

7. Participation

This chapter details the MIC’s process for ensuring timely and substantive public participation during the development of the LRTP.

Sustainable Choices 2045



Duluth-Superior Long-Range Transportation Plan

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Engaging the Public in Transportation Planning

The MIC is committed to reaching out to and engaging community members throughout the transportation planning process.

The MIC's Planning Process

All of the MIC's planning activities embody the [cooperative, continuous and comprehensive \("3-C"\) framework](#) for making transportation investment decisions in metropolitan areas as reaffirmed in the 2015 FAST Act. By disseminating information and soliciting comments that address ideas, issues, scope and alternatives, the MIC aims to ensure that all stakeholders are given ample opportunity to have a real influence throughout the planning and decision-making processes and thus help to shape the transportation policies, programs and projects in the Duluth-Superior area.

L RTP Public Participation: What We Did

For *Sustainable Choices 2045*, MIC staff followed its 2018 [Public Involvement Plan](#) which incorporates the public participation requirements of 23 CFR 450.316 into 4 overall phases and several specific strategies, tools and techniques, as follows:

Devise L RTP Public Participation Process

The first of four public involvement phases began in 2017 and laid the groundwork for the project. The first step was to devise a documented public participation process to:

- Identify roles, responsibilities and key decision points;
- Employ visualization techniques, utilize electronic formats and hold public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- Coordinate with statewide public involvement procedures and consider related planning activities;
- Consult with related agencies, officials and tribes;
- Identify stakeholders in keeping with federal requirements and the MIC's commitment to seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems;
- Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the L RTP;
- Periodically review the effectiveness of the process.

Federal L RTP Outreach Requirements:

- Provide reasonable public access to information.
- Incorporate the use of electronic methods and visualization techniques.
- Provide early & continuous opportunities for involvement.
- Offer timely information to citizens, affected agencies, private entities and other interested parties.
- Give adequate notice of public involvement activities and ample time for public review and comment at key decision points.
- Hold public meetings at convenient times and accessible locations.
- Ensure the inclusion of non-motorized users, the disabled, the elderly, minority, low-income and other traditionally "underserved populations".
- Include the consideration of the potential impacts of decisions on social and natural resources and reach out to relevant agencies and stakeholders.
- Develop and regularly review a public participation plan.

Sources:

Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) § 1201;

USC 23 § 134 and 49 § 5303 and CFR 450.316

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act

28 CFR 36 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice

Executive Order 13166 on Limited English Proficiency

Identify Stakeholders and Develop Contact List

An extensive effort was made to obtain and verify current email addresses for a broad range of organizations and individuals using the Stakeholder Identification Tool (Fig. 7.1).

A comprehensive mailing list was compiled that included interested parties (agencies, groups and individuals) as well as traditionally underserved groups and individuals as identified in the MIC’s Title VI plan.

Identified stakeholders also included current MIC Board as well as participants in MIC planning projects within the past several years.

Fig. 7.1 The MIC’s Stakeholder Identification Tool

Stakeholder Identification Tool for LRTP

As part of the 2013 update of the Public Involvement Plan, a comprehensive stakeholder contacts list was developed that included interested parties (agencies, interest groups and individuals who have been engaged in current and recent planning activities or “opted in” to our planning mailing lists) as well as traditionally underserved groups and individuals as defined in Section 450.316 of the Federal Register and as identified in the MIC’s Title VI plan.

