



City of Duluth

Council Chambers, City
Hall

Meeting Agenda Planning Commission.

Council Chambers

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

5:00 PM

Council Chambers

Special Meeting

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA

OTHER BUSINESS

[PLSUB-2508-0010](#) Minor Subdivision at Swan Lake Rd (010-0803-00020) by Adam Schminski [CH]

Attachments: [PLSUB-2508-0010 Staff Report with Attachments](#)

[PLUMA-2509-0006](#) UDC Map Amendment for Lower Miller and Coffee Creek Shoreland Designations at 2402 W Michigan St by City of Duluth [JM]

Attachments: [PLUMA-2509-0006 Staff Memo w Attachments](#)

[PLOR-2510-0015](#) Resolution of the City of Duluth Planning Commission Recommending that the City Council Approve Sale of Certain Real Property in the Lester Park Neighborhood to the Duluth Economic Development Authority

Attachments: [PLOR-2510-0015 Memo](#)
[PLOR-2510-0015 Resolution](#)
[PLOR-2510-0015 Property Area Map](#)
[PLOR-2510-0015 Timeline 1](#)
[PLOR-2510-0015 Timeline 2](#)
[PLOR-2510-0015 Public Comments](#)

COMMUNICATIONS

Land Use Supervisor Report

Heritage Preservation Commission Report



Planning & Development Division
Planning & Economic Development Department

Room 160
 411 West First Street
 Duluth, Minnesota 55802



218-730-5580



planning@duluthmn.gov

File Number	PLSUB-2508-0010	Contact	Christian Huelsman, chuelsman@duluthmn.gov	
Type	Minor Subdivision	Planning Commission Date		October 15, 2025
Deadline for Action	Application Date	August 11, 2025	60 Days	October 10, 2025
	Date Extension Letter Mailed	August 19, 2025	120 Days	December 9, 2025
Location of Subject		Swan Lake Rd, northeast of Swan Lake Pl		
Applicant	Adam Schminski	Contact		
Agent	Darren Weets	Contact	3W Properties, Inc.	
Legal Description		PIN: 010-0803-00020		
Site Visit Date		October 2, 2025	Sign Notice Date	October 1, 2025
Neighbor Letter Date		September 19, 2025	Number of Letters Sent	29

Proposal:

Subdivide the parcel to create 4 separate lots through a minor subdivision between Swan Lake Rd and Swan Lake Ln.

Recommended Action: Staff recommends approval.

	Current Zoning	Existing Land Use	Future Land Use Map Designation
Subject	R-1	Vacant Land	Low-density Neighborhood
North	MU-N	Vacant Land	Rural Residential
South	R-1	Residential	Low-density Neighborhood
East	R-1	Residential	Low-density Neighborhood
West	R-1	Residential	Low-density Neighborhood

Summary of Code Requirements:

50-33.1 General: All subdivision plats and replats, and all registered land surveys, shall create lots, streets and walkways and open spaces consistent with the requirements of the zone district within which the land is located.

50-37.5, D 1. The planning commission shall approve the application if it determines that: (a) The lot or lots to be subdivided or combined have frontage on an improved public street; (b) Each proposed lot meets the minimum zoning requirements of the district that it is in; (c) If an existing structure on a lot complies with the requirements of this Chapter, then after the minor subdivision structures on each of the resulting lots will still comply with the requirements of this Chapter; and (d) If one or more of the existing lots, or a structure on one or more of those lots, does not comply with the requirements of this Chapter, the proposed relocation will not create any new nonconformity or increase any existing nonconformity between the requirements of this Chapter.

50-14.5.A R-1 Minimum lot area: 4,000 square feet for a one family dwelling, 2,000 square feet per family for a two-family dwelling, 2500 square feet for a townhouse; minimum lot frontage: 40 feet for one or two family, and 20 feet for a townhouse.

Comprehensive Plan Governing Principle and/or Policies and Current History (if applicable):

Governing Principle #5 - Promote reinvestment in neighborhoods.

New development or redevelopment should maximize public investment that strengthens neighborhood commercial centers or diversifies residential opportunities that fit the neighborhood's character.

Future Land Use: Low-density neighborhood – Single-family housing with urban services. Typified by curvilinear streets, houses with longer side parallel to street, and attached garages. Includes a range of house sizes and lot sizes. 3 to 4 units per acre.

History: The existing parcel was platted as part of Crystal Village in 2003, rearrangement of part of Block 2, Blocks 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, Outlot A, Outlot B, and the vacated streets in the official plat of Crystal Tree. It was platted as part of Crystal Tree in 1991. The parcel has not previously been developed.

Review and Discussion Items:

Staff finds:

1. Applicant is requesting a Minor Subdivision to divide one parcel into 4 parcels. The parcel currently contains no structures. Dividing the parcel will create 0.26-acre, irregular shaped Parcel A, a 0.28-acre, irregular shaped Parcel B, a 0.27-acre, irregular shaped Parcel C, and a 0.61-acre, irregular shaped Parcel D.
2. Lots created by this subdivision are subject to the zoning requirements of the R-1 district. All parcels will satisfy the minimum area and frontage requirements contained in UDC Table 50-15.2.1.
3. Parcels A, B, C and D will have frontage on Swan Lake Rd.
4. The proposed subdivision, if approved, would not make the parcels non-conforming due to lot frontage, lot area, or similar bulk standard.
5. No City, public or agency comments were received at the time of drafting this report.
6. Approval of this Minor Subdivision signifies that City of Duluth UDC standards are met. St. Louis County may have additional requirements. This subdivision approval lapses if deeds for the proposed parcels A, B, C, and D are not recorded by the applicant with St. Louis County within 180 days. Applicant must provide the City with proof of recording.

Staff Recommendation:

Based on the above findings, Staff recommends that Planning Commission approve the minor subdivision with the following conditions:

1. Appropriate deeds be filed by the applicant with St. Louis County within 180 days. Prior to recording the deed that results from this adjustment, the Planning Division will need to stamp the deed, indicating compliance with the local zoning code.
2. Any alterations to the approved plans that do not alter major elements of the plan may be approved by the Land Use Supervisor without further Planning Commission approval; however, no such administrative approval shall constitute a variance from the provisions of Chapter 50.



PLSUB-2508-0010

Minor Subdivision
010-0803-00020 (Swan Lake Rd)

