



CHESTER BOWL IMPROVEMENT CLUB  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
2021-2025

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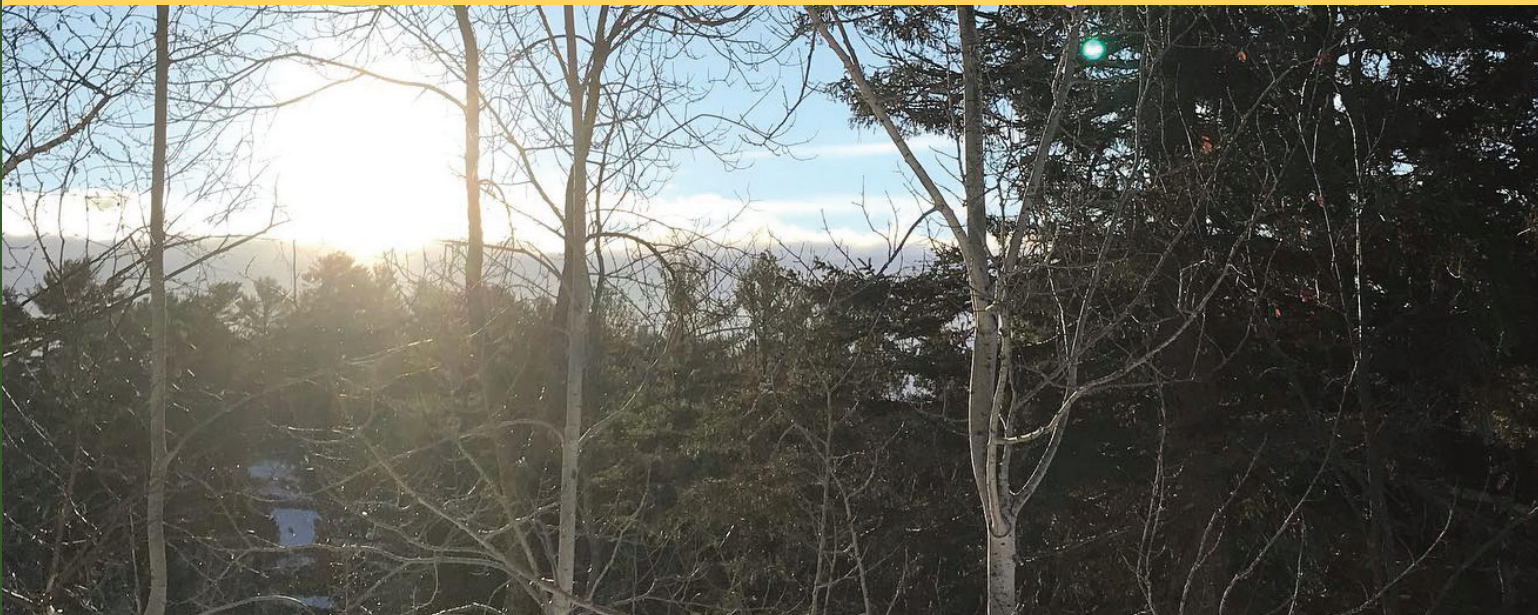
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2021, the Chester Bowl Improvement Club (CBIC) engaged Northspan to conduct a strategic planning process. The goals of the process were to clarify and/or identify the following:

- Mission
- Objectives
- Strategic Directions for next 5 years
- Accomplishments by which the strategic directions are achievable

The CBIC, over the course of two 3-hour sessions and with input from many local partners and volunteers, confirmed and developed the following vision, objectives, and strategic directions:

## **MISSION:**

To promote sustainable, quality programs for all Chester Bowl Park users in a healthy and safe environment.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Seeks to promote healthy living through a wide variety of outdoor recreational activities.
2. Aims to serve individuals and families from all socio-economic backgrounds.
3. Strives to offer a friendly and safe environment to learn skiing and snowboarding.
4. Works to help teenagers gain confidence and leadership skills while furnishing a positive space in which to hang out.
5. Endeavors to provide year-round programming and events for people of all ages.

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:**

1. Expanding inclusive community programming to increase participant base
2. Sharing our story to engage new & current users
3. Creating reliable, sustainable funding
4. Focusing on diversity, equity & inclusion to better serve our mission
5. Restructuring leadership model to optimize staff, volunteers, & board

This document provides an overview of the new strategic plan, which will guide CBIC's work for the next five years. Details on the planning process and supporting documents from that process are available in the appendices.



# OVERVIEW

The Chester Bowl Improvement Club (CBIC) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to supporting programming for users of Chester Bowl Park. It formed in 1982 to support park programming and took over daily operations of the park from the City of Duluth in 2008. While the City of Duluth continues to maintain the grounds and facilities of the park, CBIC manages all programming. This programming includes summer day camps and operation of a downhill ski and snowboard area, including a chair lift and equipment rental.

CBIC has two permanent staff members, plus additional seasonal employees who lead summer camps and assist with winter activities. An 11-member board of directors guides the organization, and an extensive group of volunteers further expands CBIC's capacity through thousands of donated hours over the course of the year. The organization holds several annual fundraisers to support scholarships for program users, providing access to individuals who otherwise might not be able to afford activities at Chester Bowl. CBIC maintains a commitment to providing affordable access to its programming and seeks to expand its reach to populations who have not traditionally made full use of Chester Bowl Park.

