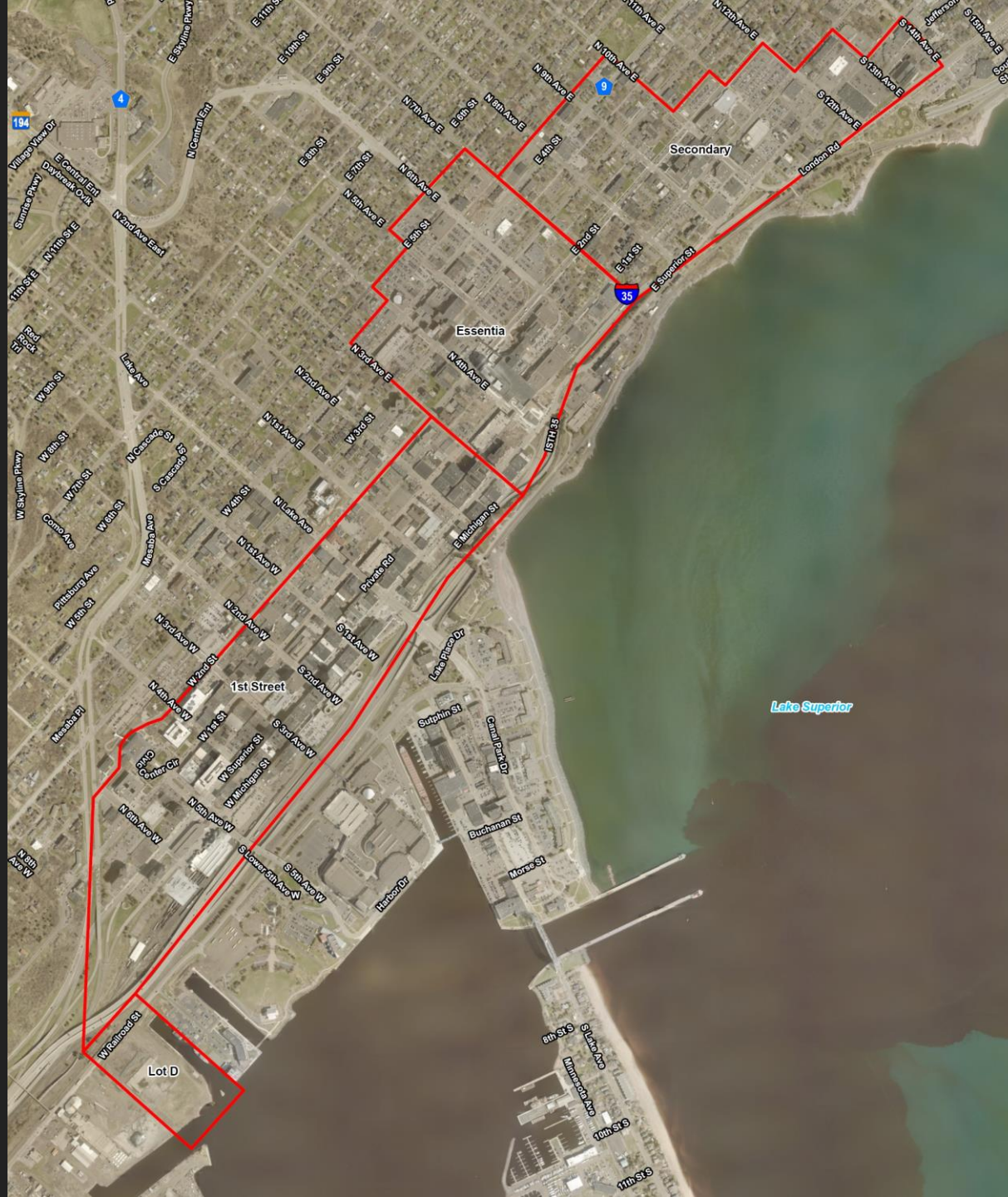


# Downtown Duluth AUAR

## November 2025



# Agenda

- **Introduction to the AUAR**
- **Downtown Duluth AUAR**
- **Project Schedule & Next Steps**
- **Discussion / Q&A**

# What is an Alternative Urban Area-wide Review (AUAR)?

- Community planning tool.
- Ideally suited to addressing the environmental effects of development within a defined geographic area, where specific uses and timing are unknown.
- Evaluates concept-level development scenarios.
- Must be updated every 5 years until the AUAR area is built out.
- Does not approve or deny a specific project, but instead acts as a source of information to guide approvals and permitting decisions.



