



LESTER PARK GOLF COURSE LAND USE STUDY & VISION PLAN

AUGUST 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1

FINDING A FUTURE FOR THE LESTER PARK GOLF COURSE

The former Lester Park Golf Course is a cherished place in the city, with a compelling history of public development, public ownership, and public access.

The original 18 holes were built in the early 1930s as part of the City Works Administration program, employing local residents to hand-clear the course. Through the subsequent decades, including the opening of the Lake 9 in the 1990s, the course remained in public ownership and as a publicly accessible course. Even with its closure in the early 2020s, the site remained publicly accessible for outdoor recreation.

Today, the site presents one of the most consequential locations for a city wrestling with how and where to grow — while staying true to its identity as a nature- and recreation-oriented community. The 270 acres are a backdrop to pointed questions, such as:

- How could the city fully embrace a unique opportunity to restore natural landscape and habitats at the gateway to the north shore, that for nearly a century have been artificially manicured for human usage?
- Might this be a prime location — the east bookend of the city’s park system — to further enhance the city’s nationally-renowned recreation opportunities?
- Could the site help address a deep-rooted need for additional housing of different types, recognizing the city is in need of thousands more units to keep up with increasing demand?

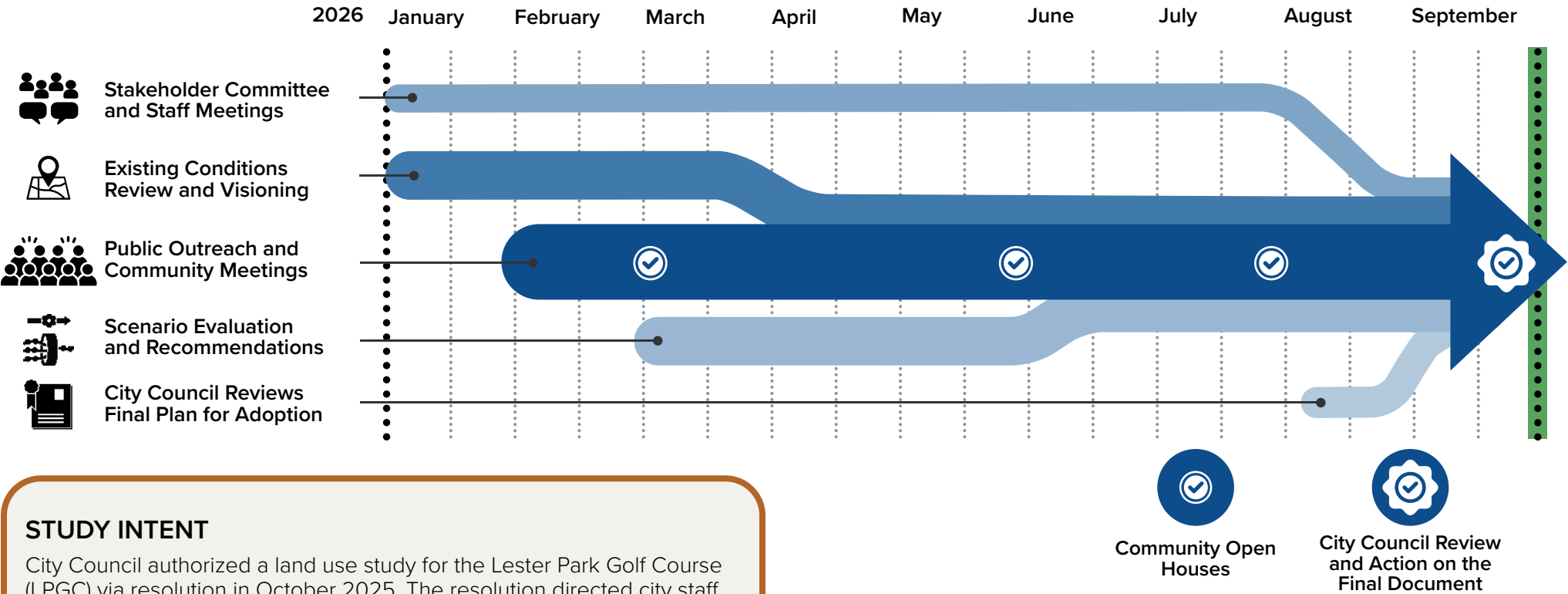
To answer these questions, the city commissioned an eight-month study organized around a multi-phase public engagement plan. Interspersed with this engagement, analyses of site conditions, opportunities, and barriers were conducted to answer core questions of balancing outcomes:

- Where should natural resources be restored across the site, what outdoor recreation uses should the site offer, and where should different development occur?
- To what degree should each of those activities be present, and where can they be blended?

The recommendations of this study provide a vision derived by thoughtful community feedback, technical analyses, and alignment with city goals. What is more, they provides a model for answering similar questions for other places of opportunity across the city.

PROJECT SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

The study began in January 2026, and followed a council-mandated timeline to be completed in September 2026. Building on prior efforts to-date, and an exceptional commitment by the community, stakeholders, and city staff, the study team was able to deliver a study structure with built-in feedback loops, iterative design processes, and regular touch points with the community and stakeholder groups.



STUDY INTENT

City Council authorized a land use study for the Lester Park Golf Course (LPGC) via resolution in October 2025. The resolution directed city staff to commission and complete a land use study that considered a future of the entire 270-acre LPGC site. In January 2026, city staff from Planning, Economic Development, Engineering, Parks and Recreation, and Natural Resources began the study, with the intent to:

- Assess current site conditions,
- Create potential land use concepts, and
- Identify a preferred future land use vision.

This LPGC Land Use Study differed from prior assessment and redevelopment efforts in the area in that:

- It analyzed the entire 270-acre LPGC site.
- It explored a comprehensive set of potential land uses for the area.
- It explicitly balanced a complementary approach to natural resource preservation, outdoor recreation opportunities, and development that supports a complete neighborhood.

GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE STUDY

- Provide multiple opportunities for the public to engage with the study team where they can inform and review project outcomes and build awareness of issues and knowledge of processes that shape the area.
- Establish a vision, goals, and guiding principles for the study area to inform future plan development and implementation actions.
- Identify a future land use and development vision that balances development, outdoor recreation, and natural resources in alignment with community and Council goals.
- Outline clear and actionable implementation steps for the City and its partners, to support the future vision of the LPGC.



SUMMARY OF KEY SITE ANALYSIS FINDINGS



GREEN ISN'T ALWAYS NATURAL

Though it is very green, the site has been significantly altered over time for use as a golf course and is not in a “natural state.” The areas that have been fertilized may need to be remediated and mitigated. Most likely, the tee boxes and putting greens of the original golf course have the deepest contamination.



GREAT CONNECTIONS TO LEVERAGE

The site has incredible potential for connections to public assets and parks — Lester Park and Amity Park to the west, and Brighton Beach to the south. Any future development should account for future site users who also want to reach these key public spaces.



UP-HILL WATER DISTRIBUTION

There is adequate current water pressure to serve the area south of the existing clubhouse. Any development of the central and northern portions of the site would require additional infrastructure like a booster station and reservoir, to push water through pipes up the hill.



SUPERIOR VIEWS

Views of Lake Superior are increasingly scenic as you move up hill across the site. These views have significant value for the public, and for possible future residents looking for housing close to the lake.



HELPING MEET CITY-WIDE NEEDS

With an estimated demand for 8,800 new housing units by 2035, there is a great need for new housing in Duluth. Some developable areas on the site can serve to meet a small portion of this demand.



THE VISION

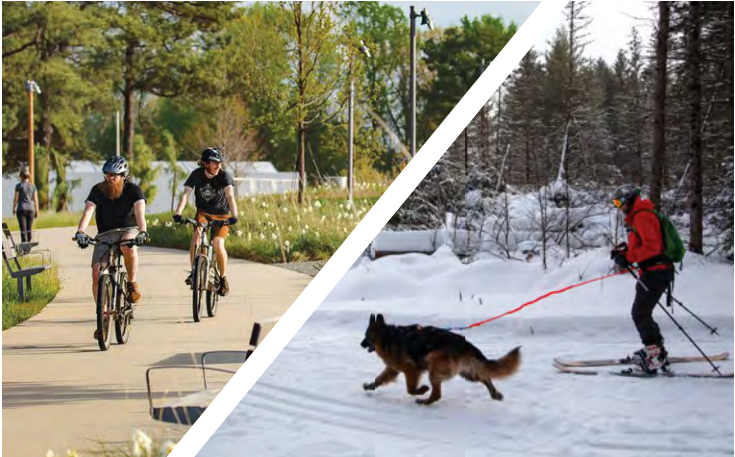
The future of the LPGC site will be one in which a compact, walkable, and environmentally integrated community is nestled within one of Duluth’s significant natural landscapes. This vision sets the groundwork for restoration and year-round recreation opportunities within the northern 2/3 of the site, while strengthening connections to the broader park system. To the south, an urban, mixed-use neighborhood is organized around a walkable main street and a diverse mix of housing types. Orienting around views of Lake Superior and integrated nature and recreation, the neighborhood embraces and manifests Duluth’s pride as a nature-oriented city where all are welcome to live, recreate, and enjoy the natural world.

VISION STATEMENT

Duluth’s former Lester Park Golf Course will be an enduring neighborhood that embodies Duluth’s identity of stewardship while inspiring balanced, thoughtful growth.

Through an integrated approach to natural resource restoration, outdoor recreation, and well-designed neighborhood development, the site will honor its scenic and ecological assets while meeting city-wide needs of creating environmental, social, and economic value.

The vision will serve as a model for responsible, financially sustainable land use while fostering a legacy of belonging, exploration, and pride for current and future generations.







PLAN PROCESS & ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

2

PROCESS OVERVIEW

AN ITERATIVE PROCESS

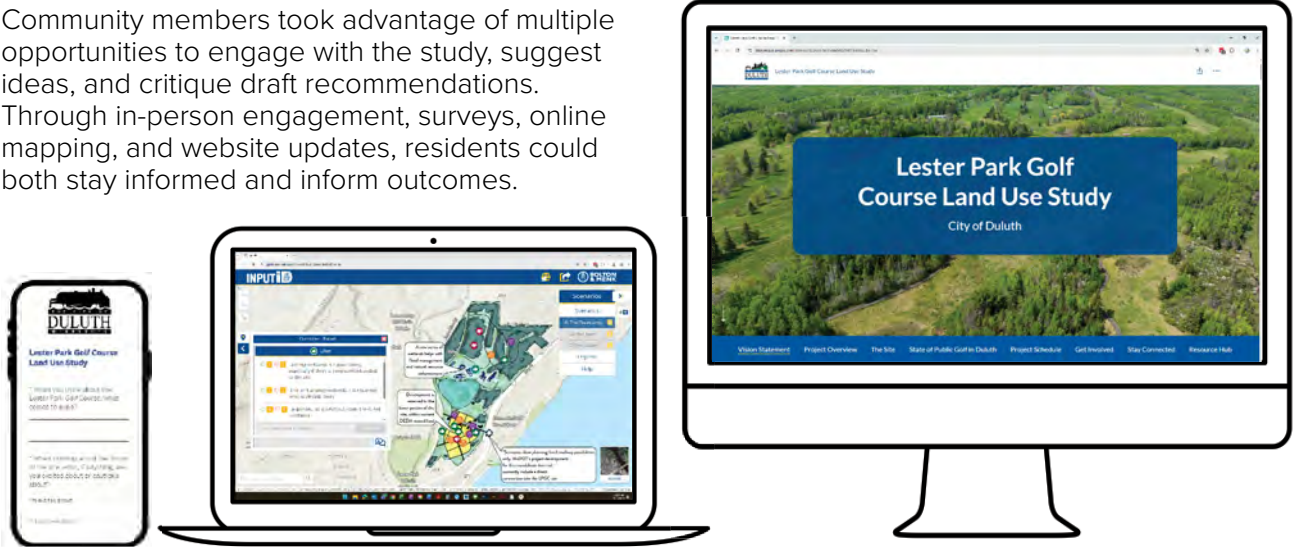
A priority of the study process was to ensure maximum transparency, responsiveness to public feedback, and the ability for an efficient progression of data-driven scenario exploration. As such, the study was structured around four key stages, anchored by a three-phase engagement process.

At each study phase, key findings, analysis, and ideas were co-informed by an advisory stakeholder committee that represented a diversity of perspectives and opinions. In turn, outcomes at each stage were synthesized and shared out broadly with the public and technical advisors. Feedback gathered during each engagement phase was then used to inform the subsequent project stage.

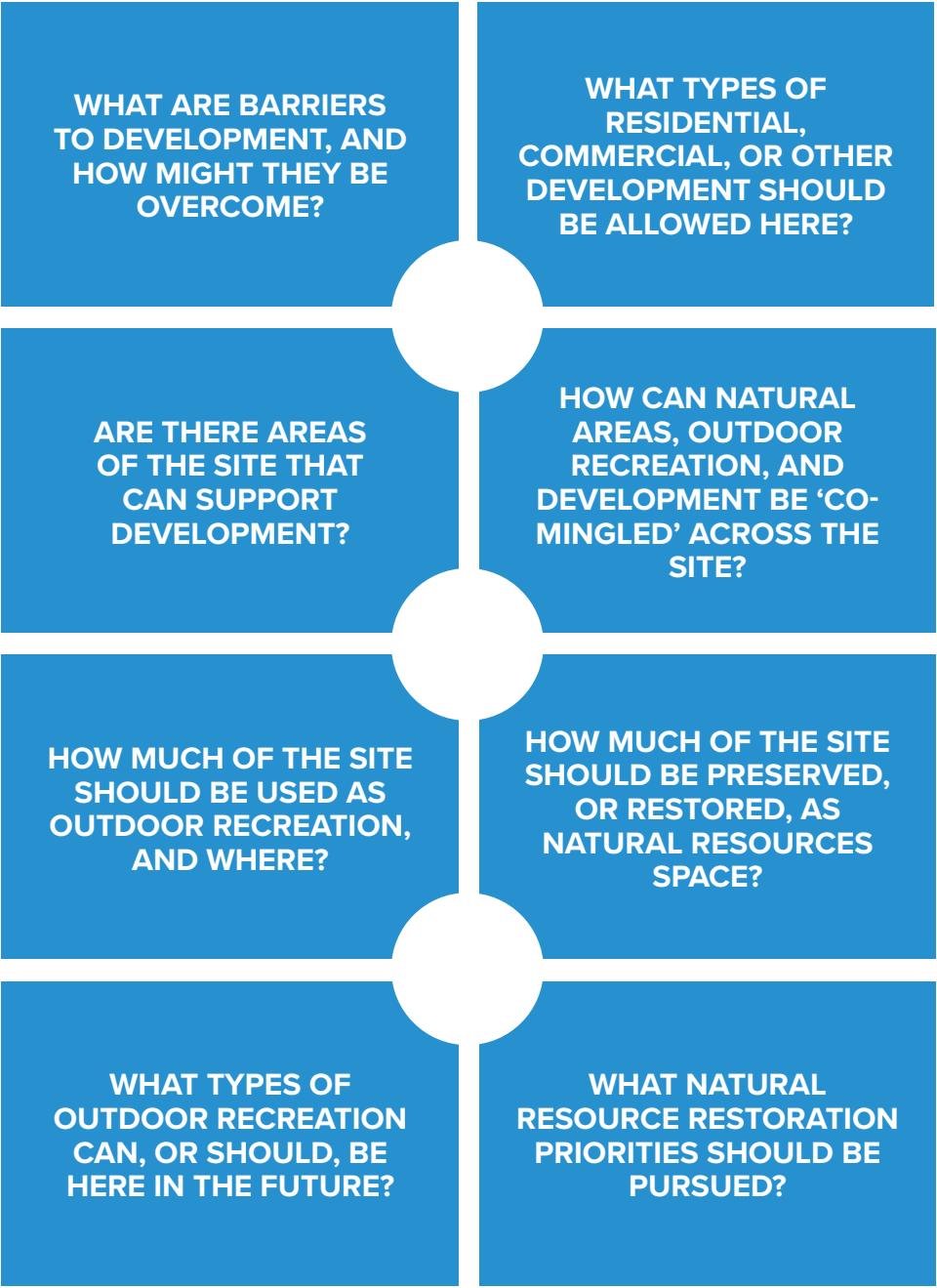
Importantly, project and engagement updates were regularly shared to a project website. This site acted as a dynamic study archive, while offering additional means of feedback throughout the study duration.

COMMUNITY TOUCH-POINTS

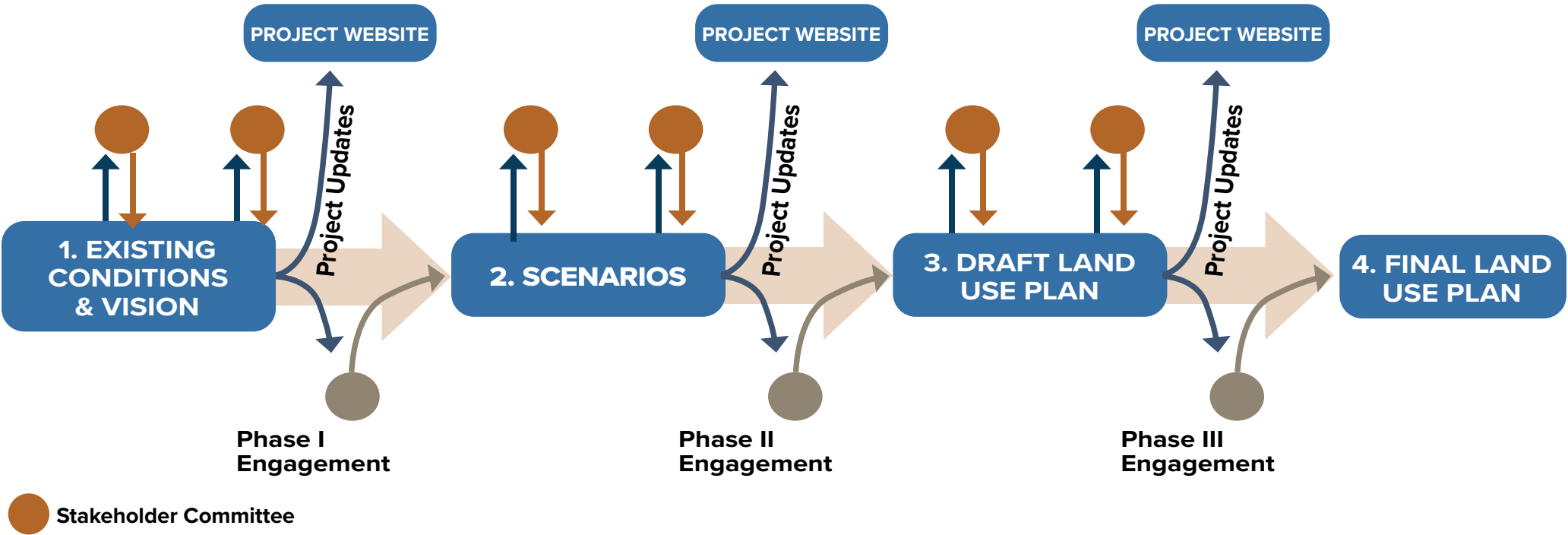
Community members took advantage of multiple opportunities to engage with the study, suggest ideas, and critique draft recommendations. Through in-person engagement, surveys, online mapping, and website updates, residents could both stay informed and inform outcomes.



KEY STUDY QUESTIONS



THE LAND USE STUDY PROCESS



FINDING BALANCE AND HARMONY

The LPGC area is — and should continue to be — a rich, dynamic, and multi-functional space. The site currently plays a significant role in natural resource systems, and offers outdoor recreation usage for residents and visitors.

HARMONY WITHIN AND ACROSS SYSTEMS

NATURAL RESOURCES

The LPGC property is abundant with vegetation, water, and plant and animal habitats.

- How much of the site should be preserved, or restored, as natural resources space?
- What natural resource restoration priorities should be pursued?
- How might restoration be blended with other uses?



OUTDOOR RECREATION

Duluthians have used this 270-acre area for recreation for decades, primarily for golfing and related activities.

- How much of the site should be used for recreation? Where should recreation occur within the site?
- What types of outdoor recreation can, or should, be here in the future?
- How might recreation be blended with other uses?



WHAT DOES “BALANCE” MEAN IN THE LPGC LAND USE STUDY?

As alternative scenarios were considered for LPGC’s future, the study team sought to understand and balance the following:

- Where should natural resources be restored across the site, what outdoor recreation uses should the site offer, and where should different development occur?
- To what degree should each of those activities be present, and where can they be blended?

DEVELOPMENT

The city has a need for more housing options, which are most successful when built as complete neighborhoods.

- How much of the area is practical and feasible to develop?
- What types of residential, commercial, or other development should be allowed here?
- How might development be blended with other uses?



ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

MULTI-PHASED OUTREACH

The LPGC site is deeply important to many people across the city, as is its future. To ensure as many opportunities to engage with the study as possible, the study team structured a three-phase, multi-faceted engagement plan. Summaries of each phase, their findings, and how information informed scenario development is included here.

PHASE I ENGAGEMENT AND FINDINGS

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

COMMUNITY SURVEY 1

A 17-question survey was conducted from February 12 to March 8, 2026. More than 1,200 respondents participated in the survey.

OPEN HOUSE 1

On March 2, 2026, more than 150 Duluthians came together for the study's first Open House — demonstrating a strong level of community engagement with participants sharing their perspectives on the future of Lester Park Golf Course.

VIDEO UPDATE 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS

A [summary video](#) details key findings from the Existing Conditions phase of the study (released May 22, 2026).

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

This committee includes representatives from City boards and commissions, ISD 709, the HRA, St. Louis County, the Lakeside neighborhood, and individuals from the development, real estate, and outdoor recreation communities. During this phase, this group met on January 28 and February 26, 2026.

THEMATIC FOCUS GROUPS

As part of Phase 1 Engagement, three separate focus groups were conducted on March 2, 2026. The three groups focused on the respective issues and opportunities in the following areas: Large Employers, Natural Resources, and Outdoor Recreation.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

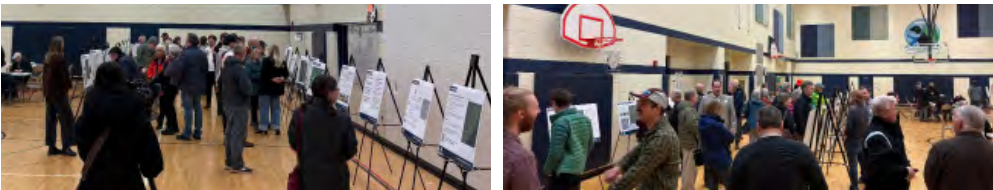
Engineering and planning professionals from the City and other agencies convened to discuss technical issues related to infrastructure and the built and natural environment. This group met on March 12, 2026.

WEBSITE UPDATES, E-BLASTS, MEMOS, AND PRESS RELEASES

Throughout all phases of engagement, staff made regular updates to the study website, [LPGCStudy.com](#), and sent emails to individuals who signed-up for study news. Monthly memos regarding the study were delivered to City boards and commissions. Staff also issued press releases for major items through the City's [Communications Office](#).

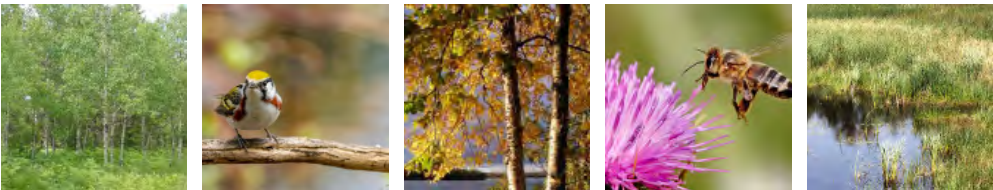
FEEDBACK SUMMARY

A summary of the findings from this phase of engagement is provided below. Full findings from the activities are provided in [Appendix A](#).



GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

- Generally, the community sees the LPGC site mainly as a natural place that people already use every day.
- The community's personal preference leans heavily toward keeping the site mostly natural, supporting outdoor activities, and allowing only limited development — if any at all. Overall, people are asking for a plan and a process that protects the land, keeps public access strong, and responds to community values.



PRIORITIES FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

- Many residents value LPGC's open space, wooded areas, lake views, and quiet places to walk or spend time with dogs. People want these experiences to remain the heart of the site moving forward.
- When people talk about what makes them cautious, the clearest worry is losing public green space and changing the character of the land.
- Priorities include: forest restoration, bird habitats, climate resilient species planning, pollinators, wetland restorations.

HOW PHASE I INFORMED SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

- Eliminated large lot single-family housing
- Eliminated high-density residential housing
- Added alternative ideas for realigning Lester River Road
- Included disc golf and dog parks as recreational ideas
- Prioritizing public access to views



PRIORITIES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

- Many residents still connect the land to its golf history and would like to see golf return in any form.
- When residents talk about what they are excited about, outdoor recreation stands out by an exceptionally large margin. Walking trails, biking trails, winter use, disc golf, and open fields all also show strong interest. Some residents are interested in space for skiing and Skijoring
- Priorities include: natural play and gathering spaces, bike trails, off-leash dog park, cross-country skiing, and hiking trails



PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Residents are also open to mixed ideas that combine housing with trails or open space, but on a much smaller scale. On the other hand, feelings toward housing alone and commercial development are mostly negative for nearly all the options evaluated.
- Participants see this site as a rare opportunity within the city and do not want it overbuilt or privatized. Concerns about dense or expensive housing, traffic, school impacts, or rushed decision-making drive this concern.
- Priorities include: co-housing/cottage courts, small-lot single-family homes, small-scale apartment/condo buildings, townhouses, restaurants and gathering spaces.

PHASE II ENGAGEMENT AND FINDINGS

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

COMMUNITY SURVEY 2

A 12-question survey was conducted from May 29 to June 19, 2026. About 180 individuals responded to the survey.

OPEN HOUSE 2

On May 27, 2026, nearly 150 community members attended the second Open House. The essential information shared and discussed here focused on three draft scenarios for potential redevelopment at LPGC. Attendees gave feedback on these draft concepts and other items.

VIDEO UPDATE 2: POTENTIAL SCENARIOS

This [summary video](#) explores the drafts of three potential development scenarios for the future of the LPGC site (released July 1, 2026).

INTERACTIVE COMMENT MAP

Participants used the [INPUTiD web application](#) to map and flag their concerns, ideas, likes, and dislikes on the layouts of each of the three draft scenarios.

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

This committee includes representatives from City boards and commissions, ISD 709, the HRA, St. Louis County, the Lakeside neighborhood, and individuals from the development, real estate, and outdoor recreation communities. During this phase, this group met on March 26 and April 26, 2026.

FEEDBACK SUMMARY

A summary of the findings from this phase of engagement is provided below. Full findings from the activities are provided in [Appendix A](#).

	✓ General “Likes”	✗ General “Dislikes”	⚙️ Specific Design Concerns	★★★ Ideas for Improvement
Scenario A The Basecamp 	- Generally viewed as the least disruptive and most balanced option — preserving the most natural and recreation space, concentrating development at the site’s southern edge near existing roads, utilities, and buildings. - Described as the most sensible approach, with open space remaining dominant and added benefits like trail connections, wetland/forest restoration and green space.	- Pro-housing respondents say it adds too little housing, while preservation-minded respondents object to any development at all. - Some view the plan as catering to wealthy homeowners or developers, while others criticize it as not doing enough to address the housing shortage.	- Cost of expanding utilities beyond the lower portion of the site where infrastructure already exists. - Feasibility of affordable housing due to construction costs and terrain.	- Incorporating affordable housing through development agreements or partnerships, restoring wetlands, and balancing development with open space. - Maximizing density in appropriate areas while protecting key environmental features.
Scenario B The Town 	- Generally viewed as compromise option — offering more housing in a broader mix of housing types than Scenario A with a more complete neighborhood while still retaining some open space and natural features. - Supporters favor wider range of recreation ideas, such as the pump track, sport courts, camping, and gathering spaces. Supporters also favor the clustered development and potential for neighborhood-style growth, increased parking, trail access, and opportunities for housing near existing parks.	- Generally, disliked elements include the scale of development, road realignment, and potential traffic impacts. - Preservation-minded respondents oppose building in natural areas, while pro-housing respondents say does not deliver enough housing.	- Proposed realignment of Lester River Road, higher infrastructure cost, and doubts about affordability and the long-term value of some recreation features were recurring criticisms. - Many are concerned with the extent of development shown in the scenario. Many respondents describing the scenario as too commercialized, too suburban, too sprawling, too fragmented, or too large for former public parkland. - Technical concerns center on infrastructure cost and feasibility related to extending utilities uphill and dealing with bedrock. Many question who will pay for infrastructure and whether it undermines affordability.	- Emphasize increasing density to address housing shortages, focusing development in lower elevations, and improving connectivity to transit, trails, and surrounding neighborhoods. - Designing/right-sizing new housing to better serve local residents (focusing on unit types, unit sizes, quantities of bedrooms, availability of parking, etc).
Scenario C The Ladder 	- Viewed as the most appealing to the pro-housing respondents — offering the most housing, the greatest variety of housing types, and the strongest sense of complete neighborhoods. - Many responded positively to the more active recreation package, including features like the dog park, bike trails, and disc golf. - Least-favored scenario, but many respondents appreciate the balance of development and open space if implemented effectively.	- As the most disliked of the three scenarios, many respondents feel this scenario would leave the site overdeveloped, add too much pavement, fragment natural land, create sprawl and privatize too much of the site’s public value. - Some respondents feel the design reduces usable recreation space and creates a disjointed landscape. - Others criticize the plan for not effectively addressing affordability or connectivity.	- Concerns center on road changes, infrastructure cost, environmental impact, and the fear that the housing would be expensive market-rate development rather than something that meets local needs - Concerns emphasize fragmented development patterns that may reduce ecological function and usable recreation space. - Infrastructure costs are seen as potentially higher due to dispersed development. - Additional concerns include unclear connectivity, access to surrounding areas, and long-term maintenance of separated green spaces.	- Improving connectivity between fragmented areas, creating multi-use trails, and designing green space that functions ecologically and recreationally. - Consolidating development to reduce fragmentation and improve efficiency.

HOW PHASE II INFORMED SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

- Minimize development area to preserve natural and recreation areas and limit public expenses caused by extending beyond what can already be served by utilities
- Plan for medium- and lower-density developments with a mix of housing types offered in a neighborhood footprint. Incorporate nature and recreation into the neighborhood.
- Layer nature and recreation throughout the natural areas. Maintain contiguous natural spaces to promote healthy habitats and natural systems

PHASE III ENGAGEMENT AND FINDINGS

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

OPEN HOUSE 3

The final Open House of the study was held on July 30, 2026 at Duluth East High School. Attendees provided comment on the draft recommended scenario ahead of subsequent review by DEDA, City commissions, and the City Council. A tentative review and approval process schedule was shared with attendees.

VIDEO UPDATE 3: RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

This summary video will explore the drafting of the potential development scenarios for the future of the LPGC site (released August 13, 2026).

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

This committee includes representatives from City boards and commissions, ISD 709, the HRA, St. Louis County, the Lakeside neighborhood, and individuals from the development, real estate, and outdoor recreation communities. During this phase, this group met on June 25 and July 25, 2026.

COMMISSION REVIEW AND REVIEW AND APPROVALS

The draft recommended scenario and final plan document were reviewed by multiple City commissions ahead of a full, comprehensive review by City Council. Members of the public were encouraged to attend reviews of the plan that were discussed at the following public meetings:

- Natural Resources Commission meeting, August 5, 2026
- DEDA presentation, August 11, 2026
- Parks & Recreation meeting; August 12, 2026
- Planning Commission meeting; August 13, 2026 (public hearing)
- City Council Meeting; August 20, 2026 (Committee of the whole informational presentation. Final decision to be made at an upcoming meeting)

FEEDBACK SUMMARY

A summary of the findings from this phase of engagement is provided below. Full findings from the activities are provided in Appendix A.

OPEN SPACE AND DEVELOPMENT BALANCE

- Generally, the comments received were in support of the proposed balance of open space and development so long as there was a commitment to maintain the upper 207 acres as open space.

FUTURE OF OPEN SPACE

- Many comments asked about the future of the open space area - programming, timeline for planning, and relationship to the adjacent Lester Park/Amity Falls area and Hawk Ridge.
- There were a few comments asking about the possibility of golf returning to the site.

FUTURE OF DEVELOPMENT

- Many comments received expressed a desire to promote housing affordability, avoiding a neighborhood that is only luxury housing, and a strong desire to ensure a mix of housing (types and price points) across the neighborhood.
- Some comments correctly identified that there will need to be additional public infrastructure needed to support neighborhood buildout, while others inquired about the tax revenue potential.
- A few comments conveyed a desire to further identify natural ecosystem and wildlife protections, such as impervious limitations, building design standards to protect the flyway, and green infrastructure.
- Several comments affirmed a desire for green space and recreation integration within the neighborhood, screening buildings from Hwy 61, and protecting viewsheds from the above proposed open space area.

FEEDBACK GATHERED DURING PHASE III

- Ensure the proposed balance of Open Space and Development is maintained.
- Pursue housing affordability within the new Neighborhood
- Require design guidance for the Neighborhood that integrates green space and recreation, while protecting the natural environment and wildlife systems.





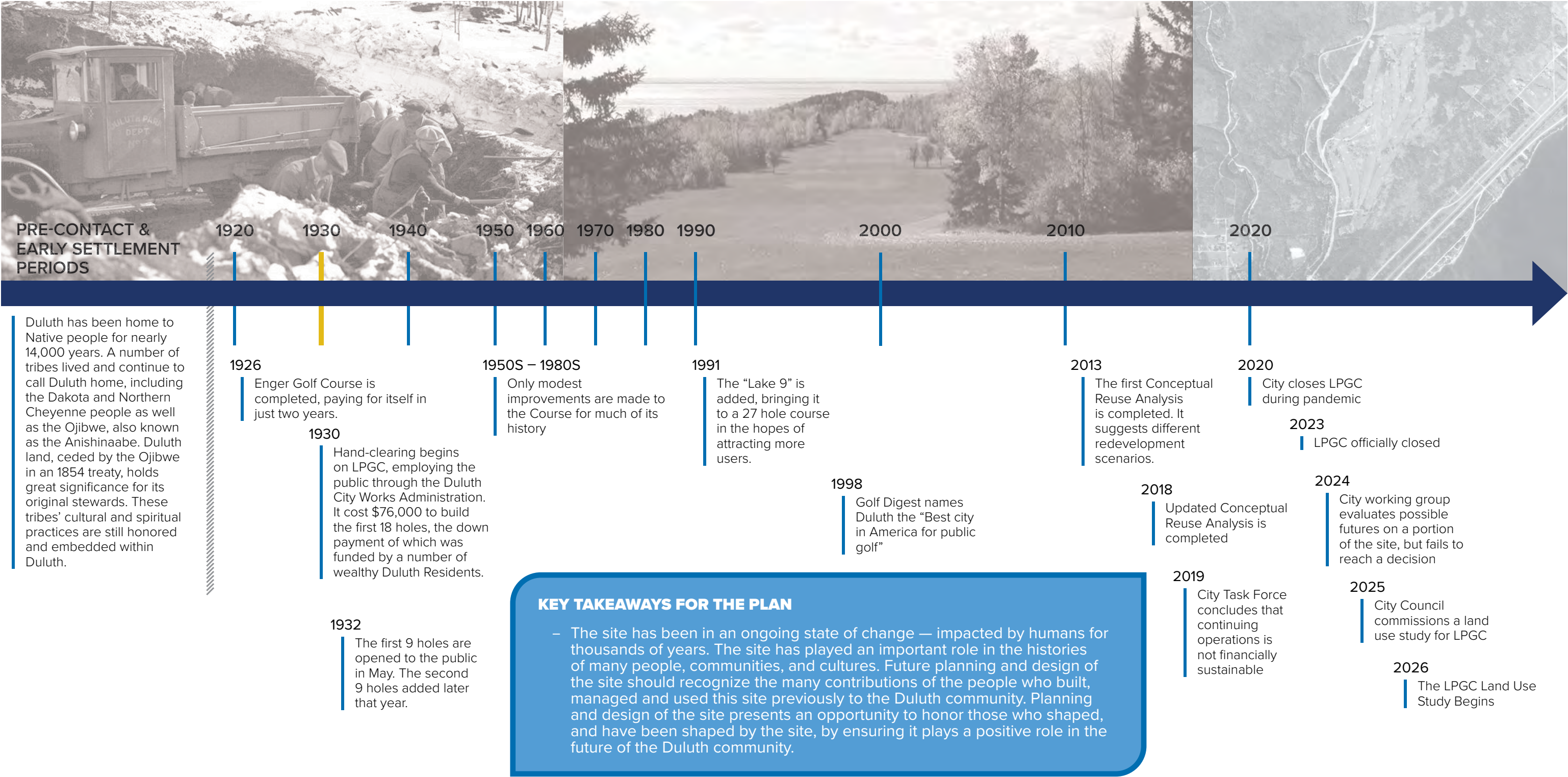


SITE CONDITIONS

3

SITE HISTORY

LPGC THROUGH THE YEARS



GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

THE REGION



- The City of Duluth is both an economic powerhouse and a premier recreation destination for the Great Lakes region, for northern Minnesota, and for the Iron Range.
- Regional travelers and recreationists seek out Duluth for its culture and unmatched natural resources and spaces.
- In addition to industry and commerce, the city at-large derives significant economic activity from outdoor recreation.

SCALE OF THE OPPORTUNITY

The site offers immense potential to envision a future that serves current and future residents and visitors. As a frame of reference, the size of the site is shown here compared to other notable local areas, and means to convey the relative scale of the LPGC site.

DOWNTOWN DULUTH



THE CITY



- The Lester Park Golf Course and surrounding neighborhoods serve as the northeastern bookend of the City — the tapering off of the urban environment as travelers make their way to the North Shore.
- Immediately west of LPGC are Lester/Amity Parks
- Further west of the site is the Lakeside Neighborhood — a thriving, urban neighborhood largely characterized by mid-sized single-family houses along a grided street network. Commercial activity here is concentrated along Superior Street.
- East of the site, the Lakewood and North Shore neighborhoods host large-scale houses in secluded along forest roads. Housing here is on large-lots with low densities. There is minimal commercial activity.

SPIRIT VALLEY / WEST DULUTH



DOWNTOWN SUPERIOR



THE SITE



- The 270-acre site is surrounded by mature woodlands, Lester River, Amity Creek, and other natural points of interest. The hillside offers sweeping views toward Lake Superior.
- Cut across the hillside, topography slopes both south and east.
- It is located at a unique meeting place of Duluth's eastern edge and the "foothills of the north shore."
- Nearby Lester and Amity Parks, along with their extensive trail systems, offer exceptional surrounding regional recreation destinations.
- Throughout the calendar year, the site continues to be used for recreation beyond golf, such as cross country skiing, hiking, dog walking, and other similar activities.

BIRD’S-EYE VIEWS OF LPGC



CITY OF DULUTH

IMAGINE DULUTH 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2018)

Imagine Duluth 2035 is the City’s policy document that describes the 20-year vision for the city—made achievable by following the plan’s foundational guidance for transformational opportunities, land use and economic development, housing, parks and open space, transportation systems, and more. Imagine Duluth 2035 is more than a land use plan or simple road map for future development. It envisions a holistic, engaged, inclusive community with all its complexity and diversity.

TRANSFORMATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Duluth has a history of identifying and acting upon complex opportunities to achieve outcomes that will directly benefit its residents, its commerce, and the livability of the city. These transformational efforts require precision and coordination in high-activity locations throughout the city — these are **Core Investment Areas (CIAs)**.

Respecting the size of the LGPC and the relative lack of existing infrastructure, new development here should follow the CIA framework set in the comprehensive plan.

CORE INVESTMENT AREA AMENITIES

- Upgraded utility infrastructure
- Modern, multi-modal streets
- Intensively designed streets and site plans
- Opportunities for gathering spaces and service retail, such as cafés, pubs, churches, clubhouses, gyms, hardware stores, postal services, and grocery stores
- Shared parking or district parking facilities
- Medical facilities

LAND USE

The future land use guidance provided in the comprehensive plan sets the stage to develop underutilized areas in the city that will work to achieve the overall community vision for 2035.

Future land use guidance for the general LPGC study area is shown [here](#). Except for the southern tip along Superior Street (guided Low-Density Neighborhood), the whole golf course is currently guided as Open Space.

KEY LAND USE POLICIES

- Implement the future land use map alongside the Governing Principles in the Plan to direct land owners, developers, government staff, and elected officials as they make land use decisions
- Implement the zoning map amendments for special areas throughout the city, allowing for higher and better usage of under-performing land

OPEN SPACE

Open spaces in Duluth provide places for people and wildlife to breathe, literally and figuratively. They are part of the character of the city and they play an essential role in uplifting wellness and quality of life for residents.

The City of Duluth is deeply rich with open space — so much so that, throughout its history, the the City has struggled to afford these vast holdings of land. Such is the case the City finds itself in with LPGC. The City recognizes that land is a limited resource and that considerations to any public lands require a thoughtful, sustainable, and community-centered approach.

KEY OPEN SPACE POLICIES

- Improve Duluth’s resiliency to flooding and natural disasters
- Examine the value and need for all of Duluth’s publicly-owned open space
- Remove barriers to accessing parks and open space
- Improve the delivery of parks and open space services to the community
- Encourage urban food growth



TRANSPORTATION

Within the comprehensive plan and supportive policies in Community Development and Public Works, the City is working to transform its infrastructure to achieve a multi-modal network for residents of all ages and abilities.

KEY TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

- Improve street conditions to function better for everyone
- Reduce infrastructure costs through innovation and wholesale design change
- Add to the transportation network by systematically enhancing multi-modal options
- Base decisions about transportation infrastructure primarily in the context of improving city and neighborhood vitality, and not solely on automobile through-put
- Protect and enhance regional transportation networks, especially for purposes of expanding opportunities for movement of freight

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

Supporting new, innovative development types in Duluth required that the City update some of its regulatory frameworks and adopt new policies intending to make new construction more efficient, more affordable, and better designed. Some of these issue areas are outlined in the section below.

KEY DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- Urban design
 - Mix land uses with sensitivity to scale and neighborhood context
 - Master-plan signature sites
 - Strengthen pedestrian movement with cohesive, pedestrian-oriented design;
 - Encourage transit and cycling, and protect natural features
- Green infrastructure
 - Implement green infrastructure in roadway design
 - Require green stormwater infrastructure in publicly funded projects

HOUSING

The housing stock in Duluth is dynamic, strong, and in-demand. As Duluth continues to be an attractive home for the next generation of locals and newcomers from around the state and the country, the housing stock must continue to grow. New housing must meet the demand of existing and future residents in all aspects, including total units built, ownership models, unit sizes, unit types, and neighborhood amenities.

KEY HOUSING POLICIES

- Increase density in and around the designated CIA.
- Provide affordable, attainable housing opportunities
- Prioritize inclusive housing policies to reflect the city’s social, cultural, economic, and historic diversity and development patterns
- Improve the quality of the city’s housing stock and neighborhoods
- Expand the cohesiveness of “One Duluth” by expanding a variety of housing opportunities throughout the city while maintaining unique community characteristics within distinct individual neighborhoods

FUTURE LAND USE GUIDANCE (FROM IMAGINE DULUTH 2035)

Under the current future land use plan (adopted in 2018) the Lester Park Golf Course site is guided as Open Space, with some Neighborhood Mixed-Use and Low-Density Residential at the southern tip near Superior Street/Highway 61 and minimal Rural Residential to the north. This study aims to determine if updated land use guidance is appropriate for all or part of the 270-acre site.

OPEN SPACE

High natural resource or scenic value, with substantial restrictions and development limitations. Primarily public lands but limited private use is anticipated subject to use and design controls. Examples include: city parks and recreation areas, primary viewsheds, shorelands of the lake and streams, wetlands and floodplains, and high-value habitat

DENSITY / INTENSITY / DESIGN

- Low intensity uses such as trails and recreation
- Viewshed protection and access
- Water access, with some parking and support facilities

INSTITUTIONAL

Applicable to medical, university/ college, public school, religious, or governmental campuses. Can include adjacent areas that support them,with related commercial and/ or office uses, and residential uses in the fringe areas of the district.

DENSITY / INTENSITY / DESIGN

- Relationship to institutional master plans, which should guide expansions and ancillary land uses in adjacent areas
- Pedestrian-oriented design, transit facilities, and parking

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Characterized by grid or connected street pattern, houses oriented with shorter dimension to the street and detached garages, some with alleys. Limited commercial, schools, churches, and home businesses. Parks and open space areas are scattered through or adjacent to the neighborhood.

DENSITY / INTENSITY / DESIGN

- 4-8 units/acre
- Mix of housing types (i.e. townhouses and 4-plexes) at corners
- Limited commercial uses (i.e. “corner store”) serving neighborhood market

NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED-USE

A transitional use between more intensive commercial uses and purely residential neighborhoods. Includes conversions of houses to office or live-work spaces. May include limited commercial-only space oriented to neighborhood or specialty retail markets.

DENSITY / INTENSITY / DESIGN

- Site design should maintain a largely residential building character
- Commercial-only uses should be adjacent to non-residential or other mixed-use areas

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

Areas of single-family lots of at least five acres. Limits the extension of municipal utilities for new development. Includes existing rural density areas with lots as small as an acre now served by municipal utilities but not planned for further subdivision.

DENSITY / INTENSITY / DESIGN

- 1 unit/5 or more acres (may vary depending on soils) (future study)
- Conservation development encouraged or required
- Undeveloped areas of large lots are used to complement open space patterns (viewsheds, buffers)

LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Single-family housing with urban services. Typified by curvilinear streets, houses with longer dimension parallel to street, and attached garages. Includes a range of house sizes and lot sizes. Non-residential uses are mainly uses such as schools and churches. Parks and open space are located within or adjacent

DENSITY / INTENSITY / DESIGN

- 3-4 units/acre
- Conservation development an option, required with shoreland overlay
- Limited number of secondary/ granny flats



SITE ZONING

The bulk of the site is currently zoned P-1 Park with the southern area zoned as MU-N Mixed-use Neighborhood. Updating some, or all, of the site’s zoning may be necessary to realize the vision. More information on each zoning district, allowed uses, and site design standards can be found on the City’s [zoning website](#).

P-1 PARK

The P-1 district is intended to preserve land for recreational, scenic, and natural resource purposes, typically applying to publicly owned property but also allowed on private land with the owner’s written consent. It supports both passive recreation, such as walking paths and picnic areas, and active recreation, including playgrounds and athletic facilities. Small-scale structures and improvements that support these uses, such as parking areas, may also be permitted, provided all development remains compatible in scale, design, and impact with the natural environment.

MU-N MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD

The MU-N district is intended to support neighborhood-scale mixed-use by allowing a blend of residential options alongside small-scale, neighborhood-serving non-residential uses. It accommodates both horizontal mixed-use, where uses occupy separate buildings, and vertical mixed-use, where multiple uses are integrated within the same structure. Typical non-residential uses include small retail shops, services, and professional offices that provide everyday goods and services to nearby residents.

R-1 RESIDENTIAL TRADITIONAL

The R-1 district is designed for traditional residential neighborhoods featuring single-family homes, duplexes, and townhouses on moderately sized lots. Intended mainly for established areas, its standards ensure that new development or redevelopment aligns with the existing neighborhood’s character, including its development patterns, building scale, and building placement.