Required Stakeholders (per 23CFR 450.316 (a) & (b); MIC Title VI Plan and established practice)	(List specific contacts)
1. Citizens/General Public <i>People who live and work in the Duluth-Superior area, including:</i>	MIC-LRTP-01 / List 767
(a) Those individuals and groups directly impacted by the results and recommendations of the plan or study, i.e., located inside or in close proximity to the study area; those individuals and groups who opt in to receive more information	
(b) Community clubs and neighborhood groups	
(c) Civic groups and service organizations such as the Rotary, Lions Club and Kiwanis Club	
(d) People and groups involved recent MIC plans and studies (within the past two years)	
2. Government and Public Agencies (Coordinated Planning) <i>Government agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the Duluth-Superior area that are affected by transportation, including:</i>	MIC-LRTP-02 / List 768
(a) Local elected officials from the cities, counties, and townships within the MIC Planning Area or Study Area	
(b) Local professional staff from the cities, counties, and townships within the MIC’s Planning Area or Study Area—Engineering and Planning, Fire and Police, etc.	
(c) City and County planning commissions	
(d) Area organizations responsible for planning activities with transportation interests (e.g., small-area plans and/or policy studies)	
(e) Formal and informal groups representing area transportation-related interests such as traffic safety, parking, Parks and Recreation, etc.	
(f) State and Federal officials—legislators representing the study area in both MN and WI	
(g) State and Federal agencies, including the planning and modal divisions of MnDOT and WisDOT, FHWA and FTA	
3. Public Transportation Interests <i>Representatives of both operators and users of transit, including:</i>	MIC-LRTP-03 / List 769
(a) Duluth Transit Authority staff	
(b) Organizations and individuals who represent the needs of transit-dependent persons	
4. Private Transportation Interests <i>Demand response operators and other private transportation interests, including:</i>	MIC-LRTP-04 / List 770
(a) Private transit operators and taxi services	
(b) Other:	
5. Multimodal Freight Interests <i>Representatives of both freight-generating businesses (shippers) and providers of multimodal freight transportation services, including:</i>	MIC-LRTP-05 / List 771
(a) Trucking firms	
(b) Railroads and rail operators	
(c) Duluth Seaway Port Authority and harbor-related businesses	
(d) Duluth Airport Authority and airport-related businesses	
6. Non-Motorized/Active Transportation Interests <i>Representatives of non-motorized (active) modes of transportation, including:</i>	MIC-LRTP-06 / List 772
(a) Users of pedestrian facilities, affiliated interest groups	
(b) Users of bicycling facilities, affiliated interest groups	
(c) Mn Department of Public Health	
(d) Health promotion and active lifestyle advocacy groups	
7. Human Services Interests <i>Representatives of traditionally underserved populations, including:</i>	MIC-LRTP-07 / List 773
(a) Disabled	
(b) Low-income	
(c) Minority	

Fig. 7.1 The MIC’s Stakeholder Identification Tool

The MIC’s Stakeholder Identification Tool translates the requirements of CFR 450.316 into a detailed listing of local organizations and individuals potentially interested in and/or affected by the transportation policies and projects included in the MIC area LRTP. Briefly, those interested parties included:

- Citizens/General Public
- Government and Public Agencies
- Public Transportation Operators and Users
- Private Transportation Operators
- Multimodal Freight Providers and Customers
- Non-Motorized/Active Transportation Advocates
- Human Services Providers and Recipients
- Natural and Historical Resource Preservation and Protection Groups and Agencies
- Business and Economic Development Interests
- Educational Institutions
- Tribal and Federal Lands Agencies

In addition to those identified by MIC staff, visitors to the Sustainable Choices 2045 website were invited to submit their email address if they were interested in receiving updates.

Form and Engage L RTP Advisory Committee

The MIC’s Transportation Advisory Committee, consisting of Duluth and Superior area planners, engineers and modal representatives, was enlisted as the primary advisory group for the L RTP throughout during all phases of the Plan’s development (Fig. 7.2).

Its purpose was to discuss the vision and goals of the L RTP, provide an overview of each L RTP chapter drafted, highlight the key take-aways from data collected and feedback received, and to ask for feedback and desired revisions for all aspects of the L RTP being developed.

The MIC Board also received much the same information as the L RTP Committee at several of its monthly meetings, and was appraised of primary comments and suggestions of the Advisory Committee.

A total of 22 updates were provided to the L RTP Advisory Committee and the MIC Board, from January 2018 through the release of the Draft Plan in June 2019.

Fig. 7.2: The MIC’s Transportation Advisory Committee, was enlisted as the primary advisory group for the L RTP throughout during all phases of the its development.