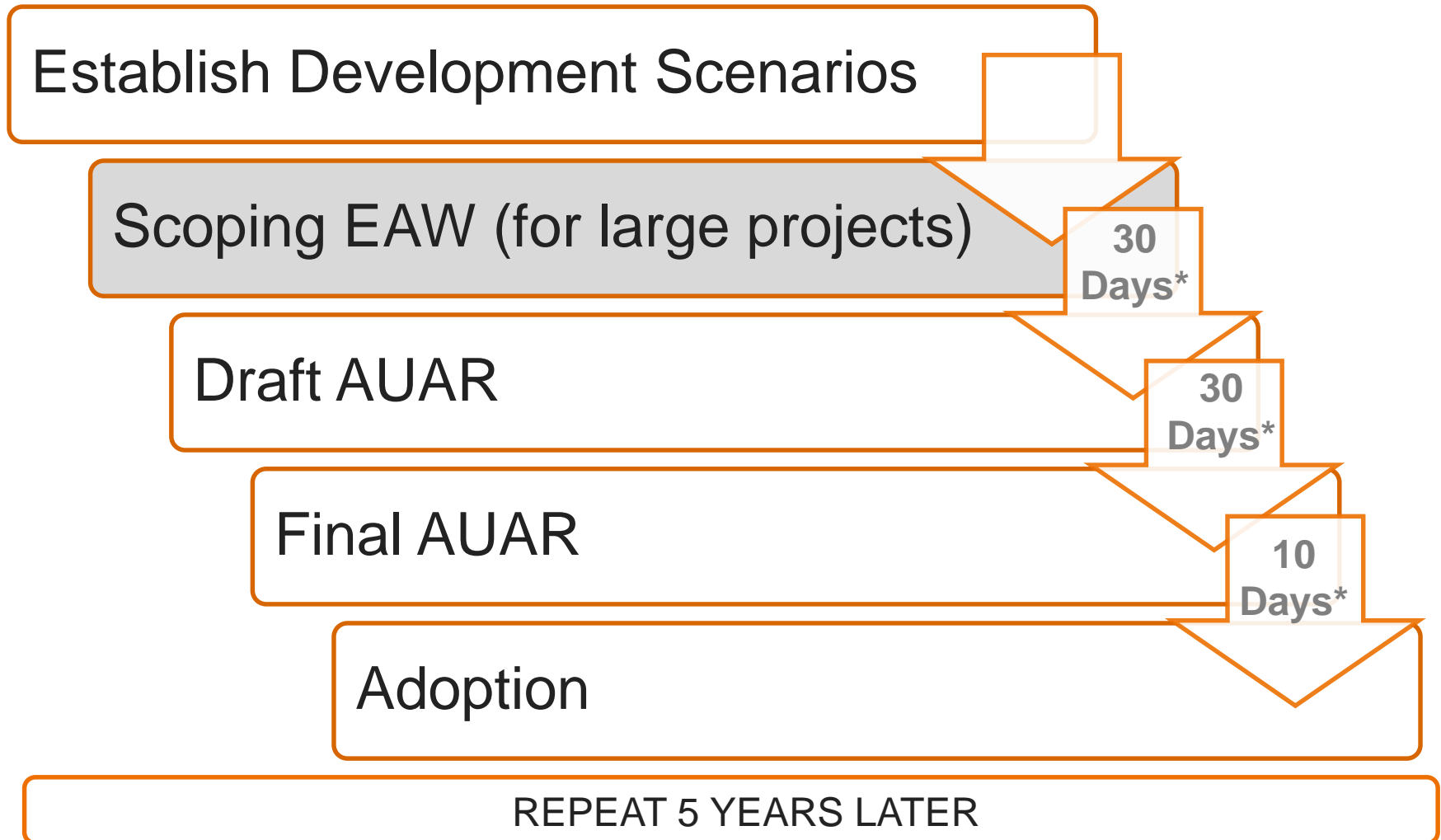
# AUAR Process

Includes three documents:

1. **Scoping EAW** - Presents the development scenarios and describes the scope of the Draft AUAR
  - 1<sup>st</sup> 30-day Comment Period: Opportunity to comment on the proposed development scenarios, along with data sources and analyses to be considered in the Draft AUAR.
2. **Draft AUAR** – Evaluates the Project’s potential environmental impacts and includes a mitigation plan
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> 30-day Comment Period: Opportunity to comment on the accuracy and completeness of the Draft AUAR, environmental impacts that may warrant further investigation, or possible mitigation measures.
3. **Final AUAR** – Includes revisions to the Draft AUAR and responses to comments
  - 10-day agency objection period



# AUAR Process



\*Refers to mandatory public comment period or objection period

# Scoping EAW

- Provides information to agencies and the public on the proposed scope of the AUAR.
- It does not include detailed analysis (completed as part of the Draft AUAR).
- Provides an opportunity for agencies and the public to comment on additional analysis or data sources that should be considered in preparing the Draft AUAR.
- Once the Scoping EAW process and comment period is complete, a Draft AUAR is prepared.

July 2013 version

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

This Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) form and EAW Guidelines are available at the Environmental Quality Board's website at: <http://www.eqb.state.mn.us/EawRevGuidanceDocuments.htm>. The EAW form provides information about a project that may have the potential for significant environmental effects. The EAW Guidelines provide additional detail and resources for completing the EAW form.

**Cumulative potential effects** can either be addressed under each applicable EAW item, or can be addresses collectively under EAW Item 19.

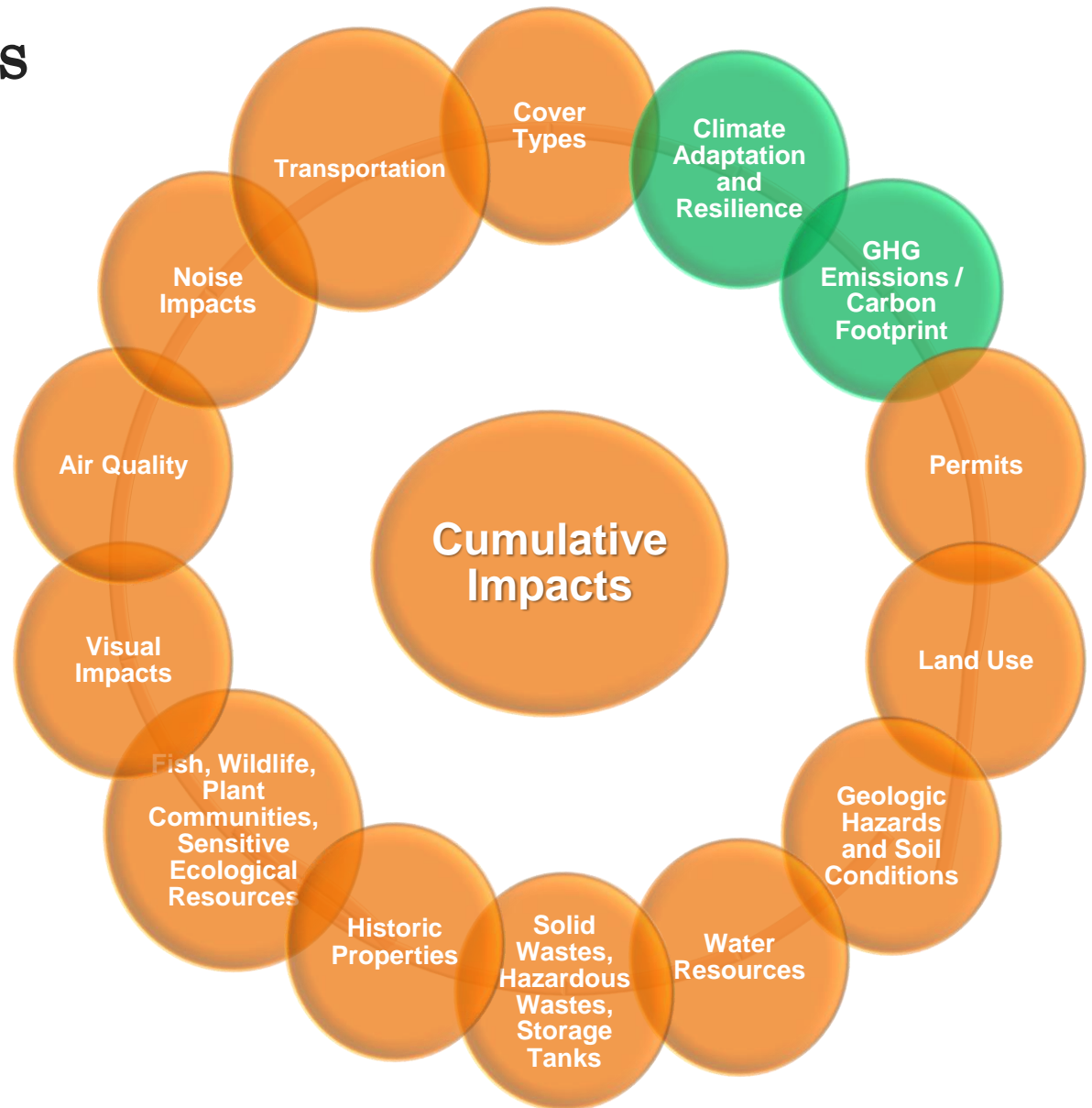
**Note to reviewers:** Comments must be submitted to the RGU during the 30-day comment period following notice of the EAW in the *EQB Monitor*. Comments should address the accuracy and completeness of information, potential impacts that warrant further investigation and the need for an EIS.

