

IMAGINE... CANAL PARK



**Community Engagement
Summary Report**

Prepared by 8 80 Cities

Report prepared by 8 80 Cities

Community Engagement Lead:
Ryan O'Connor
Director of Programs

E: roconnor@880cities.org
T: (416) 591-7404 ext. 2

401 Richmond St W. Studio 372
Toronto, Ontario
M5V 3A8, Canada

Imagine Canal Park Lead:

Keith Hamre
Director, Planning and Construction Services
City of Duluth

E: khamre@duluthmn.gov
T: (218) 730-5580

City Hall, Room 208
411 West First Street
Duluth, MN 55802

www.imagineduluth.com/canalpark2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Engagement Results At a Glance	6
Introduction	8
What is Imagine Canal Park?	9
The Opportunity	10
Methodology & Findings	11
Stakeholder Workshops	12
Community Surveys	13
Walkshop	20
Public Life Surveys	23
Vision	28
Recommendations	30
Mobility & Access	31
Public Space & Programming	43
Next Steps	52
Pilot Projects	53
Continued Engagement	66
Final Report	67

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Imagine Canal Park is a collaborative project to chart a future for one of the city's most beloved and unique areas – Canal Park. In fall 2017, the City of Duluth led a comprehensive community engagement process to learn what residents, visitors, business owners, and other stakeholders think about Canal Park, and what ideas they have for improving the area. Thousands of people shared thoughts, concerns, criticisms, and praise for Canal Park through online surveys, at public events, and at community workshops.

This report summarizes our key findings, and sets a framework for the second phase of Imagine Canal Park, which will bring the community's ideas to life through a series of pilot projects.

We heard that people value Canal Park and want the area to thrive. People also told us that changes are needed to ensure Canal Park succeeds as a place for people to work, play, live, visit, and travel through. We sorted through thousands of sticky notes, online comments, and surveys to develop a collective vision statement for the future of Canal Park:

In 2035, Canal Park will be a unique and accessible year-round hub that is designed for residents and visitors of all ages, and is seamlessly connected to the rest of the city.

This vision statement reflects two priority areas: 1) Mobility and access, and 2) Public space and programming. Using the data collected, we developed nine recommendations to guide the future growth and development of Canal Park:

Mobility & Access

1. Create connectivity to the city
2. Improve access to the lake
3. Enhance access for all modes of transportation
4. Fix the parking problem
5. Make Canal Park a pedestrian paradise

Public Space & Programming

1. Host diverse events and programs
2. Make Canal Park an all-season destination
3. Create more spaces for people
4. Fill Canal Park with play



These recommendations are described in detail throughout this report.

The next challenge is to put these recommendations into action. Many changes will take further planning, more time and resources. Other improvements can be made within the next twelve months. In early 2018, the City of Duluth will begin testing new programs and design interventions throughout Canal Park as pilot projects. Based on public feedback, we identified 6 potential pilot projects that could strategically inform the future improvement and development of Canal Park:

Pilot Project Ideas

1. Connect Canal Park Project
2. Pedestrian Paradise Project
3. Buchanan Plaza Project
4. Lake Access Project
5. Canal Park Winter Village Project
6. Canal Park on the Move Project

Of the pilot projects that go forward, we will evaluate every change to understand what works and what doesn't. This process will help the City of Duluth and the community to determine what changes should be made permanent.

The final report, due in fall 2018, will feature results from the pilot project phase, and include a final set of recommendations to shape the future of Canal Park.

ENGAGEMENT RESULTS AT A GLANCE

The Vision: In 2035, Canal Park will be...



a unique, accessible,
year-round hub



designed for residents
and visitors of all ages



seamlessly connected
to the rest of the city

Who We Talked To



1,200+
people engaged



706
online survey responses



400
launch event participants

Of all online survey respondents:

Local / Visitors

82% Duluth residents
18% Visiting or
working in Duluth

Gender

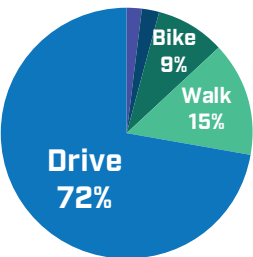
61% Female **39%** Male
<1% Other

Age

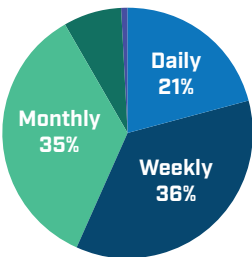
20-30	31-40	41-64	65+
20%	28%	40%	12%
<1% 15-19			

Current State of Affairs

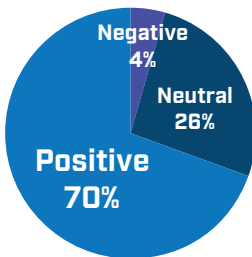
Getting to Canal Park



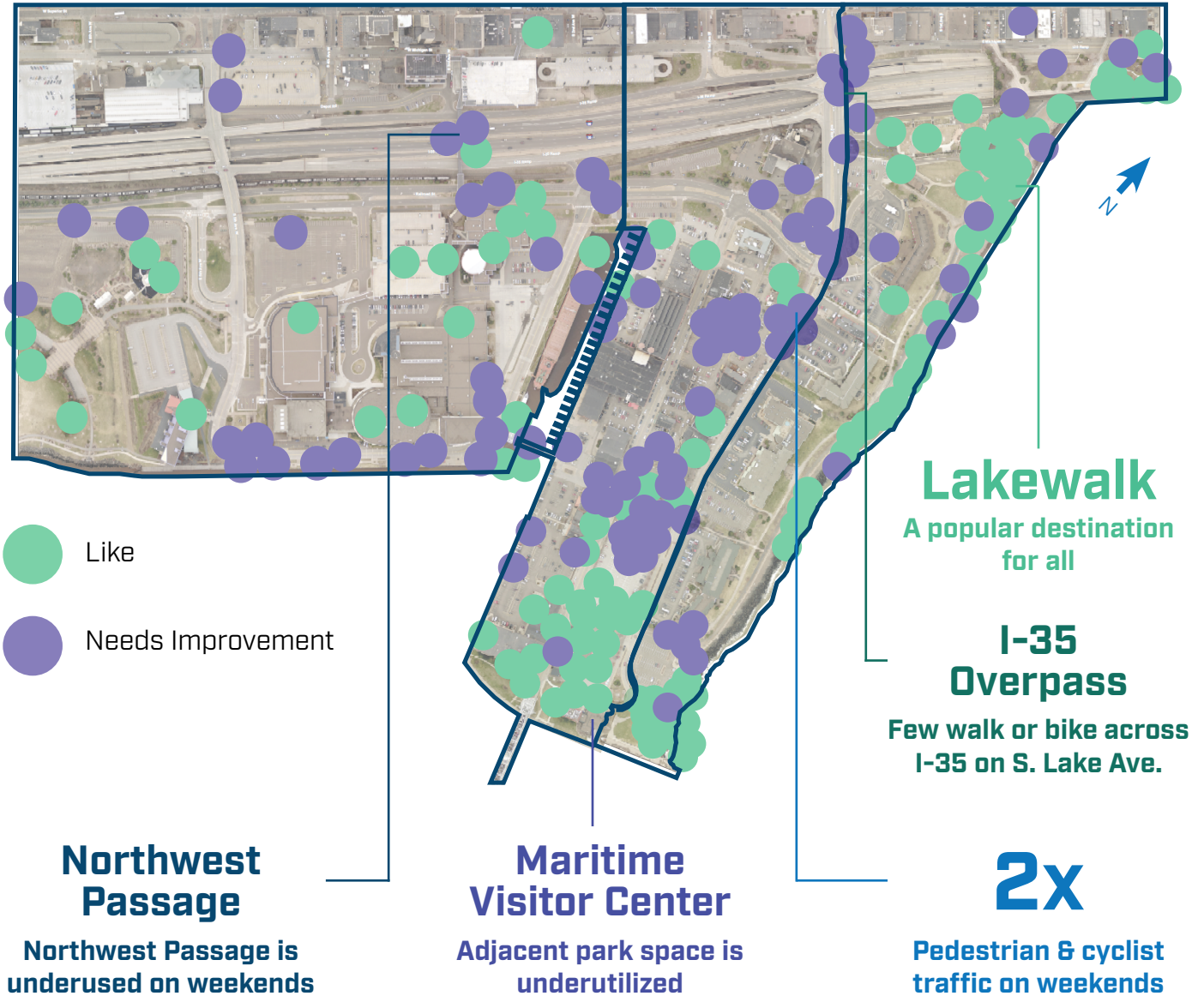
Frequency of Visits



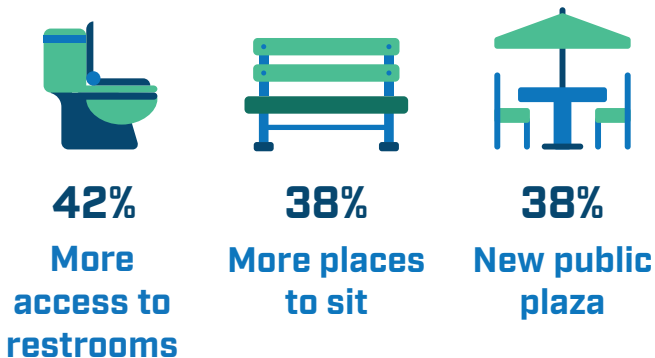
Perception of Area



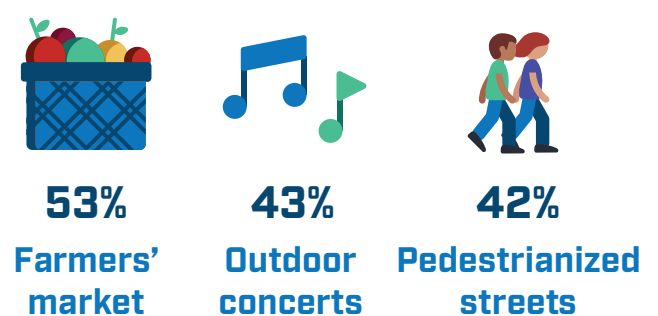
What We Saw & Heard



Top 3 design changes people would like to see



Top 3 programs people would like to see



*The percentages add up to more than 100% because respondents were given the choice to select more than one option.



INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS IMAGINE CANAL PARK?



Imagine Canal Park is a bold initiative that will shape the future of Canal Park and the surrounding community. As part of the Imagine Duluth 2035 process, the City of Duluth is leading this initiative to understand what residents like about Canal Park, and what ideas they have to improve the design, programming, and accessibility of this unique civic asset.

As a local, statewide, and regional destination, Canal Park has grown and changed over the past 30 years. By engaging Duluth residents and key stakeholders in conversations about Canal Park, this process will create a plan to build upon this success, preserve what's worked well, and implement low-cost, high-impact improvements to enhance the overall, everyday experience of Canal Park.

The project is divided into two phases. In the first phase, residents, visitors, business owners, and other community stakeholders will be invited to share ideas on how Canal Park can grow and improve. This first step will provide insight into how Canal Park currently functions. In the second phase, the City of Duluth will work with local partners to implement a series of pilot projects, based on real ideas from the community, to live-test new programming and design interventions in Canal Park.

The outcomes of these two phases will be used to develop a long-term strategy for the continued growth and success of Canal Park.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Imagine Canal Park coincides with the Imagine Duluth 2035 comprehensive planning process, which will set a roadmap for Duluth's growth and development over the next two decades. Led by the City of Duluth Community Planning Division, Imagine Duluth 2035 will look closely at issues related to housing, transportation, economic development, and open space.

Canal Park has existed as a tourist and recreation-oriented area for the past 30 years. Given its proximity to downtown, the performance of Canal Park is tightly linked to the overall success of the city. The Imagine Canal Park process will seek to balance the many important and occasionally competing functions Canal Park currently serves in the city.

Canal Park is a hub of economic activity that draws both tourists and local residents with a vibrant and diverse cluster of retail shops, restaurants, and hotels. Meanwhile, the area gives access to Lake Superior outdoor recreational activities. Finally, Canal Park is also a necessary linkage for more than 2,000 residents who live in Park Point, the unique lakeside neighborhood located on a 7-mile sand spit south of Aerial Lift Bridge.

Imagine Canal Park is a valuable opportunity to take stock of how Canal Park is currently performing in these functions. Based on the findings of this process, project leaders and local partners will begin to experiment with low-cost interventions to live-test new ideas and creative solutions to challenges related to public space, accessibility, and transportation. The final report will serve as a guidebook for Canal Park to ensure this unique area continues to serve local residents, and supports the city's existing transportation

and public space networks, and economic development goals.

The Team

Imagine Canal Park is led locally by the City of Duluth. The Community Planning Division is leading this work through their ongoing efforts with the Imagine Duluth 2035 process. The City of Duluth has enlisted consultants 880 Cities and Zeitgeist to conduct the community engagement and pilot project processes.



Imagine Canal Park is a recipient of a 2017 Knight Cities Challenge grant, generously provided by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. This project is also generously supported by the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation.



**KNIGHT
FOUNDATION**





METHODOLOGY & FINDINGS

Imagine Canal Park is led by the City of Duluth, but guided by everyone who lives, works, plays, visits, or travels through Canal Park.

