



Chester Bowl Shared Use Trails Informational Presentation

DULUTH PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AUGUST 14, 2019

History of Process

City of Duluth Chester Park Mini-Master Plan (approved November 2014), and the Cross Country Ski Trail Master Plan (approved May 2015) call for a shared use trial period, allowing pedestrians to utilize the existing Cross Country ski trails at Chester Park.

As the plan dictates, “if pedestrians and skiers are unable to coexist”, the plan calls for the City to bring a recommendation to Parks and Recreation Commission on or before June 01, 2017 to either:

- Build a separate parallel pedestrian trail
- Limit Nordic skiing in all or major parts of Chester

Parks management extended the trial period to 2018, and again until 2019 to further evaluate shared use and the success of improved trail signage. During this time, numerous stakeholder and public meetings were held, a trail user survey was conducted, trail counters and cameras were installed to monitor trail use.

Summary of Planning Process

Timeline of Shared Use Trail

Chester Park Mini-Master Plan approved- November 2014

Cross Country Ski Trail Master Plan approved- May 2015

Original Trail Signage Implementation – 2017/2018 Winter Season

Public Meeting #1 – February 20th, 2018

Public User Survey – Spring 2018

Stakeholder Meeting #1 – May 3rd, 2018

Public Meeting #2 – March 21st, 2018

Stakeholder Meeting #2 – October 25th, 2018

New Trail Signage Implementation – 2018/2019 Winter Season

Trail & Camera Installation – 2018/2019 Winter Season

Stakeholder Meeting #3 – May 29th, 2019

Stakeholder Site Visit – July 8th, 2019

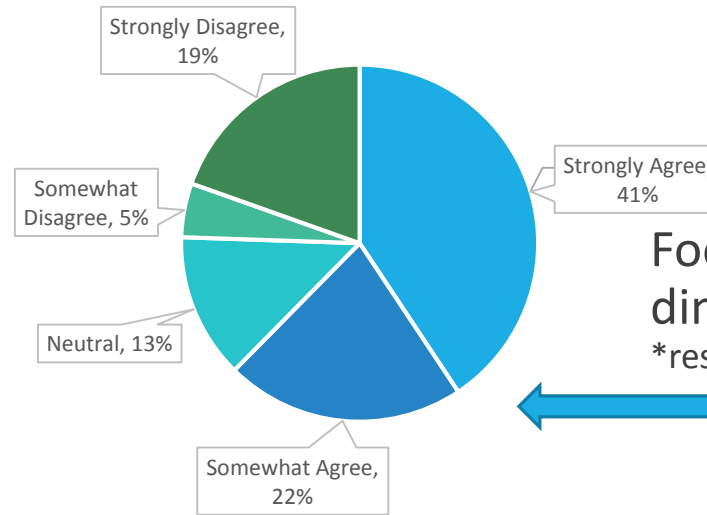
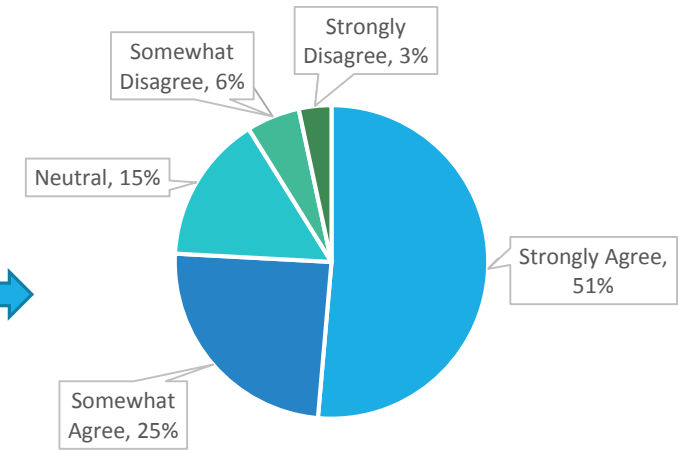
**Duluth Parks and Recreation Commission Informational
Presentation- August 14, 2019**

Parks and Recreation Commission Action Requested- September 11,
2019

Conclusions from the 2017/2018 Public User Survey

The packed/groomed surface is an important reason I use the ski trail.

