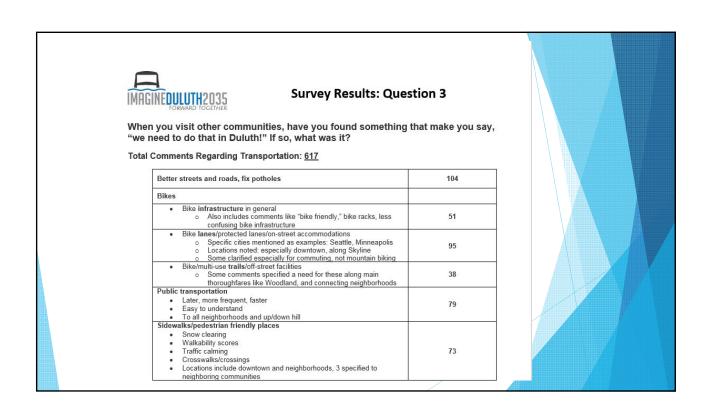


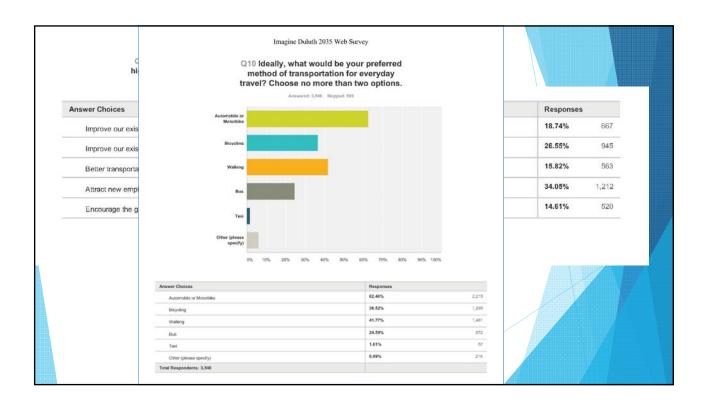
Research Questions

- Does the city's road and bicycle_infrastructure meet demand at peak times and how do we compare with other communities of a similar size?
- ▶ Do existing transportation modes equally serve all residential neighborhoods? Does infrastructure availability follow population density?
- What percentage of the population is within a quarter mile of the transit system?
- Is there sufficient area for growth of water borne industry and transportation logistics within current footprint of harbor/port area?
- Do we have trail connections for pedestrian and bike access to job centers, neighborhoods, and recreation areas?
- How could we improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the city?
- What new transportation opportunities and practices should we consider given our topography?
- Is the community fully utilizing the investment in the roadway network, meaning are the major connector streets and arterials carrying an acceptable level of traffic to warrant the investment?
- Do we fully utilize the capacity of the air and rail modes of commerce that serve the community?

Any additional questions we should be asking?









Other resources to consider?

Emerging issues & Big Ideas!

- Tram/funicular up the hill
- Beet juice to melt ice?
- Closed streets events: Superior Street and Skyline Parkway
- Water taxi/river bus
- Reduce road widths
- Complete Street Policy
- Others???

Infrastru	ucture and Public Service Policies	Comments:	Status:
I&PS 1	Prioritize areas for development, restoration, or adaptive	Clyde Iron Site, Atlas Cement Plant Sit, planning	Implemented
	reuse that increase utilization of Duluth's existing	clean up and reuse USX Morgan Park Site, new	and in
	infrastructure.	Maurices Building, extension of 57 th Ave. W.	progress
I&PS 2	The City will set standards for the staging of development on	Jay St. infill housing, Central High School MU-P	In progress
	undeveloped land.	zoning for reuse of the site	
I&PS 3	Public investment in streets and other infrastructure should	Endi Apartments, Kenwood Village, Lincoln Park	Implemented
	support private reinvestment in housing stock, neighborhood	School reuse, Bluestone site, Grand Ave Estates	
	commercial districts, and new mix use areas.		
I&PS 4	Priority should be given to development where utility services	Needs further study for locations to work on	Not
	can be provided at average or less than average cost.		implemented
	Developments where utility installation will be more costly		
	should be discouraged.		
I&PS 5	The City will promote clean air, both regionally and locally	LED street lights and ski trails, energy efficiency	Implemented
	through management of City facilities and programs.	projects in City buildings, installed PV solar,	
		member of MN Green Step City, energy plan for	
		City, low interest loans/grants for	
		residents/businesses can use energy efficiency	
		improvements	
I&PS 6	Implement the City's storm water management goals and	UDC includes all of these goals and policies, City	Implemented
	policies (adopted by the City Council, 2005)	upsized culverts/installed bridges as part of flood	and in
		recovery	progress
I&PS 7	The City will work with governmental units on watersheds that	Chester Creek watershed NOAA study completed,	Implemented
	pass through Duluth to protect and enhance natural	Duluth Chairs the Regional Storm Protection Team	
	resources.	that provides collaboration and communication	
		on watershed protection education	
I&PS 8	The City will work with County, regional, and State agencies to	City participates on MIC and transportation	In progress
	ensure efficient provision of water, wastewater,	committees, work with County, State, University	
	transportation, energy, and infrastructure.	on studies and programs (Institute on the	
		Environment at U of M), Smart Municipalities	
		Collaborative to encourage energy efficiency and	
		use of renewables through partnership with	
		German city, participated with St. Louis County	
		Sheriff's office on communications infrastructure	
		improvements	
Transpo	rtation Policies	Comments:	Status:

