

**Parks and Recreation Division Report  
February 2023**

**PROGRAMMING**

**Cold Front**

Cold Front is happening on Saturday, February 4, from noon-6:00 p.m. at Bayfront Festival Park. This free, family-friendly event offers a variety of winter activities including skating, sledding, curling, skiing, bonfires, and more!



**Volleyball League**

Parks and Recreation offered, for the first time, an adult volleyball league utilizing the Washington Center gym on Sunday nights. The league has a total of 60 participants over a seven week period.

**Develop Skills to Skate**

For the second year, we are partnering with Duluth Figure Skating Club to offer a Develop Skills to Skate program for kids 5-12 years old at Bayfront on Monday nights for six weeks. Both of our classes are completely full with eight kids per class.

**55+ Programs**

The new year brought brand new programs for ages 55+! In January, we offered our first Lunch, Learn, and Share session in partnership with Duluth Aging Support. This free monthly program provides a catered lunch over an interactive presentation about rotating topics. Last month we focused on “Wellness in the Winter” for ways to support both physical and mental health. January also saw the launch of Chair Yoga at Evergreen Senior Center. This weekly class is led by a certified yoga teacher to help participants relieve stress and tension, calm the nervous system, and help maintain mobility. In addition to new programs, we have a return of popular opportunities such as snowshoeing, tech-help sessions, and other social activities at the senior center.

**Archery**

Archery programs are off to a busy start in 2023, with more than 60 participants registered already. We are adding classes when we can for the 20+ people on a waitlist due to classes reaching max capacity. These programs are a great way for youth, families, and adults to stay active and try something new during the colder months.

## Backyard Curling

A fun addition to the Bayfront Ice Rink this year is Backyard Curling! This equipment was awarded to us through a Minnesota Recreation and Parks Foundation (MRPF) New Initiative Grant in 2022. Visitors to Bayfront can borrow this equipment for free during the warming house open hours. Featured in the curling picture is Adam Fornear, our newest Recreation Specialist, who is overseeing the Bayfront Ice Rink this winter.



## UPCOMING PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT – PROJECTS

### **Brighton Beach Road Environmental Assessment Public Comment Period open through February 13**

Severe winter storm damage in 2018 caused extensive erosion to the shore and the Brighton Beach Road infrastructure. The storm was declared a disaster, and the City applied for recovery funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Public Assistance Program to repair damage and relocate the road inland to prevent future damage. An environmental review process has been underway for the relocation of Brighton Beach Road. The draft Environmental Assessment for Brighton Beach Road is available for public comment until February 13: <https://duluthmn.gov/planning-development/environmental/environmental-assessment-worksheets/> The City of Duluth Engineering division is managing the Road relocation and the plans are being integrated with the park improvements, which are informed by the 2019 Brighton Beach (Kitchi Gammi Park) Mini-Master Plan.

### **Lakewalk Interpretive Plan Public Meetings February 15 & 16**

- February 15 at 6 PM, Duluth City Hall, Conference Room 330
- February 16 at 6 PM, [Virtual via Webex](#)

Both meetings will include a presentation about the interpretive approach, draft plans for eight defined experience districts, and proposed interpretive content. Following the presentation, there will be time for questions and discussion with the project staff. The project area includes the riverfront segments of the Baywalk along Bayfront Festival Park, the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center and the south side of Canal Park, and then continues along the Lakewalk from the ship canal to 21st Avenue East. Altogether, the Plan spans nearly 3.5 miles of designated trail.

The purpose of the Plan is to define specific elements and common themes for interpretation along the existing trail and soon to be reconstructed segments during the Lakewalk resiliency and Harbor Plaza improvements. Themes will invite visitors to gain a richer understanding of the area and create meaningful spaces for visitors to engage. Interpretive elements will include historical, cultural, and artistic representations of people and place.



## Tischer Creek & Hartley Pond Feasibility Study Public Information Session February 23

The first of three public information sessions regarding the Feasibility Study will take place at 7 PM on Thursday, February 23 at Hartley Nature Center. The meeting will introduce the study, provide information on the proposed options, and introduce the consultants, GEI, that are conducting the Study. The purpose of the Study is to improve the aesthetic value and recreation opportunities in Hartley Park, while also mitigating the temperature and sediment impairments that are negatively impacting downstream trout. The Study will evaluate the feasibility of the proposed options. The findings will then be used by the Parks and Recreation Commission, Natural Resources Commission, and City Council to determine future action. The City is working with the Minnesota DNR for the Study. Conducting a Feasibility Study is an action set forth in the 2014 Hartley Park Master Plan, the 2019 Hartley Natural Area Management Plan under the Duluth Natural Areas Program, and the 2022 Essential Spaces: Duluth Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Plan.



0 250 500 1,000 Feet

Tischer Creek/Hartley Dam



## PROJECTS UPDATES

### **Half & Half Tax Renewal for Sports Tourism**

On January 23, 2023 the Duluth City Council supported the pursuit of an extension to the existing City of Duluth 0.5% food and beverage tax and 0.5% lodging tax for the purpose of funding up to \$36 million in capital improvements to parks-based public athletic facilities to support sports tourism and improved quality of life. The Half & Half tax was initially authorized by the legislature and City Council in 2014 to fund investments totaling \$18 million for outdoor recreation in the St. Louis River Corridor.

Link to the City Council Resolution: <https://duluth-mn.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6000090&GUID=0B707E1A-4C76-4BF8-A5D4-612D965BEF2D&Options=ID%7CText%7C&Search=tax&FullText=1>

An Athletic Facilities Action Plan, led by the Property, Parks, and Libraries department, will guide investment of funds. The scope and timeline of this planning process are still in progress.

### **Kitchi Gammi Park – Brighton Beach**

Parks and Recreation is currently reviewing the 50% plan sets, and expect to put the park improvement project out for bid in spring of 2023. Construction is anticipated to be substantially complete by the end of 2023.