*responses received from all user types

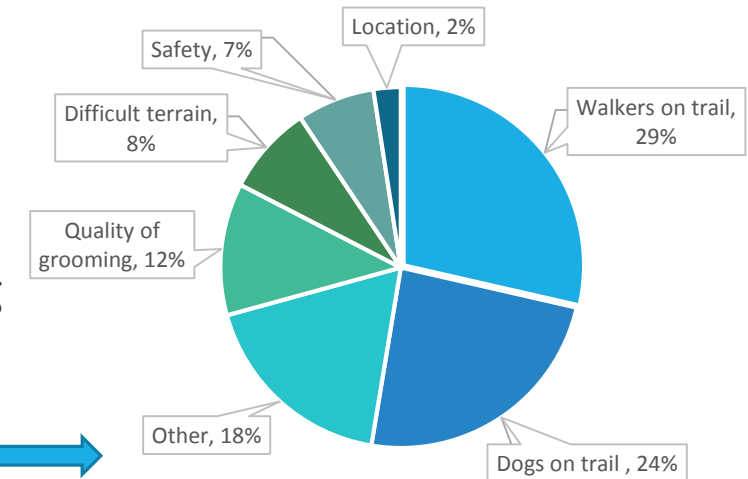


Footprints on groomed trail have diminished my experience.

*responses received from all user types

If you have used the Chester ski trail for skiing in the past but have stopped doing so, why do you no longer ski there?

*responses received from xc-skiers only



Improved Signage Implementation Fall 2018

-New trail signage installed, communicating approved trail use (Hikers to utilize 1/4 of trail)

*20 directional signs were installed along the 1.8 miles (3k) of xc-ski trail, 15 etiquette signs were also installed

-Trail counters and cameras installed to monitor and evaluate use



2018/2019 Trail Counter & Camera Data

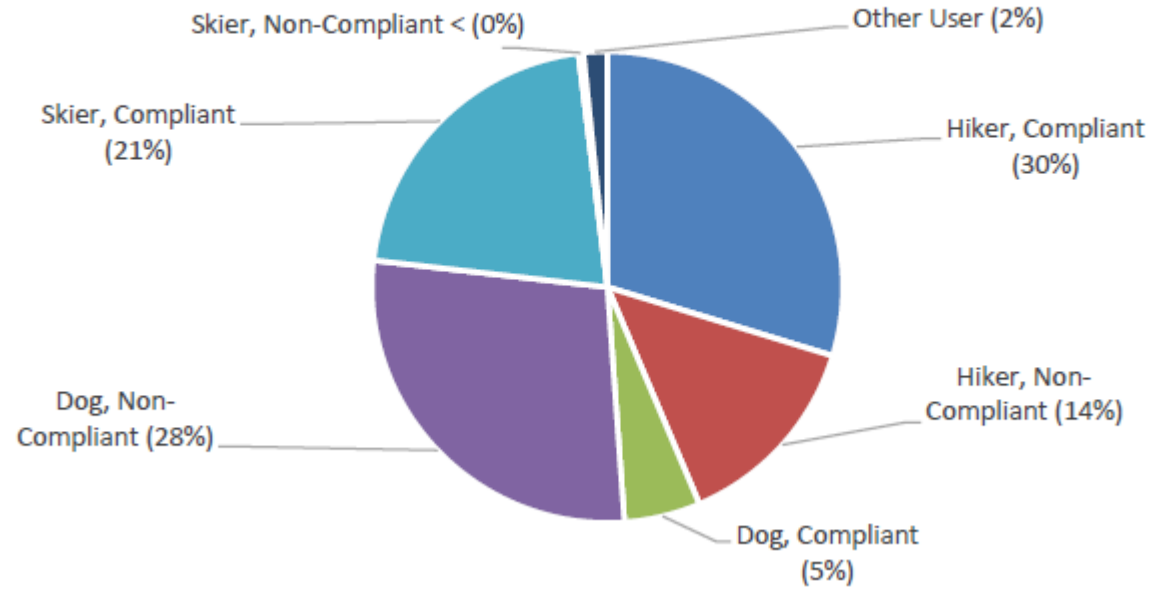
Study Period 12/27/18 to 04/01/19

Daily Average Use = 48 users/day (mix of all users, includes dogs as an individual user)

