



CITY OF DULUTH

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & CONSTRUCTION SERVICES
Community Planning Division

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Date: April 4, 2017

To: Planning Commission

From: Keith Hamre, Director of Planning and Construction Services

RE: Public Hearing for 14 Governing Principles

As the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan, the Governing Principles serve as a constant reminder and guidepost for future planning and community goals. The principles are intended to provide direction when the details of the Comprehensive Plan are insufficient to clearly resolve issues or make decisions. Continual reference to the principles will make sure that the concepts of the Comprehensive Plan are held in place over time.

The initial 12 principles were formally adopted by the City Council on October 24, 2005. Amendments to the initial 12 principles, and the addition of 2 principles, has been discussed at the following public meetings:

June 29, 2016, Vision Committee Meeting (City Hall Room 303)
September 21, 2016, Kick Off Event (Denfeld School)
December 14, 2016, Vision Committee Meeting (City Hall Room 108)
February 15, 2017, Vision Committee Meeting (The Depot/Train Museum)

Attached to this document are the final proposed 14 Governing Principles; they are the end the result of open and honest discussion in public meetings over the last nine months. The Planning Commission is asked to hold a public hearing on April 11th and make a recommendation to the City Council.

City of Duluth Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2006 Governing Principles (4/4/17)

Amended Per Planning Commission and Imagine Duluth 2035 Vision Committee Discussion

The Plan is the foundation upon which Duluth's regulatory tools (zoning, subdivision, shoreland, floodplain and other ordinances) and Duluth's capital improvement programs rest. The Plan's content, including the principles, policies, future land use map, and strategies, define how development, redevelopment, and preservation decisions are made.

Principle #1 - Reuse previously developed lands

Reuse of previously developed lands, including adaptive reuse of existing building stock and historic resources, directs new investment to sites which have the potential to perform at a higher level than their current state. This strengthens neighborhoods and is preferred to a dispersed development pattern with attendant alteration of natural landscapes and extensions of public services. Site preparation or building modification costs are offset by savings in existing public infrastructure such as streets, utilities, and transit, fire and police services.

Principle #2 - Declare the necessity and secure the future of undeveloped places

Undeveloped areas are an essential part of Duluth's municipal fabric - urban plazas, neighborhood parks, large tracts of public ownership and private lands zoned for minimal development. These minimally or undeveloped areas collectively create an open space system. These areas contribute to Duluth's cultural, health, recreational, and economic value and community identity. This open space system provides vistas, encourages active recreation, provides natural infrastructure as storm water retention, plant and animal habitat and water quality, and is the strongest visual element defining Duluth's sense of place.

Principle #3 - Support existing economic base

Supporting Duluth's existing economic foundation maintains jobs, tax base, and opportunity. Economic activity with specific location requirements may be subject to displacement or site competition with changes in real estate values. This traditional economic activity faces change as result of global economic patterns, changing markets, new regulation and aging of extensive infrastructure. Nevertheless, fundamentals remain and the economic contribution, sometimes taken for granted, is significant.

Principle #4 - Support economic growth sectors

Emerging and growing economic sectors add economic, cultural and social diversity. These include higher education, medical, value-added manufacturing, commercial outdoor recreation, historic resources interpretation, arts and music, information technology and visitor services. Encourage and foster locally owned and entrepreneurial ventures to enhance economic base.

Principle #5 - Promote reinvestment in neighborhoods

Duluth is strongly defined by its neighborhoods. This system should be supported through land use and transportation that fosters neighborhood reinvestment. New development or redevelopment should maximize public investment that strengthens neighborhood commercial centers or diversifies residential opportunities that fit the character.

Principle #6 - Reinforce the place-specific

Public and private actions should reinforce cultural, physical and economic features which have traditionally defined Duluth, its open space and its neighborhoods. This includes commercial areas providing neighborhood goods and services, ravine parks and other natural features that define neighborhood edges and view corridors to the Lake or River which serve to provide location and context.

Principle #7 - Create and maintain connectivity

Connectivity is established through our network of streets and highways, transit system, sidewalks, greenways, bikeways, and trails (local and regional). ~~The Non-vehicular modes should be considered more than recreation. They~~ transportation should be considered as an ~~are~~ important components of ~~an~~ the overall transportation network. Winter maintenance of sidewalks and other public ways is critical to creation of usable pedestrian systems.

Principle #8 - Encourage mix of activities, uses and densities

Cities have evolved as a mix of land uses, building types, housing types, and activities. Accommodating choice while protecting investment is a balance to strike in land use regulation. Mixed uses provide opportunity for a diversity of activity that segregated, uniform uses do not provide.