RR-1 RURAL RESIDENTIAL

The RR-1 district is intended for large-lot, single-family homes on parcels of at least five acres, creating distinctive neighborhoods with a semi-rural character and substantial surrounding open space. It also allows compatible secondary uses such as limited agricultural activities, small-scale institutional facilities, parks, minor utilities, and certain temporary uses.

RR-2 RURAL RESIDENTIAL

The RR-2 district supports single-family homes on lots of at least two acres, fostering distinctive neighborhoods with a suburban character. It is intended to serve as a transition zone between lower-density semi-rural areas and more intense residential or mixed-use areas. The district also permits compatible secondary uses such as limited agriculture, small-scale institutional facilities, parks, minor utilities, and certain temporary uses.

R-P RESIDENTIAL PLANNED

The R-P district provides a flexible option for residential development that incorporates creative site design, diverse housing types, natural feature preservation, and enhanced pedestrian connections, to deliver greater public benefit than conventional zoning. Each project requires an approved R-P regulating plan outlining the development’s location, type, intensity, and public amenities. This zoning district was removed in recent code changes. Pre-existing R-P zones will remain, but the City will no longer rezone new parcels to the district.



COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS (2025)

In 2025, the City of Duluth executed a housing demand study to understand the quantities and types of housing that could be built to satisfy demand in the short-term (2025 to 2030) and long-term (2030 to 2035).

Duluth continues to be an attractive city for newcomers looking to relocate as well as for current families looking to grow. However, there is a significant need for more housing to accommodate these residents. Demand for nearly all housing product segments was found in Duluth, but there are specific product types that have been identified as being in high demand and should be considered for development priority; moderately priced housing, ownership and rental, targeted to the area’s workforce and housing alternatives targeted to older adults and seniors (townhouses, twin homes) are two of the most pressing needs in Duluth.

KEY FINDINGS

- There are over 8,700 new housing units demanded by 2035.
- Duluth is projected to add 2,500 new residents and 1,800 new households by 2035.
- An estimated 38% of the housing demand will be for affordable and subsidized rental housing.
- Increased competition for homes has caused significant price appreciation in recent years.
 - Median single-family home prices rose 58.7% between 2018 and 2024
 - Median price for a new single-family home in Duluth in 2025 is \$530,000.
 - Median price for newly constructed condos in Duluth in 2025 is \$495,000.

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF INDIGENOUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CITY (2015)

This study documents the historical and contemporary contributions of Indigenous peoples — primarily Ojibwe/ Anishinaabe — to the City of Duluth and the larger region.

The report reconstructs a long-term history of the area, from pre-contact Indigenous settlement through European arrival, and the modern period. It highlights Indigenous place names, travel routes, spiritual sites, and settlements, emphasizing that Duluth existed as a significant Indigenous landscape long before becoming a modern city.

KEY FINDINGS

- Duluth is an Indigenous place first
 - The area has deep Indigenous roots, with established place names, trade routes, and settlements long before European arrival.
 - Many current geographic features have Indigenous meanings and histories
- Significant cultural and archaeological sites within the city require protection.
 - Numerous important sites (burial grounds, ceremonial locations, historic routes) exist across Duluth. Some sites remain undocumented or at risk.
 - No significant sites were identified at LPGC in this study.



In 1897, Duluth resident John Busha (Ojibwe /French-Candian) lead the construction of the “Rustic Bridge” over the Lester River. Busha incorporated Ojibwe themes and designs in carvings on the structure. The bridge was removed in 1931.

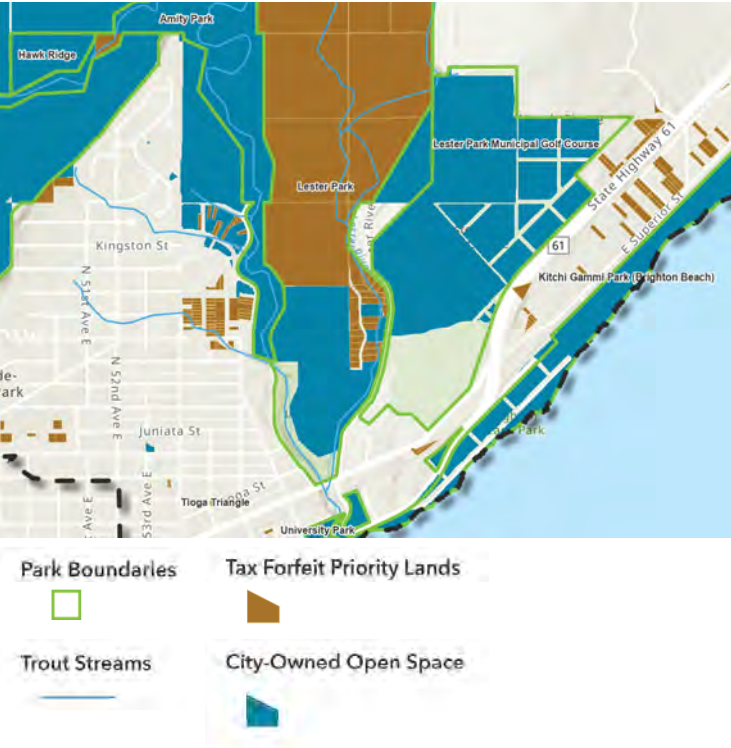
NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM PLAN (2022)

The goal of the [Natural Resources Management Program Plan \(NRMPP\)](#) is to identify and implement projects specifically tied to the function and values of the natural resources within Duluth. This program outlines a continual and adaptive process for multiple organizations to work together to preserve, repair, nurture, and assess Duluth’s public open space lands.

The NRMPP organizes the city into Program Areas with similar natural and physical characteristics. Lester Park Golf Course falls within the Lester/Amity Program Area

KEY ISSUES

- Erosion and sedimentation related to steep clay banks are significant in-stream sources of sediment within the watersheds
- Large tracks of land, including LPGC, score highly on Ecologically Significant Areas assessments
- Ongoing preservation work for Hawk Ridge, Moose Mountain Scientific and Natural Area, and Brighton Beach



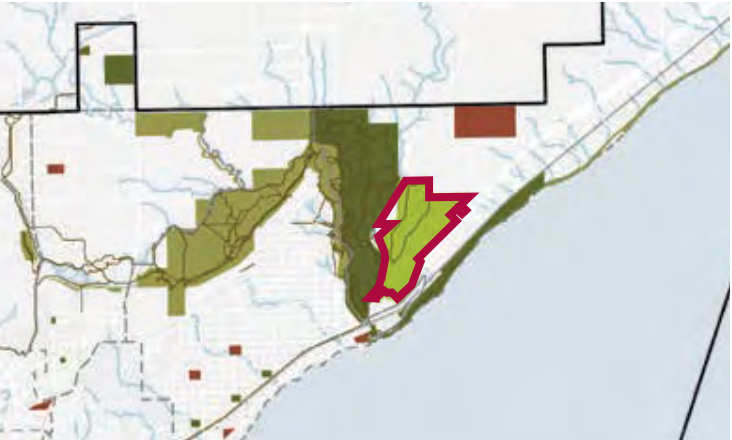
ESSENTIAL SPACES: PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS PLAN (2022)

This [Essential Spaces Plan](#) is a guide for the future of Duluth’s parks, recreation, open space, and trails system over the next 10 to 15 years. This plan provides recommendations on how Parks and Recreation can continue to support a healthy and vibrant community, enhance inclusion and equity, and advance environmental protection under a sustainable budget framework.

KEY THEMES

- Investing in Duluth’s future
- Advancing uniquely Duluth experiences
- Park spaces for community building
- Sustaining trails and natural areas

The first action item in the Essential Spaces Plan for the eastern subarea calls for a planning process to guide the future of LPGC.



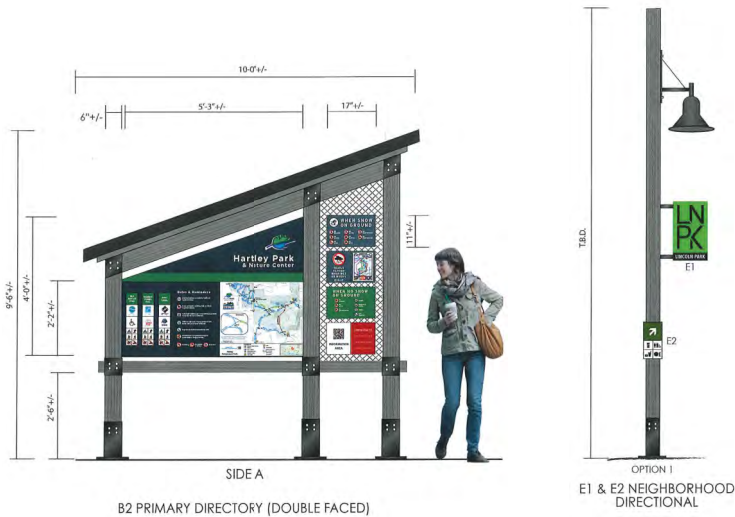
PARKLAND TYPES (2022)



GATEWAY, WAYFINDING, AND SIGNAGE DESIGN PLAN (2017)

Throughout Duluth, signage has often been erected on an individual basis, which has resulted in aging or unmaintained features, inconsistencies in message, and an incongruous look. In an effort to implement clear, consistent, and effective signage throughout Duluth’s park system, the City of Duluth produced this plan to better serve Duluth’s residents and visitors, address, public safety concerns, and protect sensitive resources within the park system.

Preferred designs for a suite of signage and wayfinding were developed to be flexible to fit parks of any size, from small neighborhood parks to regional and special use parks. Public realm developments at LPGC will rely on this plan for wayfinding strategies and design standards for signage.

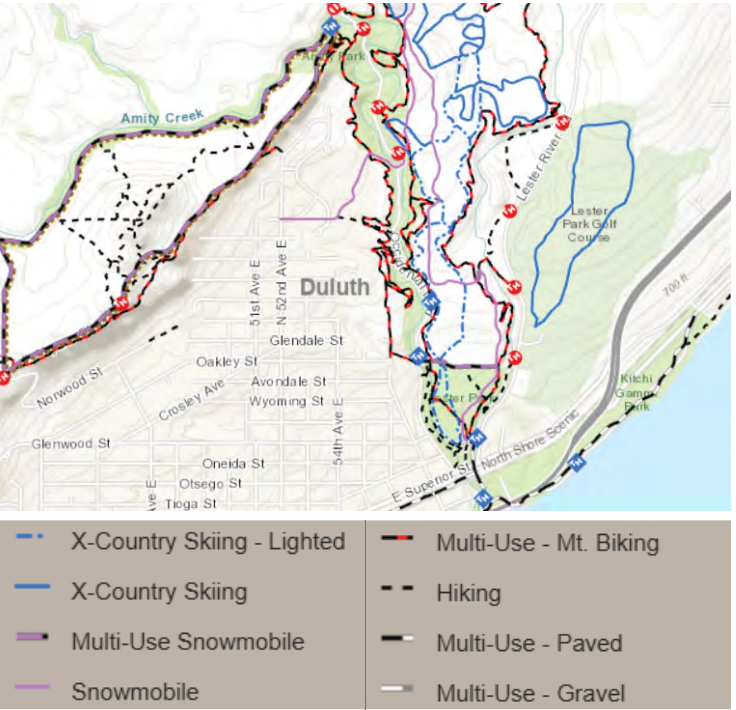


CROSS-COUNTRY TRAIL PLAN (2015)

Duluth has a strong winter sports heritage including: cross country skiing, alpine skiing, snowmobiling, hockey and alpine skiing. Winter mountain biking has seen tremendous growth in the last several years.

In collaboration with the Duluth Cross-Country Ski Club (DXC), the City of Duluth maintains and grooms 55 kilometers of ski trails at six locations throughout the City. Amongst these has been a simple, lightly-groomed loop on the Lester Park Golf Course property that allowed for cross-country skiing and Skijoring.

With the future of this property under study, the City has made arrangements to relocate this loop to the Enger Park Golf Course in the future, with plans for users to eventually enjoy access to a future new clubhouse to support year-round recreation at Enger Park Golf Course.



The existing ski trail at LPGC is the City’s only dog-friendly Skijor trail.

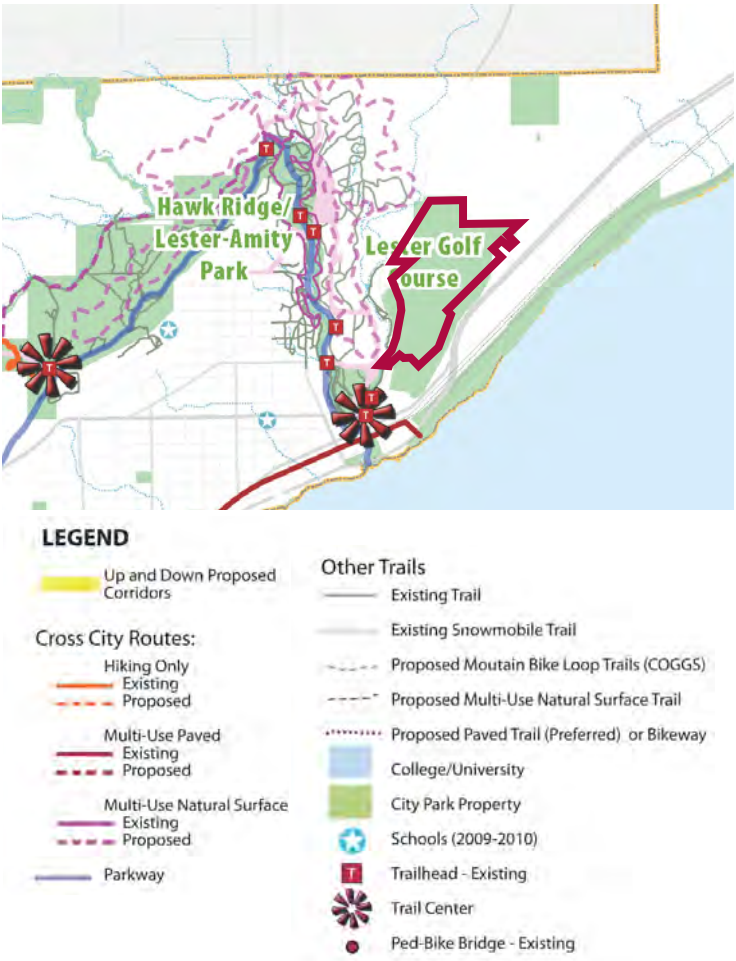
TRAIL AND BIKEWAY PLAN (2011)

This Trail and Bikeway Plan is a guide and framework for the development and management of Duluth’s trails and bikeways to create a comprehensive, connected and sustainable system serving residents, businesses and visitors.

Duluth’s trail and bikeway system has the potential to improve quality of life, foster economic development, preserve and enhance natural resources and enhance community and individual health and enjoyment.

Excerpts for the Lester Park Area are shown here.

TRAIL PLAN



BIKEWAY PLAN



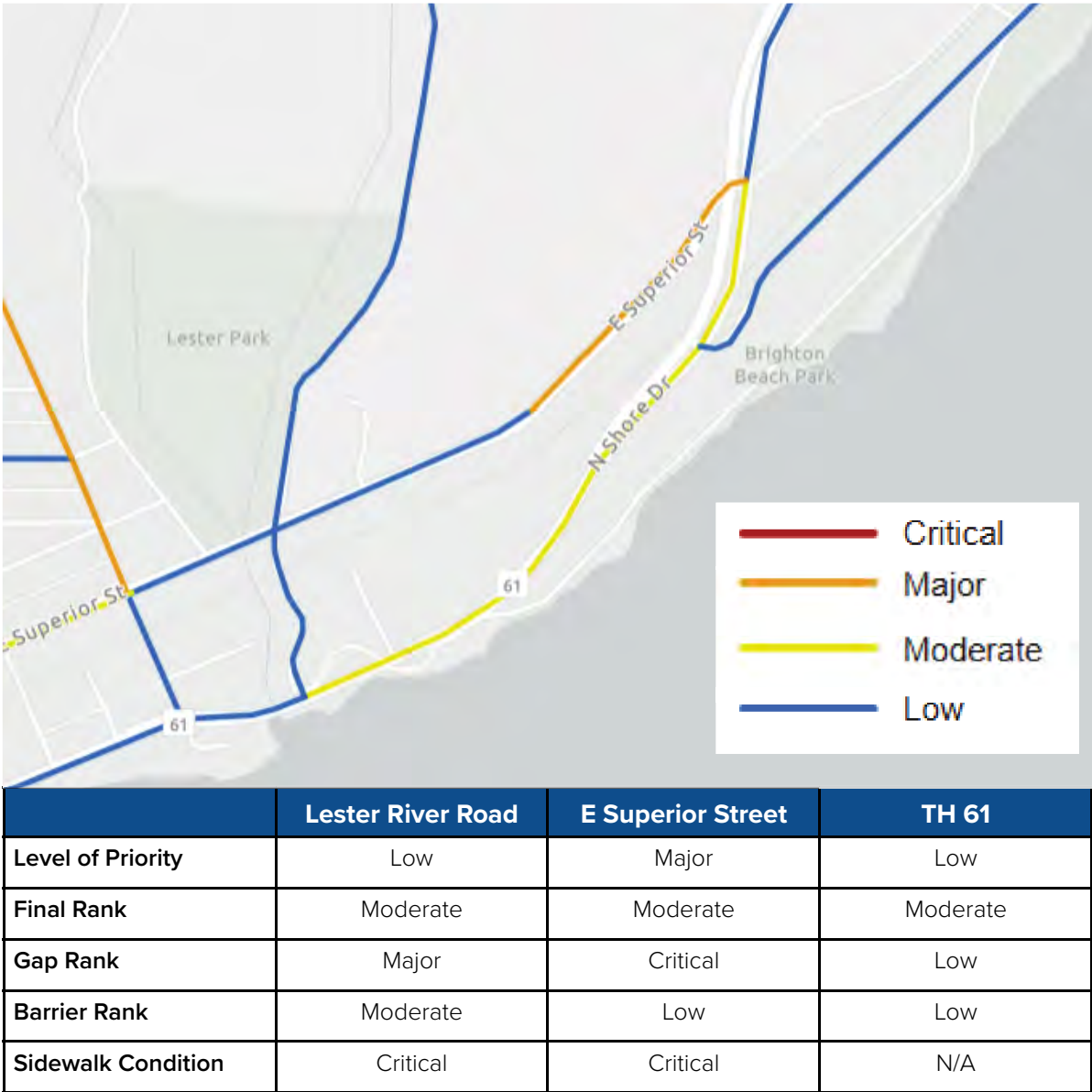
DULUTH-SUPERIOR MIC

PEDESTRIAN PLAN (2021)

The Duluth-Superior Pedestrian Plan provides a 20-year vision with short- and long-term recommendations and strategies to improve the walking environment throughout the Twin Ports area.

It is intended as a guide to be utilized by all jurisdictions responsible for roadways; township, city, and county officials carrying out and creating land use policies and development codes; public entities such as schools and colleges; and property owners that are building and maintaining connections in their part of the network.

Based on a layered analyses, the Pedestrian Plan ascribes a priority ranking to pedestrian routes in the service area. The prioritization rankings for LPGC-adjacent street segments is shown below.

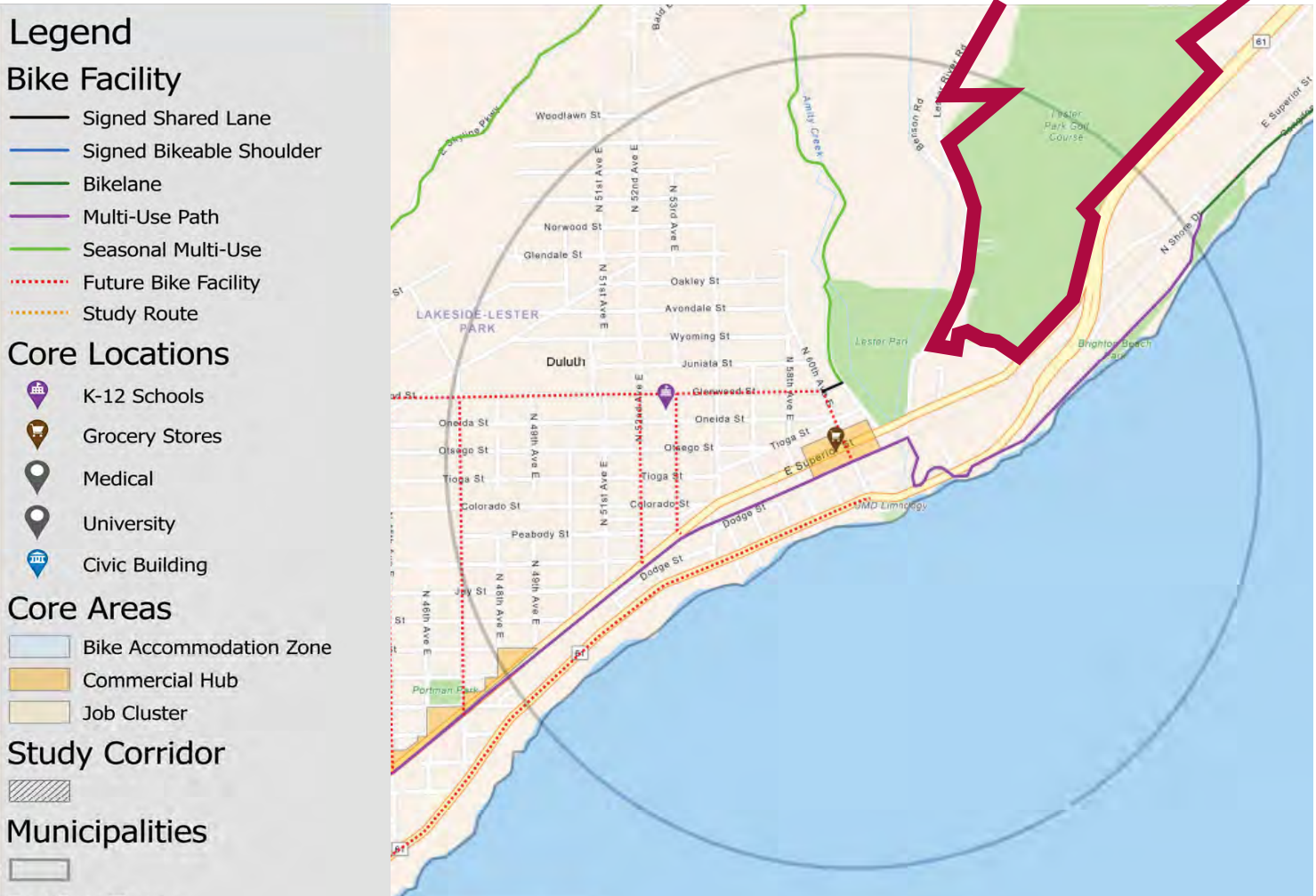


BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (2025)

This purpose of this plan is to guide the development of the bicycle transportation network in the Duluth-Superior Urban Area for the next 25 years and sets forth a vision of where the region would like to be and guidance on how to get there. A major component of this vision is an urban transportation system that is fully integrated and multimodal, where citizens of all ages and abilities have convenient and desirable options. This plan provides a guide to advance the bicycling component of this vision, by laying out the next steps for developing bicycle routes as a component of the Duluth-Superior regional transportation system.

PRIORITIES FOR THE LESTER PARK AREA

- Bike facility along 60th Avenue from Glenwood Street to multi-use path on Dodge Street
- Bike facility along Glenwood Street to support Lester Park Elementary School
- Bike facility along 52nd Avenue from Glenwood Street to multi-use path on Dodge Street
- Improve safety along 61st Avenue from Superior Street to Voyager Highway



CITY-WIDE HOUSING NEEDS

OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS CITY-WIDE NEEDS

Duluth is estimated to need nearly 8,800 new housing units by 2035 to keep up with housing demand, based on a 2025 Housing Assessment. Like much of the country and state, the average household size in Duluth is shrinking. By 2035, a majority of households will have only 1 or 2 persons. This means more housing units (with different configurations, floor sizes, and bedroom counts) are needed to meet the demands of a changing population.

Over the last six years the city had a net increase of, on average, 230 new housing units constructed per year. To reach the city’s housing needs by 2035, or an increase of housing construction by nearly 4x the rate of current production is needed.

DEMAND OUTPACING PRODUCTION

Based on the city’s 2025 Housing Assessment, if housing production across the city doesn’t keep pace with demand, there will be:

- Acceleration of rising housing costs
- Longer commutes and trips as people are forced to buy homes further away from the city
- Employers will have a harder time attracting and retaining workers
- Stagnated economic development and higher per capita tax burden

A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO TACKLE HOUSING NEEDS

The City of Duluth has identified the following strategies, all of which will be necessary as we strive to meet the housing demand in our community:

- Conversion of underutilized commercial buildings for residential uses – specifically in our downtown district.
- Redevelopment of underutilized lots for infill housing.
- Partnering with St. Louis County to facilitate the sale of tax forfeit properties for housing development.
- Exploring opportunities for thoughtful neighborhood development on larger parcels of underutilized land.



CITY-WIDE HOUSING NEED BY 2035

-  SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES – 1,200 UNITS
-  MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING – 5,200 UNITS
-  SENIOR HOUSING – 2,400 UNITS

8,800 NEW UNITS *Needed by 2035, based on a 2025 Housing Needs Assessment*

MARKET ANALYSIS

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE MARKET ANALYSIS

To guide the study, and understand the potential development demand, a market analysis was conducted. Key results are shown here. The full market analysis report can be found in [Appendix B](#).



RESIDENTIAL FINDINGS

- Overall, the golf course redevelopment site would work well for residential redevelopment
- Duluth is averaging about 270 new units of housing per year (building permit data), mostly multi-family rental
- Single-family Homes
 - Single-family development has occurred in smaller developments and infill locations, averaging about 50-60 homes per year since 2019
 - Pricing for newly constructed homes starts at over \$400,000
- Townhouses and Twinhouses
 - Few townhouses have been built in Duluth, less than 5 per year on average
- Apartments
 - Apartment developers have constructed about 210 units per year in Duluth, and units have been absorbed by the market
 - Even with the new supply, the rental market is tight, with vacancy rates below 5%

COMMERCIAL FINDINGS

- Commercial uses would work well at the golf course redevelopment site, specifically at areas immediately adjacent to E Superior St and Hwy 61, but may not have a high demand.
- Restaurant and Retail
 - When adjusted for inflation, commercial expenditures are projected to decline, reducing demand and possibly consolidating commercial users around key retail nodes
 - New retail construction overall is projected to be constrained in the next five years based on consumer trends and challenging margins for retailers
- Office and Medical Office
 - General office development will continue to be slow, with high vacancies and little new development
 - There may be opportunities for medical office development in the study area, as demand remains steady for this use

DEVELOPMENT DEMAND AND LAND ABSORPTION POTENTIAL AT LPGC (2025–2040)

For the various development types and densities under study, there is a spectrum of total unit/square footage demands identified through 2040. While these are estimates, they provide initial framing as to the potential absorption time of the site.

Development type	Units/square feet demanded (2025–2040)	Acres of land absorbed for the development (2025–2040)
Single-family homes	275 – 375 units	68 – 94 acres
Townhouses	125 – 175 units	15 – 22 acres
Apartments	400 – 500 units	8 – 10 acres
Restaurant & retail	0 – 20,000 square feet	2 acres
Office & medical office	0 – 20,000 square feet	3 acres

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THE PLAN

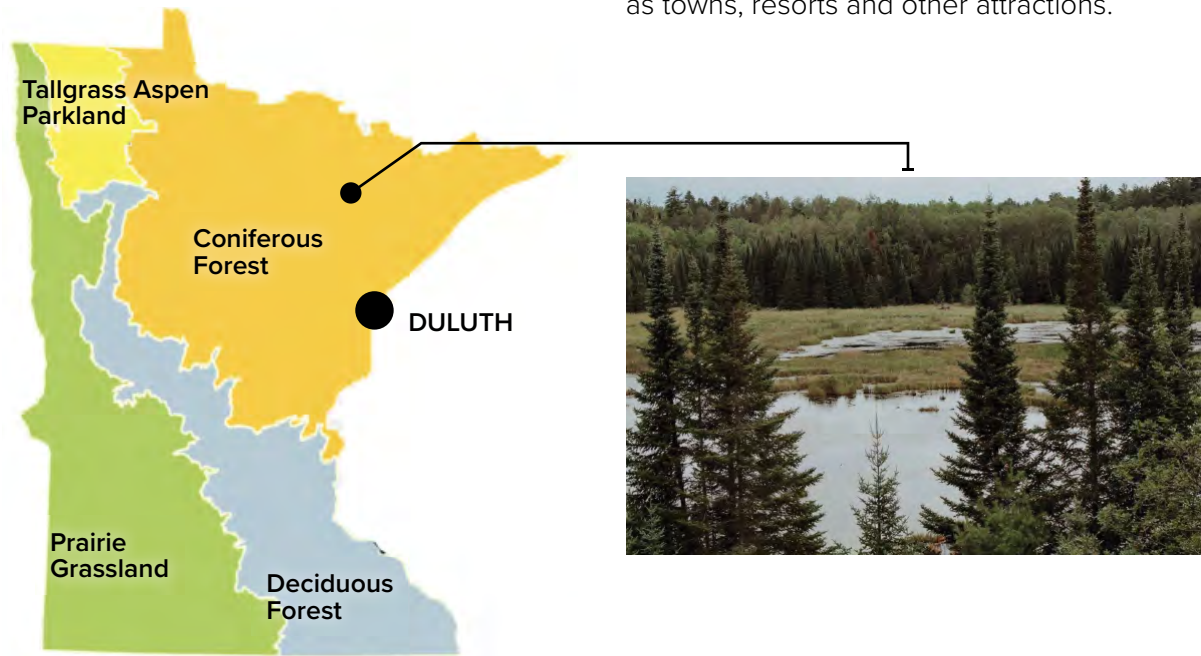
- Market demand can be bolstered by leveraging and emphasizing key natural features, such as parks and trails as amenities, connecting to and throughout development.
- Higher housing densities could be achieved through a “cluster-development” approach with natural common areas.
- Many home buyers in the Duluth market desire larger lot sizes, however housing of all sizes is needed.
- Premium lots with Lake Superior views could bring high demand.
- Home Owners Association- (HOA-) maintained attached and detached townhouses are good options for the site alongside any single-family houses.
- Apartment development with connections to natural areas and trails could be very attractive, as these are not offered in most apartments across Duluth.
- Phase any development that occurs from west to east, to optimize absorption and leverage existing access. Phasing could incentivize development in some of the deeper areas of the overall site, as well.
- While there is not a significant demand for commercial uses today, setting aside a few acres along East Superior Street or Highway 61 gives commercial the greatest chance at success while other development occurs.
- A strong area identity or ‘brand’ could be established that revolves around nature and recreation, that would bolster market demand.

SETTING AND CLIMATE

CONIFEROUS FOREST BIOME

Minnesota has the distinction of being at the confluence of four of North America’s biomes. Duluth and the entire northeast portion of the State is in the Coniferous Forest Biome: a large geographic area characterized by specific climate, soil types, vegetation and animal life — together forming a distinct ecosystem that is essential for the survival of many species.

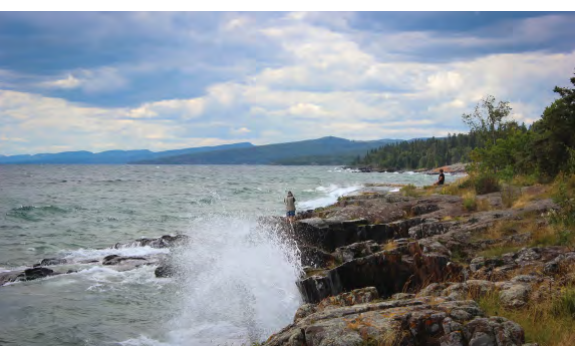
Glaciers created the coniferous forest biome forming the unique topography and land features. As glaciers receded, they sculpted the land and left a thin layer of deposits over the bedrock. In parts of northwestern Minnesota, and specifically along the shores of lake Superior, outcroppings of bedrock are exposed. Throughout most of Duluth, bedrock sites just beneath the surface.



THE NORTH SHORE OF LAKE SUPERIOR

In addition to being in a forest, the site sits along the north shore of Lake Superior — the largest freshwater lake in the world. The convergence of cold blue water and forest creates a rocky coastline, exposed cliffs, and sandy/rocky beaches. The site is positioned on the east edge of the City, a location which many consider the “gateway to the north shore”.

The north shore stretches 175 miles north from Duluth to Thunder Bay, on the Canadian Border. The region played an important role in iron and lumber industry in Minnesota during the 20th Century. Today, it plays an important role in the states tourism industry, attracting nearly 100 million visitors a year. Attractions include the many state parks, trails, camping and outdoor activities, as well as towns, resorts and other attractions.



CURRENT AND FUTURE CLIMATE

Due to proximity to the Lake, Duluth, and the north shore experiences a cool summer and a warm winter microclimate. The lake moderates the climate, providing a summer cooling effect near its shorelines and maintaining suitable habitats for arctic-alpine plants.

Duluth and the north shore is characterized by short growing seasons and highly variable atmospheric conditions, with high wind speeds and wave heights. Weather conditions can become extreme, particularly in the late fall when high winds and cold weathers can create lake effect snows and treacherous conditions — known as the “gales of November”, made famous by the sinking of the Edmond Fitzgerald. The lake effect snow can deposit heavy snow throughout the region, impacting the downwind shorelines.

A changing climate will result in warmer average winter temperatures and more intense precipitation events in the fall and spring seasons with drier summers. As Duluth has experienced in recent years, more intense rainfall events can overwhelm existing stormwater infrastructure and flooding events can cause great damage and harm.

A changing climate will also result in adjustments to USDA Plant hardiness zones. Duluth is currently on the edge of Zone 3 and 4. As the earth continues to warm, the site will be solidly in Zone 3.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THE PLAN

- The site is both scenic and picturesque. It is within a forest overlooking a great lake. Viewsheds from and to the site should be considered in the future design and use of the site.
- A changing climate requires resilient infrastructure that can absorb the intensity of extreme weather events.
- Development restoration and recreational uses of the site should anticipate and intentionally adapt to changing conditions in climate and ecosystems.

Duluth is in many ways opposite of the “mild Midwest.” Here, steep cliffs crash into cold, deep water. Wild weather swings, with heavy rains and dramatic snows. It’s not flyover country, because it’s so out of the way, and it’s not a place for the faint of heart — **which is what makes it special.**

NATURAL RESOURCES

PLANTS

Aspen-Birch Forests, Aspen-Birch Woodlands, and Bedrock Shrubland likely dominated much of the area prior to course’s construction. Unfortunately, invasive species, like Buckthorn, are overtaking large portions of the site. Restoration should remove these invasives, while protecting high-quality native species, including those shown below which are already found on the LPGC site.



Red Maple



Red Oak



Northern White Cedar



Red Pine



Paper Birch



White Pine



Balsam Fir



Trembling Aspen



Bedrock Shrubland

UNDERSTANDING FERTILIZER IMPACTS

Despite its pastoral image, decades of fertilizer and mercury use may present environmental challenges to redevelopment. Because the Lake 9 was built more recently, it likely has less chemical usage and impacts than the rest of the site.

At most 20th century courses, contamination is deepest at the tee-boxes and on the greens where chemicals are used more intensely to treat and prevent fungus on turf grass.



Tree Cover and Potential Reforestation

The site has considerable amount of tree cover, despite the grading and golf course. The “Lake 9” was created in 1991, and is therefore a strong candidate for re-forestation.

ANIMAL HABITAT

Like much of Duluth, the site is important to bird habitats and migration flyways. Hawk Ridge to the northwest of the site attracts hundred of thousands of raptors annually on their migratory path in the fall. Hawk Ridge is easily accessible to the site by trails through Lester/Amity Park or directly through Lakeside Neighborhood

Lester River, located west of the site is a designated trout stream. A portion of the site’s surface flow discharges into the Lester River.



Area Biodiversity Significance

- “High” Biodiversity Significance
- “Moderate” Biodiversity Significance
- “Low” Biodiversity Significance

MINNESOTA BIOLOGICAL SURVEY (MBS)

MBS is a ranking through the state DNR that describes the biodiversity significance of a given area. No MBS sites have been identified within the LPGC site. However, Moose Mountain to the northeast is a “high” ranking site, and the lake shore is a “moderate” site.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THE PLAN

- As part of an important migratory flyway, future use and development of the site should include bird safe materials, minimize building heights in certain areas, and advance practices that preserve a dark sky.
- Most likely, bedrock is close to the surface. Grading and development should avoid bedrock as much as possible.
- The area is adjacent to an existing park to the west and a scientific natural area the northeast, creating opportunities for both natural habitat connectivity and trail-based recreation
- The site has been treated for decades with fertilizer, pesticides, and herbicides. Mitigation will have to be included in any reuse plan.
- Besides the contamination from chemicals, the site is full of invasive tree species — and early successional, poor quality forest. Much of LPGC is a restoration site requiring years of significant investment to get the vegetation back to a healthy forest.

SOILS TYPES PRESENT AT LPGC

E13E UDIFLUVENTS, OCCASIONALLY FLOODED-ROLLINS COMPLEX

- Floodplain Forest and Sandy Uplands
- 0–30% slopes
- Likely silver maple, boxelder, eastern cottonwood, black willow, green ash, and river birch

E14B: BARTO, STONY-GREYSOLON-ROCK OUTCROP COMPLEX

- Bedrock Controlled Upland Forest
- 0–8% slopes
- Likely dominated by boreal-hardwood forest species, with potential for species like white pine, red pine, and birch

E14D: BARTO, STONY-GREYSOLON-ROCK OUTCROP COMPLEX

- Bedrock Controlled Upland Forest
- 0–18% slopes
- Likely dominated by boreal-hardwood forest species, with potential for species like white pine, red pine, and birch

E3B: CUTTRE COMPLEX

- Moist Clayey Lowlands
- 0–8% slopes
- Primarily a mix of balsam fir, red maple, white spruce, with paper birch, red oak, and quaking aspen

E6D: AMNICON-CUTTRE COMPLEX

- Clayey Uplands
- 3–18% slopes
- Likely dominated by balsam fir, white spruce, northern white cedar, white pine, trembling aspen, paper birch, and red maple

E24F MOSKOAKI-CUTTRE COMPLEX

- Steep Sandy and Loamy Uplands
- 5–45% slopes
- Likely mix of red pine, eastern white pine, quaking aspen, paper birch, and red oak

E4B: CUTTRE-EUTRUDEPTS COMPLEX

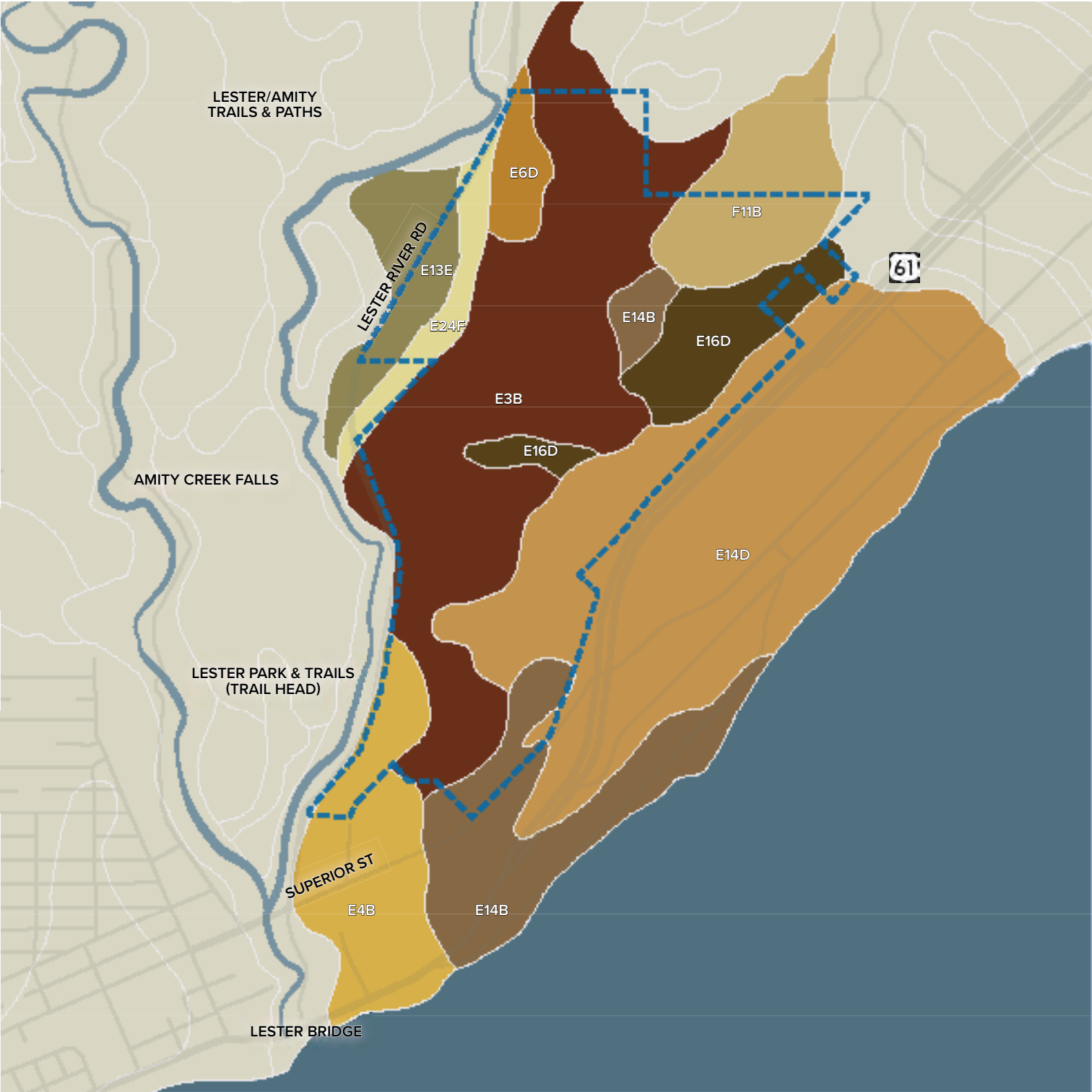
- Loamy Upland Forest
- 0–8% slopes
- Likely mix of sugar maple, basswood, red maple, and yellow birch

E16D: AMNICON-CUTTRE COMPLEX

- Clayey Lowlands
- 5–18% slopes
- Likely dominated by balsam fir, white spruce, northern white cedar, white pine, trembling aspen, paper birch, and red maple

F11B: AUGUSTANA-HEGBERG COMPLEX

- Loamy upland
- 1–8% slopes
- Primarily sugar maple, yellow birch, northern white cedar, and white spruce



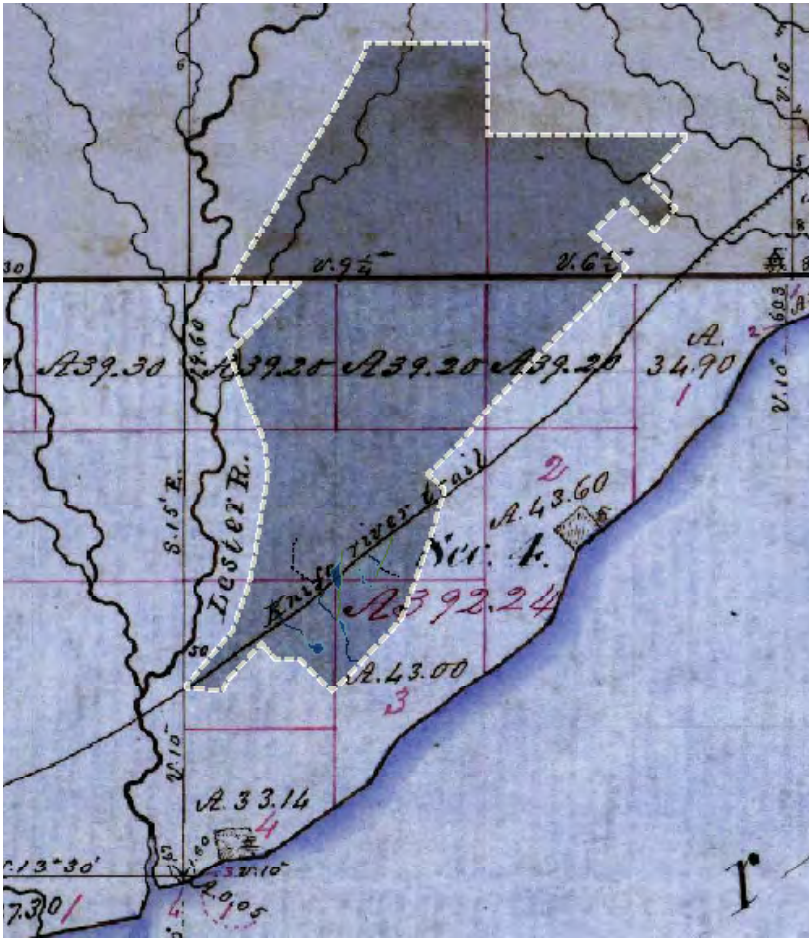
WATER RESOURCES

The site contains water resources that should be carefully considered in future use and development of the site. The site is sloped towards the lake and generally drains towards the south east. However a portion of the site drains to and is part of the Lester River watershed, A DNR designated trout stream, and will require a higher level of stormwater management. There is evidence of a former stream alignment through the north west portion of the site, where a wooded ravine defines the northern edge of the former golf course.

There is also evidence of a former band of wetlands across the middle of the site where the topography levels out slightly. Construction of the golf course likely altered these wetlands and transformed them into ponds — features for the golf course.

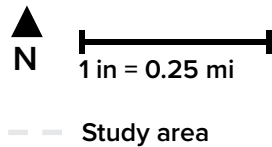
1856 PLAT MAP

An 1850s map of the area shows the site between two ravines with a series of tributaries to larger streams leading to the lake. It also shows the presence of a creek through the site. This creek appears to have been altered over time, yet it's topography and ravine remains on the north west portion of the site.



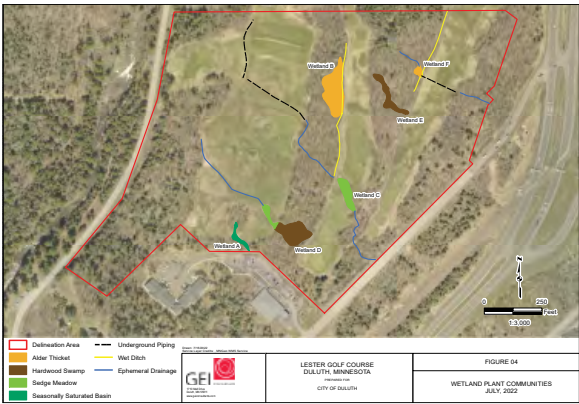
Slope and Topography

The land is generally sloped towards the lake, with a portion of the site discharging towards the river. Surface flows towards the lake are collected in inlets and culverts (in red) beneath Superior Street. A small portion of the northern edge of the site drains to the Lester river via culvert beneath Lester park Road.



Wetlands

The flatter section of the site has a belt of wetlands that have been engineered into ponds for the golf course.



The southern area of the site previously had detailed analysis completed. This shows how a series of ponds and drainage ways manages water at the bottom of the course.

