



ACTION OF THE CITY OF DULUTH PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE: June 9, 2026

ACTION: Adoption of the Final Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR)

PROJECT: Downtown Duluth AUAR

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENTAL UNIT

City of Duluth
Planning Commission

PROJECT PROPOSER

City of Duluth
Department of Planning & Economic Development

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PLANNING COMMISSION FILE NUMBER: PLEAW-2511-0002

PROJECT LOCATION

An approximately 354-acre area encompassing the traditional downtown, Essentia Health Medical Campus and surrounding Hillside neighborhood, as well as the proposed "Lot D" development in the Bayfront area all within the City of Duluth, St. Louis County, Minnesota.

REASON FOR AUAR PREPARATION

The purpose of the AUAR is to help the City adequately plan for this redevelopment and provide a mitigation plan for how the City and future developers will manage the environmental impacts. The City initiated this AUAR in anticipation that the downtown area could see significant infill and redevelopment within the coming years, including areas that are within the City's shoreland area and would require environmental review and sensitivity. The AUAR is meant to plan for this development in a holistic manner, understanding that there are environmental benefits of development within an already dense urban area, and that environmental impacts are not contained to one site but rather are best studied and mitigated with a broader lens.

AUAR DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND PUBLIC REVIEW

Pursuant to Minnesota Rules Chapter 4410.3610, Subpart 5a, additional procedures are required when certain large specific projects are reviewed, which requires an early scoping process. This process provided an opportunity for early agency coordination and public comment.

A Scoping EAW was prepared and noticed on November 25, 2025, in accordance with these procedures to guide the drafting of the AUAR. A public hearing was held by the Planning Commission on December 9, 2026. All comments were considered (including written comments received during the 30-day period) by the Planning Commission when they approved the Scoping EAW and ordered the drafting of an AUAR at their regular meeting on January 13, 2026.

The Draft AUAR was officially noticed in the March 24, 2026, EQB Monitor and was provided to the distribution list starting the 30-day comment period. The Draft AUAR was posted for public viewing on the City's Environmental Reviews web page and was made available at the Duluth City Hall. The City issued a news release and legal notice was published in the Duluth News Tribune announcing the availability of the document, the 30-day comment period, and the public hearing.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing at its regularly scheduled meeting on April 14, 2026. At the close of the 30-day comment period on April 23, 2026, responses to all comments were prepared and necessary changes to the Draft AUAR were made, such comment responses and Draft AUAR changes having been subsequently approved by the Planning Commission at their May 12, 2026, regular meeting.

The Final AUAR document (incorporating all changes) was officially noticed in the May 26, 2026, EQB Monitor and responses to commenters provided on that day. The 10-day objection period concluded on June 9, 2026, and no objections to adoption of the Final AUAR were received from State agencies.

The AUAR will be required to be updated every five years in accordance with Minnesota Rules 4410.3610, Subpart 7.A and future proposed development will be required to comply with the AUAR mitigation plan.

DECISION TO ADOPT AUAR AND MITIGATION PLAN

Resolved that, Pursuant to Minnesota Rules 4410.3610, Subpart 5.E, the City of Duluth Planning Commission adopts the Downtown Duluth Final Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) dated May, 2026, with all Appendices, and including Mitigation Strategies found within the Final AUAR document.

Decided at Duluth, Minnesota, on Tuesday, June 9, 2026.

BY ORDER OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Wedul', is written over a horizontal line.

Andrea Wedul, President, City of Duluth Planning Commission