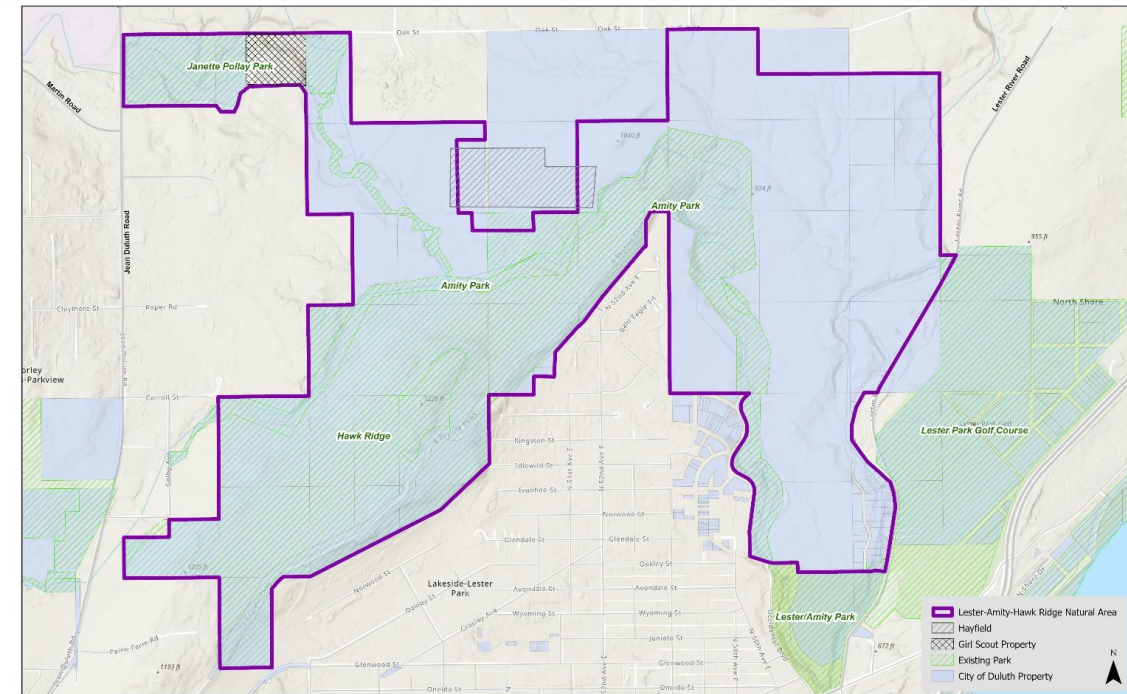


LESTER-AMITY-HAWK RIDGE NATURAL AREA

PLANNING COMMISSION PRESENTATION

JUNE 9, 2026



Proposed Lester-Amity-Hawk Ridge Natural Area

3/16/2025 12:05 PM



Minnesota Land Trust
Daryl Peterson – Director of Restoration Programs

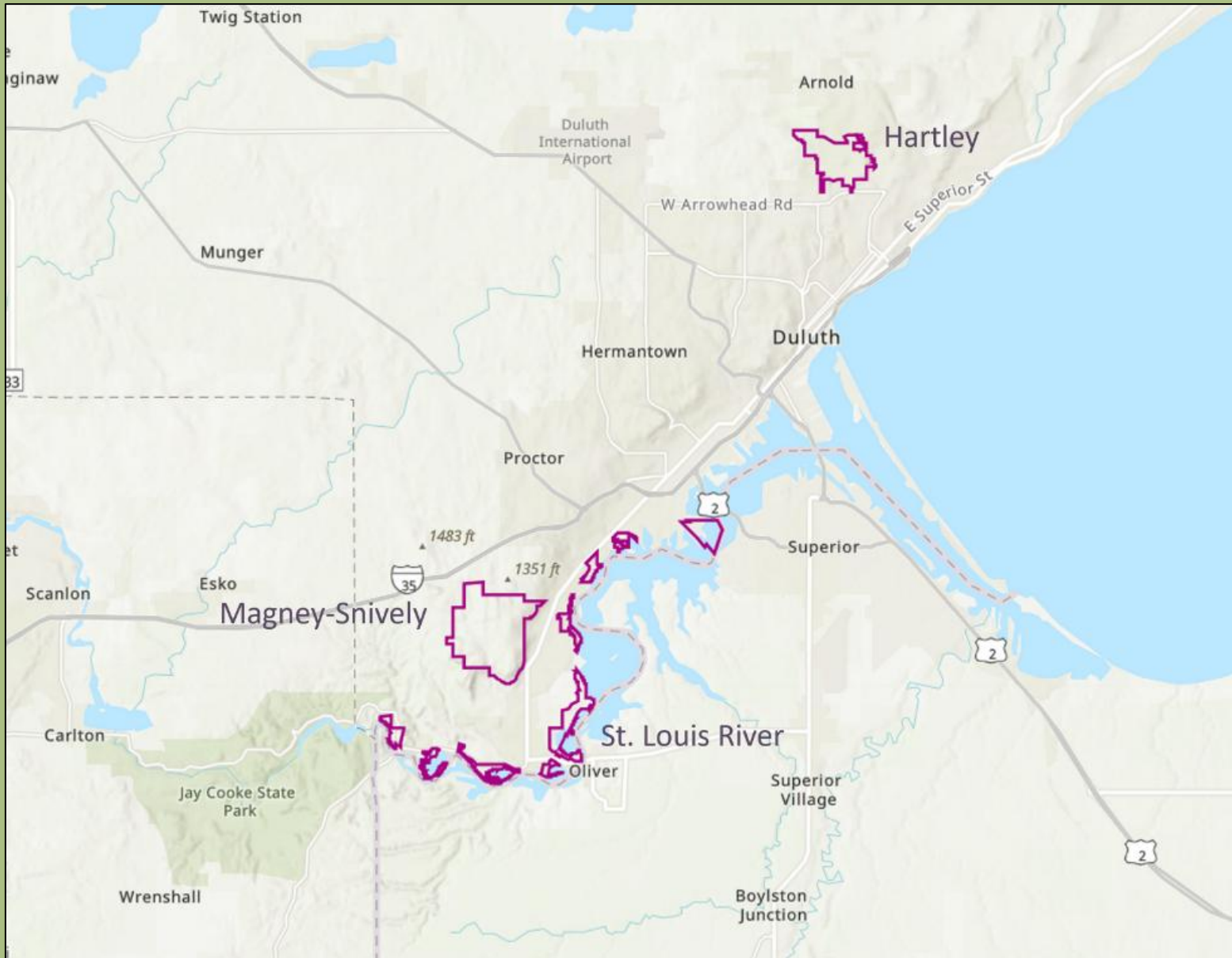
Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory
Janelle Long – Executive Director