Against this backdrop, CBIC sought to complete a strategic plan to guide its activities from 2021-2025. While the group had surveyed program and park users over the years and has a vision statement, it had not completed a formal strategic plan under its current executive director or within the tenure of any current board members. The new strategic plan seeks to bring together many of the organization's activities behind a common vision and provide concrete, measurable steps with which to make the vision a reality.

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Chester Bowl has long been one of the most iconic areas within the City of Duluth's extensive park system. Over the years, the park has been home to ski jumps, an operating ski hill, tennis courts, a field used for sports, a playground, and a chalet. A network of trails for walking, cross-country skiing, and biking connect the park to surrounding neighborhoods and line Chester Creek, providing a connection to the Lower Chester skating rinks, skatepark, and neighboring park area. While its uses have changed over time, Chester Bowl has remained a major recreation area in the heart of Duluth. Since its formation in 1982, CBIC has opened opportunities for community members to make full use of the park and helped create an all-season educational playground for children and park neighbors.

The Chester Bowl Improvement Club faces a variety of challenges and opportunities as it plans for its future. CBIC is in the midst of a capital campaign that still needs to raise a significant amount of funds to meet its goal. Its programs are often at capacity, which limits the organization's ability to expand its offerings, and programming work consumes the work of the two year-round staff. CBIC programming enjoys a strong group of dedicated users, but often does not reach beyond already established populations. The park straddles both high-income neighborhoods to its east and lower-income neighborhoods to its west, plus the large student populations on and around the neighboring campuses of the University of Minnesota Duluth and the College of St. Scholastica. CBIC has the potential to tap into all these user groups, but regular participants disproportionately come from Chester Bowl Park's higher-income neighbors. A surge in outdoor activity during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020-2021 only underscored the importance of planning to ensure that recreational activities in Chester Bowl are available and accessible for years to come.

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2021 – 2025

This strategic plan is the culmination of a planning process conducted in March 2021. The planning confirmed the CBIC's mission and objectives, provided new strategic directions, and established action steps and outcomes to advance the strategic directions.

## MISSION

To promote sustainable, quality programs for all Chester Bowl Park users in a healthy and safe environment.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Seeks to promote healthy living through a wide variety of outdoor recreational activities.
2. Aims to serve individuals and families from all socio-economic backgrounds.
3. Strives to offer a friendly and safe environment to learn skiing and snowboarding.
4. Works to help teenagers gain confidence and leadership skills while furnishing a positive space in which to hang out.
5. Endeavors to provide year-round programming and events for people of all ages.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The following are the strategic directions of CBIC's mission:

1. Expanding inclusive community programming to increase participant base
2. Sharing our story to engage new & current users
3. Creating reliable, sustainable funding
4. Focusing on diversity, equity & inclusion to better serve our mission
5. Restructuring leadership model to optimize staff, volunteers, & board

## **SD1: EXPANDING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING TO INCREASE PARTICIPANT BASE**

### **DEFINITION:**

This strategic direction acknowledges the strengths of CBIC's existing programming but recognizes that it has the potential to broaden and better serve a more diverse population from the community. It notes that programming is already at or near full capacity and relies on word-of-mouth marketing, and it has made little formal effort to reach out beyond people who already have experience with the organization. It recognizes the importance intentionally broadening efforts and strengthening CBIC capacity as necessary to bring in additional users from more diverse backgrounds.

### **ACTION STEPS:**

- 1. Develop a marketing committee** to develop strategy for targeted messaging
- 2. Expand program capacity** to accommodate more users (including physical assets)
- 3. Identify and develop relationships** with organizations/leaders in underrepresented zip codes
- 4. Explore having more equipment** available through daily rental program or on-site storage
- 5. Conduct research** or focus groups to determine additional program gaps or opportunities
- 6. Explore programming** and assets that utilize different areas of the park
- 7. Explore transportation** options and develop a plan to make park more accessible

### **OUTCOMES:**

- 1. More representation** across zip codes in Duluth
- 2. Established partnerships** with DTA or other transportation service (e.g., taxi) to bring in participants
- 3. Increased programming** targeted at more diverse user group (including accessibility)
- 4. Staff and board members** more accurately reflect diversity of community
- 5. Program participants** extend beyond past participants and their networks

## **SD2: SHARING OUR STORY TO ENGAGE NEW & CURRENT USERS**

### **DEFINITION:**

This strategic direction seeks to enhance CBIC's marketing efforts. The organization enjoys a strong social media presence and good relationship with local press, but it lacks the capacity to create sustained marketing campaigns and reach out beyond the populations who already use its programming. It strives to create additional internal capacity to conduct more intentional outreach and open opportunities to use Chester Bowl Park facilities for creative new purposes.