In fall 2017, the Imagine Canal Park team led a comprehensive and inclusive community engagement process to ensure everyone had an opportunity to participate in the project. This engagement process included stakeholder workshops, online surveys, a walkshop, public life surveys, and a series of public Imagine Stations.

The following section describes these engagement methods and summarizes our findings.

STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

Two workshops were held in September with key stakeholder groups. Workshop participants collaborated in groups to create a collective vision for the future of Canal Park, and then developed action plans to implement new programs and infrastructure improvements within the next year. These events were

attended by residents, business owners, community organizers, and municipal staff.

The key themes, ideas, and concerns that came out of these workshops are summarized below.



Improve connections between downtown, Canal Park, and Park Point

- Safer and more attractive pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to cross the I-35
- Increase trolley service between downtown and Canal Park
- Multimodal connection to the west side and to Lincoln Park
- Moving walkway on the Skywalk
- Better lift bridge and boat access to Park Point
- Water taxi connection from downtown to Canal Park to Park Point



Accessibility for all modes of transportation

- Better access and views to the lake and harbor
- Central parking structure to replace surface parking and increase parking capacity
- Permanent pedestrian connection between DECC and Canal Park
- Rebrand DECC parking as Waterfront Parking
- Safer, universally accessible pedestrian infrastructure
- Improve biking and bike sharing infrastructure



Diverse, year-round activities and programs for locals and visitors of all ages

- Gathering spot for both locals and visitors
- Establishing and promoting Canal Park as a winter destination with outdoor activities
- Children and youth-friendly places, activities and programs
- Iconic landmark and marketplace for local/regional food, crafts and events
- Appeal to a diversity of backgrounds, including Indigenous and African American communities
- Diverse offerings, including free and affordable activities and programs



Better urban design and greater density of mixed-use development

- More green spaces and less gray and hard surfaces
- Vertical, mixed-use development on existing surface parking lots for more housing and hotels
- Impose height restrictions to maintain views of the lake
- Fill the slip and expand development to the west
- Sustainable power grid in Canal Park
- Reduce light pollution

COMMUNITY SURVEYS



Pop-up Imagine Stations

Imagine Stations were held in nine locations across the city to collect ideas and generate excitement about the Imagine Canal Park project. These sessions use a 'go-to-them' approach by locating in places where people already visit as part of their daily routines. Imagine Stations were held in a library, shopping center, community center, bus stop, neighborhood meeting, elementary schools, and other public places. Passers-by were invited to share their ideas for Canal Park and participate in dotmocracy surveys to indicate what types of improvements they would like to see.

A majority of the Imagine Stations responses

were from a public block party and project launch event on September 12. As a potential preview of what's to come, the launch party transformed a parking lot in Canal Park into a fun and vibrant space with free food, free bike rides, and arts activities for children. Hundreds of people attended the event and provided input on Canal Park.

Online Survey

The Imagine Canal Park online survey received more than 700 responses between September 6 and 27, 2017. The questions asked in the survey were consistent with the questions posed to participants at the workshops and Imagine Stations. The survey and engagement results are highlighted in the next section.

Who We Talked To

1,200+

people engaged

706

online survey
responses

400

launch event
participants

Of all online survey respondents:

82% Duluth residents

18% Visiting or working
in Duluth

Gender of online survey respondents

Female

60.8%

Male

38.6%

Other 0.6%

Age of online survey respondents

20-30

20.2%

31-40

27.5%

41-64

39.6%

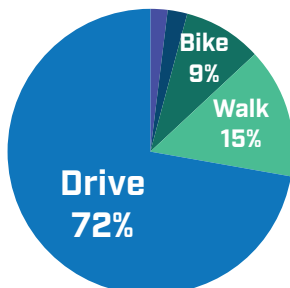
65+

12.3%

15-19 0.3%

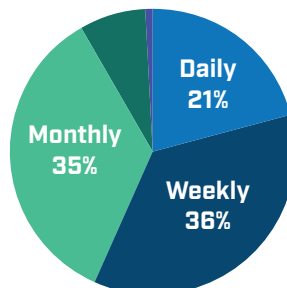
Current State of Affairs

How do people get
to Canal Park?



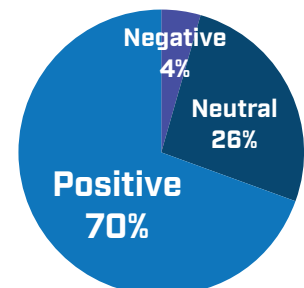
Bus 2%
Other 2%

How often do
people visit?



Annually or less 7%
First time or never 1%

How do people feel
about Canal Park?



Positive
70%

Negative
4%

Neutral
26%

Purpose & Priorities

Purpose of going to Canal Park

- 73% Food & drink
- 60% Active recreation
- 35% Meet with friends & family
- 26% Shopping
- 22% Attend events
- 15% Visit museums or attractions
- 10% Work/employment

Top priorities to improve experience of visiting Canal Park

- 46% Better connection to downtown Duluth
- 34% More events & things to do
- 20% Improved programs & activity spaces for children
- 17% Improved safety at night

Top priorities to improve access to Canal Park

- 48% Safer pedestrian connections to downtown
- 48% More parking
- 23% Safer cycling connections to downtown
- 19% More frequent bus/trolley service
- 15% Water taxis/shuttles

*The percentages add up to more than 100% because respondents were given the choice to select more than one option.

Design & Programming

Top 3 design changes people would like to see



42%

More access to restrooms



38%

More places to sit



38%

New public plaza



53%

Farmers' market



43%

Outdoor concerts



42%

Pedestrianized streets

Engagement Maps

At our Pop-up Imagine Stations, we asked community members to map out areas of Canal Park they like and areas that need improvement. We divided the Canal Park area into 3 sections: West, Central and East.

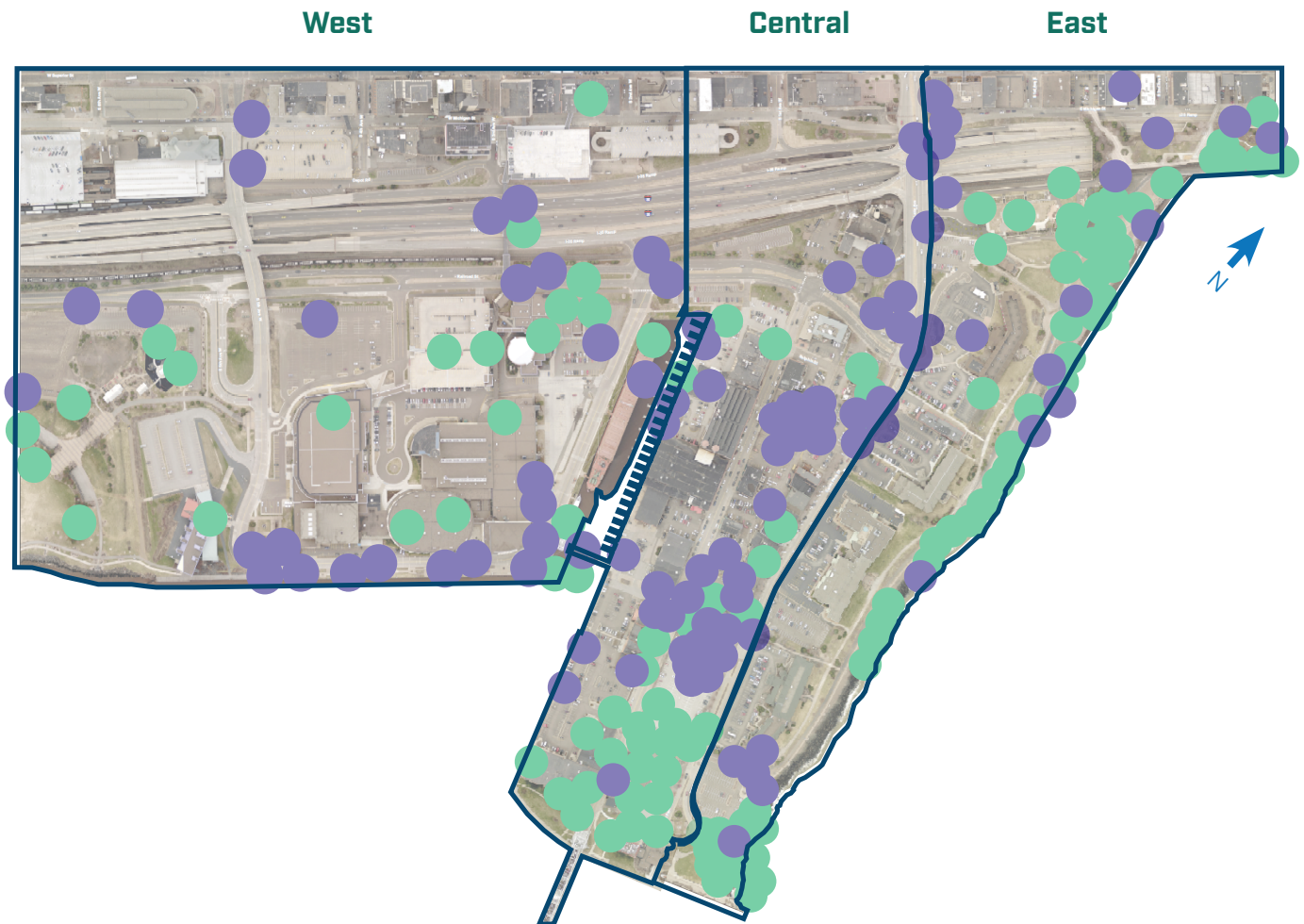
Each green dot on the map represents one 'like' and/or a comment about what they like. Each purple dot on the map represents 'needs improvement' and/or a comment about what needs to be improved. The community's input on the maps informed our recommendations.



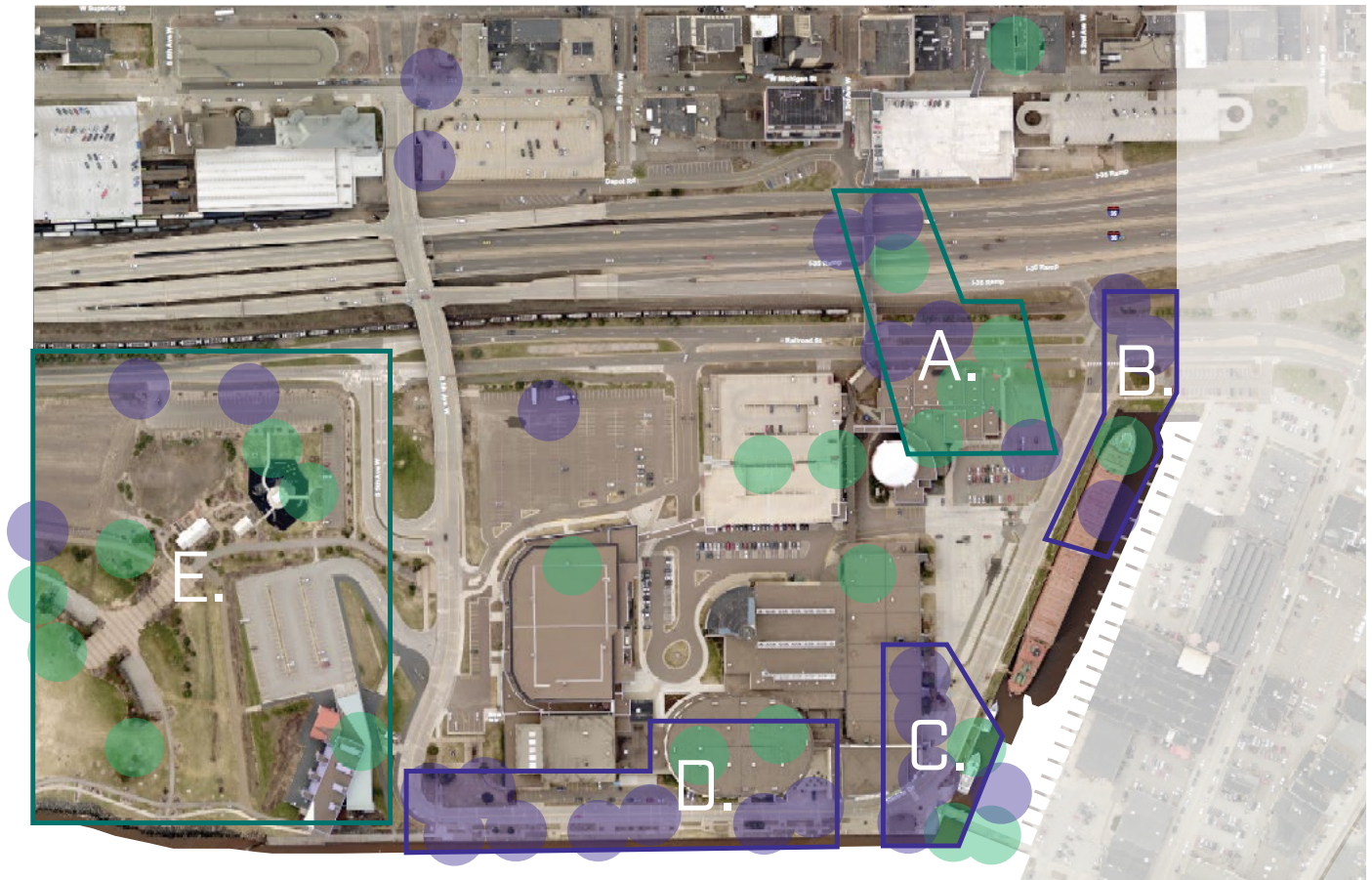
Like



Needs Improvement



West



A. The Northwest Passage skywalk between the Transit Center and DECC

What people like:

- Sitting in the garden

What people want to improve:

- Improve signage around DECC
- Improve vehicular and pedestrian access

B. The eastern side of Harbor Dr and the slip

What people want to improve:

- Safer pedestrian and cyclist crossing

C. The Slip Bridge and entrance to the DECC and the Northwest Passage

What people want to improve:

- Pavement quality & maintenance of Lakewalk
- Add seating

D. The south side of Harbor Dr, and the strip of green space between the road and the lake

What people want to improve:

- Improve the seawall
- Improve pedestrian walking experience
- Add bike path

E. Bayfront Festival Park, including Playfront Park and the Great Lakes Aquarium

What people like:

- Festivals
- Watching ships come in

What people want to improve:

- Pave the parking lot adjacent to the park
- Add splash pads
- Fill the slip to the west of the park to create campground for RV's

Central



A. The I-35 overpass on S Lake Ave

What people want to improve:

- Improve bridge crossing experience for pedestrians and motorists
- Improve coordination of traffic lights

B. The commercial area in northern Canal Park between Canal Park Dr and S Lake Ave

What people want to improve:

- Create a safe pedestrian experience with crosswalks and pedestrian-only timings
- Improve traffic flow

C. The parking lot and pathway along the Baywalk

What people like:

- Love the charter boats

E. The southern tip of Canal Park including Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center, N Pier, and Aerial Lift Bridge

What people like:

- Enjoy the Maritime Visitor Center
- Enjoy boat & people-watching
- Enjoy the food scene

What people want to improve:

- Improve traffic flow around bridge

D. The commercial area in the center of Canal Park between Canal Park Dr and S Lake Ave, including Buchanan St and Dewitt Seitz Marketplace

What people want to improve:

- Improve traffic flow
- Incorporate event programming on Buchanan St.
- Create a safe pedestrian experience

East



A. Lake Place Park

What people like:

- Sitting in the garden

What people want to improve:

- Improve entrance

B. The northern Lakewalk and Sister Cities Park

What people like:

- Good green rest stop

What people want to improve:

- Things for families for to do

D. The Lakewalk and Lighthouse Lot

What people want to improve:

- Better access

E. The green space east of the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center

What people like:

- Beautiful view
- Light house

What people want to improve:

- Add more activity and programming

C. The Lakewalk

What people like:

- The park
- Active waterfront

What people want to improve:

- Pavement quality & maintenance of Lakewalk
- Add benches and active equipment

WALKSHOP



..... 5th Ave W

..... NW Passage

..... S. Lake Ave

The Canal Park Walkshop took place prior to the block party on September 12. Four groups of stakeholders walked from downtown to Canal Park along different routes. Along the way, walk leaders stopped at various points of interest to assess and discuss the built environment around them. Conversations and insights were guided by the 8 80 Cities' walk audit toolkit, which challenges participants to evaluate the accessibility and safety of a public space. Based on their experience and

observations, participants recommended improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks, green spaces, or public amenities along the way. The primary objective was to generate discussion and collect ideas for enhancing the accessibility of Canal Park by using non-motorized modes of transportation.

The following pages summarize the assessments of the three Walkshop groups.

Accessing Canal Park

	NW Passage	Lake Ave	5th Ave W
Navigation/Wayfinding	Difficult	Acceptable	Difficult
Pedestrian Perception	Poor	Fair	Poor
Sidewalk Connectivity	All streets	All streets	Some streets
Accessibility	Split	Split	Split
Traffic Safety	Split	Split	Split
Landscaping/Lighting	Split	Split	Good
Noise	Split	Poor	Poor
Cleanliness	Acceptable	Good	Good
8 80-Friendly	No	Split	Split

Arriving in Canal Park

	NW Passage	Lake Ave	5th Ave W
Sense of Place	Disconnected	Positive	Underwhelming
Pedestrian Perception	Good	Fair	Split
Sidewalk Connectivity	All streets	All streets	Some streets
Accessibility	Fair	Fair	Split
Traffic Safety	Acceptable	Good	Split
Comfort	Poor	Good	Split
Noise	Acceptable	Good	Split
Cleanliness	Acceptable	Good	Split
8 80-Friendly	Split	Yes	Split

Experiencing Canal Park

	NW Passage	Lake Ave	5th Ave W
Pedestrian Perception	Good	Good	Good
Sidewalk Connectivity	All streets	All streets	All streets
Safety	Good	Good	Good
Street Life	Good	Good	Good
Aesthetics of Buildings	Poor	Good	Split
Scale of Buildings	Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate
Opportunities for Play	Split	Yes	Yes
Overall Design	Good	Good	Good
8 80-Friendly	Yes	Yes	Yes

Walkshop Participants' Ideas

Northwest Passage	Lake Ave.	5th Ave. W
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebrand as 'Canal Park Connect' or 'Welcoming Passage' • Better wayfinding signage, e.g. painting ship anchors on the ground as guide • Use of art, color and music • More trees to provide shade • Fix curb cuts • Make trolleys accessible to wheelchair users • Make the area friendlier to all ages at night • Color code parking lots for ease of use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconfigure traffic flow in Canal Park; consider a one-way loop road incorporating Lake Ave and Canal Park Dr. • Slow down traffic and improve crosswalks • Offer different transit options, such as bike share, taxis, ride share, and trolleys • Make I-35 crossing more pedestrian-friendly and attractive • Historical signage to celebrate rich Indigenous and local history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen sense of place upon arrival at Canal Park • Replace surface parking lots near the water with parking structure elsewhere • Develop waterfront area by the arena • More public seating, retail and outdoor dining • Pedestrianize Buchanan St to create public plaza • Consistent branding (color) for the area and promote events with banners, smart LED signs, kiosks

PUBLIC LIFE SURVEYS

Observation is the best way to understand who visits a public space, and what those visitors do there. That's why we coordinated a series of public life surveys in Canal Park. Here's how it works: Volunteers were stationed at twelve locations in and around Canal Park on a Wednesday and Saturday in September. For one hour between 12 pm and 1 pm, the volunteers counted how many people walked or biked through the location and recorded their gender and approximate age. The volunteers also counted and recorded visitor

behavior in two locations where people are more likely to stay.

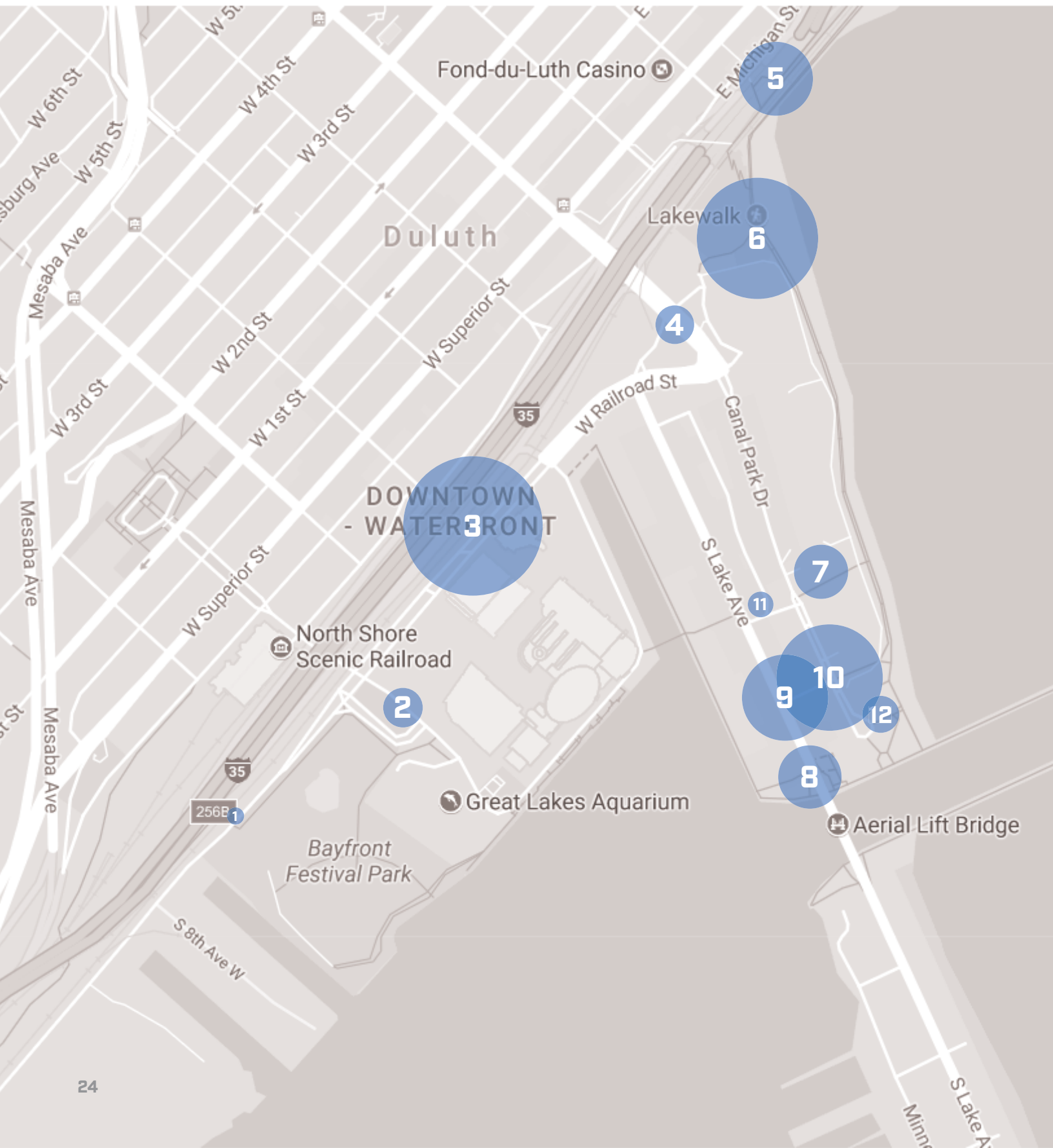
The purpose of public life surveys is to understand who visits Canal Park, who does not visit Canal Park, where they go in Canal Park, how they access Canal Park, and what they do in Canal Park. These findings are based on a relatively small sample size, but it provides a valuable snapshot of how Canal Park currently performs.

Findings








- 1. Weekends are busier:** In total, nearly twice as many people were counted on Saturday [2,544] than Wednesday [1,306]. Nine out of the twelve locations had more pedestrian and cyclist traffic on Saturday. The busiest site, by a large margin, was the corner of Morse Street and Canal Park Drive on Saturday.
- 2. The Northwest Passage is underused on weekends:** Our findings suggest that this pathway is more commonly used by people who work downtown during the week, rather than weekend visitors to Canal Park. More could be done to advertise this connection to weekend visitors, and possibly alleviate parking pressure in Canal Park.
- 3. The park adjacent to the Maritime Visitor Center is underutilized:** We expected to find more people enjoying one of Canal Park's few green, public spaces beside the Maritime Visitor Center. Signage may help improve awareness of the park, while new programming or designs might draw more people.
- 4. The Lakewalk is a popular destination:** This confirms our engagement findings. The Lakewalk is well loved and used by visitors and residents of all ages.
- 5. Few people use I-35 overpass on S Lake Avenue to walk or bike to Canal Park:** This confirms what we heard from the public. Despite being the most direct and obvious connection between downtown Duluth and Canal Park, virtually no one feels like this is a safe route to walk or bike.
- 6. Canal Park visitors are equally balanced by gender and by age:** We observed men and women visiting Canal Park at equal rates. This indicates that Canal Park is a safe destination since women tend to be more selective in this respect. However, further study should be done at night to determine consistency. Visitors to Canal Park also mirror the age demographics of Duluth, within 1-5 percentage points.