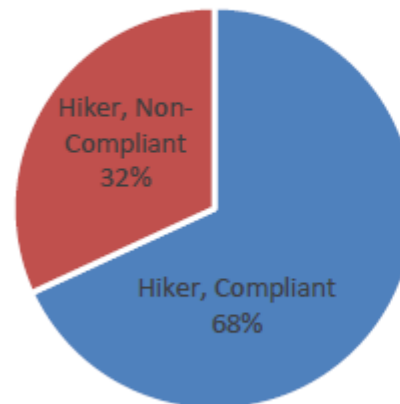
Data tabulated to determine peak usage

Compliance refers to trail usage as well as adherence to applicable City Ordinances (i.e. leash laws)

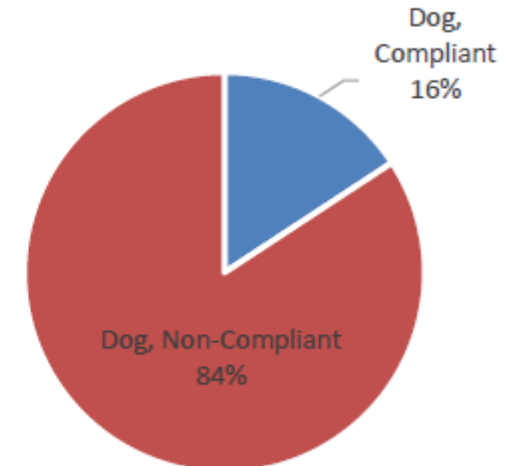
Peak Usage Broken Down by User Compliance



Hiker Compliance



Dogs Compliance



Staff Recommendation

Excerpt from Chester Park Mini-Master Plan (unanimously approved by City Council November 2014)

If pedestrians and skiers are unable to coexist in Stage One, the City will bring a recommendation to the Parks Commission on or before June 1, 2017 to determine proper action for Stage Two, Options include:

- Building a separate parallel pedestrian trail as in the current Plan;
- Limiting Nordic skiing in all or major parts of Chester.