Public Involvement

is integral to the vision of *Sustainable Choices 2045*:

“To develop a **community-supported** multimodal transportation system that not only supports the diverse needs of people and commerce, but is also fiscally, socially, and environmentally sustainable over time.”

Public Involvement

is represented in several different goals and objectives:

Objective 2-2: Ensure legitimate opportunities for the public to engage in discussion about, and to share their needs and desires regarding the Duluth-Superior area transportation system.

Objective 2-6: Make information about the Duluth-Superior area transportation system available to the public in a variety of ways.

Launch *Sustainable Choices 2045* web page

A web page <https://dsmic.org/planning/long-range/> (Fig. 7.3) was developed and maintained as the primary resource for current information about the LRTP for the duration of the process. It included:

- Background info and scope of work;
- Listing of upcoming public meetings;
- Links to online public surveys (Fig. 7.4);
- Links to an interactive projects map (Fig. 7.5) and draft sections of the plan;
- Email link to MIC staff person to enable site visitors to provide input and ask questions.

Fig. 7.3 Screenshot of the MIC’s Long Range Plan Web Page
<https://dsmic.org/planning/long-range/>

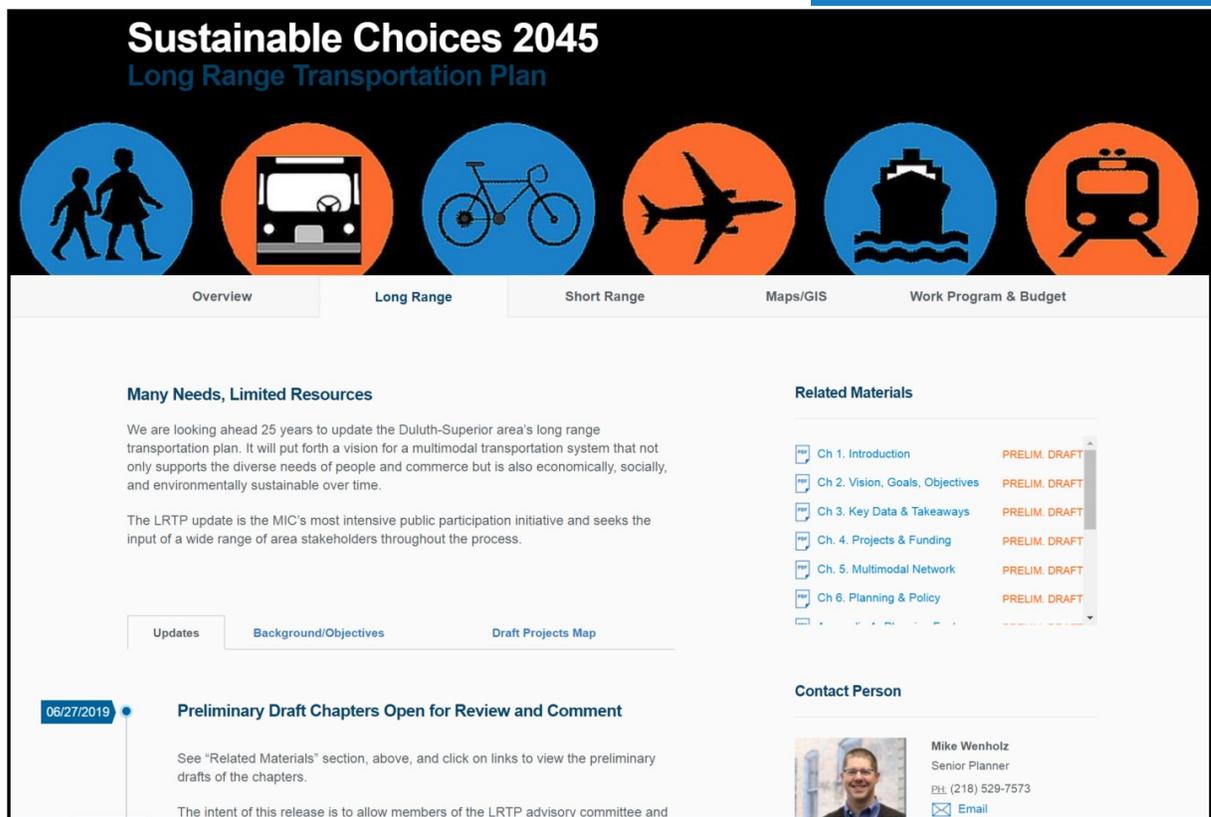
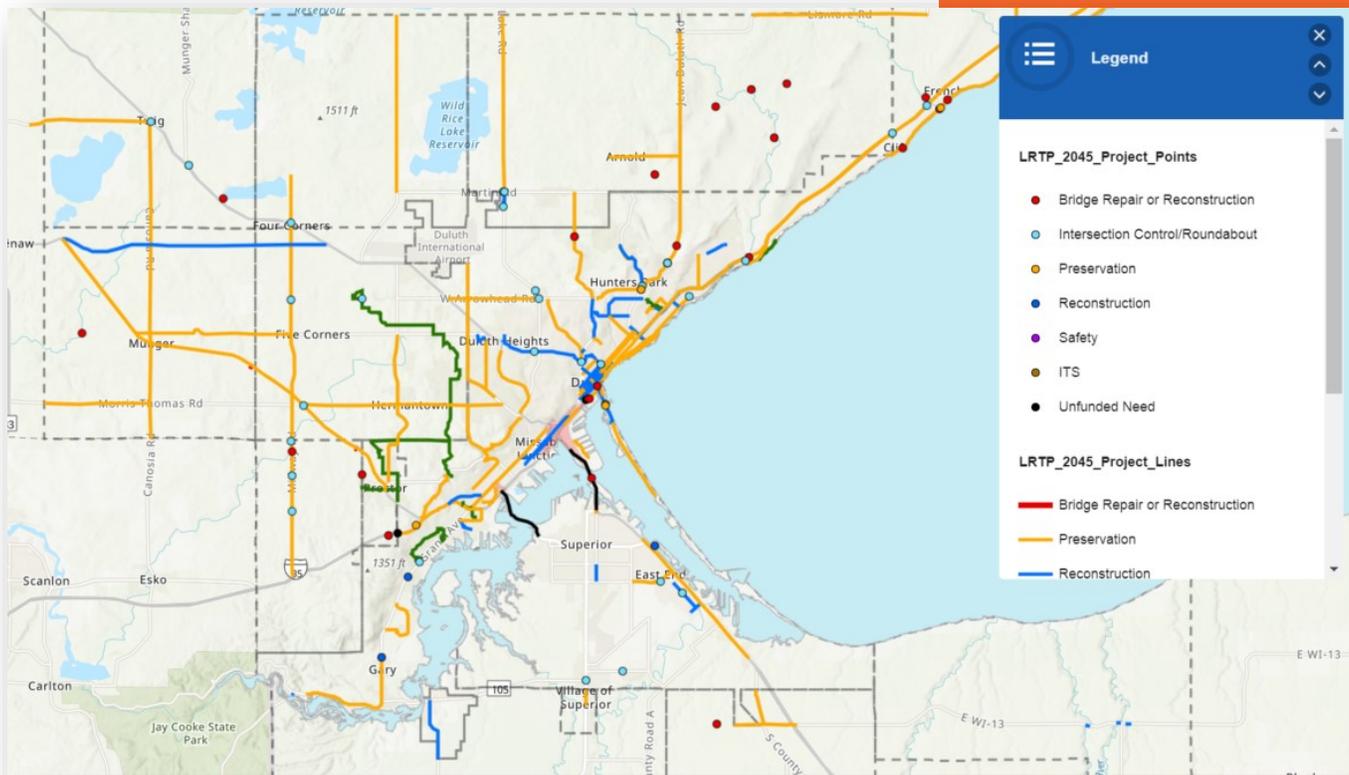


Fig. 7.4: The LRTP web page was a primary public involvement tool, with several 'call to action' posts about taking the surveys, attend meetings, and other public engagement notifications.