## **Signage & Wayfinding**

Parks and Recreation is in the process of updating the printable Outdoor Recreation maps to simplify the icons, make it more user-friendly, and update all information on roads, parks, and trails. The new maps are expected to be printed and made available later this year.

Comprehensive signage will be installed at Lincoln Park and Kitchi Gammi Park following the completion of their respective park improvement projects.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **Invasive Species Management**

Staff are in the process of planning invasive species management for the coming year including opportunities for volunteers, and how available capacity will impact the scope of management. The Sustain Our Great Lakes grant funding will support treatment and restoration in the Tischer Creek and Kingsbury Creek watersheds in 2023 and 2024. Staff are beginning to plan summer work that will be completed with the Community Action Duluth Stream Corps.

### **Minnesota Point**

The City is continuing to support the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 111 Study of Minnesota Point. A virtual public meeting was held on January 13 to provide an update on information gathered so far and the next steps.

## **PARK MAINTENANCE**

Park Maintenance staff have been working closely with the Recreation Specialists to prepare for Cold Front including creating the pleasure ice rink, an ice sheet for curling, Quinzhee, an obstacle course, and luge, as well as grooming for skiing, fat biking, and snowboarding. In addition to event preparation, staff have begun winter maintenance projects including painting garbage cans, completing upgrades for vehicles and equipment, restocking for 2023 operations, and completing continuing education for staff. In the winter months, the sanitation route for garbage and recycling collection serves over 80 locations throughout the City. Snow removal remains a core component of work clearing city-owned sidewalks and park areas.

### **Memorial Park Pleasure Rink**

A pleasure ice skating rink was installed at Memorial Park this season. Parks and Recreation and Park Maintenance identified Memorial Park for the addition through assessment of the distribution of rinks throughout the City and evaluation of parks with sufficient infrastructure to support a rink (parking, lighting, and turf, etc.).

### **Trail Maintenance and Repairs**

After the extensive winter storms early in the season, Park Maintenance staff have worked diligently to clear debris, establish the base for winter activities, complete trail grooming, and communicate grooming updates via the Trail Grooming phone line and Facebook. Volunteers with COGGS and DXC have been very helpful assisting with the clearing of debris from trails. Special thanks to these organizations and the countless volunteers assisting this season with trail clearing and packing.

### **Forestry**

With the strong potential for urban forestry funding through the Inflation Reduction Act, there will likely be an increased demand for trees in the next 2-5 years. In anticipation, we are working to secure a growing contract with a nursery to ensure the City will have the necessary supply of trees for planting and, ideally, insulate the City from potential market changes. The contract would secure roughly 300 trees of specified tree species and cultivars annually for the duration of the contract.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) continues to damage the ash tree population in Duluth. Removal of dead and dying ash trees has, and will continue to be, a high priority for Park Maintenance staff. Once infested, ash trees become very brittle and can be hazardous if not removed in a timely manner. We are in the process of providing educational information to people, particularly for residences where ash are growing in the road right-of-way that could be perceived to be a home's yard. Door hangers and green tree ribbons are currently being distributed to various neighborhoods.

The EAB Management Plan, which was initially approved by City Council in 2016, will be updated to reflect the progression of the pest. These revisions, which do not alter the intent of the plan, will go to City Council for approval on February 13. A copy of the plan is available via the EAB webpage: <https://duluthmn.gov/media/14628/eab-plan-revisions-for-council.pdf>

## **GOLF**

### **Enger Park Renovation Update**

After the bids for the Irrigation System Renewal project came in over budget, staff reviewed value engineering options and determined there was an opportunity to restructure the bid documents. The documents will be separated into three scopes of work for the pond, irrigation, and electrical improvements. By separating these elements, we hope to attract additional bids. The project will be rebid in February. This timeline will continue to allow Enger Golf Course to operate as planned in 2023, and preserve the possibility that construction could begin after Labor Day, with the majority of work planned for 2024. Bid documents are structured to maintain a minimum of 18 holes of golf available at Enger throughout construction.

## **CAPITAL BUDGET PRESENTATION**

The 2023 Parks Capital Budget was delivered to City Council on November 21, 2022. Attached to this division report is a PDF of the presentation slides. A WebEx recording of the meeting is available to watch as well, with the Parks section beginning around the 1:06:00 mark:

<https://duluthmn.webex.com/recording-service/sites/duluthmn/recording/e5cc047d4c21103bafef005056813512/playback?rcdKey=4832534b00000005a82cc5442c1bb88d6f16bd1f76454b2836deab3b7dcc991c2891fb1bad28afd6&timeStamp=1675356270939&reviewId=432491572>

