

Finding the Fair(Way): utilizing community engagement strategies to re-envision a vacant golf
course in Overland Park, Kansas

by

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A REPORT

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Hyung Jin Kim

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Abstract

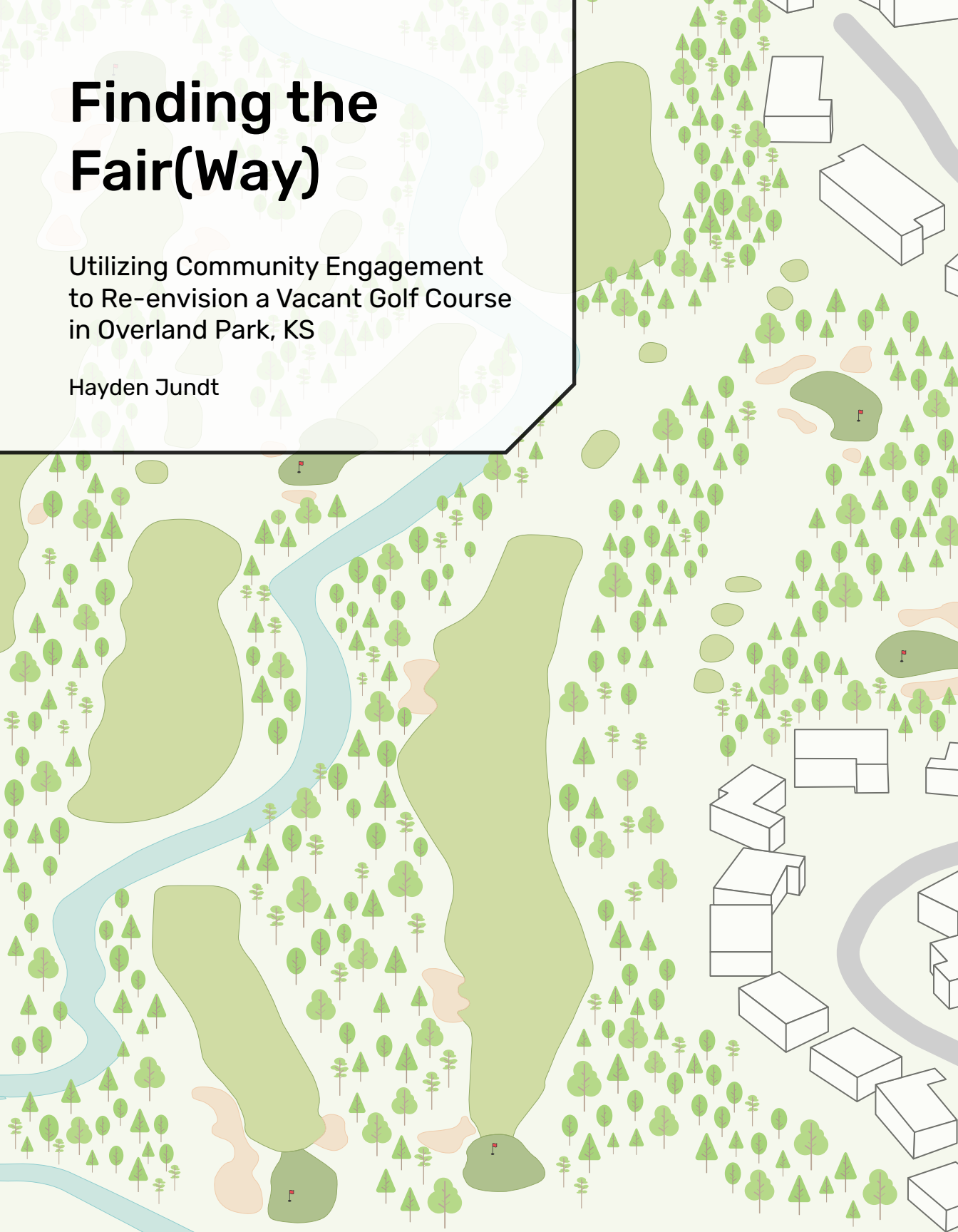
Golf course closures have become an increasing problem in the United States for over a decade. This problem falls on the residents of surrounding communities to defend their neighborhood from an influx of redevelopment plans, all while typically having limited input into what happens after a golf course closes. These issues lead to an abundance of conflict concerning vacant golf courses due to the contrasting opinions of stakeholder groups. Thus, this study aims to answer the research question, “*How can vacant golf courses be re-envisioned to balance the interests of developers and residents of surrounding communities?*” To answer the research question, this project identifies common issues and dilemmas among various stakeholders concerning the redevelopment of Deer Creek Golf Club, explores relevant community engagement and design approaches through a case study analysis process, and proposes a scenario-based design for re-envisioning a vacant golf course, Deer Creek Golf Club. This study investigates how past examples of community engagement were utilized in the design process to address conflict and explore resolutions for repurposing vacant golf courses. This project utilizes document reviews, city council meeting agendas and minutes, and adequate site and community analyses to understand land use dilemmas and redevelopment issues. Case studies involving public perception summaries and stakeholder interviews with professionals were conducted to obtain insight into the community engagement processes involved in recent golf course development projects. Specifically, this study applies what the investigator learns from the document review and case study analysis processes to develop a hypothetical design for Deer Creek Golf Club. The research outcomes of this study provide greater insight into the differing opinions regarding redevelopment plans for vacant golf courses and how community engagement in design can help address and solve the problem. The results highlight the usability

of community engagement strategies to resolve conflict among residents surrounding vacant golf courses in the U.S.

Finding the Fair(Way)

Utilizing Community Engagement
to Re-envision a Vacant Golf Course
in Overland Park, KS

Hayden Jundt





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Finding the Fair(Way)
*Utilizing Community Engagement to Re-envision a
Vacant Golf Course in Overland Park, Kansas*

Major Professor: Hyung Jin Kim
Supervising Committee: Huston Gibson & Howard Hahn

Kansas State University
College of Architecture, Planning, and Design

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and Regional & Community Planning

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Abstract

Golf course closures have become an increasing problem in the United States for over a decade. This problem falls on the residents of surrounding communities to defend their neighborhood from an influx of redevelopment plans, all while typically having limited input into what happens after a golf course closes. These issues lead to an abundance of conflict concerning vacant golf courses due to the contrasting opinions of stakeholder groups. Thus, this study aims to answer the research question, “How can vacant golf courses be re-envisioned to balance the interests of developers and residents of surrounding communities?”

To answer the research question, this project identifies common issues and dilemmas among various stakeholders concerning the redevelopment of Deer Creek Golf Club, explores relevant community engagement and design approaches through a case study analysis process, and proposes a scenario-based design for re-envisioning a vacant golf course, Deer Creek Golf Club.

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Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	page 18
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	page 28
3	METHODOLOGY	page 40
4	RESEARCH RESULTS	page 54
5	DESIGN PROPOSAL	page 102
6	CONCLUSION	page 166

List of Figures

Chapter 1

- Figure 1.1 U.S. Golf Course Closures since 2000
- Figure 1.2 Net Change of 18-Hole U.S. Golf Courses since 1987
- Figure 1.3 Conceptual Conflict of Interests between Stakeholders
- Figure 1.4 Hole 10 at Deer Creek Golf Course
- Figure 1.5 Proposed Mixed-Use Development on Deer Creek Golf Course
- Figure 1.6 Structure of the Study

Chapter 2

- Figure 2.1 Literature Map
- Figure 2.2 Themes from the Literature Review

Chapter 3

- Figure 3.1 Methodology Process Flow
- Figure 3.2 Site Selection in Overland Park, KS
- Figure 3.3 Site Context
- Figure 3.4 Deer Creek Study Area
- Figure 3.5 Deer Creek Community Buildings
- Figure 3.6 Community Context
- Figure 3.7 Census Block 1
- Figure 3.8 Census Block 2
- Figure 3.9 Social and Economic Demographics of Study Area
- Figure 3.10 Study Methods

Chapter 4

- Figure 4.1 Document Review Process and Objectives
- Figure 4.2 Preliminary Design of Building B
- Figure 4.3 Proposed Apartment Building Units
- Figure 4.4 Revised Elevation of Building B
- Figure 4.5 Deer Creek Neighborhood Signage
- Figure 4.6 Phase One Thematic Analysis
- Figure 4.7 Preliminary Plat for Single-Family Homes
- Figure 4.8 Phase Two Thematic Analysis
- Figure 4.9 Deer Creek Redevelopment Timeline
- Figure 4.10 Case Study Analysis Process
- Figure 4.11 Meadowbrook Housing Variety
- Figure 4.12 Meadowbrook Park and Development Components
- Figure 4.13 Meadowbrook Master Plan
- Figure 4.14 Themes from Stakeholder Interview #1
- Figure 4.15 Themes from Stakeholder Interview #2
- Figure 4.16 On-Course Engagement
- Figure 4.17 Open House Format
- Figure 4.18 On-Course Community Engagement Tents
- Figure 4.19 Pop-Up Pickleball Court on the Golf Course
- Figure 4.20 Brookridge Redevelopment Master Plan
- Figure 4.21 Brookridge Mixed-Use Development and Golf Course
- Figure 4.22 Brookridge Concept Sketch
- Figure 4.23 Brookridge Redevelopment Concept
- Figure 4.24 Brookridge Mixed-Use Concept

List of Figures

Chapter 4 cont.

- Figure 4.25 Themes from Stakeholder Interview #3
- Figure 4.26 Stakeholder Interview Themes
- Figure 4.27 Key Takeaways from Case Study Analysis
- Figure 4.28 Synthesis of Research Phases into Design Goals

Chapter 5

- Figure 5.1 Land Use and Zoning
- Figure 5.2 Topography
- Figure 5.3 Hydrology
- Figure 5.4 Canopy Cover
- Figure 5.5 Transportation & Accessibility
- Figure 5.6 Recreation Opportunities
- Figure 5.7 Suitability for Development
- Figure 5.8 Existing Site Conditions
- Figure 5.9 SWOT Analysis
- Figure 5.10 Development Intensity Conceptual Scenarios
- Figure 5.11 Scenario 1 Site Plan
- Figure 5.12 Proposed Low-Intensity Redevelopment Scenario
- Figure 5.13 Townhomes and Stormwater Mitigation Strategies
- Figure 5.14 Community Park and Rain Gardens
- Figure 5.15 Hole 1 Shortened to Par 3
- Figure 5.16 Scenario 2 Site Plan
- Figure 5.17 Proposed Medium-Intensity Redevelopment

Chapter 5

- Figure 5.18 Two Single-Family Development Clusters
- Figure 5.19 Greenbelt Connectivity and Programming
- Figure 5.20 Clubhouse Addition and Programming
- Figure 5.21 Scenario 3 Site Plan
- Figure 5.22 Proposed High-Intensity Redevelopment Scenario
- Figure 5.23 Three Single-Family Development Clusters and Townhomes
- Figure 5.24 Low-Impact Design Strategies to Mitigate Flooding Issues
- Figure 5.25 Public Amenities along Tomahawk Creek
- Figure 5.26 Design Scenario Analysis

INTRODUCTION



contents

problem
background & significance
research question & objectives



Problem

Since 2006, golf course closures have outnumbered new openings (see Figure 1.1), and more than 1,500 facilities have closed across the United States (Beditz 2022). These large-scale closures can be attributed to the construction of many golf course communities in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This problem, coupled with a general decline in the number of people who play golf, has forced many golf course facilities to close (see Figure 1.2) (Gibler, de La Paz, and Zahirovic-Herbert 2018). Some residents envision development opportunities when golf courses close; others may want to retain the green space. However, these facilities are typically sold to developers for future redevelopment plans, while other opportunities still exist for microhabitat creation, biodiversity, and community sustainability (Salgot and Tapias 2006; Price et al. 2013; Gibler, de La Paz, and Zahirovic-Herbert 2018). The differing viewpoints of municipalities, developers, and community members often conflict as they struggle to find a consensus on how to address the problem of vacant golf courses.

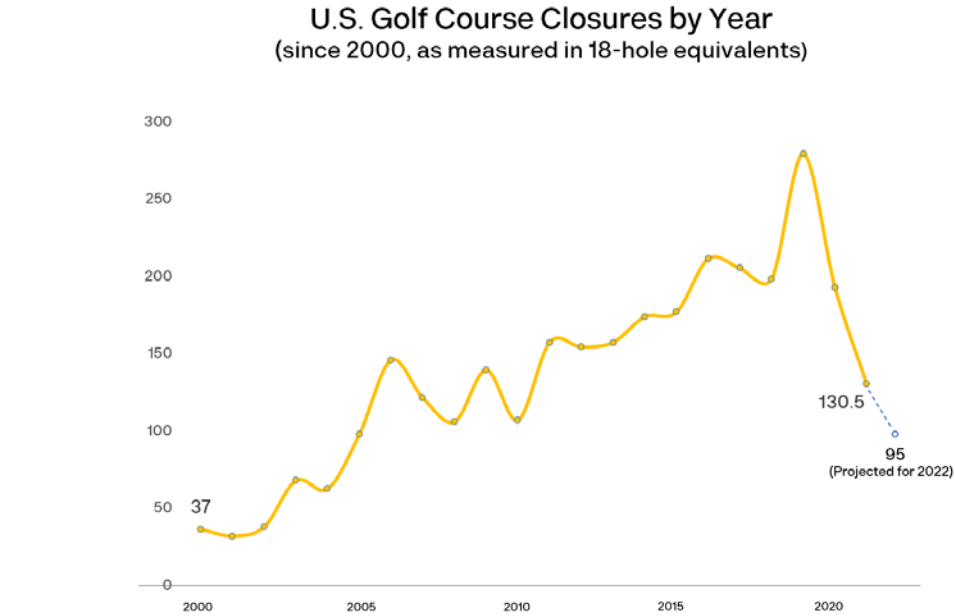


Figure 1.1 U.S. Golf Course Closures since 2000

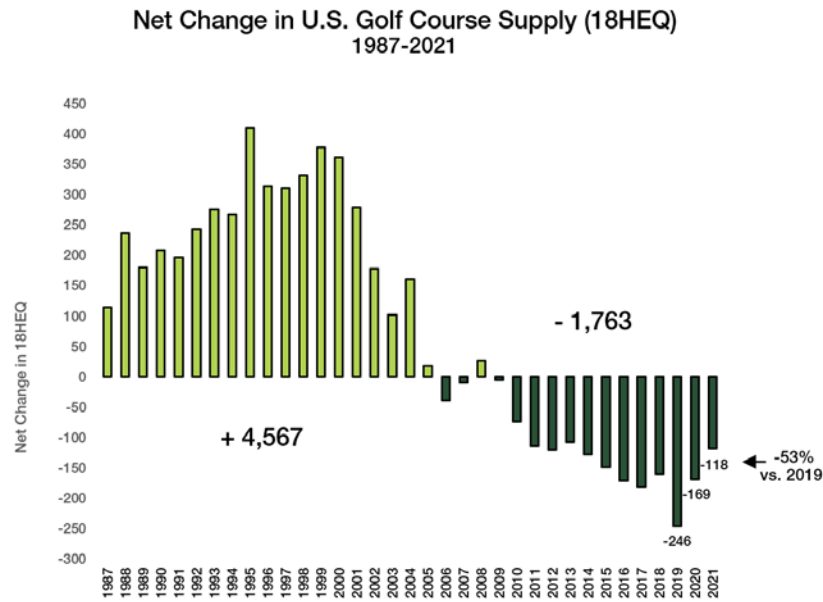


Figure 1.2 Net Change of 18-Hole U.S. Golf Courses since 1987

Conflicts surrounding vacant golf courses typically arise due to competing interests, such as those seeking economic development versus those valuing open green spaces (see Figure 1.3). Additionally, the emotional connection residents may have developed with the golf course, environmental concerns, and potential harm to local ecosystems can intensify the disputes. Addressing the conflicts arising from abandoned golf courses requires proactive education and stakeholder collaboration. By involving residents in decision-making processes, vacant golf courses can be re-envisioned to balance various factors to achieve the desires of both the community and the developer.