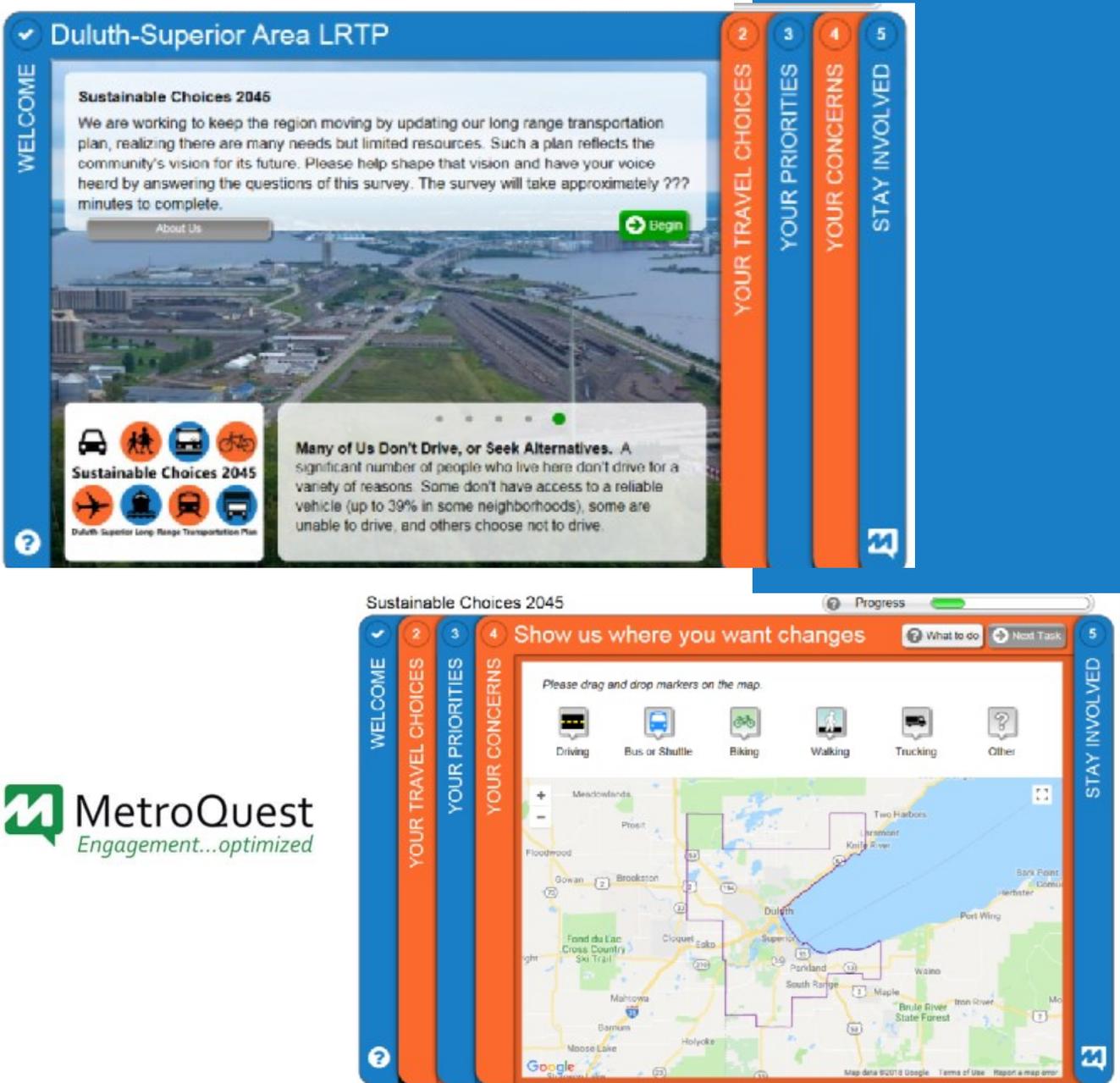
Fig. 7.5 Interactive Project Map Posted on the MIC's Long Range Plan Web Page (<http://bit.ly/LRTP2045ProjectList>)



Develop and Distribute Public Surveys

MIC staff designed two online surveys using the interactive MetroQuest platform (Fig. 7.6) to obtain public input about area transportation priorities, which in turn translated into short-and long-term goals and objectives. Appendices B, C, D and G discuss the surveys and their results in detail.