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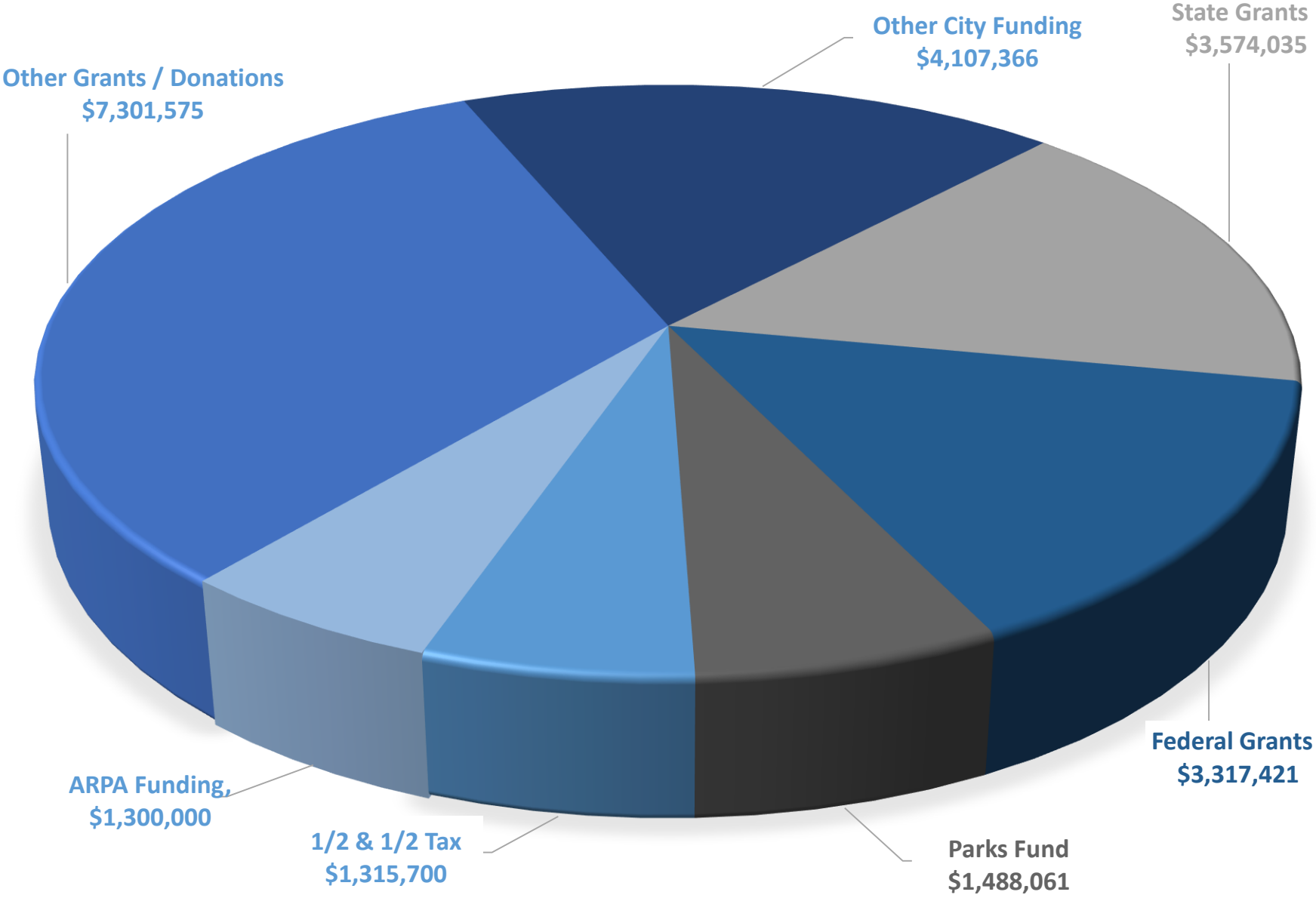
# Parks and Trails