Figure 1.3 Conceptual Conflict of Interests between Stakeholders

Background & Significance

Deer Creek Golf Club in Overland Park, Kansas (see Figure 1.4), was established and built in 1989 by Robert Trent Jones Jr., a renowned golf course architect. The course is a par 72 and measures just over 6800 yards. In 1990, the club hosted the Kansas City Classic, a professional golf tournament on the Ben Hogan tour. The course is interwoven through a suburban neighborhood and densely wooded area, with a beautiful, winding creek across the property.



Figure 1.4 Hole 10 at Deer Creek Golf Course

GreatLIFE KC acquired Deer Creek Golf Club in August 2019 for a reported sale price of \$4.7M. Shortly after, roughly six million dollars was needed to fund an erosion and flooding problem along Tomahawk Creek and the adjacent golf course property. GreatLIFE then partnered with EPC Real Estate and, in July of 2021, proposed a \$60M redevelopment plan that included 220 high-end apartments (see Figure 1.5). The proposed mixed-use development would replace the southwest portion of the golf course to generate revenue to fix the erosion problem.

The Planning Commission approved the preliminary development proposal. However, a month later, the City Council denied the proposed development. Two months later, in April 2022, Deer Creek Golf Club permanently closed. The current plan is to build 68 single-family homes on part of the golf course.



Figure 1.5 Proposed Mixed-Use Development on Deer Creek Golf Course

Research Question & Objectives

This study attempts to answer the question, ***“How can vacant golf courses be re-envisioned to balance the interests of developers and residents of surrounding communities?”*** To answer the research question, this project aims to (1) identify common issues and dilemmas among various stakeholders concerning the redevelopment of Deer Creek Golf Club, (2) explore relevant community engagement approaches and public perception, and (3) propose a hypothetical design for re-envisioning Deer Creek Golf Club.

The research question is addressed by exploring existing literature related to the topic (see Figure 1.6) and a methodology that collects and analyzes relevant data to inform hypothetical design solutions.

How can vacant golf courses be re-envisioned to balance the interests of both developers and residents of surrounding communities?

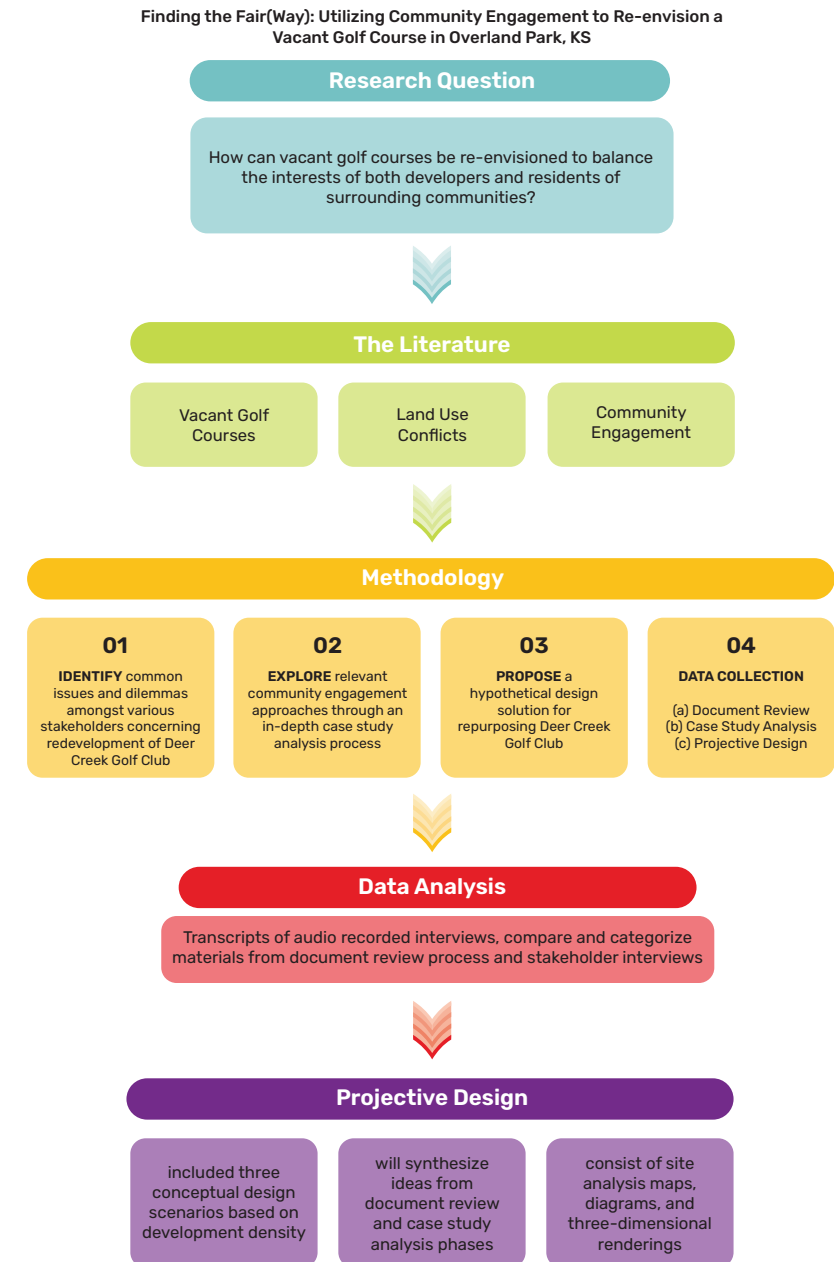


Figure 1.6 Structure of the Study

LITERATURE REVIEW



contents

overview
literature review
summary



Overview

To combat rising golf course facility closures, some redevelopment has to occur for these areas to be profitable. Otherwise, golf courses will likely be left vacant, and more significant problems will inevitably present themselves. The interrelationship of golf courses and real estate development often conflicts. Vacant or not, the developer’s primary goal is to maximize profits on their developable land. Meanwhile, public interests are primarily formulated by residents of surrounding communities who typically want to preserve open land. The interests of these two groups are starkly different and are often the source of land use disputes. Although numerous competing interests are related to golf course developments, there is more significant conflict surrounding redevelopment projects.

Golf course redevelopment projects involve land use issues and legal battles for course owners, lawyers, and municipalities. The typical approach is to hire a consultant who prepares a proposal and presents it to stakeholder groups. This top-down approach can generate conflict about environmental protection, residents’ interests, economic development, and more.

Community engagement instead views the public as a partner rather than the subject. Addressing conflict through public participation often diffuses controversy when groups have opposing ideas and agendas. This bottom-up approach helps encourage and foster collaboration among end-user groups in the design process.

This process enables end users to contribute to decision-making that will directly affect them in the long term. Involving partners in the design process helps improve public spirit, fosters a sense of ownership, and can lead to significant financial savings. For professionals, involving community members in the design process enhances the feeling of trust between the designer and the community and increases the likelihood that the end product will successfully serve the end user. Community engagement is a proven method for successfully addressing conflicts within stakeholder groups while providing a unique and inclusive method when designing for the end user group. To answer the research question, relationships between existing literature on golf course redevelopment and community engagement were reviewed (see Figure 2.1).

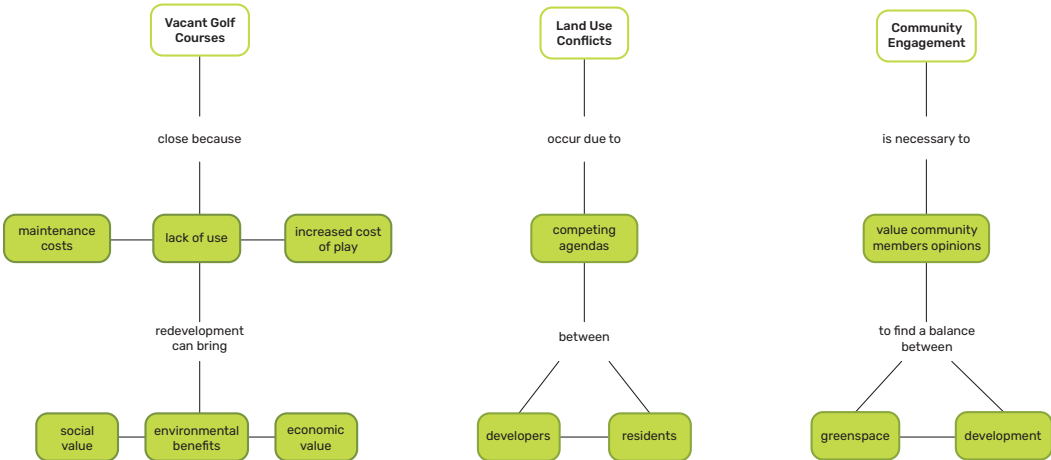


Figure 2.1 Literature Map

Literature Review

Golf Course Development

A surge of golf course development occurred in the United States beginning in the 1950s, culminating in more than 7,000 course openings between 1970 and 2000, an average of nearly one newly constructed course per day. (Napton and Laingen 2008; Colding and Folke 2009). This influx of golf course development set the trend for golf courses to become the centerpiece of large-scale housing developments and offer communities a significant open space, making these developments an increasingly appealing place to live (Mulvihill and Cory 2001; Helphand 1995). About 46 percent of all golf course developments today have a real estate component (Mulvihill and Cory 2001). Throughout these communities, the golf course is an integral part of the real estate development, intended to increase property values and maximize residential frontage (Robert L. A. Adams and Rooney 1985; Helphand 1995). These homes are typically sold in a more luxurious residential market due to their view of natural open space (Helphand 1995).

Despite the rapid development of golf courses, their growth rate has recently declined throughout much of the United States (Robert L. A. Adams and Rooney 1985). The golf industry peaked in 2000 and has declined in the number of built golf courses and golfers (Hueber and Worzala 2010). The future of golf courses nationwide is uncertain due to expensive course construction, increased maintenance costs, reduced play, housing shortages, and higher patron fees (Hueber and Worzala 2010; Anderson 2020; Robert L. A. Adams and Rooney 1985). If methods aren't developed to counteract this decline, golf in the United States may again become a game for the privileged few (Robert L. A. Adams and Rooney 1985). In an economic downturn, it can be expected that some golf courses will not only see a decrease in usage but may be forced to close due to these trends. These problems began with nearly 300 golf course facility closures reported by the National Golf Foundation in 2020, a record high (Anderson 2020). Some redevelopment has to take place for these areas to be profitable. Otherwise, golf courses will likely be left vacant, and more significant problems will inevitably present themselves (Anderson 2020).

Conflicting Interests

The relationship surrounding golf courses and real estate development is one of conflict due to their complex interrelationship, regardless of whether they're vacant (Muirhead and Rando 1994; López-Bonilla and Reyes-Rodríguez 2020). The developer's primary goal is to maximize profits on their developable land. Meanwhile, public interests are primarily formulated by local municipalities and residents of surrounding communities who typically want to preserve open land. The interests of these two groups are starkly different and often are the source of land use disputes (Han 1995). Golf courses are usually viewed as visually appealing open space amenities in urban environments (Anderson 2020). But some may argue they're a waste of space and don't provide any environmental or social benefits. There's often opposition to golf course construction, but sometimes what takes the course's place could be potentially worse in terms of sociability and economic and ecological value (Hiskes 2010).

Both development and greenspace offer numerous benefits relative to their location and applicability to golf courses. Transforming vacant and abandoned land into parks and open spaces has proven to help sustain communities (Kim and Peiser 2018). Similarly, conserving resources like wetlands, endangered species, and their habitats as integral parts of golf courses can enhance the ecological and market value of real estate fronting open space (Muirhead and Rando 1994). Golf courses can provide numerous benefits in urban environments, such as diverse habitat creation, biodiversity promotion, and serving as a native habitat for flora and fauna (Price et al. 2013). Although golf course developments typically involve numerous competing interests, more significant conflict surrounds these projects.

Golf course redevelopment projects are complete with land use issues and legal battles left for course owners, lawyers, and municipalities to sort through. The typical approach to these redevelopment projects is hiring a consultant, also considered “the experts,” who present a proposal to stakeholder groups. This top-down approach can generate conflict concerning environmental protection, the interests of residents, economic development, and more (Semeraro et al. 2020). Community engagement instead views the participant as a partner rather than the subject (Sanders and Stappers 2008). Community engagement in design serves dual purposes as a design approach and a research method (Spinuzzi 2005). Addressing conflict through public participation often diffuses controversy when groups have opposing ideas and agendas (Sanoff 2000). Community engagement can help resolve the conflict surrounding vacant golf courses by including residents and other stakeholder groups in design decisions. This bottom-up approach helps encourage and foster collaboration among end-user groups in the design process. It enables them to contribute to the decision-making process that will directly affect them in the long term (Sanoff 2000).

Community Engagement

Designers know that design is a social process, and community engagement in design can be utilized to extend the design process to end users (Luck 2003; Sanoff 2000). In landscape architecture, these end user groups are typically community members and other stakeholders who the implementation of the design will impact. Community engagement in design has numerous advantages for both the end users and the professional(s) facilitating the process. Involving people in the design process helps improve public spirit, fosters a sense of ownership and pride, and can lead to significant financial savings (Sanoff 2000). For professionals, involving community members in the design process improves the designer’s sense of trust with the community and increases the likelihood that the end product will successfully serve the end user. (Luck 2003; Sanoff 2000).

Informing the public and opening people’s minds to change is critical to effective public participation (Sanoff 2000). Instead of determining blame for current situations, participants must be in a design mode to look forward at what needs to be done (De Bono 1985). In architecture and design professions, methods for participatory design are commonly design workshops, charettes, and games (Luck 2003; Sanoff 2000). Common materials used in community engagement activities are maps, trace paper, and markers to show designers what they want to see on a particular site (Arciniegas and Janssen 2012; Todd and Lindsey 2016). It is essential to address conflict, trust, and acceptance among participants through the presence of a mediator or facilitator (Sanoff 2000). Participatory workshops are used to allow for the integration of a variety of community concerns. An essential factor to consider in developing participatory workshops is the materials’ readability for participants not trained in design or planning (Sanoff 2000). Community participatory design is a proven method for successfully addressing conflicts within stakeholder groups while providing a unique and inclusive design approach for the end user group.

Summary

The rapid development of golf course communities throughout the United States in the late 20th and early 21st centuries has led to widespread golf course closures. Many of these communities struggle to address these closures due to the various conflicts surrounding them (see Figure 2.2). Community engagement has proven to be an effective way to handle conflicts with a bottom-up approach instead of the typical top-down one. The disputes surrounding golf courses can be successfully mediated through a community engagement process.