Figure 7.6—The interactive online survey platform MetroQuest was utilized in two separate phases in the early development of Sustainable Choices 2045.



Develop LRTP Informational Pieces

MIC staff developed a “brand” for the LRTP using specific fonts, colors and images, to use across all print and electronic media in regard to the LRTP. As the project progressed, a number of displays and handouts were produced to describe our LRTP initiative and to promote the surveys, including:

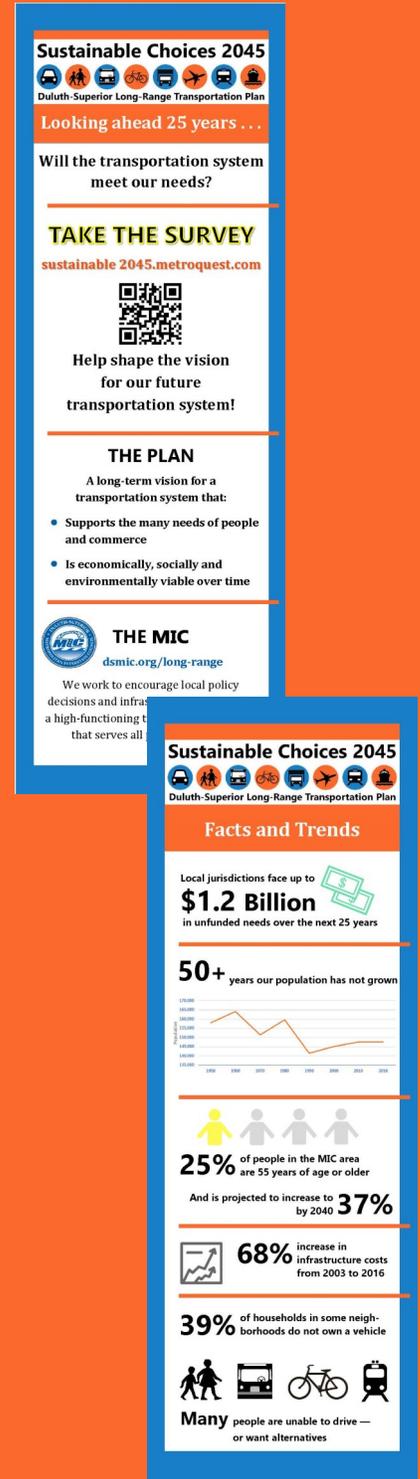
- Handouts describing the LRTP: key facts, primary issues and public involvement opportunities (Fig. 7.7).
- Posters with a message to “Take the Survey” included a scannable QR code linking directly to the online survey (Fig. 7.8).
- An interactive project maps and other visualization tools to describe aspects of the LRTP.
- Powerpoint presentations about current topics, technical data, transportation trends and public input.

Conduct Public Events

Fig. 7.8: Posters with “Take the Survey” message included a scannable QR code linking directly to the online survey site.



Fig. 7.7: A two-sided bookmark-style handout described the LRTP’s key facts, primary issues and included a scannable link to the online public survey



MIC staff conducted several pop-up displays, early in development of the LRTP, to reach out to the general public about the goals of the LRTP, promote the online surveys and gather input in person. These events included:

- 7th Annual Mayor's Bicycle Ride and Luncheon
- MIC Bike to Work Day Hospitality Station
- Lincoln Park Craft District Solstice Street Party
- Downtown Duluth Sidewalk Days Display (Fig. 7.9)
- Lincoln Park Meet on the Street Event
- Duluth Transit Authority Customer Appreciation Day
- Table/Exhibit at DTA Passenger Terminal

A total of 8 displays were hosted by MIC staff from June to December 2018 to promote the LRTP and the 2 surveys.