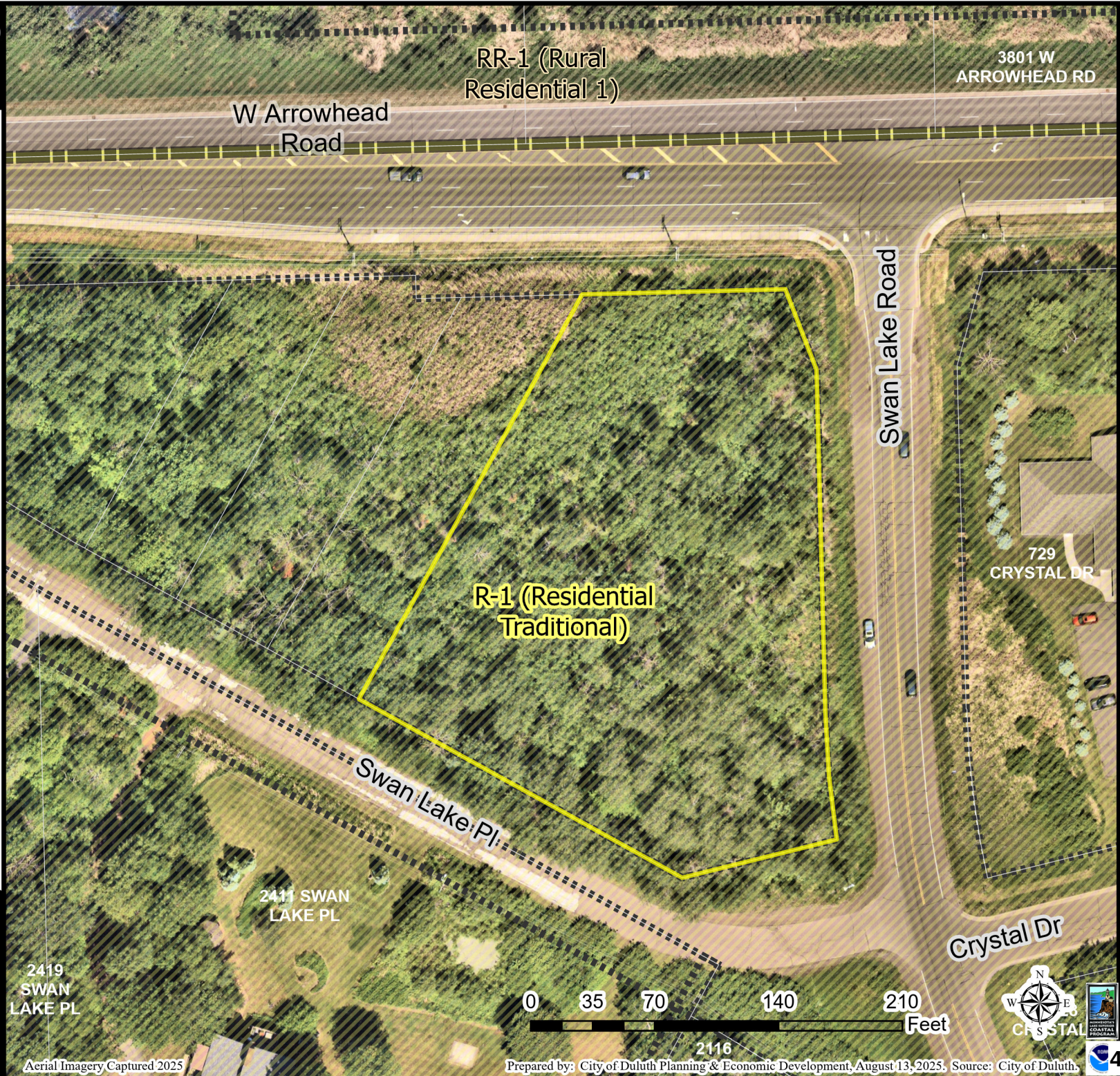
Legend

- Zoning Boundaries
- Road or Alley ROW
- County Parcel Data

Zoning

UDC Zoning

- RR-1 (Rural Residential 1)
- R-1 (Residential Traditional)



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Aerial Imagery Captured 2025

Prepared by: City of Duluth Planning & Economic Development, August 13, 2025. Source: City of Duluth.



WEST ARROWHEAD ROAD

S88°52'45"W
114.75

SURVEYOR NOTES:

1. APEX LAND SURVEYING, LLC PREPARED THIS SURVEY WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF CURRENT TITLE WORK. THE PROPERTY SHOWN IS BASED ON A LEGAL DESCRIPTION PROVIDED BY YOU THE CLIENT OR A GENERAL REQUEST AT THE APPROPRIATE COUNTY RECORDER'S OFFICE. EASEMENT, SITE RESTRICTION OR ADJOINING DEED CONFLICTS MAY EXIST WHICH AFFECT SUBJECT PROPERTY AND ARE NOT SHOWN BY THIS SURVEY. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REVISE THE SURVEY UPON RECEIPT OF A CURRENT TITLE COMMITMENT OR TITLE OPINION.

PARCEL D

Lot 2
BLOCK 1

N88°52'45"E
220.63

PARCEL C

N88°52'45"E
249.97

PARCEL B

N88°52'45"E
217.42

PARCEL A

SWAN LAKE PLACE

25.00 foot setback line

53.50
S60°43'15"E
(Point of Commencement)

Point of Beginning Line A

155.37
S60°43'15"E

L=59.38, R=560.00
Δ=6°04'31"

L=12.46, R=560.00
Δ=1°16'29"

37.54
S1°07'15"E

50.00
S1°07'15"E

106.67
N1°07'15"W

48.72
W=51.94°02'N

30.5

25.0

10.00

54.5

40.0

26.3

90.03
N76°25'44"E

SWAN LAKE ROAD

PROPOSED LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS:

Parcel A:

That part of Lot 2, Block 1 of CRYSTAL VILLAGE, as of public record, St Louis County, Minnesota, lying Southerly of the following described line; Commencing at the Southwesterly corner of said Lot 2; thence on an assumed bearing of South 60 degrees 43 minutes 15 seconds East, along the Southerly line of said Lot 2, a distance of 53.50 feet to the point of beginning of the line herein described; thence North 88 degrees 52 minutes 45 seconds East, 217.42 feet to the Easterly line of said Lot 2 and there terminating.

Containing 0.26 acres, more or less.
Subject to easements of record.

Parcel B:

That part of Lot 2, Block 1 of CRYSTAL VILLAGE, as of public record, St Louis County, Minnesota, lying Northerly of Line A as described below and Southerly of Line B as described below; Line A described as follows; Commencing at the Southwesterly corner of said Lot 2; thence on an assumed bearing of South 60 degrees 43 minutes 15 seconds East, along the Southerly line of said Lot 2, a distance of 53.50 feet to the point of beginning of the line herein described; thence North 88 degrees 52 minutes 45 seconds East, 217.42 feet to the Easterly line of said Lot 2 and there terminating. Line B described as follows; Commencing at the Southwesterly corner of said Lot 2; thence on an assumed bearing of North 29 degrees 16 minutes 45 seconds East, along the Westerly line of said Lot 2, a distance of 26.58 feet to the point of beginning of the line herein described; thence North 88 degrees 52 minutes 45 seconds East, 249.97 feet to the Easterly line of said Lot 2 and there terminating.

Containing 0.28 acres, more or less.
Subject to easements of record.

Parcel C:

That part of Lot 2, Block 1 of CRYSTAL VILLAGE, as of public record, St Louis County, Minnesota, lying Northerly of Line B as described below and Southerly of Line C as described below; Line B described as follows; Commencing at the Southwesterly corner of said Lot 2; thence on an assumed bearing of North 29 degrees 16 minutes 45 seconds East, along the Westerly line of said Lot 2, a distance of 26.58 feet to the point of beginning of the line herein described; thence North 88 degrees 52 minutes 45 seconds East, 249.97 feet to the Easterly line of said Lot 2 and there terminating. Line C described as follows; Commencing at the Southwesterly corner of said Lot 2; thence on an assumed bearing of North 29 degrees 16 minutes 45 seconds East, along the Westerly line of said Lot 2, a distance of 84.55 feet to the point of beginning of the line herein described; thence North 88 degrees 52 minutes 45 seconds East, 220.63 feet to the Easterly line of said Lot 2 and there terminating

Containing 0.27 acres, more or less.
Subject to easements of record.

Parcel D:

That part of Lot 2, Block 1 of CRYSTAL VILLAGE, as of public record, St Louis County, Minnesota, lying Northerly of Line C as described below; Line C described as follows; Commencing at the Southwesterly corner of said Lot 2; thence on an assumed bearing of North 29 degrees 16 minutes 45 seconds East, along the Westerly line of said Lot 2, a distance of 84.55 feet to the point of beginning of the line herein described; thence North 88 degrees 52 minutes 45 seconds East, 220.63 feet to the Easterly line of said Lot 2 and there terminating

Containing 0.61 acres, more or less.
Subject to easements of record.

SURVEYORS CERTIFICATION:

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS SURVEY, PLAN, OR REPORT WAS PREPARED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A DULY LICENSED LAND SURVEYOR UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