## Capital Projects and Funding Sources

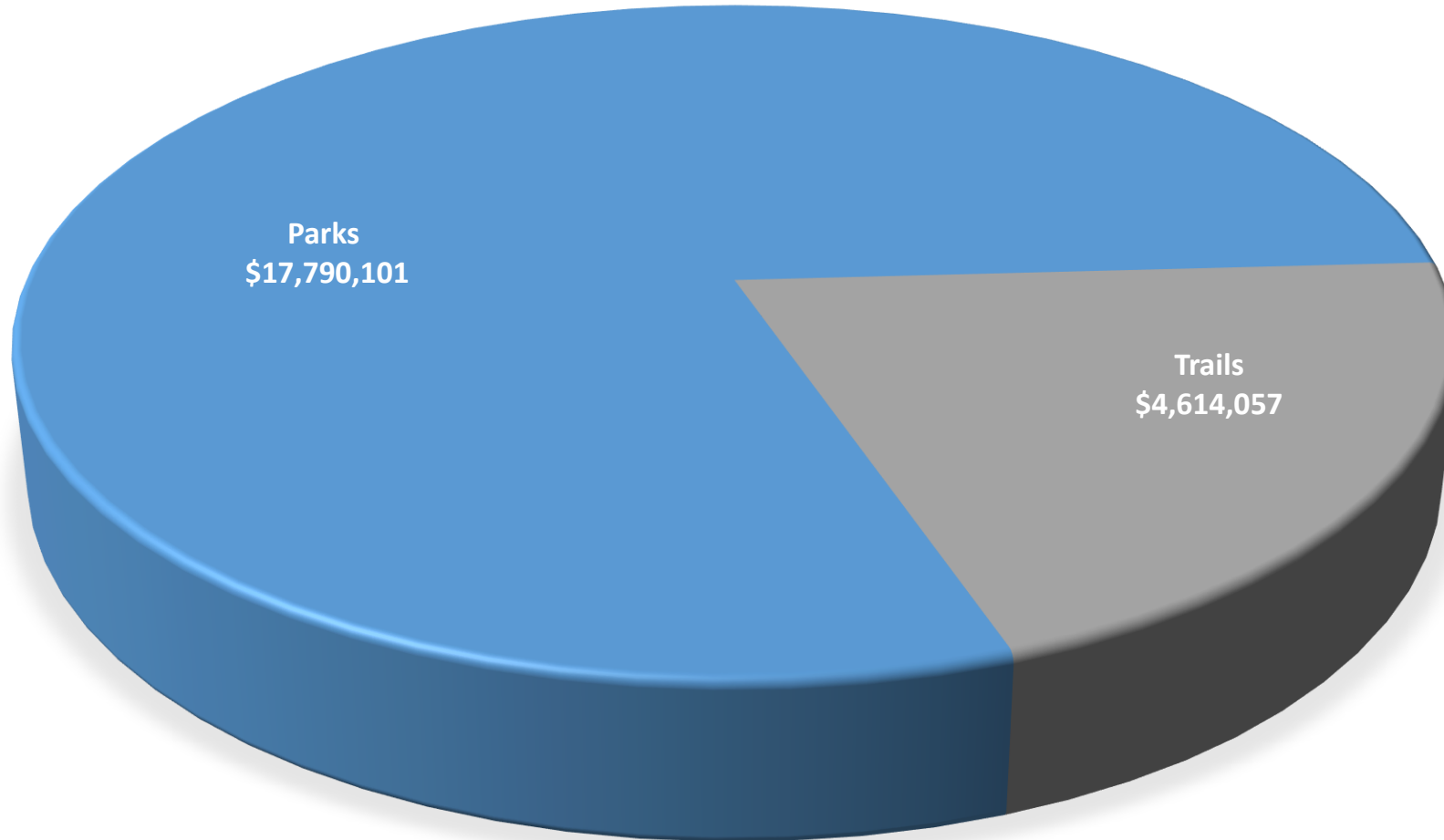




# 2023 Parks and Trails Funding Sources - \$22,404,158



# 2023 Parks and Trails - \$22,404,158





# 2023 Parks Budget

St. Louis County Tax Forfeit Land Conveyance	\$ 4,440,000
St. Louis River Natural Area Land Acquisition	3,730,000
Lincoln Park Restoration	4,268,406
Enger Golf Course Renovation	2,750,000
Brighton Beach Park	1,392,695
Spirit Landing Project	370,000
Zoo Main Building Design	204,000
Community Athletic Facilities Needs Assessment	150,000
Lester Park Golf Course Public Planning Process	100,000
Miscellaneous Infrastructure - Citywide	385,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 17,790,101</b>

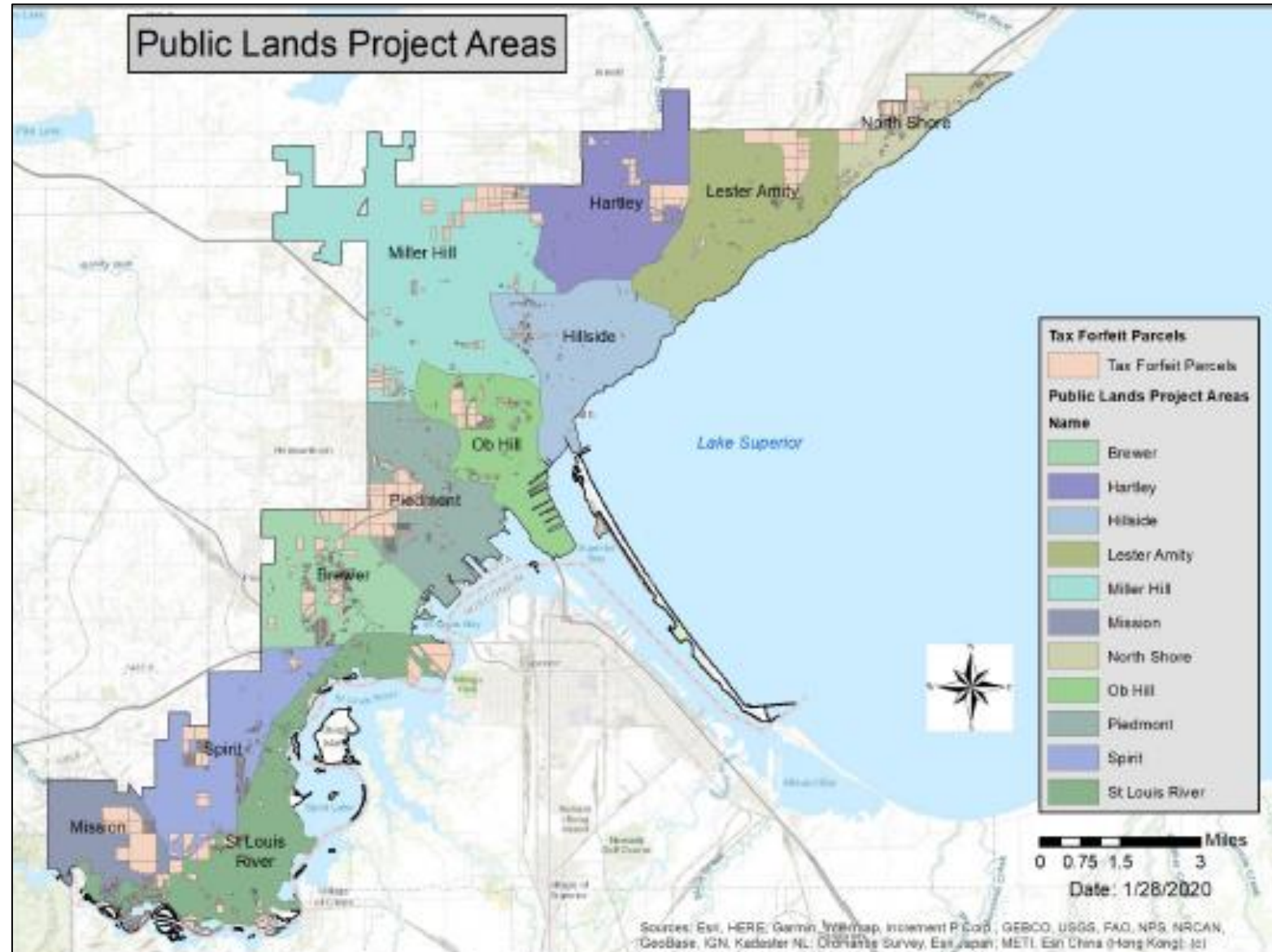


# Open Space Acquisition

Acquisition of \$8.17 million worth of tax forfeit property across 11 distinct districts. The first five areas of focus include: Lester/Amity, Hartley/Downer, Piedmont, the St. Louis Riverfront, and Mission Creek for permanent protection.

Total Funding: \$8,170,000

- Other Grants/Donations/Funding: \$7,000,000
- Federal EPA Grant: \$900,000
- Parks Fund: \$270,000





# Lincoln Park Restoration

Comprehensive restoration of developed lower portion of Lincoln Park.

