Health Impact ASSESSMENT

Duluth, Minnesota's
Complete Streets Resolution,
Mobility in the Hillside
Neighborhood and
The Sixth Avenue East
Schematic Redesign Study

JUNE 20, 2011

What is a *Health Impact Assessment?*

ACCESSIBILITY & SAFETY
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
LIVABILITY

#1 SCREEN
Verify means and rationale for completing an assessment.

#2 SCOPE
Identify health concerns and to determine the health categories.

#3 ASSESSMENT
A cumulative report is generated based on categories.

#4 REPORTING
Getting results to decision makers.

#5 EVALUATING
Determining HIA's effect on the decisions made.

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, program, or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population. The HIA is used to inform decision makers about potential health impacts so they can make the most informed decision. The HIA uses health indicators to determine its recommendations. Health Indicators, when changed, produce an effect on the health of a population. They are measurable and related to an aspect of health. Examples are the proportion of pervious to impervious ground surfaces, the ratio of miles of bike lanes and paths to roadways and the number of vehicle crashes when compared to similar roads.

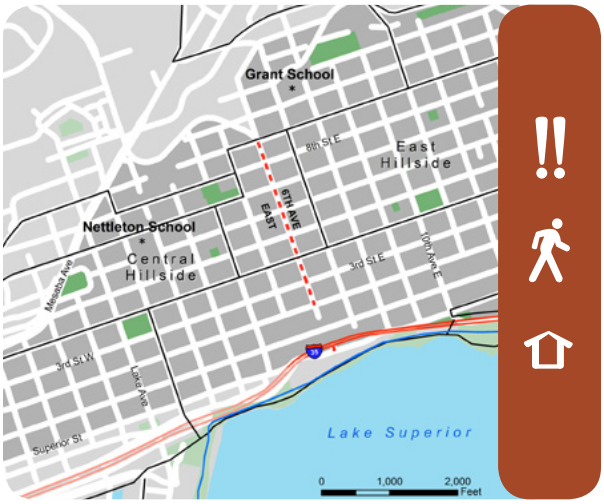
The Redesign Study was selected for a HIA, because the roadway has been an ongoing source of concern.

This HIA builds upon the Sixth Avenue East Schematic Redesign Study. The Redesign Study arose out of the community's concern for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists using this road. Multi-modal transportation challenges exist throughout the corridor. The Redesign Study evaluated the balance of transportation modes and found solutions to obtain a true multi-modal approach. Secondarily, it addressed the health benefits of a well-designed and environmentally sound corridor.

The Redesign Study was selected for a HIA, because the roadway has been an ongoing source of concern, plus the Safe & Walkable Hillside Coalition goal is to create a safe, walkable, greener, cleaner neighborhood, with emphasis on helping school children walk or bike safely. Additionally, when Nettleton Elementary School is closed in 2012, the District will bus all children across Sixth Avenue East to Grant Elementary School.

The first step is to screen. Screening determines if there would be a benefit from conducting a HIA. We asked several questions like, "Is there enough time to complete a HIA before decisions are made?" and "Would the HIA findings have the ability to alter the outcomes of the project?" The second step is to scope. The scoping step begins to identify health concerns and to determine the health categories and indicators for evaluation in the assessment step. During a public scoping workshop, the health categories to receive further study were determined. The stakeholder discussions and the final assessment of the participants and the HIA Team resulted in the health categories of **Accessibility & Safety, Physical Activity, Livability, Pollution, and Food Access.** Due to time constraints and the level of funding available, the health categories of pollution and food access were not assessed for this report.

Selected *Recommendations*



Hillside Neighborhood and Surrounding Area

The following selected recommendations should be taken into consideration for future planning and engineering initiatives associated with the redesign and reconstruction of Sixth Avenue East. They are intended as a foundation to meet the public's health needs and concerns identified through the HIA process. They ***should be considered by all parties, agencies and organizations that have a role in meeting the needs of the community within the HIA project area.***

ACCESSIBILITY & SAFETY

- Add additional bus stops to the redesign study and install shelters where ridership warrants.
- The addition of a traffic signal at Sixth Avenue East and Seventh Street reinforces the Redesign Study, which recommended that option be explored and implemented, if possible.
- Implement measures to reduce crashes at the highest crash intersections, such as Sixth Avenue East and Fourth Street.
- Establish an official bike route on Sixth Avenue East, with corresponding changes in the physical environment including separation of bicyclists from cars to improve bicyclists' safety.
- Develop a plan to clear snow from the medians at the Sixth and Eighth Street pedestrian crossings.
- Provide safe crosswalks for school children, along with designating Sixth Avenue East north of Fourth Street a School Crossing Zone.

