

DOWNTOWN DULUTH MODAL CONNECTIONS STUDY: SCOPE OF WORK

Objective: *Conduct a technical analysis of existing transportation conditions between Canal Park, the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC)/Bayfront Park, and Downtown Duluth (central business district or CBD). Fully review the existing interaction or barriers that exist between these three locations. Identify deficiencies and opportunities that exist to connect all modes of travel (auto, public transit, bike, pedestrian, rail) between these three locations. This technical analysis will be the basis for the Greater Downtown Council (GDC) and City of Duluth to formulate a transformative vision and implement improvements to create stronger interconnectedness between these three locations.*

Background

With the completion of the *Duluth Comprehensive Plan (2006)* and *Duluth's East Downtown, Hillside and Waterfront Charrette Report and Plan "Duluth Charrette" (2005)*, the City of Duluth would like to conduct a technical modal needs analysis focused on Canal Park, the DECC/Bayfront Park, and Downtown Duluth (CBD). Annually, 3.5 million tourists visit Duluth and 18,000 people work downtown. Interstate 35 (I-35) creates a distinct barrier for tourists and downtown workers moving between these three districts. Currently, connections exist across Lake Avenue, the Northwest Passage Skywalk, 5th Avenue West, and the Minnesota Slip Bridge. The concept is to examine the adequateness of existing infrastructure for sufficiently encouraging the movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit services between the districts of Canal Park, the DECC/Bayfront Park, and Downtown Duluth. The goal of this technical analysis is to fully examine existing conditions to gain an understanding of what interactions exist and/or do not exist between these three districts that this study will focus on. Preliminary ideas for improvement include improved walkways, bikeways, bridges, public transit, and/or establishing new points of connectivity or infrastructure. The technical analysis devised by MIC staff will be used to support a larger connectivity vision for all of Downtown Duluth (including the DECC/Bayfront Park and Canal Park) which will be developed by the Greater Downtown Council and City of Duluth.

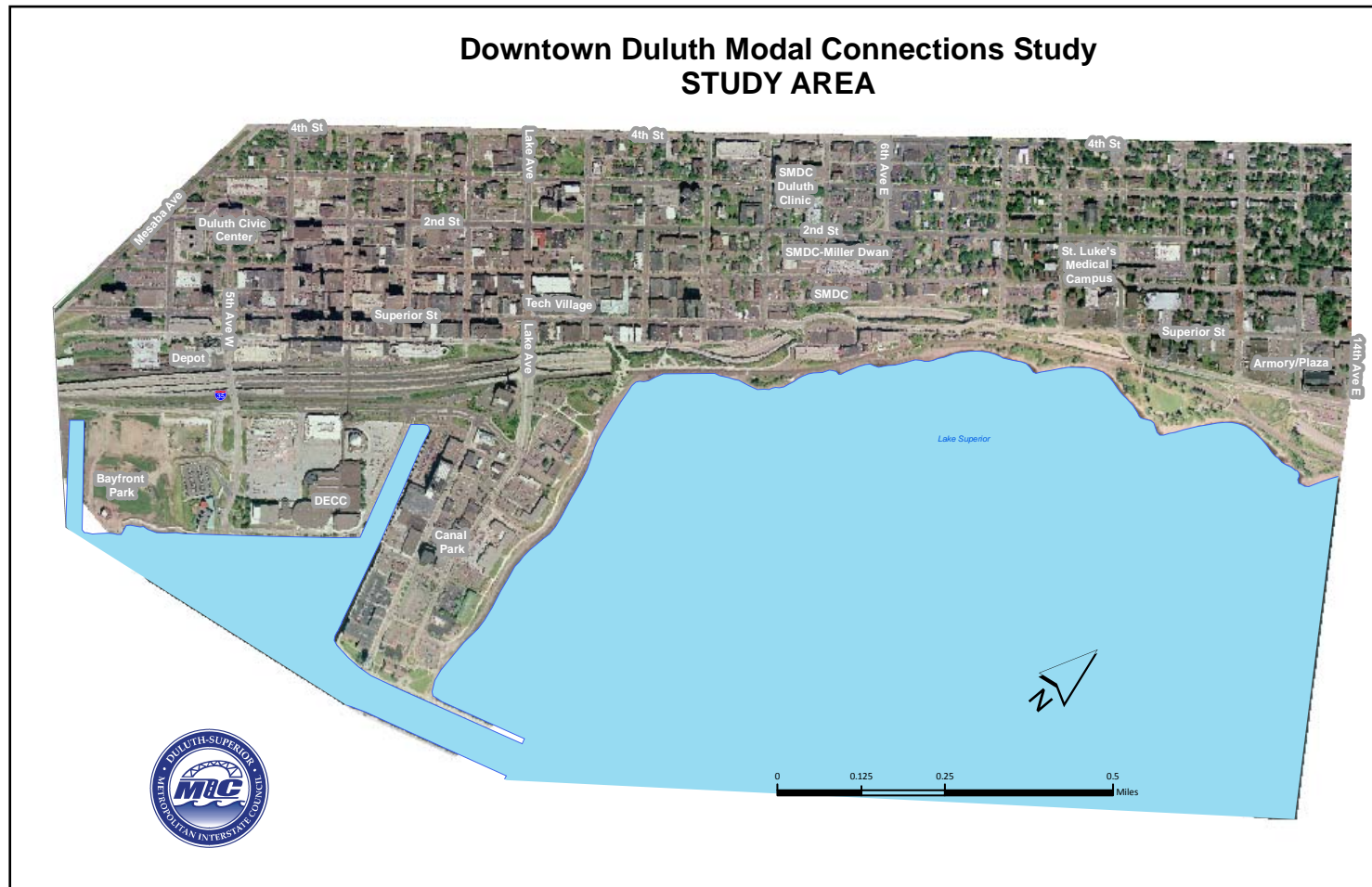
Additionally, this study will also examine improved connections between Downtown Duluth, Lake Place Park and the Lakewalk. Other issues this study will address will be improved connectivity to the Hillside and Medical District neighborhoods and linkages between key cultural corridors which include the Depot area Arts District, the Old Downtown and the Hillside Sacred Heart and Washington Studios Arts Center. Lastly, 2nd and 3rd Streets are pre-interstate one-way pairs and serve as barriers connecting the Hillside to Downtown. Examining the currently functionality of these one-way pairs will be included in this study.