Fig. 7.9: The three-day Downtown Duluth Sidewalk Days event allowed MIC staff to interact with many members of the community and yielded a high number of survey responses.



MIC displays at public events in 2018 were opportunities, early in the process, to interact with members of the public, answer questions, and complete the Phase I survey.



Transit Center Passenger Terminal



Lincoln Park Meet on the Street



LRTP Display at the 7th Annual Mayor's Bicycle Ride and Luncheon

Engage Local Media

Local media picked up on a MIC press release featuring the Phase 1 public survey:

- [Article](#) in the Duluth News Tribune
- Interview with Lead Planner Mike Wenholz on weekly PBS public affairs program Almanac North

Two earned media placements were obtained in July 2018 promoting the Phase 1 public survey .

Engage the General Public with Social Media

The [MIC's Facebook page](#) was used several times to promote the LRTP generally, and the Phase 1 and Phase 2 surveys specifically:

- 6 posts with links to the surveys June—November 2018, reaching 848 people.
- 2 paid Facebook Boosts with links to the surveys in June and November, reaching 1280 people.

A total of 8 posts (paid and unpaid) were made on the MIC Facebook page with links to the Phase 1 and Phase 2 public surveys, resulting in a total reach of 2128 people.

Conduct Targeted Stakeholder Consultations (Part 1)

MIC staff reached out to a wide variety of different stakeholder groups and organizations throughout Duluth and Superior during the early phases of developing the LRTP.

The purpose of the stakeholder meetings held in 2018 was to share the vision and an overview of the LRTP and some key perspectives, and to receive feedback to two questions, tailored to each specific organization:

- How well does the existing Duluth-Superior area transportation system help your organization meet its mission or goals?
- Looking ahead 25 years, what should the Duluth-Superior area transportation system look like to help your organization meet its mission or goals?

Appendix I discusses comments received during these consultations in detail.

The following groups accepted our invitation to participate in the first round of stakeholder consults: (2018):

- City of Duluth Public Arts Commission
- Ecolibrium 3
- Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) Board
- One Roof Housing
- Harbor Technical Advisory Committee (HTAC)
- City of Duluth Commission on Disabilities
- ARC Northland
- SOAR Career Solutions
- Superior-Douglas County Area Chamber of Commerce and Travel Superior
- Duluth Community School Collaborative
- Duluth LISC Local Advisory Board

Conduct Jurisdictional Consultations

As part of developing of the transportation project list and fiscal constraint components of the Plan (see Chapter 4), MIC planning staff met with officials from every MIC-area jurisdiction.

The purpose of the consultations was for each jurisdiction to learn about the vision and goals of the LRTP, along with several key take-aways from public involvement efforts to date (Chapter 3).

It also served as an opportunity for the jurisdiction to share its transportation wants, needs and projects to be considered for inclusion within the LRTP.

The jurisdiction was also asked to share any known project ideas or suggestions for future additional study within the next 25 years, and to identify which of the five planning perspectives/goals of Sustainable Choices 2045 would be key drivers of each project idea or suggested study.

Conduct Targeted Stakeholder Consultations (Part 2)

The purpose of the second round of stakeholder meetings, held in 2019, was to give agencies, groups or organizations with interests in environmental and historic preservation, and low-income, minority, aging and disabled populations a meaningful opportunity for input prior to the finalization of the Draft Plan.

These consultations (Fig. 7.10) were purposely held at a later stage in the Plan's development, so we could bring forward the information collected to date, highlight key take-aways from data collected and feedback received and present the short-, mid- and long-term projects proposed for inclusion in the Plan's project list.