Total Funding: \$4,268,406

- ARPA: \$1,200,000
- National Park Service Grant: \$750,000
- ½ & ½: \$810,000
- Clean Water Grant: \$299,525
- Local Grants/Donations: \$186,575
- Parks Fund: \$587,500
- Other City: \$392,305
- Community Development Block Grant: \$42,501





# Brighton Beach Park

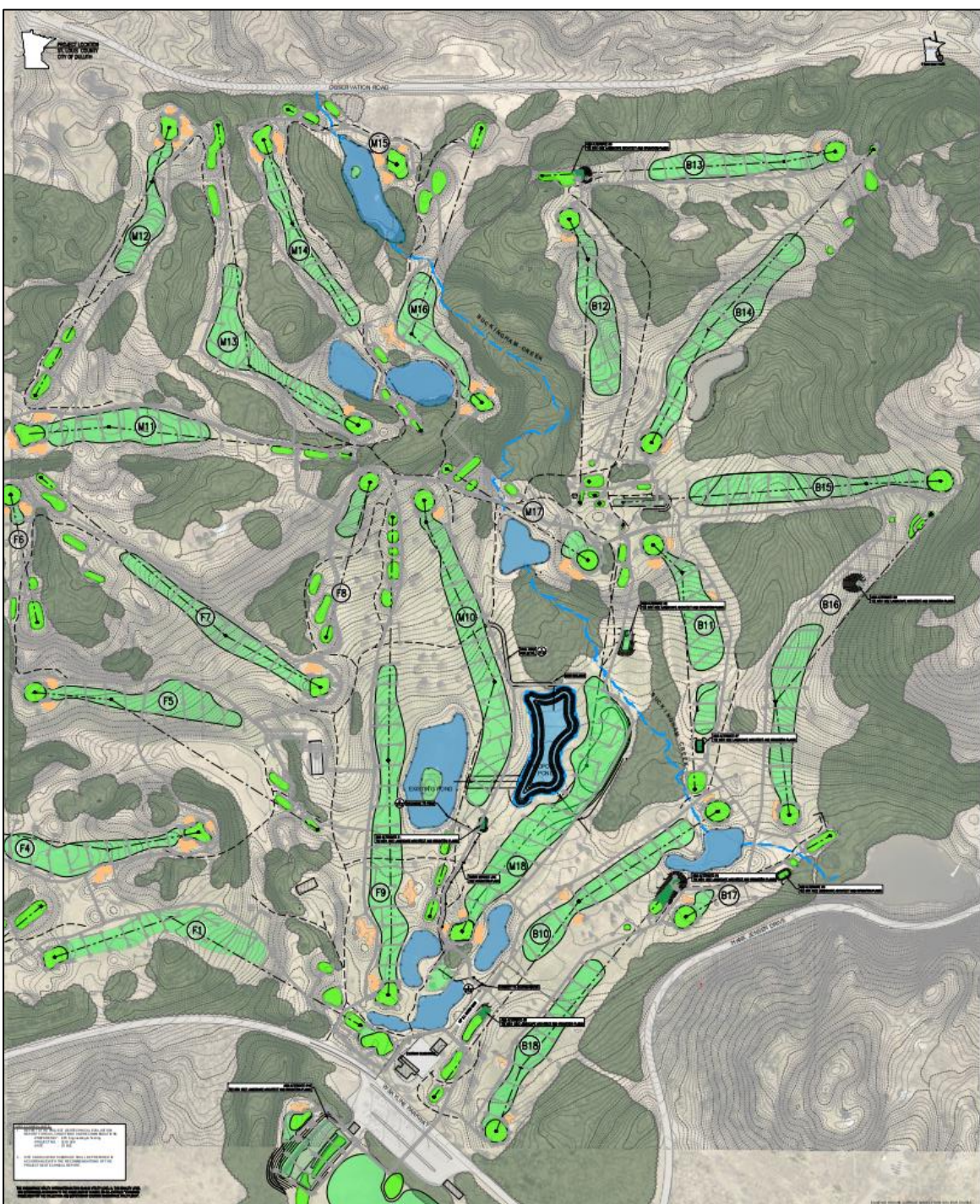


Construction of new northeast entrance road, stabilization of shoreline, and renewal of park amenities.

Total Funding: \$1,392,695

- Federal Grant: \$515,695
- State Grant: \$285,939
- Other City Funds: \$414,061
- Parks Fund: \$177,000





# Enger Park Golf Course Renovation

Enger Park Golf Course renovation items in this phase include a new irrigation system and expanded irrigation pond capacity as well as improvements to fairways, bunkers, etc.

Total funding: \$2,750,000

- Bonding: \$2,000,000
- Revenue Replacement: \$750,000



# Spirit Landing

Protect and restore eight-acre riverfront property and connect trail systems to and through the property.

Total funding: \$370,000

- ½ and ½ Funds: \$120,000
- Grants: \$250,000







# Lake Superior Zoo Main Building Pre-Design

Lake Superior Zoo main building pre-design.

Total Funding: \$204,000

- Bonding: \$204,000



# Community Athletic Facilities Needs Assessment

Assessment to determine community athletic facility needs and recommend capital investments in existing and new facilities.