KALEB J. KADELBACH (LICENSE NO. 57070) 8/18/2025 DATE



● FOUND IRON MONUMENT

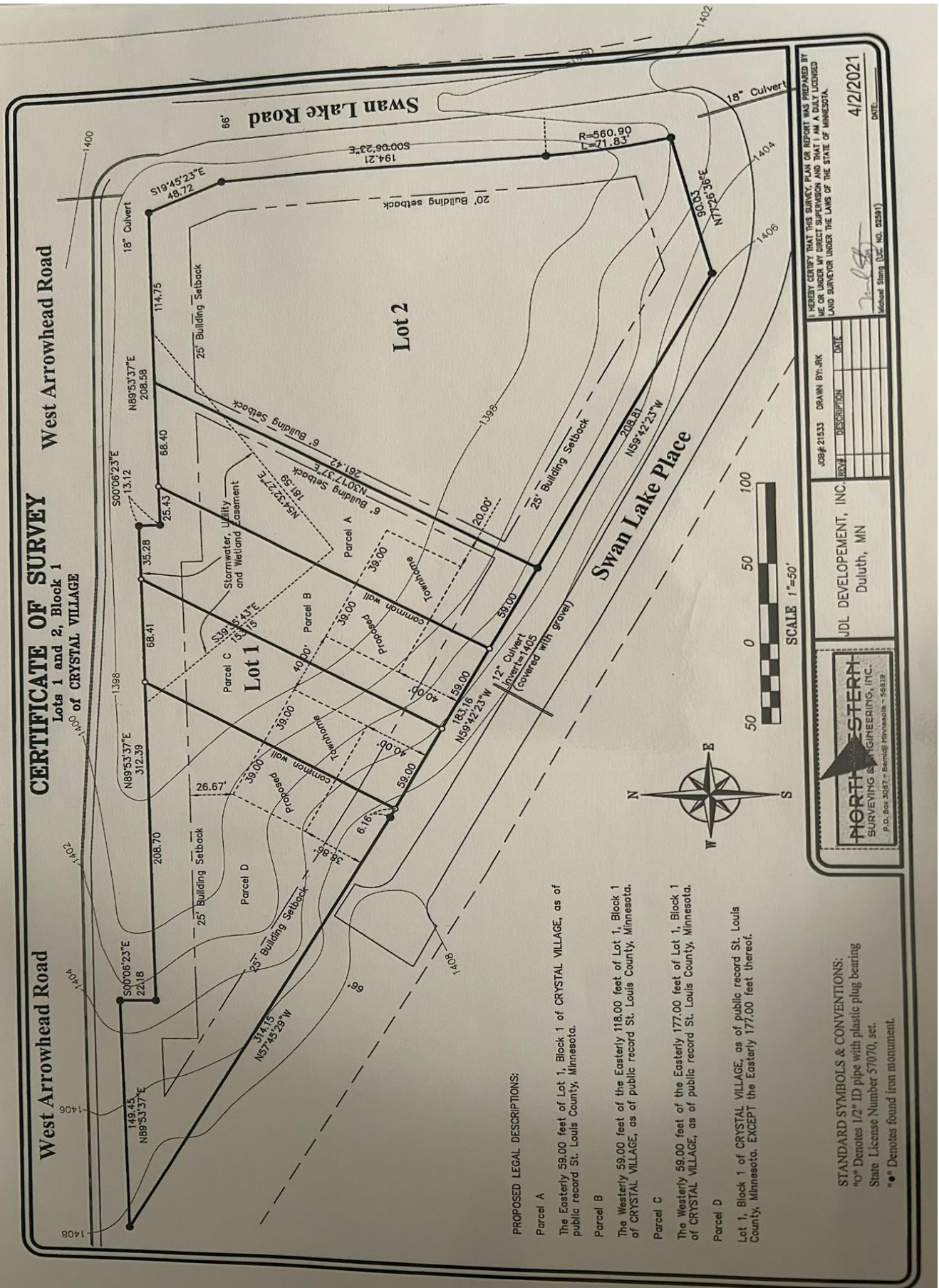


CLIENT INFORMATION:
JDL Development
Parcel: 010-0803-00013
Duluth, MN

FIELD DATE: 06/30/2025
APEX JOB NO. 25336

CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY
Split of Lot 2, Block 1 CRYSTAL VILLAGE,
as of public record St. Louis County, Minnesota.

kaleb.kadelbach@apex-landsurveying.com PH: (763) 388-0056





Planning & Development Division
Planning & Economic Development Department

Room 160
411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802



218-730-5580



planning@duluthmn.gov

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 7, 2025

TO: Planning Commissioners

FROM: Jason Mozol, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: UDC Map Amendment (PLUMA-2509-0006) related to adding lower Miller Creek and lower Coffee Creek to the shoreland overlay

Staff were recently requested to provide the relevant setback from Miller Creek below S 26th Ave W by an architect working for an adjacent property owner. To answer this question, staff consulted with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and City Engineering staff to identify relevant regulations and appropriate stream classifications. Upon review, staff determined that applying cold-water shoreland regulations to this section of stream is appropriate. Further, staff recognized that the adjacent section of Coffee Creek, recently daylighted during construction of the Twin Ports Interchange project, has similar characteristics to Miller Creek and should also be designated as a cold water shoreland zone.

Since shoreland regulations are part of the Natural Resources Overlay (NR-O) District, the process to add these streams to the mapped overlay is a UDC Map Amendment.

Proposed Changes:

Include the sections of Miller Creek and Coffee Creek described below, and illustrated in the attached maps, in the cold-water shoreland zone:

- Coffee Creek- DNR Stream Identification Number S-002-000.7- from the outlet from the storm sewer system on parcel number 010-1110-00390 to the confluence with Miller Creek on parcel number 010-1110-00200.
- Miller Creek- DNR Stream Identification Number S-002-001- from the outlet from the storm sewer system below S 26th Ave W on Lots 415 and 416 and the vacated alley, Block 10 of Duluth Proper Second Division, parcel number 010-1100-00310 to the inlet below the Duluth Transit Authority facility in the vacated section of S 25th Ave W Northeasterly of Block 10 of Duluth Proper Second Division (parcel number 010-1110-00010).
- Miller Creek- DNR Identification Number S-002-001- from the outlet below the Duluth Transit Authority facility on Lot 2 of Duluth Proper Second Division, 1st Subdivision (parcel number 010-1110-00010) to the

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confluence with Coffee Creek on Lot 2 of Duluth Proper Second Division, 1st Subdivision (parcel number 010-1110-00200).

- From the confluence of Miller and Coffee Creeks on Lot 2 of Duluth Proper Second Division, 1st Subdivision (parcel number 010-1110-00200) to the box culvert inlet within the I-35 right-of-way of Duluth Proper Second Division, 1st Subdivision.

Findings and Recommended Action:

Per Section 50.37.3 of the UDC, Planning Commission shall review the application, and council shall approve the application or approve with modifications, upon determining the application:

1. Is consistent with the comprehensive land use plan;
2. Is reasonably related to the overall needs of the community, to existing land use, or to a plan for future land use;
3. Is required by public necessity, convenience, or general welfare, or good zoning practice;
4. Will not create material adverse impacts on nearby properties, or if material adverse impacts may be created they will be mitigated to the extent reasonably possible.

The Planning Commission may recommend approval, approval with modifications or denial to the City Council.

Staff finds that:

- Both Coffee Creek and Miller Creek are public waters identified by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
- The Minnesota DNR identifies these as trout streams (cold water streams) since they support sensitive trout species.
- This request meets the criteria of general welfare and good zoning practice. Trout have been observed within the subject section of Miller Creek and it is reasonable to expect these fish will access the recently daylight section of Coffee Creek since they are hydrologically connected. Further, upstream sections of Coffee Creek support trout populations.
- Cold water designations have been applied to sections of other trout streams, such as Chester Creek, downstream of enclosed sections.
- This proposal is consistent with the comprehensive land use plan. The future land use for the areas surrounding the streams is "Open Space". Open Space is defined as, "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." The cold water shoreland designation is the most restrictive shoreland classification and meets the intent of "substantial restrictions and development limitations."
- This proposal is reasonably related to the overall needs of the community. The open space section of the Comprehensive Plan identifies the numerous ecological, recreational, and functional benefits healthy waterways provide. The strategy and principle below, identified in the Comprehensive Plan, are executed by this rezoning action.
 - Governing Principle #2- Declare the necessity and secure the future of undeveloped places-
 - Undeveloped areas are an essential part of Duluth's municipal fabric— urban plazas, neighborhood parks, large tracts of public ownership, and private lands zoned for minimal development. These minimally developed or undeveloped areas collectively create an open space system. These areas contribute to Duluth's cultural, health, recreational, and economic value and community identity. This open space system provides vistas, encourages active recreation, supplies natural infrastructure such as storm water

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retention, plant and animal habitat, and water quality, and is the strongest visual element defining Duluth's sense of place.

- Open Space Policy #2- Examine the value and need for all of Duluth's publicly owned open space-
 - Strategy #7- Amend the Unified Development Chapter (UDC) to require more permanent protection of ecologically significant lands (including wetlands, important forested areas, streams, etc.) during the development process.
- These stream sections exist within a previously developed area. It is reasonable to anticipate that development will be proposed that is not consistent with the cold-water shoreland regulations. Projects that are otherwise unfeasible and demonstrate practical difficulty in conformance with all criteria defined in Sec 50-37.9 may be permitted via the shoreland variance process. Therefore, these potential impacts will be mitigated to the extent possible.
- Comments on this project were received from the City's Engineering Department, see below, and from the DNR, see attached.
 - "Miller Creek and Coffee Creek are both designated trout streams and are regulated by the MnDNR. Both of these lower reaches for each stream have aquatic life that include trout. The shoreland requirements for cold water streams or trout streams benefit the health of the stream. The MnDNR requires the City of Duluth to enforce the public waters rules. This change is needed to make the shoreland zone consistent for the entire length of the streams." Tom Johnson, Senior Stormwater Engineer, PE

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend approval to the City Council.