### **ACTION STEPS:**

- 1. Complete chalet renovations** in line with vision from strategic planning process
- 2. Research CMS options** to see what best fits needs
- 3. Develop marketing committee** to manage communications tools
- 4. Explore budgeting** for additional staff to see what additional programming could look like
- 5. Explore working with UMD/CSS** students or AmeriCorps VISTAs for communications assistance (with a class or through scholarships/service-learning)

### **OUTCOMES:**

- 1. Customer management system** in place for streamlined outreach and tailored messaging
- 2. Active use of new communication tools** (other social media, email campaign management, keeping up with trends)
- 3. Capital campaign complete and efforts** focused on program development and more participation
- 4. Increased participation** across a variety of programs and seasons to make sure there is capacity for increased use
- 5. Outreach effectively targets user groups** beyond current participants
- 6. Chester Bowl chalet used** as community center and people know it can be used for many things

## SD3: CREATING RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

### DEFINITION:

This strategic direction recognizes that CBIC has a stable operations budget but no clear long-term financial plan. It acknowledges how successful grant-writing, fundraising, and volunteer efforts sustain programming, even as maintenance expenses eat away at reserves and a capital campaign consumes fundraising efforts. It looks to create a foundation for stable long-term financial viability and identify new revenue streams.

### ACTION STEPS:

- 1. Identify merchandise** with profit margin; market and distribute it
- 2. Develop staffing/volunteer capacity** for intentional promotion and management of chalet space
- 3. Develop plan for ongoing funding** of chairlift and maintenance needs
- 4. Assess financial viability** of potential new programs
- 5. Get capital campaign back on schedule** through connections with big donors
- 6. Develop framework** for annual fundraising campaign when capital campaign is over
- 7. Explore creating** a long-range financial plan

### OUTCOMES:

- 1. Funding method & reserve** in place for maintenance & related expenses
- 2. Additional streams of revenue** throughout the year explored (e.g., concessions in spring)
- 3. Chalet being used** in shoulder seasons
- 4. Existing fundraisers continue** to generate strong returns
- 5. Expanded sales of merchandise** and selling it off-site or online explored
- 6. Capital campaign is complete** (\$1.8M raised) and converted to annual fundraising campaign
- 7. Grants remain** a significant portion of revenue



## **SD4: FOCUSING ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION TO BETTER SERVE OUR MISSION**

### **DEFINITION:**

This strategic direction acknowledges that the current user base of CBIC programming is relatively homogenous and does not reflect the diversity of surrounding neighborhoods. It creates a framework for outreach to and the creation of a welcoming environment for more diverse users, including those who may face language, cultural, or disability-related barriers to CBIC program use.

### **ACTION STEPS:**

- 1. ADA compliant** facilities
- 2. Connection with area colleges** for formal welcome to those with language/culture barriers
- 3. Bring in expertise/trainings** in DEI (include accessibility) to create cultural fluency and encourage participation by users and volunteers, e.g., to assess all aspects of programming
- 4. Explore programs outside of the “park”** to connect to user groups (income barriers scholarship program)
- 5. Explore partnership organizations** for winter “clothing” gear to participate (e.g., CHILL, Great Lakes Gear Exchange, or other local company/org)
- 6. Considering personal welcome** to the facility (e.g., Courage Kenny at Spirit Mtn.)

### **OUTCOMES:**

- 1. More diverse group of users** and language plan in place
- 2. Diversity represented in programs** is greater percentage than the community population
- 3. Facility & lift accessibility improved**, making adaptive skiing & snowboarding possible
- 4. Participants feel welcome** no matter their “gear”

## **SD5: RESTRUCTURING LEADERSHIP MODEL TO OPTIMIZE STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, & BOARD**

### **DEFINITION:**

This strategic direction recognizes the potential benefits of streamlining CBIC's structure to enhance its capacity. It looks to create clear job roles and expectations for staff, board members, and volunteers to better employ their diverse talents. It builds strategic partnerships, expands the diversity of CBIC leadership, and lays the foundation for growth in the size of organization staff.

### **ACTION STEPS:**

- 1. Determine staffing needs plan** based on Strategic Plan goals
  - a.** Create clear staff & programming action plan which includes evaluating current & needed roles and skillsets
- 2. Explore feasibility** to create another FT year-round position focused on also running programming
- 3. Attract new board members**, staff & volunteers from diverse backgrounds
- 4. Explore Spirit Mtn. partnership** for maintenance staff time

### **OUTCOMES:**

- 1. Accountability and feedback loops** closed
- 2. Potential new assistant staff** member
- 3. Free up Dave** for development, financial duties, and grant writing versus running programming with Sam
- 4. There is a full-time director** once capital campaign is done
- 5. On top of risk management** and chair lift maintenance
- 6. Clear roles and job descriptions** developed as they evolve
- 7. Expanded staff** to meet growth

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1

### STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Chester Bowl Improvement Club has prepared this 5-year strategic plan to guide its activities and achieve accomplishments consistent with the group's vision and mission. The strategic process steps, session dates, and agendas are included as an attachment, as are the results of the sessions that followed.