Infras	tructure and Public Service Policies	Comments:	Status:
T1	Coordinate road and regional non-road improvements with the	Coordination on-going	In progress
	Metropolitan Interstate Commission's Long-Range Plan.		
T2	Road and traffic planning investments should address cut-	Joshua Ave. studied but not implemented	In progress
	through traffic in residential neighborhoods. The City will also		
	conduct studies to determine where cut-through traffic degrades		
	the quality of life.		
Т3	The City will develop a pedestrian level-of-service standard.	Not done, consider doing in future	Not
			implemented
T4	Arterial roads should move traffic along the edges of	Small area plans affirmed and implemented this	Implemented
	neighborhoods rather than within neighborhoods.		
T5	Road construction and street improvement plans shall consider	Being implemented as streets are redeveloped	Implemented
	retaining existing trees and leave adequate space for tree		
	planting.		
T6	The City will limit or reduce one-way streets in the primary and	12 th and 14 th Ave E. converted to two way	In progress
	secondary downtown areas.	In the process of changing 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd Ave.	
	A. Participate with the MIC in modeling the effects of	W. to two way	
	eliminating one-way streets on vehicle, pedestrian, and	Part of 1 st St converted, needs more study.	
	bicycle movement.		
	B. Reviewing commercial parking and loading limitations to		
	converting one-ways to two-ways in the primary		
	downtown area.	a	
T7	Interstate 35 ends at 26 th Avenue E., channeling large volumes of	Stops signs installed at 2 nd St.	Implemented
	traffic into the residential neighborhood. The City will evaluate		
	options to reduce risk to the neighborhood and the function of		
T8	London Road. The City will evaluate traffic coloning strategies to increase. Council resolution on Complete Streets, Need a		In munauasa
18	The City will evaluate traffic calming strategies to increase pedestrian safety, Including:	Council resolution on Complete Streets. Need a policy that becomes the implementation	In progress
	A. Where requested by residents.	framework.	
	B. When need to address new development in an existing	namework.	
	neighborhood.		
	C. When considering street improvement guidelines.		
	D. When evaluating on-street parking standards.		
	E. When traffic calming will slow traffic and not divert		
	traffic to another street.		
	F. Where a lack of street trees contributes to excessive		
	speeds.		
	abaasa.		

Infrastr	ructure and Public Service Policies	Comments:	Status:
Т9	Create a trail network to promote non-motorized commuting. The city will work with non-profits to secure trail connection and construction. A. Develop trails and corridors connecting neighborhoods to parks and green space. B. Create trail right-of-ways and links to existing or planned trail systems in new subdivisions. C. Connect Duluth trails to trail systems in neighboring communities.	Cross-city trail and Lakewalk extensions created an east-west commuting option Downtown Lakewalk needs study to reduce conflicts	In progress
T10	Adopt procedures and enforce ordinances to keep sidewalks clear of obstructions, snow, and ice.	Adopted ordinance and implemented, Snow Angel program	Implemented
T11	Identify standards for improving bicycle safety and encouraging greater bicycle commuting.	MIC Bikeway Plan adopted by City Council	Implemented
T12	Skyline Parkway requires increased legibility through developed portions of the city, view protection, and a way finding system.	Completed and updated in 2015 Skyline Pkwy Corridor Management Plan, obtained grant for and implemented wayfinding signage and completed a historic resource study, targeted vegetation removal to enhance views, adopted Skyline Pkwy Overlay for view protection	In progress
T13	The city will create a schedule for improving pedestrian access in critical pedestrian areas.	MIC Sidewalk Plan and implementation of curb ramp deployment in many districts. Plan needs to be updated	In progress
T14	The City will emphasize Duluth's stream corridors as natural non-motorized access corridors.	Chester Park trails from bowl to 4 th St., St. Louis River Corridor Plan looks at creeks and trail connections through	In progress
T15	The City will meet parking needs through use of shared parking facilities and building that incorporate parking into the building footprint.		
T16	Within areas of higher density, the City will work with land owners and business to meet parking needs.	Duluth Transit Center	In progress
T17	The City will encourage the use of vacant lots, rear yard areas, institutional lots, and other solutions for off street-parking.	UDC allows parking within 500' of commercial uses	In progress
T18	The City will encourage incorporating parking into the building footprint for higher density development.	See T15	Implemented

