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City of Duluth - Communications Office

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SUBJECT: The City of Duluth and Citizen Advisory Committee Propose Expansion of Green Space, Recommendations for Public Golf

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

The City of Duluth and Citizen Advisory Committee Propose Expansion of Green Space, Recommendations for Public Golf

[Duluth, MN] The City of Duluth plans to acquire approximately 450 acres of unprotected tax-forfeit land adjacent to Lester Park. This land would be designated as an addition to Lester Park and rezoned as parkland as recommended in the Imagine Duluth 2035 Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the City would purchase 30 acres of additional tax-forfeit land adjacent to Enger Park, and rezone that area for protection as well.

Currently, the City owns 300+ acres around Lester Park that features 9+ miles of hiking and mountain biking trails around the lower reaches of Amity Creek and Lester River. The 450-acre addition to the park would be permanently protected from development as a condition of acquisition.

As a part of a fifteen month collaboration, the City of Duluth worked with the Friends of Duluth Public Golf, Duluth Golf Citizen Advisory Committee, and members of the public to make recommendations for the future of public golf in Duluth.

The Citizen Advisory Committee is comprised of City Councilors, Parks Commissioners, the elected leadership of Friends of Duluth Public Golf, and other community leaders.

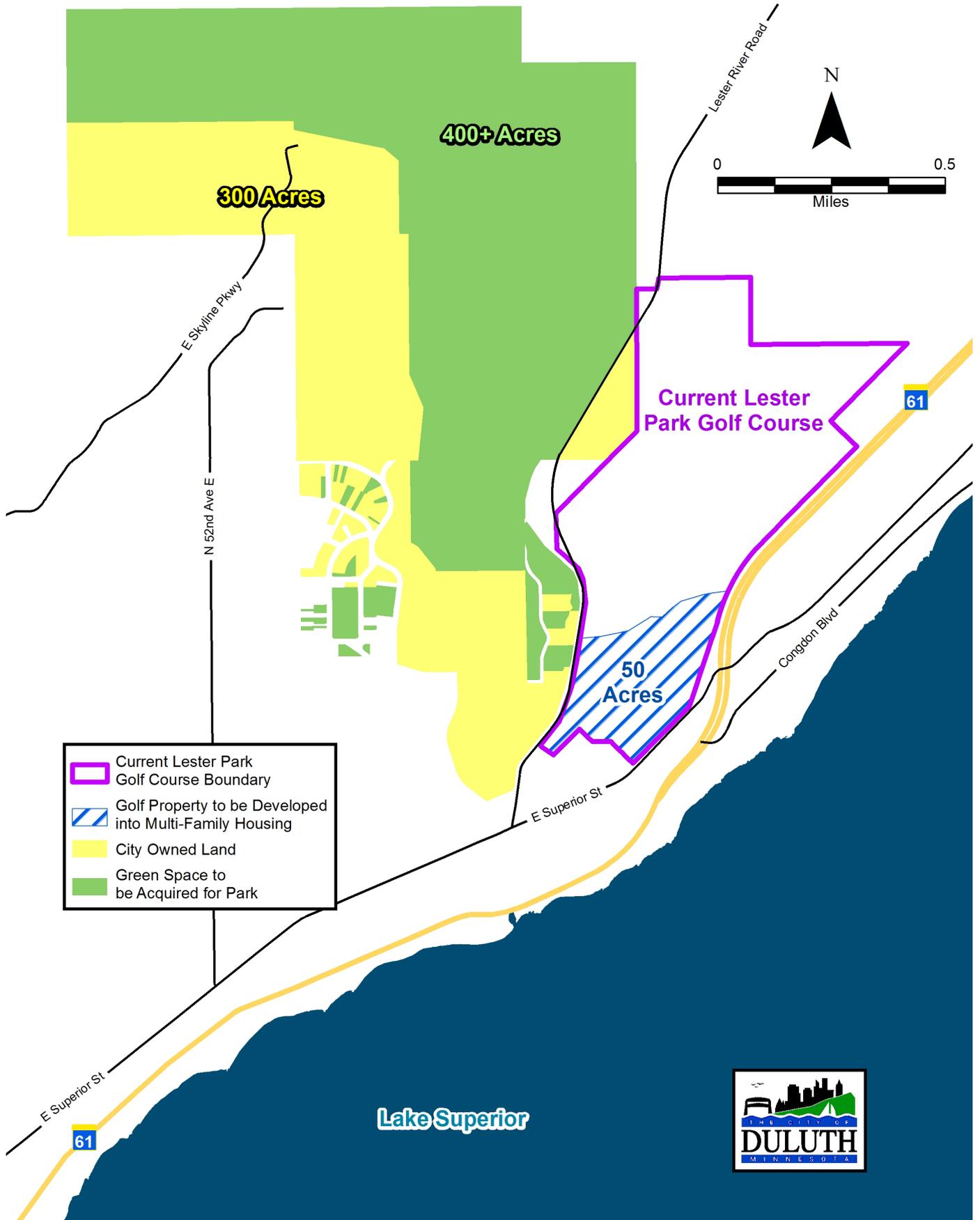
For golf, the City of Duluth and the advisory committee recommend prioritizing the centrally located Enger Park Golf Course, closing and selling the Lake Nine at Lester Park Golf course following the 2019 golf season, renewing deteriorated golf infrastructure at Enger Park Golf Course, continuing to operate the original 18 holes at Lester through the end of the 2022 season, then evaluating whether golf financial performance is strong enough to justify continued golf operations at Lester in 2023.

An additional piece of the proposal would include the potential redevelopment of the bottom 50 acres of Lester Golf Course. This area is close to public infrastructure, and could accommodate up to 400 units of multi-family housing, with affordable units included. The proposal also would allow the driving range at Enger Park Golf Course to be redeveloped to create up to 120 units of multi-family housing.

“For fifteen months, City staff have engaged with the community, public officials, and stakeholders to choose the right path forward for Duluth’s public golf courses and the green space around them,” said Director of Public Administration Jim Filby-Williams. “This signals the intent of the City of Duluth, supported by the Duluth Golf Citizen Advisory Committee, to add and protect more public greenspace, while also making an improvement to golf. This furthers the City’s intent to provide outdoor amenities to the public, while coming to an agreement with the golfing community, and creating needed space for housing.”

The next steps include a presentation at the Park Commission meeting on May 8, 2019, followed by recommendations being brought to the City Council on May 13, 2019.

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Lester Graphic