Minnesota Trout Unlimited
John Lenczewski – Executive Director

**South St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation
District**

Tim Beaster – Conservation Specialist

A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM



Duluth Natural Areas Program (DNAP) is established within Duluth City Code (*Legislative Code, Chapter 2, Article XXIX, Sec. 2-152*)

DNAP Purpose:

- Preserves Duluth's natural heritage
- Supports outdoor recreation and outdoor-based businesses
- Enhances community health and quality of life
- Delivers critical ecosystem services (clean water, flood mitigation, carbon storage, etc.)
- Reduces long-term public infrastructure risk

A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM



The DNAP designates lands based on five primary scientific criteria:

1. Important Bird Congregation Area

Areas that act as critical habitat which support large concentrations of birds during migration or breeding.



A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM



The DNAP designates lands based on five primary scientific criteria:

1. Important Bird Congregation Area
2. Special Species Area

Locations harboring viable populations of endangered, threatened, or special concern species.



A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM



The DNAP designates lands based on five primary scientific criteria:

1. Important Bird Congregation Area
2. Special Species Area
3. Significant Native Plant Communities

Areas containing intact plant communities native to the area.



A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM



The DNAP designates lands based on five primary scientific criteria:

1. Important Bird Congregation Area
2. Special Species Area
3. Significant Native Plant Communities
4. Natural Water Feature Area

High-quality water bodies, including trout streams, which contribute to water quality and ecological health.



A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM



The DNAP designates lands based on five primary scientific criteria:

1. Important Bird Congregation Area
2. Special Species Area
3. Significant Native Plant Communities
4. Natural Water Feature Area
5. Geological Landform Area

Sites with undisturbed geological formations that illustrate the region's natural history.





NOMINATION OF LESTER - AMITY - HAWK RIDGE NATURAL AREA TO THE

Duluth Natural Areas Program

DATE: APRIL 2025

Nominated by:

Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory

Minnesota Land Trust

South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District

Minnesota Trout Unlimited

The Lester-Amity-Hawk Ridge Natural Area meets **ALL FIVE** requirements for nomination



THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST ECOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPES IN THE CITY

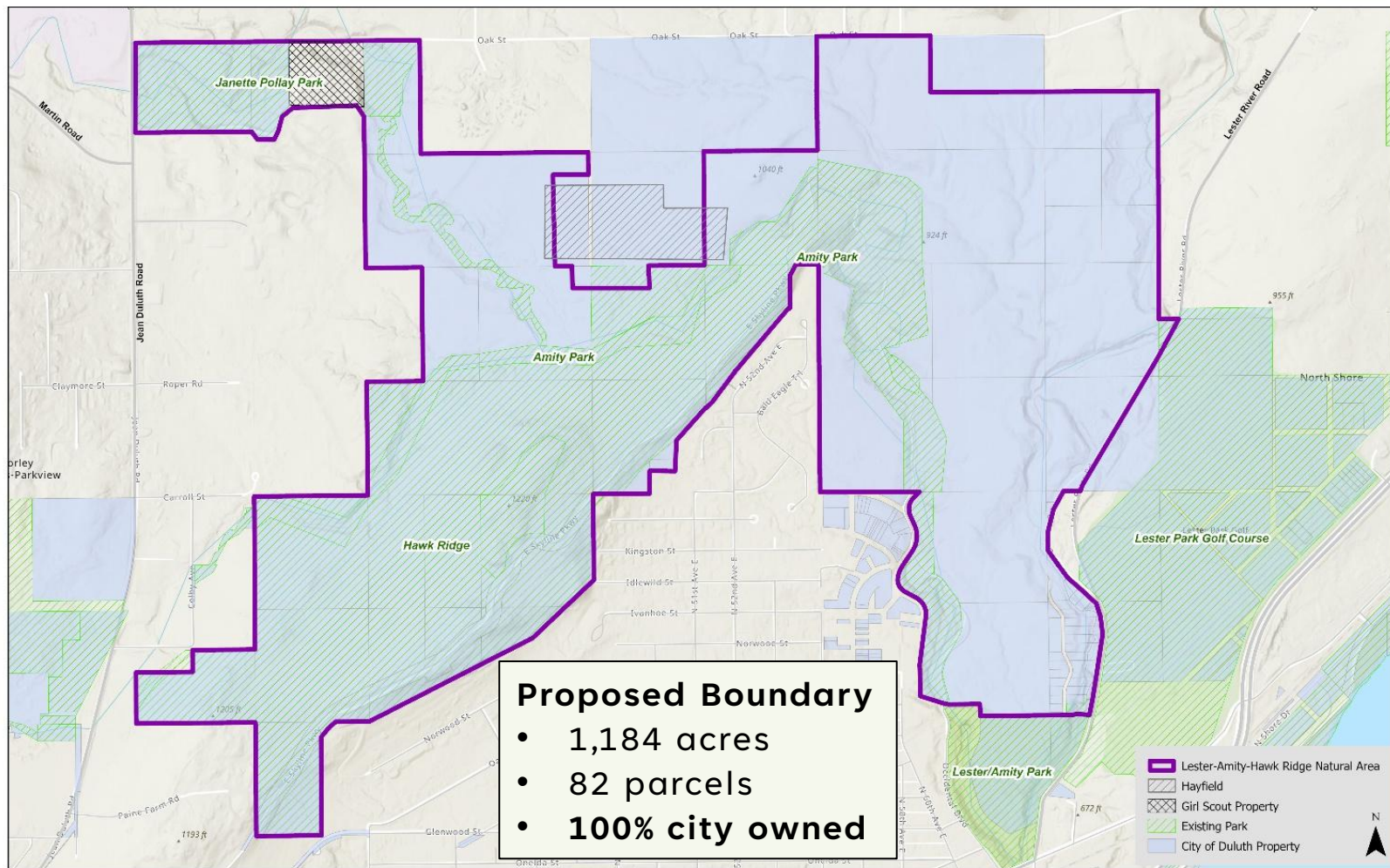


Proposed Lester-Amity-Hawk Ridge Natural Area

3/16/2025 12:05 PM

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- Important bird congregation area – over 200 species documented annually

