

REPORT AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

DOWNTOWN TASK FORCE

NOVEMBER 2022





Emily Larson
Mayor

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Dear Duluth Community,

What an extraordinary downtown community we get to share.

A beautiful urban landscape, just off the coast of Lake Superior, that features gorgeous architecture, a newly reconstructed street and utilities, locally owned restaurants, multiple theaters and stages, with wide walkable sidewalks and plenty of parking.

There is a unique convergence of commerce, housing, entertainment, tourism and retail in our downtown; distinct elements merging into one another in ways that all communities deserve, but few are able to manifest. These elements of built and natural infrastructure are variables you cannot fabricate, recreate or copy.

It is this grounded optimism in our downtown which became the foundation of our six-month Downtown Task Force.

In my 2022 State of City, I put a stake in the ground: our downtown is too special to allow for any erosion of progress and growth. With the challenging intersection all downtowns across the country are experiencing currently, we needed to convene some of our best thinkers and doers to reposition ourselves for long term prosperity within this neighborhood.

The challenges are many:

- Two years of a global pandemic have permanently changed workplace engagement and expectations. When previously we had 18,000 daily workers downtown, we are now to a fraction of that.
- Three years of road construction disrupted the long-held habits of downtown consumers and shoppers. Just as we were all making a comeback, COVID-19 made changed behaviors permanent.
- The nexus of income inequality, increased chemical dependency, exacerbated mental health issues and the need for additional affordable housing units has encouraged people to take to the streets in their plea of panhandling, which the Supreme Court, and not local elected leaders, have established to be a protected first amendment right.
- Private property owners are not taking full responsibility for their blighted and neglected properties. Several specific buildings and parking ramps are driving exceedingly unsettling and dangerous behaviors.
- Two fully built sidewalk systems – one inside and one outside – require more people and activation to feel safe than we currently have. We can, and we are, driving housing expansion in our downtown to increase day and evening population growth.
- While crime calls and statistics do not support an increased risk to people downtown, perception of safety is as important as actual safety. Activation and a strong public safety presence are a powerful combination to changing this narrative and we are committed to increasing both.

Convened by Co-Chairs Kristi Stokes of Downtown Duluth and Shaun Floerke of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, the 15-member Mayors Downtown Task Force has articulated a clear and aggressive agenda to support, grow, improve and activate our downtown. My sincere thanks to Kristi, Shaun and all Task Force members for your significant contribution of time and expertise to improving our community.

In the coming year, I will invite members of this Mayors Downtown Task Force to meet with me quarterly to ensure we are on track, experiencing progress and adjusting course as needed.

Every resident wants safe places to go and fun things to do. We want to be where people are and we want to feel like we're a part of something bigger than ourselves. We want amenities. That's the distinct and unique value of downtowns; they are all of this, all at once, and what's amazing is that we couldn't possibly fabricate the elements that make it so. Better said by rock and roller Jack White, "People talk about wanting amenities – downtown is the amenity."

We have a lot of good, important work ahead, and we're the right people and community to get it done. Here's to our next chapter. Together.



Mayor Emily Larson



Downtown Task Force

We believe in a vibrant, thriving, safe downtown where business can prosper and people are safe, where positive behavior is the norm, and there are things to do outside of the traditional workday to keep people investing their time downtown. We believe that everyone should feel welcome and that they belong in our downtown.

Members

- Emily Larson, Mayor
- Kristi Stokes, Taskforce Co-Chair and President of Downtown Duluth
- Shaun Floerke, Taskforce Co-Chair and President of Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
- Matt Baumgartner, President of Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce
- John Cole, Executive Director at CHUM
- Sara Cole, President and CEO at Duluth YMCA
- Tony Cuneo, Executive Director at Zeitgeist Center for Arts and Community
- Arik Forsman, President of the Duluth City Council
- Steve LaFlamme, President of Oneida Realty / BOMA
- Frank Jewell, St. Louis County Commissioner
- Fred Lewis, President of North Shore Financial Corporation
- Jon Pryor, President of East Market, Essentia Health
- Roz Randorf, Duluth City Councilor
- Katie Rohner, City of Duluth
- Noah Schuchman, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Duluth

Background

In the 2022 State of the City speech, Mayor Larson announced the Downtown Task Force: *“Key to reimagining tourism and our business community is rethinking our Downtown. Downtown is the center of our city and the window to Duluth for millions of annual visitors. Yet the pandemic has changed the way we work and live, and while it is still too soon to tell whether these changes will be permanent, I suspect some of them will be.*

This has ramifications for how we envision our downtown. We need to make it easier and more inviting for people to work and experience downtown. We need to tackle blighted areas and storefronts and reimagine creative ways to use vacant spaces. The downtown Shopper’s Parking Ramp has got to go. We need to address illegal behaviors and continue to grow confidence in public safety downtown. And with the increase in the number of people working from home, rather than housing office workers, more downtown space can actually be converted into homes.