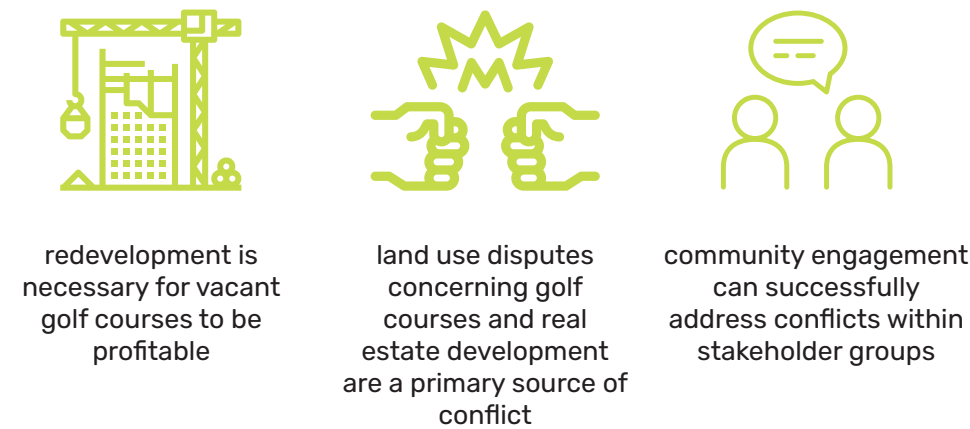
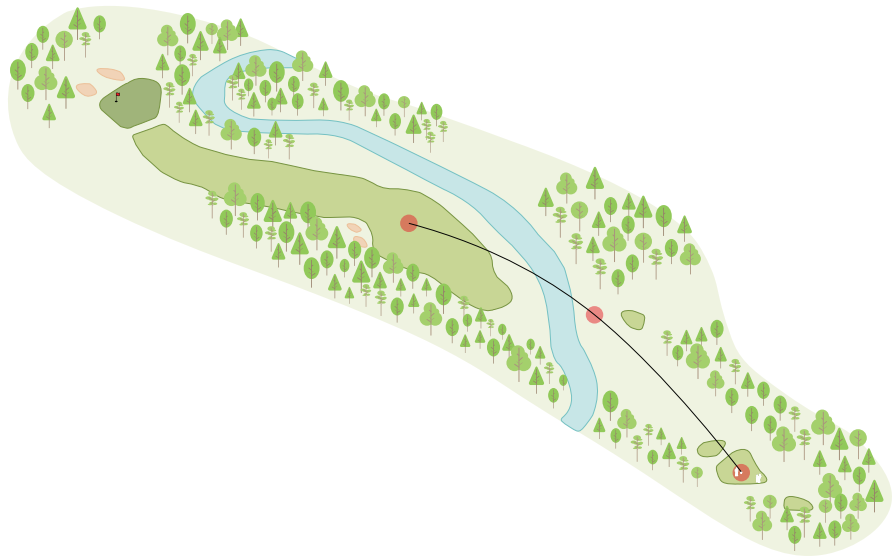


Figure 2.2 Themes from the Literature Review

METHODOLOGY



contents

overview
site selection
study area
context analysis
target population
demographics
methods

3

Overview

To answer the research question, “*How can vacant golf courses be re-envisioned to balance the interests of both developers and residents of surrounding communities?*” this chapter will be guided by the following objectives (see Figure 3.1):

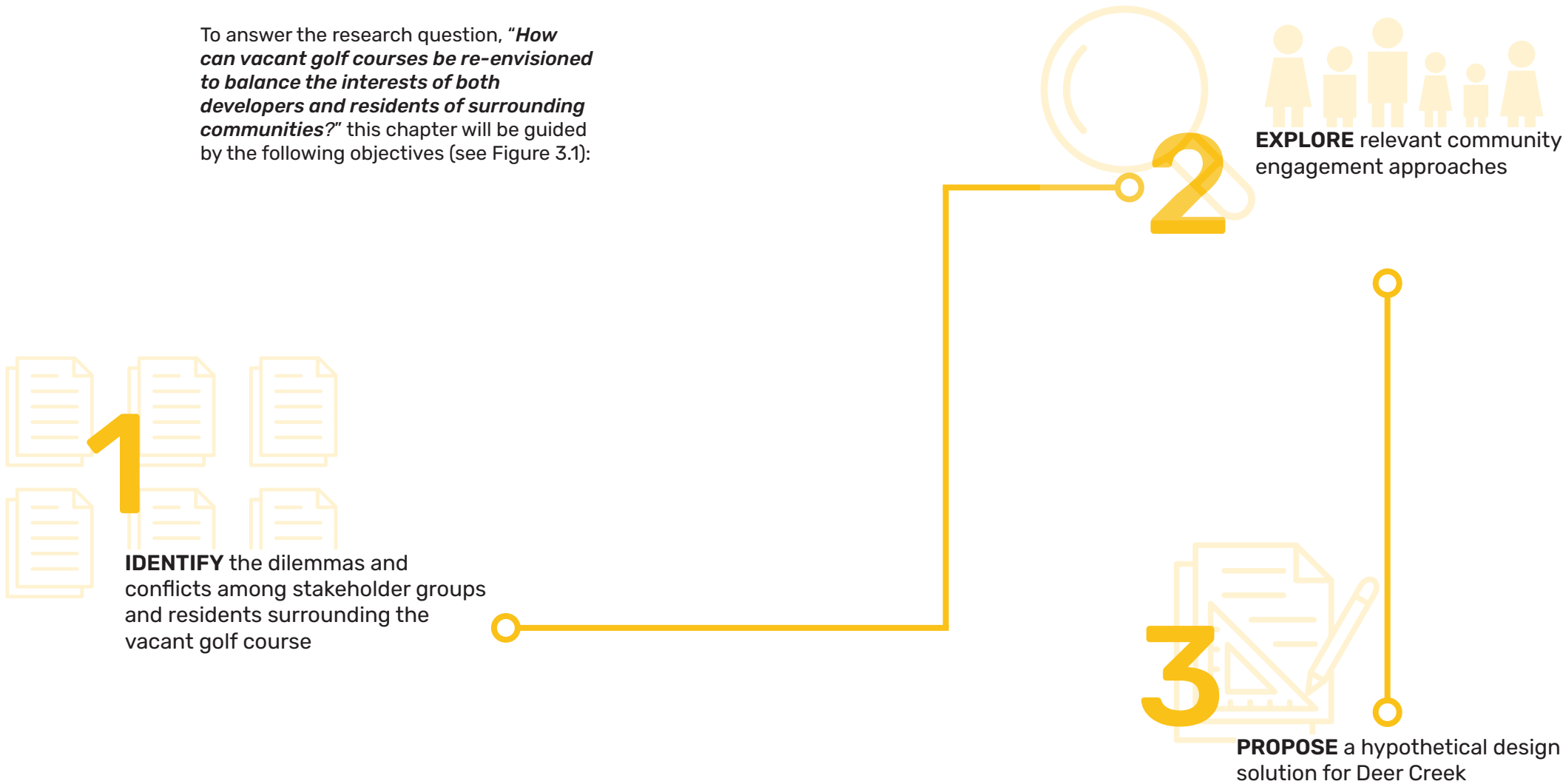


Figure 3.1 Methodology Process Flow

Site Selection

The site selection process was reasonably straightforward, as a search for vacant or closed golf courses was done at the beginning of the study. Either closed or vacant golf course conditions were considered the best-case scenario for the project because they would be prime candidates for redevelopment.

Deer Creek Golf Club in Overland Park, Kansas (see Figure 3.2), was chosen as the project site due to its current vacant condition and recent “hot topic” among residents and the surrounding community. Deer Creek is near other notable golf courses (see Figure 3.3), such as Hallbrook, Ironhorse, and Lionsgate.

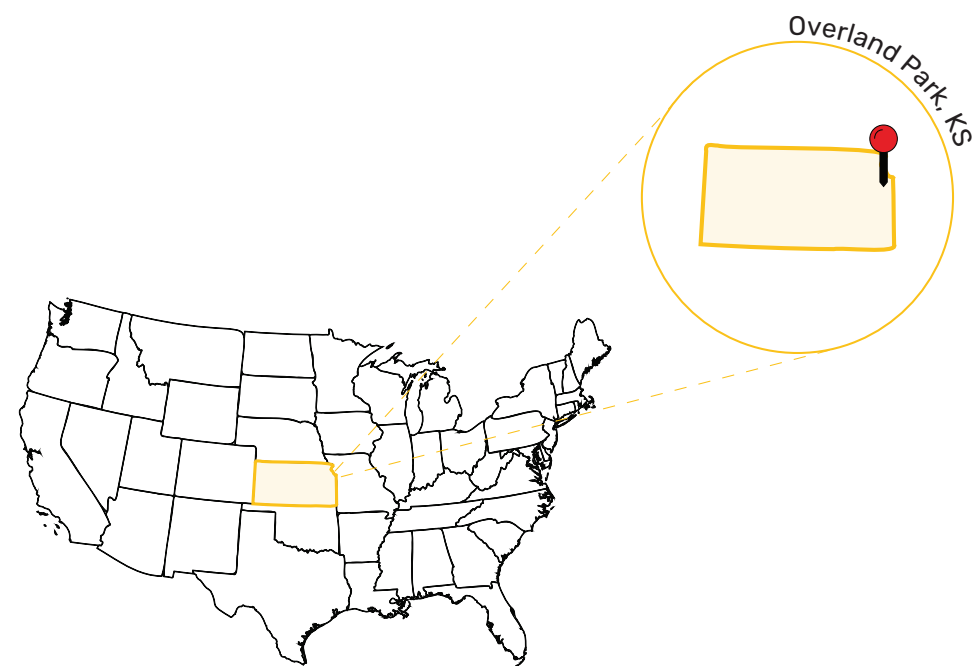


Figure 3.2 Site Selection in Overland Park, KS

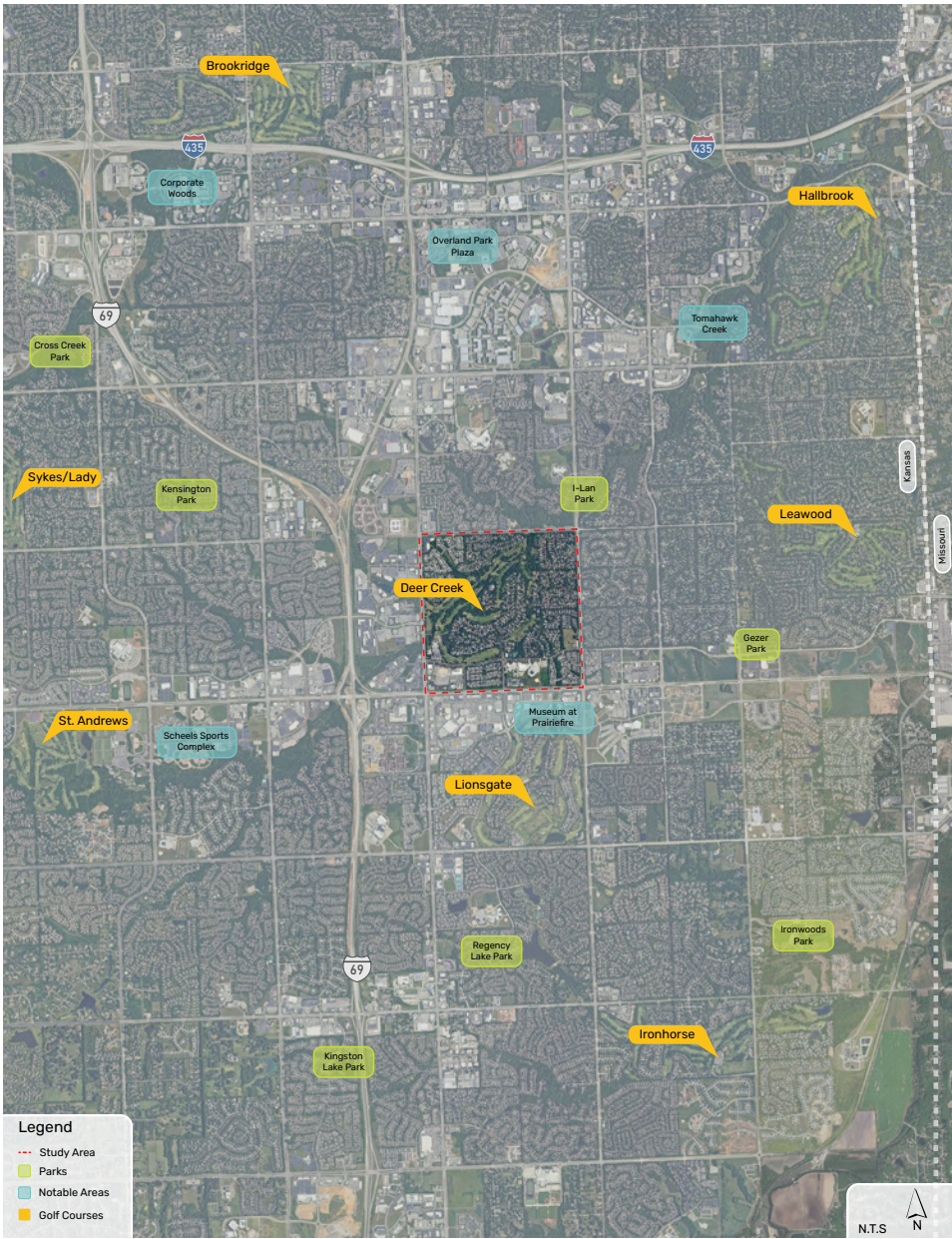


Figure 3.3 Site Context

Study Area

The study area is bounded by Metcalf Ave., which goes north to 127th St., east to Nall Ave., south to 135th St., and back west along Metcalf. This study focuses on the site boundary of Deer Creek Golf Club, located inside the primary study area (see Figure 3.4).

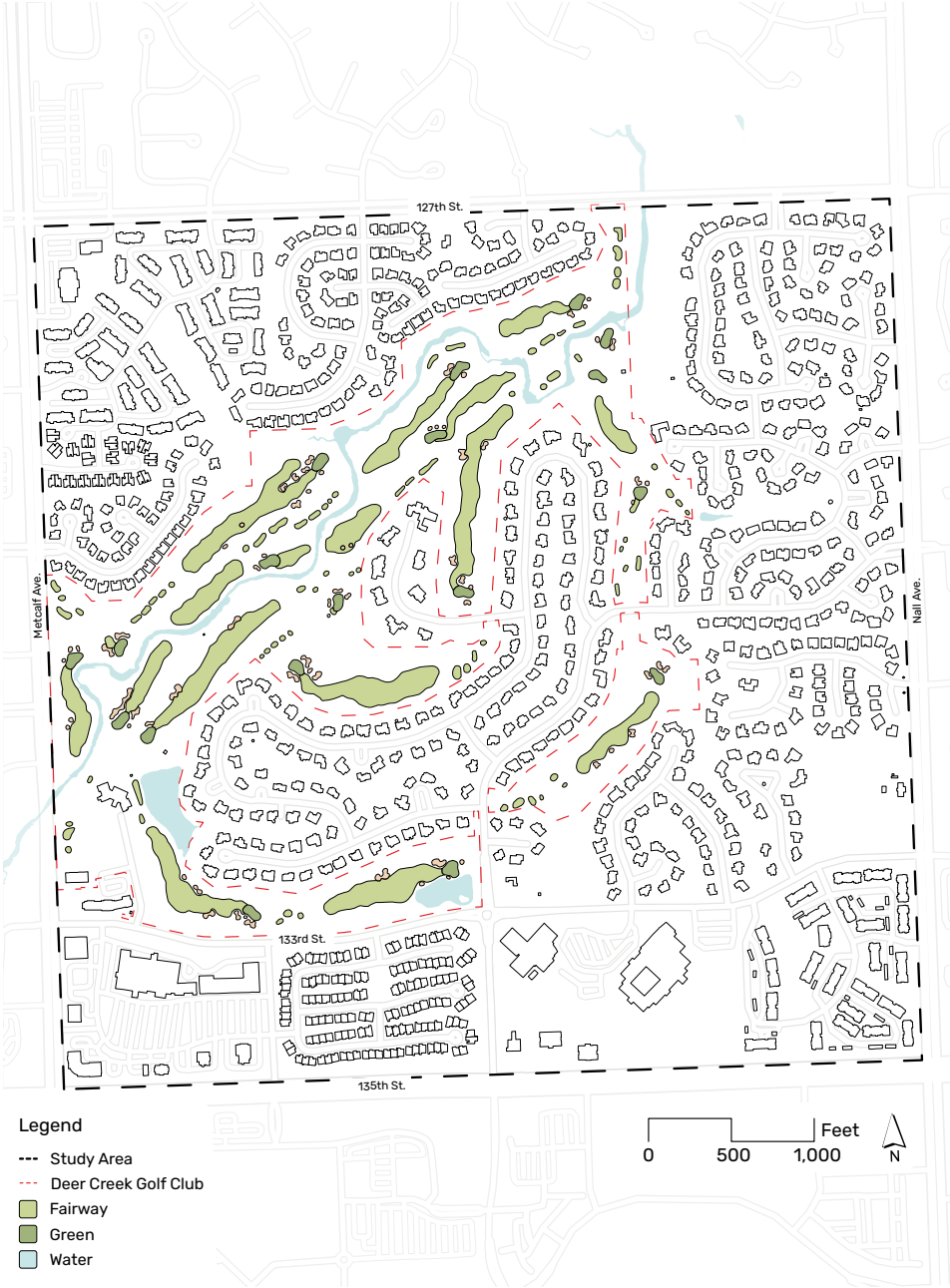


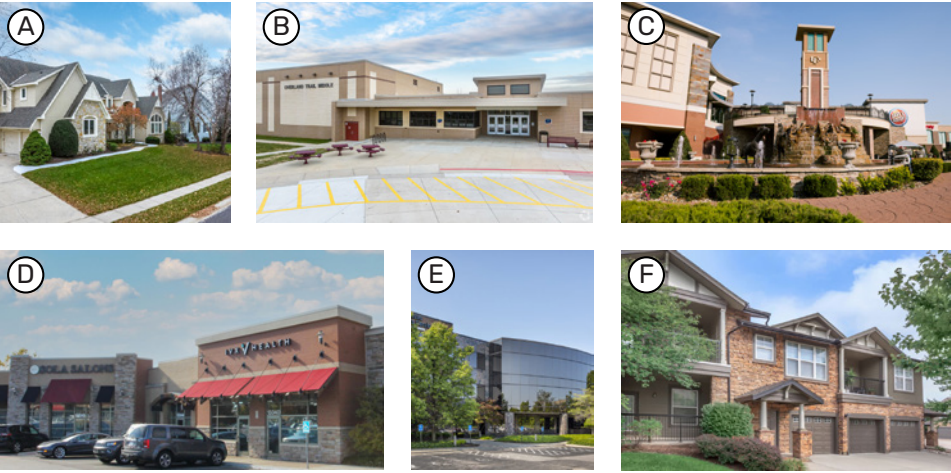
Figure 3.4 Deer Creek Study Area

Context Analysis

The area around Deer Creek Golf Club comprises single-family homes, multi-family apartments, condos, townhomes, parks, restaurants, office space, and shopping centers (see Figures 3.5 and 3.6).