Principle #9 - Support private actions that contribute to the public realm

Private building construction and site design influences activity in adjacent public areas. Building form, height, setbacks and detailing affect the adjacent areas. The uses and activity contained in the buildings directly impacts the surroundings. Public areas should benefit from adjacent private investment.

Principle #10 - Take actions that enhance the environment, economic and social well-being of the community

Initiate land use, site design, transportation, building design and materials policies which reduce consumption of finite resources, generation of solid waste and introduction of toxic materials to land, air or waters. Also implement resiliency in design and operation with City systems and infrastructure that serves both public and private land uses.

Principle #11 – Consider education systems in land use actions

There is a connection between land use patterns and all level of educational facilities. School locations in neighborhoods and housing opportunities for students and family require

consideration of impacts on transportation and infrastructure systems, housing densities, parking and non-student uses.

Principle #12 - Create efficiencies in delivery of public services

The costs of public service must be considered in land use decisions. Street construction and maintenance, utilities, libraries, fire, police, snowplowing and recreation facilities are services directly related to the physical location of development. Infrastructure should help prescribe development location rather than react to it. The integration of public services to maximize efficiencies with all related use decisions should be evaluated.

Principle #13 - Develop a healthy community

Supporting health and well-being is a priority. The City will actively promote access for all to health resources, quality food, recreation, social and economic opportunities, and a clean and secure environment. Policy decisions will consider impacts on health and health equity.

Principle #14 - Integrate fairness into the fabric of the community

All people will have equitable access to resources and opportunities that stabilize and enhance their lives. The City recognizes historical and current disparities and will actively promote inclusive and participatory decision-making that addresses systemic barriers to success. Investments and policies will advance and maximize equity in the City.

Final edits from Staff on Principles 7 and 11 to clarify concepts

Principle #1 - Reuse previously developed lands

Reuse of previously developed lands, including adaptive reuse of existing building stock and historic resources, directs new investment to sites which have the potential to perform at a higher level than their current state. This strengthens neighborhoods and is preferred to a dispersed development pattern with attendant alteration of natural landscapes and extensions of public services. Site preparation or building modification costs are offset by savings in existing public infrastructure such as streets, utilities, and transit, fire and police services.

Previously developed lands include a range of sizes, locations, with and without structures: large 'brownfield' sites such as U.S. Steel; smaller industrial sites in a neighborhood context such as Clyde Iron; vacant 'infill' sites with streets and utilities, commercial buildings no longer in viable service, residential structures suitable for rehabilitation, (creates individual improvement as well as contributes to neighborhood vitality) and scattered vacant parcels.

Principle #2 - Declare the necessity and secure the future of undeveloped places

Undeveloped areas are an essential part of Duluth's municipal fabric - urban plazas, neighborhood parks, large tracts of public ownership and private lands zoned for minimal development. These minimally or undeveloped areas collectively create an open space system. These areas contribute to Duluth's cultural, health, recreational, and economic value and community identity. This open space system provides vistas, encourages active recreation, provides natural infrastructure as storm water retention, plant and animal habitat and water quality, and is the strongest visual element defining Duluth's sense of place.

Duluth contains a great diversity of land form. Areas where construction is less challenging have largely been developed. Much of Duluth's open areas were private lands, now tax forfeit. Areas often presumed to be public parks are tax forfeit lands and are subject to possible auction and sale. Other lands presumed to be public, are private. Legal status, common usage and public perception frequently do not match. Securing the future for key parcels of open space is critical to Duluth's identity and economic base.

Principle #3 - Support traditional economic base

Supporting Duluth's traditional economic foundation maintains jobs, tax base, and opportunity. Economic activity with specific location requirements may be subject to displacement or site competition with changes in real estate values. This traditional economic activity faces change as result of global economic patterns, changing markets, new regulation and aging of extensive infrastructure. Nevertheless, fundamentals remain and the economic contribution, sometimes taken for granted, is significant.

The traditional economic base includes port operations, transportation services, manufacturing, bulk commodity handling and related support services. Locational considerations include docks, shipping channels, railroad rights-of-way, Interstate highway and airport.

Governing Principles

Growth sectors can be as small as a new sole-proprietorship or as large as a medical complex or UMD. What they share in common is a contribution to Duluth's economic diversity which did not exist thirty years ago. Changes in technology and transportation allow business location here attracted by a disciplined work force, Lake Superior, natural landscapes, relatively low real estate prices and cultural features. Linkages between these emerging sectors and the traditional economic base will strengthen both.

Support neighborhood scale commercial areas, neighborhood parks with links to the larger city-wide parks and trails system, varieties of housing, both in cost and building types and a street pattern which places arterials on the edges of neighborhoods rather than bisecting them. Avoid large scale, non-neighborhood based activity within the core of a neighborhood.