Weekday Pedestrian & Cyclist Traffic

Wednesday, 12 - 1 pm



By Location and Age Groups





							
	Young Children [0-6]	Children [7-14]	Youth [15-19]	Younger Adults [20-30]	Adults [31-64]	Older Adults [65+]	Total
1 Cross City Trail along W Railroad St, adjacent to Bayfront Park	0	0	0	10	17	1	28
2 South 5th Ave W bridge between downtown and the DECC parking lot	1	3	2	17	38	4	65
3 Inside the NW Passage between downtown Duluth Transit Center & DECC	0	0	2	35	176	13	226
4 Lake Avenue bridge over I-35	1	0	6	14	36	5	62
5 Lake Place Park (upper level, above the Lakewalk, accessible from Superior St)	4	1	3	25	82	6	121
6 Lakewalk near Endion Station	14	16	13	32	103	19	197
7 The boardwalk connection from the Lakewalk to Little Angie's	8	16	7	28	29	1	89
8 Aerial Lift Bridge	22	15	9	9	38	9	102
9 Morse Street at S Lake Ave	14	23	13	20	50	20	140
10 Morse Street at Canal Park Dr	14	23	13	45	64	13	172
11 Buchanan St and plaza and fountains by Little Angie's and DeWitt-Seitz Building	3	2	1	19	14	4	43
12 Park adjacent to the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center	6	11	7	5	20	12	61

Activities

11 Buchanan St and plaza and fountains by Little Angie's and DeWitt-Seitz Building

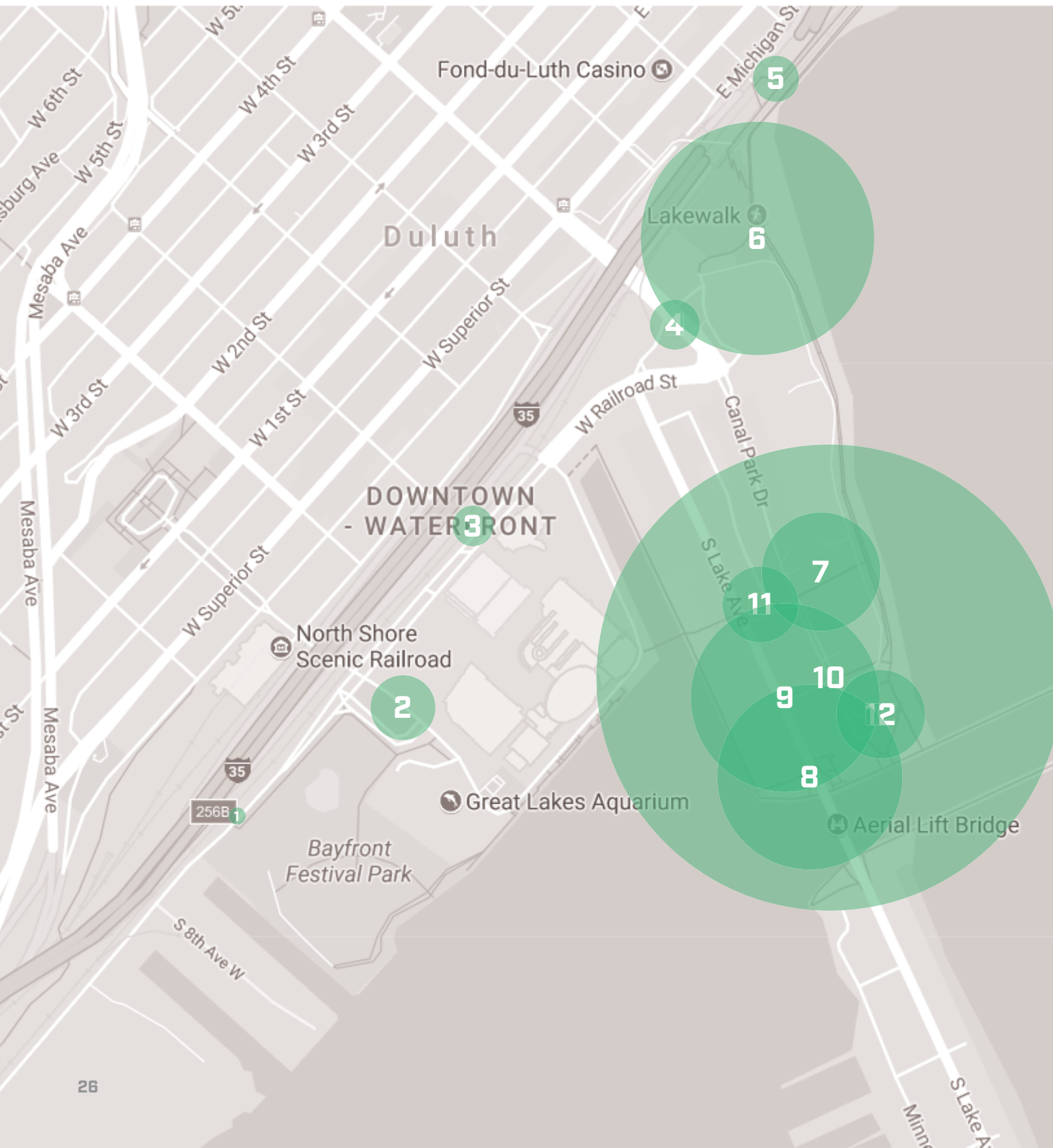
-  Sitting: 23
-  Standing: 15
-  Sitting at cafe: 13
-  Physical activity: 6
-  Children playing: 4

12 Park adjacent to the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center








-  Standing: 12
-  Sitting: 9
-  Children playing: 5
-  Waiting for transit: 3

Weekend Pedestrian & Cyclist Traffic

Saturday, 12 - 1 pm



By Location and Age Groups

							
	Young Children [0-6]	Children [7-14]	Youth [15-19]	Younger Adults [20-30]	Adults [31-64]	Older Adults [65+]	Total
1 Cross City Trail along W Railroad St, adjacent to Bayfront Park	2	4	7	0	14	0	27 [=]
2 South 5th Ave W bridge between downtown and the DECC parking lot	7	6	11	17	57	6	104 [+]
3 Inside the NW Passage between downtown Duluth Transit Center & DECC	8	2	0	18	30	8	66 [-]
4 Lake Avenue bridge over I-35	1	0	3	39	33	4	80 [+]
5 Lake Place Park (upper level, above the Lakewalk, accessible from Superior St)	0	0	6	19	42	8	75 [-]
6 Lakewalk near Endion Station	14	31	57	141	104	30	377 [+]
7 The boardwalk connection from the Lakewalk to Little Angie's	21	8	10	44	104	5	192 [+]
8 Aerial Lift Bridge	23	24	30	79	102	40	298 [+]
9 Morse Street at S Lake Ave	24	23	26	74	151	7	305 [+]
10 Morse Street at Canal Park Drive	79	93	60	185	214	122	753 [+]
11 Buchanan St and plaza and fountains by Little Angie's and DeWitt-Seitz Building	15	8	13	31	47	9	123 [+]
12 Park adjacent to the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center	9	20	23	28	48	16	144 [+]




[+] Increase from weekday traffic
[=] Similar to weekday traffic
[-] Decrease from weekday traffic

Activities

11 Buchanan St and plaza and fountains by Little Angie's and DeWitt-Seitz Building

-  Sitting at cafe: 60
-  Standing: 34
-  Sitting: 26
-  Commercial activity: 6
-  Children playing: 6

12 Park adjacent to the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center

-  Standing: 40
-  Sitting: 33
-  Children playing: 30
-  Commercial activity: 10
-  Physical activity: 6
-  Lying down: 3



VISION

THE VISION



In 2035, Canal Park will be a unique and accessible year-round hub that is designed for residents and visitors of all ages and is seamlessly connected to the rest of the city.

Creating great cities and places takes vision. The statement above is a collective vision created by hundreds of stakeholders and Duluth residents who participated in the Imagine Canal Park engagement process. It is a summary of the key themes, ideas, dreams, and concerns that people shared about the future of Canal Park. This vision statement is to be used as a guidepost for all future plans and developments in the area.

To create this vision statement, we categorized thousands of stakeholder ideas into two priority areas and nine recommendations:

Mobility & Access

1. Create connectivity to the city
2. Improve access to the lake
3. Enhance access for all modes of transportation
4. Fix the parking problem
5. Make Canal Park a pedestrian paradise

Public Space & Programming

1. Host diverse events and programs
2. Make Canal Park an all-season destination
3. Create more spaces for people
4. Fill Canal Park with play

These recommendations are described in the following section.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MOBILITY & ACCESS

1. Create connectivity to the city

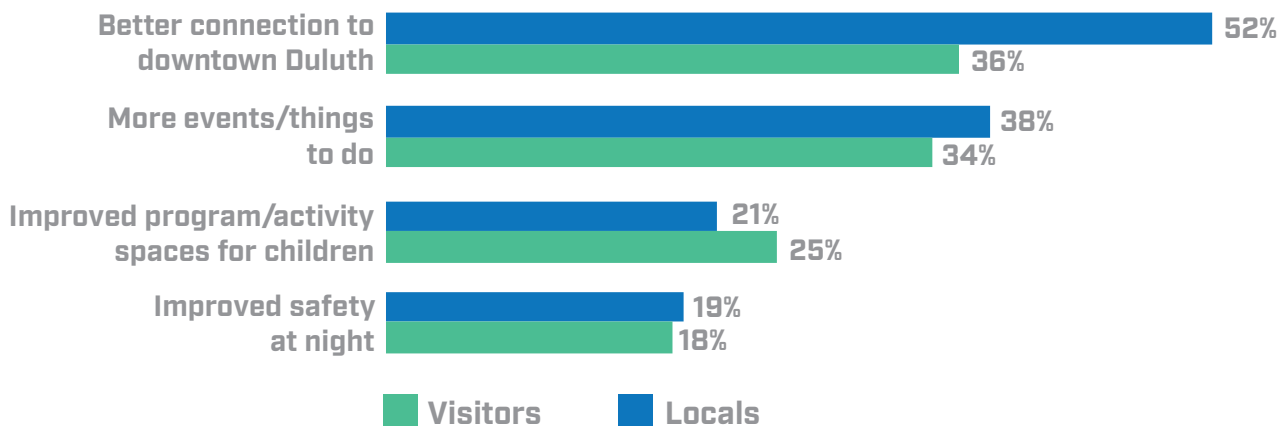


“I think it is key to envision the future of Canal Park and downtown as one. Better, more attractive connections to Downtown would be a real plus.”

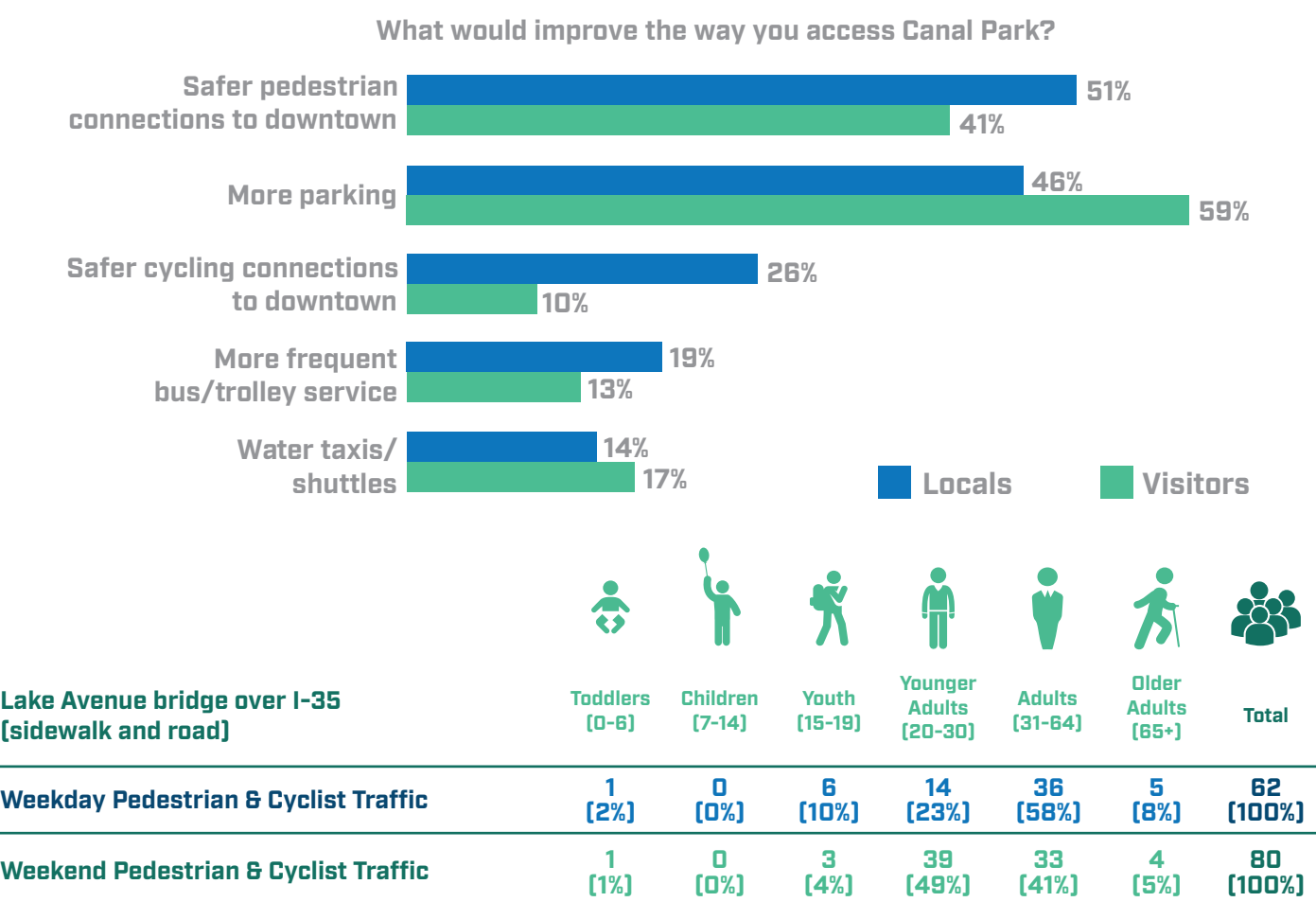
Canal Park’s proximity to downtown Duluth is an incredible asset for both downtown and Canal Park. Thinking of these two areas as two parts of a larger whole, with increased foot traffic between the two, would benefit businesses, residents, and visitors of both neighborhoods. The lack of safe and accessible walking routes to Canal Park is a major barrier for all users. According to our engagement, enhancing connections to downtown Duluth is the highest priority to improve the experience of visiting Canal Park,

with 46% of survey respondents selecting this option. Locals felt more strongly about this issue; 52% feel this is a priority compared to only 36% of visitors. Existing pathways are difficult to find and navigate, while the sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure over I-35 are clearly inadequate. This problem is amplified by existing parking challenges. If more people could safely reach Canal Park by bike or on foot, the pressure for parking spaces could be alleviated.