#### PROCESS STEPS

1. Collection of background information
2. Environmental scan survey with staff, board, and community volunteers
3. 03.15.21 Strategy Planning Session 1 of 2
4. 03.22.21 Strategy Planning Session 2 of 2
5. 03.31.21 Draft Strategic Plan Review & Feedback
6. 4.12.21 Strategic Plan Board Presentation
7. Complete a 90-day check-in

#### BLOCKS & STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS | STRATEGIC PLANNING VIRTUAL SESSION: March 15, 2021

##### AGENDA | March 15, 2021 | 6:00PM-9:00PM

Open Zoom space at 5:45PM

**6:05 Welcome & Zooming In**

**6:10 Introductions**

**6:20 Survey Overview**

5 Minutes, Mission & Objectives

10 Minutes, SWOT Results

**6:35 Underlying Contradictions / Blocks Workshop**

**7:50 Strategic Directions Workshop**

**9:00 Next Steps & Adjourn**

On March 15, Northspan facilitated a strategic planning session with the CBIC board and staff that focused on blocks that prevent the organization from reaching its vision and strategic directions to overcome those blocks and barriers.

## **UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS AKA BLOCKS**

Participants identified five contradictions or blocks that they believed held back CBIC. These blocks are available in the appendix in the document titled CBIC Underlying Contradictions and Strategic Directions 3.15.21.

### UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS

1. Funding model limits infrastructure updates & reliability
2. Underdeveloped equity work challenges inclusivity
3. Conflicting visions limit growth potential
4. Funding capacity & instability limits staffing, consistent programming & growth
5. Inadequate marketing limits community and participant engagement
6. Short-term financial planning prevents decision making & growth

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**

With the contradictions in mind, the participants then moved to identify five strategic directions that they believe will allow CBIC to overcome these blocks. These strategic directions are available in the appendix in the document titled CBIC Underlying Contradictions and Strategic Directions 3.15.21.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. Expanding inclusive community programming to increase participant base
2. Sharing our story to engage new & current users
3. Creating reliable, sustainable funding
4. Focusing on diversity, equity & inclusion to better serve our mission
5. Restructuring leadership model to optimize staff, volunteers, & board

**AGENDA | March 22, 2021 | 6:00PM-9:00PM**

Open Zoom space at 5:45PM

**6:05 Welcome & Zooming In**

**6:10 Introductions**

**6:20 Focused Implementation Workshop**

Accomplishments

Timelines

**8:45 Reflect**

**9:00 Next Steps & Adjourn**

On March 22, Northspan facilitated a second workshop with CBIC board and staff. In this session, the board identified outcomes and accomplishments that could move CBIC toward its strategic directions.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

CBIC defined its current reality, identified success indicators, and developed outcomes and accomplishments that will allow the organization to move from current reality to success.

These accomplishments and the ideas that led to their creation are available in the appendix in the document titled CBIC Current Reality, Success Indicators & Accomplishments 3.22.21. CBIC then further defined the strategic plan timeline and prioritized catalyst actions steps which are available in the appendices titled CBIC Strategic Plan Timeline 03.22.21 and CBIC Strategic Action Priority Wedge 03.22.21.

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**APPENDICES ATTACHED**

**2. CBIC Survey Summary 3.12.21**

**3. CBIC Underlying Contradictions and Strategic Directions 3.15.21**

**4. CBIC Current Reality, Success Indicators & Accomplishments 3.22.21**

**5. CBIC Strategic Plan Timeline 03.22.21**

**6. CBIC Strategic Action Priority Wedge 03.22.21**





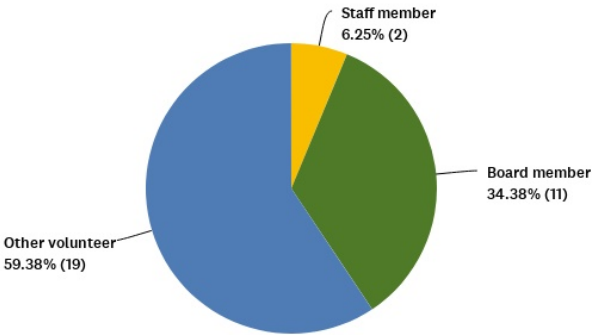
**CHESTER BOWL IMPROVEMENT CLUB (CBIC)  
STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY**

In preparation for the strategic planning sessions, Northspan conducted an online survey. The survey was e-mailed directly to participants and was open from March 2 – March 10, 2021. The survey assessed participants familiarity with the mission and objective statements and whether they still felt relevant. Participants were asked to complete a SWOT analysis for CBIC, as well as identifying blocks to and strategic actions for achieving CBIC’s mission.

**RESPONDENTS**

The survey was distributed via e-mail to 43 individuals, 32 of whom responded. Respondents consisted of staff members, board members, and other volunteers.

1. What is your association with the Chester Bowl Improvement Club?



**MISSION STATEMENT**

Survey participants were asked if they recognized CBIC’s current mission statement: *“To promote sustainable quality programs for all Chester Bowl Park Users in a healthy and safe environment,”* and whether the statement is still relevant.

Of survey respondents, 31 out of 32 recognized the mission statement, and 84% felt it was applicable. For those that did not feel the mission statement was still related the following topics emerged: adding equity & inclusion language, shifting to focus on future goals, and serving as stewards for the park and nearby neighborhoods beyond ski and camp programming.

**OBJECTIVE STATEMENTS**

Respondents were next asked to evaluate if the following five objective statements should continue to be used for grant writing and other similar endeavors. If choosing maybe or no, they were asked to explain.