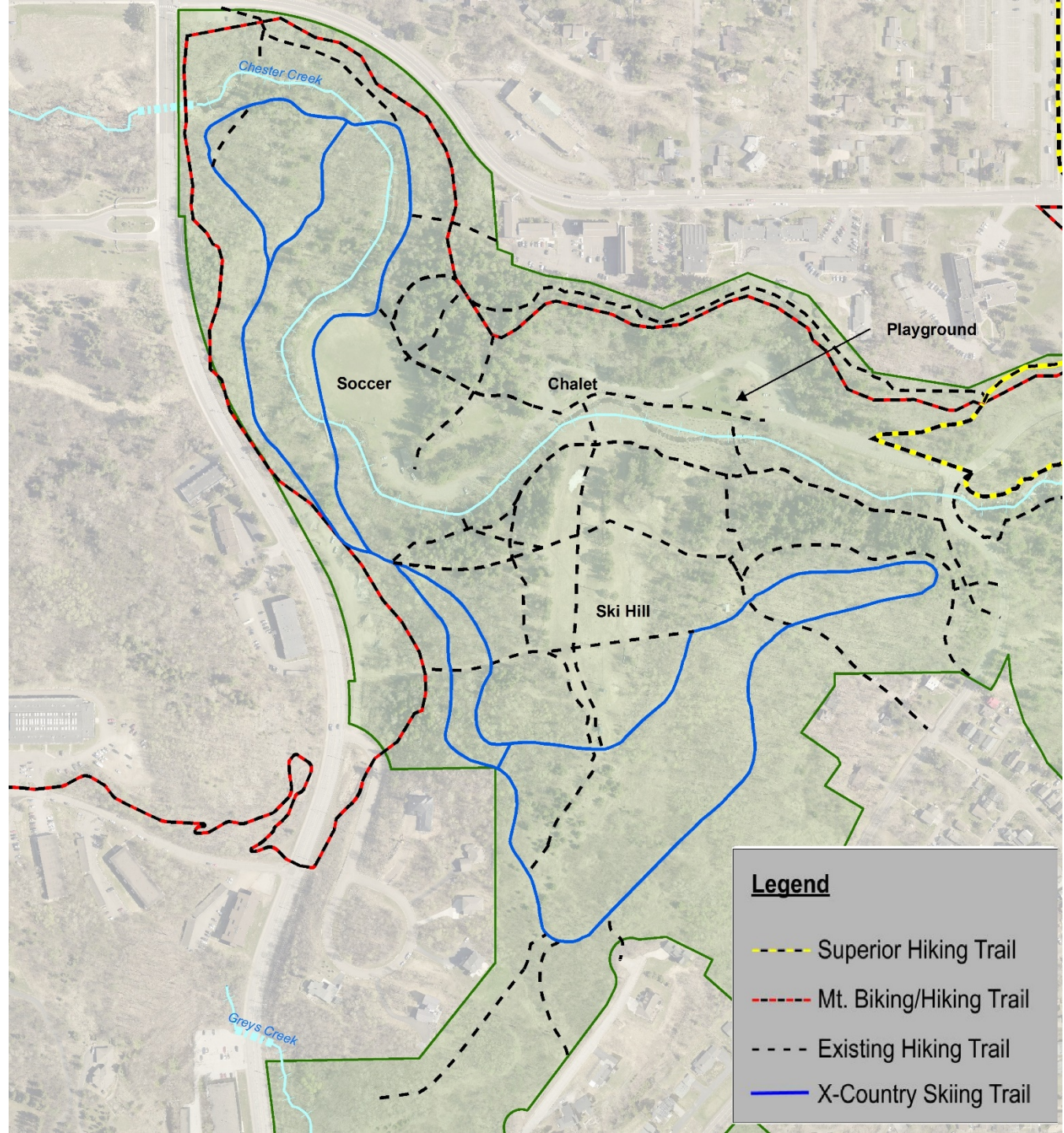
Based on stakeholder participation, public input, the *2017/2018 Public User Survey*, and observations from *2018/2019 Trail Counter & Camera Data*, it is determined that pedestrians and skiers are unable to coexist. Additionally, this information indicates comparable traffic from each user type, while also demonstrating a decrease in overall xc-ski use due to factors including: absence of the classic ski track (necessary to accommodate hiking), discontinuation of grooming the speed skating oval and classic track within the soccer field (due to conflicts with unauthorized off-leash dogs), and trail user conflicts.

Therefore the staff recommendation is to accommodate all trail use types present in upper Chester Park by:

“Building a separate parallel pedestrian trail” as identified in the 2014 Chester Park Mini-Master Plan, and allow skiing only on the XC-Ski trails from January 01 - March 31