PLUMA-2509-0006

Miller/Coffee Creek

Shoreland Designations

Legend

— Subject Stream Sections

MU-N
(Mixed Use
Neighborhood)

R-2
(Residential
Urban)

F-5 (Mid-Rise
Community Shopping
and Office)

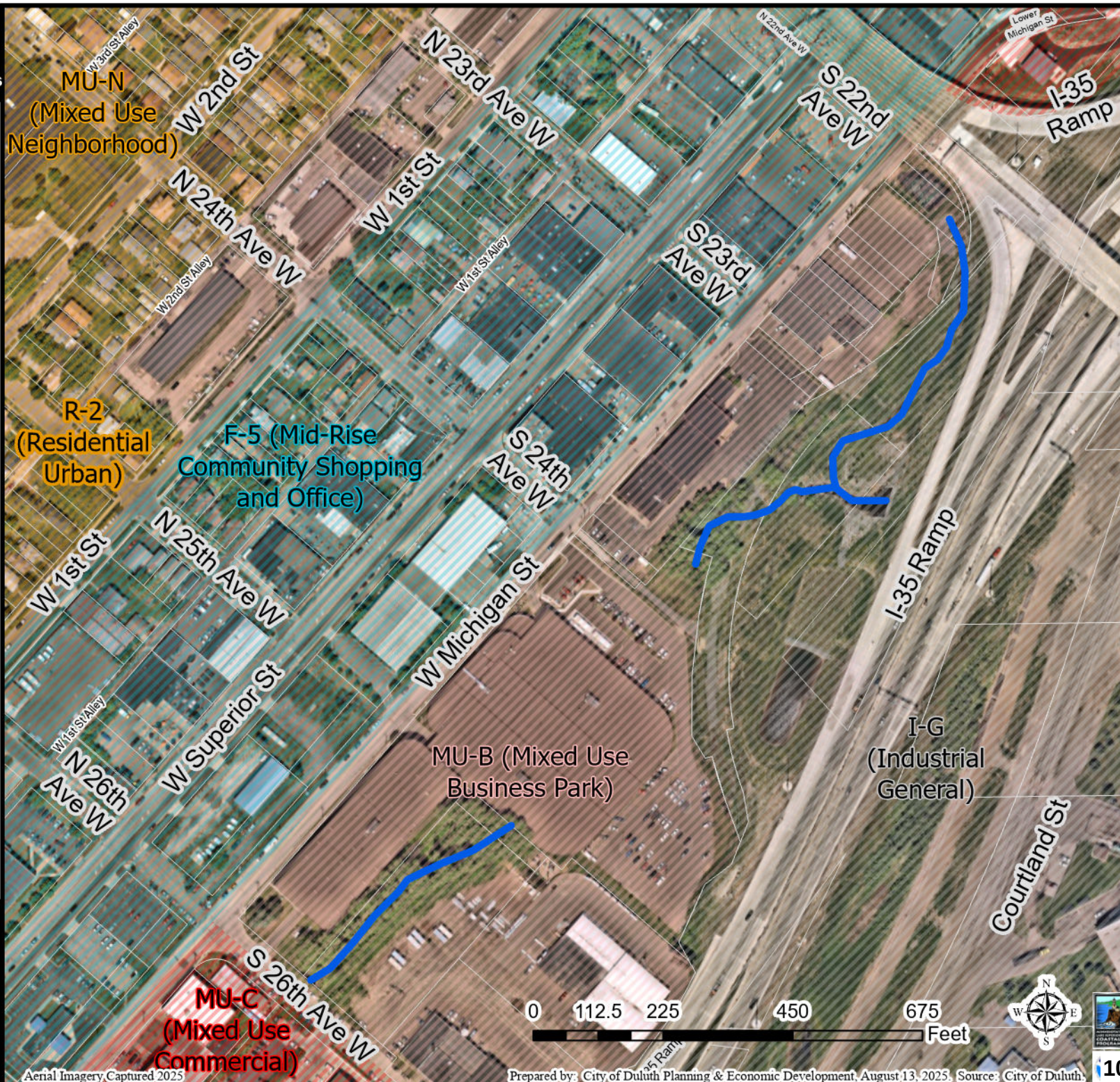
MU-B (Mixed Use
Business Park)

MU-C
(Mixed Use
Commercial)

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Aerial Imagery Captured 2025

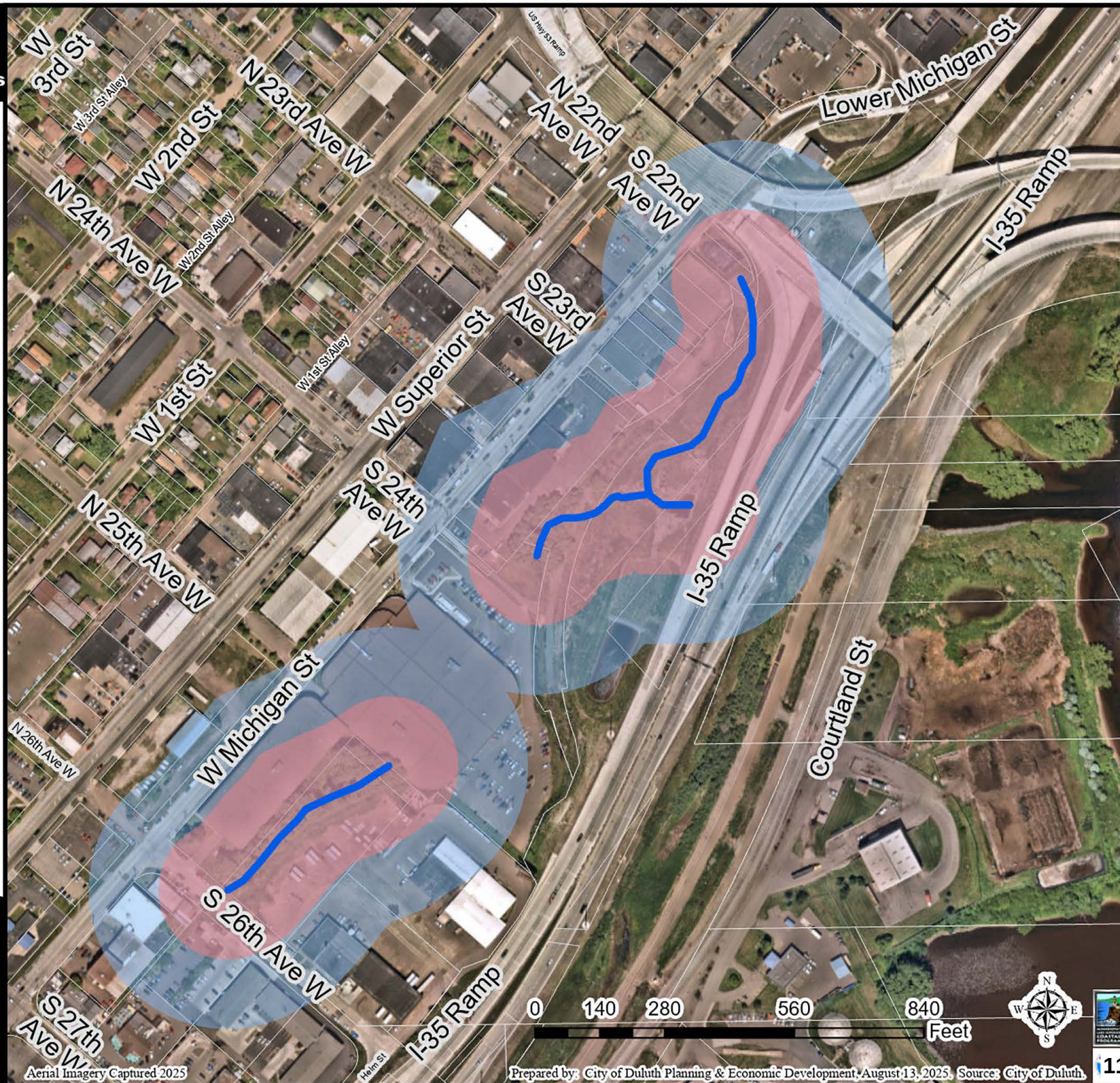
Prepared by: City of Duluth Planning & Economic Development, August 13, 2025. Source: City of Duluth.