There is tremendous opportunity, lots of ideas, and a passion and commitment for doing it right. Now we need to develop a plan to move forward. So tonight, I’m announcing a Downtown Task Force to be co-chaired by Greater Downtown Council [now Downtown Duluth] President Kristi Stokes and Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation President Shaun Floerke.

I’m charging this Task Force with convening partners from the public and private sector to provide recommendations within five months on four key areas: downtown safety, activation, vision, and investment.”

The Downtown Task Force was appointed by Mayor Larson April 28, 2022 and entrusted to examine, work, learn, ideate, and recommend strategies to advance Duluth’s downtown across those four key areas: **safety, activation, vision, and investment.**

The Downtown Task Force met nine times between April 28, 2022 and October 25, 2022 to address challenges in Duluth's downtown and strategize around recommendations that prioritize downtown's present and future as an important and vibrant neighborhood and business district.

The Downtown Task Force consulted with experts, including now retired Chief of Police Mike Tusken, Chief Mike Ceynowa, City Attorney Rebecca St. George, Assistant County Attorney Nate Stumme, City of Duluth Deputy Director of Planning and Economic Development Adam Fulton, and national expert Michele Reeves of Civilis Consultants.

To provide feedback on this document or to ask questions, please contact Katie Rohner at krohner@duluthmn.gov.

Report

Duluth’s downtown has been the traditional gathering place for the community, a place to be, and the place to be seen. Prior to the pandemic, it saw a daily influx of approximately 18,000 employees. They worked and connected with each other and were part of the community. The rise in work from home and hybrid work schedules means we must focus on building back those connections to the community and further activate downtown, to build upon our strengths, and prepare our central urban core for its next chapter.

During the pandemic and as the community emerged from quarantine, work from home and hybrid schedules meant existing challenges in the downtown were magnified, along with the addition of multi-year road and utility construction and increasing homelessness. The ratio of problematic behavior grew, in part due to the lack of activity downtown. We understand people make mistakes and we want some grace when that happens. But we also know that pervasive and predatory behaviors are damaging; together, we can work to reset the experience and perception of downtown in important, specific, tangible, and meaningful ways.

Downtown stakeholders, community members, and visitors all feel and see the impact. Key to addressing problematic behaviors is clear expectations for the specific roles of local, county, state and federal government entities, non-profit and community stakeholders and the community.

In convening, the Downtown Task Force found clearly that many organizations have a part to play. No one entity can resolve issues alone - the City of Duluth, Saint Louis County, Downtown Duluth and the many downtown stakeholders, property and business owners, visitors, residents, and community members need to work together to find solutions – and it will take work. We are all in this together - to move forward, the community must retain current downtown stakeholders while addressing problems and working to attract visitors (residents and non-residents) and new businesses and activity. The Downtown Task Force also recognizes that these recommendations have limitations due to organizational roles and federal, state and local laws.

The chart below represents five years of Duluth Police Department calls for service data in the downtown area (year to date as of October 1). This area encompasses 8th Ave East to Mesaba Ave and 1st Street and below. To compare with 2019, prior to the pandemic, there were 9,408 total (reactive and proactive) calls for service in this geographic location. In 2022 for the same time frame there have been 9,273 calls.

**Year to Date (October 1st):
2018 through 2022**

Year	City-wide CFS	% Change From Previous Yr.	DT CFS	% Change From Previous Yr.	% of City-wide CFS
2018	77613	-7	9436	-12	12
2019	74244	-4	9408	-0.3	13
2020	67983	-8	7431	-21	11
2021	61409	-10	7236	-3	12
2022	62625	+2	9273	+28	15
Total	587780	n/a	75085	n/a	13

Calls for service citywide are also down, which is why we are showing a significant percentage increase for the area but not a call for call increase. Proactive calls for service in this area are also trending upwards, meaning officers are spending time in the downtown core problem solving. The reduction in calls for service does not change the perception or feeling that downtown visitors or stakeholders may have about safety in the area.