Overland Trail Elementary and Middle School are essential features of the area (see Label B). The abundance of single-family homes and young people indicates the Deer Creek community is primarily a place for families with children.

The golf course plays an essential role in this community. It's not merely a means for greenspace in an urban environment; it also serves as a destination for members of surrounding communities and is a primary reason many homeowners purchase homes in the area.



Figures 3.5 Deer Creek Community Buildings

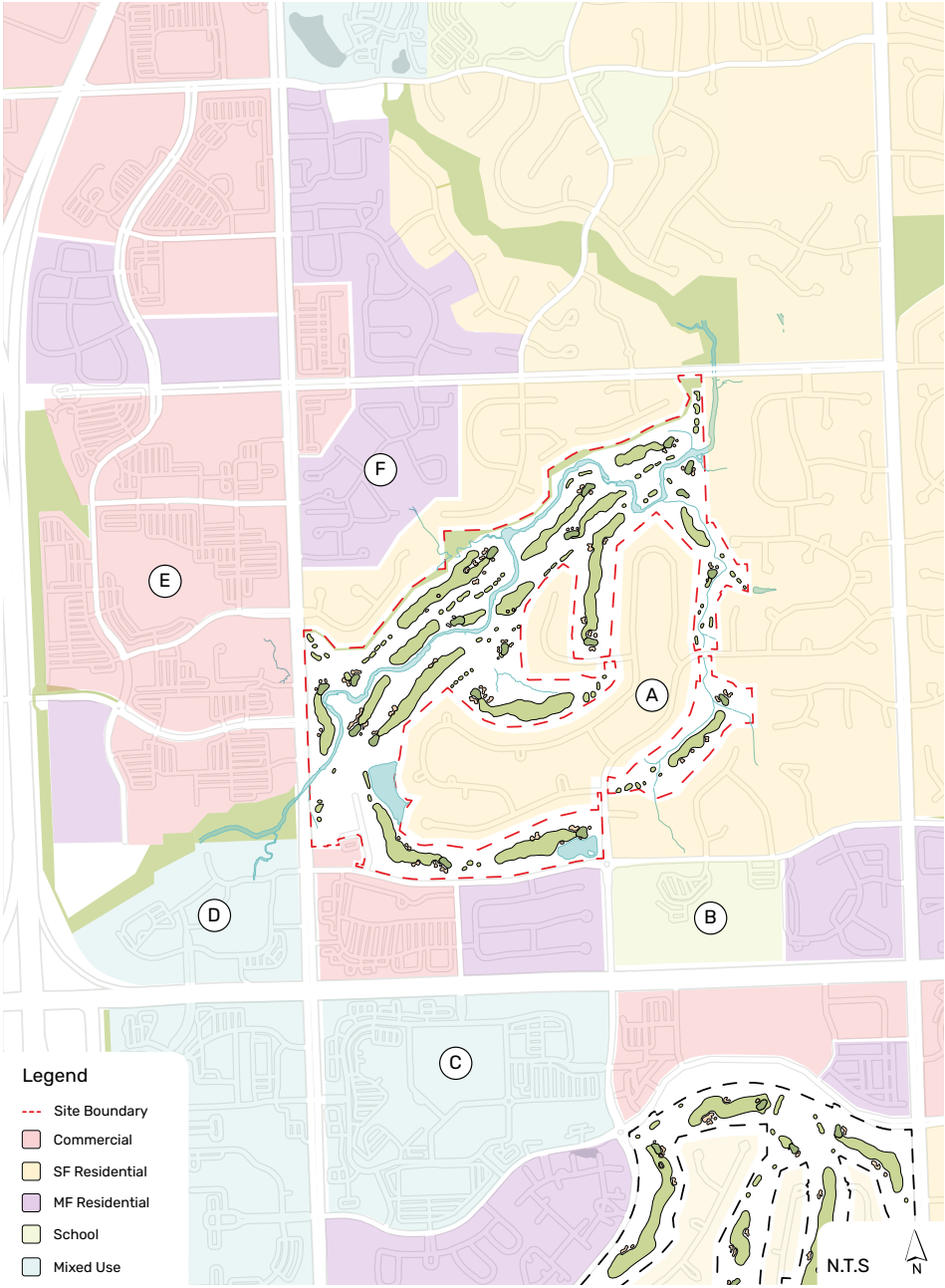


Figure 3.6 Community Context

Target Population

The study area’s population was analyzed from two census block groups (see Figures 3.7 and 3.8). Relative to the rest of Overland Park, residents of this area have well above-average incomes and home values.

This area has a large population of families with children. With an elementary and middle school in the study area, children heavily traffic this neighborhood. This area is home to a diverse range of people in age and ethnicity (see Figure 3.9). It will be essential to use inclusive design strategies to implement infrastructure that all user groups can utilize.

1,245
POPULATION OF THE AREA

\$89,973
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$556,200
MEDIAN HOME VALUE

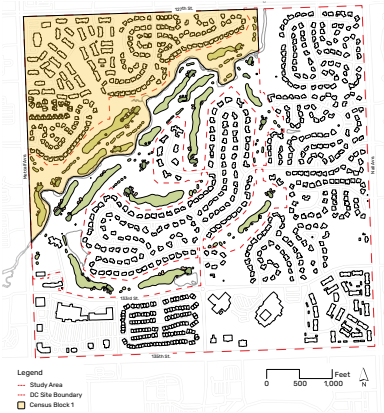


Figure 3.7 Census Block 1

2,070
POPULATION OF THE AREA

\$150,167
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$657,500
MEDIAN HOME VALUE

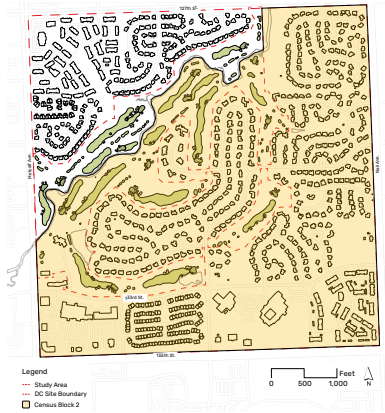
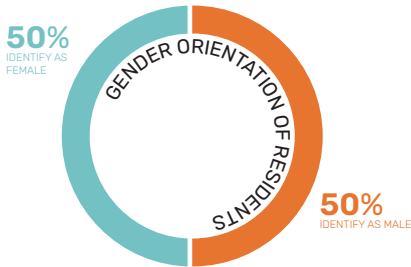
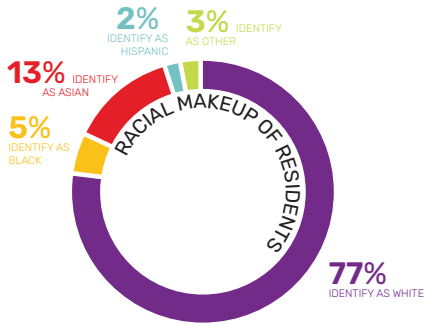
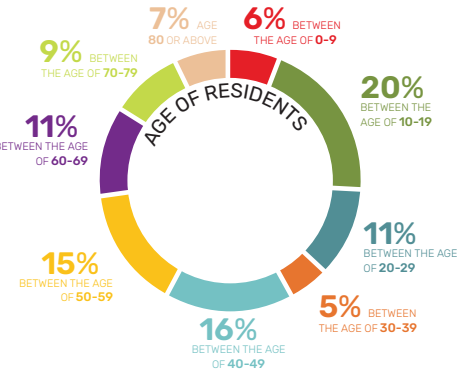


Figure 3.8 Census Block 2

Social Demographics



Economic Demographics

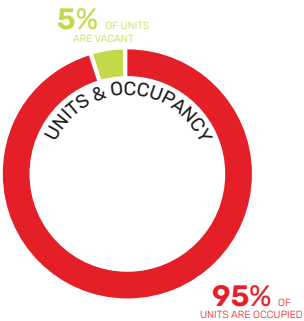
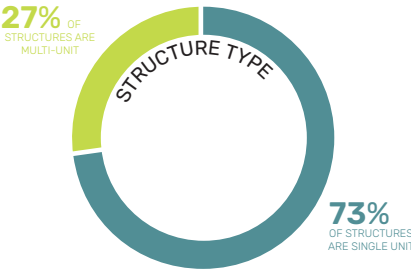
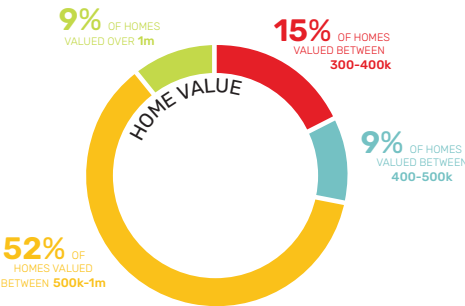


Figure 3.9 Social and Economic Demographics of Study Area

Methods

Three methods were used to achieve the objectives of this study (see Figure 3.10).

First, document reviews identified the problems facing the golf course by analyzing development plans and public meeting minutes & agendas.

Secondly, a case study analysis with stakeholder interviews was conducted to explore and analyze past community engagement approaches for golf course redevelopment projects.

Finally, a hypothetical design proposed multiple design solutions for Deer Creek through research-informed design.

DOCUMENT REVIEWS



(a) garner a deeper understanding of why the proposal was rejected

(b) understand the conflict between stakeholder groups, particularly the residents

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS



(a) learn about community engagement approaches used on golf course redevelopment projects

(b) identify programming elements for hypothetical design ideation

SCENARIO-BASED DESIGN

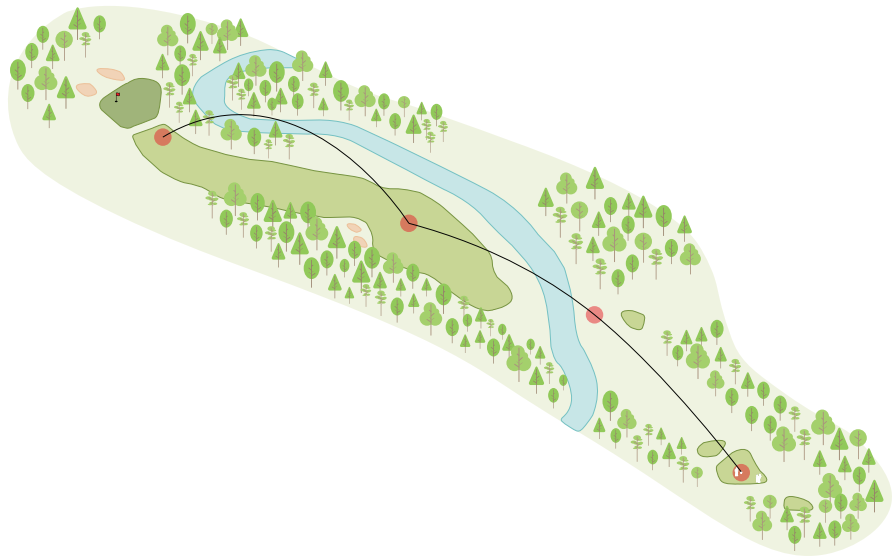


(a) propose a hypothetical design that synthesizes ideas from research phases

(b) scenario-based design that offers differing development density ideas

Figure 3.10 Study Methods

RESEARCH RESULTS



contents

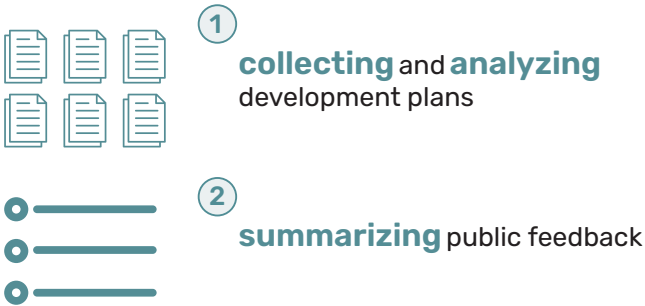
overview
document review
public meeting summaries
thematic analysis
case study analysis
meadowbrook
brookridge
stakeholder interviews
synthesis of research phase



Overview

The research phase of the study consists of document reviews, a case study analysis, and stakeholder interviews. This phase helped establish design goals and frameworks to inform scenario-based hypothetical design solutions for Deer Creek.

PROCESS



OBJECTIVES



Figure 4.1 Document Review Process and Objectives

Document Reviews

The document review process involved analyzing development plans and summarizing public feedback related to Deer Creek’s proposed redevelopment (see Figure 4.1). The necessary public meeting information for this process was gathered from the City of Overland Park, Kansas’s webpage. Meetings pertaining to Deer Creek were reviewed to understand the variety of viewpoints and identify the main points of conflict among residents relative to the proposed redevelopment plans.

The collected information was categorized into two phases to illuminate the differing opinions throughout the public meeting and design process. Phase one covers the multi-family proposal, and phase two covers the single-family plan. The outcomes of the document review process are public meeting summaries with corresponding thematic analysis diagrams that further inform a set of design strategies.

Phase I

Preliminary Development Plan

The first meeting concerning the redevelopment plans for Deer Creek was held on December 13, 2021, in front of the City of Overland Park’s Planning Commission. This meeting covered the original rezone request for the multifamily development proposal. It required a public hearing process, meaning community members were allowed to speak in front of the Planning Commission. The rezoning application was made by GreatLIFE Development Company (GLDC); their request was to rezone a portion of the southwest corner of Deer Creek Golf Club to RP-6, a planned high-rise apartment district. This request would allow multi-family apartments where the clubhouse and parking currently exist.