Total Funding: \$150,000

- Parks Fund: \$150,000





# Miscellaneous Parks Projects

- Midtown Park Planning: \$100,000
- Plan for future use of Lester Park golf course: \$100,000
- Park Point Beach House Maintenance: \$90,000
- Indian Point Campground Maintenance: \$70,000
- Fond du Lac & Historical Parks Design: \$30,000



# 2023 Trails Budget

Spirit Mountain area trails	\$ 1,478,696
Cross City Trail-Irving Park to Greene Street	1,129,750
Waabizheshikana-The Marten Trail – Segment 2 and interpretation	780,100
Snowmobile Trail	400,000
Park Point Beach Access: Lafayette CC	206,076
St. Louis River Estuary Water Trail Improvements	100,000
Other Trail Improvements	519,435
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 4,614,057</b>



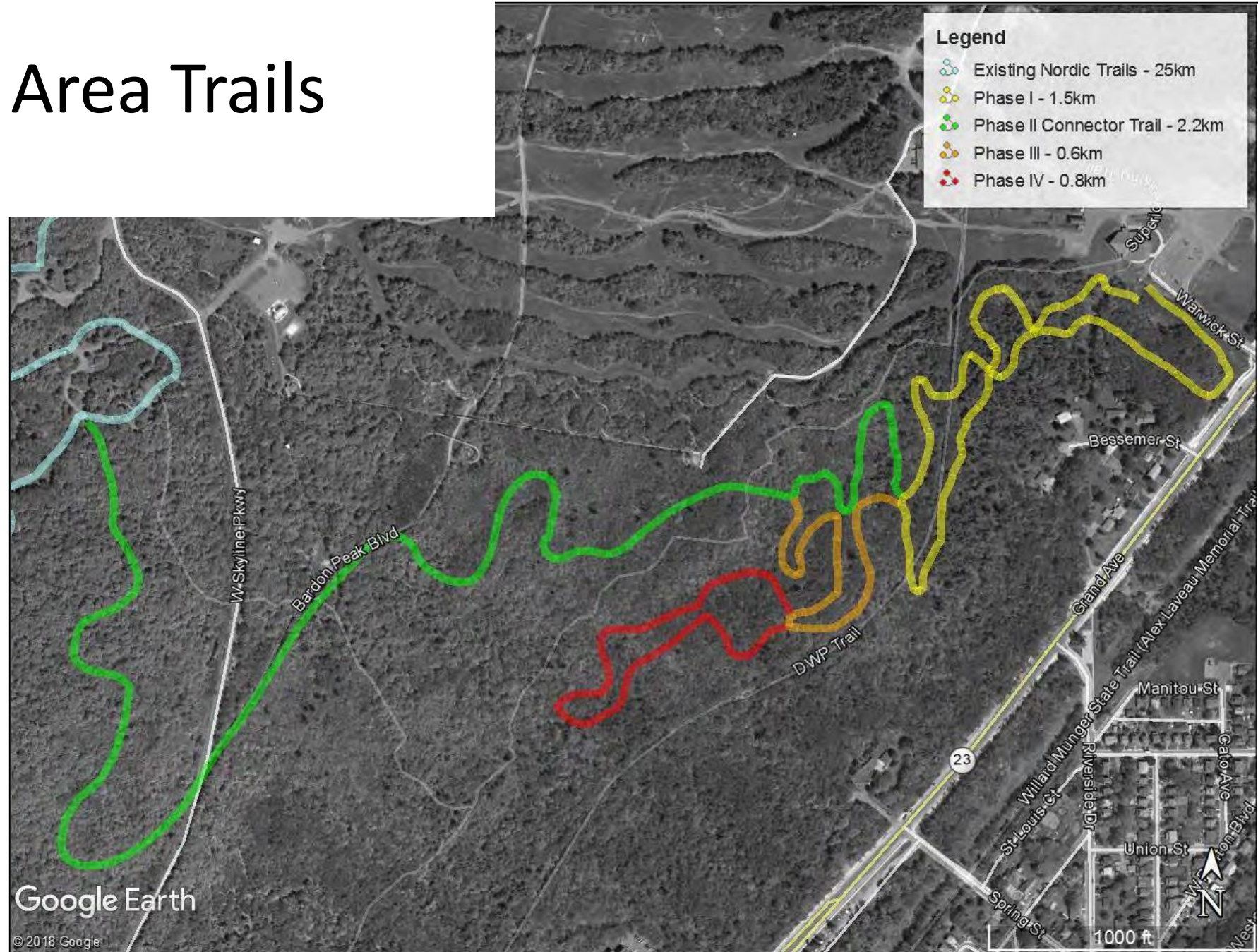


# Spirit Mountain Area Trails

Enhance trails in and around Spirit Mountain for cross country skiing, snowmobiling, and mountain biking.