In and around downtown, investment in the community is happening. Essentia’s Vision Northland, St. Luke’s expansion, significant investment in housing (both new units coming online and proposed developments) and city and state investment in the medical district exceed \$1.3 billion and draw visitors locally, regionally, and statewide. Spin-off

development projects, especially housing, are underway and will bring additional activity to downtown. Numerous buildings are seeing new life breathed into them with investment from new and existing owners.

Downtown is also central to multiple long-term visions for the community – a resurgent Duluth Entertainment Convention Center, the proposed Highway 61 Revisited project, a new main library, and the proposed Northern Lights Express all have transformational potential for the downtown and the community. Finding more effective ways to connect the community and the core downtown to Canal Park and the glories of Lake Superior are crucial to the future of the downtown.

Our downtown neighborhood serves everyone in our community. It's a treasured and valued corridor – an intersection of public, private, tourist, arts, and nonprofit economies. It is truly a place where all must feel safe, welcome, seen, valued, and heard.

We provide the following recommendations (listed with shortest timeline items first and not in priority order) as a framework to achieve multiple goals which can help address current safety concerns while positioning our downtown to be successful for long term economic development and investment and as a public expression of intent and support for the:

- business, investment, and economic development community, including the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Duluth
- downtown nonprofit community
- public partners - City of Duluth, St. Louis County, MnDOT, law enforcement, and the court system
- residents and visitors

Recommendations

Safety

We can improve the experience and perception of safety in our downtown. We support the Duluth Police Department and our community partners. We strive to be a dynamic, working neighborhood where all people feel welcome and safe and have their needs met. To achieve this, we recommend:

- **Addition of a City prosecutor and prioritizing filling vacant police positions** – Adding a prosecutor will provide quicker response time in the criminal justice process while also supporting more intentional outcomes and increased focus on the challenges we are facing. Duluth is not immune to the national trend of low numbers of applicants for police positions. The City of Duluth and Duluth Police Department continue to prioritize filling vacant police positions – positions are fully funded and the department is working to quickly hire and train new officers.

Responsible partners:	City of Duluth – City Attorney’s Office and Police Department
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Add prosecutor (completed – August, 2022) Continued focus on returning police staffing levels to peak numbers

- **Increasing the focus on chronic offenders and hold them accountable** - Increased communication and collaboration between key partners working with chronic offenders downtown. This includes follow up on individuals who create high levels of calls for service and tracking the court process. It also involves updates on change in supervision, custody, treatment or housing status. Sharing information, as legally allowable and appropriate, can have a positive effect on readiness and increased coordination between impacted partners and neighbors. The Sixth Judicial District Mental Health Summit Team, through Judge Tarnowski’s leadership, is expanding Mental Health Court to reach more individuals. This will provide court, treatment and supervision focus on high risk/high need individuals. We welcome and support these services and accountability and see it as a significant move by our criminal justice partners to address chronic offenders who threaten the safety of our downtown.

Responsible partners:	City Attorney’s office, County Attorney’s office, Courts, Police, St. Louis County Health and Human Services
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Support expanded mental health court

- **Continuing the embedded outreach worker within the Downtown Duluth organization** - With the Clean and Safe team often on the front end of skywalk and other pedestrian traffic flow areas, this position, funded as a three-year pilot program, is critical to making real-time connection to social supports and services for people who need them.

Responsible partners:	Downtown Duluth
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Maintain position through continued funding and support

- **Prioritizing and enhancing mental health response** – Find financial path to continue and enhance community mental health response. Prioritize connections between St. Louis County, the City of Duluth, the Duluth Police Department Core Unit, Clean & Safe Team outreach worker and the Community Crisis Response team to coordinate and appropriately staff mental health response. This includes advocating for funding of an additional social worker with the Duluth Police Department’s CORE team to focus on the downtown. The Mental Health Court expansion will be a welcome partner and resource in these efforts as well.

Responsible partners:	Duluth Police Department, St. Louis County Health and Human Services, Downtown Duluth, Community Crisis Response Team
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Pursue and support completion of the Clarity Project Continue support of existing mental health response funding and look for opportunities to extend short term funding and expand existing funding

- **Lobbying for an increase in chemical and mental health services and beds in the state of Minnesota** – We need services available for people in real time and believe that this should be a legislative priority for the City and the community.