1. **Project title:** Minnesota Valley State Trail, Bloomington Segment
2. **Proposer:** MN Dept. of Natural Resources,  
Parks and Trails Division  
Contact person: Brandon Helm  
Title: Acquisition and Development Specialist  
Address: 1200 Warner Road  
City, State, ZIP: St. Paul, MN 55106  
Phone: 651-259-5601  
Email: [brandon.helm@state.mn.us](mailto:brandon.helm@state.mn.us)
3. **RGU:** MN Dept. of Natural Resources  
Contact person: Lisa Fay  
Title: EAW Project Manager  
Address: 500 Lafayette Road  
City, State, ZIP: St. Paul, MN 55155  
Phone: 651-259-5110  
Fax: 651-296-1811  
Email: [environmentalrev.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:environmentalrev.dnr@state.mn.us)
4. **Reason for EAW Preparation:** (check one)  
**Required:**  
☐ EIS Scoping  
☒ **Mandatory EAW**  
**Discretionary:**  
☐ Citizens petition  
☐ RGU discretion  
☐ Proposer initiated  
If EAW or EIS is mandatory give EQB rule category subpart number(s) and name(s):  
MN Rules 4410.4300, Subp. 37.C. Recreational Trails.
5. **Project Location:**  
County: Hennepin  
City/Township: Bloomington  
PLS Location (1/4, 1/4, Section, Township, Range):



# Required Topics

QUESTION  
↓  
RESPONSE



# Mitigation Plan

**Purpose: To identify and anticipate infrastructure, improvements and other mitigation measures to avoid adverse environmental impacts.**

- Prepared as part of the Draft AUAR.
- Analyzes issues and needs in a larger area. Once adopted it has the same weight and authority as a local ordinance.
- Eliminates need for EAW or EIS for individual projects\*
- Gives detailed guidance to local decision-makers. Allows planning and budgeting to ensure that needed infrastructure and improvements are in place to support development investment
- Mitigation Plan eliminates public and private uncertainty
- **Updated every five years**, until build out

\*Note that there are some exceptions to this rule, primarily for heavy industrial projects.