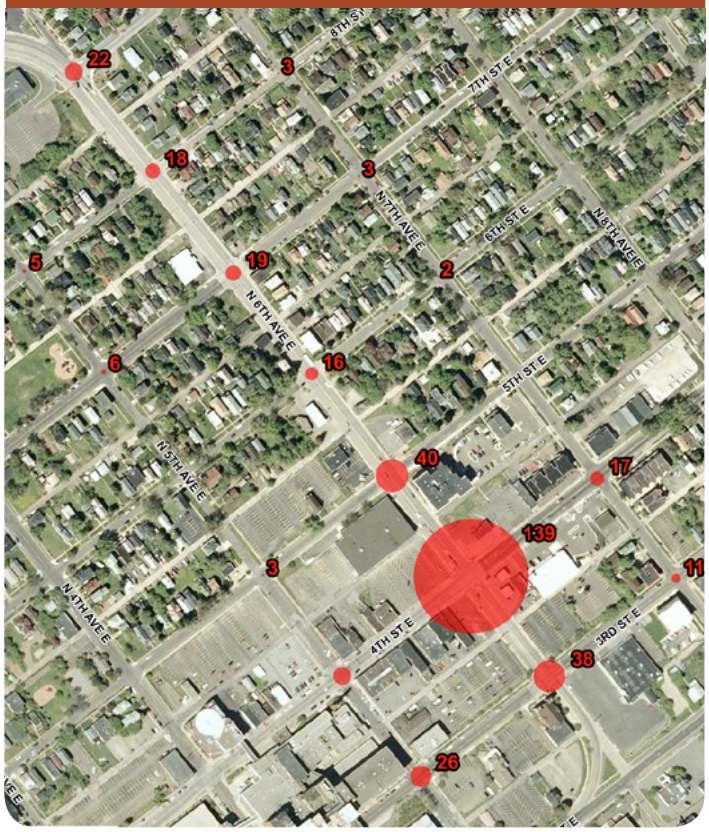
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Development patterns should encourage mixed uses, compact design, and a variety of transportation choices that promotes physical activity.
- Use the Metropolitan Interstate Council's sidewalk assessment as a guide to create a friendlier and more complete sidewalk network in the Hillside.
- Assist Duluth Parks and Recreation, Fit City Duluth, Safe and Walkable Hillside Coalition and other groups as they work to make Duluth and the Hillside a more easily active neighborhood.
- The project area should provide safe, convenient and affordable access to housing, worksites, schools and community services.

LIVABILITY

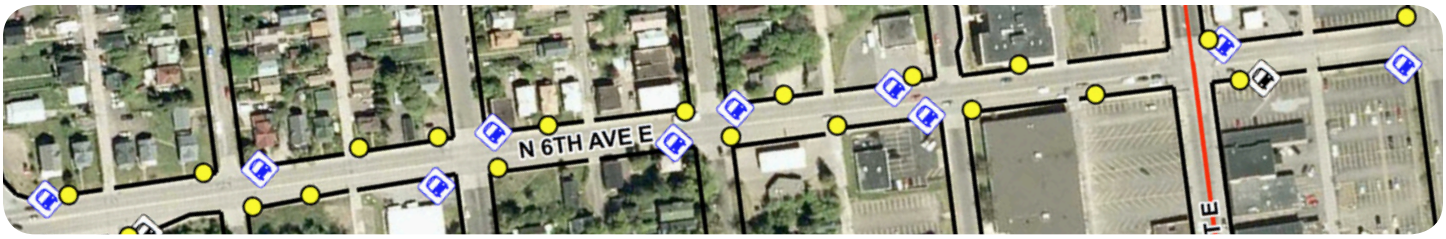
- Merge into one, unified Hillside Neighborhood Revitalization Plan and consider inclusion of a livability component.
- Implement the city's Unified Development Chapter parking standards within the Hillside neighborhoods completely, especially along the lower areas of the corridor, to greatly improve connectivity and livability for residents.
- Priority areas for "green" improvement are large parking lots around in the medical district. Improvements, such as border gardens, fences and the capture of additional rain water should be considered.
- Include amenities like lighting, benches, decorative fences, smaller localized pocket parks, trash receptacles, recycling containers, and rain gardens along the Sixth Avenue East corridor to create a neighborhood enhancing environment.
- Consider adding amenities outside of the right-of-way to create greener, more neighborhood-friendly development.

!! Total Motor Vehicle Accidents on Sixth Ave East 2006-2010



HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT Conclusions

1. The recommendations in this HIA should become an addendum to the Sixth Avenue East Schematic Redesign Study, and be paired with an upcoming traffic study on Sixth Avenue East.
2. The recommendations in this HIA would positively impact all health categories and better serve the users of and residents in the Hillside.
3. Duluth's Comprehensive Plan provides additional language to support the redesign, or a similar, improved design which supports all modes of transportation.
4. The roadway redesign is a feasible project.
5. Over time, enhancements outside the corridor are feasible.
6. With existing city policies and the HIA recommendations, the renewal of the corridor would greatly contribute to the unification of the Hillside and improve the health of its residents.



Amenities Currently Available on Sixth Avenue East

THE HIA TEAM

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*This HIA Team hopes to set a **new direction** for the redesign of the Sixth Avenue East corridor. We hope the discussion generated by this report will truly bring the Central and East Hillside neighborhoods together, in a more active and vital manner.*

The HIA Team is developing a communications and monitoring strategy, so that its recommendations will be in the public's eye and utilized to the fullest extent possible.