Map1

All Currently Identified Trails



Map2

All Currently Identified Trails
with Proposed Winter Hiking Trail



Map3

Proposed Winter Hiking Trails Only



Map4

Proposed New Trail

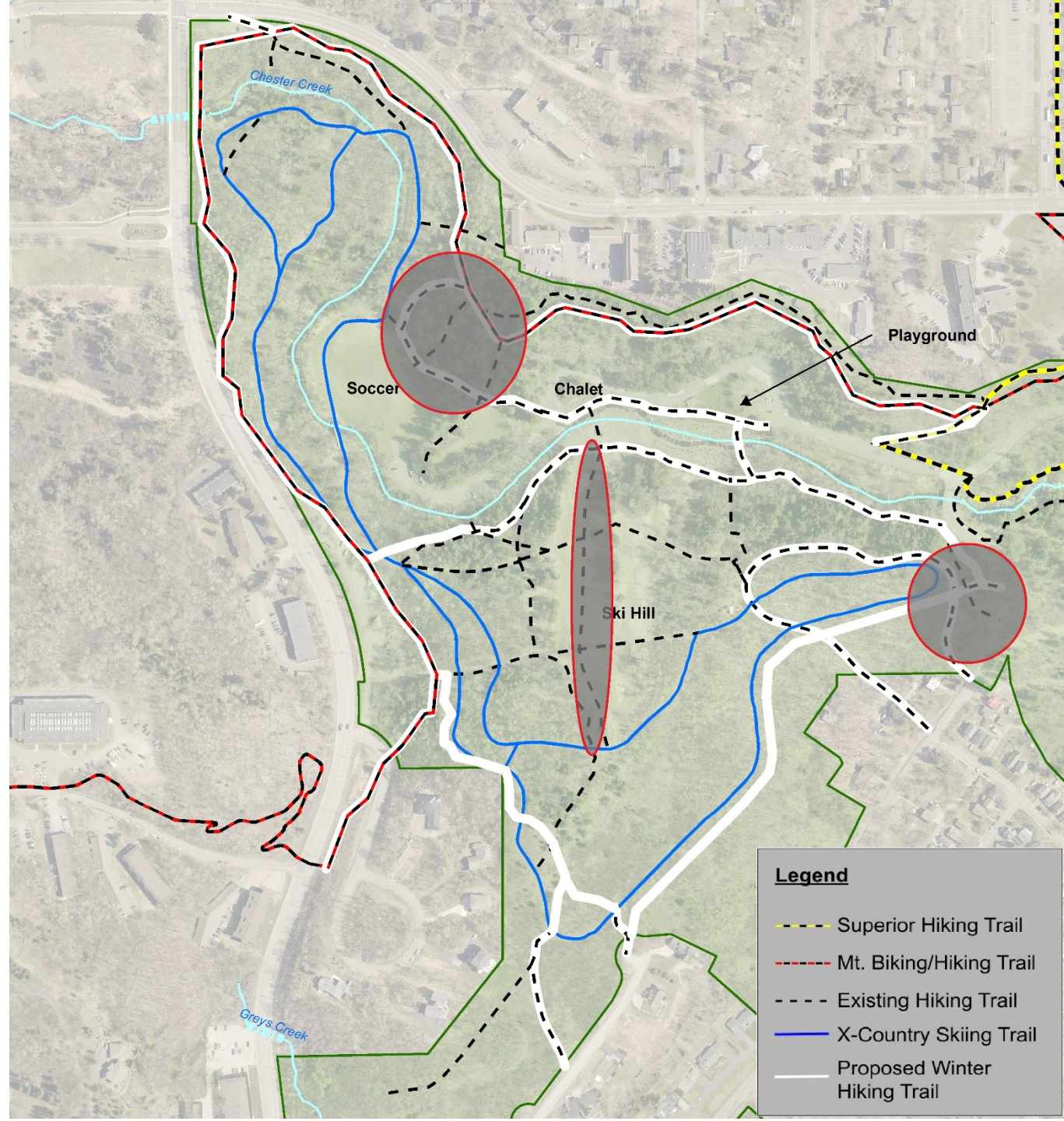
*Approximately 2,700' of New Trail



Map5

Areas of Concern

*Minimum 2,200' of Land Reclamation
& Rehabilitation Identified to Date



Proposal:

Trail Construction proposed for 2020

This proposal would include the following steps to ensure establishment of a successful, year-round hiking trail system:

- Designate xc-ski trails as skiing-only January through March
- Establish new hiking trail connections to create walking loops
- Reclamation & rehabilitation of damaged land, consolidating unsustainable neighborhood connections while providing official entry points
- Implement Signage & Wayfinding consistent with City of Duluth 'Gate, Wayfinding, and Signage Design Plan'

Approximate associated costs

2,700' of trail construction: \$4,000 - 13,500

2,200' of land reclamation: \$3,000 - 9,000

*prices are comparison of City staff & volunteer efforts vs professionally contracted services

Signage & Wayfinding: \$46,250

*price based on best known cost estimates utilizing Parks signage bid package tool

Next Steps

Chester Bowl Trails Informational Presentation posted to City of Duluth Parks and Recreation website- August 14, 2019

Two week public comment period- August 15 to August 29

Parks Commission Action Requested- September 11, 2019

Questions?

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