An attorney presented the project on behalf of the applicant and development team. He stated the rezoning request would transform an aging clubhouse with a high-quality development while simultaneously solving a worsening issue with stream bank erosion on the golf course. The preliminary development plan contains 158 acres, but 10.9 acres would be removed from that area, which includes the current clubhouse and parking area, leaving 146.8 acres for the golf course. This means that 2.5% of the existing golf course will be developed as part of this application, and 97.5% will remain an 18-hole golf course. The only alteration to the course would be a shortening of hole one from par four to par three.

Flood and erosion are among the most significant problems facing the project site. Approximately 9,000 acres flow through the stream corridor, leading to extreme erosion issues. The proposed development aims to generate enough profit from the apartment complex and golf course operations to address the erosion problems along streambanks and bring the golf course back to pristine condition.

A real estate development group member involved in the project noted that approximately 50% of the golf course is in the FEMA floodplain. The only developable areas are the clubhouse and holes 1,2,7 and 10. This proposal focused its redevelopment on the clubhouse area and parking lot and would have a minimal impact on the golf course. The development comprises three buildings; Building A has 105 units and is 360 feet long; Building B has 94 units and is 490 feet long, see Figure 4.2; and Building C has 25 units and is over 200 feet long. All the buildings required a height or length variance to make the project economically viable.



Figure 4.2 Preliminary Design of Building B

Approximately twenty residents and community members came and spoke at the public hearing portion of the meeting. There were many public comments, both supporting and opposing the project. Four community members spoke in support of the project, compared to approximately twenty speakers in opposition. Those in support stated their stance for approval as an increased quality of life, long-term viability of the golf course and community, and fear of lost greenspace and new homes being constructed on the golf course.

Those opposed to the proposed development stated their concerns about adequate amenities for golfers and how the golf aspect of the project would be separated from the residential components(see Figure 4.3). The heights of the buildings also posed much opposition as some of the residents named the 490-foot Building B “the great wall of Deer Creek.” Another common concern was the lack of investment and maintenance previously made by GreatLIFE and the lack of trust between the owner of the course and the community. The development also required numerous variances due to the buildings’ proposed lengths and overall sizes. According to the City of Overland Park’s Master Plan, there should be a gradual transition from land uses, and the stark transition from R-1 single-family homes to RP-6 multifamily is inappropriate.



Figure 4.3 Proposed Apartment Building Units

Takeaways

Concerns over the size and density of Building B, along with traffic and the overall project size, were raised by both the public and the Planning Commission. A few commission members supported the project because they believed it was a continuation of the current use in that portion of the property and would also save the golf course. A final decision on the development plan was not made at this meeting and the commission approved a motion for a continuance to the next meeting.

Revised Preliminary Development Plan

The second Planning Commission meeting, held on January 10, 2022, covered the revised preliminary development plan, primarily to split Building B. Instead of one continuous building spanning almost 500 feet long, the newly proposed buildings are 230 and 240 feet, respectively (see Figure 4.4). The gap between the two buildings is just over sixty feet, serving as a circulation and gathering area for residents and golfers. In addition, per public feedback, the pro shop increased from 5,000 to 7,500 square feet.

The public once again had a lot to say regarding this revised proposal. Over fifteen people from the surrounding area came to the podium to speak, and only one person favored the development being approved. Many concerns were carried over from the previous meeting, but new comments suggested building B was even larger since the foundation was continuous. Multiple community members spoke about parking and traffic concerns in the area and how the proposed development would ruin golf course operations. A general lack of trust between the community and owner also carried on, as there were numerous concerns about whether the course owner would develop the rest of the course later. Environmental concerns were another common theme, mentioning increased flooding, erosion, habitat loss, and maintenance issues.

In large part, the commission felt that the revised plan improved upon the previous meeting. Although Building B still had a continuous foundation, the split in the middle was seen as a visual and aesthetically pleasing improvement. A few members were still apprehensive about the size and density of the development and also concerned about the general feeling of the residents. However, after much deliberation, the Planning Commission voted to approve the proposed multi-family apartment plan.



Figure 4.4 Revised Elevation of Building B

Takeaways

The development team directly addressed the feedback from the last meeting by splitting building B. Many of the same concerns from the residents were made at this meeting, but many of them did not directly reflect the changes to the building. Therefore, they didn't hold much weight on the Planning Commission and voted to approve the plan. The next step is for the proposed redevelopment plan to go before the City Council.

City Council Meeting

The preliminary plan for the multifamily development was presented to the City Council on February 21, 2022. After the attorney’s presentation on the revised multifamily apartment plan, the City Council questioned the public staff and the applicant about topics mentioned in previous meetings. The City Council had numerous concerns about the project, including economic viability, maintenance issues, improper rezoning, flooding, lack of clarity, and parking. These issues were further echoed by members of the community, who, in large part, were firmly against the proposed project (see Figure 4.5).

One of the more interesting components of this presentation was the categories for medium and high-density land use goals: (a) functional & aesthetic living environment, (b) locational criteria, (c) transition to adjacent uses, (d) transportation considerations, and (e) compliance with policy documents. The lack of appropriate compliance to goals (a) and (c) was very concerning to the group. They felt that having a high-rise apartment district adjacent to single-family homes and the logistics of having parking underground were highly concerning. These issues and a lack of a clear plan to address flooding problems and improve golf course maintenance were alarming to council members. After nearly four hours, the City Council voted to deny the applicant’s request, ending the possibility of the multifamily plan being approved.



Figure 4.5 Deer Creek Neighborhood Signage

Takeaways

The request was denied, forcing the project to take a different direction. Apartments were no longer a viable option because the rezoning had no support from members of the City Council. Members of the public were excited about the outcome, but this result also prompted the development team to develop an alternative redevelopment plan moving forward.

Deer Creek Golf Course

Phase I Document Review Thematic Analysis

Phase one of the multi-family plan is analyzed based on prominent themes stated by members of the community and public officials (see Figure 4.6).



Figure 4.6 Phase One Thematic Analysis

Phase II

Single-Family Homes Proposal

After the City Council rejected the multifamily apartment plan, GreatLIFE closed Deer Creek Golf Club and proposed a plan for single-family homes two months later. A Planning Commission meeting on June 13, 2022, covered the Highlands of Deer Creek preliminary plat proposal. A city staff member presented the proposed plan to develop parts of the course with 68 single-family homes (see Figure 4.7). The proposed project would be divided into at least two phases, and if approved, permitting and construction would commence in 2023 and 2024. The new square footage of the development would be 39.1 acres and be located on holes 1,2,6, and 7 to avoid construction in the floodplain. The price range of homes would be high-end to match the area’s market value.

Members of the Deer Creek community spoke in stark opposition to the proposed single-family plan. There were concerns over abutting homes, safety, home values, decreased quality of life, and the rights of the homeowners. Numerous residents spoke about how the golf course has always been an asset to the neighborhood and that losing it only to build more homes would be devastating. The community was visibly more upset with this proposal because the golf course would be replaced with homes. The development alluded to the possibility of this plan if the apartment plan got rejected, and that’s the route they had to take considering the previous outcome.

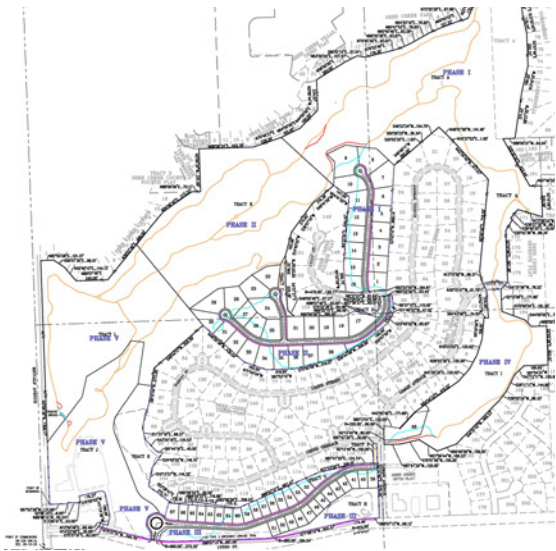


Figure 4.7 Preliminary Plat for Single-Family Homes

After the public hearing, the development team responded to some of the public's concerns, specifically addressing flooding and erosion. The city staff assured the commission of the flood study, albeit 20 years old, it is still relevant and thorough. The engineering team assured the commission that there wouldn't be any anticipated streamway impacts with the proposed single-family development. Members of the Planning Commission were generally more open to this proposal because it required rezoning, and the density of the development was deemed appropriate. The unfortunate aspect was that the golf course would not be saved, which was the preferred outcome.

Takeaways

One member stated they did not favor the plan because it should be paramount to save the golf course and would prefer to revert to the previous plan with less density. At this point of the redevelopment process, it seemed to be a foregone conclusion that the golf course would not be saved. Multiple commissioners favored the project because it matches the existing land use and the supportive professional opinions of public works members. The motion to accept the application passes much to the public's distaste.

Deer Creek Golf Course

Phase II Document Review Thematic Analysis

Phase two of the single-family plan is analyzed based on prominent themes stated by community members and public officials (see Figure 4.8).

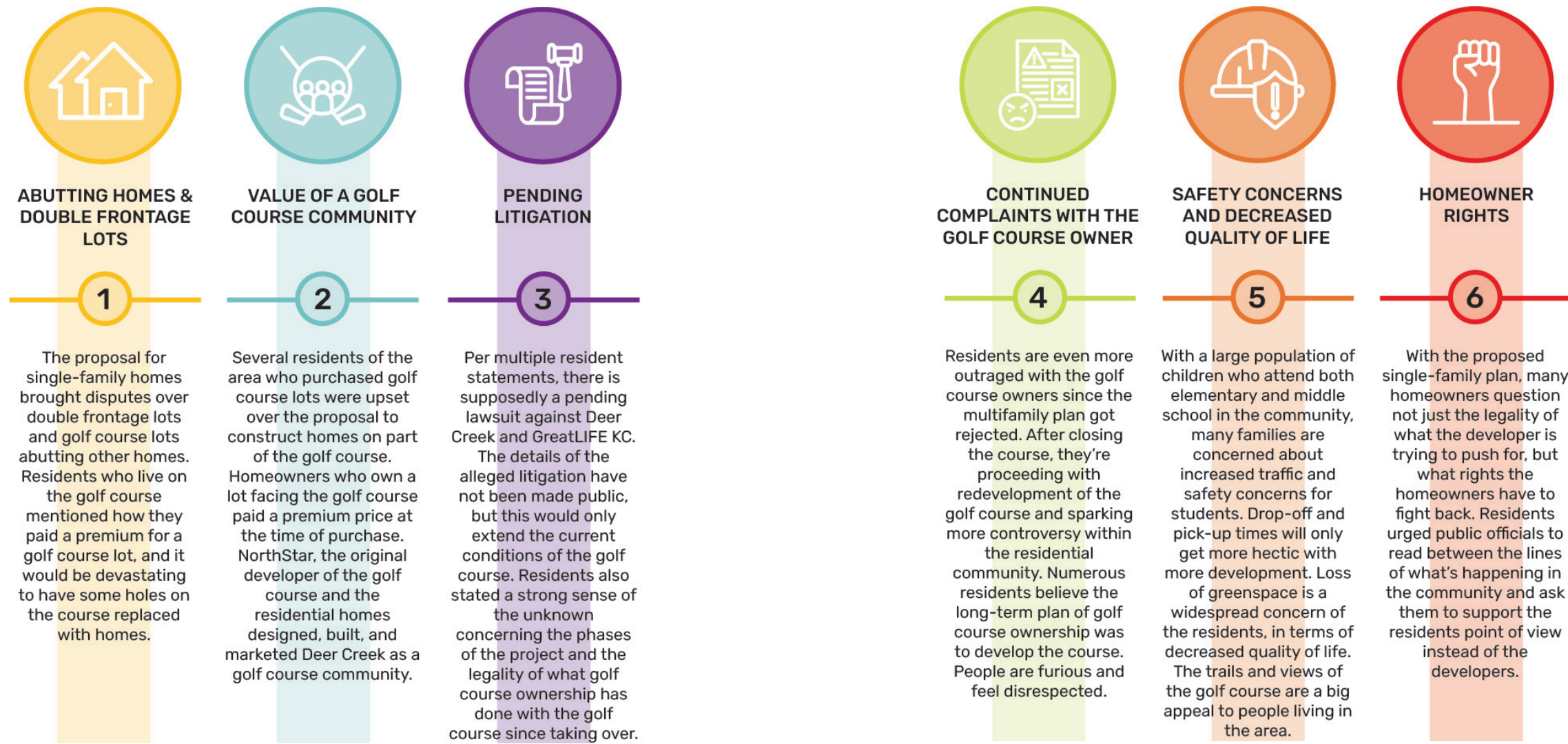


Figure 4.8 Phase Two Thematic Analysis

Deer Creek Golf Course Redevelopment Timeline

The redevelopment timeline of Deer Creek Golf Course spans over four years (see Figure 4.9). Beginning in 2020 with the need for erosion repair, the life cycle of the multi-family and single-family redevelopment plans is better understood by highlighting key events and dates.

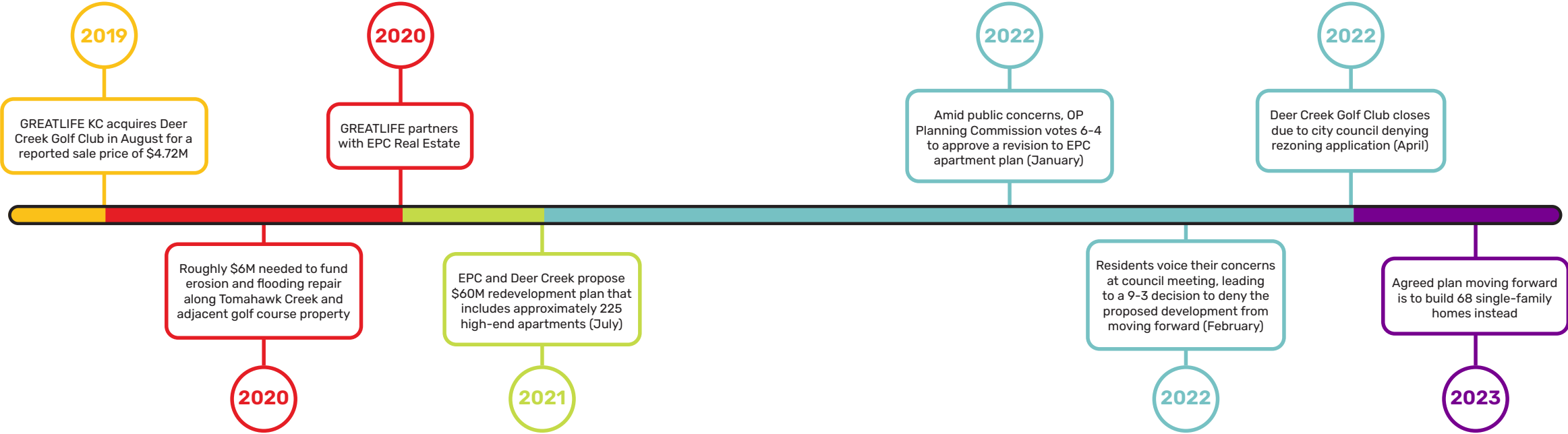


Figure 4.9 Deer Creek Redevelopment Timeline

Case Study Analysis & Stakeholder Interviews

Case Study Analysis

This project utilizes a case study analysis of two vacant golf course redevelopment projects in Kansas City to explore the common dilemmas, issues, and opportunities involved in this process. This phase intends to learn about community engagement processes and analyze design decisions used on previous golf course redevelopment projects.

Case studies were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) it must be a golf course redevelopment project; (2) it must have a combination of development and greenspace elements; and (3) it must have a community engagement component (see Figure 4.10).