Legend

- Subject Stream Sections
- Proposed Shoreland Zones
- Proposed Structure Setback



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PLUMA-2509-00069 - DNR Comments

From Speldrich, Bri (DNR) <Brianna.Speldrich@state.mn.us>
Date Fri 10/3/2025 12:44 PM
To Jason Mozol <jmozol@DuluthMN.gov>
Cc MN_Ordinance Review (DNR) <ordinance.review.dnr@state.mn.us>

Hi Jason,

Below are my comments for amendment request PLUMA-2509-00069:

DNR identifies the streams included in this request as Miller Creek and Coffee Creek. Both watercourses are public waters and designated trout streams. Because these streams are public waters, shoreland controls should be applied to these areas to ensure compliance with state shoreland rules.

It appears this amendment request includes adding these reaches to the Natural Resource Overlay (NR-O) map and applying Cold Water Shoreland Management Zone controls to these areas. This will address the identified shoreland compliance issue.

Please note Minnesota Rule 6120.3900 Subpart 6B requires that local government units provide a copy of approved shoreland ordinance amendments to DNR within 10 days of final action for final review and approval. Feel free to contact me should you have questions.

Thank you,

Bri Speldrich
Area Hydrologist | Carlton County & Duluth Metro
Ecological and Water Resources

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
525 Lake Ave S, Suite 415
Duluth, MN, 55802
Phone: 218-302-3246
Email: brianna.speldrich@state.mn.us
she/her/hers
mndnr.gov





Planning & Economic Development Department

Planning • Room 160
Construction Services • Room 100

411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

218-730-5308

• planning@duluthmn.gov
• constructionservices@duluthmn.gov

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Ben VanTassel, Director, Planning & Economic Development Department
DATE: October 8, 2025
RE: PLOR-2510-0015 Conveyance of Lester Golf Course Property

Recommendation

Staff recommends adoption of the resolution associated with PLOR-2510-0015, which recommends to City Council that the referenced property be conveyed to the Duluth Economic Development Authority.

Summary

The Lester Park Golf Course property is a 268-acre site that was previously a city owned and operated golf course. In 2021, the City of Duluth conveyed approximately 37.5 acres of the property to the Duluth Economic Development Authority (DEDA) for development purposes. The remainder of the property, an approximately 230 acre parcel, remains city owned. Due to the limited capacity and challenges related to maintaining open space and the unique nature and development potential of the site, the City is considering a public sale of the remaining property. State law authorizes the City to sell park property and the initial step in that process is a recommendation by the Planning Commission to proceed with a sale.

The City intends to convey the remaining property at the Lester Park Golf Course to DEDA, which will prepare the property and conduct the public sale process. DEDA, an authority of the city of Duluth, is best equipped to complete pre-development activities (e.g title preparation, surveys, etc.) and has the expertise and resources to effectively navigate these processes efficiently.

After conveyance to DEDA, and leading up to a public sale, additional public processes and decisions will be required of Planning Commission and City Council. The property is currently zoned as Park and Open Space (P-1) and its future use is designated as Open Space under the Duluth 2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Prior to the public sale process by DEDA, the City will ensure a land use study is undertaken on the Property to review the future land use and zoning designations. Potential changes to future land use and property rezonings will follow the typical public process, including opportunities for input from the public, with Planning Commission oversight and City Council approval.

Approval of this resolution will initiate a series of public processes and provide the opportunity for our community to envision and realize the future of the Lester Park Golf Course property.

**PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF DULUTH, MINNESOTA**

RESOLUTION NO. PLOR-2510-0015

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF DULUTH PLANNING COMMISSION
RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE SALE OF CERTAIN REAL
PROPERTY IN THE LESTER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD TO THE DULUTH
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

WHEREAS, in 2021 the City of Duluth ("City") conveyed approximately 37.5 acres of the 268-acre Lester Park Golf Course property to and the Duluth Economic Development Authority ("DEDA") pursuant to a development agreement, upon the finding that DEDA was best equipped to engage developers and facilitate the City's future development goals upon the property, such goals including increasing the City's tax base and addressing the City's ongoing need for additional housing units; and

WHEREAS, the city and DEDA are mutually interested in exploring potential future uses for the remaining approximately 230 acres of city-owned Lester Park Golf Course property, as described and depicted on the attached Exhibit A ("Property"); and

WHEREAS, 1955 Minn. Laws, Chapter 82, S. F. No. 536 authorizes the city to sell park property at a public sale upon a recommendation of the city planning commission adopted by a three-fourths vote, in addition to other requirements; and

WHEREAS, the Property is currently zoned as a Parks and Open Space district (P-1) and its future use designated as open space under the Duluth 2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan; and

WHEREAS, the proposed conveyance to DEDA is conditioned upon the City rezoning the property to a classification that will permit development on all or portions of the Property in accordance with the Development District Plan for Development District No. 17, ad; and

WHEREAS, there is an identified need for housing with adjacent outdoor amenities and a desire for preservation of open space; and

WHEREAS, the City intends to make reasonable efforts to pursue such rezoning, including conducting a land use study of the Property and seeking amendment to the City's comprehensive land use plan; and

WHEREAS, a land use study will incorporate community priorities and needs and will seek input from community members and stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the proposed conveyance to DEDA is further conditioned upon DEDA agreeing to sell the Property through a public sale process in accordance with 1955 Minn. Laws Chapter 82; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has reviewed said conditions for purposes of determining whether the proposed conveyance of the Property to DEDA is in conformance with the City's comprehensive plan and to make its recommendation of the proposed conveyance; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the commission finds that the proposed conveyance of the Property conforms with the comprehensive plan and hereby recommends that the city proceed with the proposed conveyance of the Property to DEDA according to the requirements of Duluth City Code and applicable Minnesota law.

Approved by the City of Duluth Planning Commission this 28th day of October, 2025.

ATTEST:

President

Secretary



PLOR-2510-0015

Proposed Conveyance of
Lester Park Golf Course

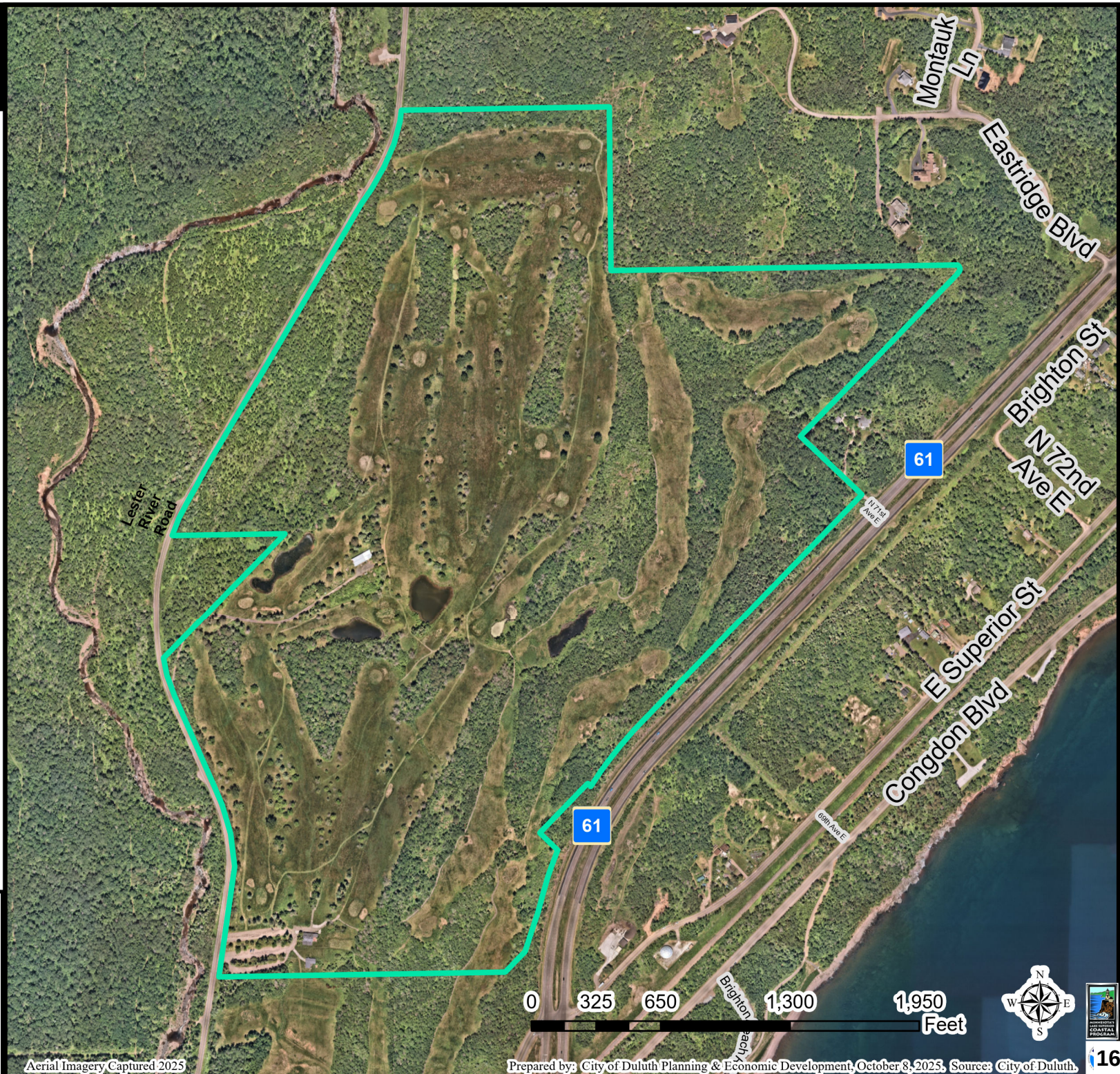
Legend

 Property Area

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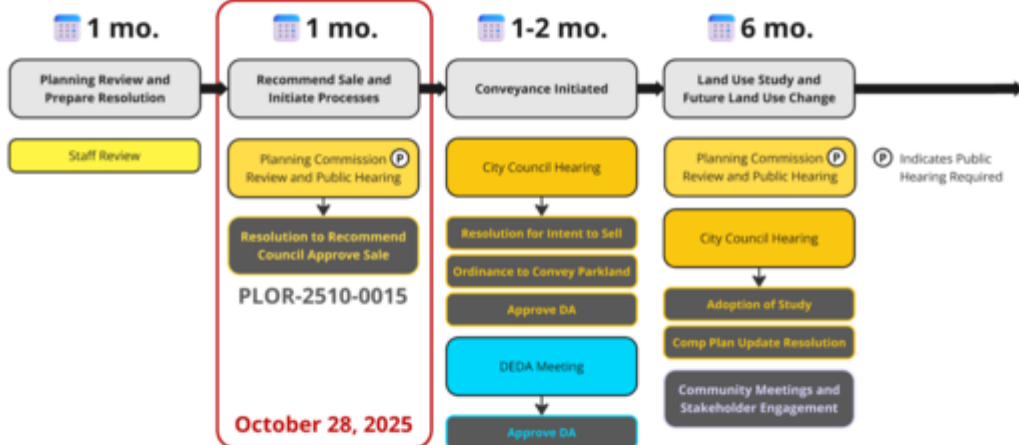




PLOR-2510-0015

Proposed Conveyance of Lester Park Golf Course

Timeline

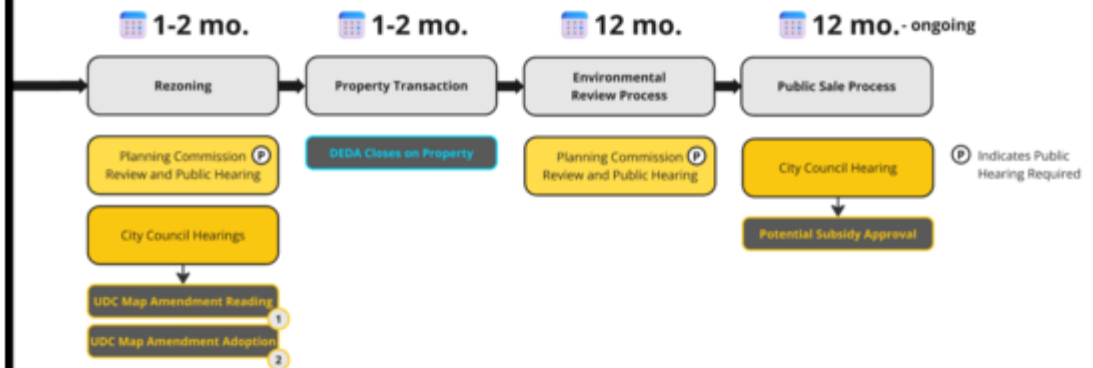




PLOR-2510-0015

Proposed Conveyance of Lester Park Golf Course

Timeline



From: [City of Duluth MN](#)
To: [planning](#)
Subject: The Form "Boards - Planning Commission" was submitted
Date: Wednesday, October 15, 2025 4:20:05 PM



Umbraco Forms

Form Results

First Name

Alec

Last Name

Kadlec

Email Address

[REDACTED]

Message

Dear Planning Commission Member, I am writing you in regards to PLOR-2510-0015. I am unable to attend the public meeting this evening due to work obligations. I would like to express my concern with the stated process of conveying this land parcel to DEDA prior to the public input process and land use or rezoning studies. It seems to me that conveying the land to DEDA would be a step towards the sale and limit the options for this land to remain public and open space, as it currently is, and as it is planned to remain per the 2035 vision plan. I personally view this property as important public space with great recreation potential worth considering. I have previously served on the board of Cyclists of Gitchee Gumee Shores, and am currently employed in outdoor recreation in Duluth

(I am writing as a private citizen, not representing my organization). This space is already frequently used as a recreation space, and is worth considering the opportunity that it remains so. If it is determined to be better as developed property, so be it, but you should not wait to hear from the public and analyze if that is the best use AFTER beginning to prepare it for sale, in my opinion that should come before preparation for sale. Further, the previously conveyed 38 acres has not found a sufficient developer that aligns with City goals, and does not yet aim to address the needs of the citizens, such as increasing affordable housing stock in Duluth. Why should we expect a broader parcel, with less access to recreational space, be more attractive to developers that would increase housing stock, and not instead to industrial or commercial means? These inputs and investigations could be determined in public process prior to the preparation for sale. In summary, I encourage you to not move forward with PLOR-2510-0015, and instead pursue a more transparent public process of determining the best use for this land. Thank you, Alec Kadlec

Recaptcha

OTHER BUSINESS

[PLOR-2510-0015](#)

Resolution of the Clity of Duluth Planning Commission Recommending that the Clity Council Approve Sale of Certain Real Property in the Lester Park Neighborhood to the Duluth Economic Development Authority

Attachments:

[PLOR-2510-0015 Memo](#)

[PLOR-2510-0015 Resolution](#)

[PLOR-2510-0015 Property Area Map](#)

COMMUNICATIONS

Land Use Supervisor Report

Heritage Preservation Commission Report

The city council in 2019 promised not to sell Lester Park golf course. This promise to the citizens of Duluth needs to be upheld. Period.

Dan Rau
204 E 6th St.
Duluth.

From: [City of Duluth MN](#)
To: [planning](#)
Subject: The Form "Boards - Planning Commission" was submitted
Date: Tuesday, October 14, 2025 6:02:30 PM



Umbraco Forms

Form Results

First Name

Julie

Last Name

Maurer

Email Address

[REDACTED]

Message

To the Duluth Planning Commission, I am writing to oppose the sale of Lester Park Golf Course, which would allow the sale of a beloved and used public space to a private developer. The Lester Park Golf Course provides more than just public golfing. It is a community green space where people can walk, forage, and enjoy beautiful views of Lake Superior. As a new resident to Duluth, I was immediately drawn to the abundant green spaces this city provides and I hope to continue to love living here for that reason. Please do not sell off ANY of our public spaces to private developers.