- Delineated Wetlands (South 40 acres only, previously delineated)
- Non Forested Wetlands (desktop review)
- Forested Wetlands
- Possible wetland restoration opportunity area

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THE PLAN

- There are considerable existing and former wetlands on the site. These resources are important for environmental restoration and can serve as an amenity for all who use the site.
- The site holds water in hydric soils while also sheeting water off site towards the lake and Lester River. New development should not increase peak flows off the site.
- Given the likelihood of extreme rain events, stormwater should be held on site and discharged slowly.
- Establishing a wetland bank on the site would restore wetland areas and ecological function to the site, while generating revenue by the sale of credits to developers at LPGC and nearby.

RECREATIONAL USES

DULUTH: A CITY OF TRAILS AND ACCESS TO NATURE

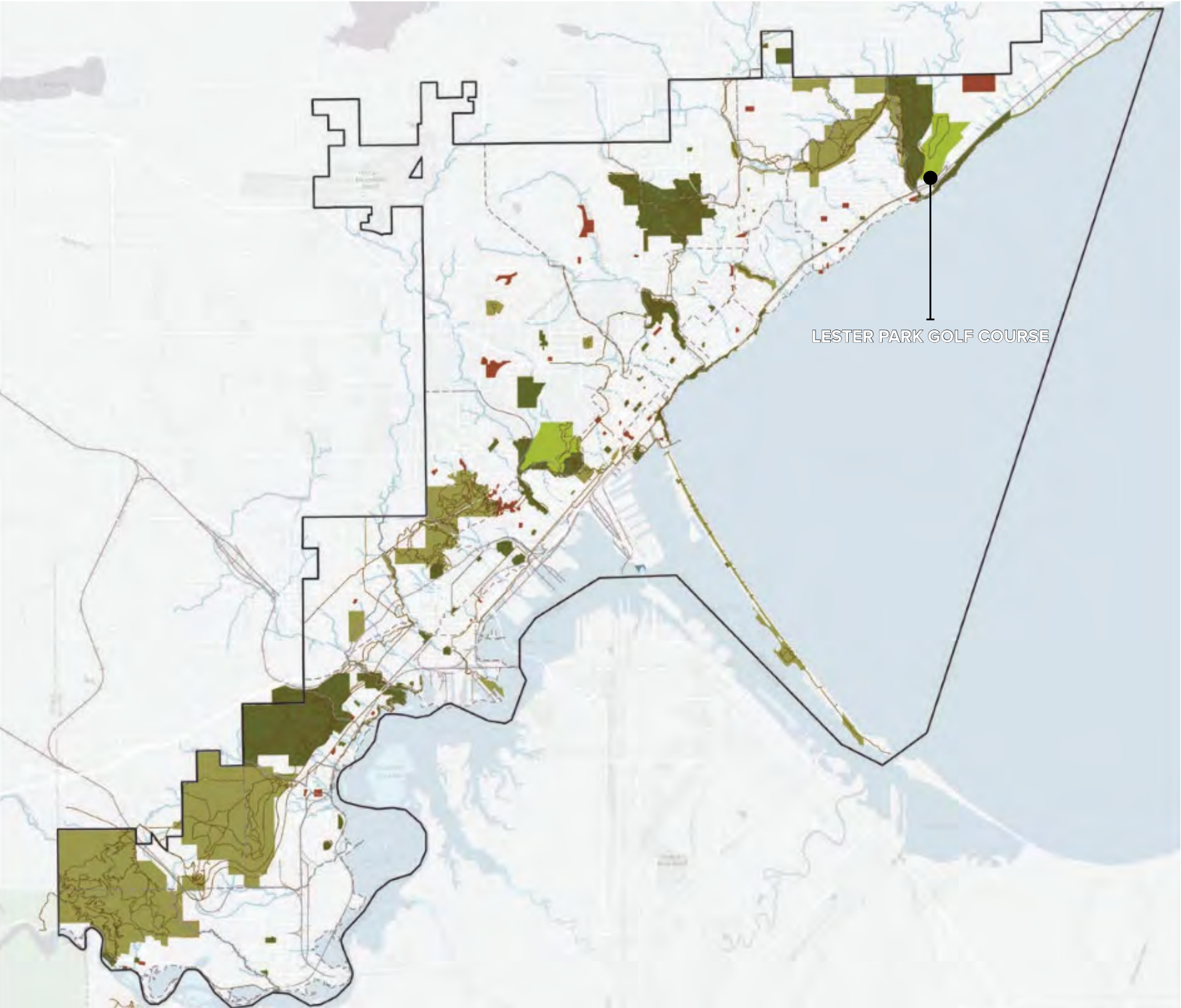
In 2013, Outside magazine named Duluth the Best Town in America — a formal recognition of the City’s vast year-round outdoor recreational activities for people of all abilities and interests.

The City boasts a vast inventory of space in-town park space: 21% of the overall City is dedicated to parks/natural/passive land, and undeveloped open spaces.

City parks and open spaces are complemented by proximity and access to Lake Superior, the North Shore, Boundary Waters and other nationally recognized adventure destinations. Access to outdoor recreational opportunities have become a point of pride, an economic driver, and core to the identity of the community.

PARK SYSTEM SUMMARY

- 21% of land in Duluth is park and open space
- 162 Parks
- 9,000 acres of park space
- 350 miles of trails:
 - 150+ miles of natural surface hiking trail
 - 10 miles of horse trails
 - 30 miles of paved, and 16 miles of gravel accessible trail
 - 95 miles of multi-use mountain bike trail



KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THE PLAN

- Duluth has a vast, nationally recognized network of recreation and trails for users of all types.
- The city must continually balance the provision of its strong recreation offerings, while ensuring fiscal sustainability.
- Outdoor recreation is a major draw for the city in attracting visitors and growth. A desire to preserve these aspects simultaneously constrains development areas needed to support ongoing growth.



PARKLAND TYPES (2022)

- Developed Parks
- Natural / Passive Parks
- Golf Courses
- Undeveloped
- Streams
- Trails
- Neighborhood Boundary
- Duluth City Boundary



ROLL OF RECREATION AT LPGC

A RECREATION-BASED AREA

Since its inception, the site has been used for year-round outdoor recreation. While an active golf course, the site was used for walking and hiking, skiing and watching the stars — among many other activities. Since its closure, people have used the site for a much broader set of activities year-round.



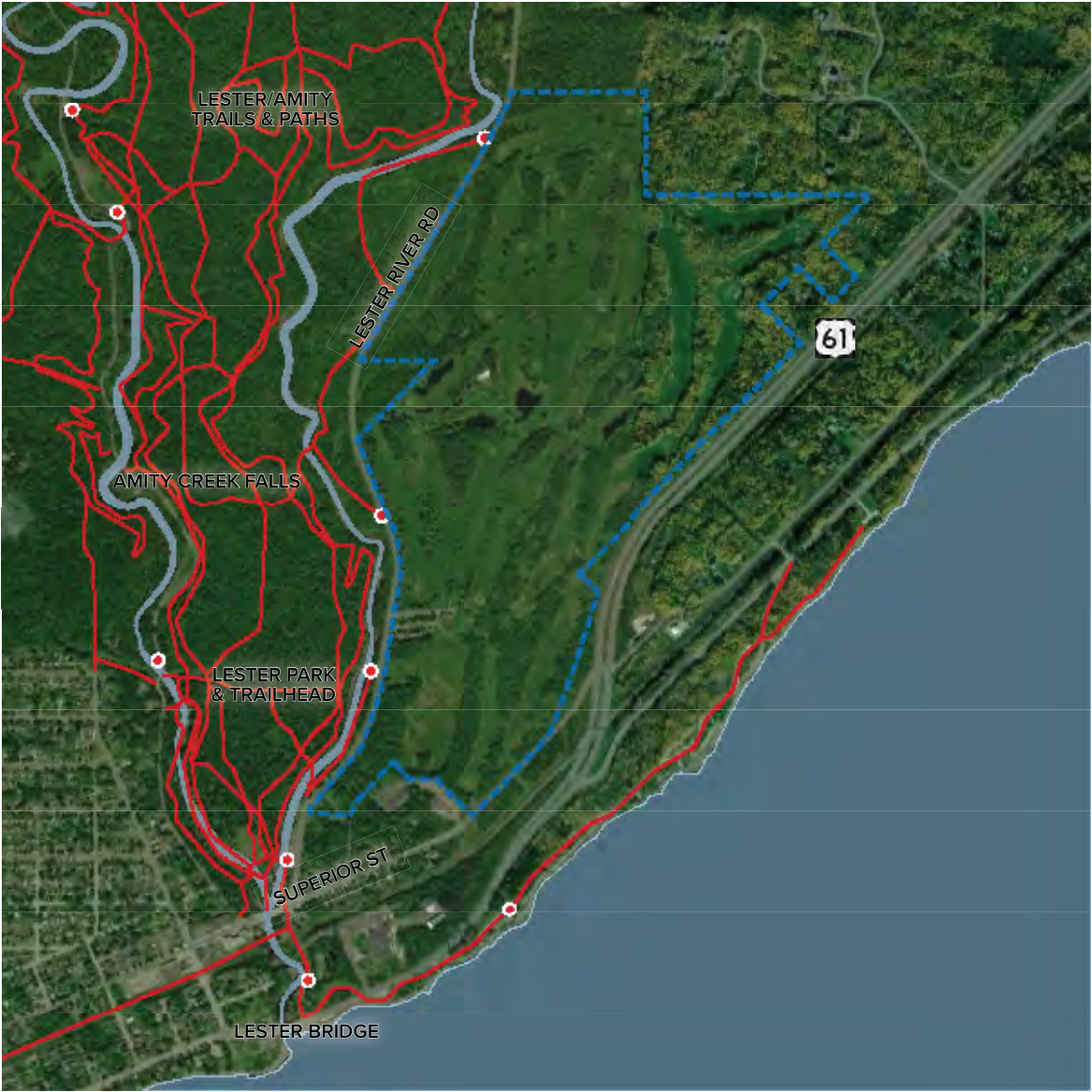
SNOW ACTIVITIES

Even before its closure, LPGC was used for winter recreation. City-groomed trails are still used by cross-country skiers, winter runners, dog walkers, and snowshoers. This has long helped keep the site a year-round community destination.



NO-SNOW ACTIVITIES

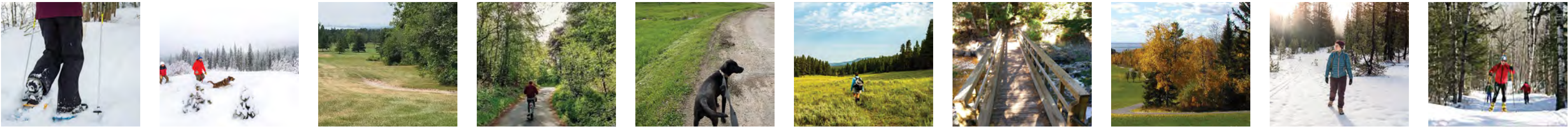
While the course had been used for golf since its opening, it has taken on a new role during the summer months, in the absence of golf. The LPGC has become extension of the recreation already happening in the nearby Lester Park and Amity Park trail systems, attracting dog walkers, hikers, trail runners, and others enjoying passive outdoor recreation.



KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THE PLAN

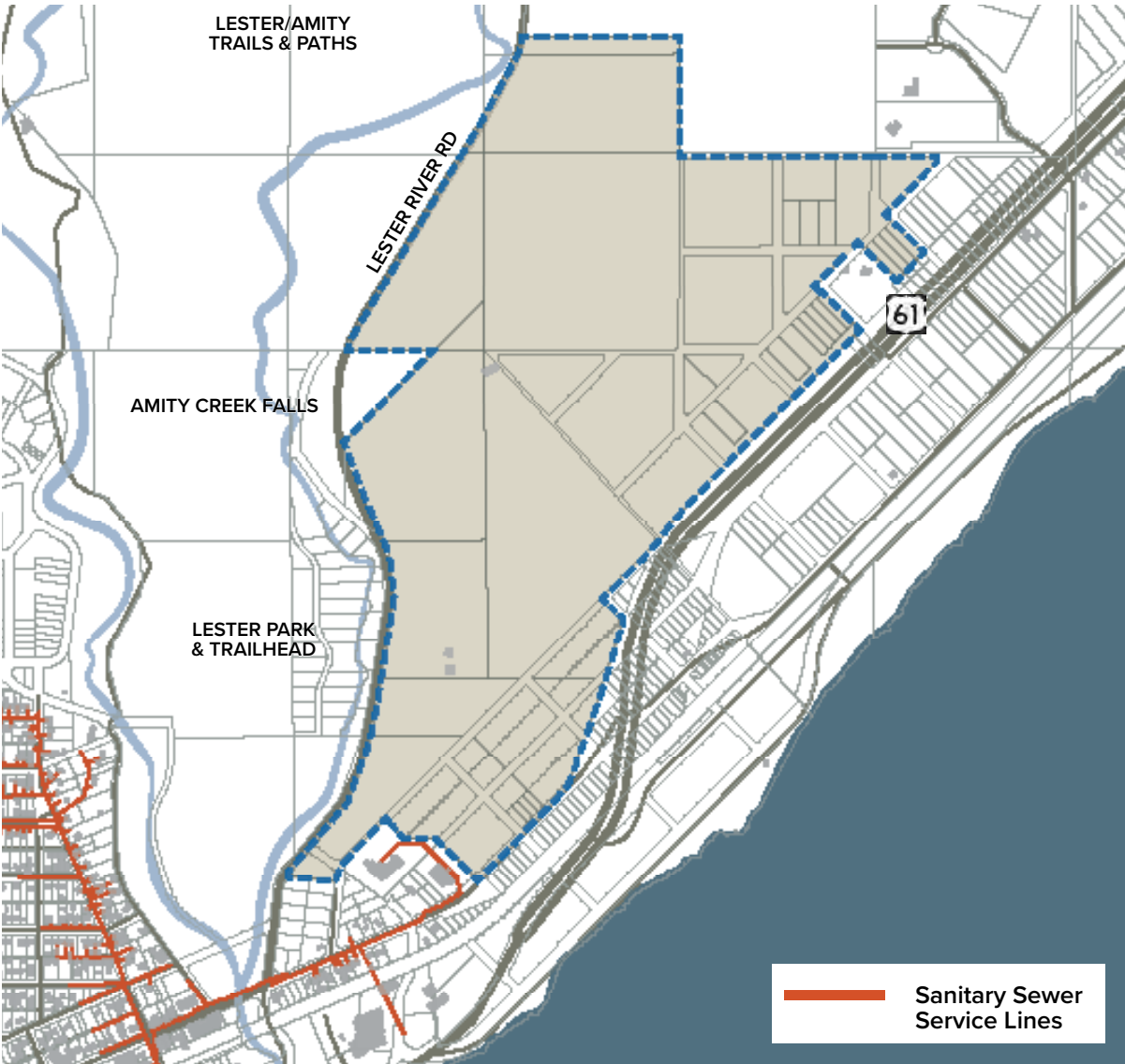
- The site should continue to play a recreation role within the context of a broader city system.
- The area is the east bookend to the city’s park and recreation network, and should embrace this role
- The site could connect to nearby trails and serve as a trailhead with appropriate amenities that attract people from within and beyond the City.
- The site should continue to serve a wide range of non-trail recreational users.

ALL-SEASON RECREATION



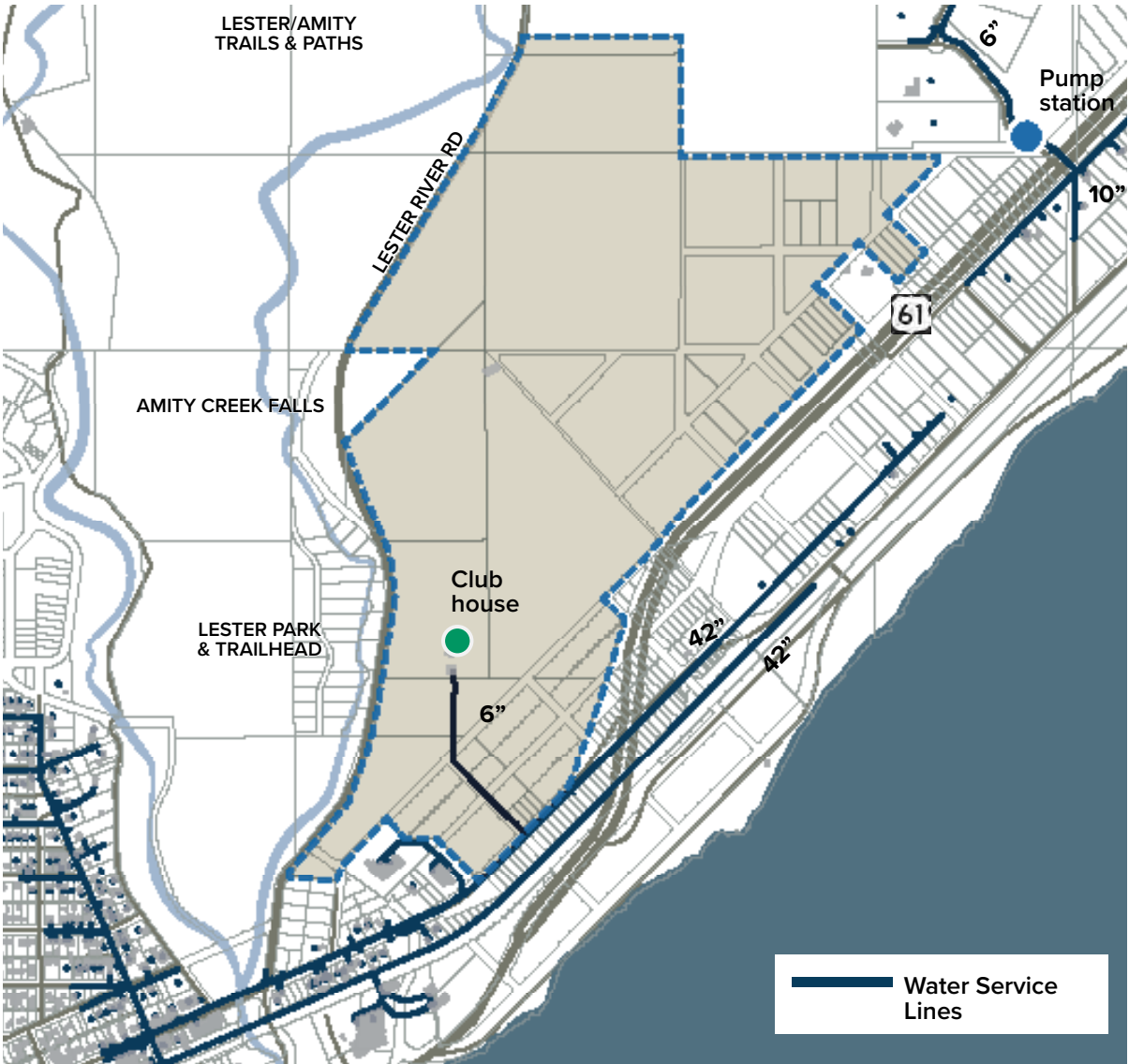
UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SANITARY



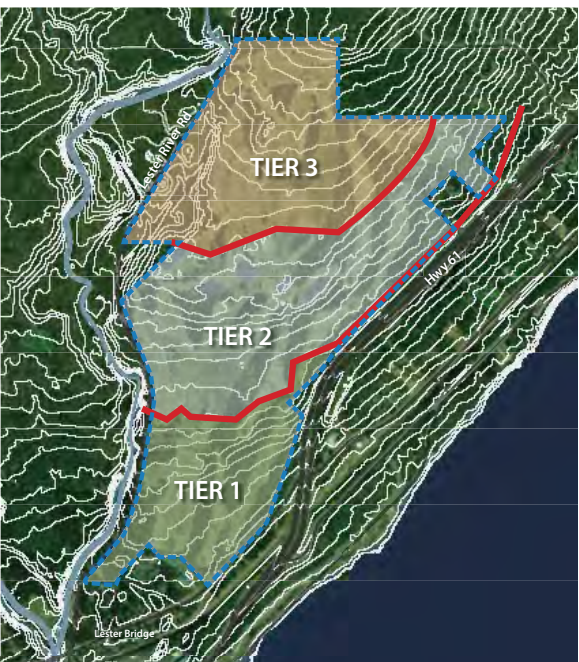
- The site currently has no sanitary service
- With new development sanitary sewer storage facilities may be incorporated to reduce peak wastewater flows to meet down gradient system capacities.
- A system-wide analysis would need to be conducted to determine capacity with new development.

WATER



- The site is serviced with an existing 6-inch service line up to the club house — this line would only be sufficient for a very modest amount of development.
- Extending utilities further north of the club house would require significant investment within the site — a booster or pump station and reservoir. A reservoir will likely be needed to provide sustained pressures for development above the 760' elevation.
- The pump station to the northeast of the site is a private system, and would require substantial upgrades in order to provide water service to the site.
- The condition of the two parallel 42-inch lines south of the site may limit options for tapping new service lines.

UTILITY CAPACITY



A planning level assessment was conducted to determine current utility capacities, and the ability to support development across the site. Through this, 'Tiers' of service were developed that define infrastructure improvements that would be needed to serve each area.

- Tier 1: There is currently adequate water pressure to serve the area up to just north of the existing club house.
- Tier 2: Development here would need a booster station to push water up hill.
- Tier 3: In addition to the tier 2 booster station, a reservoir would be needed to support tier 3 development

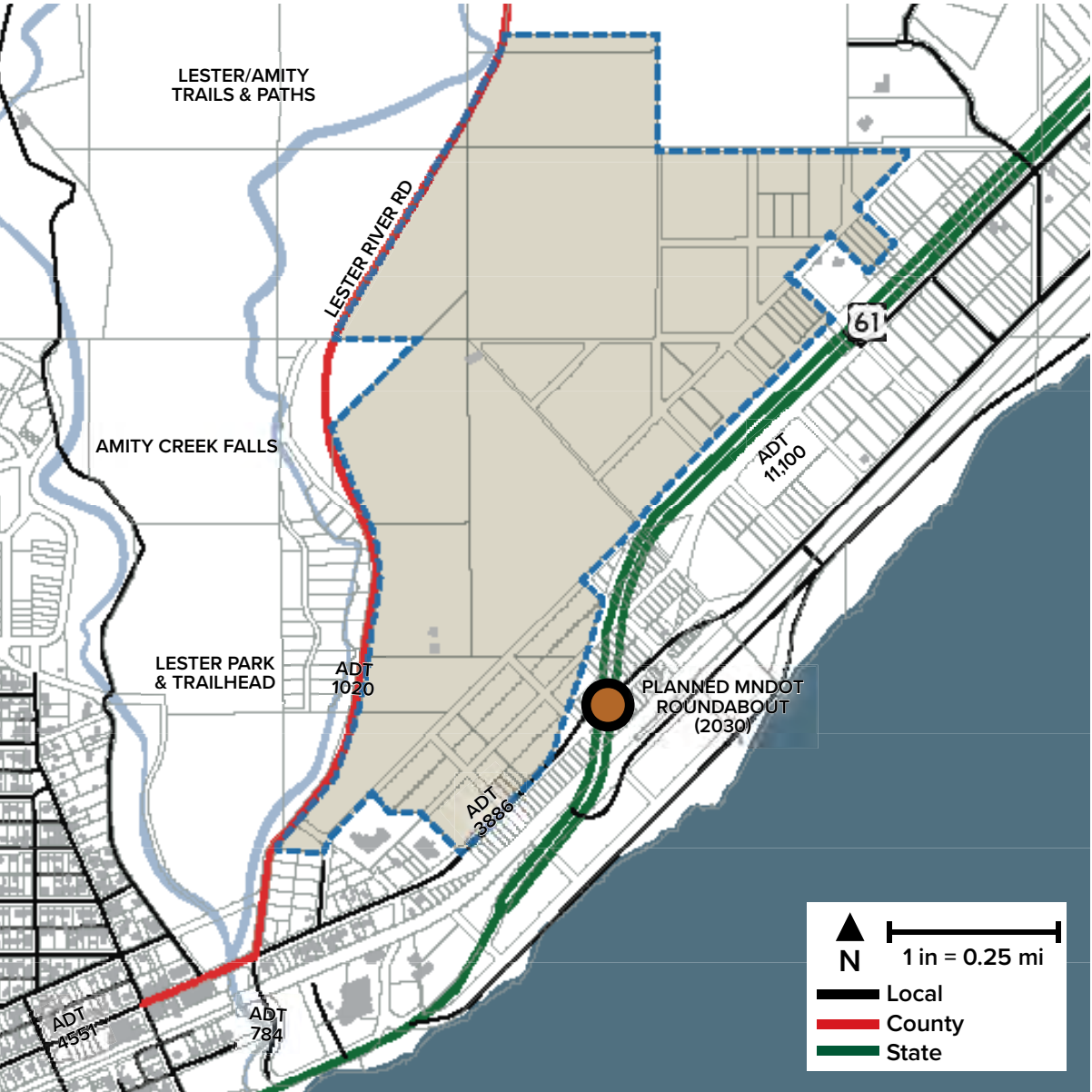
Adding development into each tier would result in necessary infrastructure costs for the respective development area(s).

STORMWATER



- The site is currently served by very limited stormwater utility infrastructure
- Most site runoff travels to Highway 61, where it is conveyed overland and channeled through a series of culverts under the roadway
- Any new development would need to be serviced by new stormwater infrastructure within the site, and connect south to the existing system.
- A system-wide analysis would need to be conducted to determine capacity and management of major rainfall events
- Any new development will need to provide stormwater management facilities that provide capture and conveyance, as well as flood control and water quality controls.

TRANSPORTATION



- MnDOT is planning for a project in Fiscal Year 2030 to mill and overlay Highway 61 from just north of 60th Avenue E to just north of Superior Street.
- MnDOT also plans to add a single lane roundabout at the Superior Street intersection and a continuous T-intersection at Congdon Boulevard.
- Lester River Road is a collector that runs adjacent to the Lester River. Over time, the river threatens the structural integrity of the road in certain locations due to steep bank erosion undercutting the roadway.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THE PLAN

- All utilities will have to be extended into the site.
- Sufficient water pressure is limited to the approximately 60 acres in the south portion of the site; without a booster station or development would be limited to this area.
- Stormwater infrastructure should include considerable on-site storage and treatment areas to reduce the rate of off site discharge.
- Transportation improvements to Superior Street and Lester River Road should be made in conjunction with long term plans for the site.

SUMMARY OF KEY SITE ANALYSIS FINDINGS



GREEN ISN'T ALWAYS NATURAL

Though it is very green, the site has been significantly altered over time for use as a golf course and is not in a “natural state.” The areas that have been fertilized may need to be remediated and mitigated. Most likely, the tee boxes and putting greens of the original golf course have the deepest contamination.



SUPERIOR VIEWS

Views of Lake Superior are increasingly scenic as you move up hill across the site. These views have significant value for the public, and for possible future residents looking for housing close to the lake.



UP-HILL WATER DISTRIBUTION

There is adequate current water pressure to serve the area south of the existing clubhouse. Any development of the central and northern portions of the site would require additional infrastructure like a booster station and reservoir, to push water through pipes up the hill.



GREAT CONNECTIONS TO LEVERAGE

The site has incredible potential for connections to public assets and parks — Lester Park and Amity Park to the west, and Brighton Beach to the south. Any future development should account for future site users who also want to reach these key public spaces.



HELPING MEET CITY-WIDE NEEDS

With an estimated demand for 8,800 new housing units by 2035, there is a great need for new housing in Duluth. Some developable areas on the site can serve to meet a small portion of this demand.

KEY FINDINGS

- A** Surrounding areas include critical landscape and animal habitats, and carry special designations. None exist within the site, however.
- B** Much of the site is likely contaminated from years of fertilizer, despite its pastoral image.
- C** A central series of ponds exist over what was likely a series of historic cascading wetlands.
- D** The ‘Lake 9’ is likely less contaminated than the rest of the site, due to the shorter period of golf activities.
- E** Locations throughout the site have sweeping views, especially of Lake Superior, while also playing host to year-round recreation (formal and informal).
- F** The east edge along Hwy 61 has some of the most prominent bedrock outcroppings, which are anticipated to exist throughout the site.
- G** Adjacent park and recreation uses run along Lester River Road, commingling access with road traffic.
- H** It is believed that there is sufficient water pressure to serve at least the southern portions of the site, up to approximately the club house.







SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

4

GROUNDING THE IDEAS

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Lester Park Golf Course has a variety of different landscapes/character types, defined by natural features, topography, and current day recreation use. Using the existing conditions analysis, a series of study-specific landscape character areas were developed as a means to explore different types and arrangements of uses within each scenario.

- 1

NORTH WOODS
The highest elevation area, with swaths of cleared fairways cut into tree groves with tree-lined edges.
- 2

RIVERS AND RAVINES
Steep topography, rivers, and tree-lined ravines define this scenic but rugged area.
- 3

BLUE BELT
These man-made wetlands reflect likely historic wetland areas and a key opportunity for re-establishing water resources.
- 4

LAKE 9
Open fairways cut into dense, thick woods, creating stunning view corridors to the Lake.
- 5

THE UPLAND
A series of cleared fairway “fingers” extending up from the old clubhouse, dotted with trees and tree-lined edges.
- 6

THE RANGE
Among the flattest area of the site, encompassing the driving range and two slices of the “Lake 9” hugged by thick wooded edges.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THE PLAN

- The landscape character areas above are derived from the existing conditions present in the natural environments of subareas of LPGC. These conditions included natural resources, plants and trees, soils, and hydrology.
- The landscape character areas go on to inform if and how a subarea of LPGC can support development, recreation, or the restoration of a natural landscape.

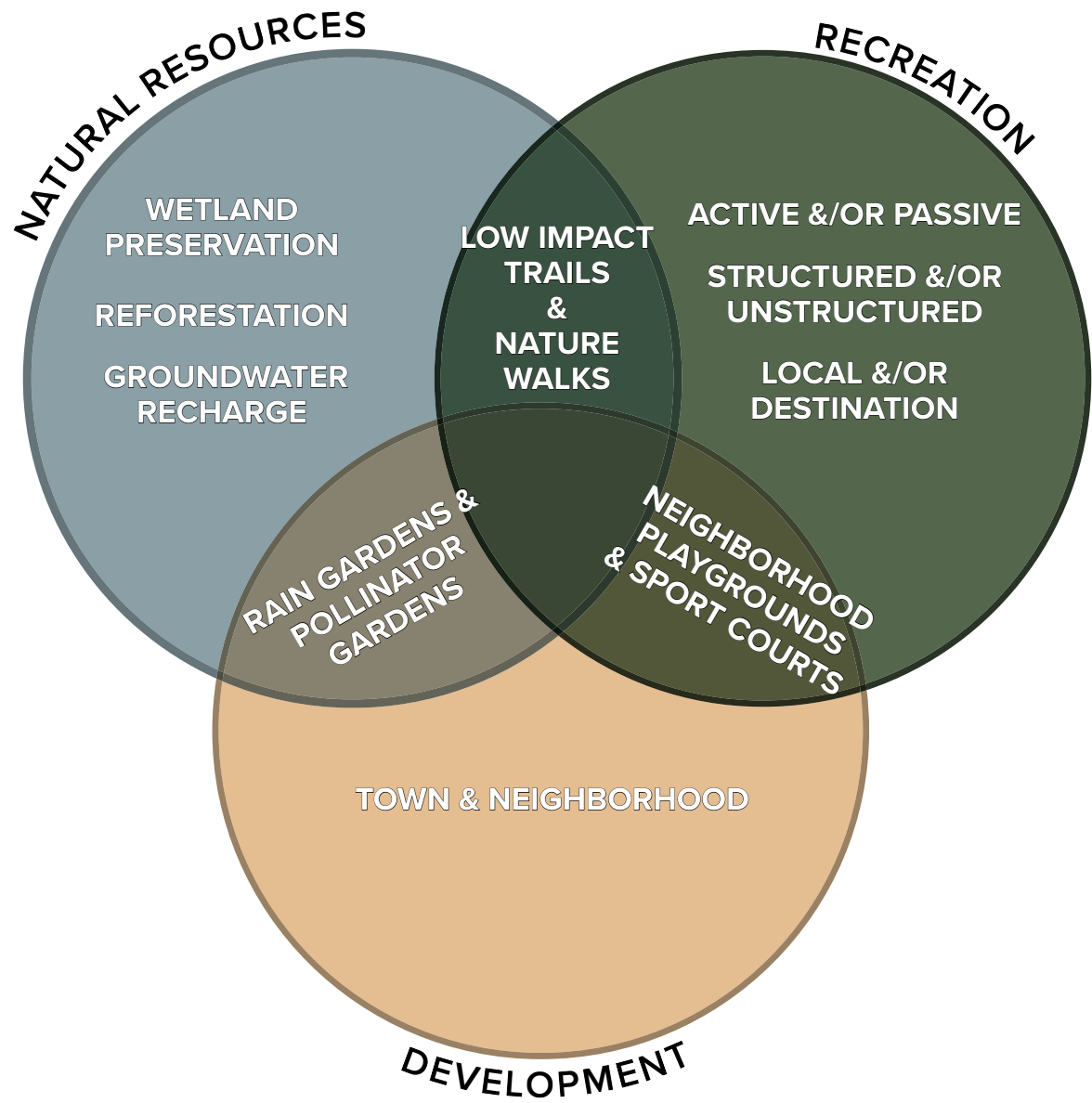


BALANCE AND CHANGES

To inform scenario development and creation of a recommended vision, the study team combined site analysis, public feedback, and the intent to balance needs and desires for Natural Resources, Recreation, and Development. These informed elements present in each scenario.

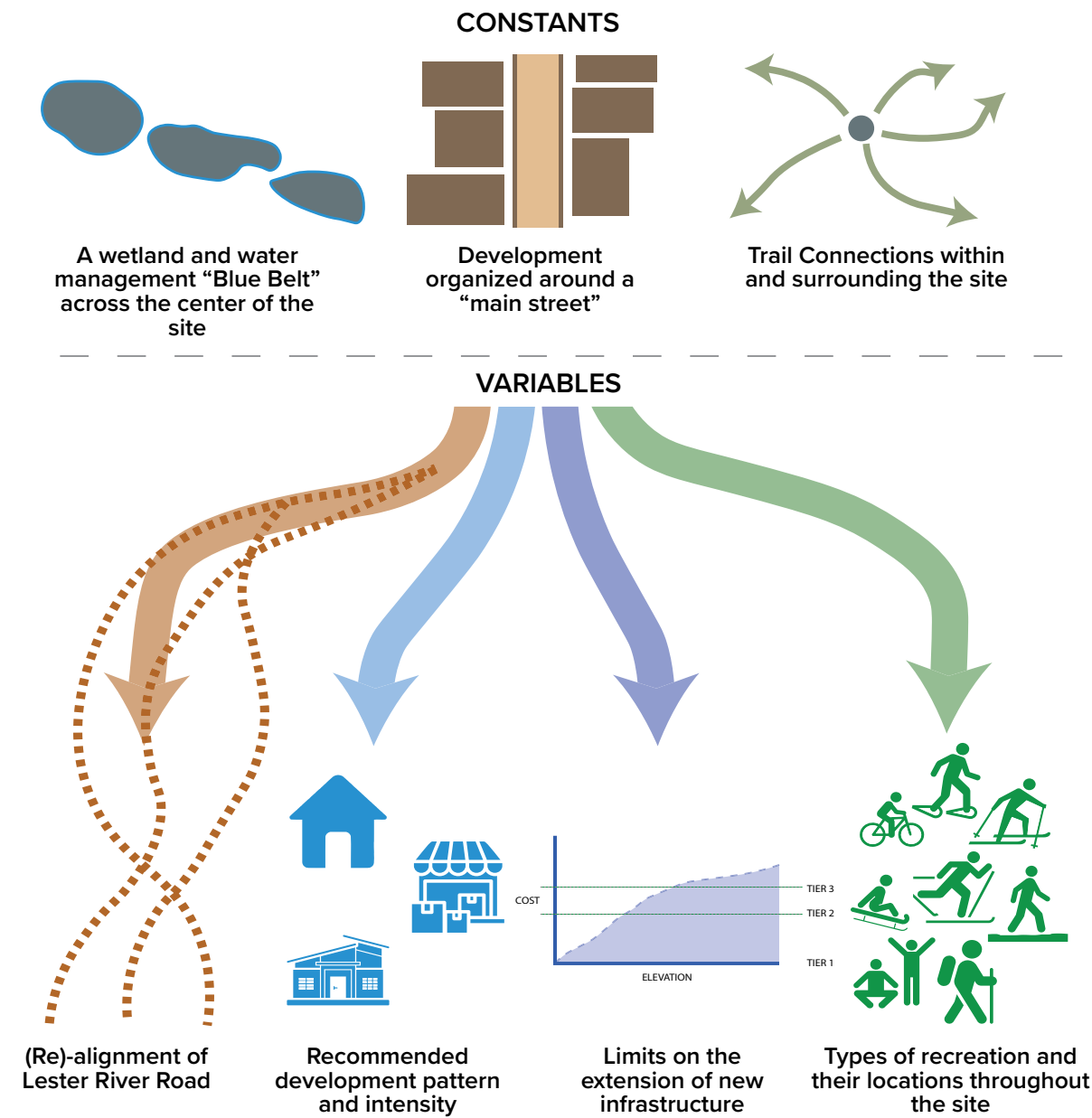
BALANCING NEEDS AND DESIRES

Much of the study and scenario development revolved around ideas of balancing. Ideas of how balancing may look across scenarios were explored with stakeholder members and the public. A brief summary of some key elements of balancing are included below.



ESTABLISHING CONSTANTS AND VARIABLES

Additionally, a series of constants and variables were identified that underpin the scenarios. Constants are core elements present in each scenario, whereas variables were the elements tested across each of the scenarios.



TESTING THE IDEAS

Grounded in study goals, Phase I public feedback, site conditions analysis, and the market study, three concepts were developed that explored different organizing frameworks for the LPGC site. Each scenario tested different degrees of balancing natural spaces, dedicated recreation areas, and development in the study area.

During Phase II engagement and scenario evaluation, it was assumed that favorable aspects of each scenario may be used to create a final vision plan, rather than asking the public to ‘choose’ which scenario to progress. Favorable elements from each were used as the basis for the final vision plan for the LPGC site, as shown in Phase III engagement.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THE PLAN

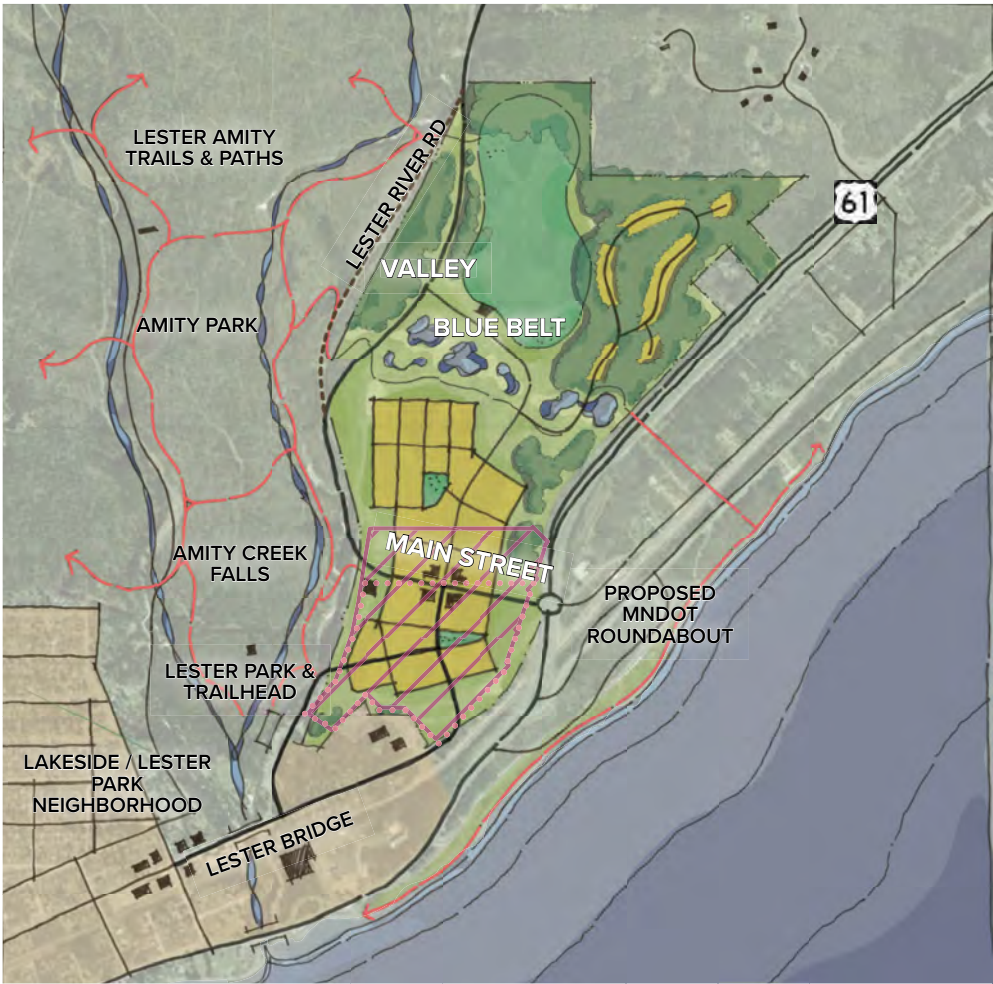
- The Vision should include a medium- and lower-density neighborhood with a mix of housing types.
- Maximize the presence of contiguous natural areas layered with recreation spaces throughout.

SCENARIO A | THE BASECAMP



Natural Areas	218 acres (80%)	Parcels owned by DEDA
Recreation Areas	28 acres (11%)	Land already zoned Mixed-Use Development
Development Areas	24 acres (9%)	
Total Land Area	270 Acres	
Anticipated Infrastructure Needs*	\$\$\$\$\$	

SCENARIO B | THE TOWN



Natural Areas	155 acres (57%)	Parcels owned by DEDA
Recreation Areas	38 acres (14%)	Land already zoned Mixed-Use Development
Development Areas	77 acres (29%)	
Total Land Area	270 Acres	
Anticipated Infrastructure Needs*	\$\$\$\$\$	

SCENARIO C | THE LADDER



Natural Areas	140 acres (52%)	Parcels owned by DEDA
Recreation Areas	73 acres (27%)	Land already zoned Mixed-Use Development
Development Areas	57 acres (21%)	
Total Land Area	270 Acres	
Anticipated Infrastructure Needs*	\$\$\$\$\$	

*A utilities cost-estimate for the recommended scenario is provided in The Vision Plan.







THE VISION PLAN

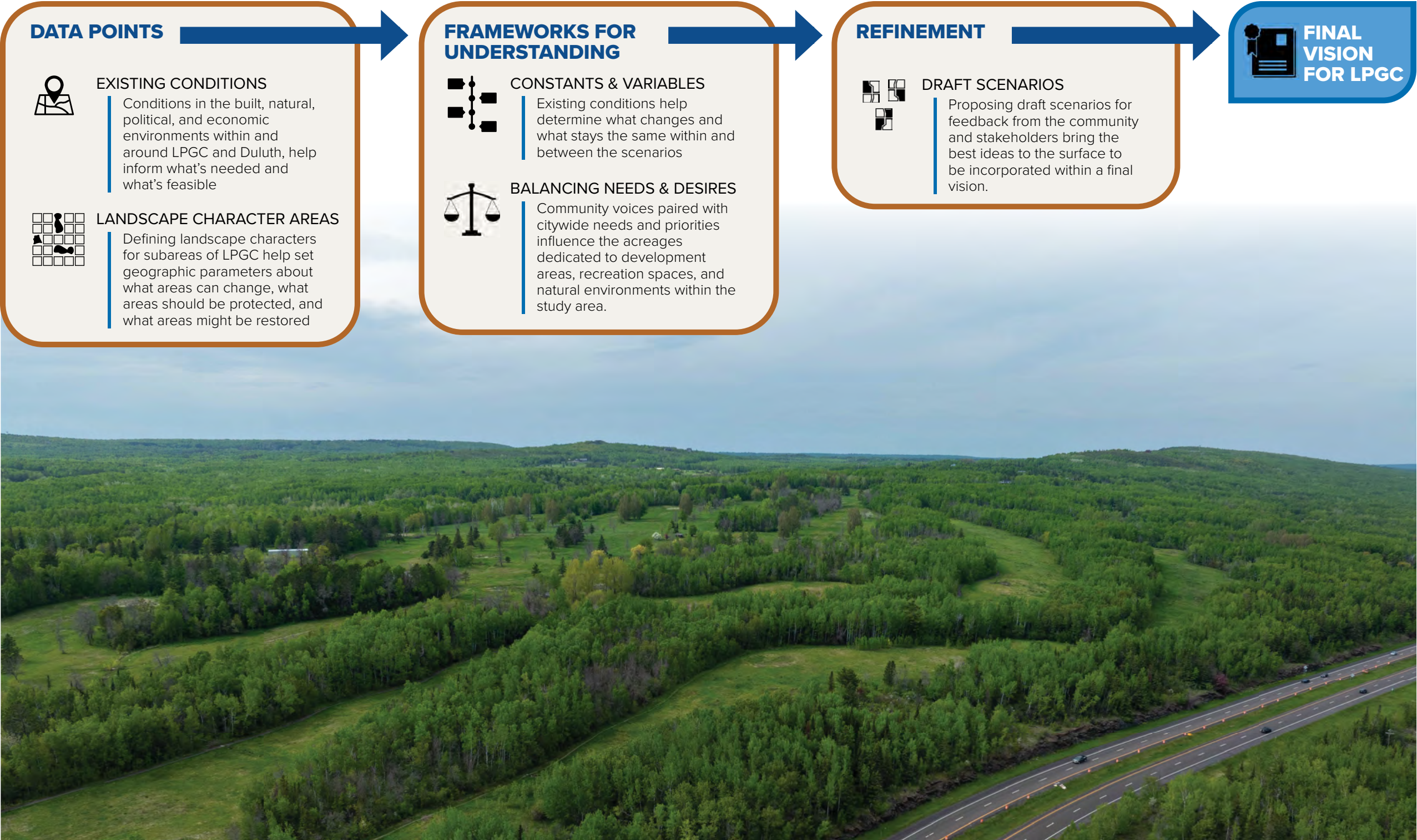
5

BUILDING TOWARD A UNIFIED PLAN

This study reflects an eight-month planning and engagement process to establish a community-supported vision for this deeply valued, public landscape in Duluth. Guided by extensive public participation, [detailed in Section 2](#), this collaborative foundation was paired with rigorous existing conditions and technical analysis effort, [described in Section 3](#), which led to the identification of landscape character areas.

Together, the findings from these efforts set grounding parameters for the drafting of potential development scenarios. These parameters reflected the constant realities of the landscape that should be accounted for in all scenarios, and options and flexibility points that allow the scenarios to vary. Further, at multiple stages of the project, community voices directed how the scenarios should balance land uses within the scenarios.

[Three draft scenarios](#) were shared with community members, stakeholders, and technical advisors. These groups critiqued the scenarios again and shared ideas about how the best elements of each scenario could be refined and coalesced into a realistic, beneficial, and exciting vision for the future of LPGC. The draft vision continued to be revised, culminating in the recommended vision that is shared in the next pages of this report.



THE VISION FOR THE LPGC

A MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD NESTLED AMIDST THE NATURE OF DULUTH

The former LPGC site is re-envisioned as a compact, walkable, and environmentally integrated community that balances new housing opportunities with the restoration and enhancement of one of Duluth’s signature recreation areas.