Responsible partners:	City of Duluth, St. Louis County, Downtown Duluth, Duluth Chamber, BOMA
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Establish advocacy group to lead coordinated lobbying from stakeholders

- **Clarifying panhandling expectations** –Panhandling (asking for money verbally and / or with a sign while on public right of way) is a protected freedom of speech as declared by the United States Supreme Court, not local leaders. Illegal behavior such as aggressive panhandling, blocking sidewalks, occupying space under private owner control, etc. is not tolerated and will be enforced.

Responsible partners:	City Attorney’s office, County Attorney’s office, Courts, Police
Timeline:	Immediate
Action items:	Schedule a “know your rights” training event for the public

- **Strengthening coordination to address encampments** – MnDOT, St. Louis County, the City of Duluth, and non-profit partners all work to address public encampments – continued coordination will be crucial for consistent, safe response. The City of Duluth does not support encampments on public property and will move people off City land.

Responsible partners:	City of Duluth, St. Louis County Health and Human Services, CHUM, Affordable Housing Coalition
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item	Mayor Larson to advocate to Governor’s office for lower risk tolerance for camping on MN DOT land and request urgent action for removal (complete) Training for stakeholders on how to address issues

- **Quarterly public safety meetings** – Downtown captains and stakeholders convened by Downtown Duluth with the Police Chief, Mayor, St Louis County, District Councilor and District Commissioner and others on the specific topic of public safety. We need to keep the conversation and contact with one another going in an intentional and planned way.

Responsible partners:	Downtown Duluth
Timeline:	Immediate and ongoing
Action item:	Schedule quarterly meetings, with specific subjects / training topics

- **Sharing of police strategies for the downtown** – Regular updates from police and partners on ideas, strategies, and plans for increasing the perception and experience of downtown safety with the community.

Responsible partners:	Police
Timeline:	Immediate (completed) and ongoing
Action item:	Request that the Duluth Police Department formulate and summarize strategies, then share with downtown stakeholders Summarize changes to parking ramp security Provide update on drug task force work and community role

- **Providing downtown stakeholders with clear expectations of community rights/roles** – Because of the varying jurisdictions and federal, state and local laws involved in addressing the most complex issues, providing downtown stakeholders with an understanding of the roles different community organizations play and guidance for how to address individual issues and emergency contact information is crucial to a coordinated response.

Responsible partners:	Downtown Duluth, City of Duluth, Saint Louis County, Duluth Police Department, St. Louis County Health and Human Services, Community Crisis Response, Clean and Safe Team
Timeline:	Immediate and ongoing
Action item:	Creation of safety card of easy to read and reference information

- **Lighting dark areas, alleys, and facades and better identify problem areas within the downtown** – In areas where there aren't many windows to light and activate, encourage and assist property owners in adding additional secondary lighting so it feels less dark and cold. Anticipate where the dark corners and lighting might exist when the ground floor activation program (more information in the Activation section) launches and pre-emptively light while simultaneously investing in ground floor improvements.

Responsible partners:	Downtown Duluth, BOMA, Michelle Reeves
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Connect property and business owners with financial and professional resources

- **Increased criminal justice system focus on downtown** – We see the future of our downtown neighborhood as critically in need of connected, focused, collaborative, and strong work involving our justice partners, community partners, and each of us as well. Our justice partners - including DPD, the City Attorney, the County Attorney, Courts, Probation, the Sheriff, and the Jail - are acutely aware of the issues and challenges and are meeting together and working to deliver increased focus and resources. Mental Health Court expansion will be a critical component to help going forward.

Responsible partners:	City Attorney’s office, County Attorney’s office, Courts, Police
Timeline:	Ongoing
Action item:	City Attorney and Police Chief (or designees) to engage with Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee

- **Residential strategy to intervene for high-risk and high-need community members** – Identification, with criminal justice and nonprofit partners, of the most high-risk and high-need people affecting the downtown neighborhood to specifically examine the possibilities for a group residential strategy to support and stabilize them.

Responsible partners:	City Attorney’s office, County Attorney’s office, Courts, Police, St. Louis County Health and Human Services, CHUM, Stepping on Up, Clarity, HRA, Center City
Timeline:	Ongoing
Action item:	Mayor to convene potential partners to strategize for long term

- **Addressing critical housing needs** – Support for Stepping On Up, CHUM, and other partner organizations as they work to build an infrastructure that addresses our current housing shortage, including housing people living with mental illness and substance use disorder. This work is critically important and essential for people who are struggling and for our downtown neighborhood.