What are the main priorities to improve your experience of visiting Canal Park?



1.1 Enhance pedestrian safety and comfort on overpasses



The overpass on S. Lake Avenue is the clearest and most direct access point from downtown Duluth to Canal Park. Walking along the overpass is uncomfortable at best, and often downright frightening. For Duluthians, improving pedestrian connections between Canal Park and Downtown was the top priority. Additionally, pedestrian/cyclist counts were conducted in 10 locations in and connecting to Canal Park. Out of the 10 locations, the S. Lake Avenue bridge that connects Downtown Duluth to Canal Park had the highest age disparity among users. People ages 20 - 65 make up 80% - 90% of the pedestrian and bike traffic on the bridge whereas children and older adults make up only 10% - 20%. This age discrepancy is a major indicator of how unsafe and unwelcoming it is for people at the far ends of the age spectrum. Simple design modifications

and reconfigurations could make dramatic improvements to the pedestrian experience, thereby encouraging more people to walk to Canal Park. Improvements could include:








- Widening sidewalks
- Railings or some form of barrier between the sidewalk and the road to eliminate fears of falling into traffic
- Extending the length of pedestrian crossing signals to provide more time for crossing
- ADA-grade sidewalk curb cuts to provide better access for people using mobility devices or pushing strollers.
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting to enhance safety and comfort at night.
- Adding trees or planters to the concrete median to calm traffic and increase the visual appeal of S. Lake Avenue.

1.2 Provide a comprehensive wayfinding system throughout Canal Park and Downtown

There are access points to Canal Park that many people either don't use or simply don't know about. Improved signage could clearly identify safe routes for people to walk or bike from downtown Duluth to Canal Park. Key locations for directional signage include the entry points to Lake Place Park on Superior St. and the transit center to help direct people

through the skywalk. More maps and signage could be added throughout Canal Park to help visitors navigate to popular destinations like the Lakewalk, Maritime Visitors Center, and to destinations in Downtown Duluth. The signage should be clearly legible, attractive, and consistent.

1.3 Enhance Lake Place Park connection

							
Lake Place Park (upper level, above the Lakewalk, accessible from Superior St)	Toddlers [0-6]	Children [7-14]	Youth [15-19]	Younger Adults [20-30]	Adults [31-64]	Older Adults [65+]	Total
Weekday Pedestrian & Cyclist Traffic	4 [3%]	1 [1%]	3 [2%]	25 [21%]	82 [68%]	6 [5%]	121 [100%]
Weekend Pedestrian & Cyclist Traffic	0 [0%]	0 [0%]	6 [8%]	19 [25%]	42 [56%]	8 [11%]	75 [100%]

Lake Place Park is a well-situated public space with magnificent views of Lake Superior's rocky coast. Due to its prime location, it has the potential to serve as one of the main pedestrian/cyclist connectors to Canal Park. The entrance to Lake Place Park from Superior Street is currently marked by an unassuming archway, sandwiched between two commercial buildings. For those who are new to or unfamiliar with Duluth, the entrance is easy to miss and there are few clues about where the boardwalk will lead you to. Even though Canal Park sees much higher numbers of visitors on the weekends than the weekdays, the number of people walking and biking through Lake Place Park is 61% higher during the weekdays than the weekends. One potential explanation for this discrepancy is that during the weekends, there is a higher

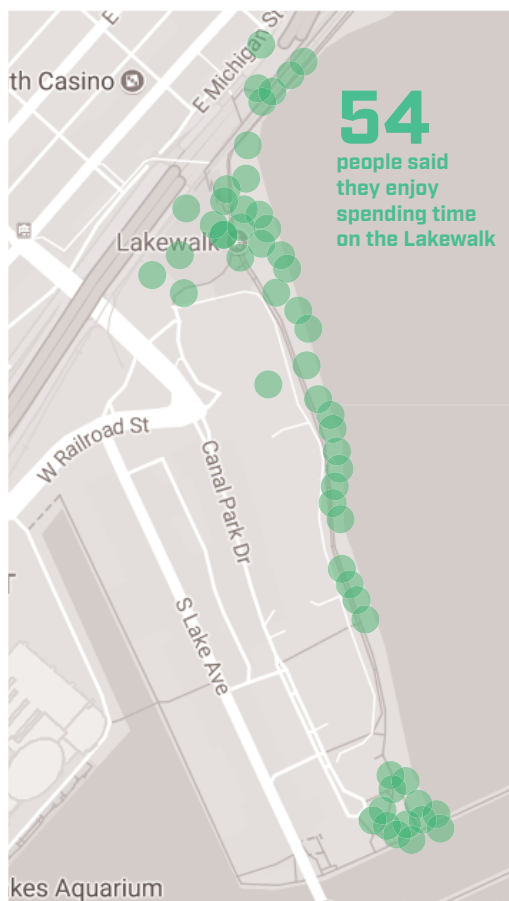
proportion of out-of-towners visiting Canal Park who are likely unfamiliar with the Lake Place Park entrance. On the weekdays, however, there are more people working downtown who are familiar with and using the Lake Place Park connection during their lunch hour. Moreover, pedestrian/cyclist counts show that children and adults over the age of 65 are under-represented among those using this connection, an indicator that it is not welcoming to these groups. Improvements such as creating a grand, well-lit entrance, high quality pedestrian lighting, directional signage, and adding more programming to Lake Place Park will compel people of all ages, residents and visitors alike, to feel more comfortable using this route.

2. Improve access to the lake



“Canal Park should provide the most beautiful and carefully maintained access points to our lake... that’s the major reason people visit Canal Park.”

Canal Park’s greatest asset is that it provides unparalleled views and access to Lake Superior. Unsurprisingly, many residents listed the Lakewalk as their favorite place in Canal Park. Improved wayfinding and more visible entry points (e.g. gates, signage, colorful walkways) would make it easier to navigate to the Lakewalk from downtown Duluth or from within Canal Park. To meet the demand for water access, Canal Park should provide a continuous multi-purpose trail and other activations along its waterfront edges.



2.1 Activate the waterfront linkage between Bayfront, area behind DECC, Baywalk, and Canal Park.

As a green event space, Bayfront perfectly complements Canal Park’s focus on entertainment and retail. Canal Park should take better advantage of its neighbor, and vice versa. Harbor Drive and the blue Minnesota Slip Bridge physically connect these two areas but this route is sorely underused. Similarly, the Baywalk, a narrow walkway hugging the western perimeter of three large surface parking lots, offers magnificent views of the Duluth Harbor. If activated with better landscaping, seating, lighting, and low-rise, small-scale shops with outdoor seating, both Harbor Drive and Baywalk would invite Duluthians and visitors to walk, linger, and socialize by the water.





2.2 Preserve and enhance water viewsheds

People love to look at the water and watch ships pass by Canal Park. More efforts should be made to support this passive enjoyment of Canal Park. Better and more consistently located benches that face out onto Lake Superior would be an improvement. More trees for shade in the summer would allow people to linger longer. The North Pier and Lakewalk already host hundreds of onlookers each day. However, the west side of the park on Baywalk, as well as Harbor Drive could be

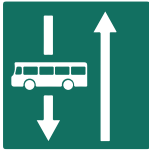
significantly more attractive as viewpoints with better landscaping, wider pathways, and more pedestrian amenities. Moreover, the interior pedestrian network within Canal Park should offer people with glimpses of the water to provide a constant reminder of the natural beauty that surrounds them. This means levelling out some of the elevated berms that block views of the lake and lakewalk from the interior of Canal Park.

2.3 Increase opportunities for recreational water sports

Lake Superior is underused as a recreational amenity. Shipping routes pose potential safety hazards, but there are areas along the northeast shore of Canal Park that could be designated swimming and paddling areas. People already swim along the beach at the

Lake Walk, so why not make it safer and more accessible with simple investments like buoys and ladders. The City or local businesses might also consider renting out non-motorized watercrafts like canoes, kayaks, or stand up paddle boards directly on the beach.

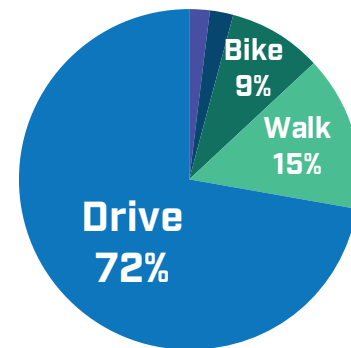
3. Enhance access for all modes of transportation



“We need better traffic flow and safer walkways for pedestrians. Canal Park is a jewel for our City.”

People come to Canal Park by all transportation modes. Most residents and visitors arrive by car, but a significant portion of trips are made by a combination of walking, cycling, trolley, and public transit. Regardless of how individuals typically travel to Canal Park, there is a strong direction from survey respondents for Canal Park to better support all modes of transportation. Despite the abundance of surface parking lots—31% of land use in Canal Park is dedicated to parking—many people cited parking as a major barrier to accessing Canal Park. If Canal Park continues to grow and develop then urgent improvements to pedestrian, cycling, and transit infrastructure are needed. There simply isn’t enough space for the number of people and cars to increase continually.

How do people get to Canal Park?



Bus 2%
Other 2%



3.1 Improve vehicular traffic flow throughout Canal Park, especially on S. Lake Ave.



Image: KBJR6

Many people feel that Canal Park is too congested with traffic. For Park Point residents, driving through Canal Park isn't a choice but a necessity. We heard from dozens of neighborhood residents who are frustrated by the time it takes to travel through Canal Park, particularly when the bridge is lifted. Many people suggested that congestion is also caused by motorists trawling for parking spots. In addition to addressing the parking problem, which is discussed in the next section, it's also important to trial out different traffic flow patterns in Canal Park.

Encourage new traffic flow patterns through implementation of new turning and parking restrictions

S. Lake Avenue becomes severely congested, especially during high season, when there is a combination of a high volume of drivers looking for parking spots and a high volume of drivers attempting to cross the Aerial Lift bridge.

One option is to eliminate parking on S. Lake Avenue. In doing so, we: a) eliminate vehicles holding up traffic due to parallel parking activities, b) free up the outer lane for right-turning vehicles, and c) concentrate all thru-traffic and left-turning vehicles in the interior lane. Vehicles travelling south on S. Lake Ave. could be restricted from making left hand turns, except at Morse Street. Vehicles travelling north on S. Lake Ave would still be allowed to make left hand turns at both Buchanan and Morse Streets.

3.2 Improve visibility, frequency, and awareness of trolley service

The DTA Port Town Trolley provides daily service between Canal Park, Bayfront, the HART District and downtown Duluth, starting the first week in June through Labor Day. Trolley fare used to be 50 cents per rider but as of August 2017, the service became free and led to an increase in ridership. While this is a good step towards increasing public transit use and decreasing vehicular traffic in Canal Park, there is still a lot of room for the DTA to grow trolley ridership.

Based on conversations and feedback from the engagement process, the biggest area

for improvement is in public awareness. This is partially proven by the fact that only 2% of people who completed our surveys travelled to Canal Park by transit or trolley. Most residents we spoke with were not even aware that there was a trolley service. Increased visibility and awareness could be achieved through marketing campaigns with online content and information available at local businesses. Trolley stop signage could also be made more visible and attractive so that people know when and where to wait. Most importantly, increased frequency, reliability, and efficiency are the surest ways to improve ridership.

3.3 Improve plowing of sidewalks that connect to and throughout Canal Park



Image: nkovac1 / Panoramio

“Since I use a wheelchair it’s very important that the lakewalk is well-maintained and shoveled in the winter. I actually do go there as long as I can get to it!”

If Canal Park is meant to be a year-round destination, it must be inviting and accessible to pedestrians in all seasons. We heard from many residents that it often feels unsafe to walk in Canal Park in the winter when the snow isn’t shoveled and cleared quickly. This safety issue is particularly important to people using mobility devices. Many cities and business districts employ ‘street crews’ of students or part-time workers to maintain roads and sidewalks over the winter. Awareness and education campaigns could also be used to encourage local business owners to ensure their entrances remain accessible.

3.4 Designate Canal Park Drive as a “great street”

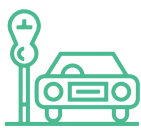


Canal Park Drive is an iconic street in Duluth. Officially designating this roadway as a ‘great street’ would formalize its status and ensure Canal Park Drive receives the funding and support it needs. The City of Los Angeles has designated 15 corridors as great streets, which will receive special attention by building partnerships with communities, and leveraging resources to invest in streetscape improvements. Through this initiative, the City is implementing short-term, temporary treatments, including plazas and parklets. In the long-term, they plan to invest in permanent changes to curbs, street lighting, street trees, and street furniture.