A defining feature of the vision is the restoration of the northern portions of the former golf course to an expansive natural open space with opportunities for enhanced year-round recreation. Approximately three-quarters (3/4) of the site remains dedicated to opportunities for conservation, habitat restoration, and continued public use. The strategic realignment of Lester River Road allows former roadway areas to be incorporated into the Lester/Amity Park area, improving park access and ecological function while reducing long-term erosion risks associated with the existing roadway alignment.

To the south, a new neighborhood is designed around an urban neighborhood framework that integrates habitat preservation, restored natural systems, recreation access, and a vibrant, mixed-use main street with traditional, small-scale retail and commercial space. This pedestrian-oriented corridor serves as the social and commercial heart of the neighborhood — providing opportunities for resident-serving retail and active uses.

A mix of housing types are found across the rest of the neighborhood, offering a range of housing styles and price points. Buildings and the street grid are arranged to maximize views of Lake Superior, creating a memorable sense of place while reinforcing Duluth’s ethos of physical and visual connections with nature.

Extending out from the site are opportunities for a series of trail corridors and trailheads, linking the site into surrounding systems, such as the Lester/Amity Falls area and Brighton Beach.



The northern three-fourths (3/4) of the site remain undeveloped, presenting an opportunity for unique recreation offerings amidst restored landscape and habitats

Development is concentrated in the southern portions of the site, offering a highly walkable new neighborhood oriented around a main street, with nature and recreation integrated throughout.

THE SPECIFICS OF THE VISION

At the right is an illustrative vision of what the future of the LPGC site could look like, based on the recommendations of the study. It is expected that this concept will evolve as additional technical analysis, studies, and projects are implemented.

KEY SITE GOALS AND OUTCOMES

- A** Lester River Road is realigned to the east of the valley, returning that portion of the site to Lester/Amity Park, and mitigating possible future roadway erosion.
- B** The northern three-fourths (3/4) of the site remain as natural space with opportunities for habitat restoration and formal recreation offerings.
- C** A central ‘blue belt’ restores wetlands and aids in water management.
- D** A grade separated trail crosses over Highway 61, leveraging existing topography, eventually connecting to Brighton Beach to the southeast.
- E** The northern portions of the neighborhood could offer direct access to the natural areas of the site, while natural corridors and recreation uses seamlessly integrate across the neighborhood.
- F** Lester River Road is realigned slightly east at a new main street, providing opportunities for a trail head and/or additional parking access for Lester Park..
- G** The neighborhood is oriented around a main street, which is a highly walkable mixed-use center of activity. If oriented appropriately, main street could also offer exceptional view sheds across the neighborhood towards Lake Superior.
- H** Superior Street offers the primary connection between the new neighborhood, the Lakeside Neighborhood, and broader Duluth community.
- I** Buffers along the south edge of the site screen the neighborhood from the adjacent clinic and senior housing.



ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

LAND USE BALANCE

Natural & Recreation Areas*	207 acres (77%)
Development Areas:	63 acres (23%)

* Future parks planning will determine final natural and recreation programming across the site

DEVELOPMENT YIELDS

Housing:	700-900 units**
Near-term commercial:	1-2 restaurants or retail stores (5-year estimate)

** Unit estimates based on a mix of housing types, and accounting for an estimated net developable acreage

ESTIMATED CORE INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Core streets (including water, sanitary, and storm mains)	
Main Street:	\$1.2M–1.5M***
Sanitary system capacity upgrades	
Sanitary collector tank:	\$1.4M–\$1.6M***

*** These are planning-level estimates for large public infrastructure investments only. Additional infrastructure will be needed, but costs will depend on final development layout, phasing, and funding sources. These will be determined during future planning, and as development proposals are submitted.

COST CONSIDERATIONS FOR PARK PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Additional resources are needed for the planning and management of the 207-acre natural and recreation area north of the neighborhood. See Implementation Section for details on next steps and funding planning.

RE-ENVISIONING GOLF AT LESTER PARK

STATE OF PUBLIC GOLF IN DULUTH

There are a number of factors that led to the closure of Lester Park Golf Course, and many more factors that would make bringing back traditional golf challenging. The city commissioned a number of course and use assessments, going back to at least 2018. Key findings are summarized below:

- Participation in golf at Duluth’s municipal courses has significantly declined from about 108,000 rounds in 2000 to just 51,308 in 2019 across the same number of golf holes (54).
- Though recent play at Enger remains below historic levels, in 2026, it is estimated that 38,000 rounds will be played at Enger, up from 35,987 rounds in 2025 and 31,316 rounds during active construction in 2024.
- With recent irrigation system improvements valued at more than \$7 million complete at Enger, the course has capacity to host an additional 10,000+ rounds of golf each year, nearly equivalent to the combined number of rounds played between Enger and Lester in 2019.
- Financial performance of the golf program has also been inconsistent, with operating losses of (\$180,370) in 2015 and (\$191,490) in 2019, followed by more positive returns in the last 5 years at Enger, including \$56,906 in 2024 coupled with reinvestment in course maintenance equipment using annual operating revenues.
- This inconsistent financial outlook and substantial reinvestment and capital needs to revive the Lester course leaves concerns about the likelihood of needing substantial on-going public subsidies to operate a second city course.

Year	Number of rounds of golf played
2019	51,308 (Enger & Lester, 52 Holes)
2020	39,337 (Enger only, 27 holes)
2021	41,440 (Enger only, 27 holes)
2022	32,400 (Enger only, 27 holes)
2023	31,316 (Enger only, 27 holes, reduced to 18 in September)
2024	31,056 (Enger only, 18 holes, active construction all season)
2025	35,987 (Enger only, 27 holes most of the season)
2026 (estimate)	38,000 (Projected at Enger in first season with 27 holes renewed and open all season)



THE FUTURE OF GOLF AT LESTER PARK

Reintroducing golf at Lester would spread a fixed pool of golfers across more courses, reducing system utilization and straining financial performance system-wide.

The City’s Citizen Advisory Committee in 2019 concluded that maintaining more than twenty-seven holes system-wide would require subsidies far beyond what residents support, and concluded that downsizing would be necessary to achieve financial stability.

Duluth citizens and golf participants in that same survey expressed a preference for alternative uses, most often identifying housing and park space as the best future options for land no longer used for golf.

These financial pressures, declining participation trends, and excess system capacity make it unlikely that golf will play a significant role in future scenarios for Lester, unless an outside entity or partner were to step forward and be responsible for bringing traditional golf back to Lester.

Because of this, the study is not anticipating the return of a traditional 9- or 18-hole course. Rather, it is exploring the preservation of dedicated space for recreation, that keeps available future opportunities for alternative forms of golf, which may be more feasible – short course, 3 hole mini course, accessible courses, driving ranges, etc.

Given the City’s lean financial ability to support the broader park system and prior citizen surveys favoring limited public subsidy, any golf redevelopment should rely on private funding for course renewal.



LAND USE MAP UPDATES

UPDATING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND OWNERSHIP

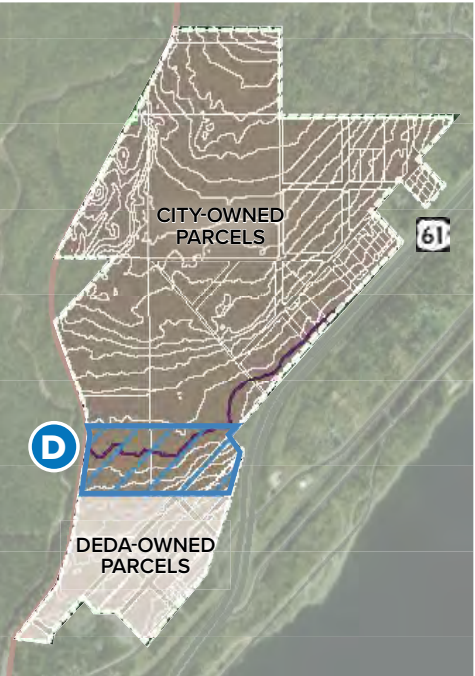
The LPGC study recommends extending the current Neighborhood Mixed-use land use designation north, to add an additional 13 acres of area to be available for build out as the new neighborhood.

This northern boundary of the neighborhood was identified by identifying the upper limits of existing city water pressure necessary to serve development, which is located at approximately 760’ elevation. The future land use map boundary line is proposed intentionally up to the next 10’ contour in order to sufficiently include land within that water pressure service area.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO CURRENT LAND USE GUIDANCE



PROPOSED CHANGES TO CURRENT PROPERTY OWNERSHIP



FUTURE LAND USE GUIDANCE AND OWNERSHIP

The LPGC Vision Plan recommends re-guiding the site to expand the Neighborhood Mixed-use designation area, and preserve the predominant Open Space nature of the site.



OPEN SPACE

High natural resource or scenic value, with substantial restrictions and development limitations. Primarily public lands but limited private use is anticipated subject to use and design controls. Examples include: city parks and recreation areas, camping, primary viewsheds, shorelands of the lake and streams, wetlands and floodplains, and high-value habitat

DENSITY / INTENSITY / DESIGN

- Low intensity uses such as trails and recreation
- Viewshed protection and access
- Water access, with some parking and support facilities

Total lands to be guided as Open Space	207 acres
Land already guided for Open Space	200 acres
Land to be re-guided from Rural Residential to Open Space	7 acres

NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED-USE

A transitional use between more intensive commercial uses and purely residential neighborhoods. May include limited commercial-only space oriented to neighborhood or specialty retail markets.

DENSITY / INTENSITY / DESIGN

- Site design should maintain a largely residential building character
- Commercial-only uses should be adjacent to non-residential or other mixed-use areas

Total lands to be guided Neighborhood Mix-Use	63 acres
Land already guided for Neighborhood Mixed-Use	48 acres
Land to be re-guided from Open Space to Neighborhood Mixed-Use	13 acres
Land to be re-guided from Low-Density Residential to Neighborhood Mixed-Use	2 acres

LAND USE RE-GUIDANCE AND OWNERSHIP TRANSFERS

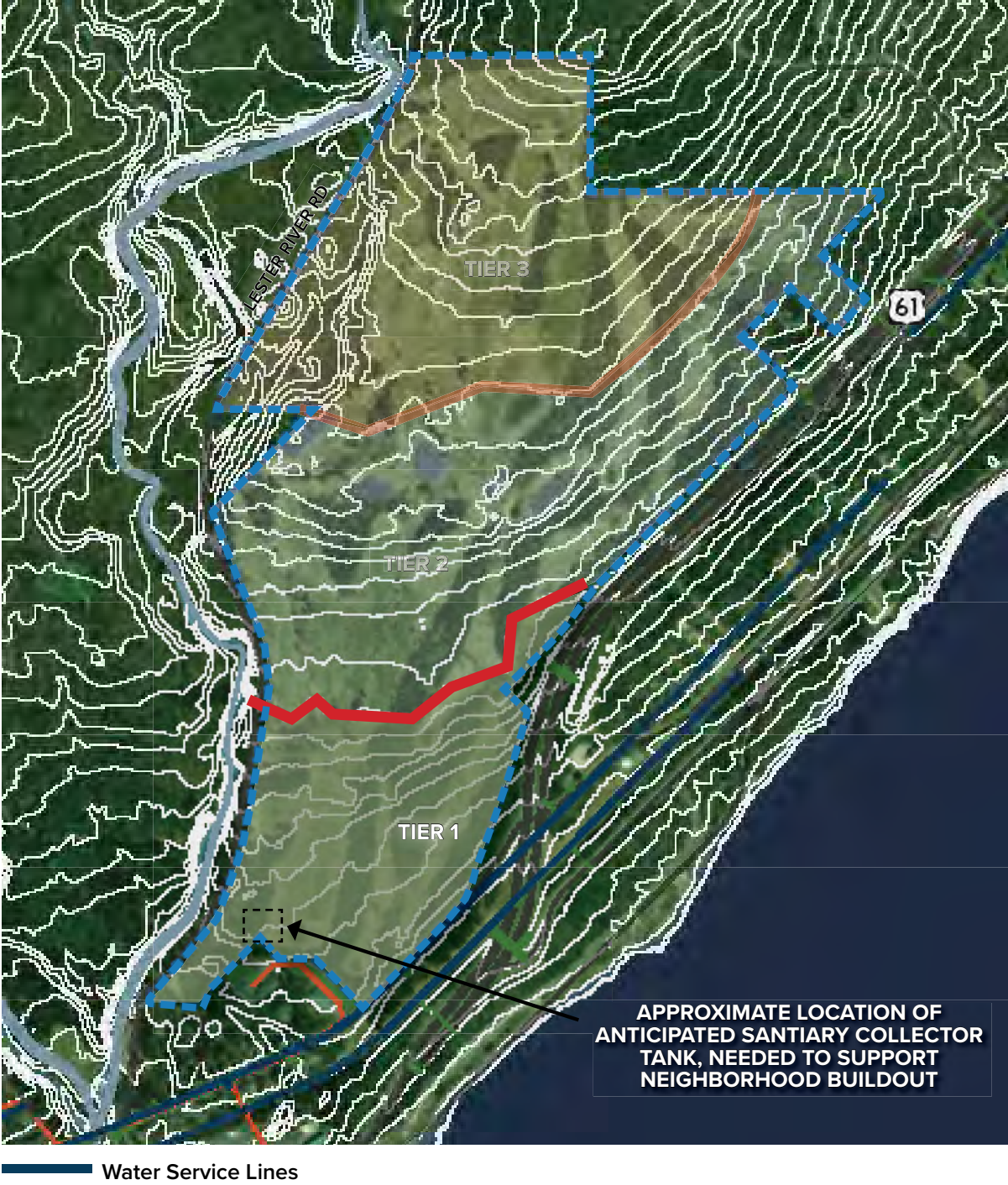
- A** 13 acres along the 760’ elevation are re-guided from Open Space to Neighborhood Mixed-Use

B 2 acres of Low-Density Residential re-guided to Neighborhood Mixed-Use

C 7 acres of Rural-Residential re-guided to Open Space
- D** The City will transfer 22 acres of City-owned land (from the former golf course) to the ownership of the Duluth Economic Development Authority (DEDA).

E The City will then own 207 acres of Open Space land

F DEDA will then own all 63 acres of Neighborhood Mixed-Use land



ALIGNING WITH EXISTING SERVICES

This northern boundary of the neighborhood was heavily informed by both public feedback and alignment with a “Tier 1” area of utility service. This area was determined during the study as approximately encompassing the area in which existing city water pressure could serve the publicly-expressed desired development types and intensity. As such, no substantial upgrades to the city’s existing utility systems is expected in order to support the LPGC vision.

It is anticipated that water pressure will be nearing its pressure limits the closer development is to the northern limits of the neighborhood. Detailed site and engineering design during site build out is expected to determine specific building siting limits and footprints, along with grading opportunities to maximize developable area and pressure capacities. During this time, determinations can be made as to the exact limits of sufficient water pressure.

There may be portions of the neighborhood’s northern edges determined to have insufficient pressure during this technical analysis. If this occurs, there are numerous non-water dependent elements of the neighborhood that could be built in those portions such as parking lots, recreation uses, public art, or even planted areas.

ADDITIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE & REMEDIATION NEEDS

Build out of the site, including any future recreation, will require supportive infrastructure and site preparedness. As described further in the implementation section, getting the site shovel ready and subsequent infrastructure delivery will require proactive planning and creative public and private partnerships as development occurs.



Gas



Internet



Public parking



Power / electrical



Soil remediation (anticipated)



Bed rock removal (anticipated)

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

CONCEPTUAL STREET GRID

The LPGC site is a chance to reconsider the surrounding street network, ensuring a future that supports local, regional, and statewide needs. While site master planning, site geotechnical analysis, and site-specific design will ultimately determine roadway decisions, the LPGC Vision explores a series of alternatives that support a strong mixed-use neighborhood.

In the illustrative plan below, Main Street acts as a connector between Superior Street and a slightly realigned Lester River Road in the near-center of the neighborhood. The intersection with Superior Street offers an attractive location for commercial uses and an activity anchor to Main Street.



ROAD NETWORK ALTERNATIVE 1

Superior Street remains in its current alignment, while Main Street is located within the true center of the neighborhood. This creates a central focal point through the heart of the neighborhood, with a strong viewshed to Lake Superior.



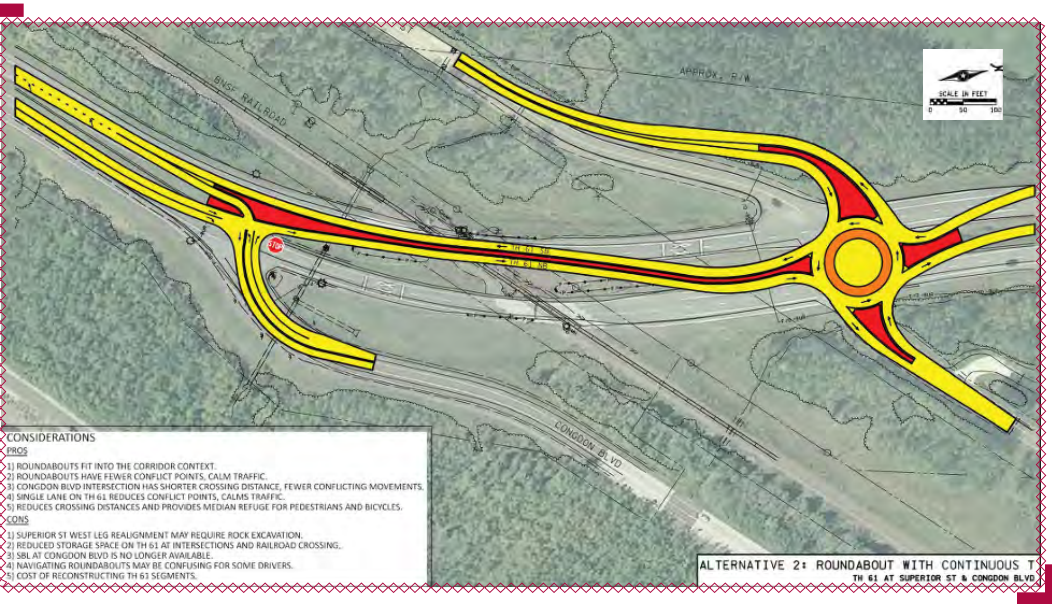
ROAD NETWORK ALTERNATIVE 2*

Superior Street is realigned into the site creating a direct connection to Main Street. Access to the Highway 61 roundabout is redesigned with Main Street as the new leg. This creates strong neighborhood connections, a focal point of activity, and direct access to Highway 61, but would require careful intersection design to accommodate possible truck movements.



ROAD NETWORK ALTERNATIVE 3*

Superior Street is realigned into the site creating a direct connection to Main Street, however is pulled slightly closer to the roundabout to provide some separation with heavy through-traffic. Access to the Highway 61 roundabout is redesigned with Main Street as the new leg. This creates strong neighborhood connections, focal point of activity, and direct access to Highway 61, but would require careful intersection design to accommodate possible truck movements.



MnDOT Roundabout Concept from March 2025 Open House

MNDOT ROUNDABOUT ON HIGHWAY 61

*Realigning Superior Street and connecting Main Street to Highway 61 would create a direct local and regional connection into the neighborhood, and what could be a regional destination for uses further north in undeveloped natural area. It would also support a strong center of activity at the Superior Street / Main Street intersection, while increasing the likelihood of non-residential uses in that area.

However, MnDOT is planning to reconstruct the Highway 61 / Superior Street Intersection in 2030 with the roundabout concept. Any future realignment of Superior Street and modifications to the planned roundabout design would require additional network, intersection, and turn-movement analysis. It would also likely require bedrock removal to grade the roundabout approach from the neighborhood. These studies and modifications would likely come at the cost of the developer/DEDA, and require strong coordination with MnDOT.

DEVELOPMENT TYPES, HEIGHTS, AND VIEWS

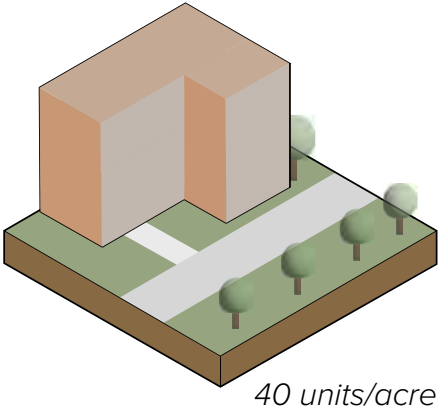
The neighborhood framework provides a number of different ways to arrange height, density, and use types. The illustrative plan below intentionally does not go into great detail to prescribe these outcomes. Rather, it is anticipated that detailed development guidance will be established at future planning and design stages.



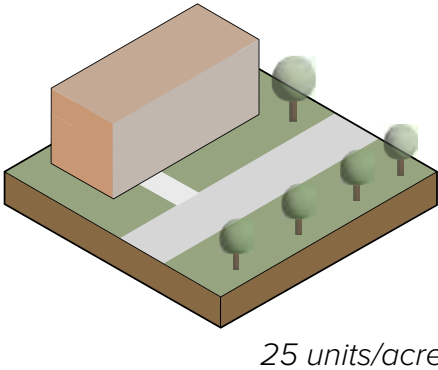
HOUSING TYPE AND DENSITY REFERENCE

The strongest neighborhoods offer a mix of housing, allowing households of all life stages to find a place to call home. Further, diversifying the housing stock and ownership builds in economic resiliency during construction and full buildout.

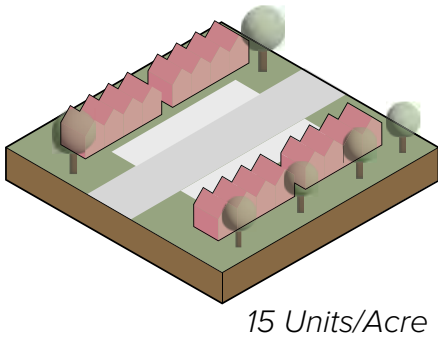
MEDIUM-SCALE APARTMENTS



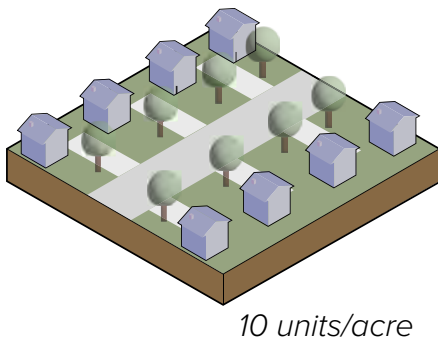
SMALL-SCALE APARTMENTS



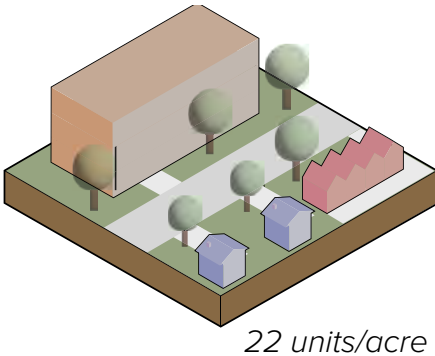
TOWNHOUSES



SMALL-LOT, SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSES

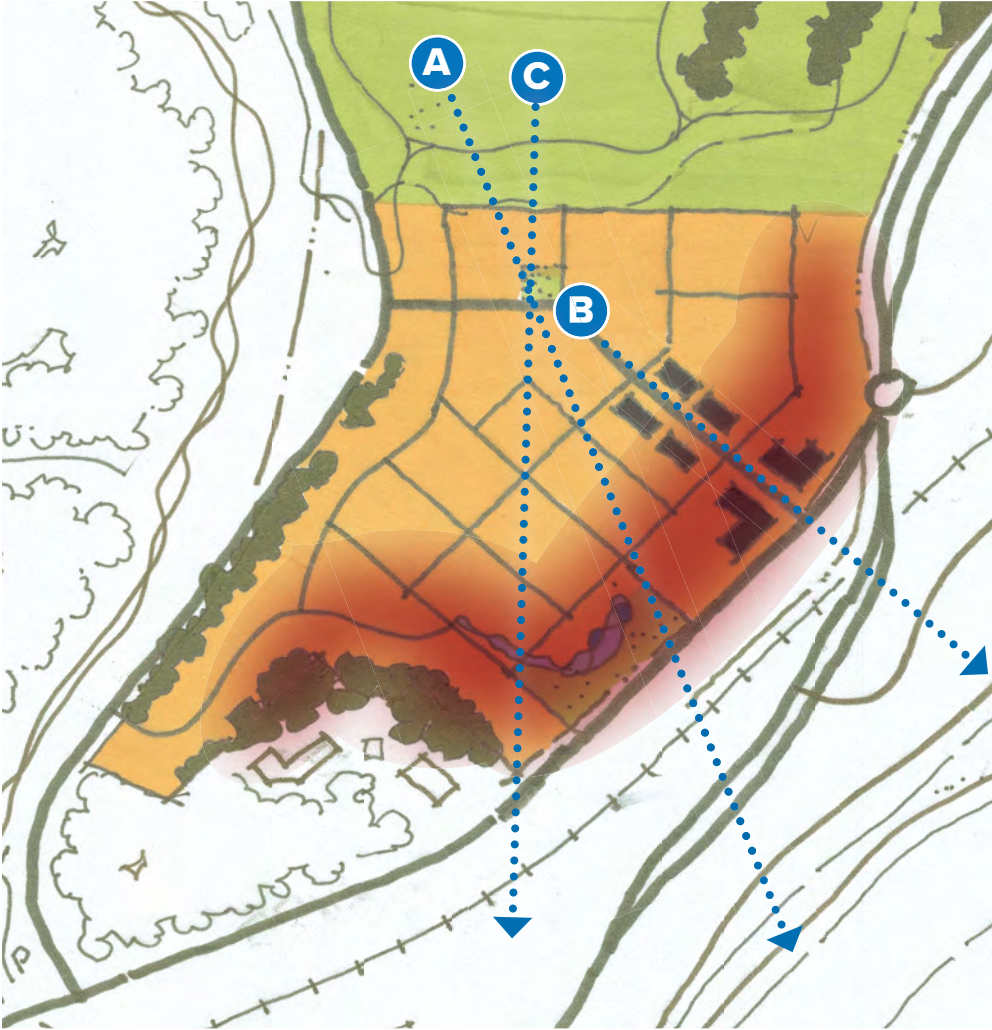


MIXED-USE

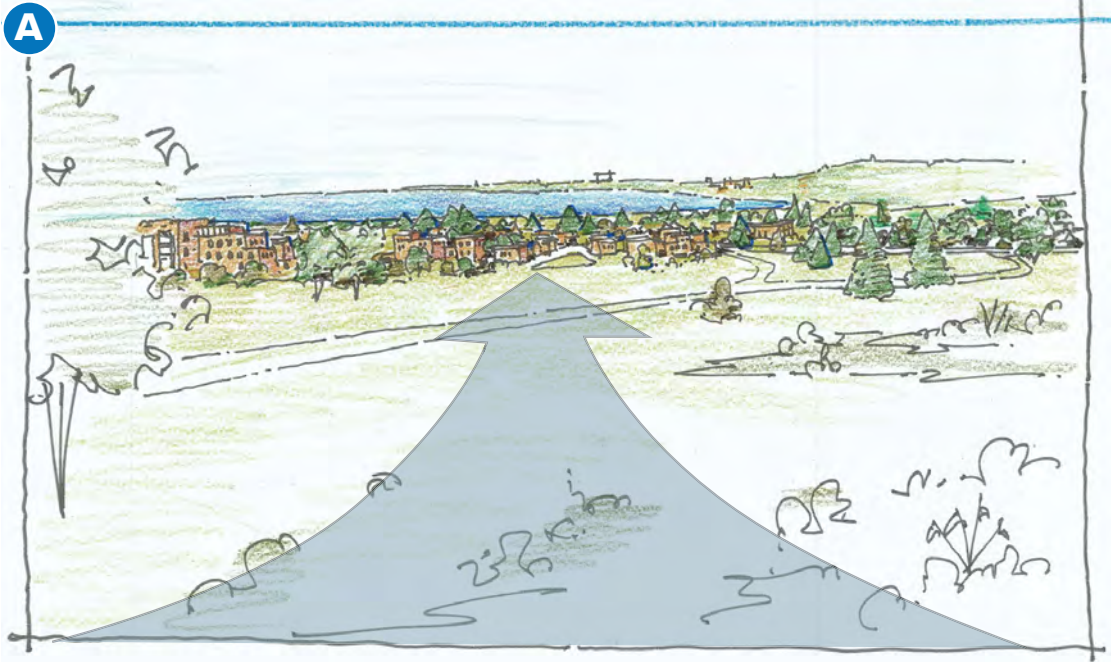


ALIGNING HEIGHTS FOR VIEWS

For the Development Areas, building heights should be right-sized to maximize the opportunities for and the quality of views of Lake Superior. Right-sizing building heights requires accounting for the direction of viewing, the height of the viewer, changes in elevation, and more.



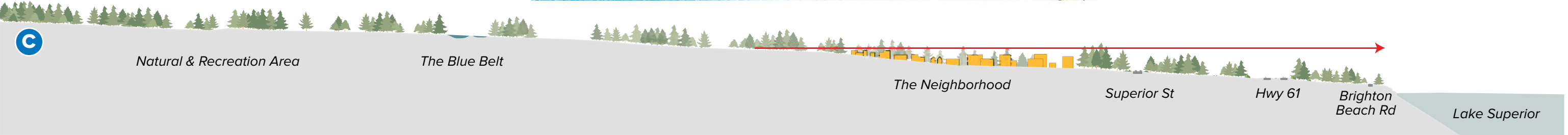
Height concentration area



This illustrative image shows what the future views could look like from up the hill within the undeveloped portion of the site. The sight line begin with the viewers' eye-level, across the neighborhood, and ends at Lake Superior on the horizon. Ideally, building heights will not break sight lines – meaning taller, 4+ story buildings should be concentrated at lower elevations and edges of the neighborhood.



This image shows what the future view could look like the west end of main street within the middle of the neighborhood. The sight line begin with the viewer's eye-level, down the street framed by buildings, and ends at Lake Superior on the horizon. Ideally, the orientation of main street will not break sight lines, but rather maintains a direct view of the lake.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

NATURAL RESOURCES

A majority of the site acreage will remain as (or be restored to) natural landscapes. Natural resource restoration opportunities will be evaluated and planned for during future park planning processes.

Despite its adjacency, the LPGC site is not formally part of the Duluth Natural Area Protection (DNAP), which covers Lester Park, Hawk Ridge, and surrounding areas. While the natural areas of LPGC will not undergo the determination and criteria process related to the DNAP, ensuring it complements the DNAP will be important as future site planning occurs.



NATURAL RESOURCES PLANNING PRINCIPLES



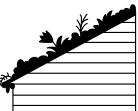
Maintain contiguous open spaces, green corridors, wetlands, and forests to support healthy biodiversity, improve air and water quality, and provide recreational and cultural benefits



Restore resource systems to withstand and adapt to a changing climate, through strategies like plant species selection.



Utilize the Blue Belt to integrate stormwater strategies that replenish groundwater, protect wetlands, and minimize flood risks. Explore additional wetland banking opportunities in the Blue Belt.



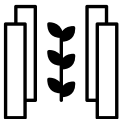
Integrate nature-based design solutions to manage stormwater, reduce heat islands, and improve water quality. Example solutions include green roofs, bioswales, and more.



Prioritize reforestation and restoration efforts on the edges of the site, where they are adjacent to healthy and intact ecosystems.

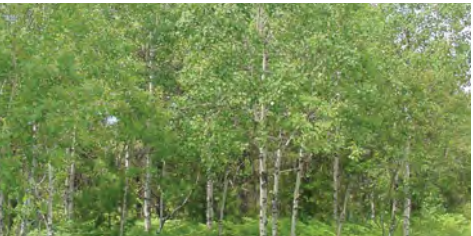


Preserve and celebrate key views across the site of the lake by protecting light touch clearings and view corridors.



Any natural and/or green corridors that extend into the neighborhood should connect directly to neighborhood parks, greenspaces, or public spaces. These connections should be formalized through the establishment of ROW or easements.

PUBLIC-EXPRESSED PRIORITIES FOR NATURAL RESOURCES



Forest Restoration



Climate Resilient Species Planning



Wetland Restoration



Pollinator Habitat



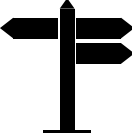
Bird Habitats

RECREATION

New recreational amenities and opportunities at LPGC will contribute to Duluth’s proud identity as a regional and national recreation destination. Specific recreation types and facilities siting will be planned and evaluated during future parks planning efforts. However, any future recreation will connect to new and existing neighborhoods nearby, and offer unique options for users year-round.



RECREATION PLANNING PRINCIPLES

-  Through a park planning process, identify ways to maintain and grow year-round recreation options available to the public.
-  The site is positioned to offer unique recreation opportunities that are either limited, or not available, elsewhere in the city.
-  Any recreation uses that extend into the neighborhood (such as trails) should be formalized through the establishment of rights-of-way or easements.
-  Recreational offerings, such as trails, that can be co-sponsored or co-developed by partner entities could have a home in the site.
-  Recreational offerings complement surrounding natural areas and the neighborhood, and are well connected to nearby parks and open spaces — notably, Lester Park and it’s exceptional offerings.
-  The northern edge of the neighborhood provides direct public access to possible recreation uses throughout the rest of the site, through offerings such as public parking, an outfitter, a trailhead, etc.
-  Recreational types and activities are appropriate to their setting, and accessible to all ages and abilities. For reserve-ahead activities like camping, the program should be self-sustaining and revenue-neutral.
-  As recreation planning occurs, the city and its partners should commit resources necessary to maintain any future recreation offerings.

PUBLIC-EXPRESSED PRIORITIES FOR RECREATION



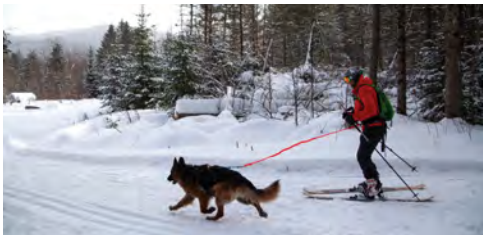
Camping



Disc golf



Off-Leash Dog Park



Skiijoring



Trails for Hiking, Biking, and Skiing



Bike park / pump track

DEVELOPMENT

The new neighborhood LPGC is being introduced into a largely undeveloped area. Along with positive outcomes for housing and tax-base growth, this development presents the City and its partners with an uncommon opportunity to creatively blend development with natural environments and recreation spaces. The new neighborhood here will be walkable and traditionally urban — offering excellent, multi-modal transportation ways and a mix of activities and uses. The neighborhood is anticipated to be primarily residential with commercial uses concentrated along a central main street.



DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PRINCIPLES



Concentrate non-residential uses along a central, highly walkable main street, and near the Superior Street / Highway 61 intersection.



Guide height, including 4- to 5-story apartments, to locations where topography and grade can off-set heights, and where view corridor impacts from the northern natural areas is minimized.



The upper-most portions of the neighborhood will be most conducive to 2- to 3-story buildings, to protect views from the north while maximizing water pressure capacity.



Blend recreation uses such as off street trails, pocket parks, and public green spaces throughout the neighborhood, offering direct connections for residents and visitors.



Require development follow best-practices for migratory flyway building design, such as bird-safe window glazing, limited and shielded night lighting, limited uninterrupted glass facades, and native site landscaping.



Orient the street grid to protect and provide publicly accessible view corridors to Lake Superior.



Recognize the benefits facilitated by mixed-use development patterns, but don't necessarily require a mix of uses in new projects.



The neighborhood can differentiate itself by establishing a commercial and recreation hub — possibly becoming a regional destination that anchors current and future surrounding recreation.

PUBLIC-EXPRESSED PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT



Cluster and co-housing



Small-scale apartments



Modest single-family homes



Townhouses / walkups



Dining



Retail





IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

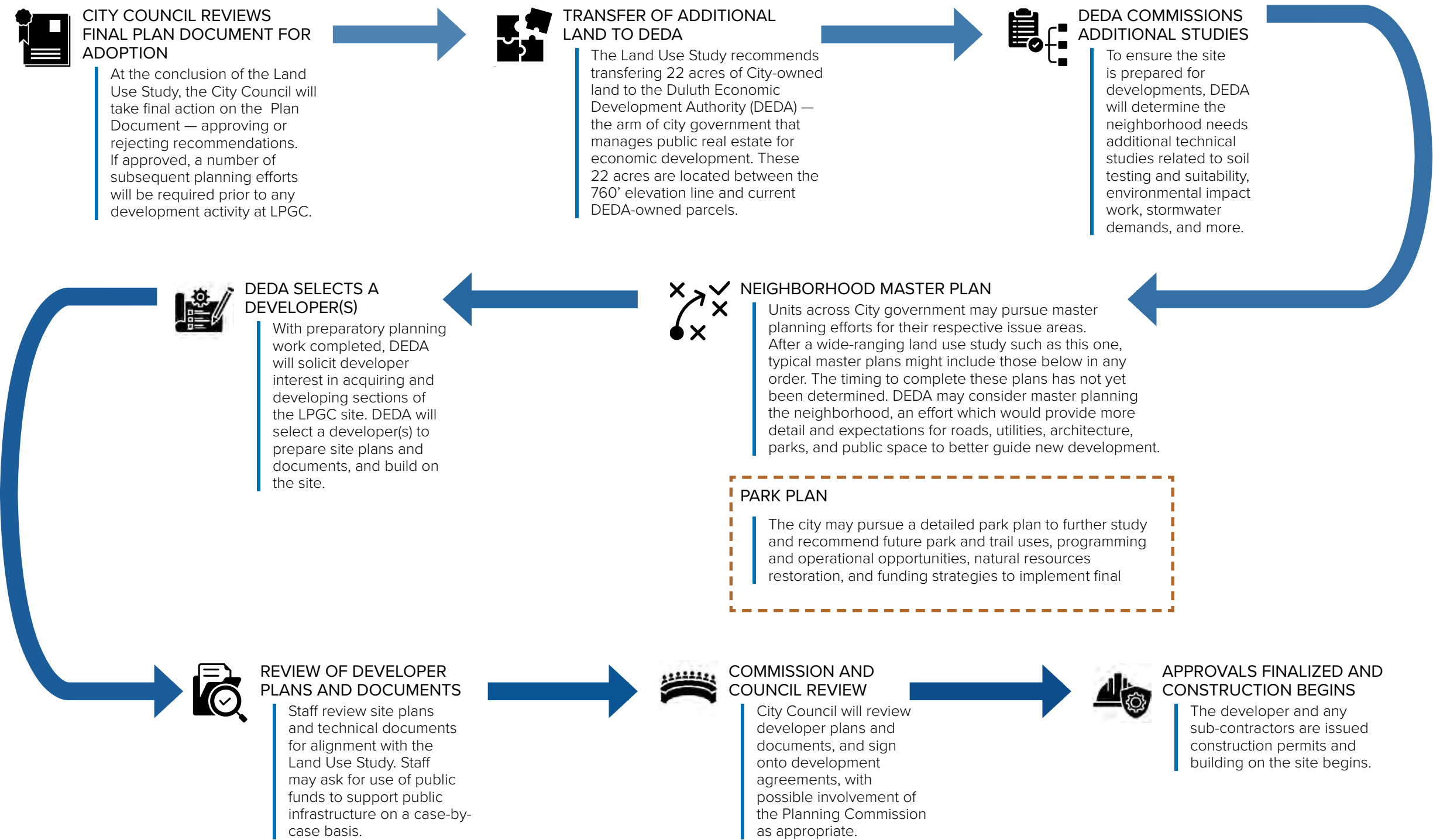
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IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This section translates the plan’s policy recommendations into an implementation program. The tables that follow identify key strategies by topic area, the parties leading or supporting each action, an estimated timeframe, the anticipated level of effort, and additional considerations such as dependencies, partnerships, funding needs, and coordination requirements.

The implementation tables are intended to be updated over time as conditions change, funding becomes available, and projects advance from planning to design and construction. These tasks can also form the basis for future progress updates to the City Council, boards and commissions, and the public, as the City moves forward with implementation.

ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AFTER THE LPGC STUDY



LAND GUIDANCE

Implementation strategy	Action step	Lead entity	Estimated timing	Level of resources	Other considerations
Update the Comprehensive Plan	Complete an update to the future land use map and associated materials in the city's Comprehensive Plan, to ensure compatibility with the LPGC Vision Plan.	City (Planning)	Short-term	Low	Align with plan adoption and any near-term development requests.
	Coordinate with St. Louis County and other jurisdictional partners on land use updates and infrastructure coordination, as necessary.	City (Planning)	Short-term	Low	Align with regional goals and any near-term infrastructure plans
Rezone the LPGC Site	Update city map to apply zone districts that correspond to future land uses as identified in the LPGC Vision Plan on page 48 .	City (Planning)	Short-term	Low	Align with the future land use designations as identified in the LPGC Vision Plan.
Transfer additional lands to DEDA	Transfer via land sale the 22 acres of additional land identified for neighborhood mixed-use to DEDA.	City (Planning), DEDA	Short-term	Medium	A land survey will be required prior to initiating the land transfer. See the Development implementation table for more details on these steps.

TABLE KEY

ESTIMATED TIMING

- Short-term: 0–1 years
- Mid-term: 2–5 years
- Long-term: 5+ year

LEVEL OF RESOURCES (\$ + STAFFING)

- Low: routine staff time
- Medium: cross-department coordination and/or moderate funding
- High: major capital project, new program, or multi-agency initiative



NATURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION

Implementation strategy	Action step	Lead entity	Estimated timing	Level of resources	Other considerations
Commission a park plan for the upper Open Space area	Prepare a park plan for the 207-acre area to include the following elements: - Community-engagement - Environmental conditions assessment - Priority recreation opportunities - Trail connectivity with adjacent neighborhoods, parks, trails - Stormwater management - Natural resources restoration and integration, inclusive of wetlands - Analysis of long-term lease options for recreation-related services/operations - Site maintenance - Sustainable infrastructure - Funding needs and sources	City (PPL, with support from Planning, ED, DEDA, PW)	Mid-term	High	Identify funding for a planning process, include development implementation strategies where feasible, foster collaboration and partnerships to implement plan recommendations.
	Update the Essential Spaces Master Plan to reflect final recommendations of the Park Plan and LUS.	City (PPL)	Mid-term	Low	Update applicable documents, materials, maps, and so forth to reflect recommendations and final implementation outcomes.
Trail coordination and development	Implement recommendations from Park Plan with support from community partners and non-profit organizations	City (PPL, with support from Planning, ED, DEDA, PW)	Long-term	High	Apply trail development standards and integrate new trail segments into city-wide trail system
Natural resources coordination	Implement recommendations from Park Plan with support from natural resources organizations	City (PPL, with support from Planning, ED, DEDA, PW)	Long-term	High	Integrate guidance from Natural Resources Management Program Plan and other applicable plans
	Explore concept of wetland bank within the Blue Belt in conjunction with water resource agencies such as DNR, SWCD, BWSR, and USACE	City (Planning/ED)	Mid-term	Medium	Coordinate with DNR, SWCD, BWSR, and USACE
Sustainability standards	Advance City sustainability goals for infrastructure and public spaces	City (Sustainability Officer)	Ongoing	High	Develop and apply a funding matrix of grant opportunities, rebates, utility programs, etc. to integrate into project scoping

TABLE KEY

ESTIMATED TIMING

- Short-term: 0–1 years
- Mid-term: 2–5 years
- Long-term: 5+ year

LEVEL OF RESOURCES (\$ + STAFFING)

- Low: routine staff time
- Medium: cross-department coordination and/or moderate funding
- High: major capital project, new program, or multi-agency initiative

DEVELOPMENT

Implementation strategy	Action step	Lead entity	Estimated timing	Level of resources	Other considerations
Commission a site master plan of the neighborhood (optional)	If the option is elected, the master plan for the neighborhood portion of the LPGC site should include these elements (at minimum): – Urban Design and Development Plan – Public Space Plan – Transportation Plan – Utility Plan – Stormwater Management Plan – Natural Resource Integration – Recreation Integration – Preliminary ROW and easement location identifications – Staging and funding plan, and – Project subsidy guidance	DEDA, with City (Planning/ED, Parks, PW/Engineering)	Short-Term	Medium	A neighborhood master plan, if elected, may occur before, during, or after a park master planning effort. These plans should be complementary and compatible, and include content that addresses operations and maintenance planning and partnerships.
Assess and commission environmental studies, such as a Phase I/II, EAW or AUAR	Determine required environmental studies and assessments, and commission them as appropriate during the Master Plan	DEDA, City (Planning)	Mid-Term	Medium	Coordinate with development staging as necessary, especially for cost-share opportunities.
Transportation network	Coordinate with St. Louis County and MnDOT on access, intersection, and roadway improvements	City (Engineering) with County / MnDOT	Ongoing	High	Agency lead times can be long; align with county/state capital programming cycles.
	Identify and advance specific roadway projects as defined.	City (Engineering) with County / MnDOT (as applicable)	Ongoing	High	Confirm right-of-way needs, environmental considerations, and cost-sharing agreements.
	Coordinate with DTA on potential transit connections to the area, including triggers, timing, and staging.	City (Planning / Engineering) with DTA	Ongoing	Medium	Service planning should reflect development phasing and ridership potential; consider first-/last-mile connections.
Water supply	Complete a system capacity assessment to determine ability to support the development vision.	City (Utilities / Engineering)	Short-Term	Medium	Foundational for utility sizing and phasing; informs cost estimates and potential interim solutions.
	Assist developers to identify and secure funding for their water utilities projects.	City (Utilities / Engineering)	Ongoing	High	Coordinate with roadway construction to minimize rework; clarify developer cost participation expectations and timing.

TABLE KEY

ESTIMATED TIMING

- Short-term: 0–1 years
- Mid-term: 2–5 years
- Long-term: 5+ year

LEVEL OF RESOURCES (\$ + STAFFING)

- Low: routine staff time
- Medium: cross-department coordination and/or moderate funding
- High: major capital project, new program, or multi-agency initiative

DEVELOPMENT

Implementation strategy	Action step	Lead entity	Estimated timing	Level of resources	Other considerations
Wastewater	Complete a system capacity assessment to determine ability to support the development vision.	City (Utilities / Engineering)	Short-Term	Medium	Foundational for sizing and phasing; informs cost estimates and potential interim solutions.
	Fund, design, permit, and install primary sewer lines and lift stations consistent with development staging.	City (Utilities / Engineering)	Ongoing	High	Coordinate with roadway/ grading; may require easements and environmental permitting; clarify developer cost participation expectations and timing.
Stormwater	Commission a subregional watershed assessment of the neighborhood to determine anticipated stormwater needs	City (Utilities / Engineering)	Short-Term	High	Coordinate with roadway/ grading; may require easements and environmental permitting.
	Fund, design, permit, and install — in coordination with development — primary sewer lines and lift stations consistent with development staging.	City (Utilities / Engineering)	Ongoing	High	Coordinate with roadway/ grading; may require easements and environmental permitting.
Commission and/or support supplemental assessments	Lead and/or support cultural, historic, archaeological, soil, and natural resource assessments as necessary, through the development process	City (Planning) with developers / consultants	As needed	Medium	May be triggered by specific sites or funding sources; coordinate with state/federal requirements as applicable.
Solicit development partners	Create and implement a development solicitation process (RFP/LOI, etc.).	DEDA, with City (ED / Legal/Planning)	Short–Mid	High	Utilize legal/procurement support; ensure evaluation criteria align with LPGC Vision Plan goals.
	Negotiate developer agreements and define development review process for selected developer(s).	DEDA, with City (ED / Legal/Planning)	Mid-term	High	Dependent on solicitation outcomes; include phasing, infrastructure responsibilities, and community benefits.
Subdivision and platting	Officially map major planned rights-of-way (ROW) and primary utility easements.	City (Engineering) with Planning	Short-term	Medium	Align with staging and infrastructure planning from the (potential) neighborhood master plan; may affect development review and negotiations.
	Complete survey, platting, and subdivision for initial development phases.	Property owner / developer with City review	Short–Mid	Medium	Dependent on market readiness, land assembly, and infrastructure availability; may proceed in phases.