Infrast	ructure and Public Service Policies	Comments:	Status:
T19	Incorporate pedestrian and public transit options in regional commercial areas when developing or redeveloping.	Central Entrance-Mall Small Area Plan incorporated this	In progress
T20	Assess the potential for transit service to future development.	Implemented new route to connect campuses to student oriented housing	In progress
T21	Evaluate parking policies and decisions for their impacts on the viability of public transit.	UDC has parking maximums to encourage alternatives to driving	Implemented
T22	Investigate the potential for light rail, streetcar or commuter rail in and around the City of Duluth.	DTA did pilot project along east side	Implemented
T23	Evaluate inter-community transit options, such as a rail connection with the Twin Cities metro area.	Environmental assessment done for federal funding, participating in project, seeking funding for final construction	In progress
T24	The City will continue to work with the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, Army Corps of Engineers, Coast Guard, and stakeholders to maintain Duluth's shipping channels and port facilities.	Port land use plan update underway and 21st Ave W. project to shallow bay and accommodate dredge materials	In progress
T25	The City will continue to protect freight corridors and intermodal facilities that link water-borne shipping with rail and truck shipping.	Industrial waterfront zone in UDC, Bayfront Plan identified boundary between tourism and industrial sites	Implemented
T26	The Duluth International Airport (DIA) is planning for expansion. The will work with the DIA to implement the DIA master plan and the Duluth Airport Land Use Plan.	Participated in master plan and helped secure funding for runway reconstruction, participate on JAZB	Implemented
T27	The City will consider public investments to reduce tourist- related bottlenecks through improved signage and alternative routes, improved pedestrian access in tourism areas, and selected road improvements.	Use temporary directional signage and freeway dynamic signs to assist tourists to destinations and large events.	In progress



Survey Results: Question 3

When you visit other communities, have you found something that make you say, "we need to do that in Duluth!" If so, what was it?

Total Comments Regarding Transportation: 617

Better streets and roads, fix potholes	104
Bikes	
 Bike infrastructure in general Also includes comments like "bike friendly," bike racks, less confusing bike infrastructure 	51
 Bike lanes/protected lanes/on-street accommodations Specific cities mentioned as examples: Seattle, Minneapolis Locations noted: especially downtown, along Skyline Some clarified especially for commuting, not mountain biking 	95
Bike/multi-use trails/off-street facilities Some comments specified a need for these along main thoroughfares like Woodland, and connecting neighborhoods	38
 Public transportation Later, more frequent, faster Easy to understand To all neighborhoods and up/down hill 	79
Sidewalks/pedestrian friendly places	73
Bike sharing/bike rental	33
Short term car rental (Zipcar)	4
Ride share (Uber, Lyft)	45
Rail	
Train (general comment)	6
Light rail/streetcar (within Duluth)	19
High speed rail to Twin Cities	33
 Pedestrian only/closed streets examples include State Street in Madison; Nicollet Ave in Mpls; Pearl Street in Boulder; Denver Many specifically mentioned Superior Street 	31
 Parking Free/cheaper More spaces Locations: neighborhoods, downtown, Canal Park, recreational access points Improved signage 	20

OTHER COMMENTS

Multimodal

- Make the city truly accessible by foot AND bicycle AND public transportation. Duluth is very challenging to navigate if you are not in a personal vehicle, especially in winter.
- Interconnected transportation: pets, bikes, trains, buses, cars (and a xc ski trail in the winter going along skyline and/or the Lakewalk). Even some streets without cars, I always enjoy those.
- Multi model transit across the city connecting train, buses, light rail and airport including more bike lanes to and from colleges/universities.
- Bikes on buses, busses that route in a way that make the workable, bike/car share
- Improve multi-model transportation options, particularily active transportation.
- complete streets, including Woodland Ave and Arrowhead!!!!!
- The city should focus on the harbor, rail and airport and try to focus on being a transportation hub.
- continued focus on alternative transportation infrastructure" bike, hiking, snow mobile trails

Tram/bike escalator/lift

- bicycle escalator (http://www.earthporm.com/norway-builds-worlds-first-bike-escalator/)
- Bike lift
- One example of something we could really use is the electric lifts they have in Norway and other European enclaves.
 They help people get up the steep hills and allow younger kids and elderly folks to continue bicycling even where there are hills. Here's an example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7j1PgmMbug8
- a tram system up and down the hills
- A cable car!
- We also should look at our roots and be uniquely Duluth by bringing back the rail system and the lift system that transported people up and down the hills.
- A fenicular like in Quebec City for getting peds and bikes up and down big hill.