1. Seeks to promote healthy living through a wide variety of outdoor recreational activities.

Response	Percentage	Comments:
Yes	91%	accuracy of stating “wide” variety, including educational component
Maybe	9%	
No	0%	

2. Aims to serve individuals from all socio-economic backgrounds.

Response	Percentage	Comments:
Yes	97%	strength of the word “aims”
Maybe	3%	
No	0%	



## CHESTER BOWL IMPROVEMENT CLUB (CBIC) STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY

3. Strives to offer a friendly and safe environment to learn skiing and snowboarding.

Response	Percentage	Comments:
Yes	88%	Including summer programming/activities
Maybe	12%	
No	0%	

4. Works to help teenagers gain confidence and leadership skills while furnishing a positive space in which to hang out.

Response	Percentage	Comments:
Yes	88%	Updating language from teenagers to “youth” or “middle & high school students” or “adolescents,” adding diversity/inclusiveness language
Maybe	12%	
No	0%	

5. Endeavors to provide year-round programming and events for people of all ages.

Response	Percentage	Comments:
Yes	91%	Replacing “endeavors” with provides, is “all ages” correct, more youth focus
Maybe	3%	
No	6%	

Participants were then asked if they felt if any major statements, ideas, or concepts were missing. Sixty-two percent (62.5%) replied no and 37.5% provided the following topics for consideration:

Topic	Number of Mentions
Inclusivity & racial diversity	4
Park stewardship	4
Safe & welcoming environment	2
Highlight year-round programming	2
Promote scholarship	1

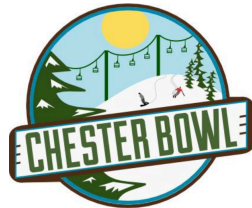


**CHESTER BOWL IMPROVEMENT CLUB (CBIC)  
STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY**

**SWOT ANALYSIS**

Survey respondents were next asked to complete a SWOT analysis for Chester Bowl Improvement Club. Strengths and weaknesses are internal to the organization, whereas opportunities and threats are external. The following topics and themes are listed below, with the most frequent responses for each section bolded.

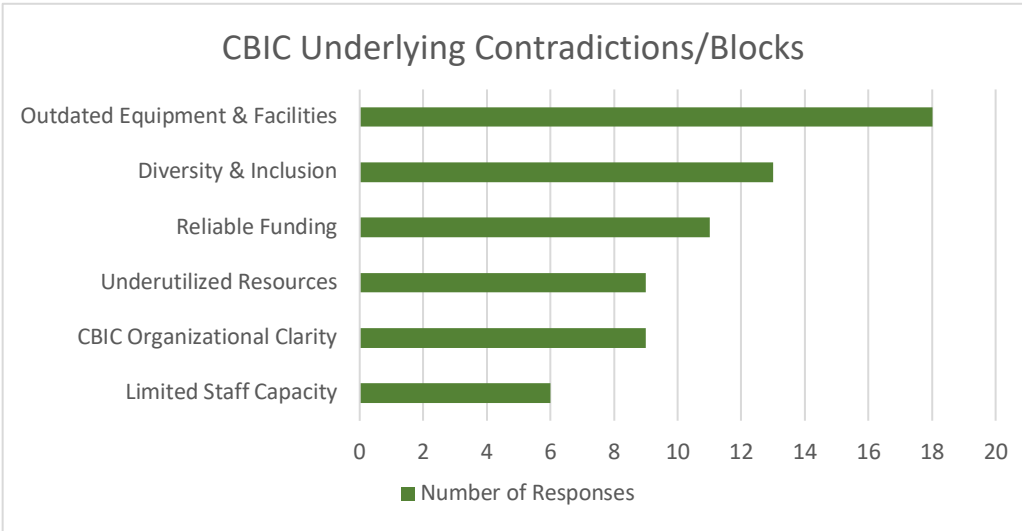
Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><b>Community support</b>  <b>Staff/leadership</b>  <b>Strong volunteer base</b>                      Location – center of Duluth                      Unique programming, year-round                      Ski lift                      Scholarship program                      Peace in the Park – promoting civility                      Relationship with City of Duluth                      Family friendly                      Affordable/accessible                      Long history/legacy                      Grant writing &amp; funding                      Natural resources</p>	<p><b>Chairlift – aging/mechanical issues/high cost of repairs</b>  <b>Staff capacity</b>  <b>Unable to meet demand for summer programming due to lack of space in Chalet</b>                      Lack of diversity – both on board and park users                      Aging chalet                      Budget                      Road/parking lot conditions                      Dependence on City for funding &amp; maintenance</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p><b>COVID leading to increased interest in outdoors</b>  <b>Partnership opportunities – schools, neighborhood groups, child care, UMD, CSS</b>  <b>Inclusivity efforts and reaching out to marginalized/underrepresented communities</b>                      Outdoor/healthy living local culture                      Zip lines/ropes course/adventure park                      Corporate partnerships/sponsorships                      Concert venue/Homegrown venue                      Tow rope                      Snowshoe rentals                      Marketing – still a hidden gem                      Partnerships with Spirit Mountain                      Disc golf course                      Capital campaign                      Increase connection to Superior Hiking Trail                      Transportation collaborations</p>	<p><b>Reliance on grant funding and fundraising</b>  <b>Reliance on City for funding/maintenance</b>  <b>Climate change</b>                      Transportation to park                      Other local parks that offer programming                      COVID                      Competition with Spirit Mountain                      Injury liability</p>



# CHESTER BOWL IMPROVEMENT CLUB (CBIC) STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY

## UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS/BLOCKS

Next, participants were asked to brainstorm a list of 3-5 ideas that answer the following question: *“What may be blocking us or holding us back from moving toward our mission?”* Sixty-six unique blocks were listed, which can be grouped around the following themes shown in the chart below. The most frequently mentioned blocks were around the aging chairlift and limited space in the chalet.



## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Finally, respondents were asked to provide 3-5 actions, programs, or efforts that the board and staff can do, create, or take on that will address the blocks they identified in the previous section. Participants identified 58 specific actions, summarized by category in the chart below. Frequent responses indicated a desire to expand programming options, and capitalize on potential partnership opportunities.



**Chester Bowl Improvement Club**  
*Underlying Contradictions & Strategic Directions*  
*Consensus Workshops 03.15.21*



## MISSION

*To promote sustainable, quality programs for all Chester Bowl Park users  
in a healthy and safe environment.*

**Underlying contradictions or blocks holding us back from moving  
toward our mission include:**

1. Funding model limits infrastructure updates & reliability
2. Underdeveloped equity work challenges inclusivity
3. Conflicting visions limit growth potential
4. Funding capacity & instability limits staffing, consistent programming & growth
5. Inadequate marketing limits community and participant engagement
6. Short-term financial planning prevents decision making & growth

**Strategic Directions are innovative, substantial actions and efforts we  
can create or do to move us toward our mission, they include:**

1. Expanding inclusive community programming to increase participant base
2. Sharing our story to engage new & current users
3. Creating reliable, sustainable funding
4. Focusing on diversity, equity & inclusion to better serve our mission
5. Restructuring leadership model to optimize staff, volunteers, & board





**Funding model limits infrastructure updates & reliability**

- Depending on City for support
- Limited funding to build chalet and buy a new chairlift
- Slim margins do not allow for unforeseen problems or voids
- Inconsistent Funding
- Outdated facilities, not sustainable
- Outdated equipment (lift)
- Outdated facilities (chalet)
- Outdated chairlift
- Outdated chalet
- outdated infrastructure
- Neglected chair lift maintenance
- Overall civic financial support is too low
- Dependency of in kind donations with programming and scholarship.
- Unable to move forward on large improvements without new funding sources.
- Aged ski lift which effects the daily operations
- increased fundraising
- Inconsistent maintenance of technical equipment (ski lift) has led to missed days on the hill.
- Outdated facilities and equipment
- Outdated snowmaking system
- Outdated ski lift
- We will lose skii participants if our ski lift is not reliable.
- Mismatch between program demand and program capacity
- Restricted funding or unbalanced funding (more for winter than summer activities)

**Underdeveloped equity work challenges inclusivity**

- Reliance on “what we have always done”
- Neglected populations
- Limited & outdated facilities; ie not ADA compliant limits ability to serve ALL
- User base is not from diverse backgrounds
- limited options for kids with disabilities
- limited knowledge on how to engage diverse populations
- Difficult to teach young kids to ski without a dedicated bunny hill.
- Outdated facilities limit safety for campers and skiees
- Underdeveloped equity work
- Slow to adopt additional technologies
- Transporting program users. Specifically 55805.
- Limited transportation options for some Duluth kids.
- Limited information or resources within target communities.
- Underdeveloped programming
- Unclear registrations procedures (they keep changing each year)
- Misaligned efforts for inclusivity; likely implicit bias embedded in practices
- settler colonialism, capitalism, neoliberalism, patriarchy (though these could be fixed...)
- Limited in demographics represented in both sociology economic and youth age groups
- Limited openings for summer camp keep people from looking at it as an option for their kids.

## APPENDIX 3

## Chester Bowl Improvement Club

### Underlying Contradictions Consensus Workshop 03.15.21



<b>Conflicting visions limit growth potential</b>	<b>Funding capacity &amp; instability limits staffing, consistent programming &amp; growth</b>	<b>Inadequate marketing limits community and participant engagement</b>	<b>Short-term financial planning prevents decision making &amp; growth</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confusion over who “owns” Chester Bowl (Many cooks in the kitchen: City, CBIC, COGGS, DNR, etc.)</li> <li>• Mis-aligned guidance on equipment rental. Some who could afford to buy equipment may be using rental setups that could go to those families who cannot afford to purchase.</li> <li>• underutilized spaces</li> <li>• Conflicting vision for the park among user groups</li> <li>• Restricted in capacity of space to accommodate need</li> <li>• Underutilized portions of park (big field)</li> <li>• Underdeveloped cross country ski trails. Could the city ‘track’ them to make the option for classic skiing available.</li> <li>• Underutilized event space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited Full Time Staff</li> <li>• Staff are stretched in many areas- busy periods are very busy</li> <li>• Lack of dedicated sales team to reach out to potential donors</li> <li>• size of staff</li> <li>• Minimal management staff</li> <li>• Underutilized volunteers to help with summer planning and programming</li> <li>• Unbalanced staff structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People don’t know about Chester programs</li> <li>• Limited outreach to target demographics</li> <li>• greater community involvement</li> <li>• Mission statement may be too broad</li> <li>• Loss of interest by youth in skiing/boarding</li> <li>• Limited volunteer opportunities in relation to the amount of volunteers.</li> <li>• Unclear in why programs that could and should be offered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unrealistic ideals about financial future and potential challenges</li> <li>• More of a mentality of saving money and keeping costs low, vs. generating revenue</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 3

