

Chapter 12 - General Development Policies & Strategies

1. Why does this chapter differ from the five focus areas?

General development policies and strategies are new policies that overlap between the focus areas, or are from the Urban Design and Development Process sections of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. During the plan development process, the five selected focus areas were thoroughly researched and potential outcomes considered by the community. Many of the new general development policies come from these focus areas; zoning updates, for example, frequently overlapped between the groups, especially in the subject area of sustainability.

In each of the general development subject areas, a summary is provided ahead of the policies reviewed, rather than the in-depth summary of research analysis found in the individual focus areas. Because the policies developed may lack specific implementation actions, further analysis will be needed following plan adoption to consider these issues. Prioritization of general development strategies in some instances may be intuitive: adjustments to the UDC based on these policies can follow a standardized process through the Planning Commission. For other issues, such as those related to wayfinding or arts & culture, further analysis and collaboration between city departments, boards and commission, and external partners.

2. Urban Design – Developed in the 2006 Plan

1. UD-1: To ensure that different land uses “mix well,” compatible building scale and sensitivity to neighborhood context is essential. The City will develop form-based standards and design guidelines that:
 - a. Allow a variety of land uses to coexist within buildings when the building is of appropriate size and character;
 - b. Recognize and reflect unique or traditional neighborhood building patterns and street and block layouts;
 - c. Provide adequate transitions to lower-density neighborhoods and districts;
 - d. Keep sufficient separation between clearly incompatible uses, such as between intensive industrial or auto-oriented commercial and residential neighborhoods.
2. UD-2: Large mixed-use development sites, such as the U.S. Steel site, the tower farm, and other sites identified as master-planned areas on the future land use map, will require master planning as market forces start to define possible new uses in these areas. Master plans should:
 - a. Be developed in close collaboration with affected neighborhoods and other stakeholders;
 - b. Protect critical natural functions;
 - c. Enhance off-site natural systems where possible;
 - d. Include internal open space and trail corridors and connections to external trail corridors;
 - e. Protect cultural resources and viewsheds;
 - f. Provide for neighborhood recreation or open space areas in residential or commercial areas;

1. Priority will be given to development where utility services can be provided at average or less than average cost. Development where utility installation would be costlier will be discouraged.
2. Redevelopment [MAP – AREAS WHERE REDEVELOPMENT IS MOST POSSIBLE USING EXISTING UTILITIES]
 - a. For example - Irving has the greatest availability of utilities in comparison to anywhere in the city. Support redevelopment consistent with the IFBRP in the Irving Neighborhood to increase density there. An analysis of utility capacity and roadway capacity showed the Irving neighborhood currently has strong water pressure, roads without congestion issues, and immediate freeway access providing transportation to the region.
3. Prioritize areas for development and redevelopment that increase utilization of Duluth’s existing infrastructure and favor maintenance and reconstruction of older infrastructure over infrastructure expansions. Development in locations where the initial installation and provision of utility services require lengthy extensions without intermediate connections should be discouraged.
4. Encourage appropriate investment on previously developed lands, incentive infill development over Greenfield development when staging development, rezoning for development, or providing public support or investment.
5. Support new development that incorporates multi story buildings on reduced footprints instead of large single-story buildings, and parking ramps instead of large parking lots, in an effort to reduce the impact of large impervious areas on the storm water system.
6. Engage in discussions with Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD) to evaluate and potentially amend their Urban Services Boundary. [MAP - excluding Tier 3 areas and some Tier 2 sites]
7. Create minimum densities or minimum levels of economic growth in order to obtain city support for extending new urban services in areas of the city where there are significant tracts of ecologically significant lands through the establishment of an urban services boundary.
8. Amend the Unified Development Chapter (UDC) to increase the minimum lot area required for development in those areas planned to remain rural to maximize water storage capacity and to reduce the amount of lives and property at risk to wildfire.
9. Ensure that land use regulation sets clear written expectations for development, redevelopment, and protection of Duluth’s natural, cultural, economic, and social assets, and for ease of developers and citizens to understand regulatory expectations.

5. General Government

Elements of updates from many chapters were recategorized under the shared category of “general government,” because the implementation of these policies is applicable across many parts of the city’s organization. The lack of definition for the listed efforts will require the identification of a specific individual, department, or group to work toward development of implementation opportunities for these policies.