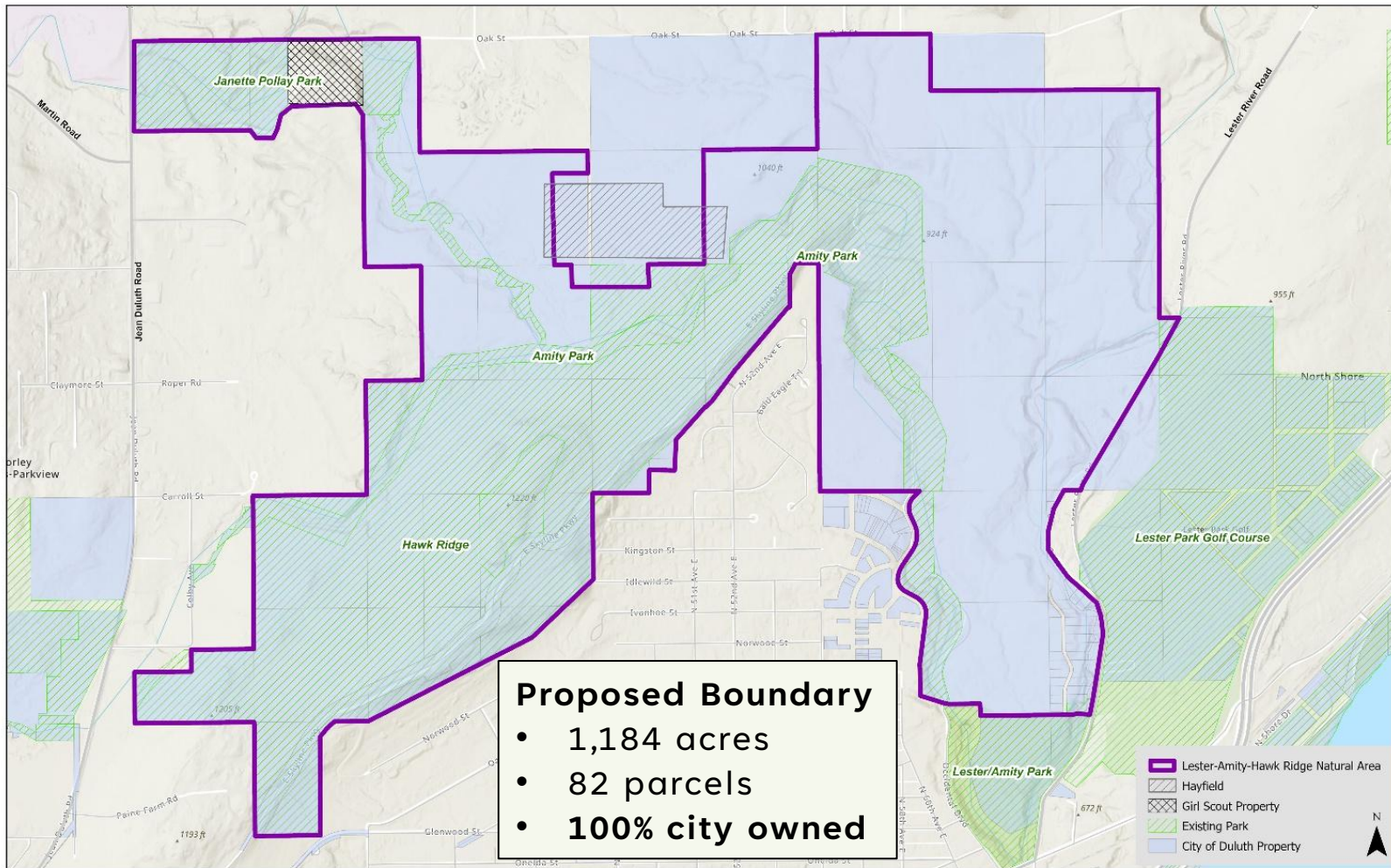


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- Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve was the first **Important Bird Area** designated in Minnesota