TABLE KEY

ESTIMATED TIMING

- Short-term: 0–1 years
- Mid-term: 2–5 years
- Long-term: 5+ year

LEVEL OF RESOURCES (\$ + STAFFING)

- Low: routine staff time
- Medium: cross-department coordination and/or moderate funding
- High: major capital project, new program, or multi-agency initiative

MISCELLANEOUS

Implementation strategy	Action step	Lead entity	Estimated timing	Level of resources	Other considerations
Planning and programming	Update city sewer, water supply, and surface water plans consistent with the area vision	City (Utilities/ Engineering)	Mid-term	Medium	Coordinate with regional requirements and development phasing; ensure assumptions match land use program.
	Update the city CIP and longer-term budget outlook to include any identified public-led infrastructure improvements.	City (Engineering/ Finance / PPL)	Short–Mid	Medium	Link to staging timeline; identify cost participation and external funding opportunities.
	Develop a capital funding plan to assist developers with financing utility infrastructure improvements (timing, grants, external resources).	City (Finance/ Engineering)	Short–Mid	High	Maintain a grant readiness package; coordinate with bonding and utility rate planning as needed.
Internal City/DEDA coordination	Establish means and methods of regular updates to city leadership and decision makers, ensuring milestones updates and decision making needs are proactively and clearly communicated.	DEDA, with City (Planning/ED	Ongoing	Low	Alignment with other regular city department communication updates, and budget cycles, and external funding opportunities
External public and partner updates	Establish means and methods of regular updates to the public and key external partners, ensuring milestones updates and opportunities for public involvement are proactively and clearly communicated.	DEDA, with City (Planning/ED	Ongoing	Low	Alignment with other regular city external communications, press releases, and project milestones that may include public involvement and/or comment

TABLE KEY

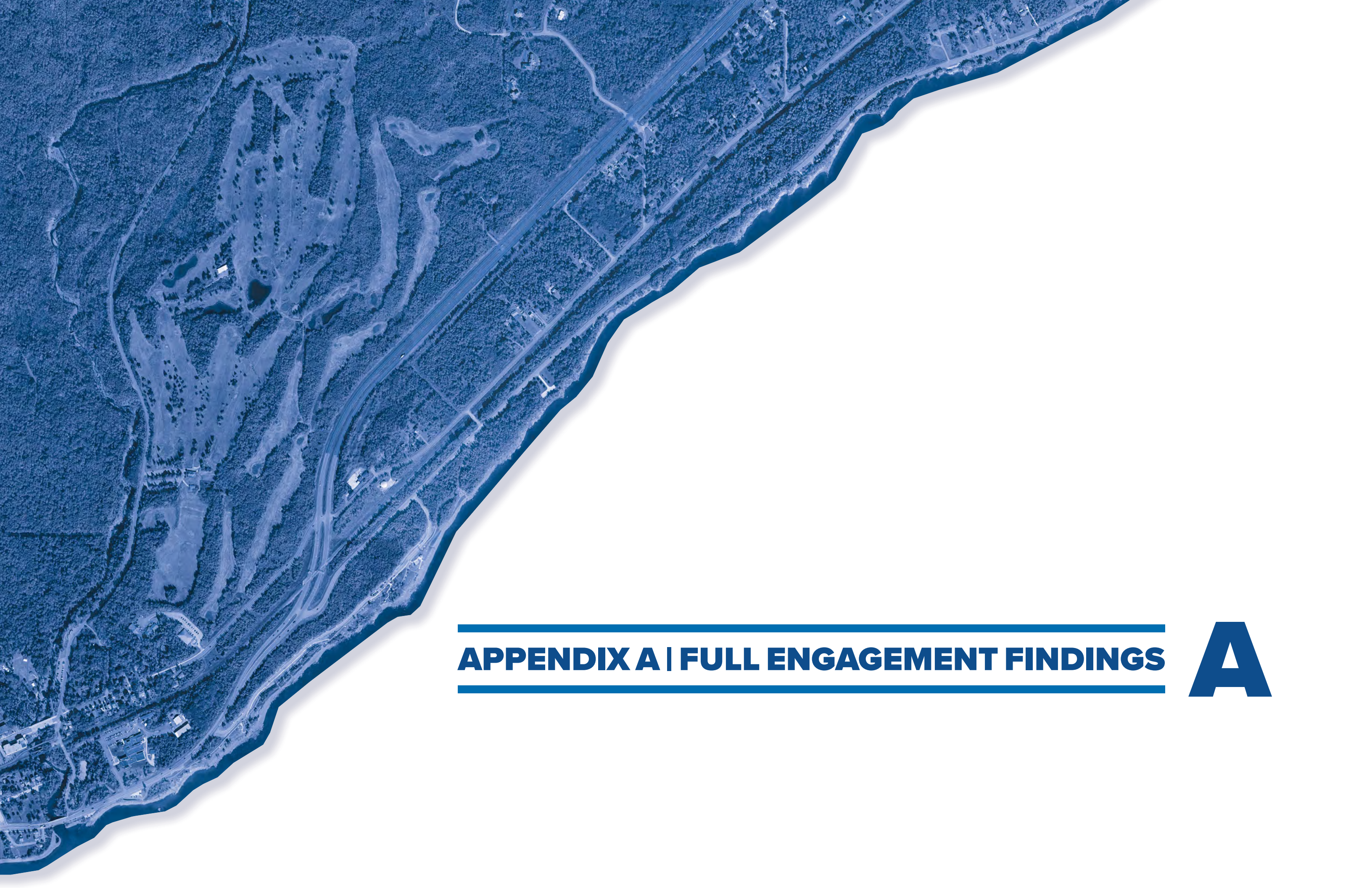
ESTIMATED TIMING

- Short-term: 0–2 years
- Mid-term: 3–7 years
- Long-term: 8+ year

LEVEL OF RESOURCES (\$ + STAFFING)

- Low: routine staff time
- Medium: cross-department coordination and/or moderate funding
- High: major capital project, new program, or multi-agency initiative





APPENDIX A | FULL ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

A

LPGC Survey Summary

Executive Summary

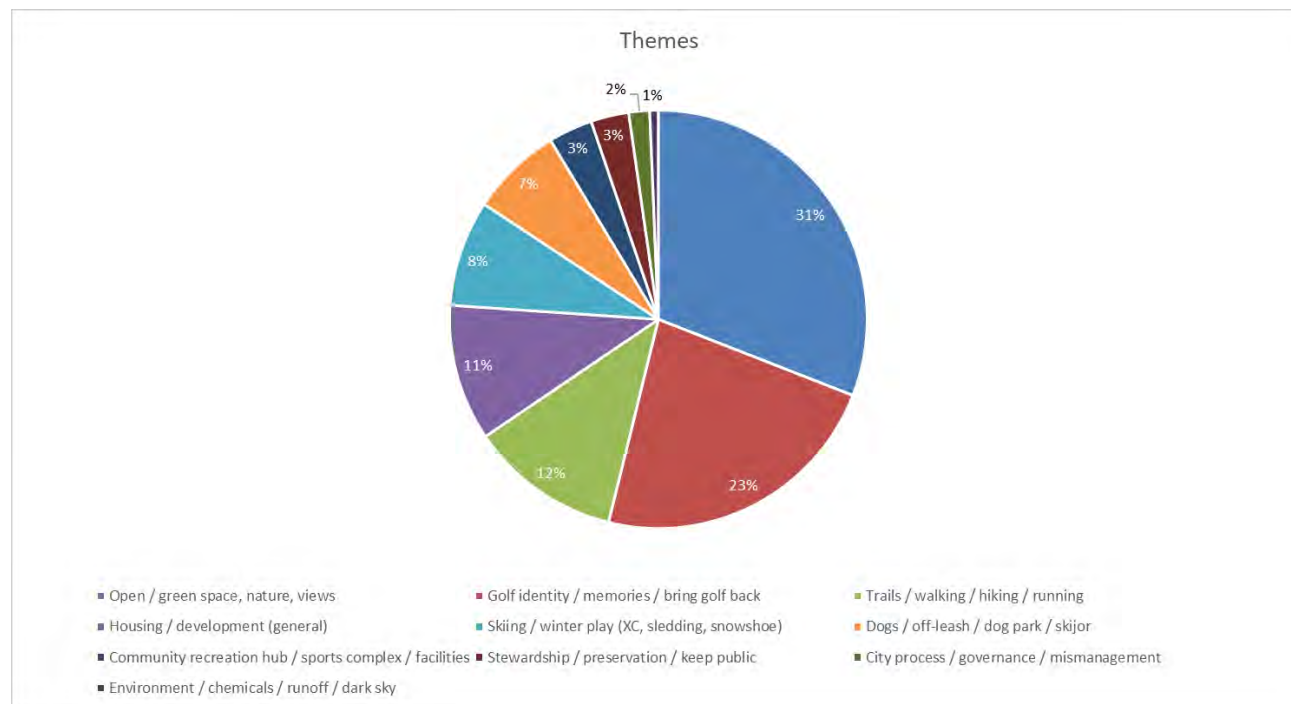
The community sees the Lester Park site mainly as a natural place that people already use every day. A 17-question survey conducted from February 12 to March 8, 2026, with 1,256 respondents reinforces this perspective. Most mentions focus on open space, wooded areas, lake views, and quiet places to walk, ski, skijor, and spend time with dogs. People want these experiences to remain the heart of the site moving forward. At the same time, many people still connect the land to its golf history and would like to see golf return in any form.

When people talk about what they are excited about, outdoor recreation stands out by an exceptionally large margin. Walking trails, winter use, disc golf, and open fields all show strong interest. People are also open to mixed ideas that combine housing with trails or open space, but on a much smaller scale. On the other hand, feelings toward housing alone and commercial development are mostly negative for nearly all the options evaluated.

When people talk about what makes them cautious, the clearest worry is losing public green space and changing the character of the land. Participants see this site as a rare opportunity within the city and do not want it overbuilt or privatized. Concerns about dense or expensive housing, traffic, school impacts, or rushed decision-making drive this fear. Overall, people are asking for a thoughtful and careful planning process that protects the land, keeps public access strong, and responds to community values.

Question 1

When you think about the Lester Park Golf Course, what comes to mind?



Themes

Open / Green Space, Nature, Views: Many people think of this site first as a large, beautiful natural space. They describe the open fields, rolling hills, trees, wildlife, and especially the views of Lake Superior as what makes the place special. For many, it feels peaceful, restorative, and unlike other spaces in the city because of its size and quiet. This sense of nature and openness is the strongest and most repeated impression in responses.

Representative quotes: “Open space for people, recreation and animals. Beautiful lake views for everyone.” and “A great and beautiful open space that I value and use often.”

Golf Identity / Memories / Bring Golf Back: Golf remains a major part of how many respondents see the site. People shared strong memories of learning the game here, raising their kids here, or enjoying Lake 9 and the views that came with it. Some feel sadness that the course closed, while others are frustrated that it was never reopened or reinvested in.

Representative quotes: “A historic golf course that never should have closed.” and “My favorite golf course! Miss it badly. Selected my living location to be close to it. Then it closed the next year!”

Trails / Walking / Hiking / Running: Many people associate the land with everyday walking and running, quiet strolling, and the freedom of moving through an open landscape rather than on narrow trails. They describe it as one of the easiest, closest places to get outside

for a simple walk with family, friends, or a dog. This everyday recreation identity is a major part of why people value the site.

Representative quotes: “Walking and hiking all seasons with my dog. Gorgeous views. Peacefulness and getting away from city busy-ness.” “Open quiet space, great for walking.”

Housing / Development (General): Some respondents see the site as a rare opportunity for needed housing, especially in a where land is limited. They talk about the potential for mixed use, new neighborhoods, and increasing the tax base. Others are more cautious and feel the site could support housing only if it fits the landscape and preserves access to nature. The general theme is that development is possible, but opinions vary widely.

Representative quotes: “Prime location for thoughtful development in a city with limited geographic options.” and “Opportunity for an increase in housing with a beautiful green feel!”

Skiing / Winter Play (XC, Sledding, Snowshoe): Winter activities are a big part of how people experience the site. Many describe cross-country skiing, skijoring, snowshoeing, and sledding as some of the best ways to enjoy the land. For some, it is the only place in the city where certain winter activities are allowed with dogs. Winter use gives the land a year-round identity that many want to keep.

Dogs / Off-Leash / Dog Park / Skijor: This site functions as the largest informal off-leash area in Duluth, and many respondents say it is their favorite place to bring their dogs. People value the ability to roam, see far ahead, and avoid conflicts found in small, fenced dog parks. For many, off-leash use is the main reason they visit the area. It is one of the strongest everyday-use themes across all comments.

Representative quotes: “It’s my favorite place to bring my dog off leash. It’s big enough she can run.” “A great spot to walk my dog with peaceful views and off-leash freedom.”

Community Recreation Hub / Sports Complex / Facilities: A portion of respondents imagine the site becoming a more structured recreation center with things like disc golf, rinks, event spaces, community buildings, playgrounds, or mixed recreation areas. These ideas vary widely but share the belief that the site could offer more organized activities for families and youth. This theme is smaller than nature or golf but still appears consistently.

Representative quotes: “Could be used as a great space for community gathering, restaurants, parks, playground.” “A place for golf, recreation and housing. A multi-use area that maintains historical roots yet looks to the future.”

Stewardship / Preservation / Keep Public: People focused on the importance of keeping this land public and protected. They talk about its long history as public parkland, its ecological importance, and the idea that once public land is sold or developed, it can never be recovered. This theme often overlaps with concerns about access, equity, and the value of large public green space within the city.

Representative quotes: “Important space in our community that should remain in public hands.” “A beautiful piece of public land that should be preserved for future generations.”

City Process / Governance / Mismanagement: A set of responses express frustration with the city’s handling of the site over the years. These comments mention mismanagement of the golf course, too many studies, slow decision-making, and a lack of clear direction. While smaller than other themes, it represents a meaningful level of distrust or fatigue with the process.

Representative quotes: “A waste of public funds spent on multiple, redundant studies and processes.” “Mismanaged public property that has sat idle for too long.”

Environment / Chemicals / Runoff / Dark Sky: A smaller but specific group of respondents connects the site with environmental concerns. They mention water quality, wildlife habitat, the effects of past golf chemicals, the importance of migratory bird areas, and the value of dark-sky conditions for stargazing. These responses show awareness of the site’s ecological role beyond recreation.

Representative quotes: “Watching the aurora. It’s my favorite in-city spot to stargaze and catch the northern lights.” “Unique habitat for migratory birds and part of an important watershed.”

Unique or less-common suggestions:

- (23) Disc golf
- (6) Campground concepts
- A state-park connection was proposed once: “Make into state park with Lester Park and Brighton Beach,”
- Event pavilion or rentable event space
- “Super Rink / indoor turf”
- Community gardens, sometimes bundled with other amenities such as trails and picnic shelters.
- A public pool
- Community land trust or cooperative housing models
- Botanical elements
- A faith-oriented youth facility

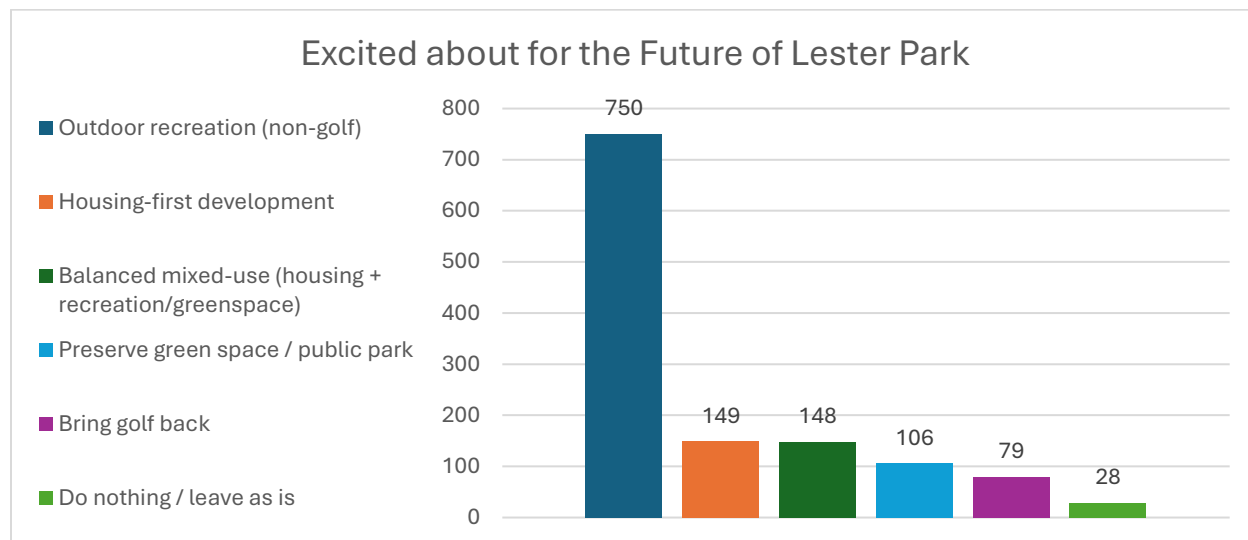
Precedents people mentioned:

- Hermantown’s YMCA & Ice Arena
- Hawks Ridge
- Amity Creek and Seven Bridges Road
- Enger Tower Park, Enger Park, and Enger Park Golf Course together were cited four times—comparisons on management, access, and basic site care.

- Disc-golf exemplars included Mont du Lac Blue Ribbon Pines in the Twin Cities metro, Kensington Metropark in Michigan, and “The Preserve” designed by Cale Leiviska in Clearwater, MN.
- An Urban mixed-use precedent was named explicitly: Biltmore Park Town Square (Asheville, NC)

Question 2a

When thinking about the future of the site, what, if anything, are you excited about?



Overview: People are most excited about keeping the site a beautiful outdoor place where they can walk, hike, ski, and enjoy nature throughout the year. They also look forward to improved trails, open views, and a safe off-leash dog area that supports the way people already use the land. Many are excited about the chance to protect wildlife and natural spaces while making the site easier and more welcoming for everyone to enjoy.

Outdoor recreation (non-golf): This is by far the largest category. Most respondents want the site to remain a major year-round recreation area with activities that are free or low-cost and accessible to all ages. Top desires include expanded walking trails, hiking, skiing and ski-joring, general winter use, sledding, mountain biking, disc golf, and especially a formal off-leash dog area. The common theme is that people already use the land this way and want it to be improved, not replaced. People described this area as one of the few large open spaces in Duluth where recreation feels “easy,” uncrowded, and close to nature.

Representative quotes: “Hiking, walking, xc skiing” “Quiet, rolling hills, lake views, wildlife, beginner friendly ski trails, long walks, golden hour, wildflowers.”

Balanced mixed-use: This group wants both housing and preserved public space, not one or the other. These responses explicitly call for a thoughtful mix. That includes new homes along with trails, open space, and sometimes a smaller golf aspect. Many emphasize “best

of both worlds,” the need for intentional planning, and the desire to protect views, habitat, and public access while still expanding the housing supply. The sentiment here supports development, but carefully designed, walkable, and connected to nature.

Representative quotes: “A golf course with homes, townhomes. A community on a golf course with different amenities” “Nature, open space, public, a place for locals to enjoy. Multi-use, versatile.”

Housing-first development: This group focuses primarily on addressing Duluth’s housing shortage, strengthening the tax base, and using this rare parcel inside city limits for residential construction. Mentions include market-rate housing, middle-income units, senior housing, and efficient land use. A small group explicitly oppose golf or single-use recreation on fiscal and ecological grounds. The key frame is “the city needs housing more than anything else,” and this parcel is an opportunity to meet demand.

Representative quotes: “An available space for new development.” “Closed course. Extremely valuable space could help drive tax revenue and provide important housing within our city limits.

Preserve green space / public park: These respondents prioritize protection of the land itself. They want the property to stay natural, public, open, and preserved, with minimal or light-touch improvements such as modest trails or habitat restoration. Concerns include loss of wildlife areas, irreplaceable views, water quality, and supporting Duluth’s identity as a city with abundant natural spaces. Several warn against overdevelopment or stress the rarity of such large public green space within city limits.

Representative quotes: “Important space in our community that should remain in public hands” “I’d like to keep it in its natural state with some trails.”

Bring Golf Back: Supporters want some form of golf—often a full 18 holes, sometimes a 9-hole layout—restored to the site. Rationales include honoring the course’s legacy, providing affordable public golf on the east side, youth golf programs, social value, and the belief that Duluth should have more than one public course. Others match golf with winter use, wanting a year-round facility with skiing in the off-season.

Representative quotes: “reopen the golf course already” “Keeping Nine or Eighteen holes for golf.”

Leave as is: A small but distinct group explicitly says “nothing,” “leave it alone,” “keep it as is.” They value the current open, lightly managed state and see any redevelopment, housing, golf, or otherwise, harmful. Many in this category simply prefer the land untouched or minimally maintained by the city.

Representative quotes: “Beautiful open green space, the epitome and uniqueness of the city of Duluth. ‘Leave it alone’” “Nothing much. The fewer golf courses that exist the better. They take up way too many resources and are only accessible to those who can afford it.”

Other patterns that stood out

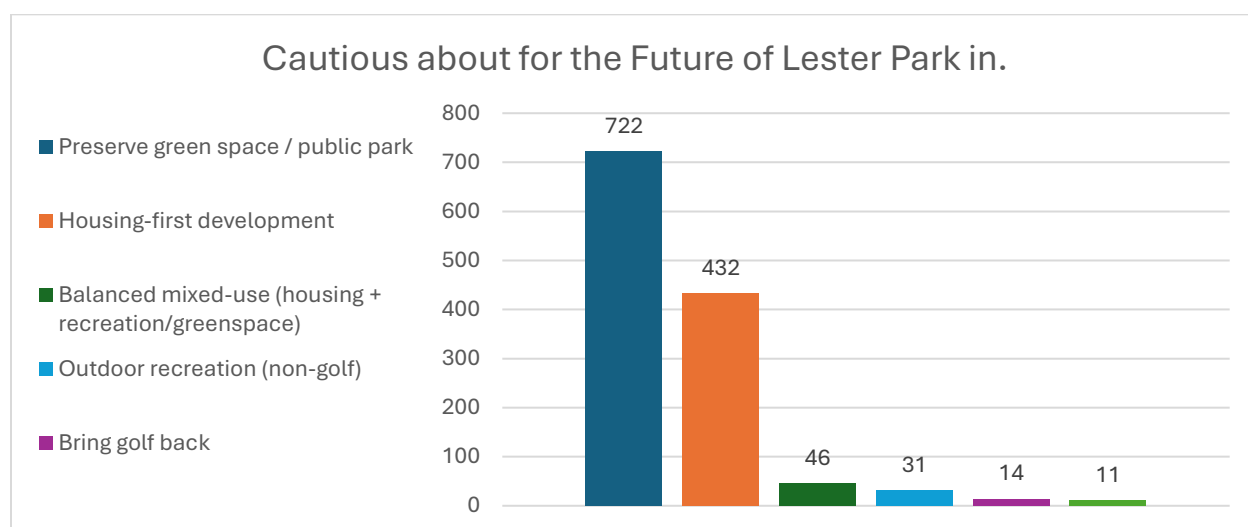
- Disc golf popularity.
- Off-leash dog use is effectively an existing program. Dozens of comments note that the site already functions as Duluth’s largest de-facto off-leash area. People strongly value the

wide-open sightlines and low-conflict conditions. They fear losing this if the site is developed.

- Winter recreation is a core expectation.
- Cross-country skiing, skijoring, snowshoeing, sledding, and general winter activity appear constantly.
- The views matter, respondents describe the views of Lake Superior as a major public asset.
- transparent, balanced, fiscally responsible plan that respects the land and community voice.

Question 2b

When thinking about the future of the site, what, if anything, are you cautious about?



Overview: Most cautions concentrate on potential loss of public green space and the risks of housing that is unaffordable, ill-fitting, or privatizes access. A smaller flags process risks (inaction, rushed trail work) and the possibility that golf is excluded entirely. This page captures the main caution themes, counts, and two representative quotes per category.

Preserve green space / public park: This is the dominant caution: once public green space is sold or built over, the loss of habitat, views, and unrestricted access is irreversible. Respondents worry about monetization and privatization of a civic asset, urging conservation as a long-term investment in community health and identity. They want decisions that treat the site’s landscape value as a first-order constraint, not an afterthought.

Representative quotes: “The idea of private companies being given carte blanche to develop this housing and then either price gouging potential residents or pulling a bait and switch to run it as a boutique hotel or the like.” “Loss of open space, unnecessary development. Monetization”

Housing-first development: The largest set of cautions centers on housing that is unaffordable, ill-fitting to the site, or privatizes access through short-term rentals or gated enclaves. People flag downstream impacts—traffic, school capacity, utilities—and

skepticism about promises of “affordable” units that later shift upscale. There is a stress that design, density, and stewardship should hold the same weight as raw unit counts if the goal is to meet local need.

Representative quotes: “Using the property more for dog-walking, skiing etc. which are all available across the street. Also, don't use it for low-cost housing on such a beautiful site.” “Housing not spaced out well. Not preserving green spaces”

Balanced mixed-use (housing + recreation/greenspace): People who want a genuine blend are cautious about extremes: luxury-only housing, all-commercial concepts, or single-use ideas that crowd out public access. They repeatedly ask for a careful mix that protects views and landscape character while adding homes and small-scale amenities. The shared worry is that without discipline, a “mix” becomes a label rather than a real, well-balanced plan.

Representative quotes: “Expensive/ luxury homes, golf course, entirely commercial space” “Creating the right mix of housing and other amenities.”

Outdoor recreation (non-golf): Respondents are wary of overbuilding or duplicating trails and facilities that already exist nearby, especially if rushed project timelines compromise design or ecological care. Several caution that unmanaged change could degrade the low-key, informal use patterns people value today. The preference is to be deliberate and avoid “recreation for recreation’s sake” if it undermines what already works.

Representative quotes: “Using the property more for dog-walking, skiing etc. which are all available across the street. Also, don't use it for low-cost housing on such a beautiful site.” “Rushed development of any kind, including of bike trails.”

Bring golf back: A smaller contingent caution against plans that exclude golf entirely, asking to keep at least nine holes. Their concern is losing a long-standing public amenity without replacing its year-round, multi-use potential. They also worry that ignoring golf forecloses a balanced solution too soon.

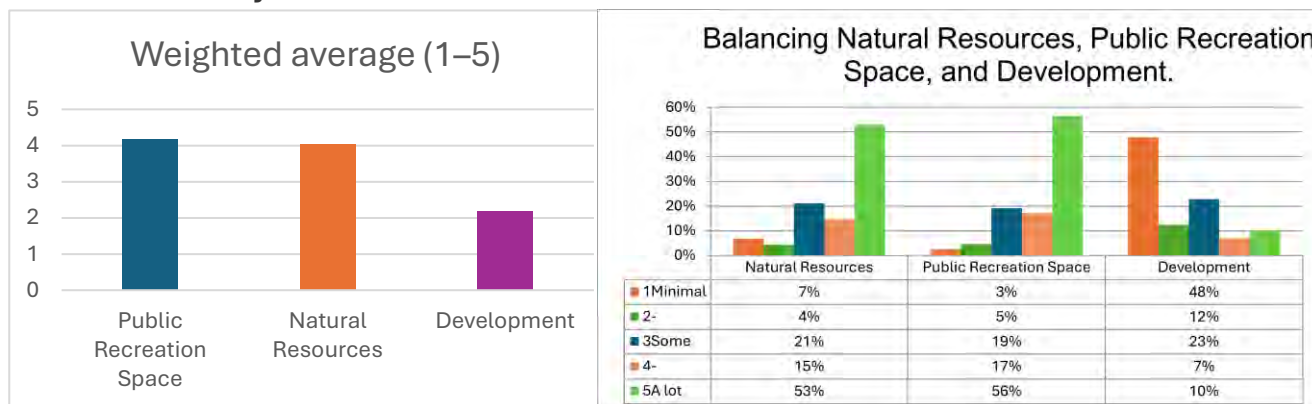
Representative quotes: “Plans to keep golf for a very small group of golfers for a very short window of use” “Anything that is not putting at least 18 holes of golf back.”

Leave as is: A handful of respondents warn about the opposite risk: extended inaction that leaves the site stagnant or functioning as an unmanaged dog-park-by-default. They want to avoid paralysis, lawsuits, or process churn that keeps the land in limbo. The caution is that “no decision” can still produce negative, long-lasting outcomes.

Representative quotes: “the site being developed, especially into large, expensive homes that do nothing to help the housing shortage in Duluth” “Nothing happening at all. Sitting there being a dog park as it is now.”

Question 3

A critical directive for this study is to develop concepts that explore balancing natural resources, public recreation space, and development. For you personally, how much of each would you want in the future of the Site?

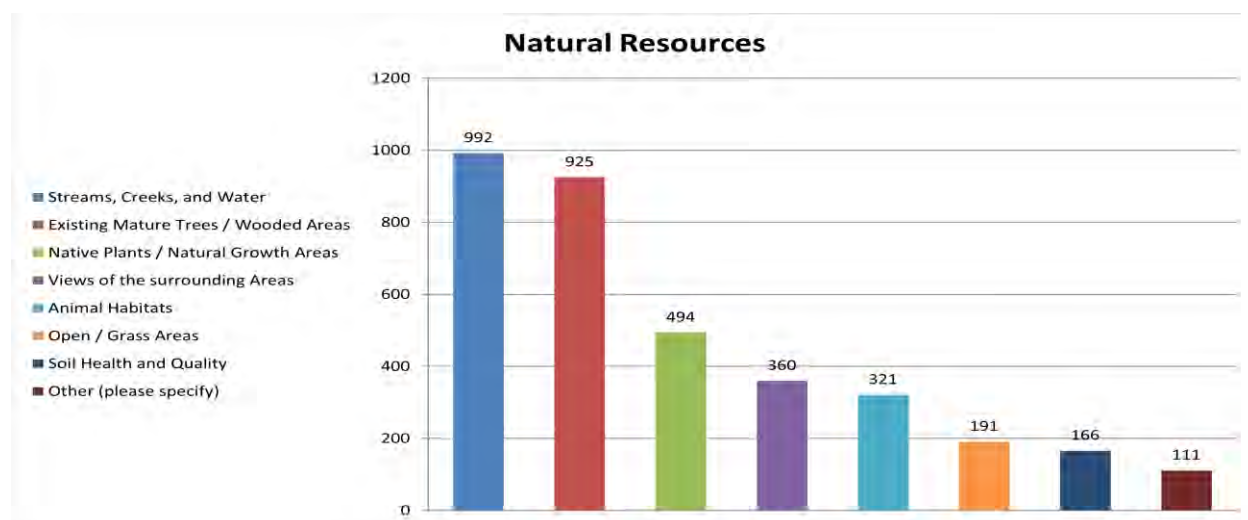


Most people want the future of the site to focus on nature and outdoor recreation, with strong interest in protecting natural resources like forests, wetlands, and wildlife habitats, along with providing good trails and places to enjoy the outdoors. Only a small number of respondents want a large amount of development, and many prefer very little or none at all. A smaller group is open to a moderate mix of nature, recreation, and some development, but the overall trend is clear. The community's personal preference leans heavily toward keeping the site mostly natural, supporting outdoor activities, and allowing limited development.

Question 4

When thinking about the site today, what are natural resources that should be protected and/or enhanced? (Select your top 3 options)

Most respondents focused on protecting water and trees, with water resources and mature wooded areas standing out as top priorities. Interest in native plants followed, while views, wildlife habitat, open areas, and soil health appeared less often. Many open-ended comments pushed back on choosing only three options, noting that these natural features are interconnected and should be protected together. Others highlighted specific priorities such as keeping golf, protecting ecosystems, preserving views and dark skies, maintaining public access and trails, or supporting more housing.



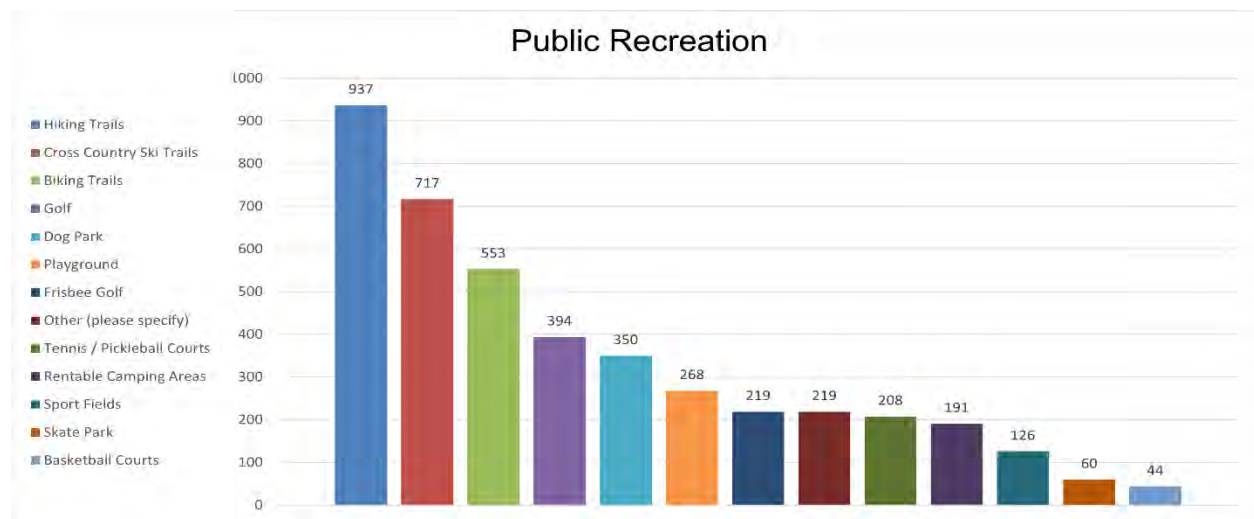
Others:

Category	Count
All-of-the-above / Interconnected	42
Bring golf back / Keep golf course	30
Protect ecosystems (water, wildlife, soils, biodiversity)	20
Preserve views / quiet / dark skies	8
Recreation access (trails, dogs, public access)	8
Housing-first / maximize development	6

Question 5

The Study will be exploring different types of year-round public recreation uses that may be part of the final vision, while balancing city costs and maintenance needs. What types of public recreation would you want to see on the site?

Most respondents prioritized trail-based recreation, with hiking, cross-country skiing, and biking emerging as the most common choices. Golf, dog areas, playgrounds, and other activities-specific facilities appeared less frequently. In open-ended comments, many people expressed interest in low-impact, nature-oriented uses such as gardens, quiet open space, and educational or interpretive areas, while others highlighted the value of community facilities, indoor recreation, dog-friendly spaces, and winter sports. A recurring theme was concern about balancing recreation with preserving the natural character of the area, as well as ongoing tension between adding new amenities, retaining golf, expanding trail networks, or prioritizing housing needs.



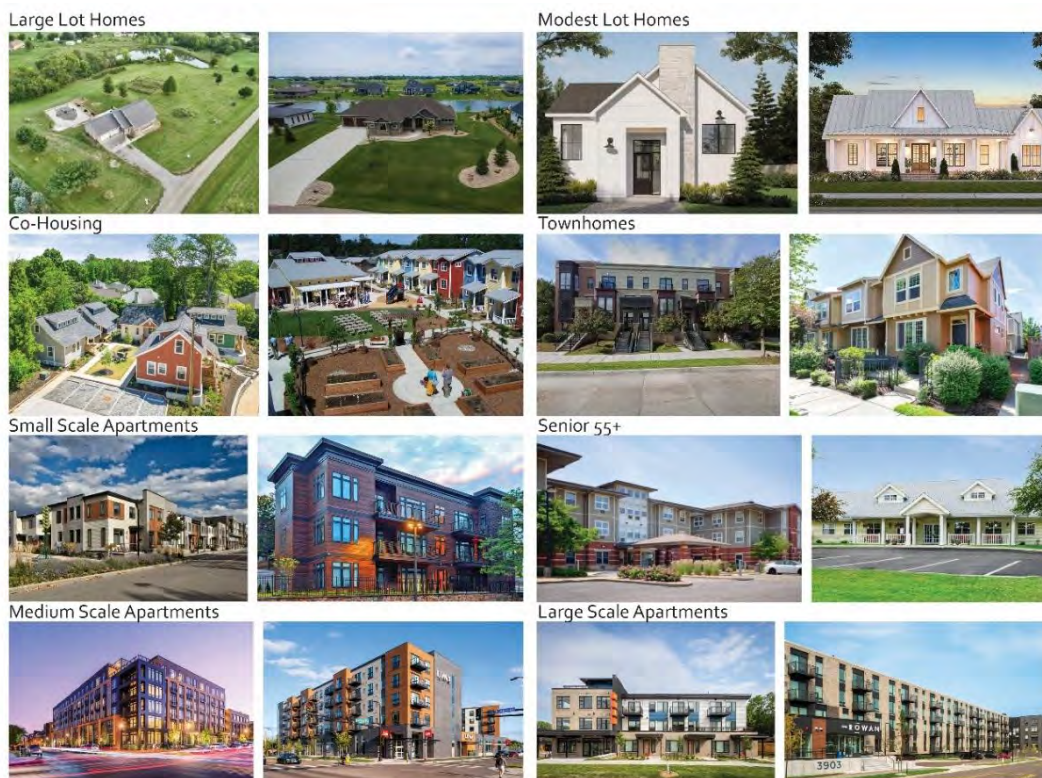
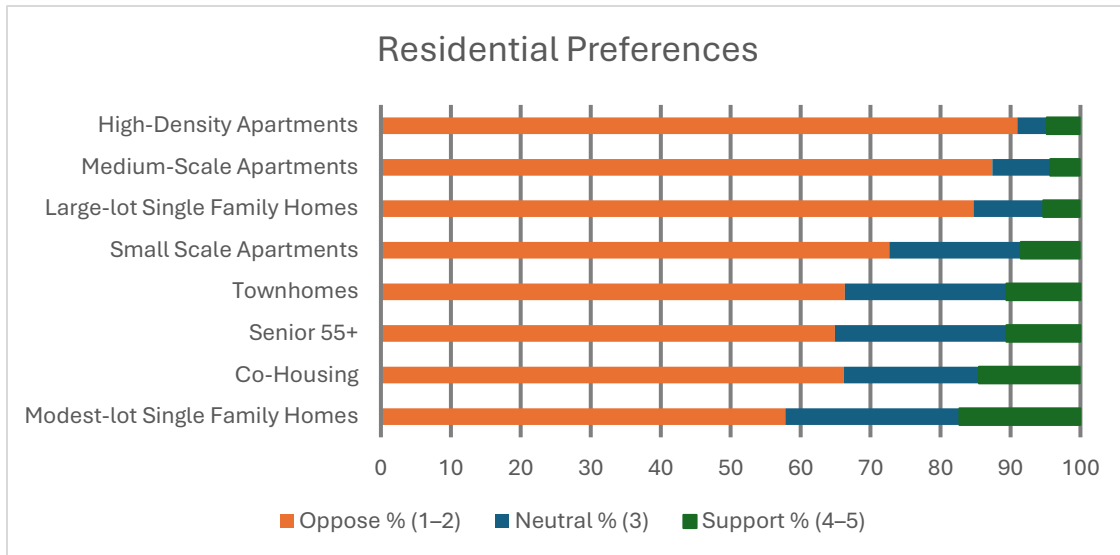
Others:

Category	Count
Passive nature, gardens & education	44
Trails & mobility (walking/biking/winter/motorized/equestrian)	33
Community & indoor recreation facilities	20
Ice sports	17
Dog-friendly / off-leash areas	12
Aquatics	11
Field & court sports	10
Camping	
Benches	
Hunting	
Perfect way it is we have enough park space.	

Question 6 – 13 (Residential Preference)

Residential: When thinking about residential uses — places for people to live in, what types of housing would you want to see

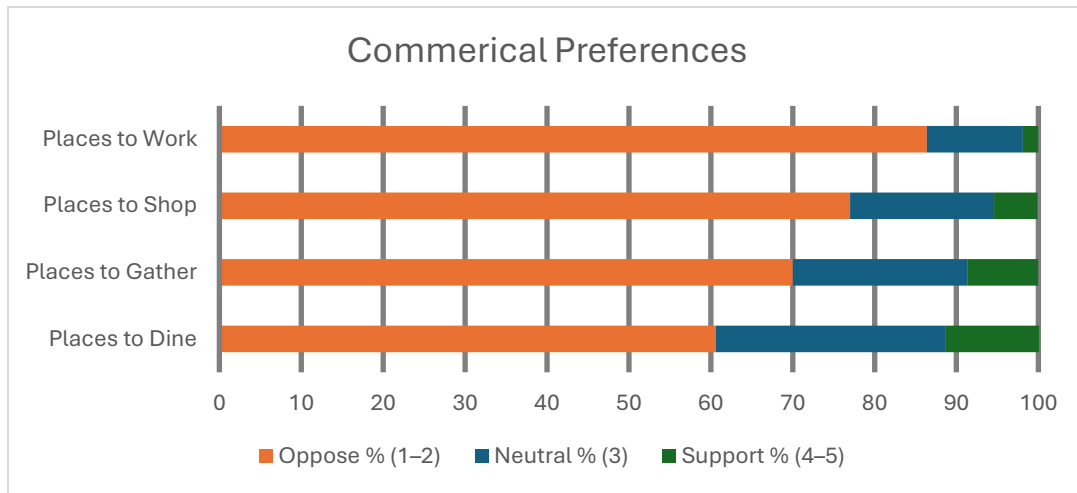
Most survey respondents showed a clear preference for no housing on the Lester Park site, with opposition outweighing support across every residential type. Still, three types performed relatively better than others. Modest-lot single-family homes, co-housing, and senior (55+) housing saw the highest (though still limited) levels of interest compared with all other options.



Question 14 – 17

Commercial: When thinking about commercial uses — places for people to work, shop, dine, and gather — what types of places would you want to see here?

Most respondents suggested they do not want commercial development on this site, with strong opposition across all categories, especially for places to work and shop, which received the lowest levels of support. Two commercial uses performed relatively better than others, with places to dine and places to gather showing the highest (though still limited) interest compared with the rest of the commercial options.



Dine



Gather



Shop



Work



LPGC Open House Summary

Executive Summary

March 2, 2026, 5:00 p.m. Open House demonstrated a strong level of community engagement, with participants sharing their perspectives on the future of Lester Park Golf Course. An overwhelming emphasis on natural preservation, outdoor recreation, and maintaining the land as an accessible, quiet, ecologically rich public space. While support for housing exists, it is cautious, small-scale, and highly conditional, and a fair number of participants oppose residential development altogether. Commercial development receives the least support by a significant margin. The strongest unifying themes are rewilding, habitat restoration, dark sky protection, trails, and the continuation of year-round recreation activities that the community already enjoys.

The Site Today

Residents describe the site today as an active and well-loved natural landscape where people regularly walk, ski, hike, bike, run, snowshoe, stargaze, observe wildlife, enjoy views of Lake Superior, and gather informally with friends, family, and dogs. People value the peacefulness, the vistas, the feeling of being immersed in nature, and the ability to access a wild and open space so close to town. The site is viewed not as underutilized land, but as a frequently used neighborhood nature area that serves as an essential recreational and emotional resource for the community.

Preference Boards

Across the Nature Preservation and Outdoor Recreation sections, community members express dedicated support for keeping the land ecologically healthy and publicly accessible. Nature preservation receives remarkably high engagement, with priorities like wetland restoration, climate-resilient species, pollinator support, forest and bird habitat, scenic views, and watershed protection standing out. Comments emphasize rewilding, dark skies, native planting, and the importance of maintaining a continuous natural corridor connected to the Lester park and Amity creek.

Outdoor recreation also scores very highly, with hiking, skiing, natural play areas, dog recreation, and accessible trail networks receiving the most support. People value open space, connection to existing trails, and recreational opportunities that keep the land quiet, natural, and lightly developed. Together, these findings show a community that sees the site primarily as a natural area for year-round recreation, restoration, and ecological health.

In contrast, Residential Development and Commercial Development receive far less support. Residential comments are deeply mixed: while support for modest, small-scale, or senior-friendly exists, others oppose any new housing on this land, often citing existing vacancies in Duluth and the belief that this site is too valuable as nature to develop. Commercial development receives the lowest support of any category by a significant margin. Most residents do not want new retail, offices, or restaurants on the site and

instead prefer that commercial activity remains in the existing Lakeside business district. Many express fear of losing natural character, harming local businesses, or inviting large developers.

In 20 Years

In twenty years, people imagine Lester Park Golf Course as a peaceful and naturally rich place where quiet, beauty, and ecological health define the experience. Many describe a setting centered on open green space, forest, trail networks, wildlife habitat, and views of Lake Superior. They imagine a place to walk, hike, ski, snowshoe, picnic, watch birds, sit in silence, see the stars, enjoy northern lights, and find refuge from the fast pace of the city. Several comments describe it as a destination green space that protects dark skies, watershed function, and natural character while remaining welcoming to all ages and all backgrounds. Several participants simply hope it remains undeveloped, free of houses and commercial uses, and protected for future generations who will value the decision to keep an irreplaceable public landscape intact.

Other visions describe a community-oriented landscape that blends trails, gathering places, recreation, and ecological stewardship in a way that keeps nature at the center. Suggestions like small campfire areas for storytelling, places to gather with friends and family, and safe spaces for quiet reflection also came up on the boards. A smaller number imagine integrated housing or an eighteen-hole golf course, though always with nature and trails woven into the setting. Some describe the future site as a place for food growing, cultural connection, or Indigenous stewardship. Across all viewpoints, the shared idea is a place where people can experience nature in meaningful ways and where the land remains a source of beauty, health, and community life.

Lester Park Stories

The stories people shared about Lester Park paint a vivid picture of a place woven deeply into daily life, memory, and community identity, serving as everything from a childhood racecourse to a winter skiing haven, a dog-walking paradise, and a restorative refuge during the pandemic. Residents describe cross-country races, night skiing, skijoring, foraging for chokecherries, watching the northern lights, and experiencing the “pure joy of dogs being DOGS” across the site’s meadows and forests, emphasizing how rare it is to have such wide-open, wild-feeling land within the city. One Participant recounted visiting the area every day since 2020, calling it their “covid sanctuary,” while others note that they have no golf story at all because the forest and trails, not the former course, are what shaped their relationship to the place. Together, the stories reveal how emotionally significant, ecologically rich, and irreplaceable this landscape has become to the community.

What Should Happen at LPGC

Comments about the future of LPGC overwhelmingly prioritize ecological restoration, rewilding, watershed protection, and dark-sky preservation. Many participants emphasize maintaining the site as a natural, lightly stewarded landscape that protects habitats, supports native species, and honors the ecological connections to the Lester and Amity

river systems. Residents describe a desire to preserve ponds, forests, meadows, bedrock shrublands, and wildlife corridors, along with restoring trails and expanding opportunities for quiet recreation. There is consistent emphasis on keeping the area open, green, and minimally developed, with sentiment ranging from cautious interest in limited improvements to strong, repeated calls for leaving the land “as is” to ensure that once-lost natural character is not gone forever.