Participants at these meetings were asked to respond to the following two questions:

- Are there any concerns to consider, from the perspective of your organization, regarding the proposed transportation projects?
- What additional transportation projects or issues should be considered for inclusion in the plan?

Appendix I discusses comments received during all consultations in detail.

MIC staff conducted consultations with all MIC-area jurisdictions (April-May, 2019):

- City of Rice Lake
- Minnesota DOT
- Wisconsin DOT and Douglas County
- St. Louis County
- City of Hermantown
- City of Proctor
- Duluth Transit Authority (DTA)
- City of Superior and Area Townships & Villages
- City of Duluth
- Duluth Area Townships

MIC staff conducted a second round of stakeholder consultations with these stakeholder groups (2019):

- Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
- Harbor Technical Advisory Committee (HTAC)
- Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) Board
- Natural and Historic Resources, Human Services Agencies and Tribes (2 meetings)

Fig. 7.10: MIC staff conducted two consultations with representatives from local agencies with interests in human services and aging, environmental and historic preservation, and tribes.



Release of Draft Plan for Public Comment

Preliminary draft chapters were posted June 27, 2019 on the Sustainable Choices 245 web page to allow members of the LRTP advisory committee and oversight agencies, including MnDOT and FHWA, to review the content before the Draft document was released for the 30-day public comment period.

The Draft document of Sustainable Choices 2045 was formally released for a 30-day public review and comment period effective Monday, July 29 through Friday, August 30, 2019.

Legal Notices were placed in the Duluth News Tribune and the Superior Telegram and emails were sent to multiple stakeholders with a link to the LRTP web page and a request to review and comment on the draft plan. A notice about the Draft plan was placed on the MIC's Facebook page and promoted via a paid boost (ad) for the duration of the comment period.

Several public meetings and promotional activities are planned during this period and will be described in detail in the final version of the Plan. Comments received about the draft document will be summarized and reported to all TAC and MIC members at their regularly scheduled meetings in August and September, prior to the Policy Board's scheduled action to vote on adoption of the plan (October 16, 2019).

SEEKING INPUT FROM TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

Community advocacy groups with which the MIC works regularly regarding local transportation issues were identified as primary contacts to traditionally underserved populations during its initial outreach efforts. Various members of these organizations were included on the LRTP stakeholder mailing list and notified directly about the LRTP update and opportunities for involvement.

Staff from the MIC also introduced the *Sustainable Choices 2045* process at a transportation-focused meeting sponsored by Community Action Duluth, and met with staff from Ecolibrium 3, a neighborhood improvement agency, and One Roof Housing.

During the development of *Connections 2040* the MIC also considered outreach to non-English speaking individuals, but data regarding the number and specific language requirements of such individuals in the Duluth-Superior area is scant, and the MIC was unable to determine a cost-effective approach of targeting communication to non-English speaking people.

Public Participation for the LRTP: What We Heard

Appendices B, C, D, G, H and I discusses specific comments received and major themes in detail, but they include:

Major Themes

Balance of Multiple Goals

People clearly want all five goals of this plan to be achieved, and in a relatively balanced manner.

Achieving this will require a shift from traditional transportation priorities, including new, broader, more integrative and holistic approaches that include a more diverse group of interests and professionals within project planning and decision-making teams from the beginning.

Comments from Consultation with Area Tribe Representative (Fond du Lac Reservation):

- The Tribe has found that many culverts are undersized given the increase in rain events — a climate change-related phenomenon. Suggests projects should include resizing culverts and proper realignment through wetland areas.
- Many roads were built through wetlands, bisecting them hydrologically and causing problems and damage to the wetlands. Suggests properly reconnecting the wetlands hydrologically to be balanced and healthier.
- Direct people involved with ALL projects in the LRTP to consult directly with the Tribal Historic Preservation office (J. Hoppe).
- Cultural resources are ubiquitous and found throughout the entire MIC area, as native americans have lived in this area for centuries.
- State databases and GIS layers are not 100% accurate, and often do not include resources that locals are aware of.
- The tribes do not hand out maps of cultural resources for security reasons.