Climate-specific materials and design; repair and use of historic walls, bridges and buildings; Lake Superior, St. Louis River and streams; walkable scale neighborhood commercial districts, parks and residential areas; cultural references and traditional events are all defining elements that reinforce the place-specific.

Principle #4 - Support emerging economic growth sectors

Emerging economic sectors add economic, cultural and social diversity. These include higher education, medical, value-added manufacturing, commercial outdoor recreation, historic resources interpretation, arts and music, information technology and visitor services.

Principle #5 - Strengthen neighborhoods

The present city is an historical amalgam of villages and other independent units of government, contributing to the present condition of Duluth being strongly defined by its neighborhoods. This condition should be reinforced through land use, transportation and public service delivery patterns which strengthen neighborhood identity. New institutional expansions, major public infrastructure or large commercial or industrial uses should not divide historic neighborhood patterns.

Principle #6 - Reinforce the place-specific

Public and private actions should reinforce cultural, physical and economic features which have traditionally defined Duluth, its open space and its neighborhoods. This includes commercial areas providing neighborhood goods and services, ravine parks and other natural features that define neighborhood edges and view corridors to the Lake or River which serve to provide location and context.

Principle #7 - **Create and maintain connectivity**

Connectivity is established through our streets and highways, transit system, sidewalks, bike-ways and trails, (local and regional). The non-vehicular modes should be considered more than recreation. They are important components of an overall transportation system. Winter maintenance of sidewalks and other public ways is critical to creation of usable pedestrian systems.

The dominant system of streets, roads and highways; historic parkway and trail systems such as Skyline, Lincoln Park, Chester Park, Lester-Amity Park; regional trails such as Munger, Superior Hiking Trail and snowmobile trails; and the transit system. Not always viewed as a system but increasingly so, are sidewalks, stairs, ramps and facilities for pedestrians and the disabled which need to be maintained all year to create a system which will grow in usage.

Principle #8 - **Encourage mix of activities, uses and densities**

Cities have evolved as a mix of land uses, building types, housing types, and activities. Accommodating choice while protecting investment is a balance to strike in land use regulation. Mixed uses provide opportunity for a diversity of activity that segregated, uniform uses do not provide.

Examples of mixed development include integration of housing, commercial, entertainment and recreational uses. Business and light industrial can blend with residential in larger complexes. Mix also refers to residential building types and income ranges, which can provide housing choices for persons who may wish to stay within a neighborhood throughout their lifetime. Neighborhood-oriented commercial uses reinforce local identity in ways that regional commercial or auto-oriented commercial centers do not.

Principle #9 - **Support private actions that contribute to the public realm**

Private building construction and site design influences activity in adjacent public areas. Building form, height, setbacks and detailing effect the adjacent areas. The uses and activity contained in the buildings directly impacts the surroundings. Public areas should benefit from adjacent private investment.

Blank walls, undirected lighting, parking areas right at sidewalk line, loading areas in a public way, are examples of features which detract from public areas. Standards are appropriate to apply in areas where private actions about public areas so that these actions not only do not detract, but enhance the public areas.

Governing Principles

Building types and materials that reduce resource consumption and load on the waste stream such as used at Hartley Nature Center are becoming mainstream. HRA's Hawk Ridge development preserves tree canopy and requires building materials and design to consider raptors. Fuel for transportation and space heating come from outside our region and reduction in consumption in this area improves our regional "balance of payments."

Neighborhood-based schools promote walkable, safe communities and reduce transportation expense. School closings or consolidations changes community connectivity. Creation of new neighborhoods can either strain or relieve transportation budgets. The number of K-12 students in the city will dictate the total facilities required but where the students live should influence which schools are in service. For higher education, housing opportunities that integrate students into the larger community are generally desirable however, the impacts of badly integrated student housing can be very destructive to established neighborhoods.

Utilizing existing water, wastewater, and storm sewer system capacity before expanding the system; when replacing aging infrastructure add additional capacity in location where development is encouraged and consideration of the cost of extending emergency service to undeveloped area. Tax base alone does not off-set the cost of these services, therefore, the pattern of development, and resultant public service costs, are important considerations.

Principle #10 - **Take sustainable actions**

Initiate land use, site design, transportation, building design and materials policies which reduce consumption of finite resources, generation of solid waste and introduction of toxic materials to land, air or waters.

Principle #11 - **Include consideration for education systems in land use actions**

For K-12 and higher education both, there is a connection between land use patterns and educational facilities. School locations in neighborhoods and housing opportunities for higher education students require consideration of impacts on transportation systems, housing densities, parking and non-student uses.

Principle #12 - **Create efficiencies in delivery of public services**

The costs of public service must be considered in land use decisions. Street construction and maintenance, utilities, libraries, fire, police, snowplowing and recreation facilities are services directly related to the physical location of development. Infrastructure should help prescribe development location rather than react to it.