Ideas for community use center on nature-based gathering spaces like campfire circles, small shelters, accessible trail networks, stargazing spots, and places for storytelling, cultural sharing, and rest. Food sovereignty also emerges as a meaningful theme, with proposals for community gardens, urban farms, native food forests, and local growing initiatives. Opinions on housing vary, with some supporting only modest, small-scale, or senior-oriented development, while many oppose any residential construction at all until Duluth addresses existing vacancies. Residents also raise governance concerns, emphasizing transparency, respect for previous city commitments, and reluctance toward large developers or commercial ventures. Together, these perspectives envision LPGC as a restorative landscape where ecological health, community connection, and cultural stewardship shape the future.

OPEN HOUSE BOARD COMMENTS

Site Hydrology

- “Water has a memory” I’ve Walked up & down LPGC all year long since 2020. I do Believe every spring I’ve noticed water on this orange arrow region

The Site today

- “passive” is a poor word choice – others enjoying outdoor recreation or simply enjoying being out in nature

City wide Housing Demands

- I support thoughtfully
- What does “underutilized” mean – who defines
 - – agreed what is underutilized”
 - -This is a frequently utilized neighborhood nature spot

How do you use the site today?

- XC Skiing/Skiing (15)
- Ski-Jor (5)
- Close to town

- Only place in town you are allowed to xc ski with your dog
- Nordic backcountry skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Snowshoe (3)
- Sledding
- Winter recreation
- Walking (5)
- Hiking (12)
- Running (2)
- running
- Biking
- Dog walking (10)
- On leash only for safety
- Off leash dog walking/running (4)
 - Happening right now and is well self “policed” for “bad” dog owners
- Enjoying nature (2)
- Exploring the outdoors
- nature walks (alone & w/ friends)
- Observing Nature
- Enjoying the peacefulness
- Enjoying other walkers
- Enjoying the Vistas
- Enjoying View! (2)
- Stargaze (3)
- Near the parking lot
- Northern light
- It is a beautiful place that is re-wilding!
- Kids free roam and explore
- Campfires for songs, storytelling, language sharing
- Birdwatching (2)
- Owl watching
- Chokecherry picking
- My use was taken away! GOLF! 18 with all other proposals is achievable
- Favorite Place since Covid began in 2020.

Nature Preservation

Natural Resource	Vote Count
Wetland Restoration	33
Climate Resilient Species Planning	30

Pollinators	29
Bird Habitats	25
Forest Preservation	25
Scenic View Protection	23
Unique Species Habitats	11
Habitat Boxes	7
Integrated Stormwater Management	5
Total:	188

Comments:/Others

- All of the Above (2)
- Skys as dark as possible
- Incorporate nature plants, shrubs + trees
- Lester River watershed preservation
- Endangered species conservation
- Restoring the land to its natural state
- Create a buffer to protect the river watershed – restoration project
- Prescribed fire and grazing for restoration

Outdoor Recreation

Recreation	Vote Count
Hiking Trails	55
Natural play and Gathering Spaces	44
Cross Country Skiing	43
Off Leash Dog Park	28
Bike Trails	25
Golf based Activities	14
Structure/Shelters Gathering Space	13
Sports Court	5
Outdoor Climbing Wall	3
Disk Golf	1
Playground	1
Total:	232

Comments:/Others

- Adaptive Universal Design Nature Trails
- Dark-Sky Observing (2)
- This city is so behind on open space for dogs to run free. Downtown MSP has a larger, more natural dog park than Duluth!!! LPGC is a perfect opportunity for this, Skiers, Hikers, Dogs, Can co-exist
- Absolutely no golf. City has a centrally located course at Enger. Any golf at Lester competes with City's course at Enger that carries significant debt.
- Golf – 18 holes (2)
- No pickle ball – horrible for nature and light pollution
- Open space Dog Run
- Pickle ball or tennis courts – none near by
- Nature preschool
- Putting pitch
- Strong need for paved, gravel extended trails for bikes, strollers, wheelchairs etc.
- Connect to Lester/Amity trails – need a safe crossing
- Preserve some space as natural area for plants/ animals

Residential Development

Development	Vote Count
Cottage Court Style	23
Modest-lot, Single Family Homes	16
Townhomes	16
Small-Scale Apartments	9
Senior (55)+ Housing	8
High Density Apartments	3
Large-Lot, Single Family Homes	2
Medium-Scale Apartments	1
Total:	78

Comments/Other:

- No residential development at all until all empty bldgs. In east/west Duluth have been refurbished or demolished + reliability for housing. (3)
- No residential development!
- Duluth has too many vacant homes, fill those first don't build more
- Please leave the golf course land alone. No one is making more land We want nature – "its" what Duluth is. Build the affordable housing on the Miller Hill Mall land. The mall is dying and it's a good housing location. (3 dots with it)
- The land is more valuable than housing, if anything could be turned into a part of a campground for tourists.
- Not too much hard surface around housing
- How about a hostel for hiker/biker/skiers
- 2022 document approved by city council said land would be "protected parkland" after golf course closure. Better be parkland, if not that then high-density apartments for the housing we claim we need.
- Bring Back Golf (2)
- Center housing downtown not destroy green spaces.
- I would rather the city put effort into renewing downtown Duluth before working in LPGC
- Senior Single level townhomes
- Suspect housing is a given- Like to see some senior aging in places residence like patio homes or small scale 2-4 residence townhomes – dislike classic "over 55" apt. housing.
- Small Scale Town homes for seniors and shared community space
- Duluth needs housing for retirees + those who want to downsize. Be creative- single level townhomes with small yards to encourage seniors to sell family homes to make them available for young families. Not luxury but affordable to the middle class.
- A good mix of single housing, mostly single family but some townhomes style. NO apartments, some senior type, only active style townhomes
- 4-6 plex style with ownership
- Missing Middle Housing
- Mixed use housing
- Affordable housing with transit access
- Community Land Trust! – Keep it Affordable + maintain the equity
- All types of housing can be done along- Lake "nine" superior street and along edge of Golf Course 18
- Tired of term "Affordable housing" What does it mean? Income Level? What?
- No Airbnb or vacation rentals

Commercial Development

Development

Vote Count

Gather – Outdoor Shelter	28
Gather – Gallery	7
Dine - Restaurant	6
Dine - Coffee	4
Shop – Grocery Co-op 1	1
Gather - Mercantile	0
Shop - Apparel	0
Shop – Grocery Co-op 2	0
Work – Coworking	0
Work – Office 1	0
Work – Office 2	0
Total:	46

Comments/Other:

- **None (21)**
- A Branch Library
- We have plenty of retail
- Book Store
- Baquet Facilities
 - Golf tournament
 - Weddings
 - Retirement parties
 - Christmas parties
- No shops, No Commercial, No Workplaces
- Wait 5 years to have area firmly established
- 2022 document approved by conical said it would remain parkland
- Upscale developments shown are not pleasing - prefer area to be left “wild”
- Prefer to channel towards existing business district in lakeside
- We have what we need in lakeside – grocery store, hardware, post office gas station, coffee shops, retail – lets support them
- Worried that any commercial development will pouch business from east superior street, let promote and develop east superior street (2)
- Do not sell to big business – keep community organic, wild spaces

- Free to low-cost community gathering space
- Free third spaces
- Land is to limited
- City funded community gathering space (2)

In 20 years, LPGC is a place to...

- Live, work, gather (all multigenerational in a place integrated with nature)
- Green space no development or golf
- Enjoy the natural beauty of Duluth – enjoy the outdoors
- Place of refuge for people and all other relatives
- Destination green space
- See the lake view and enjoy the quiet
- silence
- find quiet
- Be a peaceful spot to visit – no houses, no business, no distractions
- A place not for the rich but for the people
- Give the land back to the indigenous people of Turtle island
- Gather with friends and family, and hike, watch the sunset, picnic
- Enjoy unstructured open space, see stars and the northern lights, provide Duluth with desperately needed off leash dog trails
- Enjoy nature
- Enjoy nature in a myriad of non-motorized way: walk, ski, play, be with kids, picnic, birdwatch, meditate... all within a short walk, bike, or drive from your home outside LPGC and close to a thriving commercial district on superior street (got a second)
- hike (2)
- Walk (2)
- Bike
- Ski
- Snowshoe (2)
- Provide abundance of nature, outdoor recreation
- Visit for a day for hiking, birding (2), Visit in evening to see stars
- Still watch birds
- Campground
- Have campfire + Tell stories
- Grow Food – Food Sovereignty for Lakeside
- Preserve dark sky, protect the river and watershed

- Protect dark skies vegetated areas, quit refuge, wildlife habitat, build towards the city center & develop already impacted areas.
- Golf – 18 holes
- All of the above can happen.....Along with Golf
- Enjoy community in a well planned neighborhood with lots of trails and recreations
- Remember how foresight we were when we didn't hand over a unique, irreplaceable public space to some idiot glad-handing developer (who was going to bait- and switch to build worthless luxury condos anyway")

What's Your Lester Park Golf Story?

- Xc running races
- Highschool, Middle school + college cross country running races
- Xc skiing
- Night skiing!
- Beautiful skinning and views of the lake
- Snow showing in winter
- Skijoring with our dog + family
- Walks/hike
- Walked from Glenwood through park to play
- Hike, mountain bike (and I live on the west side of town)
- Hiking in summer
- Hiking/walking 1-2-3 miles/day since 2020 in all seasons. This started out as our "covid sanctuary" – me, my husband + our dog <3
- Climbing trees and exploring
- Dog walks in the snow with the lakeview
- The pure joy of dogs being DOGS
- No golf course story, bc we aren't allowed there – our forest & trails are our home.
- One of the few truly wide-open meadows in Duluth!
- Watching the northern lights and stargazing (3)
- Kite flying in the spring
- Foraging Chokecherry + pin cherry
- Going for a Romp with my Dog
- Sleigh & cutter parade

What Do You Want to See Happen at LPGC?

THEME: Natural Areas, Habitat, Rewilding, Dark Skies

- Tree planting
- Maintain natural habitat (2)

- Keep the Trees and ponds
- Keep it natural, maintain habitat/ restoration, dark skies, no loud noise (all over the site)
- Habitat restoration (3)
- Restore forest and hiking trails
- Natural spaces and Gathering places. This is the highest and best use of this treasure
- Keep this area park, wild, ecological and continuous with the two river ecosystems (Northern area)
- Keep as a park for all to enjoy
- Leave it as is (2)
- Once you destroy it its gone forever
- Leave as an undeveloped park, as park land zoning
- A place to gather and enjoy nature as it is restore to its natural habitat
- Dark skies (Northern lights) (6)
- Night sky stargazing spot
- Places to birdwatch during the day and stargaze at night (dark sky – amber light features)
- Food forest, native plantings, community garden, Night sky
- Significantly protected river buffer + corridor
- Preserve areas of bedrock shrub land
- Duluths greenspace is a strength – let this space be a demonstration of what rewilding can look like – with and educational component
- Second this other communities are spending millions of dollars purchasing golf courses for rewilding. Invest in development in Duluths core, Keep LPGC as part of Duluth Greenbelt.
- Rewilding the golf course + invest in creating health climate forward facing green space. Need for housing does not negate giving up natural spaces. Finish development of blighted Duluth neighborhoods before destroying more natural area.
- Keep the majority of the space open + green
- I love the forested land that greets drivers exiting of HWY 61 onto superior street keep this area as greenspace rather than a wall of development
- Upgrade drainage and planting to support native wildlife
- Natural gathering areas and hiking trails blended with housing plots to create a sense of country living within the city...
- Botanic Garden

THEME: Housing

- More housing for Duluthians especially older adults at an affordable price
- Modest homes + small apartment buildings with nature and outdoor recreation activities

- Modest homes along outer perimeter, covered gathering areas throughout, inner development only for rec and reforestation
- No Ritchie Rich houses!
- Cluster housing (2)
- Housing in one area
- Housing is only in one area, small scale give separate area for 55+ housing
- Primarily housing focused with Green-Space & Recreation woven through the development, limited commercial – do not compete w/lakeside business district. No Golf, Public or Private
- Natural gathering areas and hiking trails blended with housing plots to create a sense of country living within the city, Duluth needs to address sour housing crisis!...
- Do Not Bait and Switch “Affordable housing” and “Senior Housing” for high buck homes and big development
- No urban Sprawl

THEME: Recreation & Trails

- Walking trails (2)
- Hiking trails, open greenspace, off leash dog area, habitat, aux. space for recreation when Lester Park trails are full in peak season
- Restore forest and hiking trails
- Paved trails to connect to other trails
- Accessible trails for all
- Skiing (2)
- Tennis
- Basketball hoops, spaces for teens
- Playground, shelter and ball playing with parking
- Campground
- recreation
- Lakeside saunas, bathhouses, community spa/care centers
- Campfire spaces for songs, storytelling, language and food sharing
- Golf, or stay wild for dogwalker, hiking

THEME: Community Spaces / Gathering / Facilities

- Community center, warming center, restrooms, a la day coole, split rock
- Community center
- Covered gathering areas
- Natural spaces and Gathering places. This is the highest and best use of this treasure
- Campfire spaces for songs, storytelling, language and food sharing
- A place to gather and enjoy nature as it is restore to its natural habitat
- Lakeside saunas, bathhouses, community spa/care centers

THEME: Food & Gardens

- Food sovereignty, community farms to make lakeside neighborhood area food sovereign (2)
- Urban farms
- Community gardens
- Food forest, native plantings, community garden, Night sky

THEME: Indigenous Stewardship

- Cede the land back to the indigenous people
- Indigenous Stewardship

THEME: Golf (Support & Opposition)

- Golf
- 18 holes of golf w/ clubhouse small events center. Trails on the lake
- Primarily housing focused with Green- Space & Recreation woven through the development, limited commercial – do not compete w/lakeside business district. No Golf, Public or Private
- Golf, or stay wild for dogwalker, hiking

THEME: Governance / Policy / Concerns

- Citizens bury the political careers of people who ignore them
- No Apostolic involvement, enough is enough
- Do Not Bait and Switch “Affordable housing” and “Senior Housing” for high buck homes and big development
- NO DEVELOPEMNT 5 year moratorium on development until the economy is stable.
- Place a moratorium on all development decisions on hold until ICE is out of MN and the Trump Administration is impeached out of existence TH.
- Don’t be afraid to charge a little bit of money for use of a nice park, just keep the cost minimal so everyone can afford it. i.e. 10\$/year

LPGC Open House #2 Summary 5|24|26

What we Heard to Date

- 11 dots next to: Housing and commercial development options are view mostly negative & the primary concerns is: Loss of public green space and changes to site character

Vision & Values That Move Us Forward:

- Study values
 - By whom? With what input?
 - 0 people Strongly Disagree with the Vision Statement
 - 5 People are neutral
 - 2 people strongly agree
- Vision Statement
 - There is no way this kind of housing Duluth needs can be built here.
 - 10 people Strongly Disagree with the Vision Statement
 - 5 People are neutral
 - 3 people strongly agree

Recreation Opportunities

- A structure to hold a 12 month - year round farmers market
- Some golf
- Sauna
- Create a cross-country race like GMA's?

Natural Resources Opportunities

- community garden
- raised bed space

Types of Golf

- No golf Course Please X3
- How can we protect residents from cancer risk
- Short course is a good compromise
- Frisbee golf is the only golf I want to see
- No (or few) Pesticides
- Have some golf - but Have the Nature Conservancy design it, bees+ birding holes - tree canopy-water marsh fish

- Let all access golf have it - only 18 holes
- 9-15 hole golf does not affect Enger
- Wooded areas instead of golfcourse, that are marketed to small subset of the population
- Have nature center instead similar to hartley.
- Disingenuous to say public will be able to use in any sizable numbers
- Mini Golf
 - Hideous x2
 - NO, not on this natural site
 - Mini golf yes, no regular golf to compete with enger

What density Arrangement would you like to see

people seemed very confused at to what this was asking, it doesn't help that the diagram does not match the slide bar. For the 3 open house if we have something similar might be worth stating someone there,

From the survey but was not on the boards: "With this in mind, which of the following housing types allows for your preferred balance of development area to natural area/recreation area?"

Acknowledge that this might be a skewed data given the confusing nature of what it was asking.

28 dots (45%) were in the More dense left side of the board

16 dots (25%) were in the medium density

19 dots (30%) were in the 50/50 category

- Confusing
- Confusing? - more information is needed to respond
- Meaning larger homes on larger lots?
- I'd like to see development in areas closer to the center of the city
- Its Shouldnt be a trade off between density & open space. Could have both
- Pocket beighbohood
- Smaller Homes, shared resources
- Green space centered housing
- Aesthetic Design
- Ecological Home Design

- EXAMPLE: Davis, CA Village Homes
- Happy Summer months
- At Least some golf

SCENARIO A

- Modest lots
- No Vacation Rentals
- Design for aging in place

What Else Would You Like Us To Know

- WHEN DO WE THE PEOPLE GET TO VOTE?!
- Keep our green spaces green! Agree x2
- Restoration is Preservation
- Bring it back to mother nature
- Forest, Pollinator meadow, wetland, etc. * no need for more development and houses/hotel/buisness*
- Once Public Green space are gone they're often gone for good.
- All of these scenarios included development i am hoping a future scenario includes less development & scopes out other possible dev. areas in town and a side by side dollar # comparison with cost (actual # please)
- We need to value, preserve, and restore what little natural space we have left, otherwise it will be gone soon. Then no species will be able to survive
- The structure of this meeting is solely open house. I would appreciate the next meeting in July to have some intro w/open house and then move into a sitting/listening scenario where people can voice their concerns in front of everyone, rather than this one on one conversation style, which feels limiting (Have some of both is my recommendation) (x2)
- Have the nature conservancy design a "Nature Golf Course"
- Let all access golf have 18 holes
- It is important to preserve green space here as it is, one of the on public lands between here and two Harbors which will likely all be developed in the long term
- Do citizens of Duluth actually have a say in this?
- Prioritize developing existing lots rather than take park space
- Development seems to be predetermined in all of these scenarios

- We should have no hotels or golf courses with chemicals
- What about hiring a native plant restoration co or cod to restore the golf to native grasses? Local options: Northern ecological services, Prairie restoration in esko, shore new natives (x2)
- Please don't develop this space to look like every other soulless/placeless new development- it should be authentic Duluth

Scenario Preference

A | Things you like:

- Minimal Development
- Lower Cost
- Development closer to transit
- low cost housing only
- Small scale housing only
- Low Infrastructure cost
- Less Development next to Lester River
- Lower cost less invasive
- Lots of open space. Dev near exist inf.
- Seems prudent to star with a minimal approach + see how it works out
- Minimal Dev. Keep green space, keep golf, dog off leash, sm. aff. housing
- Focus on the value of natural resources on this site. Native plants, bird habitat
- Maximal wild space
- modest housing but affordable
- Best preservation of large amounts of park and green space
- Large area of continuous green space
- Good solution keep the prime site land for the public and housing that is possibly affordable for many people in the community
- More economical to develop along w/ preservation of green space for the public
- lower consumption w/ more green space = more affordable housing
- This would be my first choice
- Must included extensive native plantings

A | Things you dislike:

- Why is golf always an option?
- Apartments only
- not enough housing
- This version seems to fall way short of the housing opportunity too focused on green space
- Not enough housing and doesnt seem to adress traffic/parking ussues currently experience on lester river rd

B | Things you like:

- Interconnected Cottage court pocket neighborhood
- Shared green space
- Streets on periphery
- Mix develop, Income, Age, Diversity
- Campground development on tier 2-3
- This could also work
- Housing density and neighborhood feel
- Realignment of Lester River Rd addresses current traffic/parking issues
- Traditional neighborhood design
- Need more focus on housing and less on rec and green space. Lester Park is next door.

B | Things you dislike:

- Too much housing
- Need more open natural area
- Too much acreage for housing
- Please no golf, Please do native plant restoration
- Too much dev.
- No golf we have lots of golf in the area already

C | Things you like:

- Like the greater use for housing and integrating natural areas, Lester realignment creates a nice linkage but it put more housing.

C | Things you dislike:

- Higher infrastructure cost for a smaller amount of housing and development
- Development is eating up all the land
- Expensive infrastructure costs
- too much development
- Need even more open/ natural area
- Way too expensive, doesn't add what Duluth needs, and removes what Duluth wants
- Huge give away of prime land to people who will not be from Duluth economy
- loss of green space
- Cost of sewer here?
- I like the ladder scenario but what will be the cost for real road, sewer, water
- Best views reserved for the wealthy this is/was public land
- Need more housing, side by side duplexes
- Just say not this this
- Need more native plantings
- No golf on this site, city should not compete with itself at Enger, which has debt to repay

Duluth LPGC | Round 2 Engagement Survey Summary

- More Homes
- Not enough green space
- Too much golf
- too much development
- Spread out development divides greenspace too much
- Dislike Golf
- Divides greenspace, more homes that will have a higher sale price
- Too much golf/ development
- No golf, unless mini golf
- Like golf, Like more green space

Comment Cards

- The city is not doing enough to make the public aware of this process and the public meetings – there was nothing on the city website about tonight’s meeting Do Better!
- How is the city seeing future uses of the land adjacent to LPGC? Will it maintain low density in the surrounding land?
- We need more lower income and middle income housing (using the trickle down argument that building upper income housing frees up lower/moderate income is unproven- please get data!) So, I favor building single family dwellings use the less dense... small lot single family owned. A good approach as long as it uses the basecamp approach. The development of green space must have green space and housing
- The Lester Park Golf Course site is a unique parcel of parkland with high value as a natural resource. I am in favor of other sites for housing or commercial development i.e. old Central High School and downtown (desperately needs redevelopment). Keep the LPGC site as parkland.
- My main interest is golfing and with other outdoor activities – I have children & grandchildren & great grandchildren. In the Lester Park area I see the golf course as an opportunity for golfing, caddying,etc – but I see the lose of the golf as a great mistake at losing and extremely important city asset.
- In the short term – before development – is there any way the City could maintain just a small part of the land – 1–3 miles – so it is not just WEEDS. *Ideally at least a driving range would be great!! – thank you –
- From the survey, and what I’m seeing on the boards (feedback) at this event, it seems like the vast majority of Duluthians don’t want this land developed much, if at all. Why is the project pushing forward? Toward the end?

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Lester Park Golf Course Study – Survey 2

Question-by-Question Summary

Prepared from the uploaded survey PDF. This version focuses on summarizing respondent feedback by question and skips purely infographic elements unless respondents commented on them.

Q1. Agreement with the vision statement

The vision statement landed as mixed overall, with an average rating of 3.07 out of 5 across 184 responses. That suggests people were not broadly rejecting it, but they were far from fully on board.

Q2. Comments on the vision statement

The clearest theme was that many respondents felt the vision was too vague, overly polished, or full of buzzwords, especially around phrases like financially sustainable, economic value, and well-designed neighborhood development. A lot of people said the wording sounded good but did not clearly explain what would actually happen on the site. A second major theme was a strong desire to preserve green space, recreation, and public access. Many comments argued that the land should remain mostly parkland, natural area, or recreational space, with some specifically calling for no housing at all, while others said the only acceptable alternative would be restoring some form of golf or keeping development extremely limited. At the same time, there was also a clear pro-housing group in the comments. These respondents argued that Duluth needs more housing, including affordable, varied, and family-oriented housing, and that this site could be a rare opportunity to add it. Even among supporters of development, though, many emphasized that housing should be dense, genuinely affordable, and carefully integrated with the landscape, rather than becoming expensive, low-density sprawl or luxury housing. Another recurring concern was trust. Multiple respondents said the draft vision did not reflect earlier public input, or worried that the city had already decided on development and was using broad language to justify it later. There were also repeated concerns about infrastructure, traffic, transit access, runoff, environmental impacts, and whether development here made more sense than investing in downtown or existing underused sites.

Q3. Agreement with the project values

The project values performed a little better than the vision statement, with an average rating of 3.55 out of 5 across 170 responses. That suggests respondents were somewhat more comfortable with the values than with the broader vision language.

Q4. Comments on the project values

The main reaction here was similar to Q2: respondents often said the values sounded positive but generic. Words like welcoming, authentic, dynamic, and financially sustainable were seen by many as appealing but too open-ended to be useful unless tied to clearer commitments. There was still broad support for values tied to environmental health, public access, recreation, and resilience, but many people paired that support with skepticism about whether those values would actually guide implementation. A number of comments basically said that the values are fine, but actions matter more than words. A substantial share of comments again pushed back on development itself. Some said the land already fulfills many of these values as parkland or emerging natural space, while others said any development should be limited to the already-transferred acreage near existing infrastructure. Affordability also came up here: several respondents said the values should explicitly include affordability, inclusion, and housing for residents across income levels, or else the project would mainly serve wealthier households.

Q5. Housing-type preference slider

This question drew 162 responses and had a mean score of 3.89, a median of 3, and a very wide spread from 0 to 10. On paper, that points to a lean toward the lower-number side of the scale, but the result should be treated cautiously because later comments show that many respondents found the graphic confusing or potentially misleading.

Q6. Comments on housing preference

This was one of the more split sections. A sizable group said no housing should be built here at all, arguing that the land should remain public green space, recreation area, or golf-related open land. Many of these respondents pointed to other better locations for housing, especially downtown, existing vacant buildings, or already-serviced sites. Among people open to housing, one of the strongest themes was that, if development happens, it should be dense enough to preserve more open land and make infrastructure more efficient. Many comments favored a mix of housing types rather than a single product type, often mentioning combinations of apartments, townhomes, duplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, or modest single-family homes. Affordability was central. Respondents repeatedly warned against building market-rate units, vacation homes, or second homes that would not address local housing needs. Some specifically asked for housing for seniors, middle-income households, first-time buyers, or families; others emphasized owner-occupied rather than purely rental development. Just as important, many respondents objected to the design of this actual survey question. Multiple comments said the slider graphic was unclear, the labels were hard to interpret, and the setup might skew the results. So while

the score gives some signal, the written feedback suggests the question design itself undermined confidence in the data.

Q7. What people liked about Scenario A

Scenario A appears to have been valued most for being the least disruptive option. The strongest positive themes were that it preserved the most natural space, kept a large amount of land in recreation and open space, and concentrated development near existing roads and utilities rather than spreading it across the site. People who liked Scenario A often described it as the best balance or the most sensible option, especially because it minimized infrastructure costs and kept housing tucked closer to Superior Street and already-developed edges. Supporters also liked the links to existing trails, restoration potential, and the fact that public open space remained dominant. A smaller set of respondents liked some of the unique program ideas in Scenario A, including camping, an amphitheater, an outfitter, and small-scale mixed-use elements, though these were clearly secondary to the bigger theme of keeping most of the site natural.

Q8. What people disliked about Scenario A

The biggest criticism from pro-housing respondents was that Scenario A did not add enough housing. These commenters said that if the city is going to develop the site at all, it should produce more units and make a more meaningful contribution to housing supply. From the opposite direction, many respondents still disliked Scenario A because it included any development at all. Those who wanted full preservation objected to housing, commercialization, loss of public land, and the possibility that even modest development would turn into expensive or exclusive housing. There were also recurring design criticisms: some disliked apartments or townhouses, some wanted single-family homes if there had to be housing, some wanted golf restored, and others raised concerns about traffic, parking, transit, public access, affordability, and undefined green space programming. Tent camping and the Main Street and outfitter elements were also polarizing.

Q9. What people liked about Scenario B

Scenario B seems to have drawn support as a middle-ground option. The most common positives were its mix of housing types, somewhat stronger housing yield than Scenario A, and a more complete small town or neighborhood feel. Respondents who liked Scenario B often framed it as a compromise between preservation and development. People also liked the greater range of recreation ideas here, especially things like the pump track, sport courts, ropes course, camping and cabins, and clustered gathering spaces, though these features were more popular with some respondents than others. A number of people also liked that some natural area and wetland buffering still remained in the concept.

Compared with A, Scenario B appealed more to people who wanted a livelier neighborhood concept and more homes, while still keeping some open land and recreation in the mix.

Q10. What people disliked about Scenario B

The strongest criticism was that Scenario B went too far into development. Many comments said it felt too commercialized, too suburban, too fragmented, or simply too large for what had been public parkland. A particularly common issue was the proposed realignment of Lester River Road. Respondents frequently called that idea expensive, complicated, and not worth the disruption. Infrastructure cost more broadly was a major concern, especially because some people felt the extra buildout still would not yield enough affordability or public benefit to justify it. The specialized recreation elements in Scenario B also drew skepticism. Ropes courses, camping cabins, sport courts, and similar features were often criticized as costly to build and maintain, too niche, or not the best use of the land. Affordability concerns continued here too, with many doubting that the housing would serve ordinary Duluth residents.

Q11. What people liked about Scenario C

Scenario C seems to have been the strongest option for respondents who prioritize maximizing housing supply. The most common positives were that it offered the most housing, the greatest variety of housing types, and a stronger sense of a true neighborhood rather than a small edge development. People who liked Scenario C also responded positively to its recreation package, especially the dog park, bike trails, disc golf, and other active amenities, and some appreciated that it still appeared to preserve views or some open space while integrating development more fully into the site. In short, Scenario C seems to have appealed most to respondents who think the site should make a major contribution to housing and who are comfortable with a more urbanized buildout.

Q12. What people disliked about Scenario C

Scenario C also appears to have triggered the strongest backlash. The biggest complaints were that it involved too much pavement, too much development, too much fragmentation of natural land, and too much privatization of views and public space. Many respondents felt it looked like the scenario least aligned with the site's history as public land and natural and recreational space. As in Scenario B, the proposed road changes and infrastructure burden were major concerns. People repeatedly mentioned cost, complexity, access problems, traffic, and the idea that spreading development more widely across the site would be inefficient and environmentally damaging. There were also frequent concerns that Scenario C would create expensive, market-rate housing rather than housing that meets Duluth's actual needs. Others objected to specific pieces like apartment forms,

cottage courts, disc golf, or dog park treatment, but the broader objection was simpler: too much of the site would feel developed and too little would remain truly public, natural, and restorative.

LPGC Open House 3 Comments Summary

Comment cards were provided and gathered during the open house, to collect feedback on the proposed vision. A summary of comments received is provided below. In total, 14 comment cards were submitted.

Open Space and Development Balance

- Generally, the comments received were in support of the proposed balance of open space and development so long as there was a commitment to maintain the upper 207 acres as open space.

Future of Open Space

- Many comments asked about the future of the open space area - programming, timeline for planning, and relationship to the adjacent Lester Park/Amity Falls area and Hawk Ridge.
- There were a few comments asking about the possibility of golf returning to the site.

Future of Development

- Many comments received expressed a desire to promote housing affordability, avoiding a neighborhood that is only luxury housing, and a strong desire to ensure a mix of housing (types and price points) across the neighborhood.
- Some comments correctly identified that there will need to be additional public infrastructure needed to support neighborhood buildout, while others inquired about the tax revenue potential.
- A few comments conveyed a desire to further identify natural ecosystem and wildlife protections, such as impervious limitations, building design standards to protect the flyway, and green infrastructure.
- Several comments affirmed a desire for green space and recreation integration within the neighborhood, screening buildings from Hwy 61, and protecting viewsheds from the above proposed open space area.



APPENDIX B | LOCI MARKET STUDY

B

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consists of a large yellow triangle pointing downwards, which is partially overlaid by a dark blue triangle pointing upwards. At the vertex where the two triangles meet, there is a large black circle with a white center.

Preliminary Findings from the Market Analysis for the Lester Park Golf Course Land Use Study *Draft V3*****

Prepared for Bolton & Menk and the City of Duluth
April 10, 2026



Market Analysis for Lester Park Golf Course Land Use Study

Purpose

- Provide market analytics to guide a larger planning and land-use analysis for redevelopment of the Lester Park Golf Course

Overall Methodology

- Site analysis
- Demographic and economic analysis
- Review of competitive market
- Interviews with developers
- Forecasts of demand
- Summary of findings and recommendations

Considered Uses

- Single-family homes
- Townhomes and twinhomes
- Multifamily apartment buildings
- Restaurant and retail space
- Other commercial land uses



Demand Estimates for the Lester Park Golf Course Land Use Study



	Planned and Market Development Densities	Demand and Absorption 2025-2030	Demand and Absorption 2030-2040
Single-Family Homes	3.0 – 10.0 units per Acre	150 – 200 units 15.0 – 67.0 acres	125 – 175 units 18.0 – 58.0 acres
Detached and Attached Townhomes and Twinhomes	10.0 – 15.0 units per acre	50 – 75 units 3.0 – 7.5 acres	50 – 75 units 3.0 – 7.5 acres
Apartments	50.0 units per acre	200 – 250 units 4.0 – 5.0 acres	200 – 250 units 4.0 – 5.0 acres

Demand Estimates for the Lester Park Golf Course Land Use Study



	Planned and Market Development Densities	Demand and Absorption 2025-2030	Demand and Absorption 2030-2040
Senior Housing (Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Care**)	50.0 units per acre	150 – 200 units 3.0 – 4.0 acres	150 – 200 units 3.0 – 4.0 acres
Restaurant and Retail	10,000 sq. ft. per acre	0 – 10,000 sq. ft. 0.0 – 1.0 acres	0 – 10,000 sq. ft. 0.0 – 1.0 acres
Office and Medical Office	10,000 sq. ft. per acre	0 – 15,000 sq. ft. 0.0 – 1.5 acres	0 – 15,000 sq. ft. 0.0 – 1.5 acres



Preliminary Findings

Key Findings from Market Analysis: Residential

- Overall, the golf course redevelopment site would work well for residential redevelopment
- Duluth is averaging about 270 new units of housing per year (building permit data), mostly multifamily rental

Single Family Homes

- Single-family development has occurred in smaller developments and infill locations, averaging about 50 to 60 homes per year since 2019
- Pricing for newly constructed homes starts at over \$400,000

Townhomes and Twinhomes

- Fewer townhomes have been built in Duluth, less than five per year

Apartments

- Apartment developers have constructed about 210 units per year in Duluth, and units have been absorbed by the market
- But even with the new supply, the rental market is tight, with vacancy rates below 5%

Key Findings from Market Analysis: Commercial

- Commercial uses would work well at the golf course redevelopment site specifically at areas immediately adjacent to East Superior and Highway 61

Restaurant and Retail

- When adjusted for inflation, consumer expenditure is projected to decline in the market, reducing demand and consolidating development at key retail nodes
- New retail construction overall is projected to be constrained in the next five years based on consumer stress and challenging margins for retailers

Office and Medical Office

- General office development will continue to be slow with high vacancies and little new development
- But there may be opportunities for medical office development in the study area
- Because of the aging population and the fact that the city serves as a regional medical center, medical office demand is projected to grow overall in the city of Duluth



Preliminary Findings

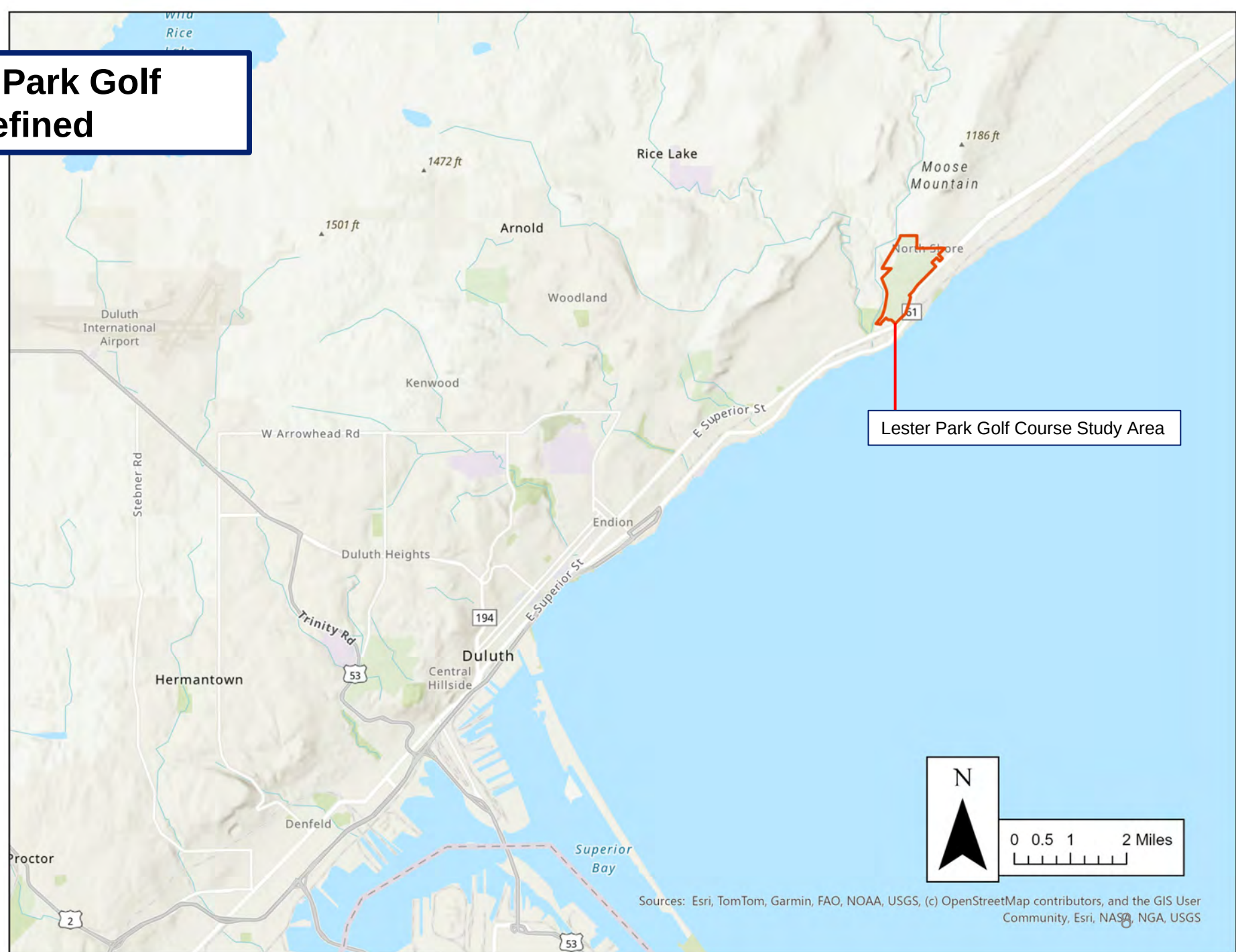
Guidance for the Land Use Planning Process

- The Lester Park Golf Course redevelopment creates a unique opportunity to test development concepts not being built in the existing market. Navigating the balance between aspirational development and market realities presents significant opportunities, but also pitfalls
- One of the key differentiators of this property is its proximity to natural amenities. Optimize key natural features for parks and trails, connecting uses throughout the development
- Lot sizes presented in the demand estimates represent current densities in the market. Some of these densities could be increased through a “cluster-development” approach and balanced with natural common areas
- Provide premium lots with Lake Superior views (up to 20% of unit demand). These lots should be generally larger than the overall average
- Plan for association-maintained attached and detached townhomes. For detached townhomes, these product types can have higher than average densities. Detached townhomes should make up a smaller portion of the townhome home category
- Plan for apartment development with connectivity to natural areas and trails. Many potential tenants will be attracted to rental opportunities with these features, something not offered in more urban apartment development
- Phase the development west to east to optimize absorption. Phasing could better incentivize development in some of the deeper areas of the overall project, as well
- The analysis suggests that there is not significant demand for commercial uses. If commercial uses are a strong community preference, consider setting aside a few acres along East Superior Street or Highway 61

Market Analysis for the Lester Park Golf Course Land Use Study

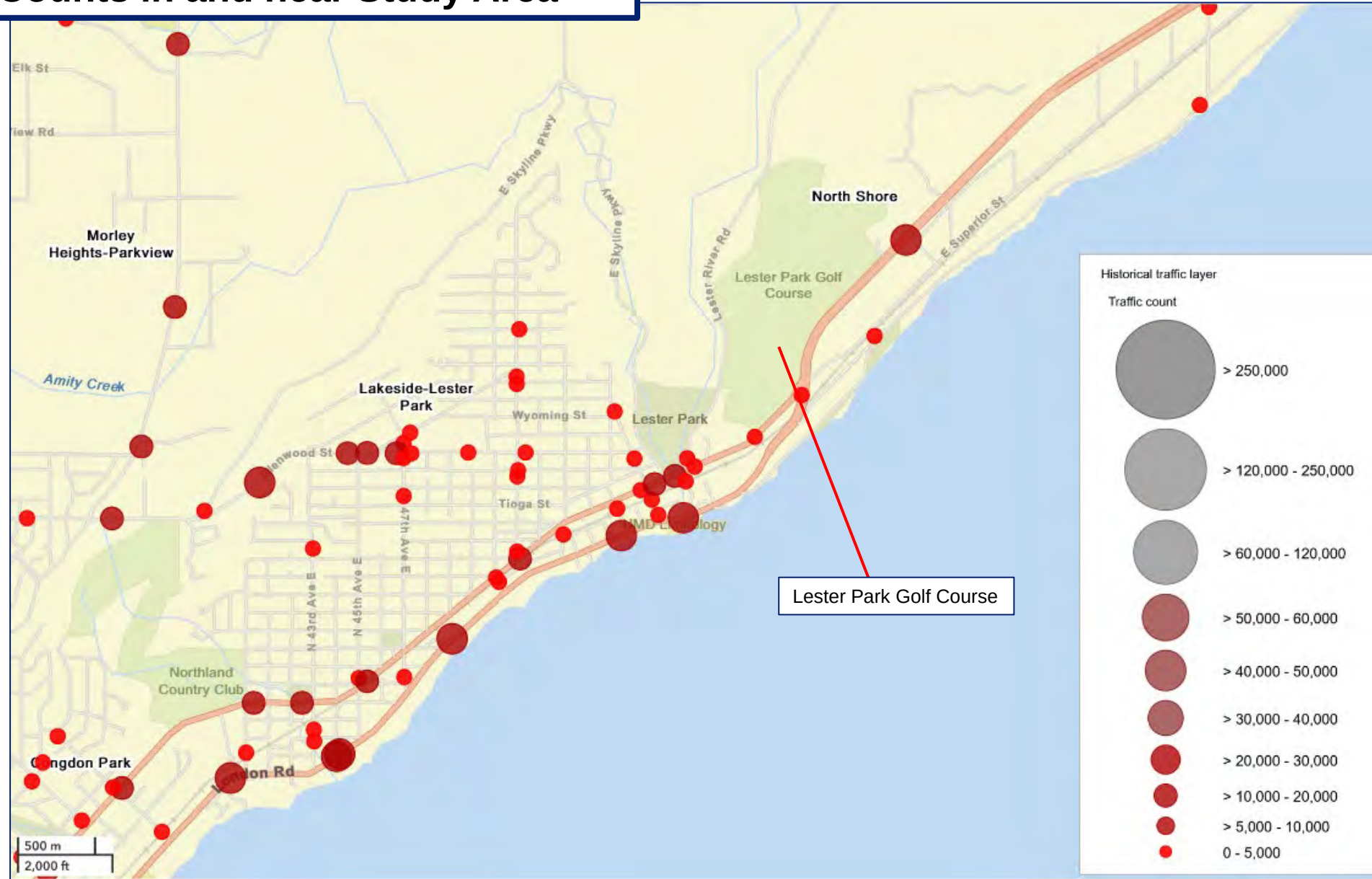
Site Analysis: Lester Park Golf Course Study Area Defined

- The red boundary marks the study area in the City of Duluth
- The area includes about 260 acres

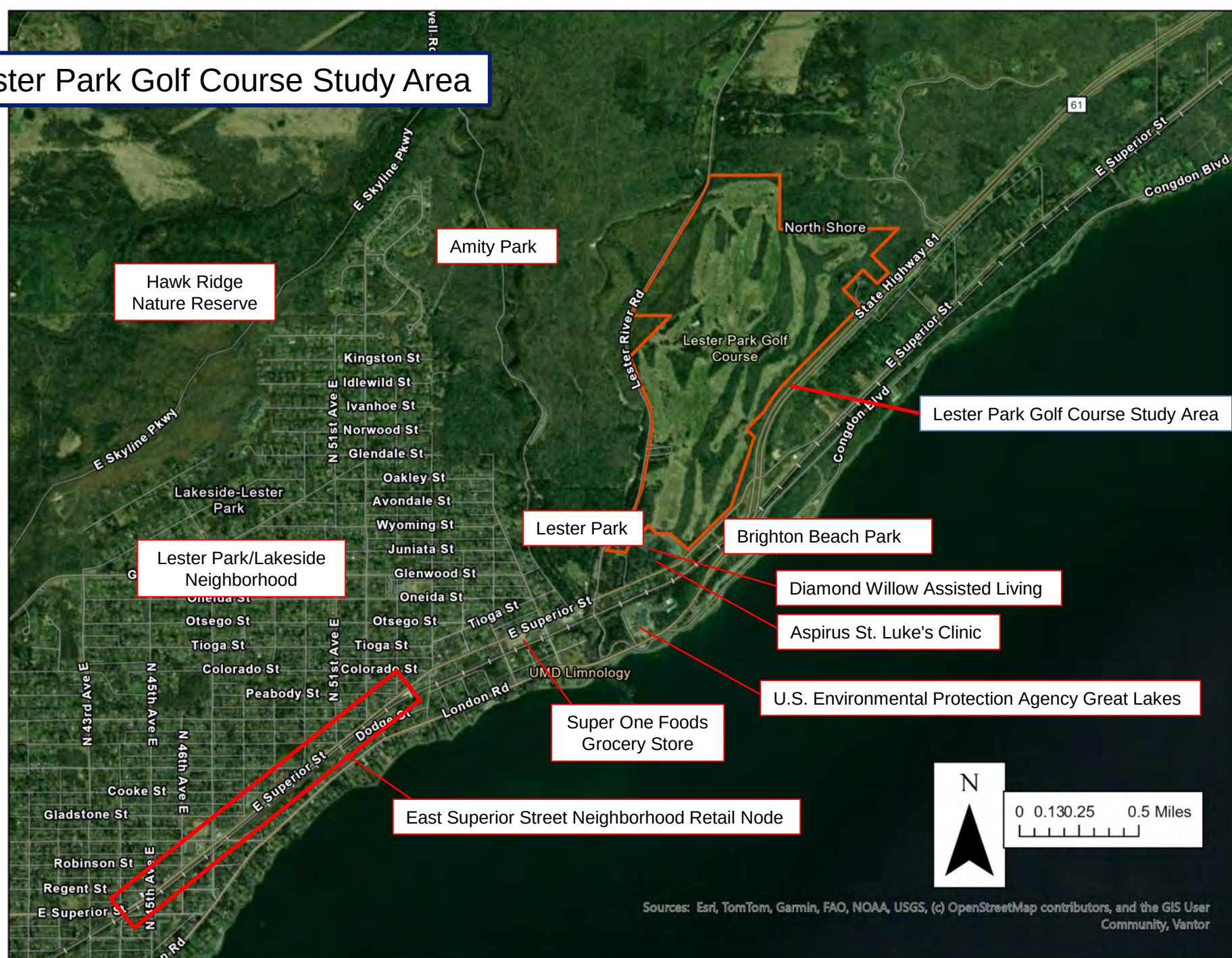


Site Analysis: Traffic Counts in and near Study Area

- Highway 61 east of Superior Street:
 - 11,100 vehicles per day
- East Superior Street directly south of the site:
 - 4,100 vehicles per day
- East Superior Street west of Lester River Road:
 - 5,600 vehicles per day
- Lester River Road north of East Superior Street:
 - 1,020 vehicles per day
- London Road west of East Superior Street:
 - 11,700 vehicles per day