Total Funding: \$1,478,696

- State Grant: \$1,254,471
- Federal Grants: \$224,225



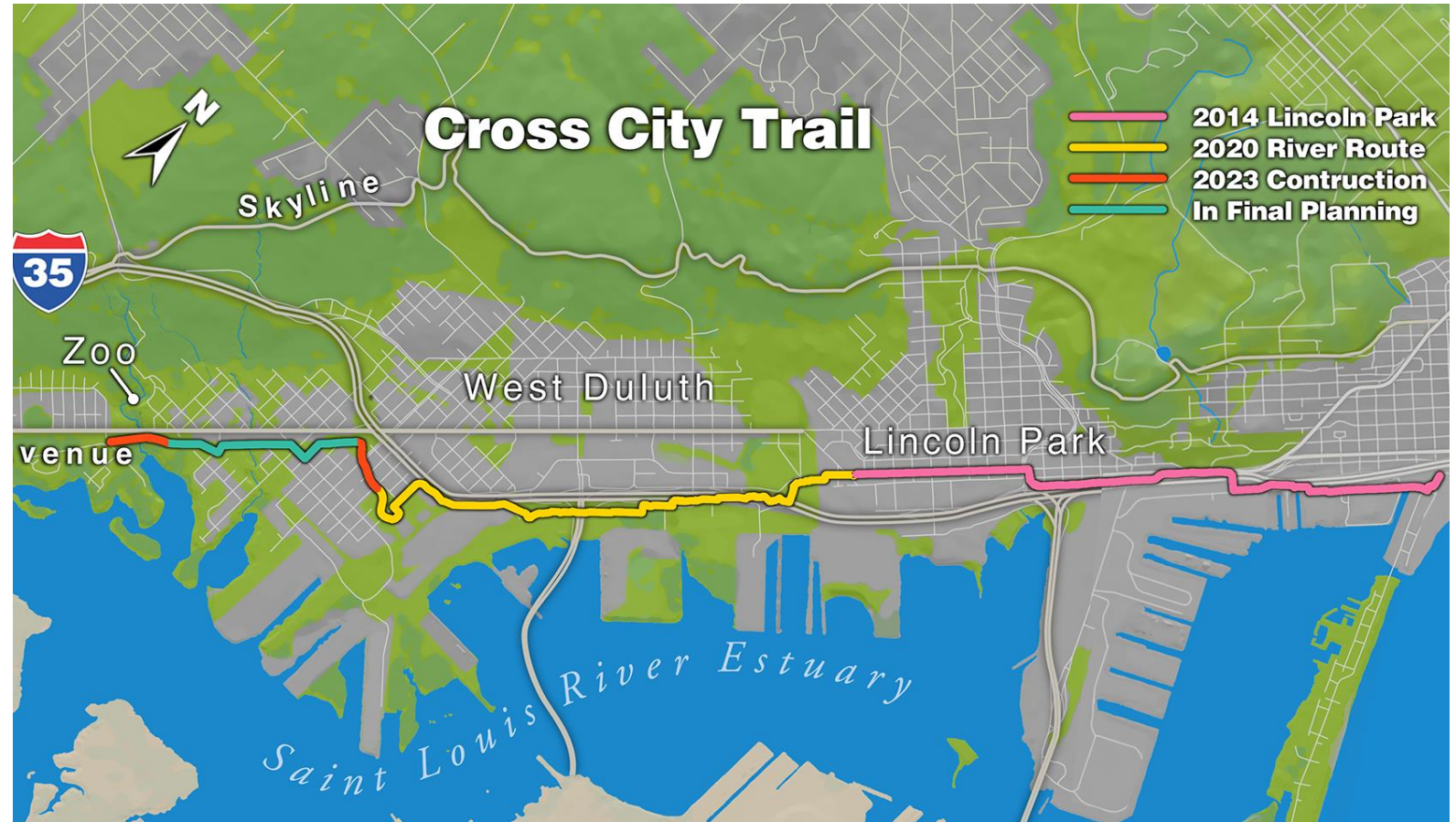


# 2023 Cross City Trail Construction

Construction of two small CCT segments: one from Irving Park to 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue East, the second from Pulaski Street to a trailhead across from the zoo.

Total Funding: \$1,129,750

- Federal Grant: \$600,000
- ½ and ½: \$255,700
- Other City Funds: \$246,000
- Parks Fund: \$28,050





# Waabizheshikana: The Marten Trail Implementation

Completion of Segment 3. Design of Segment 1, Segment 2, and interpretive elements for 2024 construction.