The Lake Avenue bridge between Downtown Duluth and Canal Park.

Study Area

The study area for this project will run from Mesaba Avenue (T.H. 194) on the west to 14th Avenue East, and from 4th Street down to Lake Superior.



Major Work Activities

- Obtain the new DECC arena and expansion plans, including additional parking, and create a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) layer. Utilize small area modeling to project new trip generation that is expected from this site. Coordinate with the DECC as appropriate.
- Obtain current numbers of visitors in Canal Park, DECC/Bayfront Park, and Downtown Duluth.
- Conduct pedestrian skywalk counts.
- Conduct traffic and pedestrian counts for entrance/exit traffic during an average and/or peak DECC event, which would include pedestrian movements within the skywalk and sidewalk system.
- Conduct traffic and pedestrian counts during the summer tourism season, an average June/July weekend, noting where bottlenecks occur.
- Examine current transportation movements (auto, pedestrian, bicycle, public transit).
- Examine the sidewalk width of both the Lake Avenue and 5th Avenue West bridges and compare to similar settings and structures elsewhere.
- Obtain the kayak route and create a GIS layer.
- Review previous plans that assess infrastructure and recommend connectivity between districts in Duluth.
- Identify deficient multimodal movements within and between the three districts of study.
- Examine key corridors that could improve linkages between the CBD, Canal Park and the DECC/Bayfront Park.
- Examine the sufficiency of modal links to the Lakewalk, including Lake Place Park.
- Examine the alignment for the future Munger Trail extension into Canal Park.
- Assess wayfinding within and between the three districts of study.
- Provide series of technical information and recommendations for the City of Duluth and the Greater Downtown Council.
- Conduct a survey effort of businesses and/or tourists if warranted.
- Work with LISC to obtain information on current projects which include greater connectivity of the Hillside and Medical District neighborhoods and linking cultural corridors in Downtown Duluth.
- Assess the functionality of the pre-interstate one-way pairs of 2nd and 3rd Streets.



The 5th Avenue West bridge between Downtown Duluth and the DECC/Bayfront Park.

- Examine opportunities for connectivity to Lake Place Park and the Lakewalk.

Steering Committee Membership

- Mayor Don Ness, City of Duluth
- Kristi Stokes, Greater Downtown Council (GDC)
- Bill Bennett, LHB Corporation
- Dennis Jensen, Duluth Transit Authority (DTA)
- Tom Cotruvo, City of Duluth DEDA
- Chuck Froseth, City of Duluth Physical Planning
- Cindy Voigt, City of Duluth Engineering Division
- Steve Goman, City of Duluth Engineering Division
- Pam Kramer, Local Initiatives Support Coalition (LISC)
- Ken Buehler, North Shore Scenic Railroad
- MIC Staff (Ron Chicka, Holly Butcher, James Gittemeier, Andrea Grygo Diamond)

Final Product / Completion Date / Timeframe

The final product will be a technical report identifying deficiencies and opportunities for improving connectivity between Canal Park, the DECC/Bayfront Park, and Downtown Duluth. The study timeframe will be April – Fall 2008.