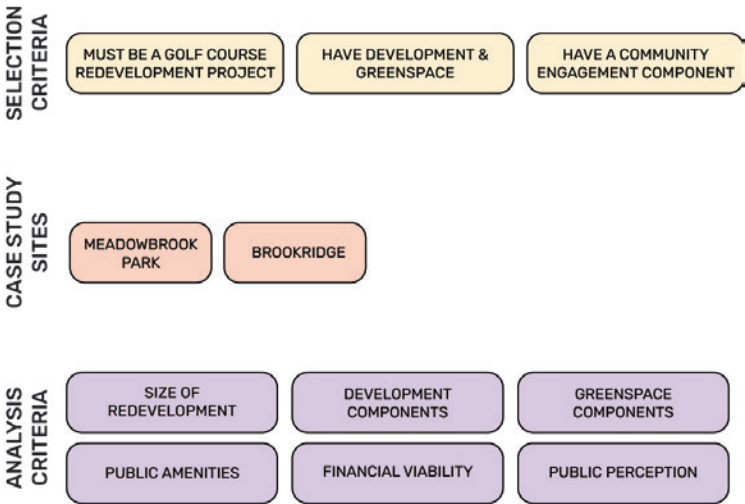


Figure 4.10 Case Study Analysis Process

Stakeholder Interviews

As part of case study analysis research, stakeholder interviews were conducted to investigate the common problems and opportunities related to the golf course redevelopment process. The primary goal of the interview process is to achieve an in-depth understanding of the process the design team took to achieve successful community engagement for this type of redevelopment project. Other goals are to identify common problems designers face within the community engagement process and understand the “why” aspect of the engagement process and how they were used to inform design decisions. Interviews primarily focus on conflicts and issues and how the design team addressed them throughout the community engagement process. Follow-up questions may be asked about how some of the outcomes from the engagement process lead to final design decisions.

Two corresponding stakeholder interviews were completed for Meadowbrook, the first case study, and one for Brookridge, the second case study.

Case Study #1

Meadowbrook Park | Prairie Village, KS

Meadowbrook is a golf course redevelopment project that was completed in 2019 and is located in Prairie Village, Kansas. The project is 136 acres, 80 of which is green space. Before redevelopment, Meadowbrook was an 18-hole regulation-sized golf course. There is a diverse assortment of development components, such as single-family homes, townhomes, senior housing units, luxury apartments, and a boutique hotel (see Figures 4.11 and 4.12). The greenspace elements include playgrounds, open event lawns, outdoor workout areas, paved trails, and fishing ponds (see Figure 4.13). One of the critical elements of this project is the public amenities, primarily located in the old golf clubhouse. Amenities include a childhood development center, multi-purpose classroom, event space, pavilions, shelters, and pickleball courts. The project had a significant community engagement component, primarily organized by a sub-consultant to Landworks Studio. Meadowbrook is a fantastic example of what a redeveloped golf course can be, with prominent development and green space components.



Figure 4.11 Meadowbrook Housing Variety



Figure 4.12 Meadowbrook Park and Development Components

Size of Redevelopment

- 136 Acres
- 80 acres of greenspace

Development Components

- 52 single family homes, 70 twin villas, 225 senior housing units, 54-room boutique hotel, 282-unit luxury apartment complex

Greenspace Components

- Playgrounds, large open space, event lawn, paved trails, outdoor workout areas, native plantings and forbays, ponds, and site furnishings
- Strategic tree preservation - added 500 new trees

Public Amenities

- Childhood development center, pavilion and three shelters, multi-purpose classroom, event space, pickleball courts, parking, and restrooms

Financial Viability

- Received TIFF funding
- Property tax dollars for the municipality

Public Perception

- Lots of support for the project
- The public valued trails, gardens, open space, event lawn, playground, and splash park
- Road alignment to preserve more park and trees



Figure 4.13 Meadowbrook Master Plan

Meadowbrook

Stakeholder Interview #1

The Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department required the community engagement process for Meadowbrook to understand what the community wanted in the area. The project lead hired a subconsultant to establish and organize the community engagement component of the project. A stakeholder advisory group consisting of the city, county, and developer was also assembled to oversee the engagement process.

When working on golf course redevelopment projects, the design team recommended being sensitive to surrounding neighbors about what aspects of the proposed project may affect them. Establishing an accessible and trustworthy communication channel with the public is essential to project success. One of the advantages of golf course redevelopment projects, specifically, is that the clubhouse can serve as a community center of sorts. Meadowbrook utilized the clubhouse on-site as a hub for community engagement activities.

The community engagement process consisted of having people walk the course and experience different stations set up throughout the course where they could stop and participate in an engagement activity. MySidewalk was utilized as a tool for community engagement, as were comment cards, dot polls, and image boards.

The redevelopment project had a significant impact on the community and City of Prairie Village. The developer, VanTrust, owned the whole piece of property and donated approximately 80 acres of green space. The city and county are collecting significant tax revenues from the hotel and property taxes. Since the establishment of the redevelopment plan, shopping centers in the area have also been getting facelifts.

What stands out about Meadowbrook is the transformation the project had on Prairie Village and the community. People came with checks in hand to purchase lots at the first community engagement meeting (see Figure 4.14). Long-time residents were willing to move out of their homes, downsize, and have lower maintenance costs moving to the development adjacent to the park. This project opened up the housing market as well. Families with young children who couldn't previously move into Prairie Village suddenly now had access to real estate that could fit their needs and budget, instigating a demographic shift in the area.



people were eager to purchase lots on property



redevelopment can have a transformative effect on a community



be proactive about constantly communicating with the public

Figure 4.14 Themes from Stakeholder Interview #1

Meadowbrook

Stakeholder Interview #2

Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department held a project kickoff meeting and identified the community stakeholders. At the beginning stages of the project, a community outreach action plan and contact database were developed (see Figure 4.15).

Open houses were the primary method of organizing outreach events. A series of brochures were created and sent to the public, and social media posts were posted to Facebook groups and other online outlets. Press releases were sent out through the Parks and Rec public relations officer. Part of the community engagement process was having the public come to the golf course and walk around, experiencing and giving feedback on possible programming elements. Small interventions such as pop-up pickleball courts and playgrounds helped inform final design decisions.

There were no conflicts of interest between stakeholder groups noted by the design team. However, a few common points of conflict on redevelopment projects are the “not in my backyard” mentality and the negative connotation typically associated with redevelopment. To counteract this, it’s essential to establish communication channels with the community early in the process and keep that channel constantly open. Keeping people up to date with recent changes to the project are just as important as initial feedback.

When engaging with the public, it’s vital to not ask them to weigh in on something they can’t control. Too much information can overwhelm community members, but it’s important to still keep them in the loop. Finding the middle ground between these is delicate, but vital to project success. A tactic used to get the public open to the idea of redevelopment is to have them “anchor” to an early vision plan or idea. Something framed in a positive way, that can be seen as an asset to the community is recommended.



Figure 4.15 Themes from Stakeholder Interview #2

Community Engagement

The golf course and clubhouse was a primary location for community engagement activities for Meadowbrook (see Figures 4.16 through 4.19). Multiple open houses were hosted that provided community members the opportunity to input their feedback on public participation boards. Pop-up tents on the course also allowed community members the chance to experience possible programming elements.

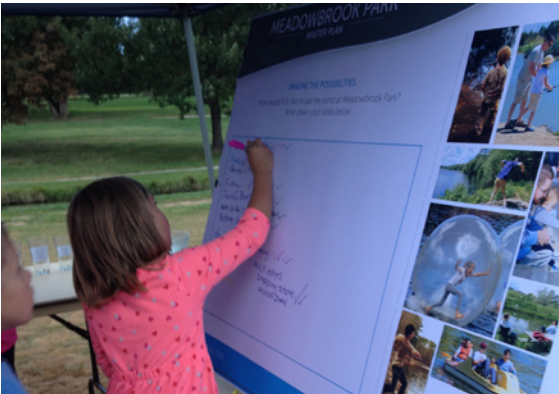


Figure 4.16 On-Course Engagement



Figure 4.17 Open House Format



Figure 4.18 On-Course Community Engagement Tents



Figure 4.19 Pop-Up Pickleball Court on the Golf Course

Case Study #2

Brookridge | Overland Park, KS

Brookridge is located on 103rd and Antioch in Overland Park, Kansas, and is currently under construction. This site was part of Brookridge Golf and Fitness Club, home to a 27-hole golf facility. The first phase of the project will preserve nine holes for members of the club to enjoy until the final phase breaks ground. This project is 200+ acres, approximately 50% of which is greenspace (see Figures 4.20 and 4.21). Brookridge is an example of a higher-density development plan, which will house over two million square feet of office space, consisting of a cultural performance venue, retail, restaurants, apartments, entertainment, and hospitality venues (see Figure 4.22). Greenspace elements will be highlighted by a 45+ acre signature park and waterway bridge crossings, promenades, forested and open lawns, fountains, and paved walking paths. Public amenities such as the publicly accessible park in conjunction with pedestrian and biking paths are a few central infrastructure elements to help improve residents' quality of life in the area (see Figures 4.23 and 4.24). This project faced initial pushback from the community due to building heights and office square footage, but the developer worked with the community to find an appropriate middle ground. Now, community members are becoming more open to the project since it's under construction.



Figure 4.20 Brookridge Redevelopment Master Plan



Figure 4.21 Brookridge Mixed-Use Development and Golf Course

Size of Redevelopment

- 200+ Acres
- approximately 50% greenspace

Development Components

- Nearly 2 million sqft office space, cultural performance venue, retail, restaurants, entertainment, and hospitality venues

Greenspace Components

- 45+ acre signature park, bridges over waterway crossings, promenades, forested and open lawns, fountains, paved walking paths
- Urban park that will host outdoor events
- Brookridge Golf Club

Public Amenities

- Accessible central park planned with biking and hiking paths that connect to larger trail network
- Shopping and entertainment areas

Financial Viability

- Grants will help pay for construction costs
- Rentable officespace, retail, and commercial real estate will sustain economic value

Public Perception

- Initial pushback from surrounding residents, but becoming more open to the project now that it's under construction
- Developed decreased office square footage and building heights due to public feedback



Figure 4.22 Brookridge Concept Sketch



Figure 4.23 Brookridge Redevelopment Concept



Figure 4.24 Brookridge Mixed-Use Concept

Brookridge

Stakeholder Interview #3

Engaging with the community is always in a project’s best interest to get as many viewpoints and opinions as possible in order to help people open up to the project. Most of the public interaction for Brookridge happened in open house formats, so people could come and go as they pleased. The public process began with preliminary conceptual design and then preliminary development plans. Other public meetings were scheduled as necessary throughout the project, such as offsite improvements.

Saving part of the golf course was certainly a priority for members, many of which live nearby. Residents who live nearby are generally pleased with the improvements made so far and they like the greenspace the golf course provides. Improvements to the course have helped some residents feel a little better about the redevelopment.

Competing viewpoints and opinions were a part of the project, and subsequently quite a few public meetings. Change is hard, especially for nearby residents who are used to seeing a golf course in close proximity to their homes. In the long term, the developer hopes to improve residents quality of life through improved infrastructure, increased property values, and amenities. The major changes made to the project through public feedback were reductions in building heights and square footage.

Once the project broke ground, there were a lot more positive opinions about it (see Figure 4.25). The project is gaining popularity in the community, and there have been people who have changed their opinions since the project’s inception. Some meetings were just to directly inform members of the public about changes to the project.

The biggest challenges in the community engagement process are the differing opinions, and often negative opinions people have towards redevelopment. There are people that no matter what kind of solutions are offered to them, are never going to be in favor of the project. Making everyone happy about these projects is simply not a realistic expectation, some opinions are beyond the scope of what can be addressed. A good development will be an asset for the community as well as increase property values and continue to be an important part of the Overland Park community.



some opinions
are beyond
project scope



a successful
development will
be an asset



more positivity
once the project
broke ground

Figure 4.25 Themes from Stakeholder Interview #3

Stakeholder Interviews Summary

Standard tools for engagement are public outreach via flyers, signs, social media, and open houses. MySidewalk was mentioned as a tool for community members to use in order to share their ideas about programming elements. Having temporary installations around the project area for people to come and try out a possible programming element is also a helpful engagement strategy. Clubhouses on golf courses are also great outlets to host community engagement activities, meetings, and workshops.

Contrary to the situation at Deer Creek, the public feedback on Meadowbrook and Brookridge was largely positive. Meadowbrook especially seemed to be well received, mainly due to the developer's donation of 80 acres of green space. Brookridge faced some initial pushback from residents, but it seems they're more supportive now that the project is under construction. Common design inputs from the public include trails, open space, tree preservation, pickleball courts, and reductions in building heights.

Surprisingly, not many conflicts or issues arose throughout the process of either of these projects. However, common mindsets that can lead to issues in golf course redevelopment projects are "not in my backyard" and changing the negative connotation people typically associate with redevelopment.

Golf course redevelopment projects have numerous opportunities, such as improved economic viability, property values, quality of life, improved infrastructure, public amenities, and safety. Overall, the findings from the stakeholder interview process have been enlightening, and I've learned about processes, tools, and approaches other projects have utilized that could be applied to Deer Creek.

Stakeholder Interview Themes

The stakeholder interviews revealed numerous themes about golf course redevelopment projects and commonly used community engagement approaches. The findings from the stakeholder interviews were organized into five categories: (1) community engagement process, (2) tools for engagement, (3) public feedback, (4) conflicts & issues, and (5) opportunities (see Figure 4.26).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS	be sensitive to surrounding neighbors communicating information to the public about why design decisions were made is vital stakeholder advisory group was assembled get as many relevant stakeholders included as possible, local and regional levels developed a public participation action plan and contact database get developer interacting with the public early in the process be proactive about getting community members to “anchor” from a positive place utilized two open houses, press releases, met with HOA as a format for engagement addressing problems is a process of repeatedly listening and finding plausible solutions
TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT	public outreach via flyers and signs around the course utilized MySidewalk and tactical placemaking interventions clubhouse was a hub for community engagement activities social media was a great tool for engagement (Twitter, Facebook groups, Instagram) fun activities temporarily installed throughout the park prior to development open houses were hosted by the development team for community engagement
PUBLIC FEEDBACK	public wanted trails, open space, and tree preservation revision to road alignment was spurred by community members strong push for pickleball and open lawn areas believes the project largely represents the desires of the community reduction in square footage and building heights was due to the public residents enjoy the greenspace the golf course provides more positive opinions about the project once it broke ground
CONFLICTS & ISSUES	no conflicts of interest between stakeholder groups “not in my backyard” is a widespread ideology people use to challenge development don’t ask the public to weigh in on something out of their control some opinions were beyond the scope of what could be addressed biggest challenge is the negative opinions people have towards redevelopment large buildings were opposed by residents
OPPORTUNITIES	commercial areas should have greenspace, it makes them more viable city is collecting revenues from hotel and surrounding property taxes had community members walk the course to test programming ideas more people = more safety developer hopes to improve residents quality of life improved infrastructure, increased property values, and amenities a successful development will be an asset for the community

Figure 4.26 Stakeholder Interview Themes

Case Study Summary

After the completion of stakeholder interviews, common themes in the community engagement process itself are to include as many relevant stakeholders as possible in the project and establish constant dialogue and communication channels with the public.

Throughout the process, takeaways such as diverse housing types, variety of programming, incorporation of public amenities, financial viability, and value of community input stood out (see Figure 4.27).

TAKEAWAYS



1 have **diverse housing** types



2 incorporate a **variety** of programming, both **development** and **greenspace**



3 **incorporate** public amenities



4 must be financially **viable**



5 developers oftentimes value **community input**

Figure 4.27 Key Takeaways from Case Study Analysis

Synthesis of Research Phases for Deer Creek

Findings from the document reviews and case study analysis relate to Deer Creek through learned mitigation strategies and proposed design responses (see Figure 4.28).