Total Funding: \$780,100

- State Grant: \$630,100
- Other Grants: \$115,000
- Federal Grant: \$35,000



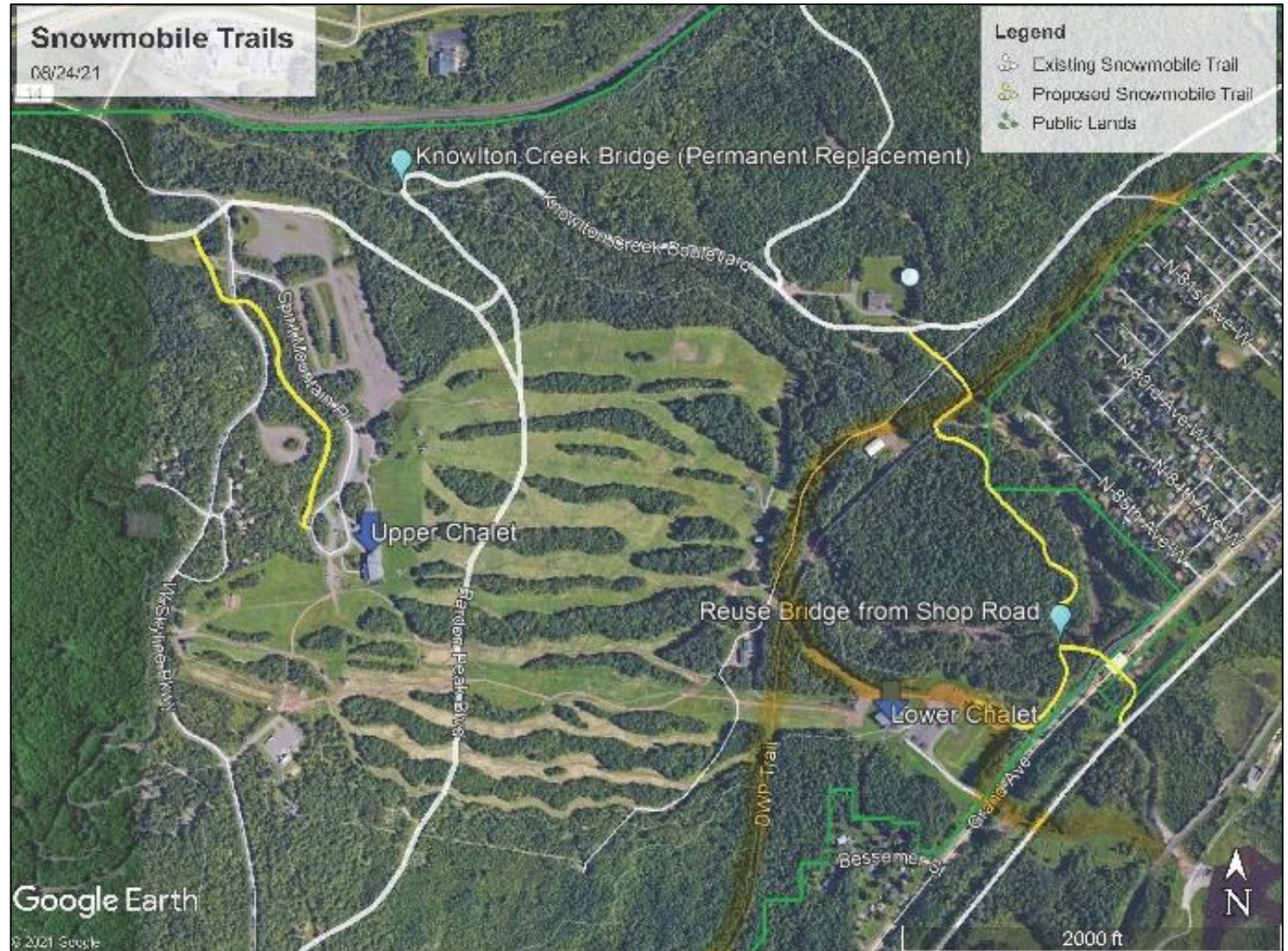


# Knowlton Creek Bridge & Snowmobile Trail

Complete abutments for Knowlton Snowmobile Trail bridge and a trail connecting the lower Spirit Chalet to the Cross-City Trail

Total Funding: \$400,000

- State Grant: \$250,000
- Federal Grant: \$150,000





# Park Point Beach Access: Lafayette Community Center

Replace deteriorated boardwalk, providing ADA beach access from Lafayette Community Center parking lot, across Park Point sand dune, to the beach.

Total Funding: \$206,076

- Federal Grant: \$100,000
- Other City Funds: \$100,000
- Parks Fund: \$6,076



# St. Louis River Estuary Water Trail Improvements



New and improved canoe and kayak accesses at Munger Landing and Perch Lake

Total Funding: \$100,000

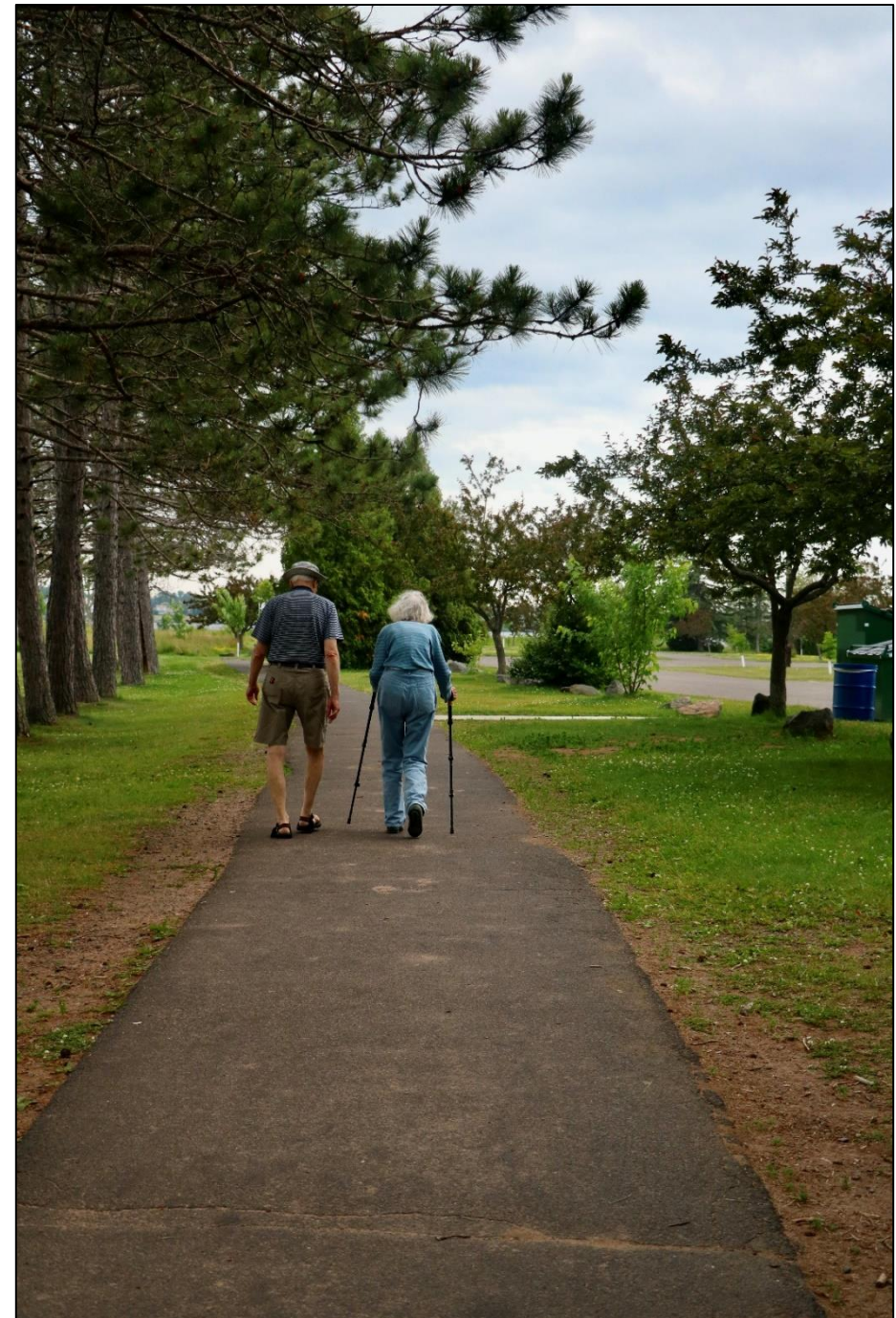
- ½ & ½: \$100,000



# Other Trail Improvements

Total Funding: \$519,435

- Lakewalk Interpretive Plan: \$20,000
- ADA Access: \$10,000
- Bridges/Infrastructure Failures: \$14,435
- Lakewalk Speed Limit Signage: \$10,000
- Amity Creek Multi-Purpose Trail Gates: \$10,000
- Property Acquisition: \$400,000 State Grant;  
\$55,000 Parks Fund



Thank you!