1. GG-1: Promote efforts to restore the “garden city” concept of Duluth with recreational corridors of parks, trails, and open space running alongside the streams.
2. GG-2: Consider developing a central office or division within the City responsible for receiving, tracking, and responding to all non-public safety complaints.

3. GG-3: Improve communication about risks and limitations with development in floodplains and shoreland areas.
4. GG-4: Evaluate whether consolidated waste management contracts for service within the city, whether citywide or on a district-specific basis, would result in improved outcomes for the city's residents.
5. GG-5: Expand efforts to reduce blight and graffiti. Consider best practices for graffiti removal, including the potential to establish a blight reduction fund.
6. GG-6: Expand resources and prioritize blight removal and vacant property nuisances, including a focus on absentee property owners.
7. GG-7: Continue work of existing neighborhood plans and, when appropriate, implement incomplete strategies that align with on-going neighborhood priorities and the Imagine Duluth plan.
8. GG-8: Continue partnerships with local institutions and transportation providers to plan for weather related community emergencies and increase community awareness of emergency protocols.
9. GG-9: Enhance delivery of the Comprehensive Plan through expanded communication and public education efforts, particularly in partnership with local educational institutions.

6. Zoning Updates

1. Ensure all new development includes pedestrian connections to sidewalks, transit stops, and neighboring destinations. Buildings should be placed and designed to encourage a pedestrian friendly streetscape and to support alternative modes of transportation. Developers should be required to add bicycle parking and transit stop amenities as needed.
2. Support development and redevelopment of mixed use nodes and corridors along transit lines that increases residential density and commercial square footage, and identify incentives to implement this. Multi-story buildings should be prioritized over single-story buildings, and parking ramps encouraged over parking lots as a more space-efficient way to provide parking.
3. Except on very steep slopes where perpendicular parking is appropriate, eliminate angled or perpendicular on-street parking because it creates an unacceptable and unsafe condition for bicycles as well as pedestrians and other motor vehicles. In very steep areas, specifically call for perpendicular parking consistent with parking best practices for vehicle and pedestrian safety.
4. Sustainability points.
 - a. Review the sustainability point system in the UDC to encourage more resource protection through the site development process.
 - b. Revise the Unified Development Code (UDC) to offer exemptions, such as reductions in parking requirements, for new buildings with high sustainability points.
 - c. Revise the sustainability points system the UDC to require a minimum level of points for existing structures that are significantly remodeled or rehabilitated.
5. When possible, work with new developments and sites that are redeveloped to install power lines underground to reduce risks of power outages during storms. Consider appropriateness of including this as a mandatory requirement for new development.
6. Promote additional options for short term housing options for visitors or employees only in Duluth temporarily, such as RV parks or camping facilities, where appropriate.

7. Implement the Comprehensive Plan through cooperation, incentives, development bonuses, and education in addition to simple regulation.

7. Food Access

1. Continue to ensure transit connects to grocery stores and farmer's markets, and that those buses have grocery bins.
2. Support the growth of an increasingly localized food system. Clarify city standards and regulations for urban gardens and urban farms. Allow agricultural uses that have no land use conflicts with residential properties (such as orchards, gardens, etc) as a permitted use in all residential zones. Lessen restrictions on where farmers' markets can exist throughout the city.
3. Consider public or community gardens on underused public lands. Support efforts to create a farm business incubator on city open space. Include small scale agriculture, local food distribution, and local food retail (such as grocery and restaurant) in economic development investments.
4. Incentivize the development of grocery retail spaces within currently designated food deserts. Consider adopting a Staple Food Ordinance which ensures improved food access in areas without adequate grocery options. Also consider revising the sustainability points system in the UDC to offer points for residential development built in areas with food access or non-residential development that improves food access in areas with minimal food access.
5. Identify barriers to urban agriculture on urban and suburban lots and remove the barriers where possible.
6. Determine where public market space is needed for the sale of fresh local food (including space for value added food products) and other local products and identify resources needed for creating that space.
7. Eliminate food deserts in areas of the City that currently meet the criteria for such a designation by working with community development partners to locate markets where needed.
8. Increase low to moderate income community member's access to food growing resources. Work with Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD) and other partners to ensure all community members have access to compost and other food growing resources.

