

PRESERVATION DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Duluth, MN

Duluth, once northern Minnesota's bustling hub for the mining and logging industries which flourished during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has a wealth of cultural resources that reflect its rich industrial history. For that reason, Duluth was selected to participate in the National Trust's

Preservation Development

Initiative [PDI], which provides recipients with a comprehensive on-site team assessment, recommendations for preservation-based development strategies, targeted technical assistance from Trust staff, and priority access to grant and loan funds.



*Historic commercial district in need of rehabilitation.
Duluth, MN.*

The PDI team's initial comprehensive assessment included tours of Duluth and its suburbs; reviews of ordinances, government and non-profit programs, and financing mechanisms; and interviews with numerous community representatives. MWO staff assisted by developing recommendations to strengthen Duluth's preservation infrastructure. The PDI report was presented to the community and City Council in April, and the MWO staff is now working with City staff and other stakeholders to implement the report recommendations. The first step was a seminar on tax credits and financial incentives, with individualized assistance for specific projects from the National Trust's Community Partners Department. The next steps include planning services by the National Trust Heritage Tourism staff, and the nomination of two National Register districts in the old downtown area that will allow more property owners to take advantage of financial incentives. Other efforts will include an assessment of the Heritage Preservation Commission with recommendations for a new work plan, technical assistance to guide property owners through the tax credit process, and the development of a loan pool for residential rehabilitation in historic neighborhoods.

To date, the new Mayor and the new Planning Director have embraced the PDI process and preservation as an effective development strategy, and the project is being accepted among the business community and the local press.