Responsible partners:	CHUM, Stepping On Up, Affordable Housing Coalition, City of Duluth, St. Louis County, State of Minnesota, Federal partners
Timeline:	Ongoing
Action item:	<p>Pursue housing development with focus on supportive housing</p> <p>Encourage and support innovation in housing development to speed process</p> <p>Utilize existing investments to subsidize housing development, including City ARP and Affordable Housing Trust Fund contributions</p>

Activation

We believe that an active downtown is a vibrant and safe downtown. Our goal should be a downtown that feels active and alive at least 18 hours a day. To achieve this we recommend:

- **Increased focus on intentional design** – The design and use of buildings, sidewalks, streets, and other public infrastructure has a significant influence on whether people are drawn to downtown and whether people feel safe and welcome here. Several downtown partners contracted with Michele Reeves of [Civilis Consultants](#). She has worked at Minnesota Surplus to provide a redesign model for activation and provided training and tools to business and property owners for downtown revitalization. She is continuing to provide resources and expertise. Working with her to create an environment downtown that people are drawn to and want to spend time in is a win for everyone.

Responsible partners:	Downtown Duluth, BOMA, Duluth Economic Development Authority, Duluth Chamber
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Continue to contract with Civilis and connect property and business owners with financial and professional resources to improve the downtown design environment

- **Establishing lighting and storefront improvement incentive program for business and property owners**
Following the window and storefront best practices outlined by Civilis Consultants, establish a program to add building/sconce/entry lighting and storefront improvements to make downtown simultaneously more visually interesting, more inviting, and less hospitable for illicit activity.

Responsible partners:	Downtown Duluth, BOMA, Duluth Economic Development Authority, Duluth Chamber
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Create and fund an ongoing incentive program and recruit and deploy a local team of activation partners

- **Establishing a downtown activation grant fund** - Growing the scope and number of events that take place in downtown will encourage positive perceptions of the neighborhood and introduce downtown businesses to new customers. The fund will support activation initiatives that encourage participants to interact with downtown public spaces and/or businesses.

Responsible partners:	City of Duluth, Duluth Economic Development Authority, foundation partners, corporate partners, Downtown Duluth, BOMA, Duluth Chamber
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Establish funding partners and process for grant selection

- **Identifying important times of movement and circulation in the downtown** – Clean and Safe Team and public safety staff can better time their checks on regular problem areas.

Responsible partners:	Downtown Duluth, Clean and Safe Team, Police
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Build strategies around increased presence at key times

- **Increasing communication and establish a neighborhood watch program using block captains, employers, and nonprofit partners** - Maintain communication among the downtown community using the block captain strategy. Block Captains are an efficient way to share information quickly, build social contact and goodwill among neighbors. Determine whether a block-by-block security strategy can be funded, built, or expanded to augment Clean and Safe and DPD. Focus on helping each other. Additional opportunities include utilization of walking groups, history tours, and exercise groups on a consistent schedule to enjoy and activate downtown together.

Responsible partners:	Downtown Duluth, City of Duluth Parks & Recreation
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Downtown Duluth identify and coordinate block captains, set regular meetings

Vision

As we navigate a global pandemic and multi-year road construction, we believe that it is important to chart a clear, cohesive direction for our downtown. Downtown is the economic engine of the community. Investment in and the long-term success of the downtown is an investment in the success of the entire city. To achieve this, we recommend:

- **Aggressively target vacant buildings, blight, and graffiti within downtown** – Prioritize resolution of blighted privately-owned properties (ex. Shopper’s Ramp, additional downtown ramp) and force or take measures to remediate and rehabilitate them. Use regulatory tools to address persistent graffiti and vacant buildings contributing to downtown blight.

Responsible partners:	City of Duluth, Downtown Duluth, BOMA, Duluth Chamber
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Utilize Clean and Safe Team graffiti removal service where appropriate Explore ordinance-based solutions to blight issues Encourage and assist owners and others in using art, lighting and activation to reduce graffiti Finalize plans for US Bank ramp and Shopper’s ramp demolitions. City of Duluth pursue financial assistance of Shopper’s ramp demolition

- **Assessing the skywalk system** - Our downtown is essentially two walking systems: the one outside and the one inside. We do not, with current and proposed work and building usage habits, have enough people and activity to vibrantly support both. Explore what can be done differently.