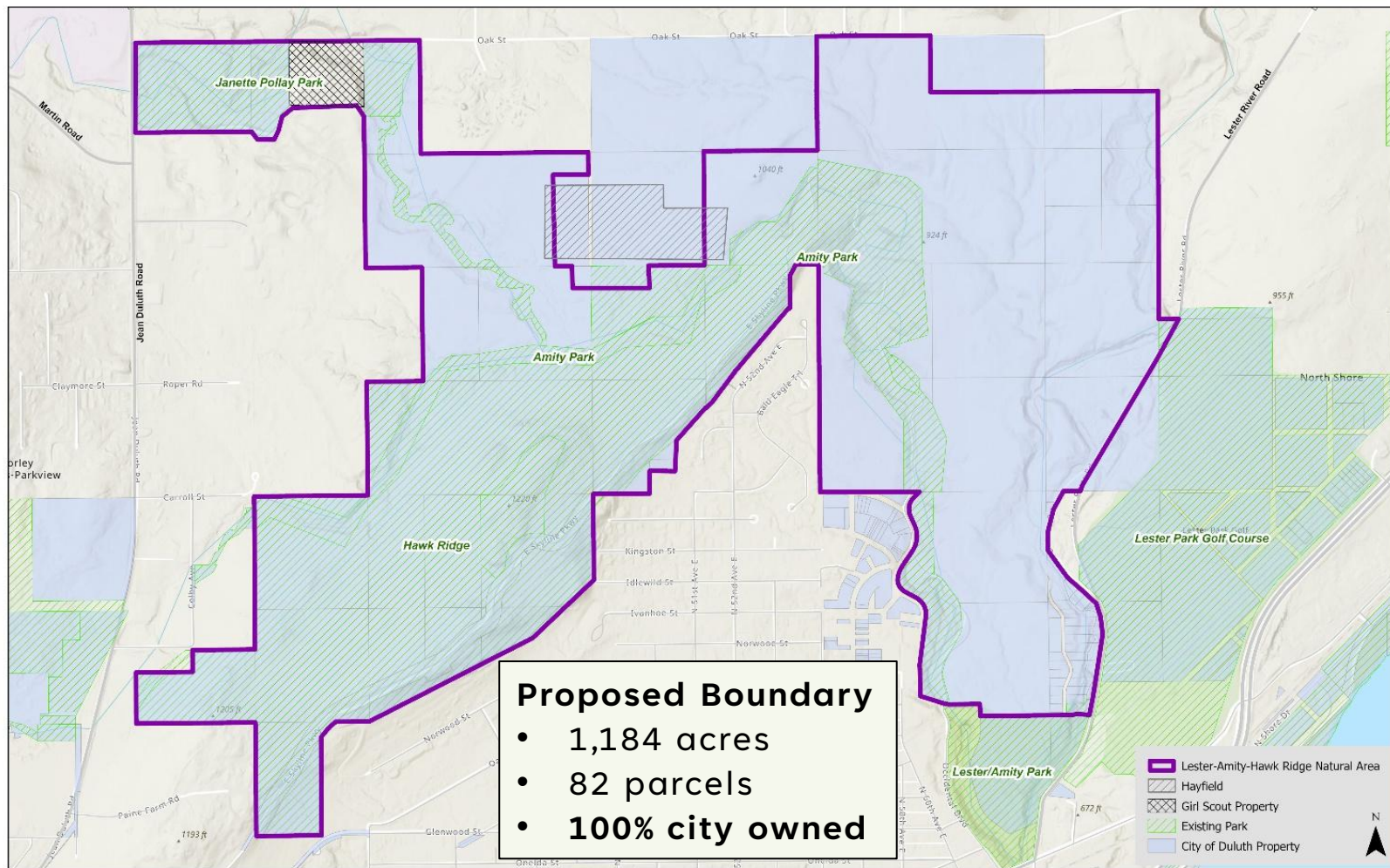


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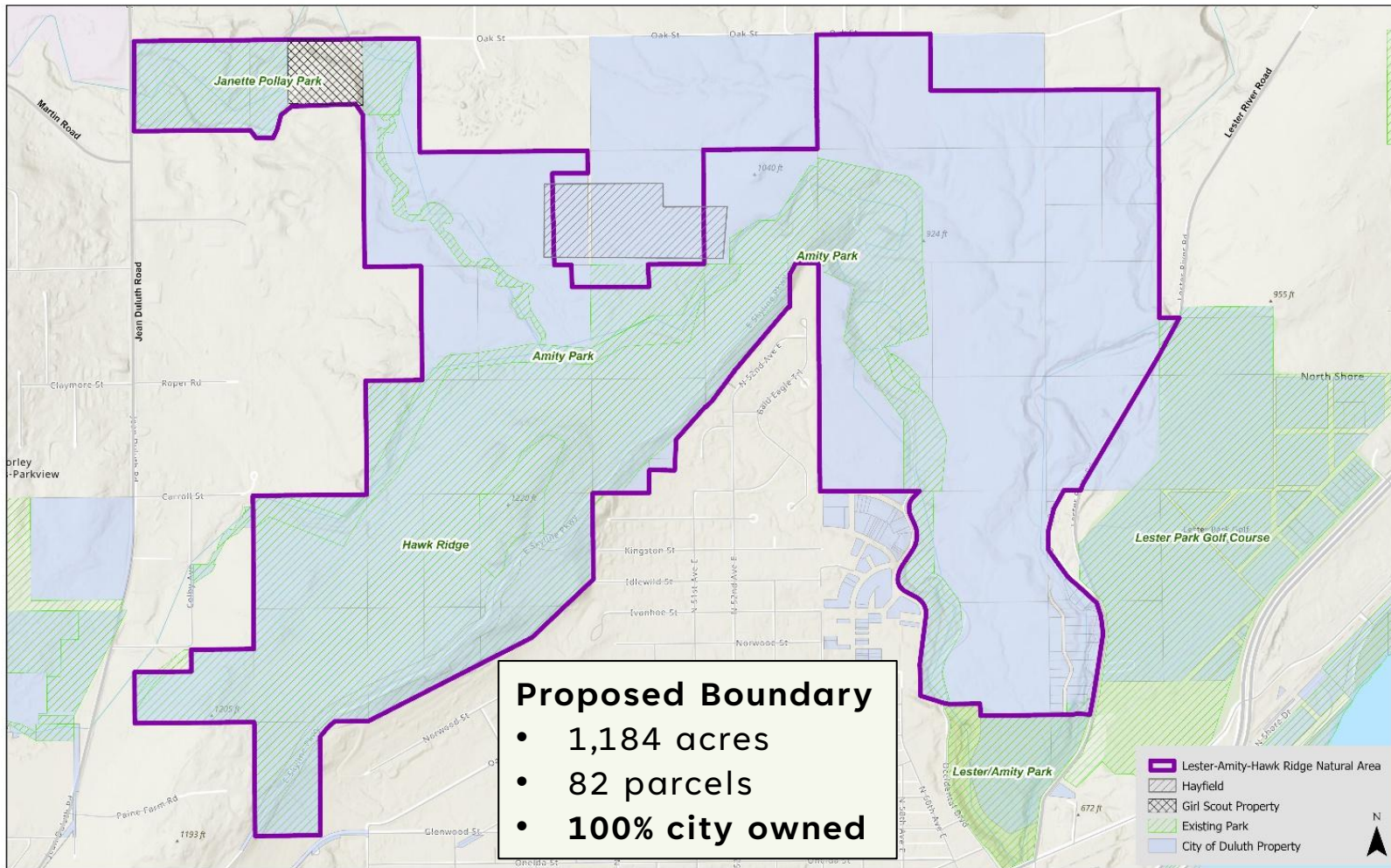