## Chester Bowl Improvement Club

### Strategic Directions Consensus Workshop 03.15.21



Expanding inclusive community programming to increase participant base	Sharing our story to engage new & current users	Creating reliable, sustainable funding	Focusing on diversity, equity & inclusion to better serve our mission	Restructuring leadership model to optimize staff, volunteers, & board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move the Ski/Suds/Slices event to an outdoor event</li> <li>• More programming out of Lower Chester</li> <li>• Welcome kids with disabilities into our programs</li> <li>• Host more neighborhood events</li> <li>• Explore camp expansion opportunities</li> <li>• Expand the fall fest to the soccer fields/tennis courts</li> <li>• Create more spaces, indoor and outdoor</li> <li>• Additional community programming that can be held at our facilities</li> <li>• Create a committee to come up with a plan for a permanent bunny hill</li> <li>• How to make the trail system more dynamic or inclusive of all activities.</li> <li>• nordic ski programming</li> <li>• Create more groups for summer camp</li> <li>• Better use all of our spaces</li> <li>• Brainstorm ideas for underutilized portions of park</li> <li>• Partner with other community groups for "exchange" days to reach new neighborhoods</li> <li>• skateboard summer camp</li> <li>• Summer adult or whole family programming or events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lobby our city officials every day</li> <li>• Partner with more community organizations</li> <li>•</li> <li>• reinvigorated campaign to renovate/replace chalet</li> <li>• Go beyond the park to tell our story</li> <li>• Communicate with DTA about bus service to CB.</li> <li>• Focus outreach on zip code 55805</li> <li>• Outreach through Duluth schools.</li> <li>• Continue utilizing social media to connect past park users and experiences</li> <li>• engage with other non-profits, schools, etc. to reach diverse populations</li> <li>• Use volunteers to reach goals (community outreach, publicity, community partnering, etc.)</li> <li>• Continue to promote healthy outdoor park activities</li> <li>• Look to utilize additional city space and facilities to expand outreach</li> <li>• Partner with ski organizations out west</li> <li>• Bring college students to the park especially target non- local students to introduce them to Outdoor experiences and provide training , gear recommendations etc</li> <li>• Find a way that skiers/snowboarders that need help can be easily identified by cadets vs them needing to ask for help (i.e. an armband).</li> <li>• Attempt to partner with key donors</li> <li>• Spend time in West Duluth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need a bigger focus on fundraising. If there's not already a committee for that, create one.</li> <li>• develop long term financial plan to include substantial costs such as scholarships and chairlift</li> <li>• Secure stable funding for scholarship fund-endowment?</li> <li>• Focus on more robust solutions to chairlift / replacement?</li> <li>• Dedicate a portion of fundraising to building or equipment maintenance</li> <li>• Improve focus on sustainability</li> <li>• Identify new sources of funding.</li> <li>• Capital Campaign (underway)</li> <li>• Regular lift maintenance schedule</li> <li>• Establish corporate funding sources</li> <li>• Brainstorm additional park features which bring revenue</li> <li>• Investing in capital improvements/ deferred maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-examine principles and practices to address implicit bias</li> <li>• Assess other barriers to participation beyond financial</li> <li>• seek diverse board representation</li> <li>• diversity/ inclusion-oriented graduate intern partnership with UMD</li> <li>• Attract more diverse staff, board, &amp; participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restructuring of key staff roles</li> <li>• Pay a part-time person to aggressively fundraise</li> <li>• Solicit wider variety of volunteer opportunities for involvement in the mission</li> <li>• Cross training with key staff to support full time staff</li> <li>• Hiring additional staff to reduce reliance on City</li> </ul>

# CHESTER BOWL IMPROVEMENT CLUB (CBIC)

## Current Reality, Success Indicators & Accomplishments

## APPENDIX 4



### 1. Expanding inclusive community programming to increase participant base

#### Current Reality

- Currently at or close to capacity
- Marketing is largely word-of-mouth; missing certain groups
- Participants are families who have own transportation & discretionary time
- No "try before you buy" option, especially for winter programming
- Lack of diversity among staff and volunteers is limiting
- People lacking past experience with CBIC have limited understanding of offerings
- CBIC good at what it does, but no broad diversity of offerings

#### Success Indicators

- More representation across zip codes in Duluth
- Established partnerships with DTA or other transportation service (e.g., taxi) to bring in participants
- Increased programming targeted at more diverse user group (including accessibility)
- Staff and board members more accurately reflect diversity of community
- Program participants extend beyond past participants and their networks

#### Accomplishments

1. Develop a marketing committee to develop strategy for targeted messaging
2. Expand program capacity to accommodate more users (including physical assets)
3. Identify and develop relationships with organizations/leaders in underrepresented zip codes
4. Explore having more equipment available through daily rental program or on-site storage
5. Conduct research or focus groups to determine additional program gaps or opportunities
6. Explore programming and assets that utilize different areas of the park
7. Explore transportation options and develop a plan to make park more accessible

