



Legislation Text

File #: 21-1004R, **Version:** 1

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CITY OFFICIALS TO EVALUATE OPTIONS FOR THE CREATION OF SHARED STREETS IN DULUTH, MINNESOTA.

CITY PROPOSAL:

BY COUNCILOR FILIPOVICH:

WHEREAS, due to reasons of topography, waterways, bedrock and wetlands, physical space and the public ways traversing those physical spaces are of inestimable importance in the City of Duluth; and

WHEREAS, activating and creating safe outdoor environments for people to converse, congregate, travel, and market goods can be achieved through more effective design of existing rights-of-way; and

WHEREAS, the concept for “Shared Streets,” as introduced by the National Association of City Transportation Officials, has been shown to create new opportunities for additional foot traffic, help to increase commerce and stimulate local business activity, and create new spaces for recreation, socializing, and leisure; and

WHEREAS, Duluth’s future success depends on creating a sustainable, safe and forward-thinking built environment for all people; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 Pandemic has highlighted the need and desire for businesses to have safe, functional outdoor space options; and

WHEREAS, the Imagine Duluth 2035 Comprehensive Plan identifies the City’s desire to execute the following policies:

Policy #1 - Improve street conditions to function better for everyone

Policy #2 - Add to the transportation network by systematically enhancing multi-modal options

Policy #3 - Improve system conditions and connections in and between downtown and Canal Park

Policy #4 - Base decisions about transportation infrastructure primarily in the context of improving city and neighborhood vitality, and not in automobile through traffic

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Duluth City Council request that City Administration evaluate options under existing laws and ordinances that would allow for the creation of Shared Streets in the city, and as permissible, identify changes to local rules, ordinances, and design guidelines to allow for designated Shared Streets, and provide a report to the City Council outlining the potential changes.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that City Administration shall identify the locations of candidate streets or alleyways for potential future implementation, and a process by which such locations could be requested by businesses or residents, and shall report back to the City Council with such information no later than June 15, 2022.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that City Administration shall evaluate and develop a plan for implementation of both permanent and temporary and/or seasonal Shared Street concept areas in appropriate business districts within the city.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to provide for continuous access of streets for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles. Sharing streets among multiple modes of transportation is commonplace in many locations throughout the world. The intent of establishing an opportunity for shared streets in Duluth is to provide for continuous access by pedestrians and bicycles, while still providing vehicular access in a safe, slow manner. Issues of safety, driver understanding, and pedestrian behavior will need to be evaluated in context of the opportunity for increased community access and potential economic opportunity. This resolution requests that City of Duluth Administration and staff explore options to create shared streets in the City of Duluth. Shared streets, sometimes called “Woonerf”, create more walkable spaces in areas that traditionally are only meant for cars. Shared streets can be in residential or commercial zones and provide benefits to both. These designated, multiuse, efficient and safe shared streets enhance commerce and promote a healthier lifestyle.

Evaluation of potential locations is intended to include areas designated as Core Investment Areas in the comprehensive plan, as well as areas such as certain parts of Canal Park, where existing conditions function as shared streets but there is no formal designation nor operational plan in existence.