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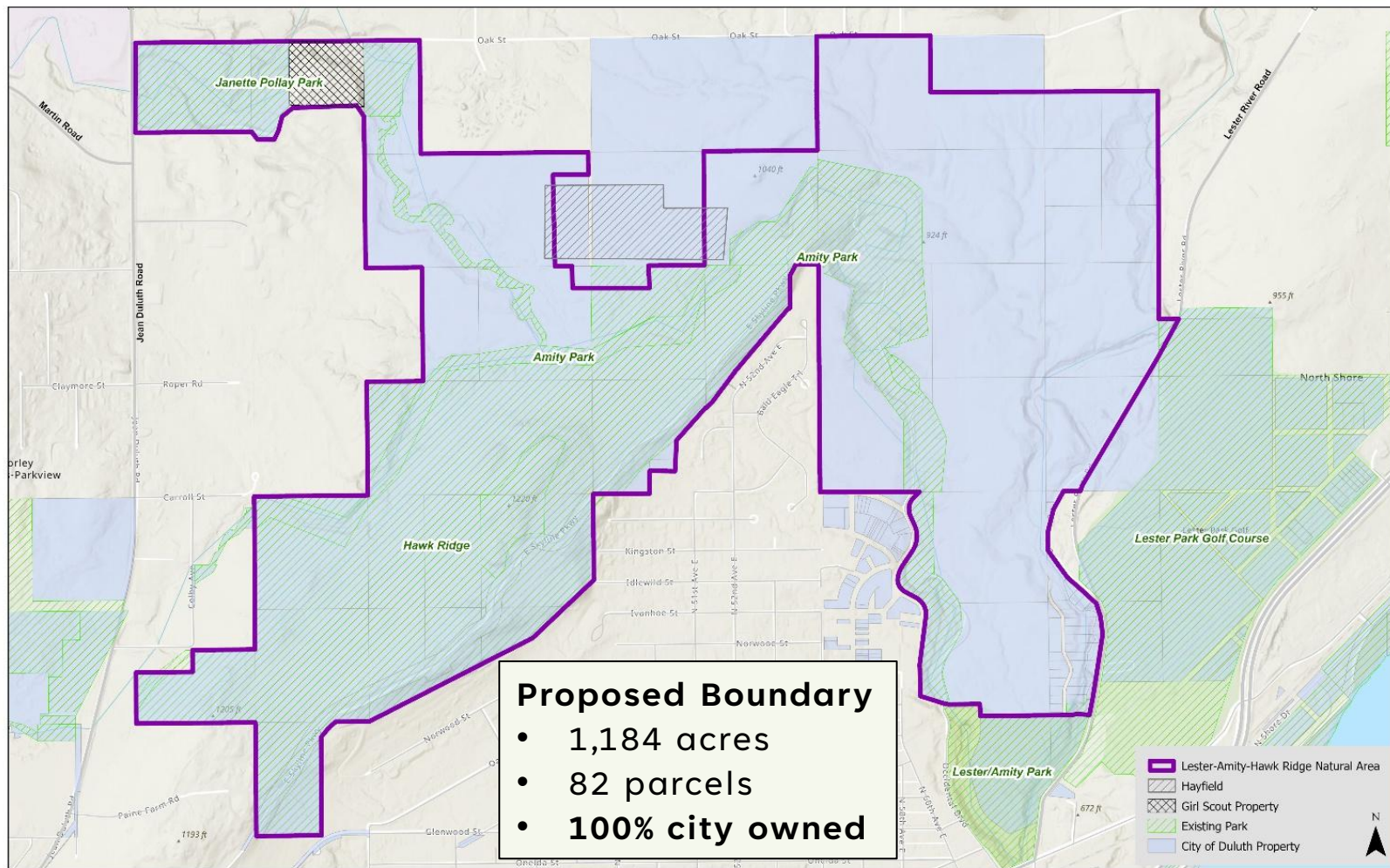