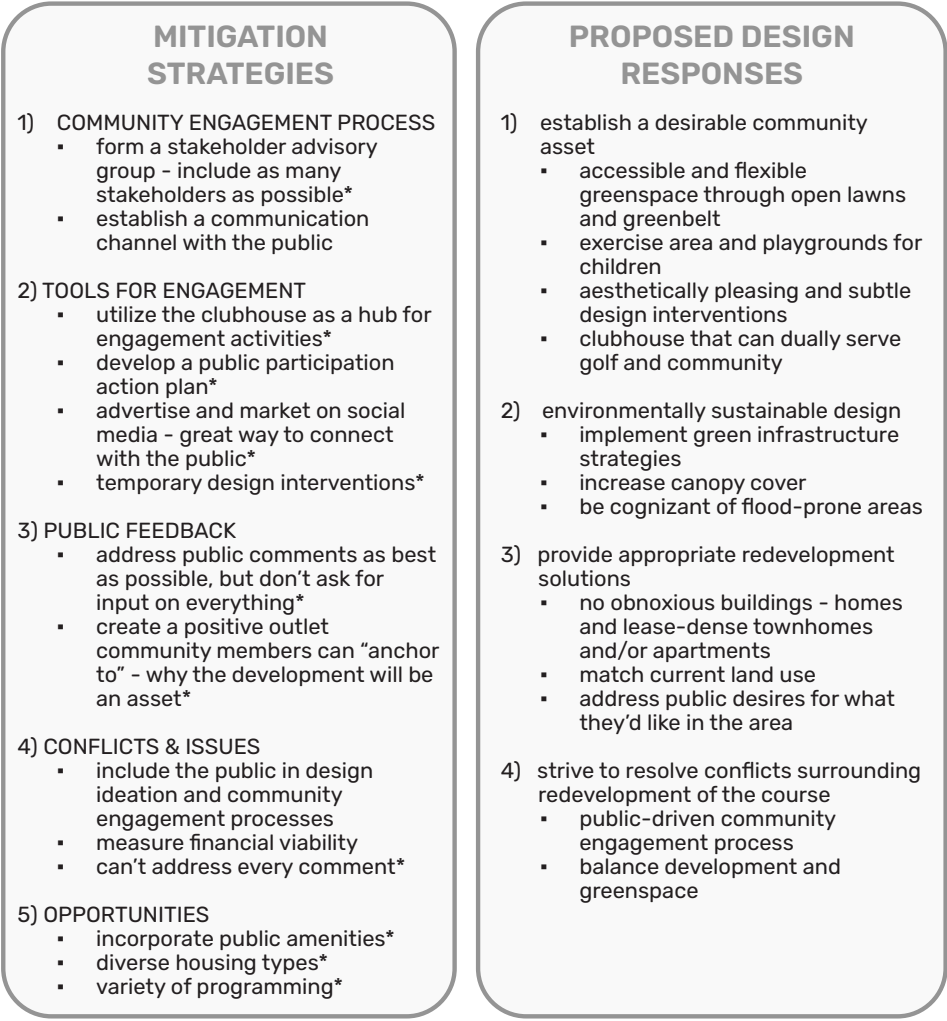
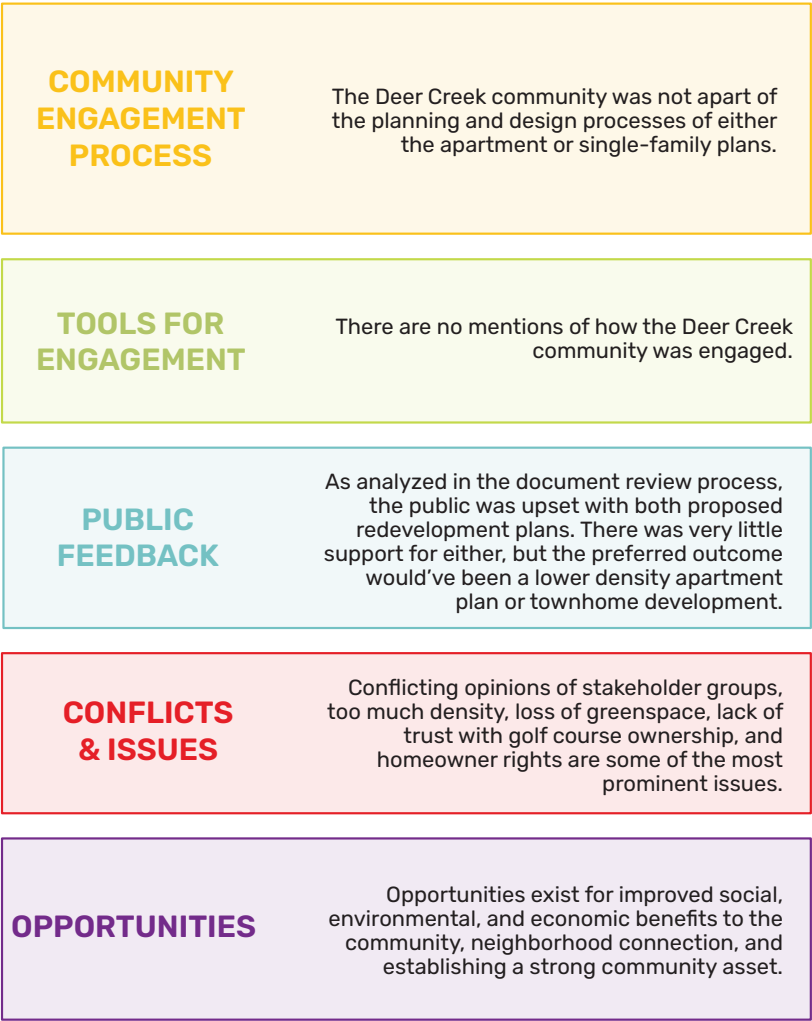
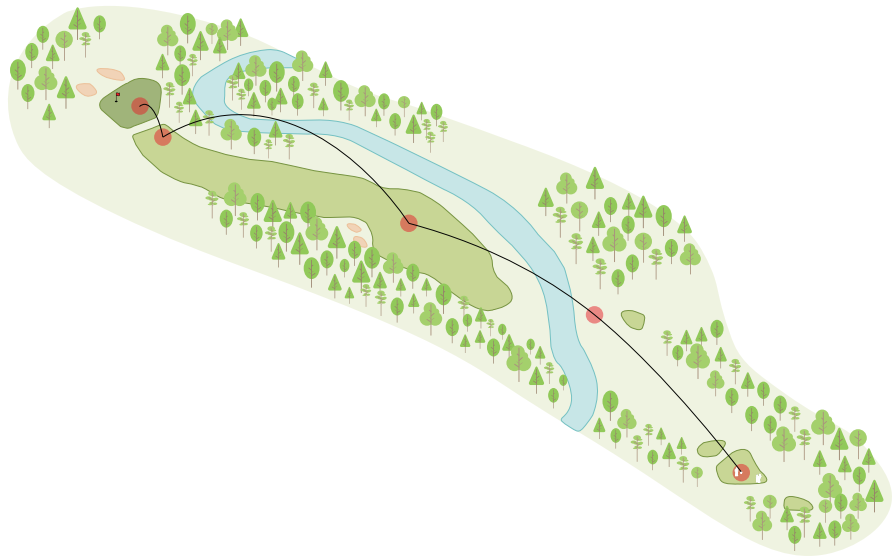


Figure 4.28 Synthesis of Research Phases into Design Goals

DESIGN PROPOSAL



contents

overview
site analysis
design focus & strategies
scenario-based design
scenario 1
scenario 2
scenario 3
takeaways
assessment of design

5

Overview

Information gathered throughout the data collection process informed multiple scenario-based hypothetical designs for Deer Creek. The designs synthesize ideas from the document review and case study analysis processes and apply them to Deer Creek. The hypothetical design includes three conceptual-level design scenarios based on varying levels of development density that could be used as an example for future golf course redevelopment projects.

Preface to the Design

The following design scenarios are not a push for new development at the selected site in Overland Park, Kansas. Rather, they explore an academic idea through research-informed design. The author has used one site as an example to explore three differing hypothetical redevelopment ideas. These designs explore possible solutions to the ongoing problems facing Deer Creek Golf Club, and the author's intent has been to explore plausible redevelopment ideas that address the issues facing the course.

Site Analysis

Land Use & Zoning

The current boundary of Deer Creek Golf Club is designated as “parks, recreation, and open space.” The housing developments interwoven with and abutting the course are low-density, single-family residential homes. The Deer Creek apartment complex is located at the corner of Metcalf Avenue and 127th Street and is designated as medium-density residential. There is also a Mariott hotel across from the existing Deer Creek clubhouse, two schools located along 133rd Street, and a small office complex adjacent to the Deer Creek apartments.

The Deer Creek Golf Club site boundary is currently zoned R-1, which allows for recreational greenspace and single-family homes (see Figure 5.1). The neighborhood to the east of the course is also zoned R-1, meaning that the current plans to redevelop part of the course into single-family homes would not require rezoning.

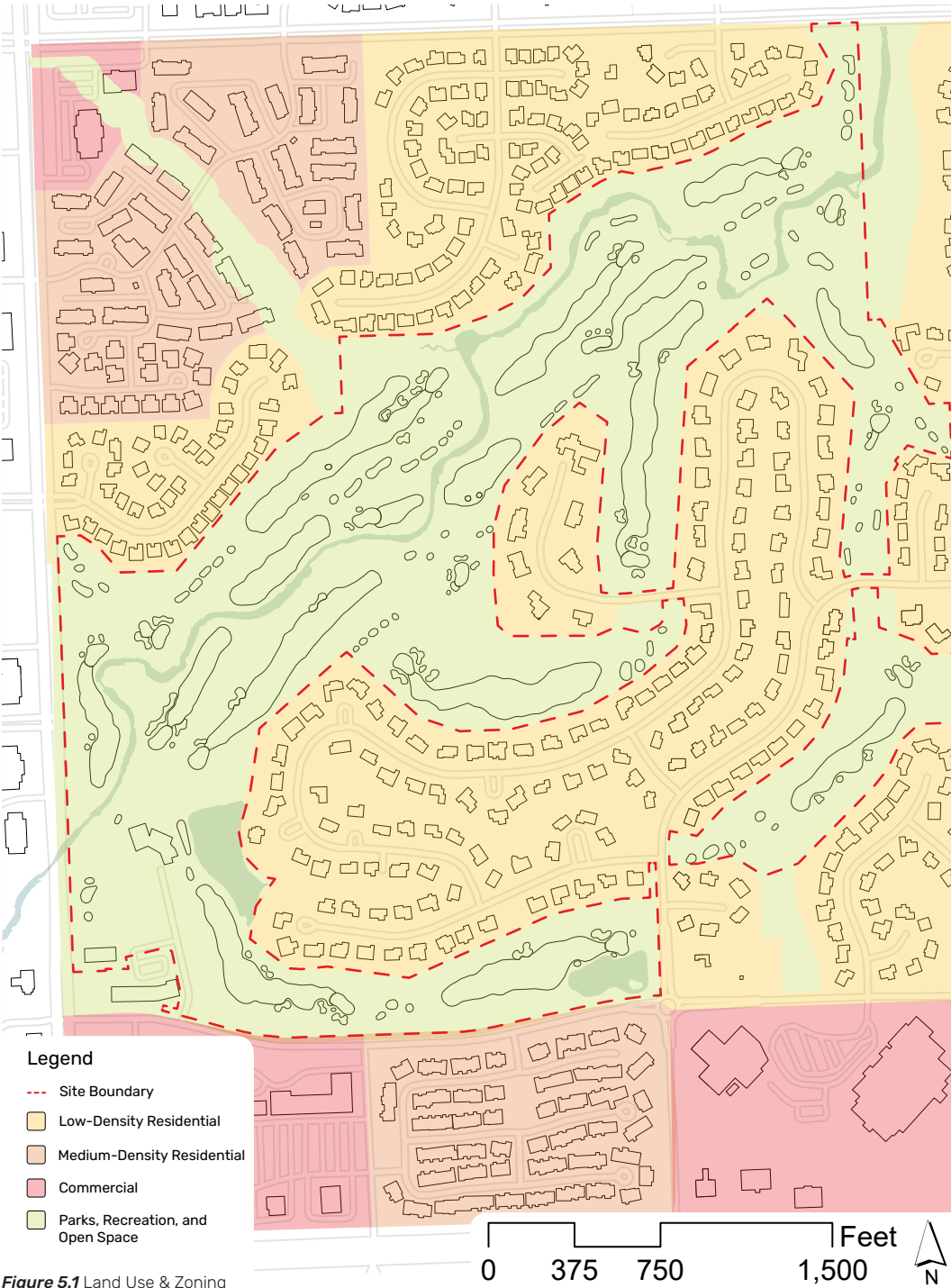


Figure 5.1 Land Use & Zoning

Topography

The site boundary has a drastic change of elevation. The high point is located around holes 7 and 8, and the low point is on hole 10 (see Figure 5.2). Deer Creek Golf Club has a variety of landforms, from lookout points to creeks, ponds, and hilltops. Particular aspects of the topography map are both the high and low points within the study area, as these indicate where water is flowing down hills and into the lowest points of the course. Tomahawk Creek captures runoff from both the northern and southern portions of the course and flows downstream.

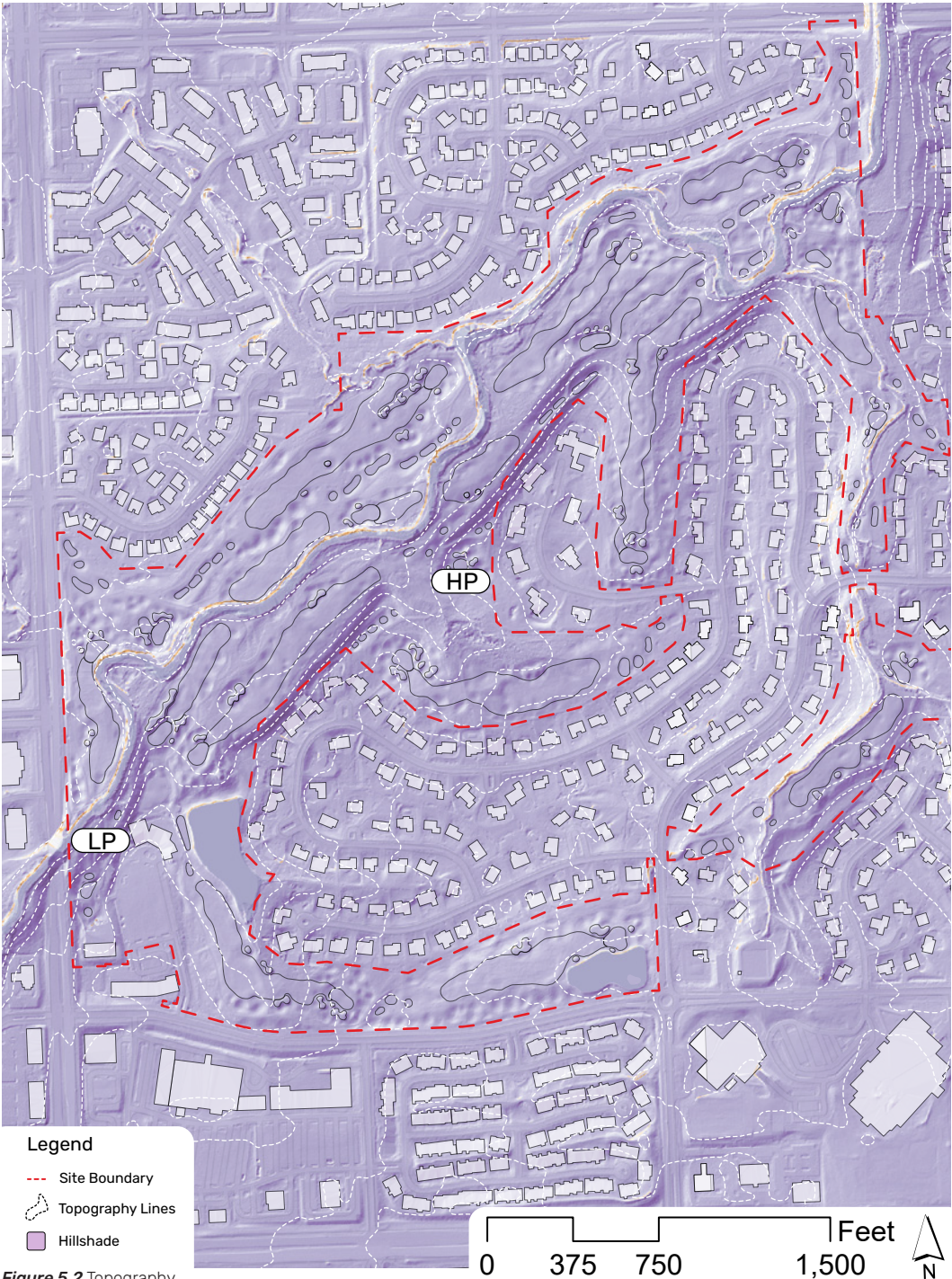


Figure 5.2 Topography

Hydrology

Tomahawk Creek flows directly through a large majority of the golf course, primarily on the back nine. As can be seen from the 100-year FEMA floodplain boundary, water often gets high enough to get into residents' backyards along holes 12, 13, and 14 (see Figure 5.3). There are also existing ponds on holes 1 and 2, but they currently don't substantially retain enough water to combat the water issues. Flooding and erosion are massive problems on the golf course, as stated in the document review process by the residents. It's the main reason the owners of the golf course were trying to generate economic profit to help stabilize streambanks and counteract the effects of flooding and erosion.