4. Fix the parking problem



“Parking and traffic kill the experience.”

48% 

want more parking

We heard it loud and clear: it is imperative to re-evaluate the infrastructure and regulations around parking in Canal Park. There is recognition that cars, whether parked or in motion, take up a disproportionate amount of space in Canal Park. Of all the land in Canal Park, including streets, open spaces, and publicly and privately-owned land, parking lots make up 31% of all land whereas commercial buildings make up 19% of all land. At the same time, many people rely on vehicles to access the area and get around Duluth. Hundreds of engagement participants told us that the cost and availability of parking is a barrier to visiting and enjoying Canal Park. We also know that an abundance of land in Canal Park is already dedicated to parking. Something isn't adding up, and it's clear that the current system isn't working. A big part of the solution is addressed in the previous recommendations of making it easier for people to walk, bike, or use transit to get to Canal Park. Fewer cars means less space required for parking and more space for people. Other solutions require an overhaul of the current system to ensure parking is accessible and efficient without detracting from the overall experience and enjoyment of Canal Park.



Source: <https://streets.mn/2016/02/27/map-monday-duluths-canal-parking/#lightbox/0/>

4.1 Concentrate Canal Park parking in strategic areas



Image: Beaver Air Tours / canalpark.com

Parking lots and spaces are scattered throughout Canal Park. It may be that an overabundance of parking encourages motorists to look for that perfect parking space rather than settle for an available spot slightly further away. This contributes to traffic congestion throughout the area. Concentrating parking in the northern section of Canal Park would eliminate this guesswork, reduce the number of cars looking for parking in the central parts of Canal Park, and increase the efficiency of parking overall. Building a multi-story ramp would allow existing parking lots, such as the Light House Lot right along the water, to be transformed into new public and commercial spaces. Yes, this may mean that people have longer walks to their destination. But the good news is that Canal Park is one of—if not the best—areas to walk in the entire city.

4.2 Increase awareness and usage of underutilized downtown parking ramps

Parking in Canal Park may be as much of an awareness problem as it is a problem of supply and demand. Current parking infrastructure and ramps in downtown Duluth are notoriously underused by visitors to Canal Park. Creating stronger, more legible connections between the Transit Center and Canal Park would unlock the potential for those parking ramps to be used by Canal Park visitors. This could be achieved through a public marketing

and awareness campaign to advertise the availability of these parking ramps, including information on how to park downtown and walk/take the trolley to Canal Park. Local businesses in Canal Park would be important partners in spreading this information. Consistent wayfinding signage could also be installed throughout the Transit Center and its adjacent parking ramps to direct people to Canal Park from the skywalk.

4.3 Reduce the number of parking lot entrances and exits on S. Lake Ave.

On the east side of S. Lake Ave. in Canal Park, there are four access points to parking lots. Eliminating two of these access points could

decrease delays on S. Lake Ave. caused by vehicles entering and exiting the parking lots at various points along the street.

5. Make Canal Park a pedestrian paradise



“I think the city should focus more on improved pedestrian facilities; wider sidewalks, improved curb ramps, replace deteriorating sidewalks.”

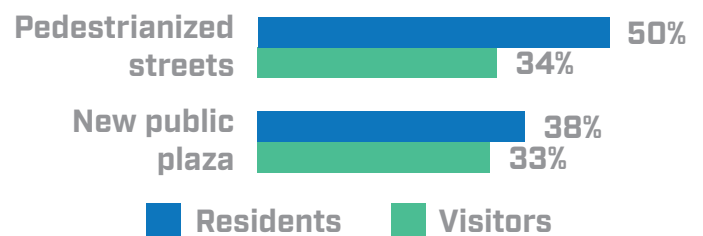
People come to Canal Park to shop, eat, see the lake, and enjoy the atmosphere. These activities are done by walking. However, during high season, it is common to see pedestrians spilling out from the narrow sidewalks. Regardless of how people arrive to Canal Park, there is strong support for enhancing the pedestrian experience throughout the area. Active recreation, including walking, was the second most popular reason that people visit Canal Park. Half of all survey respondents said they wanted safer pedestrian connections to downtown Duluth. “Walking” and “pedestrian-friendly” were also commonly used terms during our Canal Park visioning exercise. It’s clear that people want more opportunities to walk in Canal Park so every effort should be made “to make this as safe and enjoyable as possible”.

Overall:

42% want pedestrianized streets

38% want public plazas

Support for more seating



5.1 Temporarily expand pedestrian space in high season

More space is needed to accommodate the flood of Canal Park visitors during the high seasons, particularly the summer. This will provide more space for recreation and for passive enjoyment of Canal Park, but will also address safety concerns as the sidewalks overflow when the number of visitors swell. Parking lots could be temporarily transformed into pedestrian plazas with low-cost materials like planters, chairs, picnic tables, and string lights at night. These spaces could be programmed throughout the summer

with outdoor movies, concerts, cookouts, basketball tournaments, and more. A parking study would help determine what parking lots and underused spaces would make the best candidates for temporary plazas. Pedestrians should also be given priority over more space adjacent to the water. The long row of parking lots on the west side of Canal Park, as well as the Lighthouse Lot on the northern tip would make good candidates for temporary public spaces.



5.2 Create a new pedestrianized area on Buchanan Street

Pedestrianizing Buchanan Street addresses two demands from residents. First, this would immediately increase space for people to walk, socialize, or activate with programming without fear of traffic. This street is a strong candidate for pedestrianization given the higher quality design treatments along this block. The water fountain, trees, and paving stones all create a pleasant and unique pedestrian experience. This also creates a more prominent and

accessible entrance for the Dewitt-Seitz Marketplace, which is a major draw in Canal Park. Second, closing Buchanan Street to cars simplifies the intersection at Buchanan and Lake Avenue, which several people cited as confusing and dangerous. Eliminating the potential to turn onto Buchanan from Lake Avenue or Canal Park Drive could simplify and increase the efficiency of traffic flow.

5.3 Improve pedestrian crossing areas at key locations

Pedestrian safety must be the top priority for any design or programmatic changes to Canal Park. Engagement participants highlighted several areas within and around Canal Park that need attention on this issue. The overpasses on S. Lake Avenue and 5th Avenue both lack basic safety features like pedestrian-scaled lighting, accessible curb cuts, visible crosswalk signage, and wider

sidewalks. The intersection of Buchanan Street and Lake Avenue is confusing and dangerous to people who drive and walk in Canal Park. Visible pedestrian crosswalk signage and more clearly marked crossing points would enhance pedestrian safety, reduce the need for jaywalking, and improve the legibility and safety of the streets in Canal Park for everyone.

PUBLIC SPACE & PROGRAMMING

1. Host diverse events and programs to provide a range of experiences



“It would be a beautiful setting for more free community events.”

What types of programs and events would you like to see in Canal Park?



53%

Farmers' market



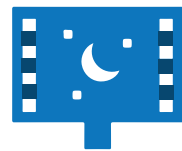
43%

Outdoor
concerts



42%

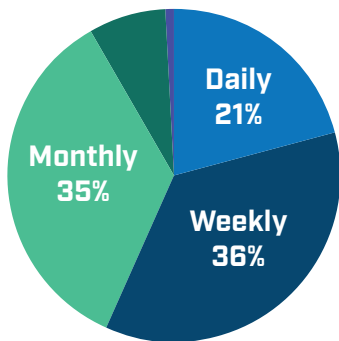
Pedestrianized
streets



20%

Outdoor
movies

How often do you visit Canal Park?



Annually or less 7%

First time or never 1%

34% want more things
to do

20% want activities
for kids

Diverse programs and events are critical to creating a Canal Park that is inclusive, accessible, and welcoming to people of all ages and backgrounds. More than 90% of engagement respondents visit Canal Park at least once a month, while 57% of people visit at least once a week. A consistent calendar of diverse events and programs will ensure that frequent visitors to the park are engaged, and will help draw other visitors more often.

These events should activate Canal Park during the day and night, and all year-round. Programming should appeal to residents and visitors of all ages, ethnicities, and income levels. Programming should also reflect and celebrate the culture and diversity of Duluth and its neighborhoods. Ongoing conversations with diverse community members will help determine what types of events would be successful.



1.1 Regular concerts, movies, activations of underutilized spaces

Music is a people magnet. Musical events should vary in scale, from buskers on street corners to large-scale concerts. Of course, musical tastes also vary, so it's important to schedule a series of events that appeal to broad audiences. Hosting a weekly concert series in a parking spot during the summer would be a good place to start. An outdoor movie series would draw people to Canal Park at night, and could cater to people of all

ages with a carefully curated movie selection. In some cities, the movie screenings are determined by a public vote as a way to build more community engagement and excitement into the program. More programming and event ideas are discussed below. The key is that programming must be consistent, diverse in time of day, day of the year, well managed, and appeal to broad audiences.

2. Make Canal Park an all-season destination



“Create a more year round place, not weekends and summer season. A place to be all times of the year.”

In Duluth, there are on average, per year*:

61

days of snowfall

136

days with at least 1' of snow on the ground

Canal Park is overcrowded in the summer, with few activations in the winter. These were popular sentiments among engagement participants. While the crowding in summer is a symptom of success, this activity needs to be more evenly distributed throughout the year. Duluth is a four-season city and Canal Park should celebrate that fact by delivering programs, events, and infrastructure that responds to the unique traditions and temperatures of each season. Improving winter programming and design is a good place to start. Duluth is a winter wonderland for 4-5 months of the year, and Canal Park could become a hub of winter festivities and programs.

What would encourage you to visit Canal Park in the winter?



65%

Winter festival



49%

Fire pits



40%

Better snow plowing on sidewalks & roads



21%

Outdoor curling

*Source: <https://www.currentresults.com/Weather/Minnesota/Places/duluth-snowfall-totals-snow-accumulation-averages.php>

2.1 Winter festival/market that will complement Bentleyville programming

We asked people what would encourage them to visit Canal Park in the winter. The most common response, by far, was a winter festival. A multi-day event to celebrate winter culture in Duluth could include outdoor fire pits, hot chocolate stands, ice sculptures, a snow maze, concerts, or even a winter fashion show. The possibilities are only limited by the community's imagination. The city, local

businesses, and other stakeholders could form a festival committee to manage and organize the event. People love Bentleyville, but that event ends every year on December 26. New programs or events in the later winter months would give people something to look forward to and a reason to visit Canal Park after the holiday hype has ended.



Image: Winnipeg Free Press

2.2 Winter warming stations

People need places to warm up and seek shelter from the wind, particularly along the lake. In Winnipeg, MB the warming stations along the Red River Skating Trail double as interactive art installations. Warming Huts is an international design competition that brings

colorful and creative structures for people to play in and escape the cold. The program is managed by the Manitoba Association of Architects. Duluth could launch a homegrown version of the Warming Huts competition, and install the creations throughout Canal Park.

2.3 Provide more opportunities for winter recreational sports [Skating, curling, cross country ski trail, etc.]

Duluthians enjoy active lifestyles, so why not make Canal Park a hub for outdoor winter recreation? An ice skating trail could be constructed for a low cost along the Lakewalk. Several residents also suggested grooming cross country ski trails throughout Canal Park in winter. The Freezeway in Edmonton is an inspiring example of a city embracing ‘skateability’ and using ice trails to enliven outdoor space in winter. Similarly, temporary curling rinks could be installed on surface

parking lots, or on the lake. Although not technically a sport, bringing a temporary sauna to Canal Park would be a guaranteed success. The Little Box Sauna is a full-size sauna on wheels. This project is based in the Twin Cities but could easily be brought to Canal Park in coordination with a winter festival. It’s important to note that any new recreational activity should be supported with access to fire pits and warming stations. It gets cold, after all!

3. Create more spaces for people



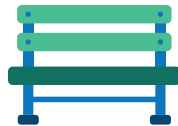
“Canal Park is a great asset. But we have so much space dedicated to parking lots - would love to see some of that converted to green space and maybe a playground, tables for public use.”

Top 3 design changes people would like to see



42%

More access to
restrooms



38%

More places
to sit



38%

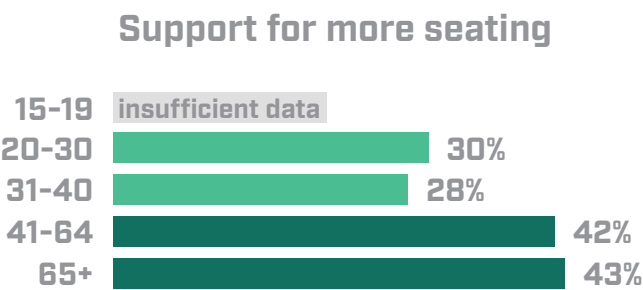
New public
plaza



People want more space in Canal Park for, well, people. While programming draws people into Canal Park, great public spaces invite people to stay. Successful public spaces happen by design, and hundreds of engagement respondents had ideas on how to improve the look and feel of pedestrian areas in Canal Park. Creating spaces for people means leveraging the pleasant and popular areas in Canal Park (and there are many – the Lakewalk, the park at North Pier, the shops along Canal Park Drive), and improving the areas that don’t feel safe or comfortable to be in. In many ways, Canal Park struggles with its own success. The demand for places to socialize, rest, shop, and do any other activity that people like to do in public far exceeds the current supply. Fortunately, there are plenty of low-cost ways to repurpose underperforming streets and spaces, and build on favorite areas in Canal Park.