Downtown Duluth AUAR

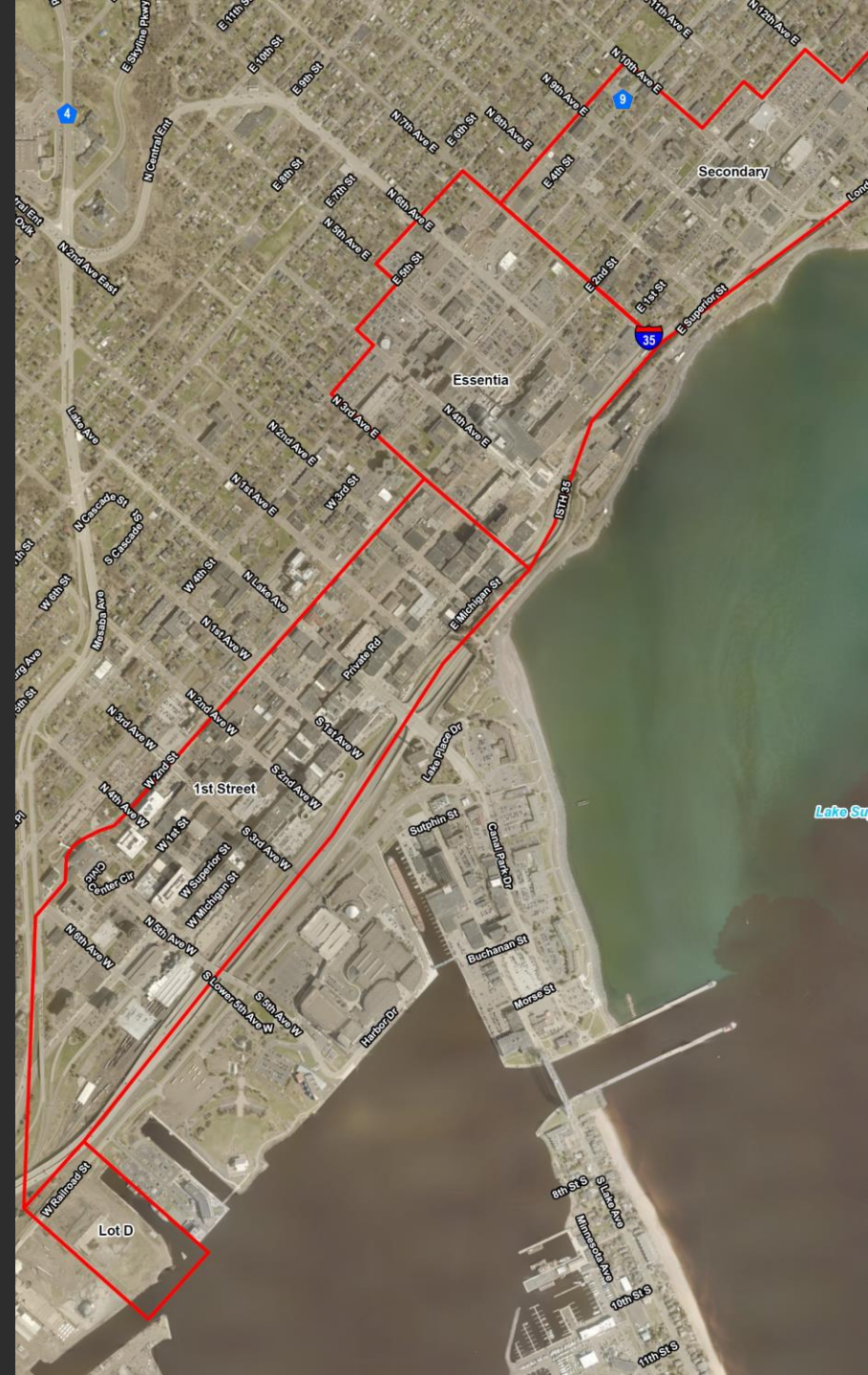
# Why conduct an AUAR for Downtown Duluth?

- Significant infill and redevelopment of the Downtown is anticipated in the coming years.
- Portions of the Downtown include shoreland areas that require environmental review.
- The AUAR holistically plans for this development, understanding that:
  - There are environmental benefits of development within an already dense urban area.
  - Environmental impacts are not contained to one site but rather are best studied and mitigated with a broader lens.



