

# 1. Welcome!

This chapter introduces the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Duluth-Superior area.

## Sustainable Choices 2045



### Duluth-Superior Long-Range Transportation Plan

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## Introduction: What is Sustainable Choices 2045?

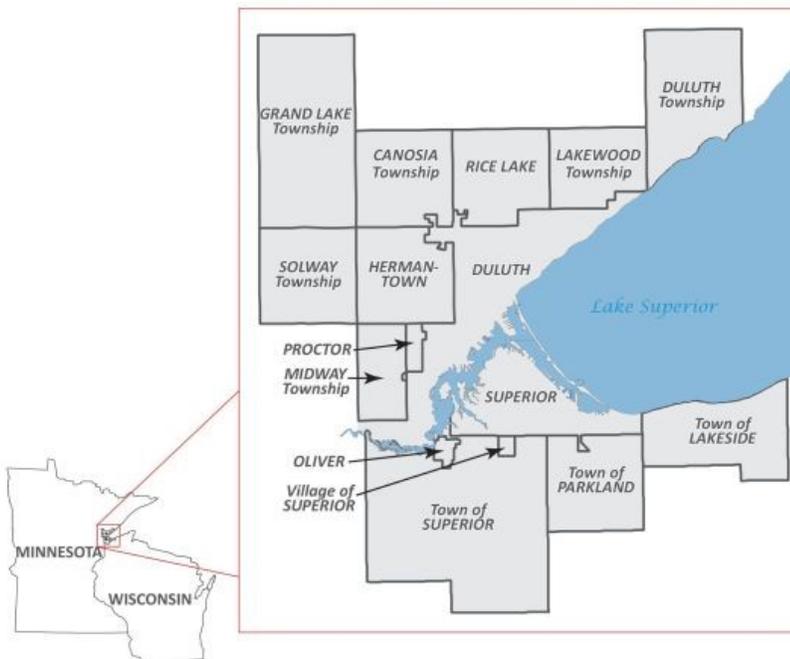
This Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) provides vision, goals and objectives, data and policy guidance for jurisdictions within the greater metropolitan area of Duluth, Minnesota and Superior, Wisconsin to work cooperatively to provide a well-maintained, integrated, accessible and multi-modal transportation system to safely and efficiently move people and freight for the next 25 years.

Since a transportation system crosses many jurisdictional boundaries with spending decisions made at state, county and city levels, *Sustainable Choices 2045* coordinates the planning and sets forth a vision for the area-wide transportation network, within the constraints of funding the region can reasonably expect to receive. It covers a twenty-five year planning horizon and is updated every five years.

### What Area Does It Cover?

*Sustainable Choices 2045* addresses all modes of transportation within the Duluth-Superior metropolitan planning area (Fig. 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Planning Area



### Area Transportation Assets

The Duluth-Superior metropolitan planning area features a broad range of infrastructure across all modes of transport:

## Statement of Purpose

*Sustainable Choices 2045* will guide the future of transportation in the Twin Ports area by planning for a comprehensive, multi-modal, and integrated transportation system that provides a high level of access and mobility for all people and goods, improves safety, preserves infrastructure, and provides economic activity consistent with available environmental and fiscal resources.

### Access and mobility...

**Access** is the ease with which people can reach destinations

**Mobility** is the ease of movement that people experience in moving from place to place

### for people and freight...

Transportation systems must accommodate the needs of personal and commercial trips, locally and regionally, via multiple modes

...is the sensitive balance sought in good transportation planning.\*

\* Source: The Institute of Transportation Engineers and Smart Growth transportation planners.

four Class I railroads, local roads, an Interstate highway, an international seaport, an international airport, a public transit system and miles of hiking and biking trails. These assets should be preserved and developed to maximize their economic development value and minimize their impact on the environment and other community values. (See [Map 4.1, Transportation Assets](#))

### Why Does It Matter?

*Sustainable Choices 2045* serves as the foundation for the MIC’s planning efforts. This multimodal plan is important because it provides an overall vision, incorporates community and jurisdictional input to establish priorities for area transportation decisions; identifies issues for further study by the MIC, and filters potential projects down into the Duluth and Superior [Transportation Improvement Program](#) (TIP) which applies federal transportation funds to priority projects for the Duluth-Superior area.

If a city, county, or public agency in the Duluth-Superior metropolitan planning area intends to use federal transportation funding for projects or programs, the projects must be included in or consistent with this LRTP.