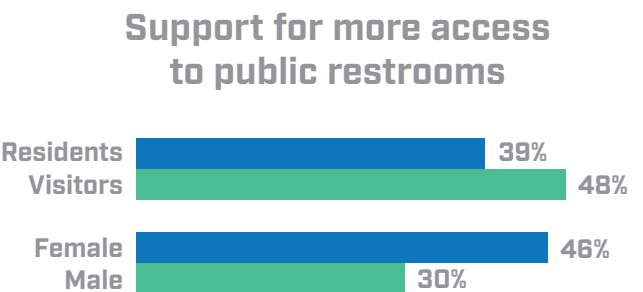
3.1 Develop a seating plan for all of Canal Park

Outdoor seating in Canal Park is inconsistent and sometimes difficult to find. Among respondents over the age of 65, seating was the top design priority. A comprehensive seating plan would ensure that people have access to spots for resting and socializing throughout the entire area. This should begin with an assessment of seating in Canal Park to determine which areas are currently underserved with seating. The city might consider offering businesses and community members the opportunity to purchase nameplates to ‘sponsor’ a bench. Seating must also be diverse, and include a mix of benches, tables, loungers, and moveable bistro-style furniture that allows people to customize the space.



3.2 Increase availability and awareness of public restrooms

Public restrooms extend the amount of time that people can spend in a public space. This is especially important for families with young children. Among respondents, visitors and women placed more priority on public restrooms than residents and men, respectively. Many engagement participants said that restrooms were too scarce or difficult to find in Canal Park unless you buy something from a café or restaurant. Building and maintaining clean public restrooms meets a fundamental human need, and could encourage people to stay longer, shop more, and enjoy Canal Park more often.



3.3 Activate green spaces along the Lakewalk

The Lakewalk is one of Canal Park’s greatest assets and attractions. People love walking along the water, but more could be done to activate the green spaces beside the Lakewalk to encourage people on a stroll to stop and stay awhile. Simple installations like benches

would encourage more people to linger and enjoy the view. Fire pits would help attract more people in winter. Temporary and rotating public art installations and yard game stations may encourage people to revisit the Lakewalk by breathing new life into the route.

4. Fill Canal Park with play



“I wish Canal Park was more kid-focused, including more playscapes and recreational opportunities.”



Canal Park is a hub for entertainment and fun. Residents want to see more opportunities for play and recreation, particularly for families and young children. This might include events and programming like outdoor movies and concerts, but it also relates to designing the park in a way that provides free and casual opportunities for play. Embedding playfulness into existing infrastructure and programming would leverage Canal Park’s status as an entertainment district, while creating opportunities for more inclusive and affordable fun. Swing sets, interactive public art, or small play structures could be built into existing infrastructure throughout the park to encourage people of all ages to have fun and be playful in Canal Park.

4.1 Play area for children

There are few places for families with children to go and enjoy Canal Park without spending money. A new playground would be a popular destination, and help draw more local families to the area. The playground in Bayfront Festival Park is creative and engaging, but it can be difficult to access. Locating a new playground in or near the southern tip of Canal Park, by

the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center, would leverage the existing green space that is popular with residents and visitors of all ages. A nautical or aquatic theme for the play area would tie in nicely with the Visitor Center and give families a reason to keep coming back to the area.

5. Increase the amount of ‘local’ uses



“I love Canal Park before and after tourist season. Locals have no incentives to frequent the stores (local discounts like other tourist locations). I avoid it like the plague.”



“Canal Park is for tourists.” We heard this statement from many Duluth residents during the engagement process. Our goal is to make Canal Park a place for everyone, so it’s clear that more emphasis is required on the needs and interests of residents. To achieve this, we need to take a deeper look at opportunities for housing and commercial services targeted at Duluthians.

5.1 Mixed use housing developments

“We also need more housing - if not in Canal Park, at least downtown. We need more residents that can easily access these areas to help them thrive and not just fit the 9-5 or the tourists (whom I love and appreciate). Great things are happening and I’m excited for the continued improvements!!”

People want to live in Canal Park. It’s easy to see why. The area is walkable, adjacent to downtown Duluth, and beautifully located on the water. Instead of building more hotels for tourists, residents want opportunities to live in the area. Developing vacant or underused lots into mixed-use housing would make Canal Park a more complete and well-rounded community. People who live in an area care more about the maintenance and safety of that space. They are also more likely to support local businesses. This is a large undertaking, but one that could address many challenges identified in Canal Park.

5.2 Provide more opportunities for small, local businesses to operate out of Canal Park

One in four people who completed our survey said they go to Canal Park to shop. The small, independent businesses make Canal Park an attractive and unique shopping experience. Rather than competing with suburban malls or car-oriented commercial centers, Canal Park must embrace and support the local business community, and explore opportunities to grow the presence of independent shops in the area.

a) Fewer chains. More goods and services that are geared towards local consumption to balance out all the tourist shops.

The shops and businesses in Canal Park should serve residents and reflect the unique culture of Duluth. Engagement participants expressed concern that too many chain stores were moving into Canal Park, diluting the unique experience of the area. The city must work with the business community to understand what's working and what gaps exist in Canal Park's commercial sector. Others felt that business growth has leaned too heavily on the restaurant, bar, and entertainment sector. A feasibility study may help to identify opportunities for new services and retail like grocery stores that will serve residents and the hundreds of people who work in Canal Park.



b) Farmer's market: good for locals and tourists.

Duluth residents want farmers' markets in Canal Park. Farmer's markets were the most common response when we asked people what type of programming they would like to see in Canal Park. Farmer's markets provide fresh, healthy food options to residents, support the local food economy, and help draw tourists to the area. These markets could be held during off-peak times like weekday evenings or weekend mornings. Surface parking lots could be temporarily closed to provide space for vendors to set up.



NEXT STEPS

PILOT PROJECTS



Beginning in early 2018, the Imagine Canal Park team will lead a series of design and programming interventions to test ideas that came out of the community engagement process. These interventions will be installed throughout Canal Park, and located in areas that we heard need attention or improvement. Some projects will include physical changes like seating, signage, or repurposing road space. Other changes will provide more things to do in Canal Park like farmers' markets, movies, or one-time events. In many cases, stakeholders like business owners, residents, and local organizations will be invited to support the implementation of these

interventions. All changes will be low-cost and temporary. The Imagine Canal Park team will evaluate every change that is made in Canal Park to determine what worked, what didn't, and what should be made permanent. The goal is to allow Duluth residents and visitors the opportunity to see, touch, and experience their ideas for Canal Park in action, and provide their feedback to the team.

Based on the engagement feedback, we have outlined six pilot projects that the City of Duluth could potentially test out over the next 12 months (January 2018 to January 2019).

Pilot Idea #1: Connect Canal Park Project

Canal Park must be easier to access by foot. These projects address significant barriers for people walking into Canal Park from downtown. Collectively, these projects make it easier for people to discover safe and accessible routes into Canal Park, enhance pedestrian safety, and capitalize on existing yet underused access points to Canal Park.

Develop a comprehensive pedestrian wayfinding system throughout downtown and Canal Park.

Description:

Begin by conducting a comprehensive asset map of Canal Park and the surrounding area to understand what destinations should be included in the wayfinding system. Next, identify locations to install signs by focusing on places where people commonly get lost or need directions. Work with local graphic designers to create sign templates and designs. Finally, install the signs and organize a community walking event to celebrate the launch.

When:

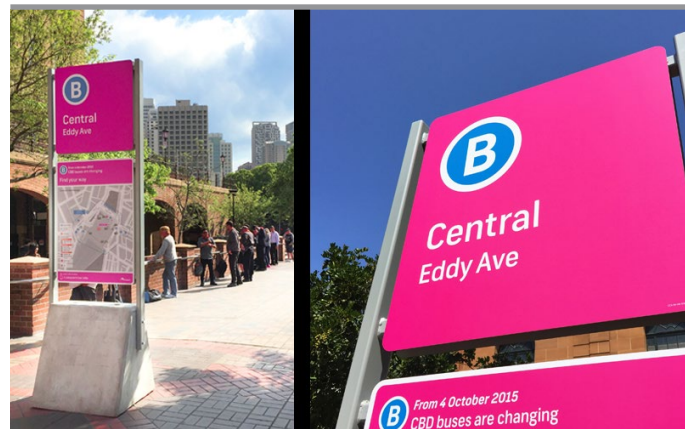
February - December

Measures of success:

- More pedestrian traffic between downtown and Canal Park

Case Study:

Temporary wayfinding in Sydney, Australia



A temporary signage system helps pedestrians navigate the central business district during road construction projects. The system was limited to three “sign types” in a bold pink which made it easier for people to identify the system. Signs were mounted to existing poles, walls, and concrete-base structures.

Image: BrandCulture Communications

Enhance safety and comfort of the I-35 overpass on S. Lake Avenue.

Description:

Pedestrians need a more secure boundary between the sidewalk and road on S. Lake Avenue on the I-35 overpass. This can be done quickly and affordably by temporarily installing plants and greenery along the median. Fresh asphalt could be laid to create a more level curb cut to improve accessibility for people using mobility devices or pushing strollers. Plastic bollards or planters along the sidewalk would enhance perceptions of safety by creating a physical barrier between the sidewalk and road. Finally, simple beautification efforts such as greenery, public art, and lighting along the pedestrian fence would create a more pleasant pedestrian experience and offset the drab concrete.

When:

February - December

Measures of success:

- More people reporting feelings of safety and comfort while walking on the overpass
- More people walking to Canal Park
- Higher proportion of children and older adults walking on the overpass

Case Study:

Eastside Pedestrian Bridge, Pittsburgh, PA



This pedestrian bridge was designed by a local artist and features pedestrian scale lighting and thousands of glass sequins hanging on a protective fence barrier. While this is a pedestrian bridge and S. Lake Ave. is a multimodal bridge, Duluth can apply some of the same approaches to create a more intimate, pedestrian-friendly experience for those walking between downtown and Canal Park.

Image: Pittsburgh Glass Center

Enhance connection between Lake Place Park and Canal Park.



Image: Duluth Experience

Description:

Lake Place Park is a convenient but underused connection between downtown Duluth and Canal Park. Simple design and programming interventions would elevate awareness about this access point, and encourage more pedestrians and cyclists to visit Canal Park. Additional seating, lighting, and small-scale events like outdoor concerts would create a more comfortable environment and draw people to the area. Improved wayfinding signage, coordinated with a larger wayfinding program for Canal Park, would increase spatial awareness and help people navigate their way to Canal Park without a car.

When:

4-8 weeks, anytime between April to November

Measures of success:

- More people reporting satisfaction with the amount of public space in Canal Park
- More people reporting feelings of safety and comfort while walking in Canal Park
- More people walking or cycling to Canal Park
- More people using Lake Place Park as an access point to Canal Park

Pilot Idea #2: Pedestrian Paradise Project

During peak seasons, Canal Park is bursting at the seams with people. The Pedestrian Paradise Project will provide more public space to alleviate pressure during peak season, while providing year-round spaces for all to enjoy. These projects will increase comfort, safety, sociability, and encourage people to relax, kick back, and stay a while in Canal Park.

Transform a parking lot into an outdoor living room.

Description:

Create a new public plaza in the Lighthouse Lot at the southern tip of the Lakewalk. This space would relieve pressure on the green space next to Maritime Visitor Center, which is frequently crowded on warm or sunny days. Work with the business community, Maritime Visitor Center, and other local stakeholders to develop a calendar of events and programs for the space. Make this parking lot a go-to space for fun and family-oriented events like concerts, movies, weekly farmer's markets, and more.

When:

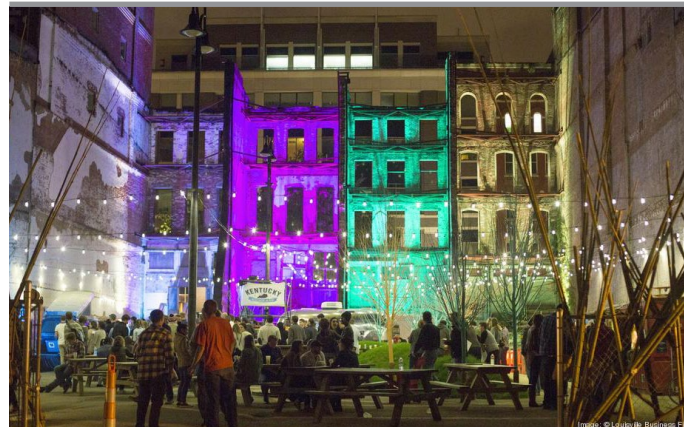
4-8 weeks, anytime between April to November

Measures of success:

- Increased average length of time that people are spending in Canal Park
- Increased number of people visiting the southern portion of Canal Park
- More people reporting satisfaction with the amount of public space in Canal Park
- More people reporting satisfaction with the amount and frequency of events and programs in Canal Park

Case Study:

Resurfaced in Louisville, KY



The first Resurfaced event was organized by City Collaborative in October 2014, where a 16,000-square foot lot was transformed into a vibrant social hub using low-cost, temporary materials such as: food trucks, a stage, moveable chairs, grass mounds, trees, and whimsical lighting. The space was programmed during the day and night and drew crowds of thousands of people. The success of this project has spawned many similar efforts across the city.