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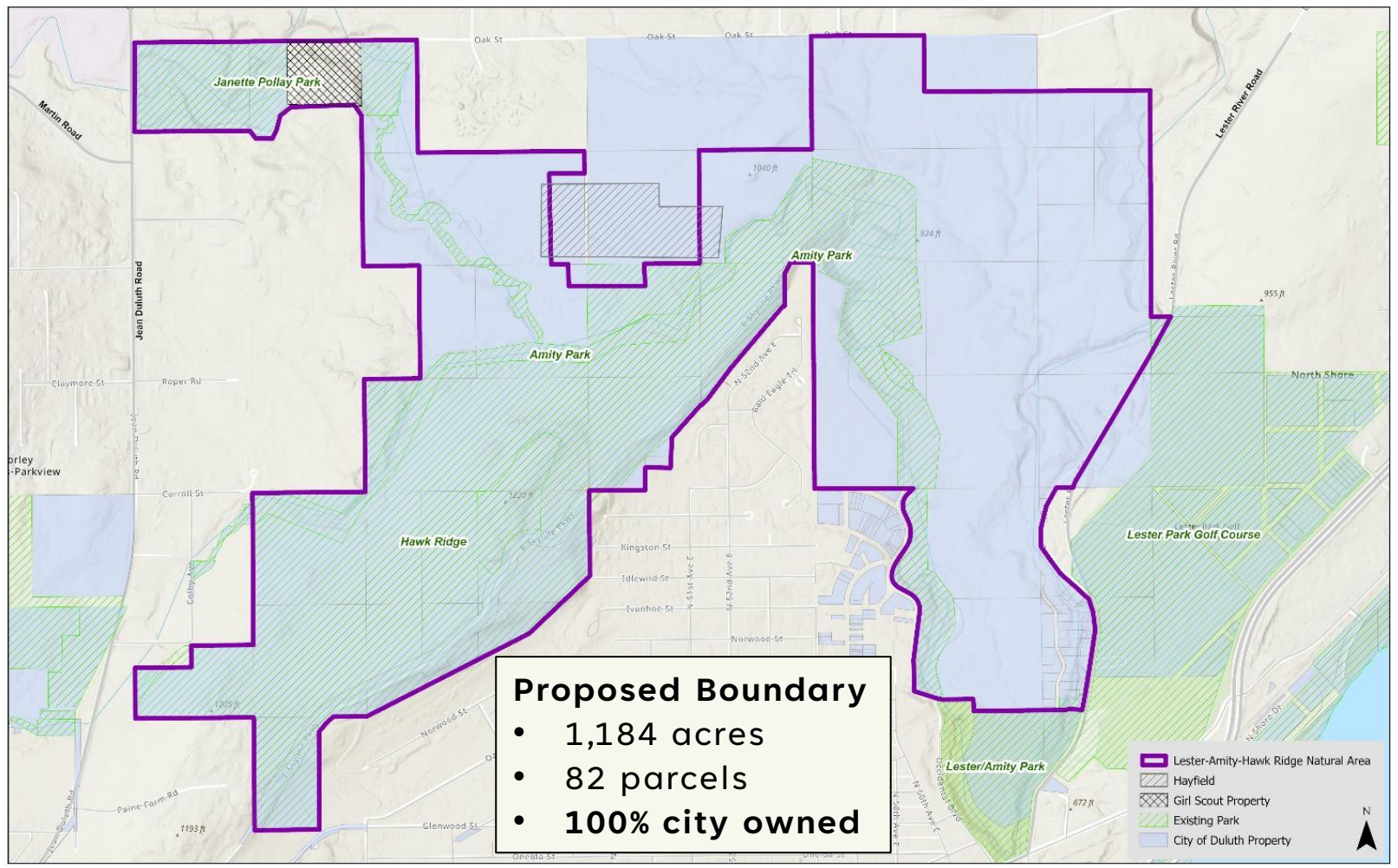
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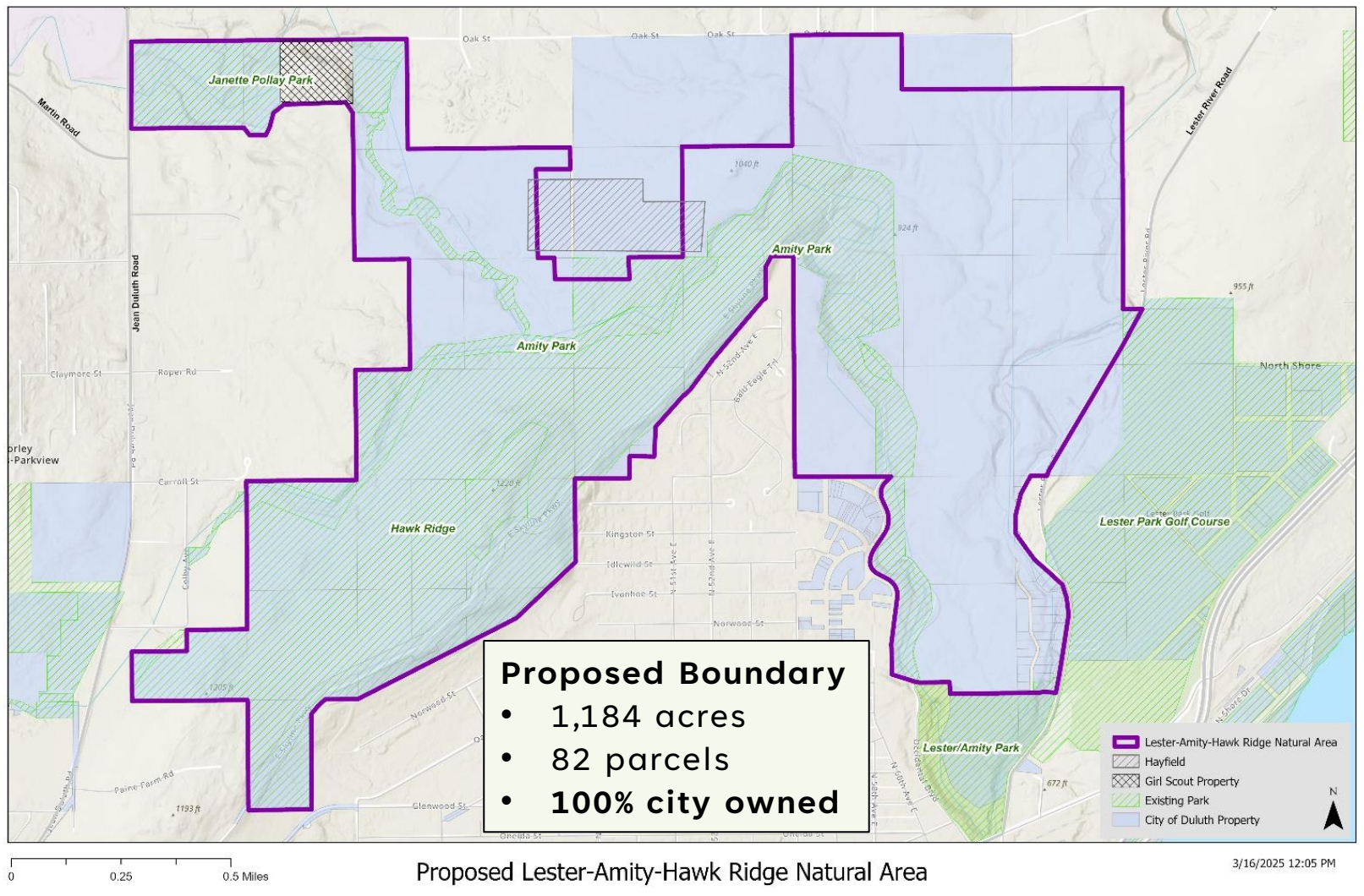