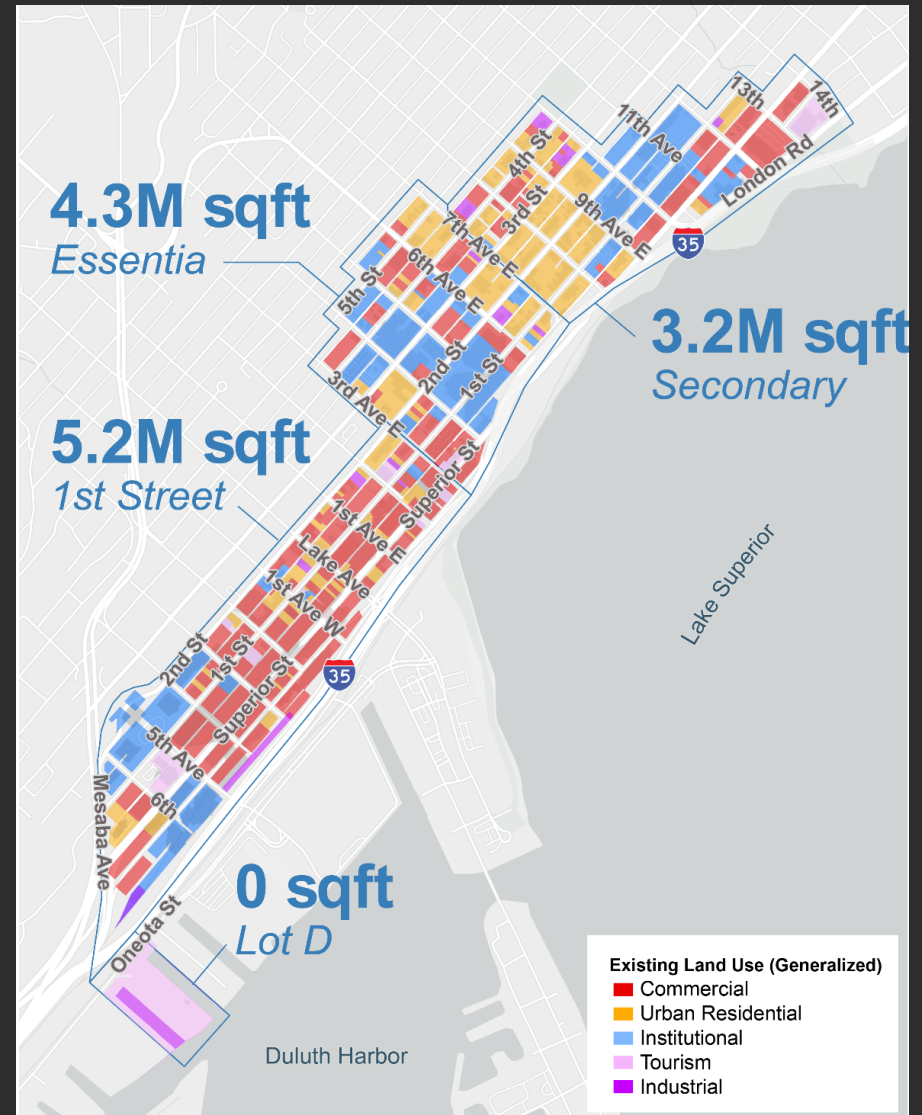
# AUAR Boundary

- Approx. 335 acres
- Four subareas:
  - Lot D subarea (19 ac.)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Street subarea (83 ac.)
  - Essentia subarea (141 ac.)
  - Secondary subarea (92 ac.)



# Scenario A: Existing Conditions

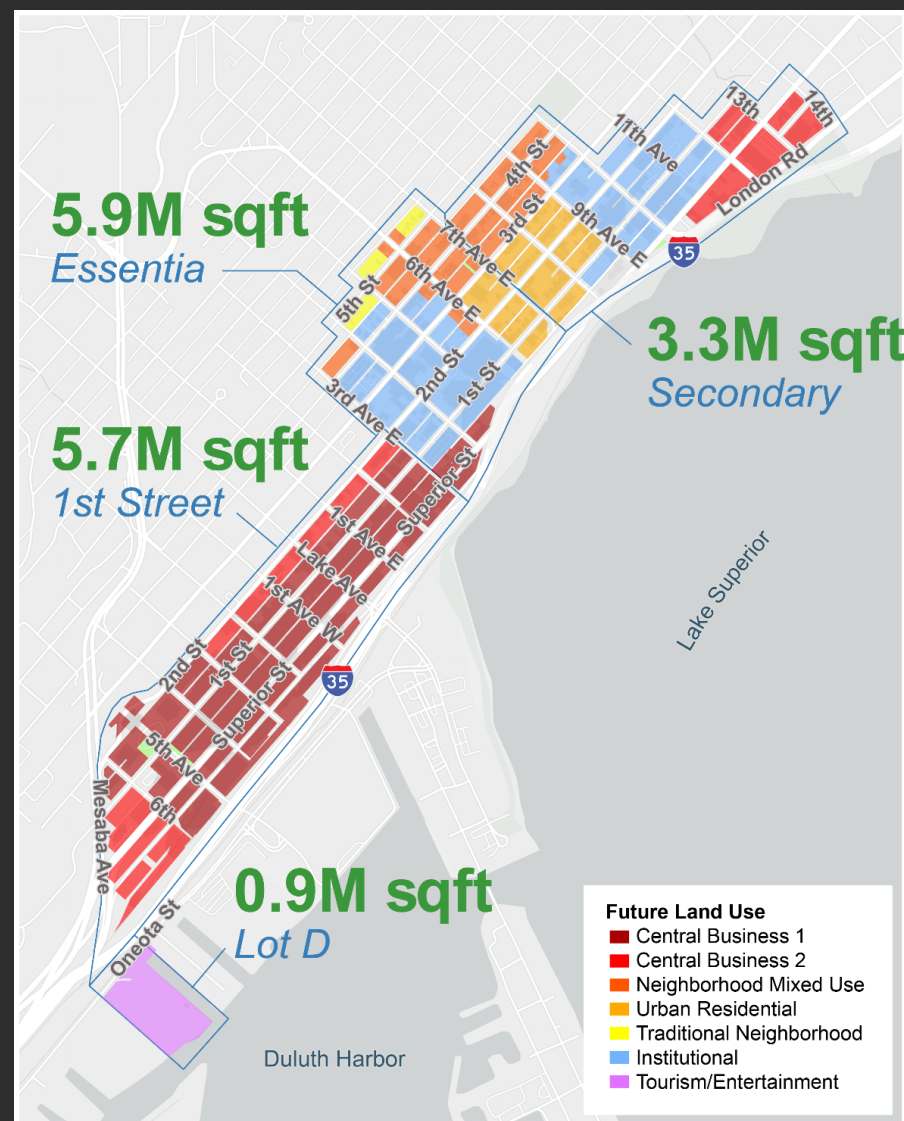
- Reflects existing conditions
- Serves as baseline comparison to Scenario B (maximum development)