Sincerely, A concerned resident

Recaptcha



W.J. McCABE (DULUTH) CHAPTER IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

P. O. Box 3063 • DULUTH, MN 55803

October 14, 2025

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Our great parks and green spaces are what make this city and the state of Minnesota such a unique and special place to live; if we lose sight of that, we lose our identity. Lester Park Golf Course is one of these great parks, with great potential to serve the public. The proposal to sell the entirety of this 230-acre public park is out of conformity with many of the adopted Governing Principles¹ of the City's Comprehensive plan, and we feel the need to remind you that Lester Park Golf Course is public parkland owned by every citizen of Duluth. With that in mind, fair governance should reserve any sale of public parkland as an absolute last-resort and be subject to a robust, transparent, and public process where all citizens have a chance to participate and offer ideas for the public use of that land. This was the process when the city considered the sale of this 230-acre park in 2019.

Therefore, we urge the Planning Commission to:

Reject the City Administration's current proposal to sell 230-acres of our public parkland, via conveyance, to the Duluth Economic Development Authority, an entity within the City of Duluth that does not have the correct expertise or oversight to review and develop these 230-acres.

According to city policy and documentation, before this request should even come before the Planning Commission the following is required to happen:

- 1) The Parks and Recreation Commission² has oversight and has yet to weigh in.
- 2) According to the *Duluth Essential Spaces - Duluth Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Comprehensive Plan*³, a comprehensive 10-year plan, that was approved and adopted by the City Council on October 10, 2022, action item E1 states:

- a) “Develop a mini-master plan for future improvement and use of the 230-acre portion of Lester Park Golf Course that the *City intends to retain as a protected park* following permanent closure of the course.”
 - b) There is no evidence of this mini-master plan for these 230-acres and DEDA is not the correct body to administer tasks specific to urban planning, nor are they subject to the necessary public oversight or scrutiny.
 - c) To date, no work has been done on this important neighborhood planning process. The sale of the Lester Park Golf Course, which could add many dozens or even hundreds of new dwelling units to this neighborhood, should consider the importance and the availability of adequate neighborhood services, including police and fire services, transportation infrastructure and utility services.
 - d) The required mini-master plan would be taking these observations, and many more, into consideration and then directing DEDA and future developers on the public’s agreed upon plan.
- 3) Additionally, this Commission should not overlook DEDA’s current compliance, or lack thereof, related to the 37.5 acres of Lester that was conveyed from the City in 2019.

The Izaak Walton League is a national leader for protection of our soil, air, woods, waters and wildlife. As a chapter of this league, it is a high priority for us to safeguard our public green spaces, but without providing us the opportunity to respond to a mini-master plan, we can’t weigh-in on the good, the bad or the ugly. We believe this to be a disingenuous process to the public, and to any contractor who may bid on this project, to take us to the precipice of this process to sell our parkland and then claim that at that critical point the DEDA will decide whether this is a good idea. That decision should be vetted and agreed upon by the community *before* proceeding with the administrative process for selling any parkland. We encourage the city to take the course they previously communicated because the public should not have to bear such risk to an important community asset.

Sincerely,

Julie O’Leary

McCabe Chapter Board President

References

1. Duluth City Council (2018) *Imagine Duluth 2035, Comprehensive Plan*. Duluth, MN. Pages 38-43.
2. City of Duluth, MN (2010). *City of Duluth, Parks and Recreation Commission Bylaws and Policies*. Duluth, MN.
3. Duluth City Council (2022). *Essential Spaces: Duluth Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan*. Duluth, MN. Page 115.

From: [City of Duluth MN](#)
To: [planning](#)
Subject: The Form "Boards - Planning Commission" was submitted
Date: Tuesday, October 14, 2025 1:09:17 PM



Umbraco Forms

Form Results

First Name

Molly

Last Name

Wick

Email Address

[REDACTED]

Message

Hello, I'm writing to oppose the transfer of Lester Park Golf Course to the Duluth Economic Development Administration and the sale of the property to a developer. The city based on public input in 2019 transferred 37.5 acres and promised to keep the rest of the property in green space. This area is highly valued for its open space, walkability, views of the lake, and greenery by people across the city. It is one of my most beloved places in town. There is no other place where one can walk open fields and meadows with long sightlines (without sand!), which offer special benefits to psychological restoration, especially for those with mental health conditions like PTSD, anxiety, depression, and ADHD (This is based on my doctoral-level expertise in human-nature

connections). It is so discouraging that with zero public input this was added to the planning commission agenda and may move forward with little publicity or notice. Such a high profile property should have an extensive public input and planning process that allows the community to guide how it is managed and its future. I am requesting all members of the city planning commission to keep the promise that was made to residents of Duluth in 2019 about keeping this property as green space, and vote no to transferring this property for potential sale. I stand with the Ikes who will be present at the commission meeting tomorrow, but unfortunately due to a conflict I cannot be there, so I am sending this instead. Thank you, Molly Wick, PhD

Recaptcha

From: [Ansel Schimpff](#)
To: [planning](#)
Subject: Lester Golf Course Development
Date: Wednesday, October 15, 2025 11:19:26 AM
Attachments: [Vision for Lester Park Golf Course Redevelopment.pdf](#)
[Untitled attachment 00009.htm](#)

Good morning all,

I want to provide some insight into the Lester Park Working Group, tasked by the mayor with two main objectives:

To discuss the inclusion of multiple year-round recreation opportunities including, but not exclusive to, public golf.

To evaluate nonprofit and alternative third-party management models where the property is owned by the City of Duluth, but the recreational asset is operated and managed by an external partner.

To be clear, this was not a transparent or public planning process. Very quickly, several members of the working group began advocating for the sale and private development of high end housing, with very little discussion around either of the objectives the mayor put forward. Shortly thereafter, the Sunnarborg plan was introduced, in concept only. Members of the working group, myself included, were told that the plan was very impressive, unlike anything Duluth has ever seen, and the only viable option for this public park. We were told we couldn't see the actual plan, because it would be politically unpopular, but we should just trust that it was as good as we were being told.

Around this time, I was instructed to create an alternative, recreation focused plan, and in partnership with Duluth Area Outdoor Alliance members, did just that.

We held a meeting in early December 2024 with representatives from:

Superior Hiking Trail Association (SHT)

Minnesota Land Trust (MLT)

Cyclists of Gitchee Gumme Shores (COGGS)

Northern Minnesota Track Club (NMTC)

Duluth Area Horse Trail Alliance (DAHTA)

Duluth Climbers Coalition (DCC)

BIPOC Twin Ports Outdoors

Duluth Cross Country Ski Club (DXC)

Izaak Walton League

Duluth Foot Trails Alliance (DUFTA)

Through this process, we created the attached outline for a community centered redevelopment of Lester Golf Course.

I plan to speak at this evenings meeting, but please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

I look forward to continuing this conversation

Ansel Schimpff
COGGS Executive Director



OPINION COLUMNS

Local View: Expand the use of our parks

Creative business models such as a public-private partnership could be used to further enhance the financial success of the park.



Dennis Isernhagen Contributed

By Dennis D. Isernhagen, Duluth

June 16, 2023 at 7:13 AM

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 Opinion

It's time to expand the use of our parks:

Status: In November 2022, the city of Duluth failed to increase property taxes to support our parks.

On June 12, the City Council voted to not reopen Lester Park Golf Course. It had been closed because of costs caused by deferred maintenance, lack of progressive business decisions, and limited revenue generation such as a short golf season. Interestingly, Lester was closed in the two COVID summers when people flocked to nature activities which were considered safer than indoor activities. Golf and outdoor recreation were a huge beneficiary of increased participation. Those courses that made investments in upkeep and improvements reaped the benefit of this focus on golf as a prime recreational and safer opportunity. Previously loyal Lester golfers moved to other courses within reasonable driving distances. Both the failure of better support for parks and the Lester golf issue would invite the obvious question: Is it time to consider other creative ways to enhance and expand the use of our parks?

Opportunity: Other outdoor activities, paired with golf, could benefit from Duluth's abundance of wonderful parks that are not utilized to their fullest potential. Duluth and the North Shore of Lake Superior have the reputation as the "go-to-place" for year-round outdoor recreation opportunities. It is a primary reason why individuals are attracted here to live and work. More people seek outdoor recreation and social activities. Throughout the United States, outdoor recreation has grown to account for many billions in economic impact.

