

Duluth Housing Strategies Conference

November, 14th 2025

Program Schedule

8am – Registration Opens

8am-9am – Coffee & Networking

9am-9:15am – Mayor’s Welcome

Roger Reinert, Mayor, City of Duluth

9:15am-9:45am – Duluth’s Development Potential

Duluth is poised to grow more over the next decade than any other period in the last fifty years. *How* we grow is up to us. How can we meet the growing demand for housing and create neighborhoods that truly support our community.

Elissa Hansen, President & CEO, Northspan Group

10:05am-10:50am – The Best Sites and Products for New Housing in Duluth

A new housing study tells us the Duluth market needs a wide variety of new housing products. Learn about the best places to build them from city leaders and local experts.

Matt Staehling, City Administrator, City of Duluth

Kevin Boren, Vice President, Essentia Health

Lynn Nephew, Real Estate Agent & Lake Superior Team Lead, RE/MAX Results

Matt Baumgartner, President & CEO, Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce

11:10am-11:55am – Show Me the Money: How to Finance Housing Projects in Duluth

What financing tools are available for housing developers in Duluth? Financial experts and experienced developers will share their strategies for leveraging local resources to fund successful projects.

Jason Aarsvold, Senior Municipal Advisor, Ehlers, Inc.

Tom Church, Senior Housing Developer, City of Duluth

Jill Keppers, Executive Director, Duluth Housing & Redevelopment Authority

Rachel Johnson, President & CEO, APEX, Area Partnership for Economic Expansion

12:15pm-1:15pm – Lunch Provided

12:45pm – 1:15pm – Keynote Address: Using Your Improv Mindset to Solve Sticky Problems

Tane Danger, Co-Founder, Theater of Public Policy & Danger Boat Productions

1:30pm-2:15pm – Building Balanced Neighborhoods: Duluth’s Housing Action Plan

What does it mean to build “balanced neighborhoods?” How is Duluth preparing to make this happen and how can this approach support our community as a whole?

Tricia Hobbs, Executive Director, Duluth Economic Development Authority

Jenn Moses, Manager—Planning & Development, City of Duluth

Tane Danger, moderator

2:15pm-2:45pm – Networking Break

2:45pm-3:30pm – Downtown Duluth: Case Study

Duluth’s downtown has begun its transformation from a business district to a residential neighborhood. This panel will explore strategies to make our downtown a welcoming space for everyone who uses it.

Meghan Elliot, Principal & Founder, New History; Principal & Founder, Jillpine

Kristi Stokes, President/C.O.O., Downtown Duluth

Michele Reeves, Principal, Civilis Consultants

3:45pm-4:15pm – The Future of the Arrowhead: What a Thriving Duluth Means for Northeast Minnesota

As Duluth grows and thrives, Minnesota’s entire Arrowhead region grows and thrives. How can Duluth lead in partnership with our neighbors to create an intentional and sustainable approach to regional growth?

Shaun Floerke, CEO & President, Boreal Waters Foundation