

**Application for  
Best Virtual Event**

**Connect Duluth  
City of Duluth, GA**

**Judges' score - 8.8**

## Detailed description of the event

Connect Duluth is a unique outreach program that has become the talk of the town among residents. First introduced during the 2019 "Be Duluth Show" by Mayor Nancy Harris, this program was designed to spark meaningful conversations between community members and city officials. It started as an in-person dinner among council members and the community at a local restaurant but has since gone virtual. While this free event would sell out every time, only 15 members of the community could participate at a time. Near the end of 2019, the City of Duluth marketing team saw an opportunity to go virtual as a way to connect with more of the community. As COVID became a reality for the world, Mayor Nancy Harris hosted the first virtual meeting on March 11. During this meeting, she answered pressing questions about the City's outlook on the virus, along with general questions about the status of construction projects, community programs, and City operations. When the series picked up again in September of that same year, Mayor Harris welcomed her first co-host, Council Member Kelvin Kelkenberg. Our community loved this virtual meeting's casual nature while also getting the opportunity to interact with their elected officials from the comfort of their own homes. Since then, we have continued to host Connect Duluth virtually every couple of months with a rotating co-host to give the show variety and each elected official a chance to participate. This past year we hosted the first Connect Duluth takeover event with the talented Student LEAD (Learn, Engage, Advance Duluth) Academy. Six of Duluth High School's brightest students came together for this 18-month program, which consists of developing leadership skills, touring City of Duluth facilities, working with various departments to learn about city operations, and identifying civic engagement opportunities (like Connect Duluth). Each year they pick a group project to work on, and their selection this year was hosting their own Connect Duluth show. The students worked tirelessly to curate one of our most engaging Connect Duluth shows yet! The opportunity for engagement makes Connect Duluth different from your average online event. Residents and visitors alike are encouraged to submit questions before the show and ask them live in the chat. The show opens with our Mayor and a Council Member as hosts. The first segment features a guest that is an expert in their field. Past guests have included the City of Duluth Chief of Police, A Gwinnett County Commissioner, and the Director of Stormwater, to name a few. After a short "commercial" break with a prerecorded video, we go into the City update portion, where our two hosts answer pre-submitted questions and take questions from the live virtual audience. Each episode ranges from 45-60 minutes. Our community loves being able to "sit down" with their elected officials in a casual atmosphere to get their take on Duluth's trajectory and to share their thoughts and concerns on what is happening in their neighborhoods. Likewise, Duluth's elected officials and city staff enjoy chatting virtually with our residents to understand our community's views better. Connect Duluth should be awarded 2023's Best Virtual Event because it brings together members of our community on a scale that we have not been able to in the past, and it enables our elected officials to become better leaders.

Will it become an annual event?

Yes

Estimated number of attendees?

3973

## Youtube

Video Title	Date	Duration	Unique Viewers	Likes	Dislikes	Comments
Connect Duluth with Mayor Harris, Council Member Harkness and Commissioner Carden	4/21/2022	0:46:38	64	1		0
Connect Duluth with Mayor Harris, Council Memeber Graeder & Duluth's Stormwater Department	7/19/2022	1:04:01	55	3	0	4
Connect Duluth with Mayor Harris, Council Member Thomas and Duluth PD Chief Carruth	10/18/2022	0:46:37	26	1	0	0
Duluth High School Student LEAD Takeover on Connect Duluth	11/15/2022	1:02:51	356	18	0	58
		<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>62</b>

## Facebook

Post Content	Date	Impressions	Reactions	Comments	Link Clicks	Shares	Other Clicks	Video Views	Type of Content	Format	Hashtag
Connect Duluth	1/26/2022	2122	3	0	16	1	8	NA	Awareness	Graphic	NA
Connect Duluth	1/26/2022	1238	19	17	2	1	227	678	Awareness	Live	NA
Connect Duluth: Mayor Nancy Harris and Councilmember Jamin Harkness	4/11/2022	1805	9	0	2	2	2	NA	Awareness	Graphic	#DuluthGA #ConnectDuluth
Connect Duluth: Mayor Nancy Harris and Councilmember Jamin Harkness	4/20/2022	2101	4	0	3	0	1	NA	Awareness	Graphic	NA
Connect Duluth: Mayor Nancy Harris and Councilmember Jamin Harkness Live Meeting	4/20/2022	1279	98	3	-	37	173	1040	Awareness	Live	NA
Connect Duluth: Mayor Harris and Council Member Graeder	7/7/2022	2149	15	5	3	4	60	NA	Awareness	Graphic	NA
Connect Duluth	7/19/2022	1686	5	1	9	0	19	NA	Awareness	Graphic	NA
Connect Duluth	7/19/2022	943	30	17	-	1	-	356	Awareness	Live	NA
Connect Duluth: Mayor Harris & Council Member Thomas	10/12/2022	1225	4	0	-	0	2	NA	Awareness	Graphic	NA
Connect Duluth: Mayor Harris & Council Member Thomas	10/18/2022	NA	32	18	-		0	751	Awareness	Live	NA
Stuent L.E.A.D. Connect Duluth	11/15/2022	1956	7	0	3	0	6	NA	Awareness	Graphic	NA
Stuent L.E.A.D. Connect Duluth	11/15/2002	2201	16	8	-	2	369	647	Awareness	Live	NA
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>18705</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>3472</b>			

[Watch Student LEAD Connect Duluth Here](#)

[Watch July's Connect Duluth Here](#)

[Watch October's Connect Duluth Here](#)

[Watch April's Connect Duluth Here](#)

As a government organization we provide our events as a free service to the community. Connect Duluth does not generate a profit. We have an annual budget of \$1,000 that goes to set and equipment upgrades and to pay the staff of the Red Clay Theatre where we film the live shows.