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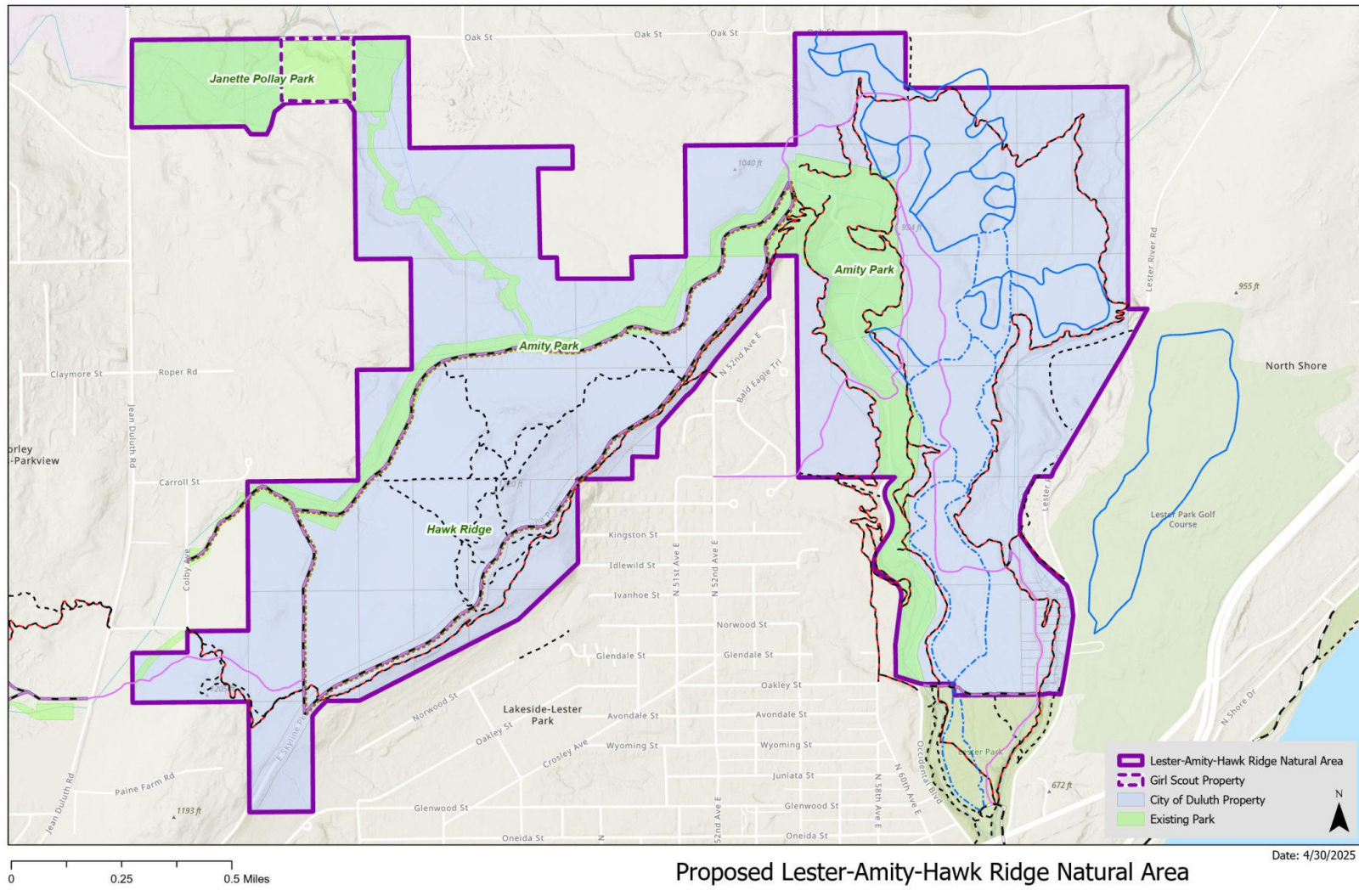
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- Geologic landform area – **Duluth’s 1.1-billion-year geological history** represented in the natural area’s landforms

WHAT THE LESTER-AMITY-HAWK RIDGE NATURAL AREA *WILL NOT* DO



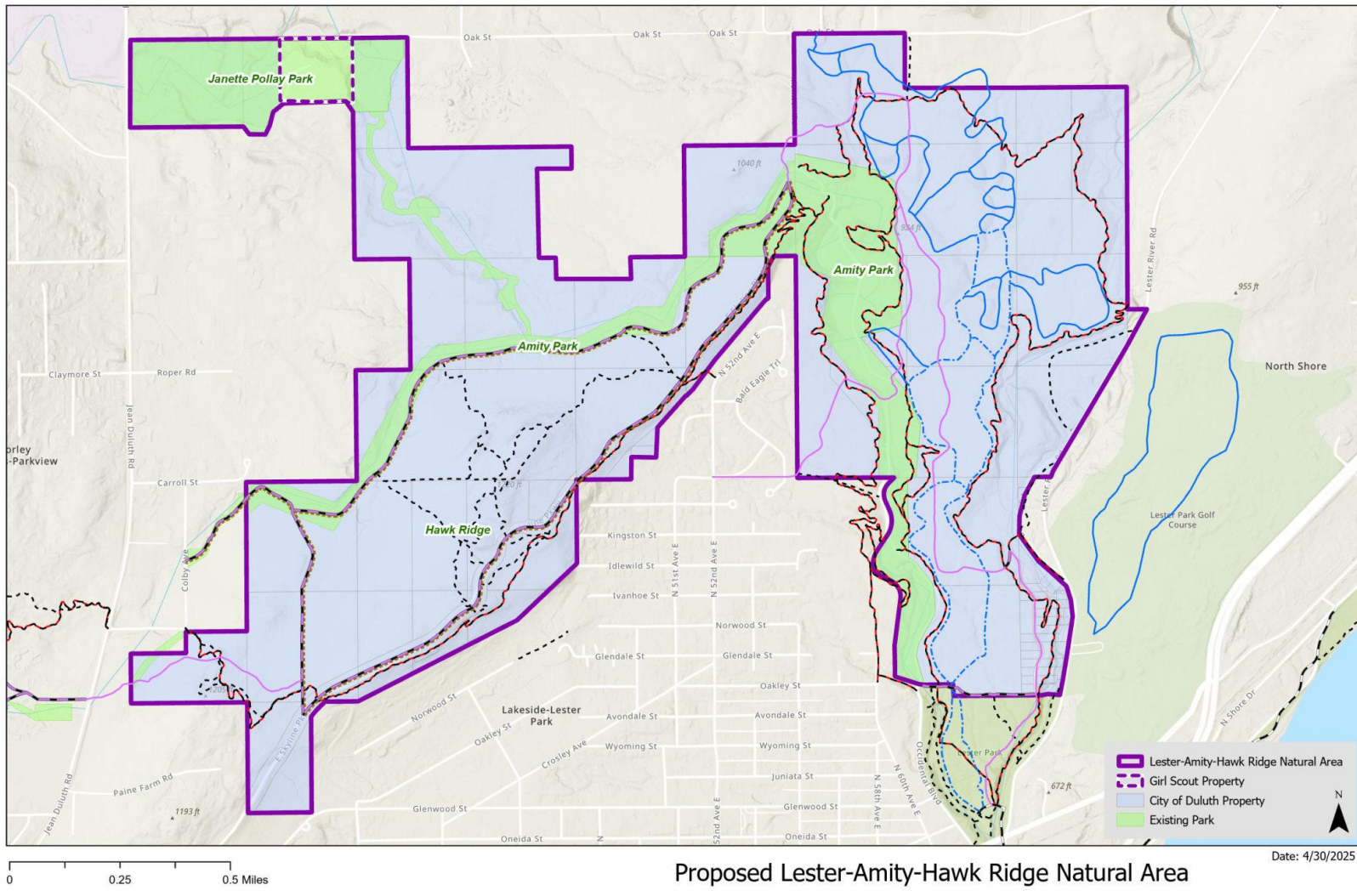
The Natural Area **WILL NOT**:

- Reduce this area's significance as a **hub of outdoor recreation**
- Close existing trails or eliminate current recreational uses
- Place limitations on the development or sale of private property adjacent to the Natural Area
- Create new regulatory authority
- Freeze the landscape in time

WHAT THE LESTER-AMITY-HAWK RIDGE NATURAL AREA *WILL* DO

The Natural Area *WILL*:

- Promote Duluth's "Best Outdoor City" Brand
- Support continued recreational use while protecting natural resources
- Protect valued City-owned open space from sale and development
- Lead to a management plan that provides for protection and restoration
- Serve as a focal point for partners to assist the City with management activities





MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE

Lester-Amity-Hawk Ridge Natural Area

OF THE DULUTH NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM

APRIL 2026

Nominated by:

Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory

Minnesota Land Trust

South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District

Minnesota Trout Unlimited

Draft Management Plan Complete

Outline:

1. Natural Area Conditions
2. Threats
3. Strategies
4. Prioritized Actions





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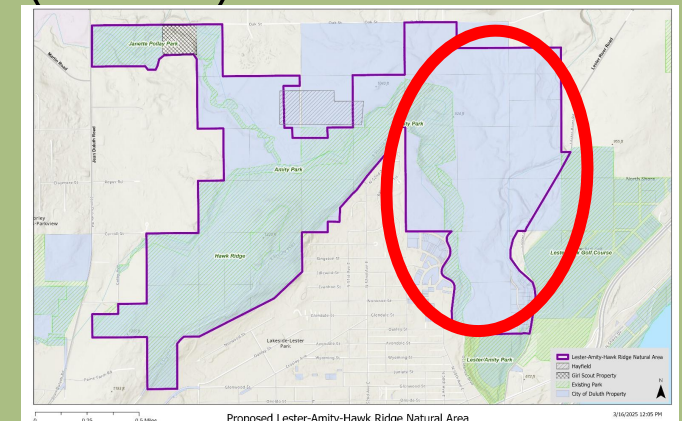


Lester-Amity-Hawk Ridge Natural Area Management Plan

PRIORITIZED ACTIONS



- **Action:** Complete Forest Stewardship Plan for Lester-Amity Forest
- **Cost:** \$60,000
- **Responsible Parties:** MN Land Trust (lead), City of Duluth
- **Target Completion Date:** 2026
- **Funding:** Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund (LSOHF)



Lester-Amity-Hawk Ridge Natural Area Management Plan

PRIORITIZED ACTIONS

HAWK RIDGE
BIRD OBSERVATORY

Duluth Parks & Recreation

THE CITY OF DULUTH MINNESOTA

SAS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
+ ASSOCIATES
WWW.SASLANDARCH.COM

HAWK RIDGE NATURE RESERVE MINI-MASTER PLAN

JUNE 8 2022

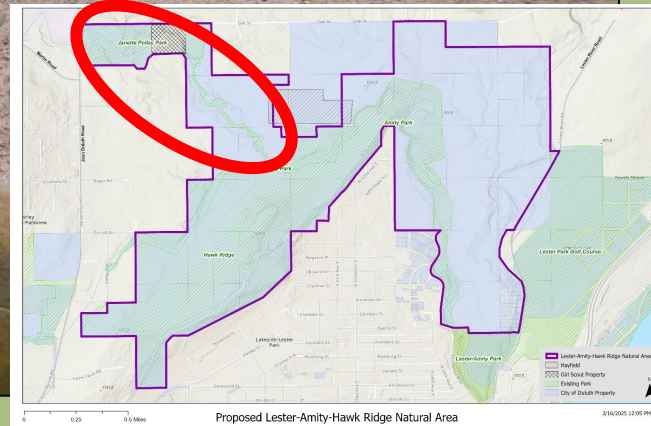
HAWK RIDGE NATURE RESERVE
MAINTAINED BY HAWK RIDGE
BIRD OBSERVATORY

Proposed Lester-Amity-Hawk Ridge Natural Area

- **Action:** Implementation of the Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve Mini-Master Plan for Facilities Improvements
- **Cost:** \$2.5-\$3.5 million
- **Responsible Parties:** City of Duluth, Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory
- **Target Completion Date:**
Phase 1 – 2026
Phases 2 & 3 – 2035
- **Funding:** Phase 1 - ENRTF/LCCMR (\$155K secured), Lloyd K Johnson Foundation (\$25K secured), LSOHF, MN Legacy Parks & Trails Funds, Private Donors, etc.

Lester-Amity-Hawk Ridge Natural Area Management Plan

PRIORITIZED ACTIONS



- **Action:** Stream and floodplain restoration on East Amity Creek Reach EB-01
- **Cost:** \$2.5-3.75 million (\$750k secured, \$500k pending)
- **Responsible Parties:** South St. Louis SWCD (lead), MNTU, City of Duluth, MNDNR, MPCA
- **Target Completion Date:** 2030
- **Funding:** Section 319, LSOHF, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), Clean Water Fund (CWF), Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL), Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program (GLSNRP)

TIMELINE FOR NATURAL AREA APPROVAL



Duluth Natural Resources Commission
• April 23, 2025



Duluth Planning Commission
• May 13, 2025



Duluth Parks and Rec Commission
• May 14, 2025



Duluth City Council
• June 16, 2025 *(Starts a 12-month clock for approval of a management plan)*



Management Plan Approval



Interest Group Input
• April 15, 2026



Duluth Natural Resources Commission
• June 3, 2026



Duluth Planning Commission
• June 9, 2026

Duluth City Council
• June 22, 2026



THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