Responsible partners:	Downtown Duluth, BOMA, City of Duluth, Duluth Chamber of Commerce, City Attorney’s Office, Duluth Economic Development Authority
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Mayor to convene discussion with property owners, BOMA, Downtown Duluth

- **Completing and implementing a new Downtown Plan** - Everything about how people use their downtown has changed in the past few years. The intersection of challenges and variables we currently experience make it an important time to develop a strong, collaborative vision with the downtown community.

Responsible partners:	Downtown Duluth, City of Duluth
Timeline:	Ongoing
Action item:	Mayor and Downtown Duluth to convene stakeholders

- **Commissioning a new Housing Study for our downtown** – There are significant housing investments happening – since 2019, there have been 236 new units added in downtown, with 196 more under construction. Additionally, 150 units have been remodeled and preserved, with an additional 510 units possible through new development. Understanding the opportunities and needs in downtown is crucial for the future. The most recent housing study, completed in 2020, does not reflect the change in work habits and office space needs within our downtown. Downtown Duluth can become a housing location of choice for people in all income classes with thoughtful and creative development opportunities.

Responsible partners:	Downtown Duluth, BOMA, City of Duluth
Timeline:	Ongoing
Action item:	Mayor and Downtown Duluth to convene stakeholders

- **Evaluating the true need for parking** - Parking needs have shifted through the emergent sharing economy. Conducting an informed and educated evaluation of needs is critical, especially with expected development along the East First Street corridor. This should be evaluated as part of the Housing Study.

Responsible partners:	Downtown Duluth, BOMA, City of Duluth
Timeline:	Ongoing
Action item:	City of Duluth work with consultant to better understand parking demand

Investment

We believe that downtown Duluth is a good economic bet. Ensuring that all systems are working in concert with one another and that the unnecessary barriers for development are identified and removed is an essential step in making sure we are laying a clear path for continued investment in our downtown. To that end we recommend:

- **Continuing to prioritize economic and business development** – Natural beauty and amenities, a diverse local economy, and an adventurous and entrepreneurial spirit all converge in downtown Duluth to bring unparalleled opportunity. Further, there is palpable energy around the new leaders and entrepreneurs our city has recently welcomed into the downtown community. Coordinated and aggressive economic development is key to the future of downtown and must be prioritized – both to capitalize on the opportunities and to address the challenges. The City of Duluth should continue to prioritize work to streamline processes to attract and encourage business development downtown. The City of Duluth and economic development partners should regularly convene to collaborate, coordinate, and communicate on current and future economic development opportunities.

Responsible partners:	City of Duluth, Duluth Chamber, Downtown Duluth, APEX, St. Louis County, BOMA, Duluth Economic Development Authority
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Economic development audit (already begun) Targeting areas for redevelopment Establish consistent opportunities for connection and coordination Continued work with Civilis or another urban revitalization consultant to ensure the decisions and suggestions being made are consistent with best practices

- **Addressing ongoing permitting concerns** – Review City permitting processes to clarify requirements and identify reasons behind them. Seek ways to streamline permitting processes and publish clear expected timelines and permitting flow. Consideration of Pilot program to implement innovative solutions to streamlined processes.
 - Street closure for special events
 - Sidewalk permits
 - Busking
 - Temporary alcohol & food service permits as it relates to outdoor, physical adjacency
 - Permanent alcohol & food service permits as it relates to outdoor, physical adjacency
 - Activation zones and pop ups

Responsible partners:	Property owners, City of Duluth, Downtown Duluth, BOMA, Duluth Chamber
Timeline:	Immediate
Action item:	Economic development audit (already begun)

- **Prioritizing housing development at all levels** – Find ways to change processes to allow for speed to market, predictability, and future investment. Explore transitioning vacant commercial spaces into re-use as residential spaces. Incentivize downtown housing development and continue to support and prepare for the significant downtown housing under construction and development.

Responsible partners:	City of Duluth, Duluth Economic Development Authority, Downtown Duluth, BOMA, Duluth Chamber
Timeline:	Ongoing
Action item:	<p>Inventory of vacant office space or buildings</p> <p>Survey of Duluth employers for housing needs</p> <p>Utilize existing investments to subsidize housing development, including City ARP and Affordable Housing Trust Fund contributions</p>