Image: Louisville Business First

Create an outdoor network of rest zones.

Description:

Designate a series of rest zones throughout Canal Park to enhance comfort and encourage people to increase their time spent in the area. These rest zones should include a variety of seating options and portable washrooms that are well maintained. These areas could also include seasonal variations to provide shade in the summer and fire pits or warming huts in the winter. Locations could include the Lighthouse Lot, the northeast section of the Lakewalk, and Buchanan Street once pedestrianized.

When:

4-8 weeks, anytime between April to November

Measures of success:

- More people reporting satisfaction with the amount of public space in Canal Park
- More people reporting feelings of safety and comfort while walking in Canal Park
- More people reporting that Canal Park is a child-friendly destination
- More people reporting that Canal Park is an age-friendly destination for seniors

Case Study:

Public Restroom Pilot Program in Denver, CO



Prior to investing money into building permanent public restrooms, the City of Denver is piloting “mobile restrooms” in various high-profile areas. Each restroom trailer costs about \$12,00 per month to lease, almost half of which is allocated for the attendant(s). The restrooms are cleaned nightly and regularly rotated to different parts of the city according to a schedule that can be accessed online. The city solicits public feedback about the trailers, including suggestions for where they should be located. For City planners, this method will ensure that the future permanent restrooms will be built in the most optimal locations.

Image: Katie Pyzyk

Pilot Idea #3: Buchanan Plaza Project

Buchanan Street is the heart of Canal Park. Smack-dab in the center of the area, Buchanan Street is the best location to create a new lively and inviting public space in Canal Park. Closing Buchanan Street to car traffic and temporarily programming the DeWitt Seitz alley would increase pedestrian space while minimally affecting traffic flow. Importantly, the Buchanan Plaza Project would elevate this underused but vital area of Canal Park.

Temporarily pedestrianize Buchanan Street.

Description:

Create a new pedestrian plaza in Canal Park by temporarily closing Buchanan Street to traffic. Activate the space with low cost materials like chairs, picnic tables, planters, and small-scale programming. Work with volunteers to count the number of people who use this space, and survey users to gauge levels of satisfaction.

When:

4-8 week period, anywhere from April to November

Measures of success:

- Increased number of people enjoying space in front of Dewitt Seitz Marketplace
- Increased average length of time that people are spending in Canal Park
- More people reporting satisfaction with the amount of public space in Canal Park
- More people reporting feelings of safety and comfort while walking in Canal Park

Case Study:

Sunset Triangle in Los Angeles, CA



In 2012, an underused street in the Silverlake neighborhood of LA was transformed into a pedestrian plaza using planters, paint, and umbrellas. This provides residents and visitors access to the shops lining the plaza with a colorful and welcoming place to socialize, sit, and/or eat. The plaza regularly hosts small farmers' markets and events.

Image: Suo Zai

Beautify the alley between Little Angie's and The DeWitt Seitz Marketplace.

Description:

Transform the alleyway beside Little Angie's, between Canal Park Drive and S. Lake Avenue, into a public space and pedestrian pathway. Recruit volunteers from the neighborhood, nearby businesses, and city staff to make it a community building event. Picking up garbage, improving lighting, and installing tables and chairs could make the alley a welcoming place to walk, and help reduce sidewalk congestion on the main streets. Collaborate with local artists to generate ideas for interactive art installations that would make the alley a popular selfie location. Work closely with local businesses to coordinate this project with their delivery and garbage collection services, which currently take place in the alley.

When:

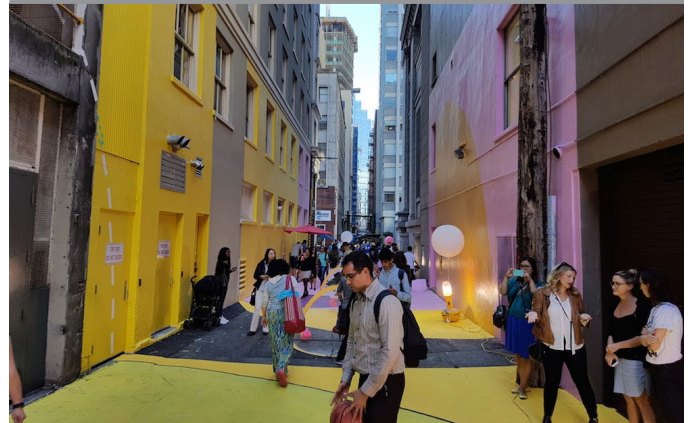
1 week, anytime between April to November

Measures of success:

- More people reporting satisfaction with the amount of public space in Canal Park
- More people reporting feelings of safety and comfort while walking in Canal Park

Case Study:

More Awesome Now laneway activation in Vancouver, Canada



More Awesome Now is a pilot project to reimagine Vancouver's laneway system. Dark and smelly alleys that people once avoided were transformed into places that welcomed play, socializing, and lingering. Led by the City of Vancouver and the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, the project was made possible through collaborating with property owners, tenants, and visitors who all shared the responsibility for enjoying, cleaning, and monitoring each alley.

Image: Kenneth Chan / Daily Hive

Pilot Idea #4: Lake Access Project

If Buchanan Street is the heart, then the lake edges are Canal Park's arteries. The Lake Access Project will make it easier for people to enjoy Duluth's greatest natural asset – Lake Superior. Activating Harbor Road and Baywalk, and infusing the Lakewalk with more programming will create a continuous waterfront experience for people to walk, run, and bike on all year round.

Temporarily activate Harbor Road and Baywalk with activities, market vendors, landscaping, public spaces, and other amenities to create a fully connected and active waterfront.

Description:

Develop a programming and design plan for these spaces for the next 12 months. A new combination of public amenities could be launched every month or each quarter to allow for experimentation and to generate more interest in the area. Begin with low cost interventions like moveable furniture (tables and chairs). Engage the business community to gauge interest in sponsoring events like a food truck festival or farmer's market along the water.

When:

Every weekend for minimum of 4 weeks, anytime between April and October

Measures of success:

- Increase in the number of people flowing between Bayfront Festival Park and Canal Park
- People spending more time and engaging in diverse types of activity along Harbor Road and Baywalk
- Increased usage of the DECC parking ramp by people visiting Canal Park

Case Study:

Smorgasburg & Brooklyn Flea, Brooklyn, NY



Visitors and residents of Brooklyn flock to a weekly food and flea market at the East River State Park, a part of the Brooklyn waterfront that previously had little pedestrian or commercial activity. Organizers carefully curate the market to create a high-quality experience with a diverse range of eating and shopping options. Since 2008, it has served as a site for incubating hundreds of new businesses.

Image: Kate Glicksberg/Brooklyn Flea

Create opportunities for play along the Lakewalk.

Description:

Identify spaces along the Lakewalk to install new amenities and programs to encourage playful behavior. Install a pop-up playground, oversized yard games, sports courts, or temporary beach/splash pad. Potential locations include the lawns next to the Maritime Visitor Center and at the northern end of the Lakewalk, or the Lighthouse Lot.

Case Study: Campus Martius, Detroit, Michigan



A street in downtown Detroit is temporarily transformed into a “Sports Zone” every summer. The space features a sand volleyball court and four basketball courts that are designed and painted by different local artists each year.

Image: Joe Gall

When:

4-8 weeks, anytime between April to November

Measures of success:

- More children in Canal Park
- More people reporting that Canal Park is a child-friendly destination

Case Study: Historic Northwest Rising, West Palm Beach, Florida



The City of West Palm Beach recently acquired a vacant lot that they wanted to develop into a public space. Many of the local residents were split on whether or not it was an appropriate place for children to play. The City tested out a variety of solutions for the vacant lot, including seating, food, shade, etc. To prototype a play area in real time, they set up an Imagination Playground, a mobile set of large foam blocks. They had volunteers monitor the playset to make sure that children were playing safely. They would store the playset at night, and bring it back onto the site after school on weekdays.

Image: 8 80 Cities

Pilot Idea #5: Canal Park Winter Village Project

People want reasons to visit and enjoy Canal Park in winter, and a Winter Village is the perfect opportunity. The Winter Village Project would bring a vibrant mix of winter-focused programs, events, and design improvements to Canal Park that celebrate the city's unique cold weather culture.

Transform Canal Park into a cozy winter village.

Description:

Organize a winter festival in Canal Park with a series of events like a polar bear swim, outdoor concerts, a craft vendor market, and food vendors. Implement a series of design interventions like winter warming huts, pop up skating rink in a parking lot or along the Lake Walk, fire pits, and a pop-up sauna.

When:

2-4 weeks, anytime between February to March

Measures of success:

- More people visiting Canal Park in winter
- More people reporting positive feelings about Canal Park as a winter destination
- Canal Park businesses reporting more sales

Case Study:

Warming Huts competition in Winnipeg, Canada



Since 2009, Winnipeg has hosted an annual, open design competition for warming hut concepts. Each winning project receives a budget of up to \$16,500 CAD for design and construction. The winning designers construct their huts within the same week, allowing the public to watch their visions come to life. The huts/ installations are placed along the Red River Mutual Trail until the end of the skating season, and provide people with a new way to experience winter in the city.

Image: Ruth Bonneville / Winnipeg Free Press Files

Pilot Idea #6: Canal Park on the Move Project

Traffic congestion and parking are major challenges in Canal Park. The Canal Park on the Move Project would alleviate traffic pressure by reducing the number of cars that need to enter the area. This is achieved by doubling down on recent efforts to provide trolley service into Canal Park, and by encouraging motorists to park their cars in downtown parking ramps. To maximize impacts, these innovations should coincide with vehicular traffic should be rerouted on a temporary basis to identify safer and more efficient methods of moving cars in and through Canal Park.



Image: DTA / canalpark.com

Enhance visibility and comfort of trolley stops.

Description:

Provide large and visible signage at trolley stops. Clearly display route map, schedule, and the fact that it's FREE! Use sidewalk art to highlight the waiting area. Have signs in downtown parking ramps showing people how to park downtown and take the trolley to Canal Park.

Measures of success:

- Increased awareness and usage of trolley service
- Increased usage of downtown parking lots and ramps
- Decreased traffic in Canal Park

Temporarily eliminate parking in the interior of Canal Park and promote shuttle service/trolleys/walking from downtown lots.

Description:

The current parking system in Canal Park isn't working, so why not try something radical. Temporarily closing parking lots and on-street parking in Canal Park would send a positive message that this area prioritizes the needs of people over cars. Work with local businesses to allay concerns and address challenges related to the temporary loss of parking. Implement a comprehensive promotional and communications plan to inform the public and ensure they understand that this is a test. Also design and promote a strategy to enhance access to Canal Park from downtown parking lots. Increase trolley or shuttle services, and

launch a comprehensive wayfinding system to encourage more people to walk or bike to Canal Park. This could only be successful if done in conjunction with the activation of the parking lots with other amenities and programs.

When:

2 consecutive weekends during high season (May – September)

Measures of success:

- More people walking or biking to Canal Park
- More people reporting satisfaction about traffic flow in Canal Park

Re-route vehicular traffic.

Description:

Test new traffic patterns by implementing new turning and parking restrictions for a temporary trial period. Two options that could be implemented individually or simultaneously include: 1) Eliminate street parking on S. Lake Avenue, and; 2) Restrict left turns for vehicles travelling south on S. Lake Avenue, except at Morse Street. This pilot project should be launched in the off-season to mitigate side effects, and allow improvements to be made before the crowds arrive in the spring and summer. A robust communications and promotional campaign must inform all residents and local stakeholders about this pilot project well in advance of implementation. The impacts on traffic flow should be carefully studied to determine how these changes impact traffic flow. The results of this evaluation should be made public once complete.



When:

2-4 weeks, anytime between February to March

Measures of success:

- Improved traffic efficiency and flow in and through Canal Park
- More people reporting satisfaction about driving through Canal Park
- More people reporting feelings of safety and comfort while walking in Canal Park

CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT



This report marks the official end of the first phase of community engagement. It summarizes the collective vision that Duluth residents have for Canal Park, as well as their responses to our three key questions: What do you like about Canal Park? What needs to be improved? And, what ideas or suggestions do you have to enhance the programming, design, and accessibility of Canal Park?

The Imagine Canal Park team will continue to host meetings with stakeholders and community members in the lead up to the pop-up interventions. These meetings will provide an opportunity for the community to review

the results of the first phase of engagement to ensure we interpreted the findings correctly, and didn't miss anything important. This report will also be made available to download on the Imagine Canal Park website with instructions on how to send additional feedback.

The second phase of engagement will focus on how Duluth residents would like to see their collective vision for Canal Park brought to life in the long term. In this next phase, we'll be evaluating the success and impact of our temporary interventions, and asking residents and local stakeholders how they would like to be involved in building the future of Canal Park.

FINAL REPORT

The Imagine Canal Park team will collect user data and feedback for each pop-up installation and program we implement in Canal Park. We will examine what changes worked well, which didn't, and why? The results of this evaluation process will inform the recommendations that

go into the final Imagine Canal Park report. This final report will shape the future growth and development of Canal Park, and set out a clear plan of action to ensure that residents' collective vision for this area is realized.

