



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0828R, **Version:** 1

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ESSENTIAL SPACES: DULUTH PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS PLAN

CITY PROPOSAL:

WHEREAS: Essential Spaces: Duluth Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan (Essential Spaces Plan) is intended to guide decision-making for Duluth's park system over the next 10 to 15 years; and

WHEREAS: The Essential Spaces Plan provides recommendations for the City of Duluth to support a healthy and vibrant community, enhance equity and inclusion, and advance environmental protection under a sustainable budget framework; and

WHEREAS: The Essential Spaces Plan was informed by an extensive analysis of the park system and by robust community engagement efforts; and

WHEREAS: On September 21, 2022, the Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously voted in support of Essential Spaces: Duluth Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan and moved to recommend that Council approve the plan as presented;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the proper City officials hereby approve Essential Spaces: Duluth Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan, attached hereto as Exhibit A, and authorize implementation of the plan as funding allows.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: This resolution authorizes the approval and implementation of Essential Spaces: Duluth Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan (Essential Spaces Plan). The Essential Spaces Plan is intended to guide decision-making for Duluth's park system over the next 10 to 15 years. The plan provides recommendations for the City of Duluth to support a healthy and vibrant community, enhance equity and inclusion, and advance environmental protection under a sustainable budget framework.

The Essential Spaces Plan was informed by an extensive analysis of the park system. System analysis included a review of local and state demographics, recreation trends, special considerations (environmental justice, homelessness, climate changes), and park funding, as well as an inventory of park spaces and amenities, a walkshed analysis, a park conditions analysis, a programs evaluation, and comparisons to peer communities.

The Essential Spaces Plan was also informed by robust community engagement efforts, including six Project Advisory Committee meetings, six focus group meetings, a community survey, eight pop-up events, three community workshops, and an open public comment period on the draft plan. In total, more than 2,374 people provided input to guide development of the plan's themes, goals, strategies, and action items.

As informed by the system analysis and community engagement efforts, the Essential Spaces Plan contains five over-arching themes: 1) Invest in Duluth's Future; 2) Advance Uniquely Duluth Experiences; 3) Park Spaces for Building Community; 4) Strengthen Programs, Partnerships, and Volunteerism; and 5) Sustain Trails and Natural Areas. Each theme is supported by relevant goals and strategies, for a total of 19 goals and 104 strategies.

Finally, to realize the vision of the park system as described through the themes, goals, and strategies, the Essential Spaces Plan outlines 89 action items for the City to undertake in the next 10-15 years. These action items support one or more plan theme and include system-wide actions, as well as geographically targeted actions in the eastern, central, and western subareas of the city. Ultimately, the action items serve to improve the financial stability of the park system, advance equity and recreational access, reduce short- and long-term maintenance requirements, streamline internal processes and procedures, strengthen partnerships, address community needs and uplift community-based life, advance recreation programming, and ensure that the parks, trails, and natural areas of Duluth are well maintained, cared for, and available for the enjoyment of generations to come.

On September 21, 2022, the Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously voted in support of Essential Spaces: Duluth Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan and recommended that Council approve the plan as presented.