Other Comments

- picture texting problems (potholes, lights, 411 things?)
- pedestrian crossing that hold back all traffic while letting pedestrians cross all at the same time
- more urban trees (with tree trenches as green infrastructure/stormwater management), heated bus shelters
- Sensible road maintenance projects. Whoever plans the schedule does so in a poor manner and for the most part by
 lousy crews. (There's Grand Ave job was done very well, but the Freeway and Michigan St. Projects have been a
 disaster). I am a mailman and travel through these projects every day. I've seen nothing but wasted time on both of
 those projects as they continually tear up and fix their own work time and time again. It seems to be the rule rather
 than the exception when it comes to construction projects.
- solar roads, etc.
- Keep bicycle lanes out of downtown areas as much as possible in favor of maxmizing premium on-street parking,
 which brings more people, vibrancy, and safety to the downtown streetscape. On-street parking also is vital for many
 folks (e.g., elderly, disabled, those with challenging pregnancies, those dropping off or purchasing large or many
 items, those dropping off or purchasing valuables [e.g., gold coins or jewelry], etc.) for whom ramp parking is not very
 feasible or safe.
- Close skyline parkway to cars on sunday morning and let people walk and bike
- In Colorado, and at the intersections with stop lights, there was a designated time where it was "Red" for all the vehicles, and "Green" for pedestrians to walk! Since seeing this, I thought this would be a great addition to Canal Park during the busy summer months. AAlso, having more Bus Shelters, in the E.U., they have very nice bus shelters I always hate seeing people stand outside in -10 degree weather waiting for a bus, while yesterday I drive by a WATER FOUNTAIN in front of the Courthouse. If our tax money can pay for a water fountain, it can darn well pay for more bus shelters.
- Artist designed bus benches
- Lower public transit rates for the elderly
- unless you are from Boston, the traffic reality is disorder Radom stop signs reduced lanes with little warning. Abrupt
 one ways that fade into 2way and then back to one way
- Using beet juice to melt ice on roads salt is terrible for the environment.
- thru-traffic road bypass (instead of thru-traffic being routed through the heart of the City)
- With all the pubs in the area, have we ever considered pedal pubs....just like minneapolis and st. paul?
- ice skating trails
- We need to manage event traffic the way big cities do. It takes too long to leave events for being a small town. It
 prevents me from going to things.
- keeping I-35 better maintained for weeds as our main entrance,

- cobblestone or brick streets it's sad to see old, unique roads being paved over.
- Open access paths to beach
- Information sharing on conditions of trails.
- Take advantage of the harbor! Have you seen San Antonio? Harbor side of Park Point should be an additional "canal park". BTW, do not do this at the expense of the working portions of the harbor. Stay away from Rice's point and the original reason Duluth exists.
- nice gateways. Central Entrance cooridor is not the best gateway into Duluth from the north.
- A river bus that can ferry folks across to superior and back as well as make stops along park point with bike accessibility. Can also be a beer ferry- ice really wanted to start this business if your j retested in investing in it.
- Expand in existing skywalk system
- Electronic motor bicycles (pedal assist) for rent; under street walkways with shops; a large, public city dock
- All weather trails
- We need to make Duluth more handicapped accessible.
- park and ride opportunities to reduce vehicle traffic/parking
- Build medians with greenery. Slows people down and makes roads more functional. Like 6th Ave E. People go too fast.
- Roads and parks in poor neighborhoods get more resources, because they can't get by without public resources
- bury the utilities
- Think Minnesota Nice when driving.
- free shuttles to popular locations. One way and round trip
- Traffic circles
- Street diets: one ways with double lanes enable rapid drive through of central Duluth encouraging paranoia and socioeconomic segregation, make single lane streets, use shoulders for bike paths and plant life or other shared use/parking (stop allowing further destruction of neighborhoods to construct parking ramps and lots-white women are afraid of these spaces and pass their Lifetime-movie-induced paranoia onto their kids, Duluth needs to take action to avoid a next generation of scared sedentary racists).