### When Is It Updated?

To keep pace with changing priorities, opportunities, and challenges, the MIC’s LRTP is updated every 5 years, while the TIPs are updated annually.

### What’s New for the 2045 LRTP?

New data that has become available since the publication of the last [LRTP \(Connections 2040\)](#), along with the federal FAST Act transportation legislation which put forward several notable policy initiatives and planning directives, have shaped the focus of *Sustainable Choices 2045*:

#### Updated Traffic Demand Model

The MIC-area traffic demand model has been updated to include revised demographic and employment projections, as well as expansion projects that have occurred since 2014.

#### Adjusted Project Costs and Constrained Project Lists

Estimated costs of all improvement projects identified in the

## Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate



[www.dsmic.org](http://www.dsmic.org)

The MIC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Duluth-Superior area and produced this Long Range Transportation Plan.

#### MIC-Area Jurisdictions include:

##### Minnesota

- Canosia Township
- City of Duluth
- City of Hermantown
- City of Proctor
- City of Rice Lake
- Duluth Township
- Grand Lake Township
- Lakewood Township
- Midway Township
- Solway Township
- St. Louis County
- MnDOT

##### Wisconsin

- City of Superior
- Lakeside Township
- Parkland Township
- Town of Oliver
- Village of Superior
- Douglas County
- WisDOT

previous (2040) version of the LRTP have been revised to better reflect inflationary increases over a 25 year timeframe. The adjusted numbers show a dramatically increasing shortfall between programmed projects and projected revenues: of \$?? million for short-range projects (2020-2024); \$?? million for mid-range projects (2025-2029); and a very large gap (more than \$?? billion) for long-range projects (2030-2045).

The MIC has worked with its jurisdictions to constrain the 2040 project lists by asking them to prioritize projects to match projected revenues and to identify other potential revenue sources.

### **Inclusion of State Performance Measures**

*Sustainable Choices 2045* includes the locally adopted State performance measures regarding:

- Safety
- Pavement and Bridge Condition
- Performance of NHS, Freight, and CMAQ

These performance measures are detailed, with listed targets and timelines in **Chapter ??? (See p. ???)**.

### **Emphasis on Overall Sustainability**

A purposeful emphasis on achieving fiscal, social, and environmental sustainability in both the short and long-term across the entire Duluth-Superior area transportation system is woven throughout, and integral to the vision of *Sustainable Choices 2045*.

### **Recommended Implementation Strategy**

*Sustainable Choices 2045* calls for a dedicated implementation strategy. The primary purpose of the implementation strategy is to ensure all aspects of *Sustainable Choices 2045* are implemented over time. It will do so by establishing an approach and timeline for checking and evaluating progress of implementing the goals and objective of this plan.

## **How Was This Plan Developed?**

*Sustainable Choices 2045* was developed after assessing transportation needs and setting priorities for the Duluth-

## **Planning for All Modes of Transportation**

Transportation systems are multi-modal. This plan addresses both motorized and non-motorized (or “active”) modes of travel, including:



*Pedestrian*



*Harbor/Port*



*Highways*



*Transit*

Superior area, which included:

- Analyzing the most recent data available, including traffic volumes, level of service estimates, socio-economic and demographic trends, and existing transportation assets;
- Estimating projected revenues;
- Coordinating with current federal and state policies;
- Building upon recent local and area plans and policies;
- Consulting with local jurisdictions and other partners; and
- Gathering and summarizing input from the public regarding local transportation options, use, issues, and priorities.

These priorities are reflected in the plan's Goals and Objectives which are described and listed in Chapter 2.

### Who Was Involved?

Public involvement is integral to good transportation planning. The MIC's [Public Involvement Plan](#) set the framework for the outreach efforts throughout the development of *Sustainable Choices 2045*.

### Surveys

Two phases of interactive online surveys were conducted to gather useful information from the public regarding use and prioritization of numerous aspects of the Duluth-Superior area transportation system.

### Advisory Committee

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) served in an advisory capacity at their monthly meetings.

The MIC Policy Board was also consulted during their monthly meetings, and invited to participate in the LRTP Committee meetings and provide input. The MIC's website ([www.dsmic.org](http://www.dsmic.org)) was utilized to help disseminate the surveys and to provide updates. Chapter 8 describes the public involvement process in detail.

### Consultations

Consultations and meetings with local transportation stakeholders provided valuable information. We shared information with and received input and suggestions from the general public via participation at local events and other opportunities.

## Planning for All Modes of Transportation



Local Roadways



Air



Bicycle



Rail