



Planning & Development Division
Planning & Economic Development Department

Room 160
411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802



218-730-5580



planning@duluthmn.gov

Date: July 7, 2020
To: Planning Commission
From: Adam Fulton, Deputy Director, Land Use Supervisor
RE: PL 20-107 Priority Tax Forfeit Lands – Parcel Selection for Preservation

Recommended Action: Motion to recommend approval of the Guidelines for Selecting Tax Forfeit and Open Space Parcels for City Ownership and Protection

Planning & Development staff has worked over the past several years with the Parks & Recreation division's Park and Land Stewardship team regarding implementation of Open Space policies of the Imagine Duluth 2035 comprehensive plan. Part of that process included an evaluation of existing open spaces that are currently held by the state of Minnesota, and managed by St. Louis County, as tax forfeit lands.

From a statutory perspective, it is St. Louis County's obligation to discard of tax forfeit lands consistent with state law (Chapter 282). As such, certain lands that may have specific open space or recreational values in the City may not be permanently protected in the manner expected by Duluth citizens and as directed in the comprehensive plan or in the UDC's official zoning map for the city.

The attached memo outlines in greater detail the evaluation process undertaken to consider the appropriateness of lands selected through this process. The process of selecting and conveying parcels for protection will take years to complete. To break the process into manageable chunks, the City has divided Duluth into eleven geographic project areas. The City and the County will proceed one project area at a time, deciding the future ownership and use of every tax forfeit open space parcel in one project area before proceeding to properties in the next project area. The City's objective is to initiate the first of the tax forfeit parcel transfers with the County by the end of 2020.

Prior to Planning Commission review, the city's Natural Resources Commission acted to recommend adoption of the Guidelines for Selecting Tax Forfeit and Open Space Parcels for City Ownership and Protection at its Wednesday July 1, 2020 meeting.

Following Planning Commission action on this item, the guidelines will go before the City Council for approval.