## Scenario B: Maximum Development (Mixed Use)

- Consistent with the City's adopted comprehensive plan (Imagine Duluth 2035 – Forward Together)
- Plans for mixed use redevelopment.
- Primarily consists of multi-family residential and commercial uses.
- Anticipates redevelopment will occur over the next 10 years.

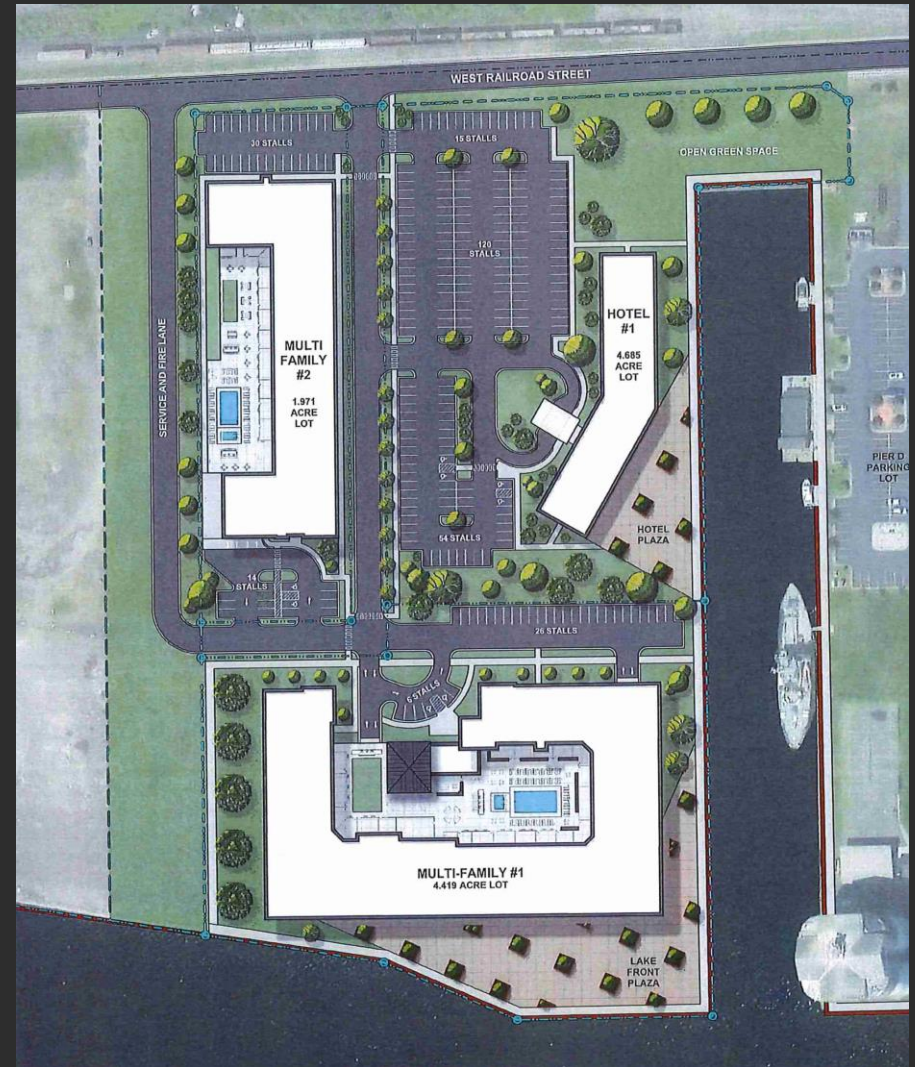




# Lot D Subarea

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- Owned by DEDA
  - Vacant, former industrial site
  - Incorporates concept plan prepared by Inland Development Partners
  - Development assumptions:
    - Two apartment buildings (802,000 SF)
    - Hotel (93,000 SF)
- 



# Essentia Subarea

- Generally based on Essentia Health's redevelopment plans.
  - Vision Northland Master Plan
- Considers redevelopment of excess properties resulting from the consolidation of the campus and parking lots.
- Development assumptions:
  - Residential (+950,000 SF)
  - Retail (+50,000 SF)
  - Institutional (+275,000 SF)
  - Hotel (+236,000 SF)



# 1<sup>st</sup> Street subarea

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- **Two sites owned by DEDA**
    - Former Pastoret Terrace building
    - Former Shoppers parking ramp & New Garrick Building (Pineapple building)
    - Hotel (93,000 SF)
  - Assumes 60% residential increase, small commercial increase