Solution: Let's revisit the Lester Park area. Lester Park Golf Course and the adjoining properties of Amity Park and 450 acres of designated parkland provide over 1,000 acres of pristine public

parkland. It provides an opportunity for a multifunctional park. It would include outdoor recreation venues of golf, cross country skiing, hiking, biking, among others. This provides year-round outdoor recreation activities, creates community gathering places that generate income that will support the needs of the park, recreational groups and the city. It also keeps the revenue local.

Approximately 50 acres of this parkland have been designated for mixed-use neighborhood housing with business. To develop this property in a way to complement the area and have low environmental impact could be reimaged. Housing development in a village style rather than a concentrated population would provide a mixture of affordable and market value homes. An event center with space for meetings and events, combined with a restaurant, would improve the attraction of the park. The inclusion of a hotel and retail could enhance future opportunities and provide a needed service to the area. Income generated from taxes and fees from the housing development, hotel, restaurant, retail and events could provide significant revenue to the city.

Creative business models such as a public-private partnership could be used to further enhance the financial success of the park.

Noted successes: For guidance and management of the park portion, a nonprofit organization could be developed. A successful model is the Loppet Foundation in Golden Valley, Minnesota (www.loppet.org(<http://www.loppet.org>)), which is an outdoor-oriented, community building organization. It utilizes input from the community, provides funding opportunities such as grants and donations, and promotes collaboration among organized recreation groups. People of all types would be attracted to events and venues

that previously had been directed at only a small group.

Plan: A collaborative effort among outdoor recreation special interest groups, schools, colleges, universities, environmental planners and wildlife organizations would expand the use of the park. It would enhance awareness, increase membership and expand opportunities to generate new revenue sources for the participating organizations. The location of Lester Park at the head of the North Shore provides an opportunity to attract visitors and tourists.

Future: How do we improve the use of our “public-owned” parkland? How do we generate sustainable funding to enhance and maintain our parks? How do we assist outdoor recreation groups to attract and expand their membership? How do we expand our parks to embrace the best environmental practices? A project of this magnitude will welcome the input of many individuals. The outcome will have a lasting impact on Duluth, its citizens and the business community.

Dennis D. Isernhagen
Duluth

Isernhagen is retired: president of DSI Work Solutions (1986-2018), director of physical medicine-St. Mary’s Medical Center (1970-1986), and Duluth Park and Recreation Commission (2018-2020).

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 Opinion

 Tags

From: [Terry McCarthy](#)
To: [planning](#)
Subject: Transfer of Lester Park golf course
Date: Wednesday, October 15, 2025 8:44:04 PM

Hello. My name is Terry McCarthy and I am a native Duluthian who has lived here for 76 yrs.

I am not in favor of the transfer to DEDA. Has there been opportunities for the community to weigh in on this possible transfer? If not, then there should be. And if so, what was the general consensus from the community?

I would hate to have it turned into a playground for the wealthy.

Terry McCarthy
127 E Calvary Rd
Duluth 55803
[REDACTED]

Brian

I am writing to express my thoughts and those of others on the Lester Park Golf Course. I was pleased to see that a hold was placed on making a decision on the future of this piece of property. Lester Park holds a special place in the hearts of Duluth residents. With its stunning views, diverse landscapes and community roots, it offers a unique opportunity to meet a broader range of needs while preserving its natural beauty.

In recent years, with the challenges facing municipal golf courses and shifting recreational trends, there is a growing consensus that now is the time to explore more inclusive, sustainable, and community-centered uses for this remarkable space. Since the pandemic many individuals are seeking opportunities to be outdoors, enjoying nature and participation in recreational activities.

Transforming Lester Park into a multifunctional park would open up possibilities for year-round recreational access—such as walking and biking trails, community gardens, educational programming, cultural events, and winter activities—ensuring the park serves a much wider cross-section of our community. Operated by a mission-driven nonprofit, the space could be managed with flexibility, community input, and long-term stewardship as guiding principles.

I was heavily involved with the early discussions about Lester Park. I had served on the Duluth Park and Recreation Commission when the decision to close Lester was made. I wrote an article (see attachment) that proposed that the city turn the property over to a non-profit organization to develop into a multi-functional park that provided year round outdoor recreation opportunities. I had suggested that a model similar to Loppet Foundation (www.lopeet.org) at the Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis be looked at. I had met with the founder of that organization, John Willard Munger, on numerous occasions and had conversations with the Executive Director of the Foundation.

I have had meetings with many local outdoor recreation organizations, City Council members, civic leaders, potential funding groups, environmental organizations and numerous interested individuals about the future of Lester Park. I met with Mayor Reinhart prior to his election. He was very supportive of ideas that I presented. After his election he asked me to co-chair a taskforce to explore the ideas further. I spent several months trying to develop a plan with Tim Meyer's who was the co-chair. We held a community meeting on May 23, 2023 that was attended by over 150 individuals. The interest expressed by the attendees was in line with making the park a multiuse outdoor recreation facility. After months of no progress I terminated my involvement because of frustration and the feeling that politics was taking over.

Numerous communities across the country have successfully transitioned similar properties into vibrant public assets that bring people together, promote health and

wellness, support environmental education, and stimulate local economies. With proper planning and collaboration, Lester Park can follow suit and become a flagship example of adaptive, community-led land use.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our city's green spaces. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this idea further and share the information I have.

Warm regards,

Dennis Isernhagen
2328 Shore Drive
Duluth, MN 55812



Dear Duluth Planning Commission:

For the past few years I have talked to many of the City Councilors, DEDA and others about Lester Park Golf Course. I had convinced Mayor Reinert to appoint a group to develop a proposed plan that focused not only on golf but an area that focused on multiple outdoor recreation opportunities. Mayor Reinert appointed Tim Meyer and myself to spearhead a group to address this. We held a public meeting on May 23, 2024 that was attended by over 150 individuals. There was enthusiastic support from those who attended to restore the golf course and to develop a multifunction outdoor recreation facility. The effort to move this forward stalled for a number of months. I resigned from being co-chair because of frustration and the apparent political maneuvers that were slowing any forward progress. A working group was eventually formed who met and developed a report of their finding. Several models were presented to City Council. I'm writing to express a deep sense of frustration shared by many in the Duluth outdoor community regarding the ongoing roadblocks we face in trying to establish a multi-use outdoor recreation facility at Lester Park.

It is both disheartening and perplexing that proposals to create a sustainable, community-driven nonprofit focused on outdoor recreation, youth programs, trail development, and stewardship continue to face bureaucratic inertia, while housing developments in or near parkland seem to move forward with far fewer obstacles.

Let me be clear: affordable and sustainable housing is critical to the future of Duluth. But so is equitable access to high-quality outdoor spaces, especially in a city that prides itself on being an outdoor capital. Lester Park is a public treasure—already beloved by skiers, bikers, hikers, golfers, and families—and it has the potential to be so much more. The terrain, the history, and the community support are already in place. What's missing is the political will and clarity of process.

There are models to look to. The Loppet Foundation (www.loppet.org) transformed Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis into a year-round hub for recreation, youth engagement, and community pride—through a public-private partnership that actually *enhanced* access to nature, rather than threatening it. Why can't we pursue something similar at Lester? Why do community members meet delay after delay, vague answers, or shifting priorities when trying to build something rooted in public good? I have met on several occasions with the founder of the Loppet Foundation, John Willard Munger, and the previous Executive Director of the Loppet Foundation, Claire Wilson. They feel that Duluth's Lester Park would be an ideal place to establish a facility like the Loppet Foundation.

We watch as large-scale developments—often with lasting impacts on our natural spaces—move forward under the banner of progress. This inconsistency sends a message: that creating long-term community infrastructure based on health, recreation, and sustainability is somehow less urgent or viable than building more market-rate housing.

I am not asking to block housing. I am asking for the same level of urgency, cooperation, and transparency when it comes to supporting public-serving nonprofits—especially those that could activate Lester Park year-round, engage youth, promote stewardship, and strengthen the local economy.

If we can fast-track development deals, surely we can find a way to support a community-led nonprofit model at Lester Park. What I am proposing to build isn't a special interest—it's an investment in the public good. The development of a nonprofit organization to lead the development of a multifunctional park that would include the Lester Park Golf Course and potentially adjacent parkland including Amity Park and Hawks Ridge.

The Duluth community is tired of waiting. We need leadership that is willing to say yes—not just to developers, but to the community that already lives here and is working hard to make Duluth a better place for to live.

Respectfully,
Dennis D. Isernhagen
2318 Shore Drive
Duluth, MN 55812