### 2. Sharing our story to engage new & current users

#### Current Reality

- Over 6,000 Facebook and 2,000 Instagram followers; good engagement across both with a generational gap between the users of each.
- Good relationship with the media includes regular TV interviews; ED is good at them and they come when CBIC calls
- Storytelling capacity currently devoted to capital campaign
- Lots of word-of-mouth marketing
- Emails to current users regularly, which reaches current population but doesn't grow it
- Community events bring in community members living around park, creating strong relationships
- Intentionally limiting capacity because all offerings fill up

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- No records of past participants

### Success Indicators

- Customer management system in place for streamlined outreach and tailored messaging
- Active use of new communication tools (other social media, email campaign management, keeping up with trends)
- Capital campaign complete and efforts focused on program development and more participation
- Increased participation across a variety of programs and seasons to make sure there is capacity for increased use
- Outreach effectively targets user groups beyond current participants
- Chester Bowl chalet used as community center and people know it can be used for many things

### Accomplishments

1. Complete chalet renovations in line with vision from strategic planning process
2. Research CMS options to see what best fits needs
3. Develop marketing committee to manage communications tools
4. Explore budgeting for additional staff to see what additional programming could look like
5. Explore working with UMD/CSS students or AmeriCorps VISTAs for communications assistance (with a class or through scholarships/service-learning)

### **3. Creating reliable, sustainable funding**

#### Current Reality

- Fall Fest and Skis, Suds & Slices are major fundraisers for scholarships
- Goal to keep prices too low to keep customers happy
- Major maintenance expenses eat up reserves
- Programming is expensive to manage, both through staff time for camps and equipment for skiing
- Capital campaign focus limits ability to do other major fundraising
- Capital campaign is behind schedule
- Very stable operations budget; many successful grants
- Seasonal programming leads to two seasons of major revenue; nothing in fall or spring
- Large volunteer base greatly expands capacity of CBIC (6,000 hours/year)

#### Success Indicators

- Funding method & reserve in place for maintenance & related expenses
- Additional streams of revenue throughout the year explored (e.g., concessions in spring)
- Chalet being used in shoulder seasons
- Existing fundraisers continue to generate strong returns



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- Expanded sales of merchandise and selling it off-site or online explored
- Capital campaign is complete (\$1.8M raised) and converted to annual fundraising campaign
- Grants remain a significant portion of revenue

### Accomplishments

1. Identify merchandise with profit margin; market and distribute it
2. Develop staffing/volunteer capacity for intentional promotion and management of chalet space
3. Develop plan for ongoing funding of chairlift and maintenance needs
4. Assess financial viability of potential new programs
5. Get capital campaign back on schedule through connections with big donors
6. Develop framework for annual fundraising campaign when capital campaign is over
7. Explore creating a long-range financial plan

### **4. Focusing on diversity, equity & inclusion to better serve our mission**

#### Current Reality

- Homogenous
- Not very welcoming to multi-cultural folks
- Language & cultural barriers
- Barrier to entry for cost; scholarships help but not well-known
- Zip code where the park sits is generally higher net worth; the neighboring one that's not isn't well-represented in park users

#### Success Indicators

- More diverse group of users and language plan in place
- Diversity represented in programs is greater percentage than the community population
- Facility & lift accessibility improved, making adaptive skiing & snowboarding possible
- Participants feel welcome no matter their "gear"

#### Accomplishments

1. ADA compliant facilities
2. Connection with area colleges for formal welcome to those with language/culture barriers
3. Bring in expertise/trainings in DEI (include accessibility) to create cultural fluency and encourage participation by users and volunteers, e.g., to assess all aspects of programming
4. Explore programs outside of the "park" to connect to user groups (income barriers scholarship program)
5. Explore partnership organizations for winter "clothing" gear to participate (e.g., CHILL, Great Lakes Gear Exchange, or other local company/org)
6. Considering personal welcome to the facility (e.g., Courage Kenny at Spirit Mtn.)

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### 5. Restructuring leadership model to optimize staff, volunteers, & board

#### Current Reality

- Dave technically 2 PT positions (creates oddities in timing & structure, opportunities for feedback), Sam FT, capacity stretched, PT seasonal ski techs
- Volunteer-driven and dependent
- Leadership isn't diverse
- 11 board members, few committees
- Primary volunteer roles - concessions, snowmaking, program assistance, ski fitting, hill cleanup
- PT lift operations, ski and snowboard, summer camp staff, ski cadets

#### Success Indicators

- Accountability and feedback loops closed
- Potential new assistant staff member
- Free up Dave for development, financial duties, and grant writing versus running programming with Sam
- There is a full-time director once capital campaign is done
- On top of risk management and chair lift maintenance
- Clear roles and job descriptions developed as they evolve
- Expanded staff to meet growth

#### Accomplishments

1. Determine staffing needs plan based on Strategic Plan goals
  - a. Create clear staff & programming action plan which includes evaluating current & needed roles and skillsets
2. Explore feasibility to create another FT year-round position focused on also running programming
3. Attract new board members, staff & volunteers from diverse backgrounds
4. Explore Spirit Mtn. partnership for maintenance staff time