  - Development assumptions:
    - Residential (+492,000 SF)
    - Commercial (+20,000 SF)
- 

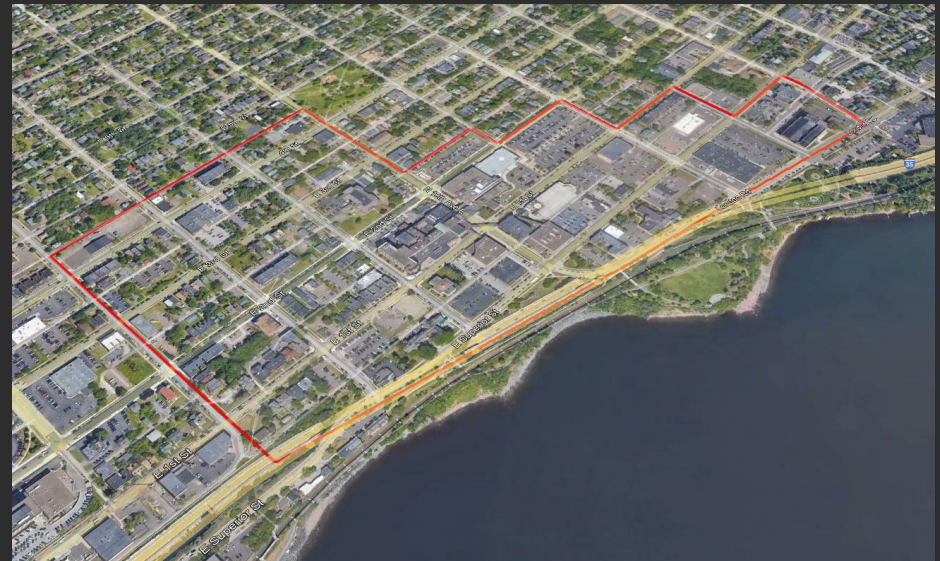




# Secondary subarea

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- No major plans currently proposed.
- Anticipate some redevelopment may occur in the next 10 years.
- Anticipates the subarea may attract housing redevelopment.
- Assumes 10% increase in residential development.
- Development assumptions:
  - Residential (126,000 SF)



# Scoping EAW Distribution & Next Steps

## Planning Commission Action:

- *Approve distribution of the Downtown Duluth Scoping EAW and Draft Order for Review*

## Next Steps:

- Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> – Planning Commission considers approval of Scoping EAW/ Draft Order for distribution
- Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> - Scoping EAW submitted to *EQB Monitor*
- Nov. 25<sup>th</sup> - 30-day comment period begins
- Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> – Planning Commission holds public hearing to receive public comment
- Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> - 30-day comment period concludes
- January 13<sup>th</sup> – Planning Commission adopts Final Order
- Draft AUAR is prepared



Discussion / Q&A