Site Analysis: Lester Park Golf Course Study Area



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Vantor



Site Analysis: Residential Uses

Strengths

- Large amount of developable land within the city
- Views of the lake would create some premium sites
- Close to Lester River Park, Amity Park, Hawk Ridge Reserve, and Lake Superior lakeshore
- Connected to The Duluth Lakewalk trail system
- Close to small neighborhood retail node along East Superior Street
- Existing lakes and wetlands that can serve as an amenities for new neighborhoods
- Existing road network connectivity provides excellent connectivity to central Duluth
- Would be seen as an extension of established and desirable east Duluth neighborhoods

Weaknesses

- Significant portions of the property are not served by city sewer and water
- Steep terrain and shallow bedrock may limit development
- Road capacity (Lester River Road and East Superior) may need to be increased to accommodate development
- The site is far from central Duluth and regional retail shopping district on Miller Hill



Site Analysis: Commercial Uses

Strengths

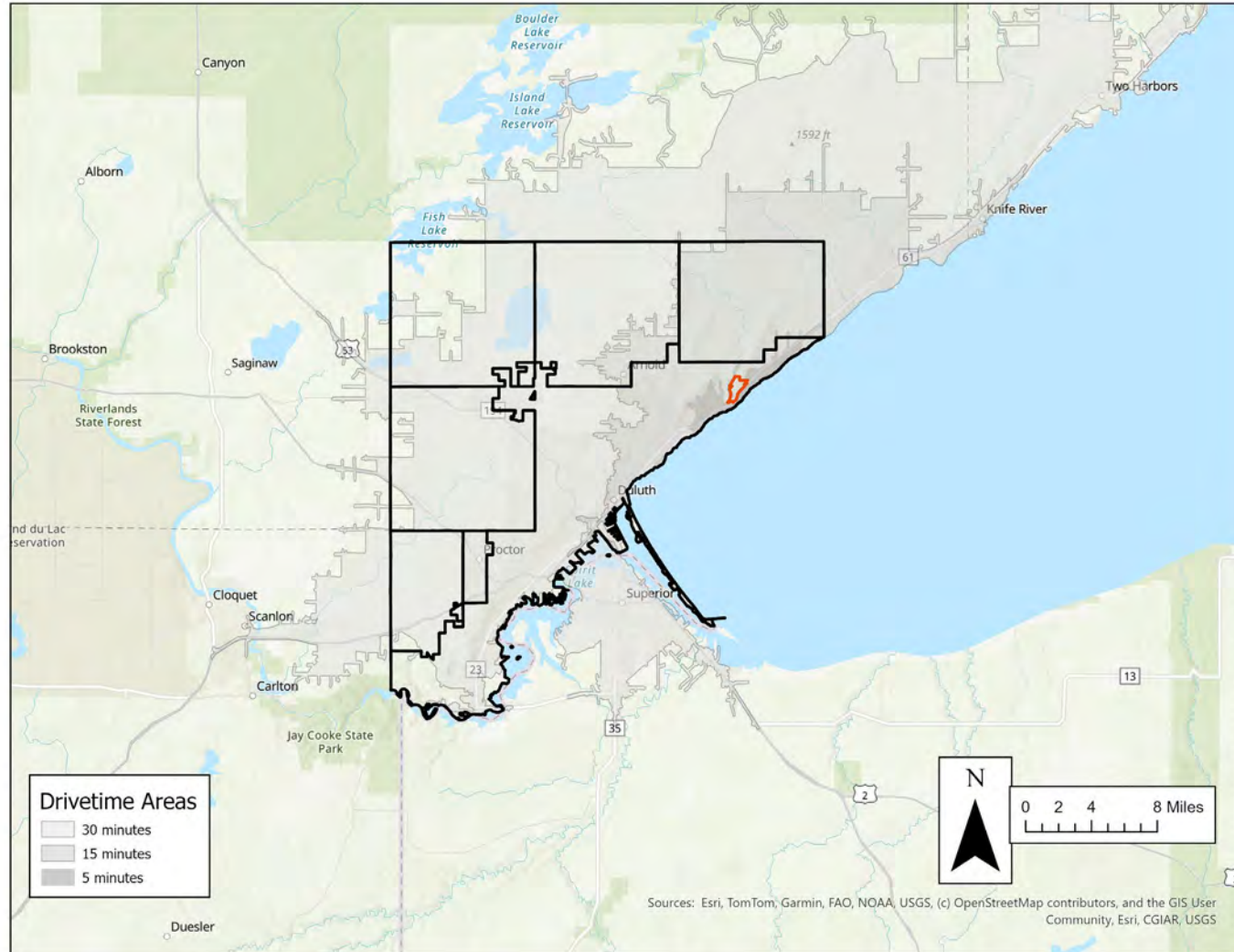
- Good traffic counts on Highway 61 adjacent to the site
- Area is a funnel point or gateway for traffic traveling west from and east to the North Shore
- Site could be connected to East Superior Street and Highway 61 on the south side
- Would be an extension of existing neighborhood retail node west on East Superior Street
- Existing established neighborhoods to the west of the site
- The site would be attractive to retailers and restaurant operators looking to serve tourists traveling to the North Shore

Weaknesses

- London Road is a bottleneck—the two-lane thoroughfare serves as the primary roadway between Interstate 35 and Highway 61, creating traffic congestion at peak times
- Commercial traffic east and west through the neighborhood is split along London Road and East Superior Street west of the site
- Access to the site is along East Superior Street, the less frequently traveled road through the area
- Access to Highway 61 on the southeast border of the site might be limited by rock formations
- Area will always be secondary to the strong regional commercial node in Miller Hill district



Primary Market Area Definition



Primary market area (PMA) for development in the includes:

- City of Duluth
- City of Hermantown
- City of Proctor
- City of Rice Lake
- Canosia Township
- Lakewood Township
- Midway Township



Demographics: Population and Population Growth

- The PMA and the city of Duluth are seeing positive population growth—lower than the rate of growth for the state as a whole
- The population of the PMA is approximately 111,000, according to ESRI*, a national demographics firm used by real estate developer and users
- The annual growth rate over the next five years is projected to be comparable to the previous five years

1 Population and Population Growth

	Census 2010	Census 2020	Estimate 2025	Forecast 2030	Annual Growth Rate 2010-2025	Proj. Annual Growth Rate 2025-2030
Primary Market Area	108,582	110,063	111,027	111,307	0.1%	0.1%
<u>Entrance to Lester Park Golf Course</u>						
5-Minute Drive-Time Area	6,063	6,319	6,353	6,261	0.3%	-0.3%
10-Minute Drive-Time Area	17,227	17,990	18,055	17,858	0.3%	-0.2%
15-Minute Drive-Time Area	52,134	51,868	52,911	52,894	0.1%	0.0%
30-Minute Drive-Time Area	146,899	148,365	149,448	149,607	0.1%	0.0%
60-Minute Drive-Time Area	209,269	211,799	213,463	213,485	0.1%	0.0%
120-Minute Drive-Time Area	526,788	532,761	542,331	546,163	0.2%	0.1%
City of Duluth	86,262	86,697	87,418	87,701	0.1%	0.1%
St. Louis County	200,224	200,231	200,638	200,004	0.0%	-0.1%
State of Minnesota	5,303,925	5,706,494	5,852,943	5,959,077	0.7%	0.4%
United States	308,745,538	331,449,281	339,887,819	347,149,422	0.6%	0.4%

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI; LOCi Consulting LLC

* This analysis uses ESRI data because it is forecasted for smaller areas and geographies (e.g., drivetime areas). ESRI also provides 5-year forecasts by demographic characteristics (e.g., age and income). Further, this data source is used by developers and private sector decision makers for site selection.



Demographics: Households and Household Growth

- Household growth is also positive in the PMA and the city of Duluth
- The PMA has approximately 47,000 households, based on ESRI estimates
- Unlike population growth, the annual household growth rate is projected to slow in the next five years, compared to the previous 15-year period

2 Households and Household Growth

	Census 2010	Census 2020	Estimate 2025	Forecast 2030	Annual Growth Rate 2010-2025	Proj. Annual Growth Rate 2025-2030
Primary Market Area	42,872	44,099	46,786	47,380	0.6%	0.3%
<u>Entrance to Lester Park Golf Course</u>						
5-Minute Drive-Time Area	2,482	2,527	2,598	2,571	0.3%	-0.2%
10-Minute Drive-Time Area	6,717	6,845	7,159	7,115	0.4%	-0.1%
15-Minute Drive-Time Area	20,663	20,743	21,593	21,821	0.3%	0.2%
30-Minute Drive-Time Area	58,221	60,058	63,406	64,069	0.6%	0.2%
60-Minute Drive-Time Area	80,313	84,557	89,210	90,038	0.7%	0.2%
120-Minute Drive-Time Area	205,035	218,369	231,127	233,987	0.8%	0.2%
City of Duluth	35,497	35,704	37,628	38,169	0.4%	0.3%
St. Louis County	82,624	84,780	87,408	87,807	0.4%	0.1%
State of Minnesota	1,895,127	2,087,227	2,333,970	2,391,162	1.4%	0.5%
United States	105,480,101	116,716,292	132,422,916	136,716,884	1.5%	0.6%

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI; LOCi Consulting LLC



Demographics: 10-Year Growth Projections

- The Duluth Housing Needs Analysis released in 2025 provided population and household projections for the next 10 years based on ESRI and State Demographer data
- Demand forecasts for residential and commercial uses in this analysis account for these projections to 2035

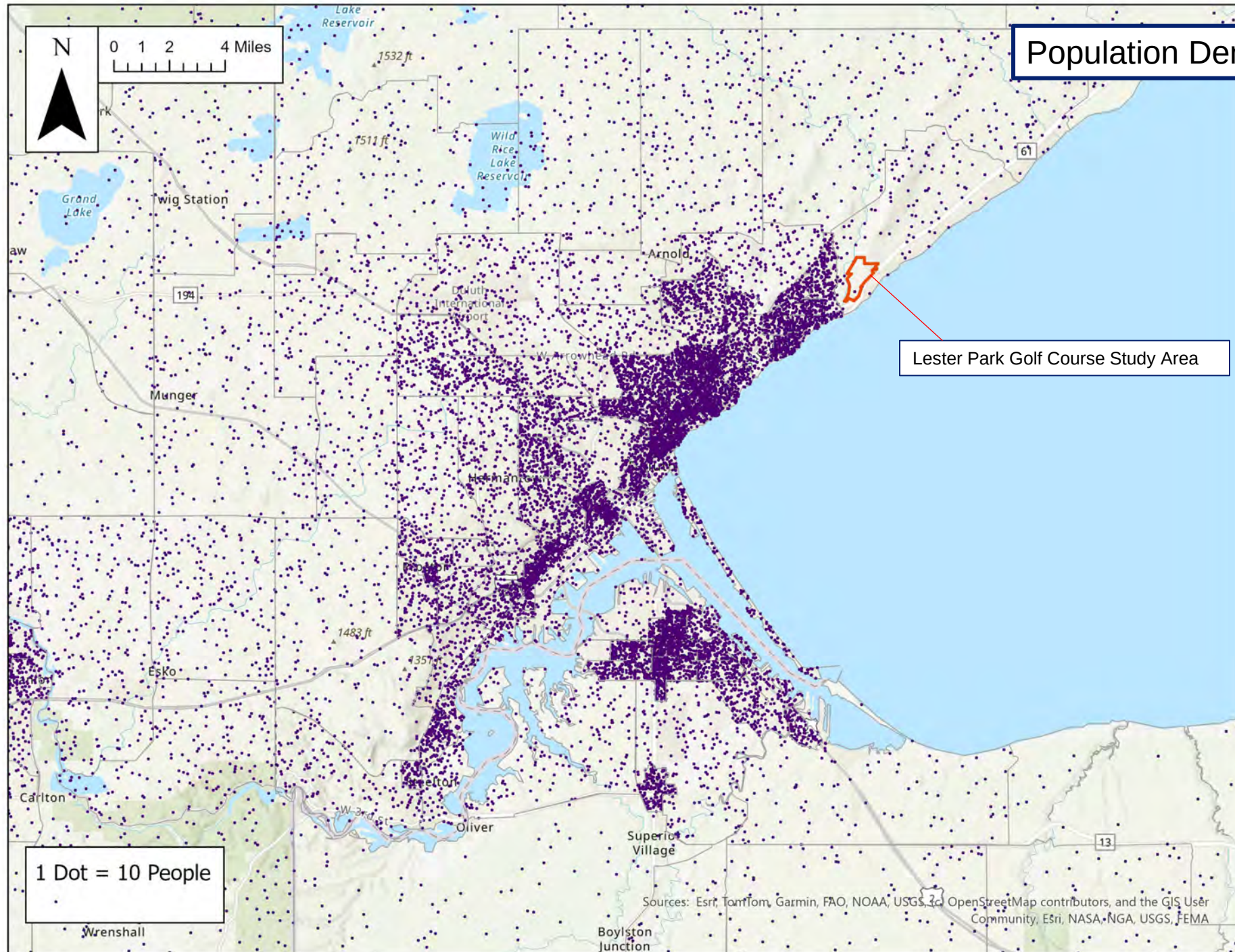
3

10-Year Projections from Duluth Housing Needs Analysis



	Estimate 2025	Forecast 2030	Forecast 2035	Forecast Number 2025-2030	Forecast Number 2030-2035	Forecast Percent 2030-2035	Forecast Percent 2030-2035
Population							
Primary Market Area	112,000	113,800	115,400	1,800	1,600	1.6%	1.4%
Households							
Primary Market Area	46,890	48,500	49,700	1,610	1,200	3.4%	2.4%

Source: Duluth Housing Needs Analysis, Maxfield Research and Consulting; LOCi Consulting LLC



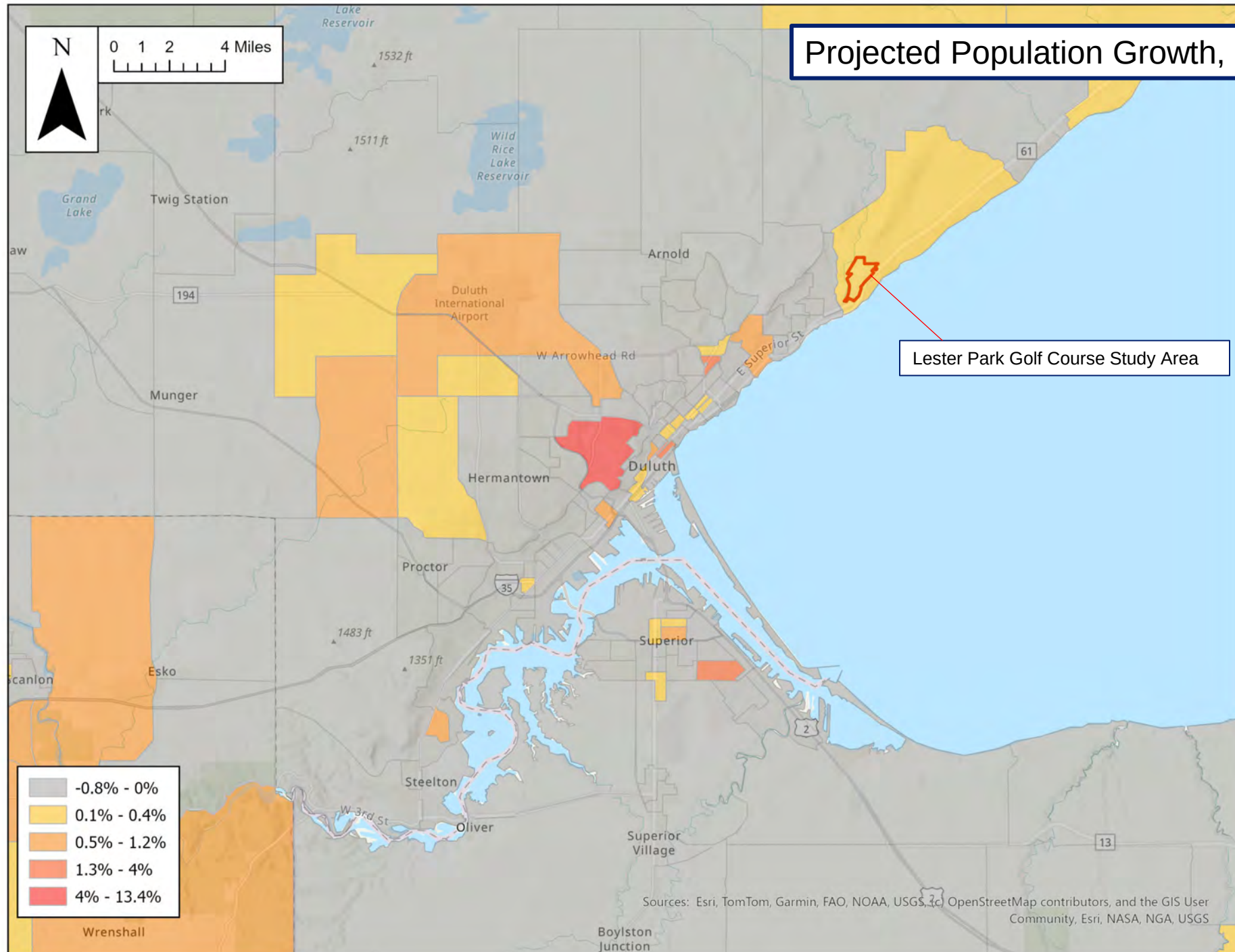
Population Density, 2025

Lester Park Golf Course Study Area

1 Dot = 10 People

Source: ESRI, LOCi Consulting LLC

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, 3d OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA



Source: ESRI, LOCI Consulting LLC



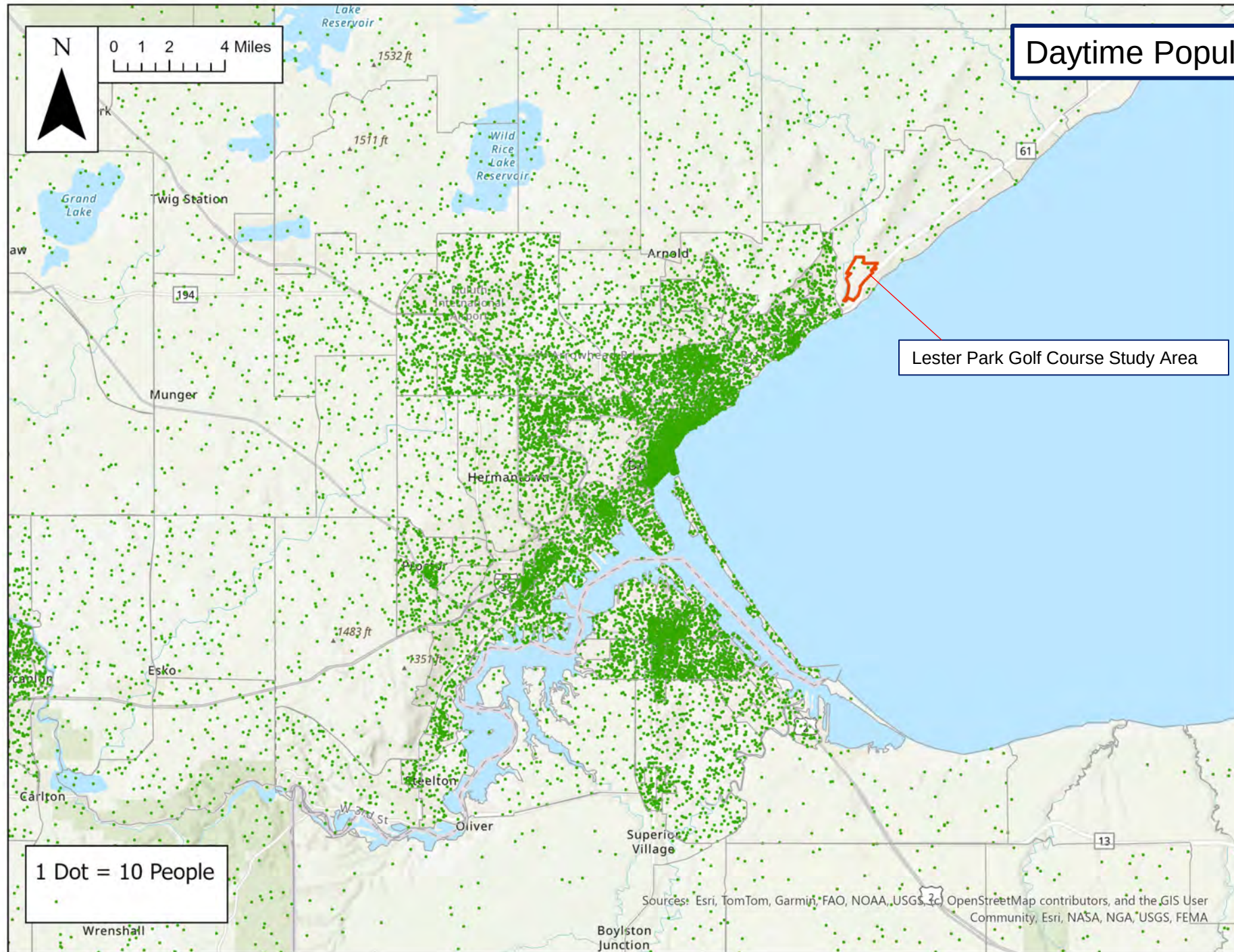
Demographics: Daytime Employment

4 Daytime Population, 2025

	Total Population	Total Daytime Population	Daytime Population: Workers	Daytime Population: Residents
Primary Market Area	111,027	122,466	67,235	55,231
<u>Entrance to Lester Park Golf Course</u>				
5-Minute Drive-Time Area	6,353	4,000	1,245	2,755
10-Minute Drive-Time Area	18,055	12,998	4,507	8,491
15-Minute Drive-Time Area	52,911	63,604	37,444	26,160
30-Minute Drive-Time Area	149,448	157,972	84,137	73,835
60-Minute Drive-Time Area	213,463	212,286	104,265	108,021
120-Minute Drive-Time Area	542,331	532,852	244,313	288,539
City of Duluth	87,418	102,151	58,059	44,092
St. Louis County	200,638	209,306	103,538	105,768

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI; LOCi Consulting LLC

- The employment base in Duluth contributes to residential and commercial demand
- Because many workers who reside outside the PMA commute into the city, the daytime population grows to about 122,000 people
- Like the PMA as a whole, the city of Duluth also sees increases in its daytime population
- Based on US Census Data from 2022 (not shown on chart) *:
 - 36,261 workers commute into the PMA
 - 13,769 residents commute out of the PMA
 - 33,600 residents both work and live in the PMA
- Workers who commute into Duluth provide additional retail spending
- These workers are also potential residents who may consider homes in Duluth to be closer to their jobs

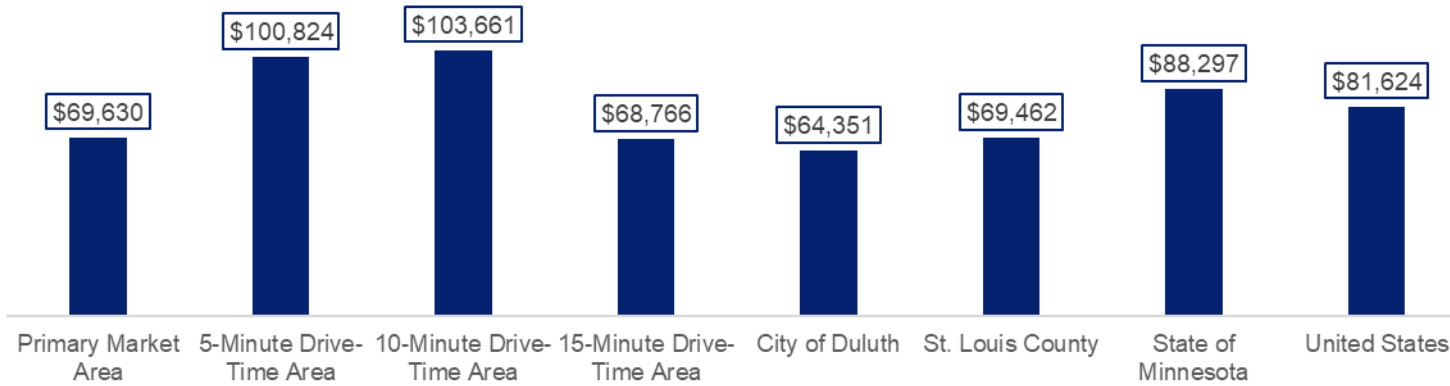


Source: ESRI, LOCI Consulting LLC

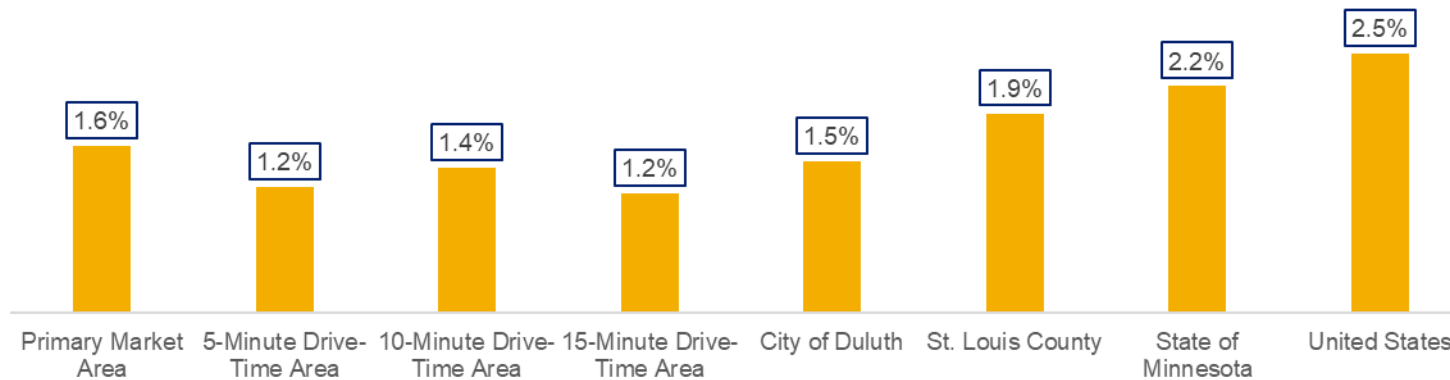


Demographics: Median Household Income

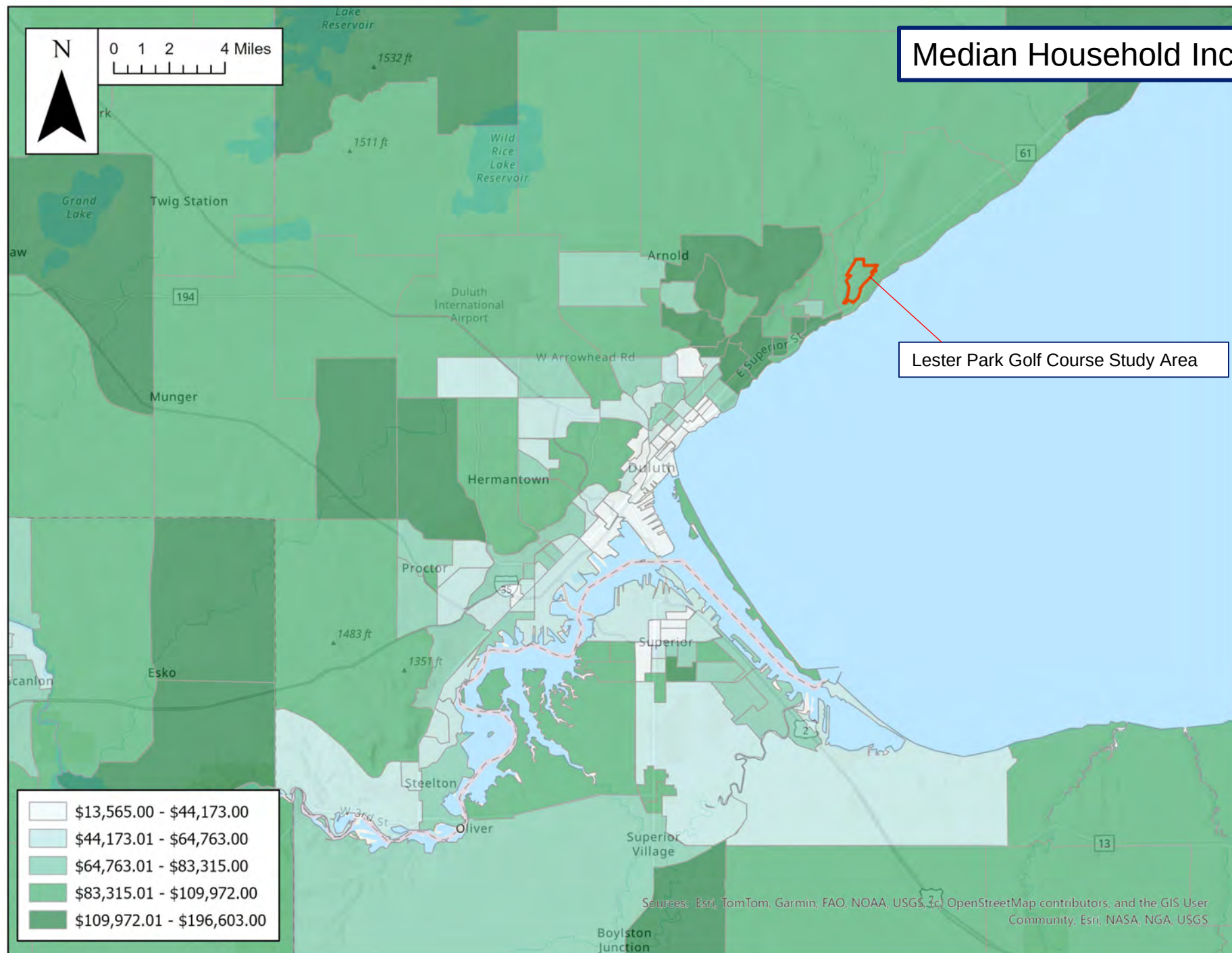
5. Median Household Income, 2025



6. Projected Annual Growth in Median Household Income, 2025-2030



- Incomes in the PMA are lower than the state as a whole and decreasing relative to inflation
- The median household income for the PMA is \$70,000
- Median household income in the City of Duluth is about \$64,000—27% lower than the median for the state
- Incomes in the drivetime areas close (5-minute and 10-minute) to the site are higher than both the PMA and the city of Duluth
- ESRI is forecasting 2.4% inflation over the 2025-2030 period and provide forecasts without adjustments for inflation—so growth below 2.4% means that incomes are actually declining relative to inflation
- This forecasts suggests that the slight income growth in the market will not keep up with inflation

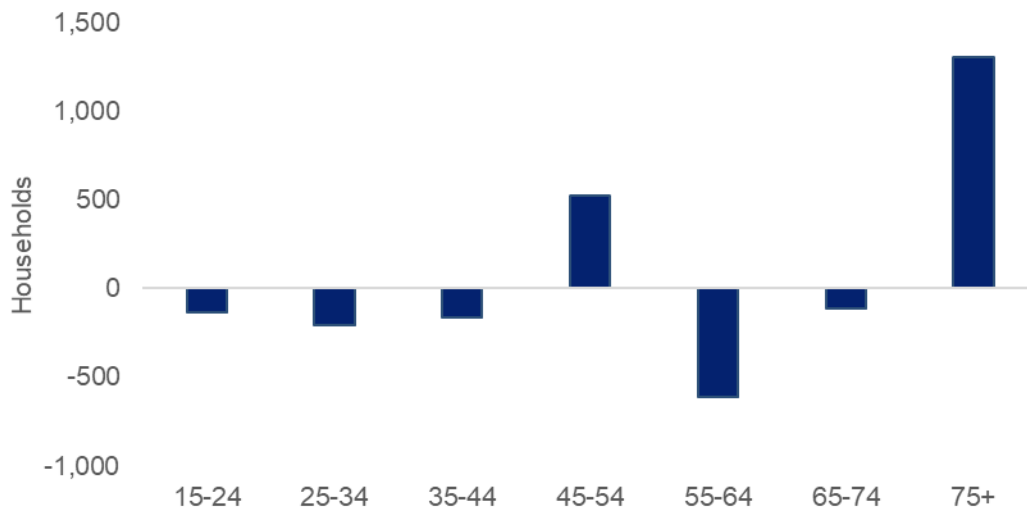


Source: ESRI, LOCI Consulting LLC



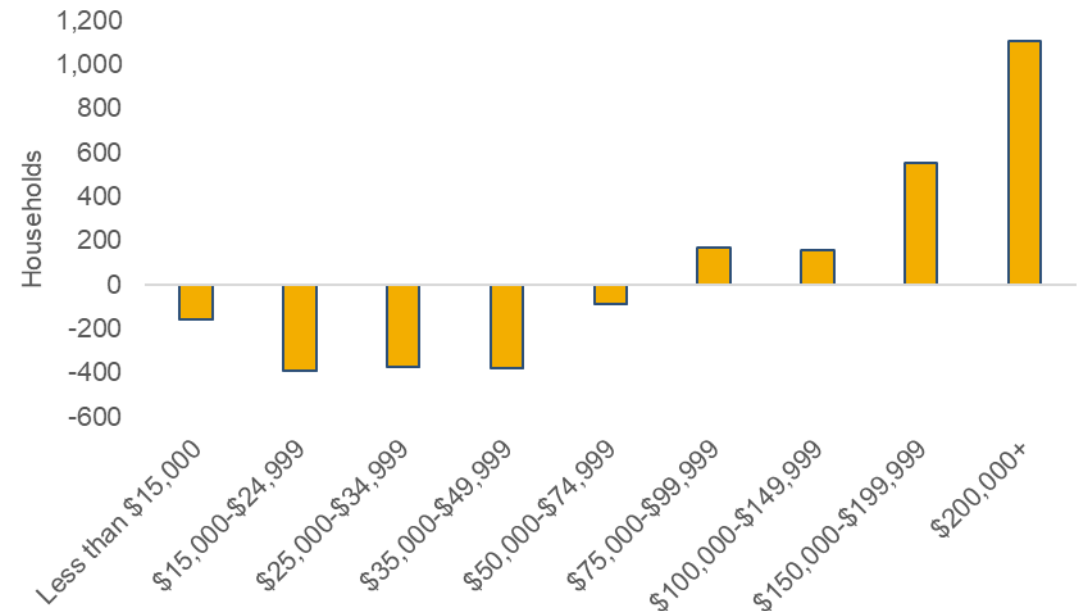
Demographics: Projected Household Growth by Age of Householder in the Primary Market Area, 2025 to 2030

7. Projected Household Growth by Age of Householder, Primary Market Area, 2025 to 2030



- Baby Boomers (Age 65 plus) will continue to drive household growth

8. Projected Household Growth by Income of Householder, Primary Market Area, 2025 to 2030



- Overall shift in growth to higher income groups—Millennials hitting higher income earning years and Baby Boomers with higher investment incomes



Demographics: Household Rental Rates and Housing Turnover for Homeowners and Renters

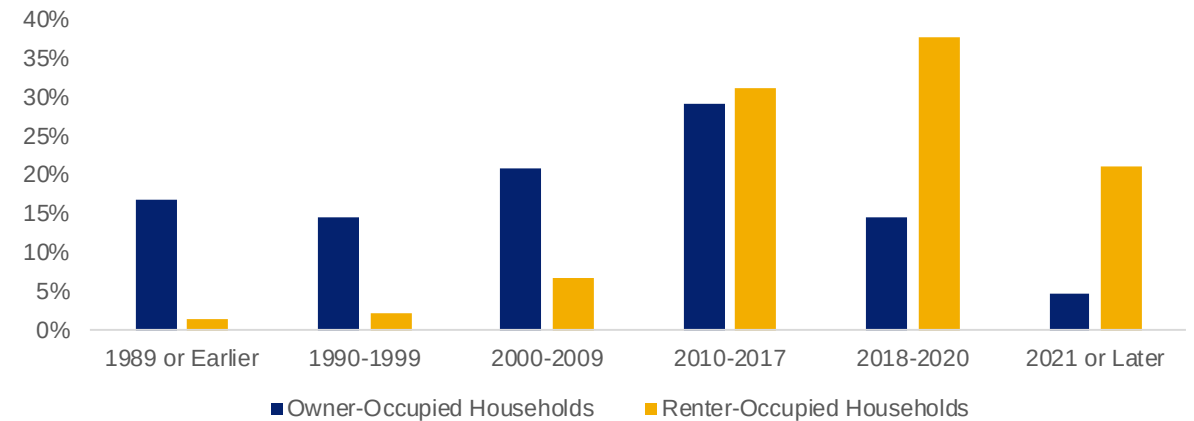
9 Household Rental Rates, 2023



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census; ESRI; LOCi Consulting LLC

- The household rental rate in the PMA is higher than the state of Minnesota as a whole

10 Move-In Year for Households in the Primary Market Area, 2023

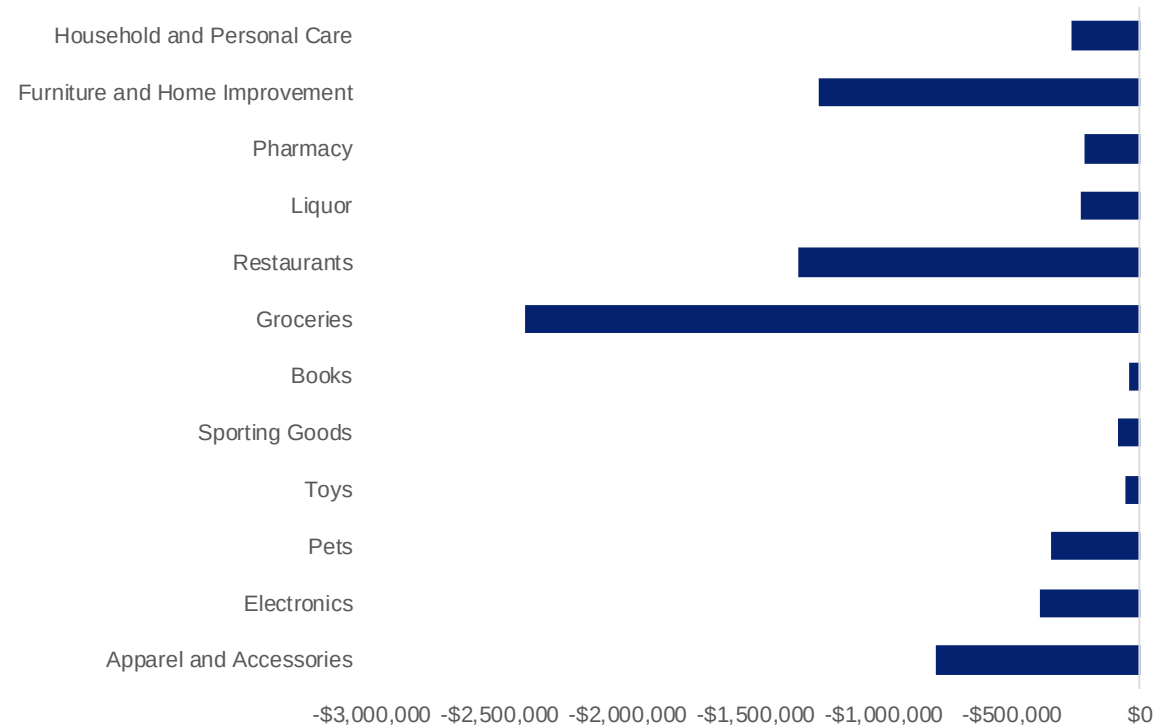


Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau; ESRI; LOCi Consulting LLC

- In 2023, it is estimated that 19% of homeowners and 59% of renters moved into their homes in the previous five years
- This data is used to determine housing demand from turnover within existing households

Demographics: Change in Consumer Expenditure in Retail Categories

11 Forecasted Change in Consumer Spending in the PMA, 2025-2030



* Data is shown in 2025 Dollars, adjusted from ESRI projection. ESRI assumes 2.4% inflation.

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI; LOCi Consulting LLC

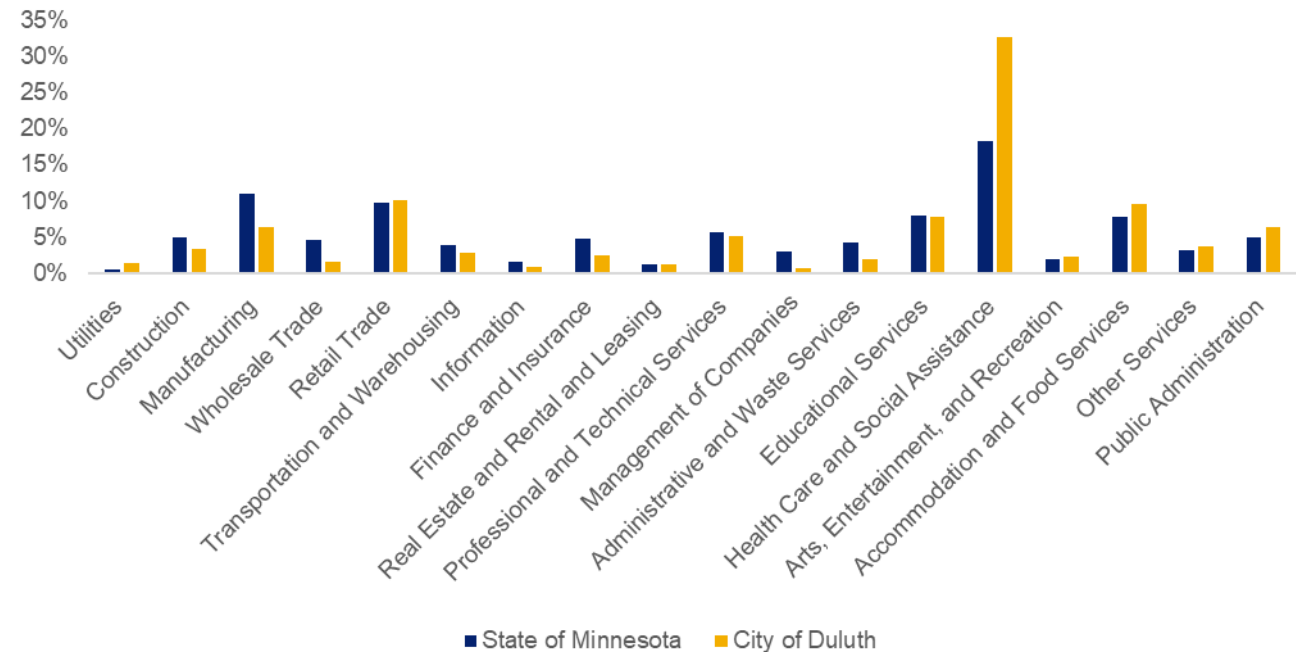
- Retail expenditure is projected to decline by about \$7 million in the Primary Market Area (this data is adjusted for inflation)
- As shown with household incomes, growth in incomes is not keeping up with inflation. This means that overall spending, while positive, is offset by inflationary pressures
- This decline is driven by an aging population that is not offset by new households
- This decline in demand will likely result in reductions in the overall amount of retail real estate square footage
- However, new construction will occur, with new developments in high traffic areas replacing obsolete retail building in lower traffic areas

Demographics: Employment by Industry

- Compared to the rest of Minnesota, the city of Duluth has a higher percentage of Health Care and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services, and Public Administration jobs
- These types of jobs are more likely to be located at office, medical office, retail, and restaurant spaces

12

Distribution of Employment for the City of Duluth and State of Minnesota, 2024



Notes:

Mining is not disclosed for the City of Duluth because the employment number is concentrated in a small number of establishments.

