



City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: Mayor Roger Reinert provides update on downtown public safety efforts

BY: Kelli Latuska, Public Information Officer

Mayor Roger Reinert provides update on downtown public safety efforts

[DULUTH, MN] This morning, Mayor Roger Reinert, along with key public safety leaders from the City of Duluth, Saint Louis County, Downtown Duluth, and the nonprofit community spoke to a gathering of over 100 individuals interested in the future of downtown. The public forum was organized and hosted by Kristi Stokes and the Downtown Duluth organization.

“This was an open, honest, and needed conversation,” said Mayor Reinert. “Downtown Duluth matters. It is the heart of our city and a hub for our entire region – a region that includes northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin. 30,000 square miles. Downtown must be a vibrant, safe, and welcoming place for residents, business owners, customers, and visitors. It doesn’t always feel that way, and that must change,” said Reinert.

Downtown Duluth is one of Reinert’s “Big Issues” –key priorities where he expects City leaders and staff to be focused and engaged. “While we’ve made progress over the past year, we know it hasn’t been enough,” Reinert said. “We continue to confront issues that include vandalism, trash, broken infrastructure, graffiti, unhoused individuals, and a concentration of problem behaviors.”

Mayor Reinert outlined multiple steps the administration has taken over the past year to make progress. These include a package of public safety ordinances, securing access to city-owned downtown parking ramps, increased patrols in the skywalk system, and the deconstruction of abandoned structures downtown.

Mayor Reinert also highlighted further steps that will be prioritized in 2025:

- A stronger, more visible public safety presence on foot and at street level.
- A focus by all downtown stakeholders and property owners on cleanliness, basic maintenance, and graffiti removal. “A clean downtown signals we care, and care changes behavior,” said Reinert.
- The City is also re-evaluating the existing skywalk system with a goal of reducing its scope and increasing activity at the street level.
- The City is also asking downtown service providers to develop and implement Good Neighbor policies on and near their locations.

“Downtown has become the center for our region’s social services network, but concentrating everything

in one part of one community isn't sustainable," said Reinert. "We also need to encourage integrated and easier to access services throughout northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin."

- Finally, Mayor Reinert asks the community to step up and do their part to encourage a safer downtown by calling 911 and providing direct and specific information so County dispatchers can appropriately prioritize the response.

"I believe in downtown Duluth, and I believe it will thrive again," said Mayor Reinert. "Not just as a destination, but as our newest residential neighborhood. We've started the work. Together, let's accelerate it."

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