8. Wayfinding & Public Signage

1. Support planning for the Northern Lights Express (NLX), promoting its importance to Duluth's economic and transportation future. Plan for the area immediately around the future station, focusing on connections to local transportation and wayfinding to Duluth destinations.
2. Implement the *City's Gate, Wayfinding, and Signage Final Design Plan* to better identify parks and the resources within parks.
3. Improve the neighborhoods.
 - a. Add culturally diverse art and statues in all neighborhoods.
 - b. Make street names more culturally diverse.
 - c. Make parks and trails names more culturally diverse.
 - d. Make all neighborhood safety a priority, so that every neighborhood has a sense of safety when walking at night. Work with neighborhood protection and watch groups.
4. Create a Wayfinding program with consistent and clear signage
5. Access to parks / trails – from neighborhoods, often no idea how to get there.

9. Green Infrastructure

1. Incorporate green infrastructure into UDC requirements for new and redevelopment projects. Create a mechanism to provide resources to ensure green infrastructure on privately-owned sites is maintained over time.
2. Implement green infrastructure at City facilities and in roadway design, where feasible, and provide resources to maintain this infrastructure.
3. Require green stormwater infrastructure in publicly funded projects to reduce the impacts of flooding.
4. Add others from list [ADD LIST FROM 1/3]

10. Arts & Culture

1. AC-1: Continually promote neighborhood attractiveness, including through permanent and temporary art and artistic endeavors in neighborhoods and Core Investment Areas.
2. AC-2: Promote the history of neighborhoods with art, events, and booklets. Celebrate the history in the community areas. Continue to make these places identifiable, especially based on historic development patterns and commerce.
3. AC-3: Promote development of murals or opportunities for large-scale graphics (using modern formats such as super graphics) in appropriate locations, particularly in the city's downtown areas.
4. [INCORPORATE COMMENTS]

10. Heritage Preservation

1. HP-1: Where the city has named parks, roads, or neighborhoods in honor of a person or event of significance to the community, develop cultural interpretation to educate the community about their significance. Consider initial investments to create incremental awareness through coordinated signage.
2. HP-2: Increase cultural tourism opportunities in the areas of the city where heritage interpretation has been completed, or where it can be developed in a way that highlights a wayfinding pattern or resources in the park system.
3. HP-3: Take advantage of historic appeal of Duluth to promote tourism activity. To do so, promote heritage preservation efforts through financial and non-financial assistance.
4. [REVIEW POLICY FROM 1/3 TO INCLUDE OTHER DATA]

Core Investment Areas [Move to Transformational Chapter]

1. Identify specific boundaries for each Core Investment Areas (see CIA Map) through a neighborhood process.

2. Adopt minimum development quality standards for the Core Investment Areas to ensure new proposals adhere to neighborhood design. Consider minimum architectural design or
3. Support “by-right” development within the defined Core Investment Areas of the following walkable neighborhood businesses and amenities:
 - a. Multi-story housing, including mixed-use
 - b. Post offices
 - c. Clinics
 - d. Daycare services
 - e. Church and school
 - f. Fitness center or other activities
 - g. Neighborhood supporting elements, including retail, including grocers, liquor stores, small professional offices, restaurants (under a certain size TBD)
4. Support development and redevelopment of mixed use nodes and corridors along transit lines that increases residential density and commercial square footage, and identify incentives to implement this.
5. Promote commercial development in existing neighborhood centers and limit expansion or rezoning of strip development. No expansion of strip zoning should be allowed until nearly all the developable land in neighborhood or core investment areas is saturated. Rezoning for new commercial strips reduces the value of existing commercial property and makes redevelopment a less active option.
6. Consider Core Investment Areas gateways to the city. Design such access points to emphasize the defining character of any given CIA. Specific aesthetic elements, identification signage, and visual cues should provide a coordinated message to individuals entering a CIA. I.e., a CIA street design plan / buildings design plan. I.e., each CIA has a neighborhood square...
7. Establish criteria for new areas to become Core Investment Areas even if not so designated on the maps of this plan.
8. Encourage or provide incentives for new housing developments that are within ¼ mile of existing public parks, and within 1/8 of a mile of a bus stop, and adjacent to public sidewalks. Sidewalk only if it meets conditions - cv