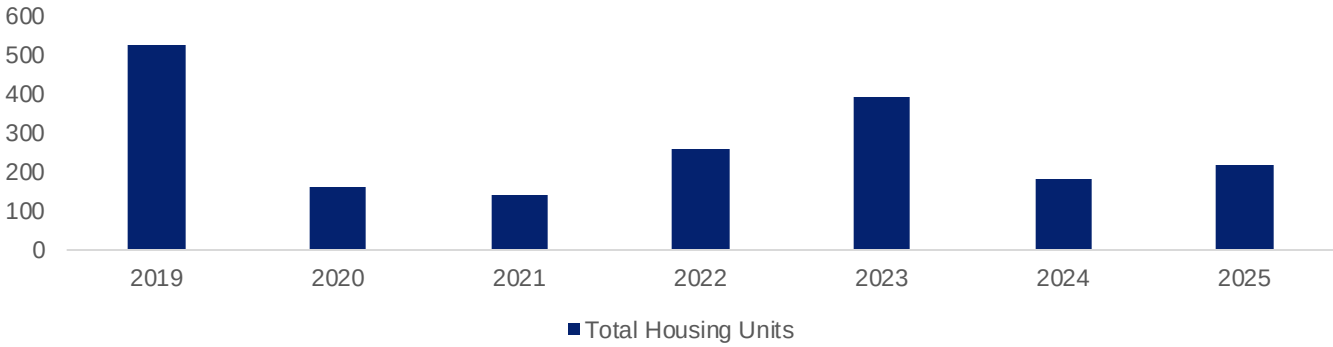
Source: Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; Employment Outlook; LOCi Consulting LLC



Building Permits: Duluth is averaging 270 housing unit permits per year since 2019



13 Residential Building Permit Units in the City of Duluth, 2019-2025



	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Housing Units	527	162	141	259	395	180	219
Single-Family Structures	57	42	67	72	45	62	51
Townhomes and Twinhomes	16	4	0	0	4	2	4
Multifamily Units (5+)	454	116	74	187	346	116	164

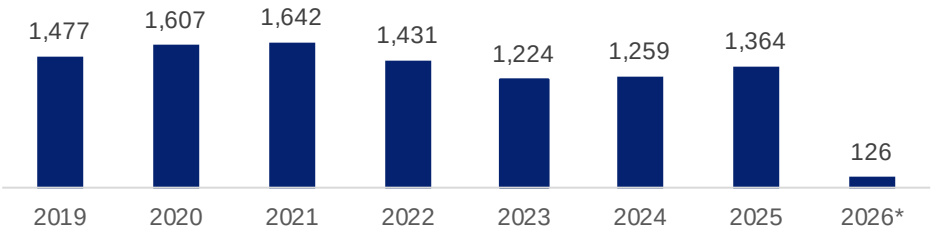
Source: City of Duluth; Maxfield Research and Consulting; HUD SOCDS Data; LOCi Consulting LLC



Residential Market: Existing home sales started to tick back up in 2025, following a slower market in 2023 and 2024

- Closed transactions bumped up 8% from 2024 to 2025
- However, transactions had declined -25% from 2021 to 2023, driven by challenging homebuying conditions and less inventory
- The median sale price of sold homes in Duluth in 2025 was \$300,000, 18% lower than the state (\$355,000)
- Inventory of homes is still low. The market has 1.7 months of inventory—generally 5-6 months of inventory is considered healthy

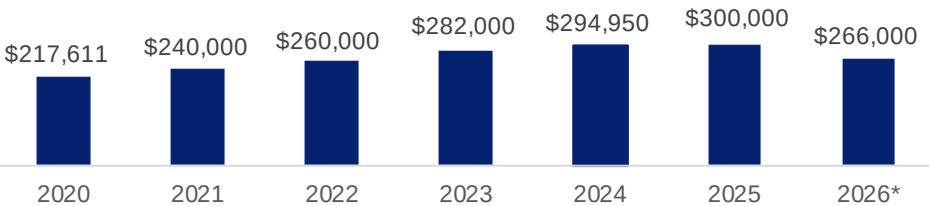
14 Residential Real Estate Transactions in Duluth



*2026 YTD is through February 2026

Source: Multiple Listing Service; LOCi Consulting LLC

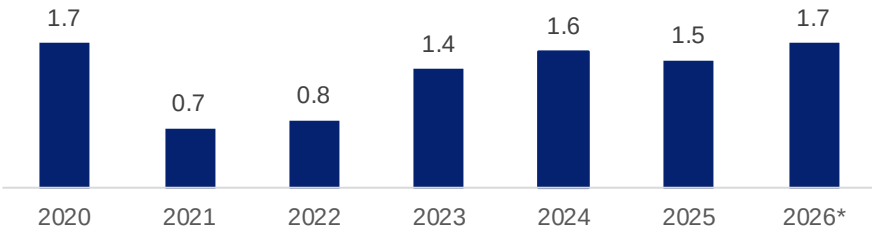
15 Median Sales Price of Home Sales



*2026 YTD is through February 2026

Source: Multiple Listing Service; LOCi Consulting LLC

16 Months Supply of Inventory at the End of the Year



*2026 is at the end of February 2026

Source: Multiple Listing Service; LOCi Consulting LLC



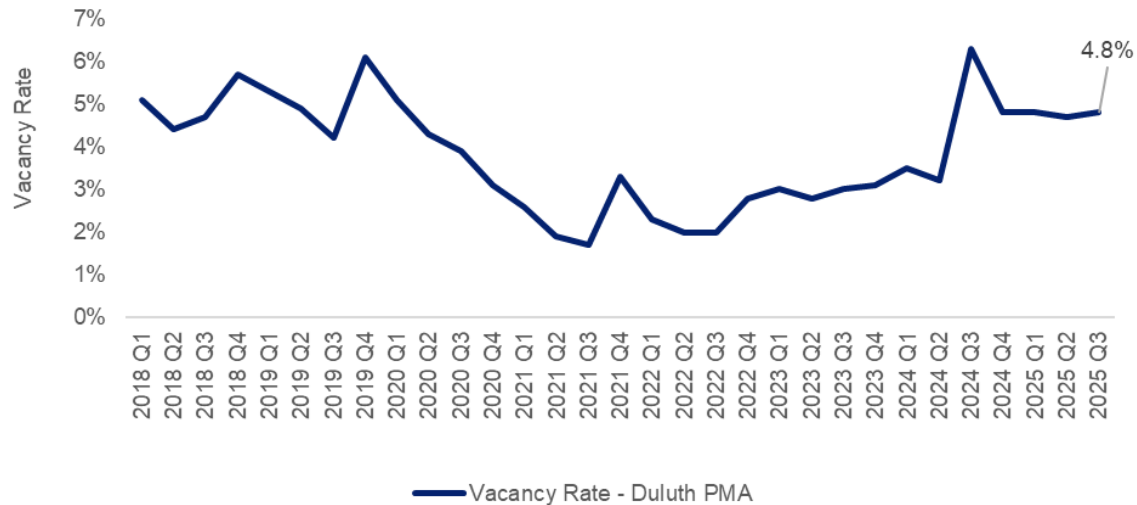
Residential Market: Recently Marketing Residential Developments in the PMA

Development	Units	Square Footage	Price Points	Estimated Units per Acre
London East Duluth Side-by-Side Townhomes and Single-Family Homes 2019	23 (12 sold)	1,965 – 3,130	\$446,000 - \$695,000	7.6 (3.0-acre development)
Cottage Hill Duluth Cottage Homes 2022	14 (10 sold)	1,820 - 1,828	\$459,000 - \$552,000	6.0 – 9.0 (Typical lot sizes are 0.11 to 0.15 acres)
Peyton Acres, Phase 5 Hermantown Single Family Lots 2024	8 lots (7 Sold)	NA	\$125,000 - \$150,000 (Lot Prices)	1.14 (Lots per Acre) (7.0-acre development)



Rental Market: New rental product developed in the market has kept the vacancy rate at or above 5%, but market-rate rents are still seeing growth

17 Vacancy Rates for Market-Rate Rental in the PMA

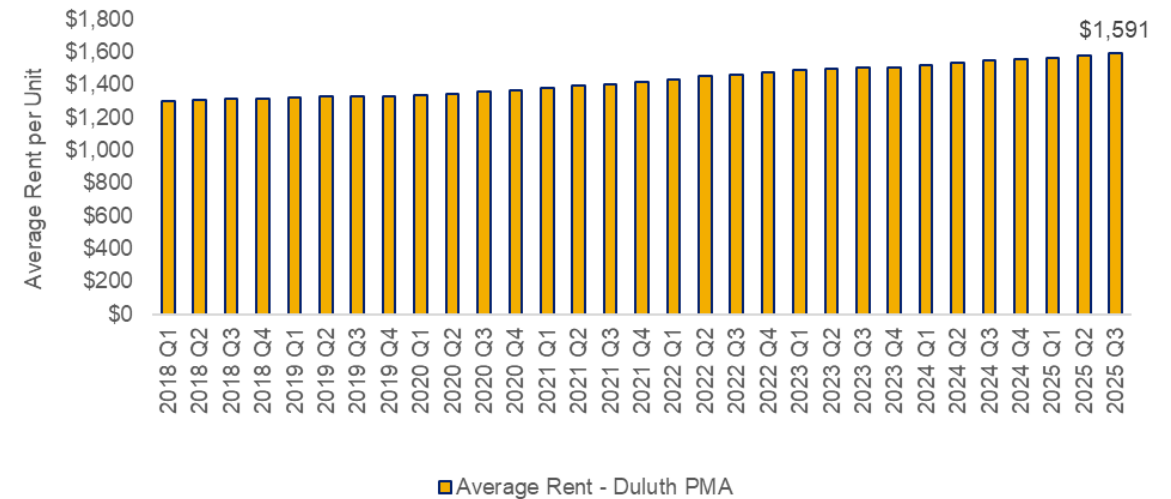


* Data is Q1 2018 to Q4 2025.

Source: CoStar; LOCi Consulting LLC

- The vacancy rate for market rate rental units in Duluth was 4.8% in Q3 2025—lower than the Minnesota rate of 6.3%
- The Duluth Housing Needs Analysis survey—which included more small apartment buildings—found a vacancy rate of 1.5%

18 Avg. Rental Rates for Market Rate Rental in the PMA



* Data is Q1 2018 to Q4 2025.

** Average Rent is asking rent, not effective rent.

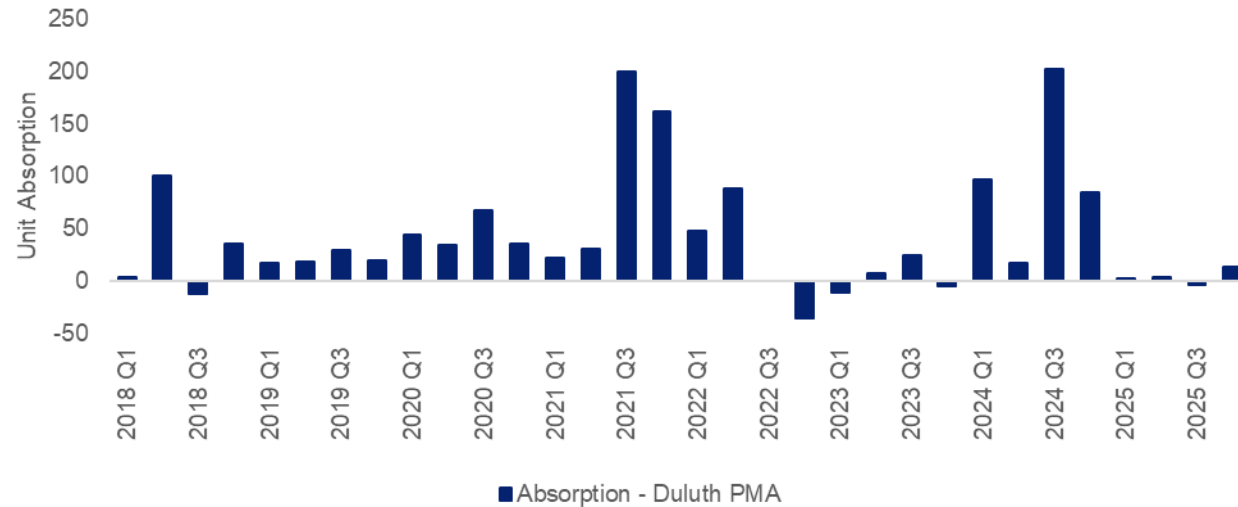
Source: CoStar; LOCi Consulting LLC

- The average market rate rent in Duluth was \$1,591—about 7% higher than the state average (\$1,485)



Residential Market: The PMA has seen an average rental unit absorption of about 42 units per year since 2018

19 Net Absorption for Market Rate Rental Units in the PMA



* Data is Q1 2018 to Q4 2025.

Source: CoStar; LOCi Consulting LLC

- The Duluth rental market has seen slower absorption in the last year compared to 2024





Rental Market: Selected Newer Rental Building in the Market Area

Development	Year Built	Rent Type	Units	Vacancies	Square Footages	Rents	Estimated Units per Acre
Brewery Creek Apartments 603 E 4th Street, Duluth	2024	Affordable	52	3	862 – 1,084	\$858+	64.2 (0.81 acres)
The Acres on Arrowhead 3425 Eischen Court, Duluth <i>(114 units existing, 189 units under construction)</i>	2024	Market Rate	114	35	346 – 1,175	\$1,150 – 2,295	16.7 (11.29 acres)
Arris Duluth 330 E Palm Street, Duluth	2024	Market Rate	200	8	484 – 1,344	\$1,312 – 3,271	99.5 (2.01 acres)
Grindstone 4050 Haines Road, Duluth	2023	Market Rate	33	4	634 - 976	\$1,682 – 2,200	19.0 (1.74 acres)



Rental Market: Selected Newer Rental Building in the Market Area (Continued)

Development	Year Built	Rent Type	Units	Vacancies	Square Footages	Rents	Estimated Units per Acre
Lincoln Park Flats 2102 W Superior Street, Duluth	2022	Market Rate	74	0	490 – 1,012	\$1,273 – 2,186	81.3 (0.91 acres)
Morgan Park Estates 8925 Hilton Street, Duluth	2021	Market Rate	96	1	1,067 – 1,144	\$1,875 – 1,960	8.9 (10.8 acres)
Decker Dwellings 4715 Decker Road, Duluth	2021	Affordable	41	4	500 – 1,000	\$850 – 955	146.4 (0.28 acres)
Aery 4498 Ugstad Road, Hermantown	2021	Market Rate	147	0	540 – 1,679	\$1,273 – 2,186	29.4 (5.0 acres)



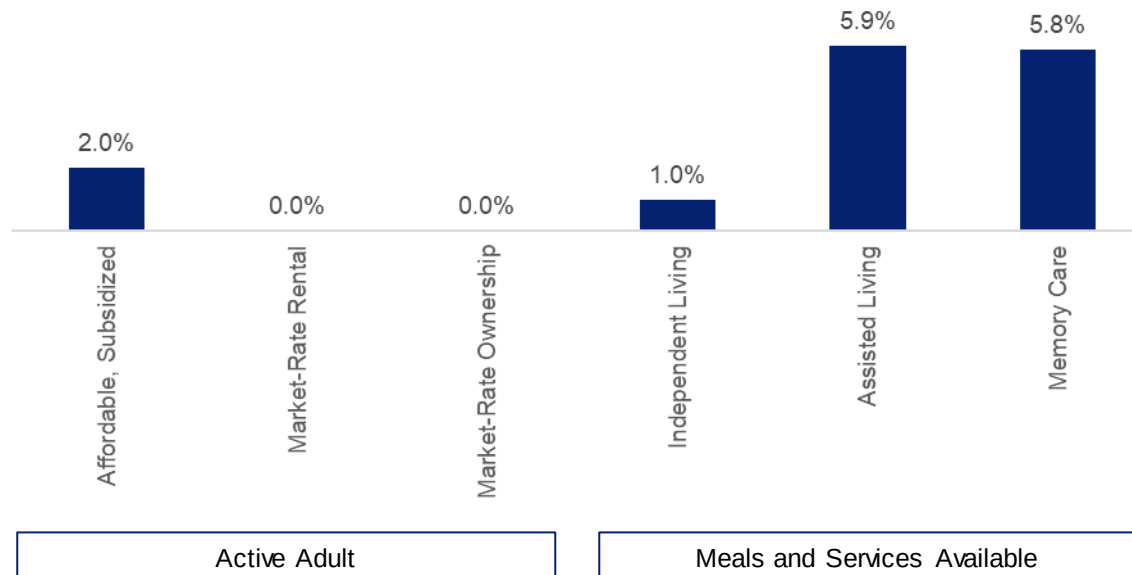
Rental Market: Selected Newer Rental Building in the Market Area (Continued)

Development	Year Built	Rent Type	Units	Vacancies	Square Footages	Rents	Estimated Units per Acre
Vue at BlueStone 120 Summit Street, Duluth	2022	Market Rate	193	0	436 – 1,512	\$1,398 – 3,693	141.9 (1.36 acres)
The Cove 1 East 1st Street, Duluth	2020	Market Rate	48	6	352 – 1,316	\$1,024 – 1,835	73.8 (0.65 acres)



Senior Housing Market: Vacancy rates are below equilibrium (5%-7%) in the PMA

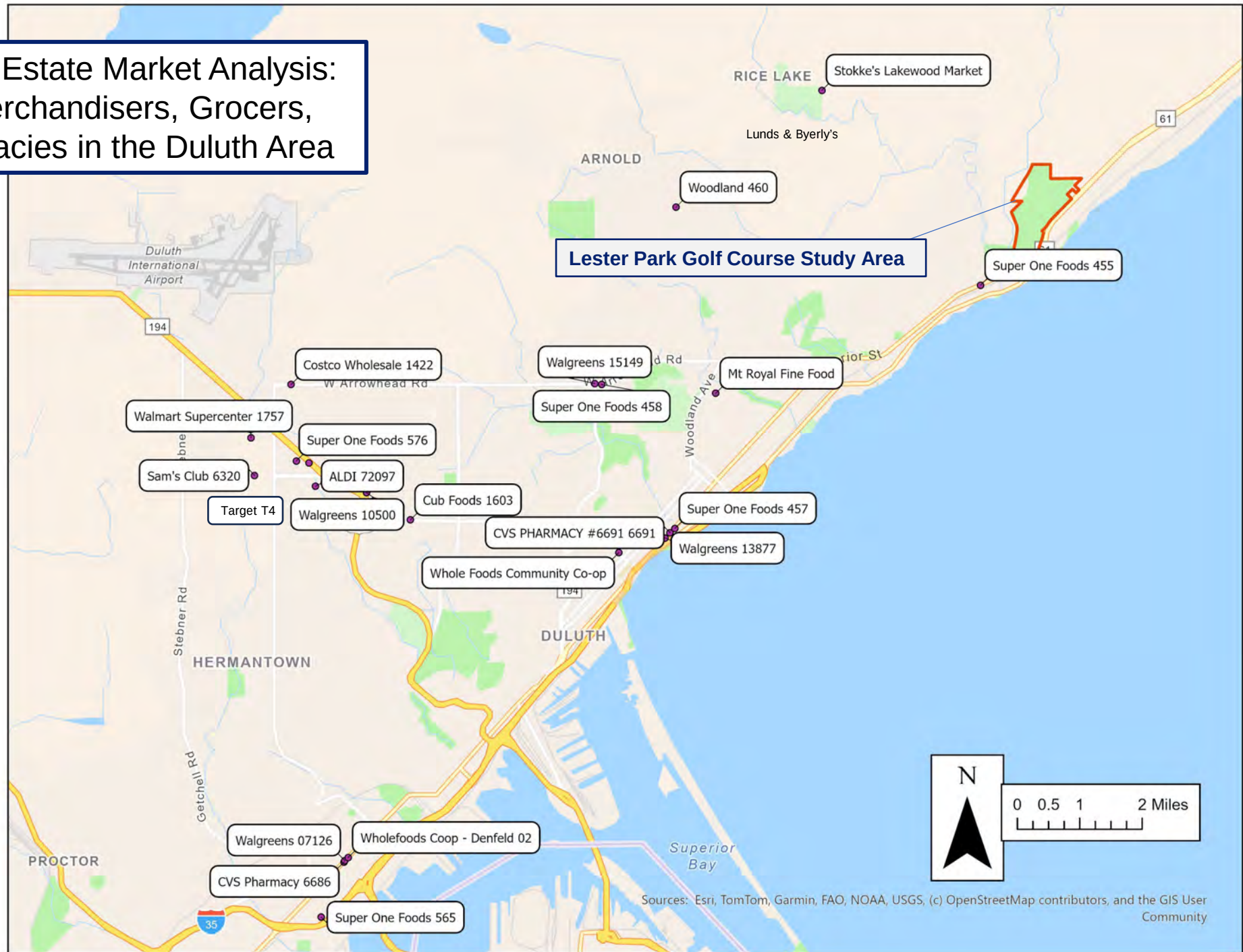
20 Vacancy Rates for Senior Housing in PMA, February 2025



- Overall vacancy rates are below 5% for active adult senior housing (limited services offered) and below 7% for service intensive senior housing
- Maxfield Research and Consulting study found demand for the following units between, 2025 and 2035:
 - Senior Affordable/Subsidized: 999
 - Senior Active Adult Rental: 366
 - Senior Active Adult Owner: 256
 - Independent Living: 299
 - Assisted Living: 147
 - Memory Care: 321
- Typical densities range from about 50 to 100 units per acre

Source: Maxfield Research and Consulting; LOCi Consulting LLC

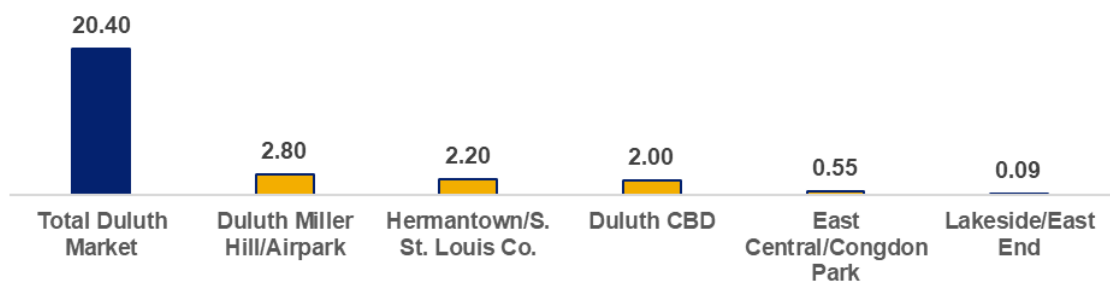
Retail Real Estate Market Analysis: General Merchandisers, Grocers, and Pharmacies in the Duluth Area





Retail Real Estate Market: the Duluth Market has about 20.4 million square feet of retail space; the PMA has seen steady retail construction in recent years

21 Existing Square Footage of Retail Space

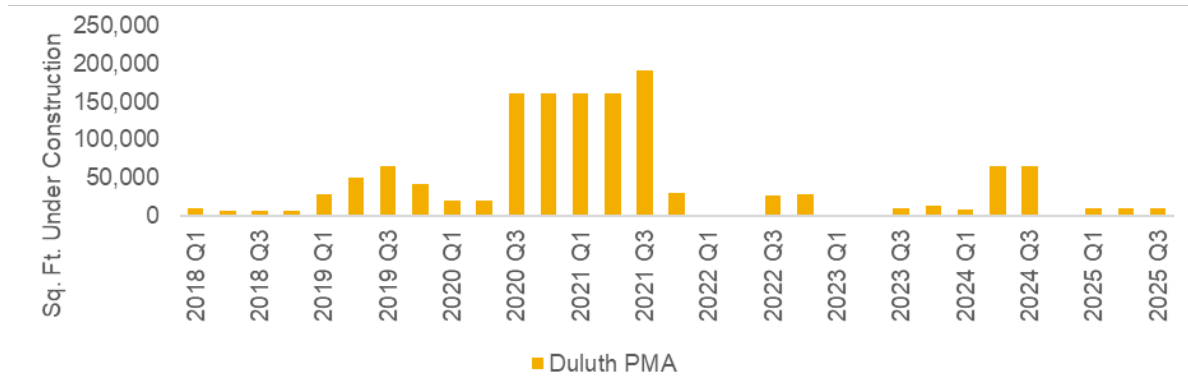


* Duluth Market includes St. Louis and Carlton Counties in Minnesota and Douglas County in Wisconsin.

Source: CoStar; LOCi Consulting LLC

- There is about 90,000-square feet of space in the Lakeside/East End submarket (includes Lester Park neighborhood)
- Retail space in the accounts for less than 1% of all retail space in the Duluth Market

22 Sq. Footage of Retail Space Under Construction in the Duluth PMA



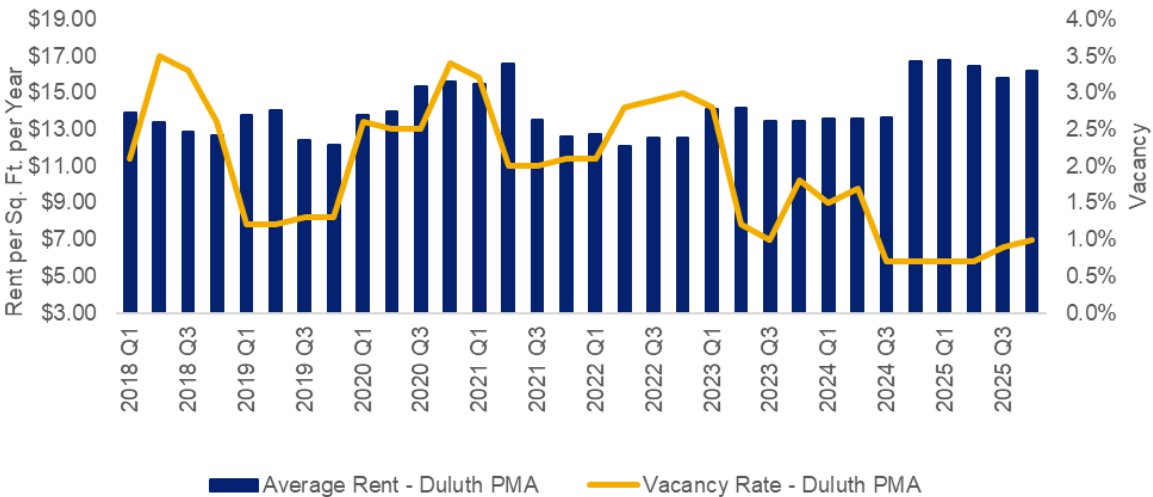
Source: CoStar; LOCi Consulting LLC

- The PMA has seen new space construction over the entire period (The new Costco dominated construction over 2020 and 2021)



Retail Real Estate Market: Vacancy rates for retail are low in the Duluth PMA and the market has seen strong absorption of available space

23 Avg. Lease and Vacancy Rates for Retail Space in the Duluth PMA

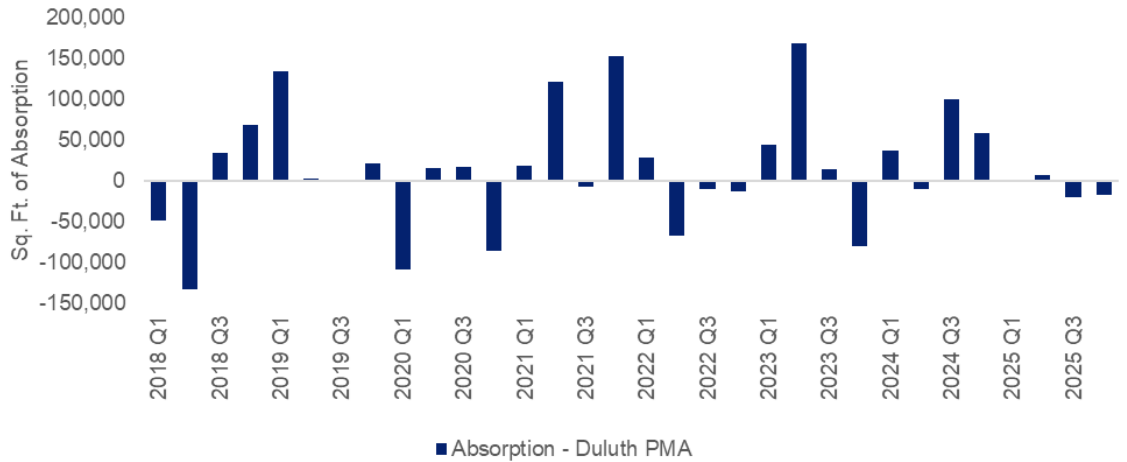


* Data is Q1 2018 to Q4 2025.
** Average Rent is for Triple Net Direct.

Source: CoStar; LOCi Consulting LLC

- The Duluth PMA's retail vacancy rate was 1.0% in the 4th quarter of 2025 (versus an estimated 5% for the state as a whole)

24 Net Absorption for Retail Space in the Duluth PMA



* Data is Q1 2018 to Q4 2025.

Source: CoStar; LOCi Consulting LLC

- The retail market in the Duluth PMA has seen average annual absorption* of over 14,000 square feet of space per year (2018-2025). However, over the last four quarters absorption has slowed



Retail Real Estate Market: New Construction in the Duluth PMA since 2020

Development	Year Built	Square Footage	Acreage	Floor Area Ratio
4744 E Milwaukee Ave – Dollar General	2026	10,566	2.67	0.09
5671 Miller Trunk Hwy	2024	4,017	0.48	0.19
610 W Central Entrance – Mister Car Wash	2024	5,000	0.71	0.16
8550 Grand Ave – Ski Hut	2024	11,304	0.97	0.27
8552 Grand Ave – Burnett Dairy Cheese Store	2024	5,350	0.10	1.26
1530 Miller Trunk Hwy – Chik-Fil-A	2024	4,800	38.22	0.00
2327 Mountain Shadow Dr – Planet Fitness	2023	22,320	2.50	2.50



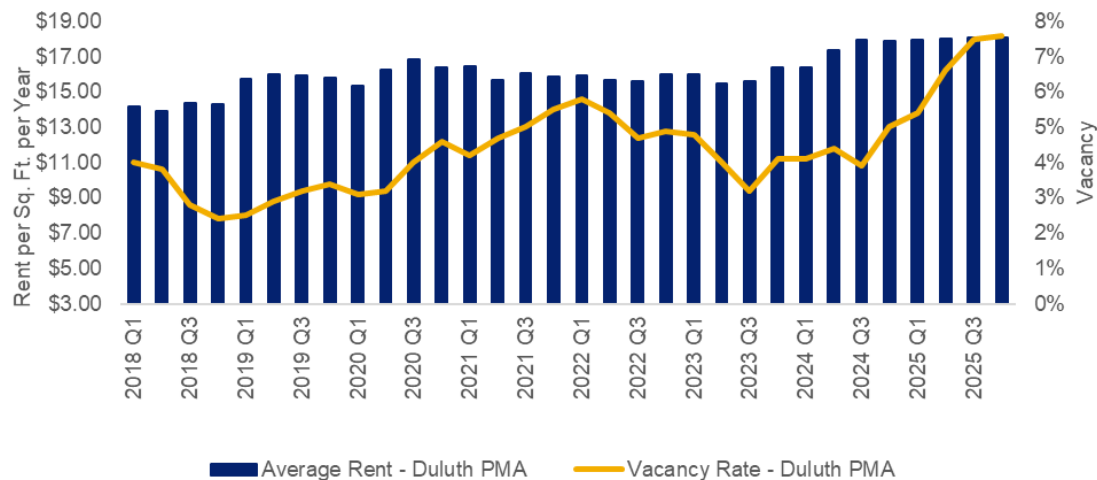
Retail Real Estate Market: New Construction in the Duluth PMA since 2020 (Continued)

Development	Year Built	Square Footage	Acreage	Floor Area Ratio
5601 Miller Trunk Hwy – Caribou Coffee	2023	625	4.08	0.00
3501 W Arrowhead Rd – Bell Bank	2023	4,575	1.50	0.07
2031 London Rd – Taco Bell	2023	1,354	0.41	0.08
4135 Richard Ave – Hermantown Marketplace Shops	2022	17,660	2.00	0.20
4611 W Arrowhead Rd – Costco	2021	161,287	5.00	0.74
4140 Richard Ave – Hermantown Marketplace Shops	2020	20,359	2.00	0.23



Office Real Estate Market: Vacancy rates have increased over the last two years in the PMA. Almost all recently constructed office has been medical office

25 Avg. Lease and Vacancy Rates for Office Space in the Duluth PMA



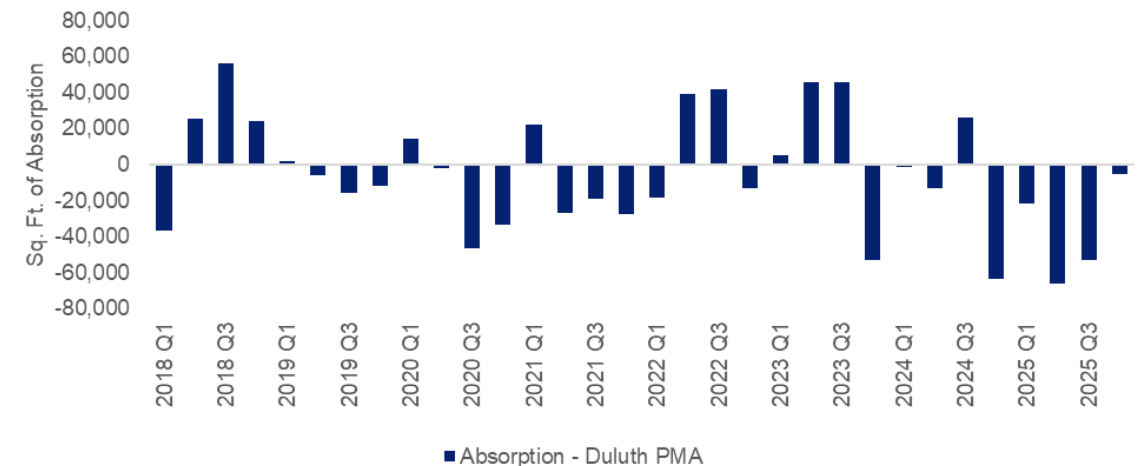
* Data is Q1 2018 to Q4 2025.

** Average Rent is for overall rent.

Source: CoStar; LOCi Consulting LLC

- Duluth's office vacancy rate was 7.6% in 4th quarter of 2025 (versus 10.3% for the state)

26 Net Absorption for Office Space in the Duluth PMA



* Data is Q1 2018 to Q4 2025.

Source: CoStar; LOCi Consulting LLC

- The Duluth office market has seen negative absorption* of about -185,000 square feet per year in the last eight years



Office Real Estate Market: New Office Constructed in Duluth since 2020 – all is medical office or mixed-use retail and office

Development	Year Built	Square Footage	Acreage	Floor Area Ratio
4289 Ugsted Road – Essentia Wellness Center	2024	48,646	13.04	0.09
4135 Richard Ave – Hermantown Marketplace Shops	2022	17,660	2.00	0.20
4140 Richard Ave – Hermantown Marketplace Shops	2020	20,359	2.00	0.23



Themes from Interviews with Multifamily and Mixed-Use Developers

Multifamily Residential

- All developers interviewed said the golf course redevelopment site has premiums (proximity to natural amenities, lake views, etc.) that would make it work well for single-family home development
- Duluth needs more higher-end housing for professionals living in and moving to the area. There are limited options for these buyers and renters
- Developers were split on whether it would work for apartment development—some said the natural setting would be a differentiator in contrast to other apartments, others said it was too far from central Duluth
- Developers said rental townhomes would be in demand, but one said that he has not been able to make those work financially
- Multifamily buildings need underground parking to be marketable
- One developer suggested that the project should be phased west to east, to encourage development in the back end of the study area
- Developers said there are significant financial hurdles to development in Duluth, and there are limited resources to address these

Retail and Commercial

- Developers said the site would work for retail, but it would never be as strong as other parts of the market. It would be a destination site not convenience





Themes from Interviews with Homebuilders



Homebuilder Capacity

- The Duluth market is made up of many smaller, local homebuilders that do 10 to 20 homes per year. There is no national homebuilder presence
- Local homebuilders struggle to find subcontractors and workers—although one local homebuilder said it has been better in recent years with a general slowdown in construction activity
- National homebuilders want to see sales velocity of 300 to 500 homes per year in a market before they will set up operations, said one national homebuilder. The job growth in Duluth does not support that development pace

Homebuilding at the Site

- The natural amenities of the area are one of its greatest selling points
- One homebuilder said homes could be sold in the \$750,000+ range at the site, but they would absolutely have to have lake views
- Homebuilders said that a range of housing types (single family, townhomes, apartments) could work at the site, but those areas would have to be thoughtfully segmented
- One homebuilder said that lot sizes need to be generous. He said buyers in Duluth want space for their kids to play and to be able to store their boats and snowmobiles
- One homebuilder said he is reluctant to pursue projects in Duluth—more specifically East Duluth. He said it is easier to work in West Duluth and Hermantown



Themes from Interviews with Realtors

- There is very low inventory in the market for move-up buyers and new professionals seeking to move to the area
- When single-family home lots open up in Duluth, they sell fast. One relator pointed to the Hawks Ridge development as an example
- Realtors interviewed said the Lester Park Golf Course would be a good location for higher-end housing—it is a pretty property, close to the lake, and located in the desirable east side of Duluth
- One realtor cautioned against too many townhomes—"We are just not a community that buys townhomes."
- Townhomes currently being built in Duluth are not targeted to first-time homebuyers. These homes are higher-end homes targeted to buyers looking for maintenance free options
- There is a market for association-maintained homes, but, because those are a smaller segment of the market, that should not be a large portion of the development
- Many buyers are looking for one-level homes
- Some buyers would be willing to purchase homes with smaller lot sizes if there is good connectivity to natural areas and trails
- Quality lots have sold for \$150,000-\$200,000 across the greater Duluth market
- Most new construction starts at \$450,000



Appendix



Market Analysis Methodology Summary

	Summary of Demand Estimate Methodology	Sources of Data
Residential Demand	1. Use household forecasts from ESRI to forecast demand from new households. 2. Use existing rental rates to estimate split between for-sale and rental. 3. Use turnover rates to estimate demand from existing households. 4. Use building permits and recent sales to estimate the demand for single-family versus attached units. 5. Calibrate with absorption from market analysis and with other estimates. 6. Project forward next 10 years using population and household assumptions from Duluth Housing Needs Analysis and the State Demographers Office.	• US Census • HUD and City of Duluth (building permits) • ESRI • Duluth Housing Needs Analysis – Maxfield Research • Costar • Lake Superior Association of Realtors • Fieldwork, interviews, and other primary research
Commercial Demand	1. Understand strengths and challenges for commercial uses at the site 2. Use consumer expenditure and employment projections to estimate increase in demand for retail and office space. 3. Use site analysis, sales tax data, and existing commercial space to estimate amount capturable by the site. 4. Calibrate with findings from the commercial market analyses. 5. Project forward next 10 year using population, household, and employment assumptions from other sources.	• City of Duluth • US Census • ESRI • Minnesota DEED • Costar • Fieldwork, interviews, and other primary research

A.1 Median Household Income

	Estimate 2025	Forecast 2030	Proj. Annual Growth Rate 2025-2030
Primary Market Area	\$69,630	\$75,500	1.6%
<u>Entrance to Lester Park Golf Course</u>			
5-Minute Drive-Time Area	\$100,824	\$107,195	1.2%
10-Minute Drive-Time Area	\$103,661	\$111,237	1.4%
15-Minute Drive-Time Area	\$68,766	\$72,861	1.2%
30-Minute Drive-Time Area	\$70,867	\$77,319	1.8%
60-Minute Drive-Time Area	\$74,643	\$80,784	1.6%
120-Minute Drive-Time Area	\$70,815	\$78,104	2.0%
City of Duluth	\$64,351	\$69,259	1.5%
St. Louis County	\$69,462	\$76,494	1.9%
State of Minnesota	\$88,297	\$98,505	2.2%
United States	\$81,624	\$92,476	2.5%

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI; LOCi Consulting LLC

A.2 Households by Age and Income in the Primary Market Area

2025							
	Age of Householder						
	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Less than \$15,000	500	559	364	396	723	714	744
\$15,000-\$24,999	420	407	309	258	488	642	884
\$25,000-\$34,999	450	613	452	293	521	593	861
\$35,000-\$49,999	609	900	677	481	667	989	1,155
\$50,000-\$74,999	802	1,515	1,190	892	1,150	1,550	1,141
\$75,000-\$99,999	406	1,139	1,142	904	910	975	519
\$100,000-\$149,999	304	1,432	1,769	1,479	1,293	1,111	515
\$150,000-\$199,999	73	630	981	858	672	474	264
\$200,000+	26	538	1,010	977	761	494	221
Median HH Inc.	\$44,333	\$72,062	\$94,872	\$100,942	\$75,907	\$60,896	\$42,274
State of Minnesota	\$51,315	\$90,112	\$110,683	\$114,957	\$101,198	\$73,165	\$46,918

2030							
	Age of Householder						
	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Less than \$15,000	483	485	342	387	589	657	898
\$15,000-\$24,999	362	353	255	236	364	541	907
\$25,000-\$34,999	403	540	401	265	396	503	904
\$35,000-\$49,999	565	812	593	470	531	852	1,277
\$50,000-\$74,999	809	1,452	1,071	869	996	1,515	1,443
\$75,000-\$99,999	413	1,103	1,128	960	850	1,008	702
\$100,000-\$149,999	311	1,431	1,681	1,581	1,210	1,149	695
\$150,000-\$199,999	79	686	1,055	1,000	736	549	397
\$200,000+	29	663	1,206	1,294	902	653	383
Median HH Inc.	\$47,014	\$77,063	\$101,430	\$107,455	\$85,393	\$67,236	\$47,172
State of Minnesota	\$54,420	\$100,610	\$119,388	\$125,611	\$112,821	\$83,349	\$53,868

A.3 Consumer Spending in Retail Categories In the PMA

	Estimate 2025	Forecast 2030	Growth 2025-2030
Apparel and Accessories	\$20,009,553	\$19,209,423	-\$800,130
Electronics	\$9,880,929	\$9,485,586	-\$395,343
Pets	\$8,771,190	\$8,421,301	-\$349,889
Toys	\$1,504,950	\$1,444,815	-\$60,135
Sporting Goods	\$2,119,814	\$2,035,323	-\$84,491
Books	\$1,067,105	\$1,024,670	-\$42,435
Groceries	\$60,087,636	\$57,681,739	-\$2,405,897
Restaurants	\$33,367,042	\$32,032,827	-\$1,334,215
Liquor	\$5,763,669	\$5,534,530	-\$229,139
Pharmacy	\$5,426,271	\$5,208,905	-\$217,366
Furniture and Home Improvement	\$31,467,809	\$30,214,984	-\$1,252,825
Household and Personal Care	\$6,745,439	\$6,475,058	-\$270,381
Total	\$186,211,407	\$178,769,160	-\$7,442,247

* Data is shown in 2025 Dollars, adjusted from ESRI projection. ESRI assumes 2.4% inflation.

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI; LOCi Consulting LLC

A4 Est. Employment by Industry for the City of Duluth and State of Minnesota, 2024

	State of Minnesota		City of Duluth	
	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.
Mining	5,803	0%	NA	NA
Utilities	14,666	0%	787	1%
Construction	145,211	5%	1,865	3%
Manufacturing	320,482	11%	3,595	6%
Wholesale Trade	134,249	5%	862	2%
Retail Trade	285,279	10%	5,668	10%
Transportation and Warehousing	116,561	4%	1,630	3%
Information	46,787	2%	536	1%
Finance and Insurance	138,288	5%	1,350	2%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	35,888	1%	723	1%
Professional and Technical Services	167,633	6%	2,908	5%
Management of Companies	86,702	3%	370	1%
Administrative and Waste Services	123,498	4%	1,050	2%
Educational Services	234,645	8%	4,421	8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	533,495	18%	18,407	33%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	54,576	2%	1,272	2%
Accommodation and Food Services	229,690	8%	5,367	9%
Other Services	91,949	3%	2,110	4%
Public Administration	145,115	5%	3,632	6%
Total	2,934,052	100%	56,579	100%

Notes:

Mining is not disclosed for the City of Duluth because the employment number is concentrated in a small number of establishments.

Source: Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; Employment Outlook; LOCi Consulting LLC

A.5 For-Sale Housing Demand in the Study Area, 2025 to 2030

Demand from Household Growth in the PMA		
Households in 2025		46,786
Households in 2030		47,380
Projected growth of the market		594
Estimated percentage that will choose new for-sale housing		65%
Units needed to meet demand from household growth in the PMA		384
Demand from For-Sale Housing Turnover in the PMA		
Estimated number of households that own in the PMA in 2025		30,212
Pct. that will seek new for-sale housing between 2025 and 2030		19%
Pct. that will choose new for-sale housing		5%
Units needed to meet demand from turnover in PMA		287
Demand from Outside the PMA		
Estimated demand from outside PMA		5%
Total Demand for For-Sale Housing in the PMA		706
Demand in the PMA by Housing Type ¹	Single-Family	Townhomes
	90%	10%
Units needed in the PMA	636	71
Capturable by the Study Area	25%	75%
Units needed in the Study Area	159	53

1. Based on distribution of building permits, 2019-2025.

Source: LOCi Consulting LLC

A.6 Income Needed for Newly Constructed Market-Rate For-Sale Housing

	Mid-Level	Higher-Level
Home Price	\$450,000	\$750,000
Down Payment (10%)	\$45,000	\$75,000
Estimated Closing Costs (3%)	\$13,500	\$22,500
Total Loan Amount	\$418,500	\$697,500
Interest Rate for 30-Year Mortgage	6.50%	6.50%
Monthly Payment (Principal and Interest)	\$2,645	\$4,409
Property Tax	\$375	\$625
Homeowners Insurance	\$150	\$250
Mortgage Insurance	\$174	\$291
Home Maintenance and Repair	\$100	\$100
Total Monthly Housing Cost	\$3,445	\$5,674
Total Annual Housing Cost	\$41,335	\$68,092
Household Income Required Assuming 30% Affordability	\$138,000	\$227,000
Income Range	\$135,000 - \$200,000	\$200,000+
Households in the PMA, 2025	6,307	4,027
Percent of all Households in the PMA, 2025	13.5%	8.6%

* Data is for 2025.

A.6 Rental Housing Demand in the Study Area, 2025 to 2030

Demand from Household Growth in the PMA	
Households in 2025	46,786
Households in 2030	47,380
Projected growth of the market	594
Estimated percentage that will choose new rental housing	35%
Units needed to meet demand from household growth in the PMA	210
Demand from For-Sale Housing Turnover in the PMA	
Estimated number of households that rent in the PMA in 2024	16,574
Pct. that will seek new rental housing between 2025 and 2030	59%
Pct. that will choose new rental housing	15%
Units needed to meet demand from turnover in PMA	1,458
Planned and Pending Rental Units	
Planned or pending rental units	300
Total Demand for For-Sale Housing in the PMA	1,368
Demand from Outside the PMA	
Estimated demand from outside PMA	5%
Total Demand for For-Sale Housing in the PMA	1,440
Capturable by the Study Area	15%
Total Demand for For-Sale Housing in the PMA	216

Source: LOCi Consulting LLC

A.8 Income Needed for Newly Constructed Market-Rate Rental

	Workforce Rental	Market-Rate Low	Market-Rate High
Monthly Rent	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$3,000
Total Monthly Housing Cost	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$3,000
Total Annual Housing Cost	\$18,000	\$24,000	\$36,000
Household Income Required Assuming 30% Affordability	\$60,000	\$80,000	\$120,000
Income Range **	\$60,00 - \$80,000	\$80,000 - \$120,000	\$120,000+
Households in the PMA, 2025	6,143	7,957	12,721
Percent of all Households in the PMA, 2025	13.1%	17.0%	27.2%

** Data is for 2025.

Source: LOCi Consulting LLC



Notes on Senior Housing Demand

- Demand uses Housing Needs Analysis, 2025
- Maxfield Research and Consulting study found demand for the following units between, 2025 and 2035:
 - Senior Affordable/Subsidized: 999
 - Senior Active Adult Rental: 366
 - Senior Active Adult Owner: 256
 - Independent Living: 299
 - Assisted Living: 147
 - Memory Care: 321
- Typical densities range from about 50 to 100 units per acre (Source is Costar). Because a large portion is AL and MC, we use the lower end of the range
- Because the For-Sale and Rental demand calculations (A.5 and A.6) use all ages, those calculations include Active Adult Senior
- For remaining IL, AL, and MC, it assumed that the study area could capture half of that demand over the 10-year period—those calculations are needs based, not based on household growth and turnover



A.10 Retail Space Demand in the PMA, 2025-2030

Increase in Consumer Demand in 2025 Dollars, 2025 to 2030	- \$7,442,247
Percent of Consumer Demand Spent at Brick and Mortar Retail	85%
Demand from Brick-and-Mortar Retail in the Market	- \$6,326,000
Times Percentage Capturable by the Retail Node	1.0%
Equals Consumer Demand for Retail Sales in the Market	- \$63,260
Divided by Average Sales per Square Foot	\$400 - \$600
Equals Demand for New Retail Space in the Retail Node	-100 - -200

Source: ESRI; Minnesota Department of Revenue; Costar; LOCi Consulting LLC



A.11 Medical Office Space Demand in the Study Area, 2025-2030

Estimated Base of Medical Office Employment, Northeast Region, 2022 ¹	
Ambulatory Health Care Services	5,397
Total	5,397
Estimated Total Square Footage Medical Office in Northeast Region, 2026 ²	
	1,820,000
Medical Office Square Footage per Employee	337
Estimated Five-Year Growth of Medical Office Employment, Seven County Metro Area, 2022 - 2032	
Ambulatory Health Care Services	264
Total	264
Additional Medical Office Space Demanded in Northeast Region, 2025-2030	
	100,000
Medical Office SF in Duluth, 2025 ²	
	1,500,000
Medical Office SF in Duluth as Percent of Total Metro	82.4%
Estimated Demand for Medical Office SF in Duluth	82,418
Estimated capture rate for Study Area	10.0%
Estimated Demand for Medical Office SF in the Study Area	8,242

1. Northeast Region is Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis counties.
2. Costar data.

Source: ESRI; Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development; CoStar;
LOCi Consulting LLC



Data Resources and Study Limitations

The data in this market analysis are compiled from a variety of sources, including interviews with city officials, property managers, and real estate salespeople, along with secondary demographic, economic, and competitive resources. Sources are identified in the tables and figures.

LOCi Consulting believes that these sources are reliable. However, there is no way to authenticate this data and information. LOCi Consulting does not guarantee the data and assumes no liability for any errors in fact, analysis, or judgement. The data in this analysis includes the most recent information available at the time of this analysis.

The findings, conclusions, and recommendations in this demand analysis are based on the best judgements and analysis at the time of the study. LOCi Consulting makes no guarantees or assurances that the projections or conclusions will be realized as stated.



Thank you!

Services:

- Market studies
- Demographic analysis
- Customer segmentation
- Market identification
- Market sizing
- Competitive analysis
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and site selection
- Data analytics

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