It's advisable not to develop land that is either within a floodplain because it is likely to be prone to flooding. If development occurs within a floodplain, runoff from the buildings and other structures will increase flood damage to the surrounding area and have a larger effect on the developed area further downstream.

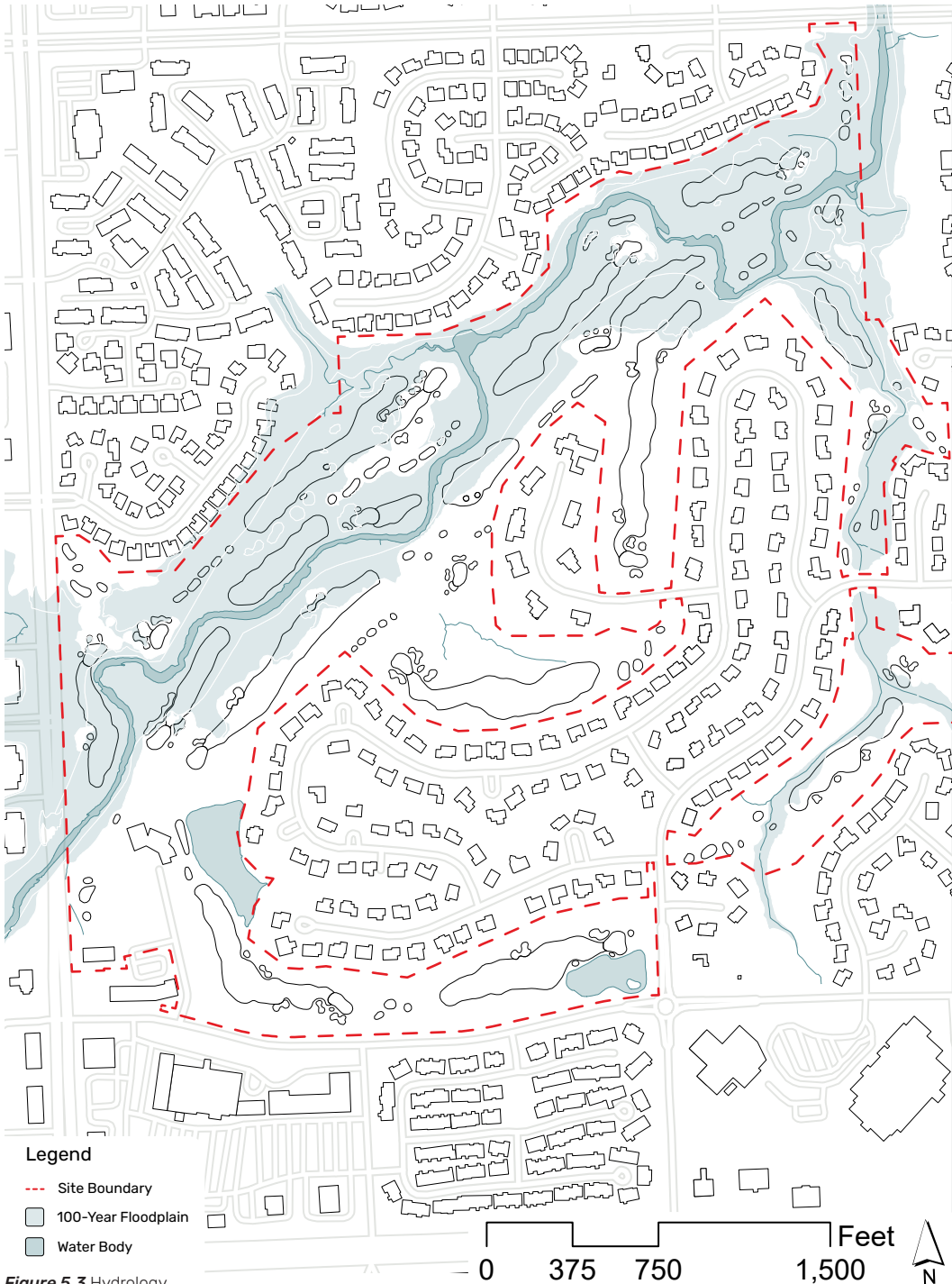


Figure 5.3 Hydrology

Canopy Cover

Most of the holes on the front and back nine have significant open space. Holes 1, 2, 3, 12, and 14 are particularly lacking canopy cover (see Figure 5.4). Due to their proximity to residential neighborhoods, public streets, and commercial land uses, there is an opportunity for increased vegetative cover, specifically in these areas.

There is a plethora of vegetation along Tomahawk Creek, most of which are mature trees. Opportunities exist for increased flood-resistant planting to help mitigate the effects of flooding and erosion along the creek corridor. Incorporation of water-loving trees and grasses would help make the course more flood-resistant. Vegetation, specifically on golf courses, is highly desirable and allows for a more intimate relationship between users and the landscape.



Figure 5.4 Canopy Cover

Transportation & Accessibility

Major roadways along 135th Street, Metcalf Avenue, and 127th Street encompass the study area. Minor roadways on 133rd Street and Lamar Avenue still see significant traffic and usage from the surrounding community, especially during drop-off and pick-up times for elementary and middle schools. Many residents of the area mentioned the congestion that occurs at the roundabout at the intersection of Lamar Avenue and 133rd Street (see Figure 5.5).

The RideKC public transportation metro bus makes stops along Metcalf Ave and continues north toward downtown. The existing parking on site is near the clubhouse and hotel. Opportunities exist for better accessibility to the site from Metcalf Avenue and along Lamar Avenue.

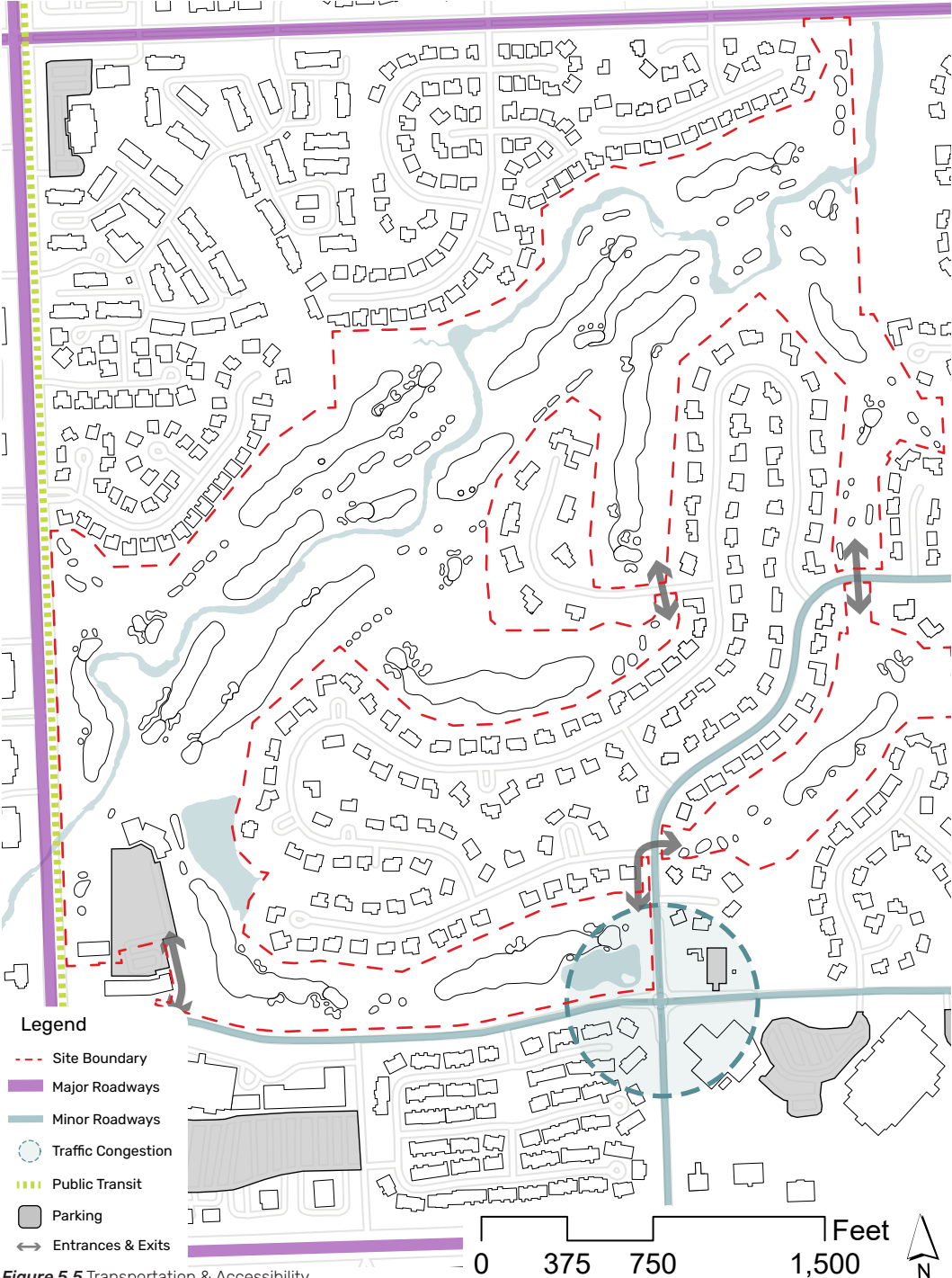


Figure 5.5 Transportation & Accessibility

Recreation Opportunities

The existing Tomahawk Creek trail network runs along the north boundary of Deer Creek Golf Club and along Metcalf Ave (see Figure 5.6). Future redevelopment plans should consider access and connection to this existing trail infrastructure.

Numerous recreation opportunities exist on and around the study boundary. For example, walking and biking are possible along the Tomahawk Creek trail and throughout the surrounding neighborhoods. Considering the large population of both younger and older residents, providing them with opportunities for recreation and exercise in future redevelopment plans is essential to their health and well-being.

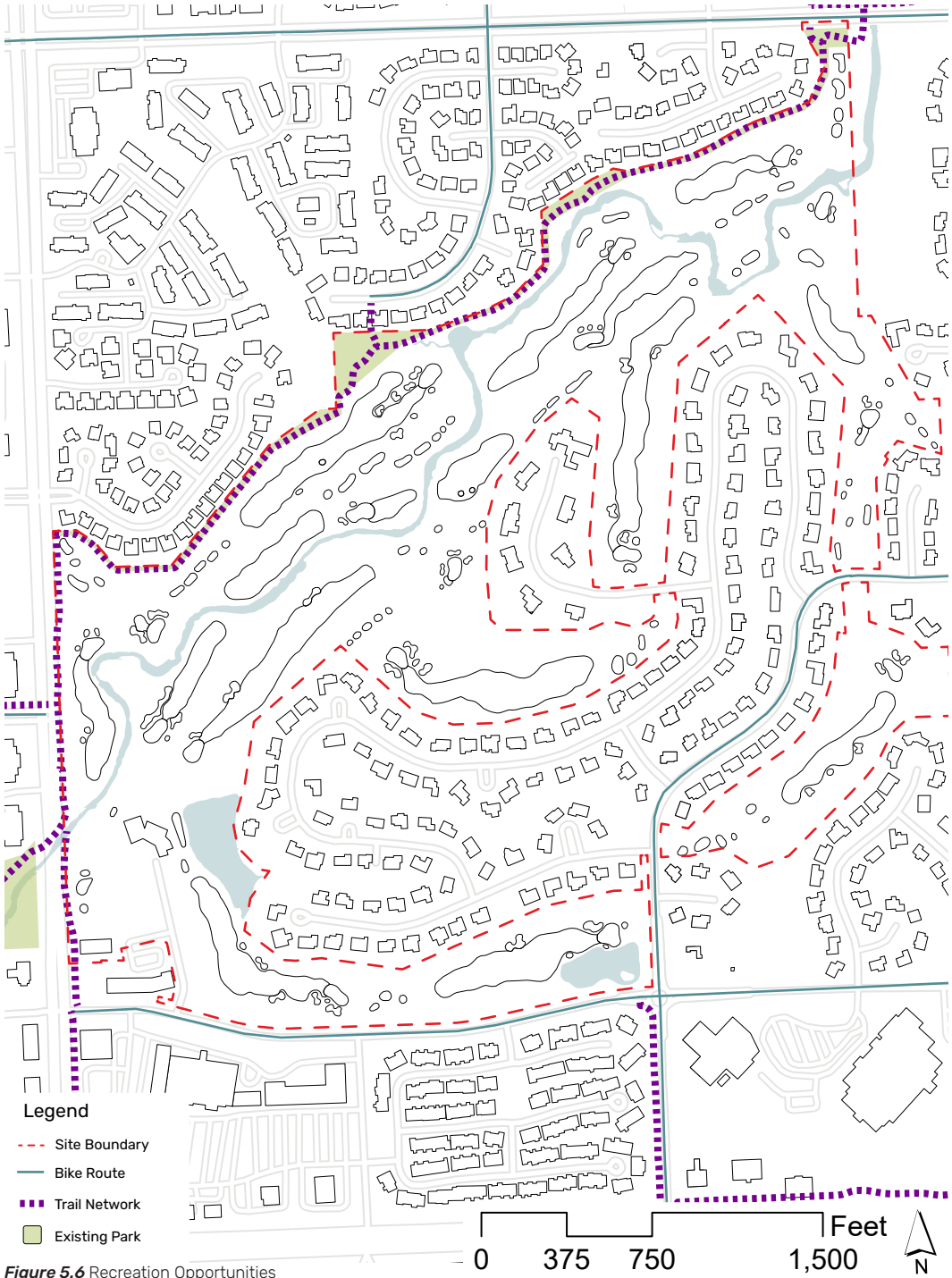


Figure 5.6 Recreation Opportunities

Suitability for Development

The largest threat to development in the site boundary is the floodplain. As residents and the municipality repeatedly mentioned throughout the proposed redevelopment plan’s public hearing processes, flooding is a massive problem in the area. Thus, the plausible areas for development are located at the existing clubhouse and parking lot and the first few holes that weave throughout the existing single-family homes (see Figure 5.7).

When selecting the locations for development in the hypothetical design, priorities were to keep developed areas outside of the 100-year floodplain and away from areas with high slope percentages. Developing within these areas could be extremely damaging to the land, further making any development susceptible to flooding and erosion.

Four primary areas were revealed as possible locations for development and design opportunities. The first of which is at the southwest corner of the site where the proposed multifamily development would’ve been. The second is along holes 1 and 2, running adjacent to 133rd Street. Two other areas are suitable for development towards the middle of the course and would extend the homes currently in the area.

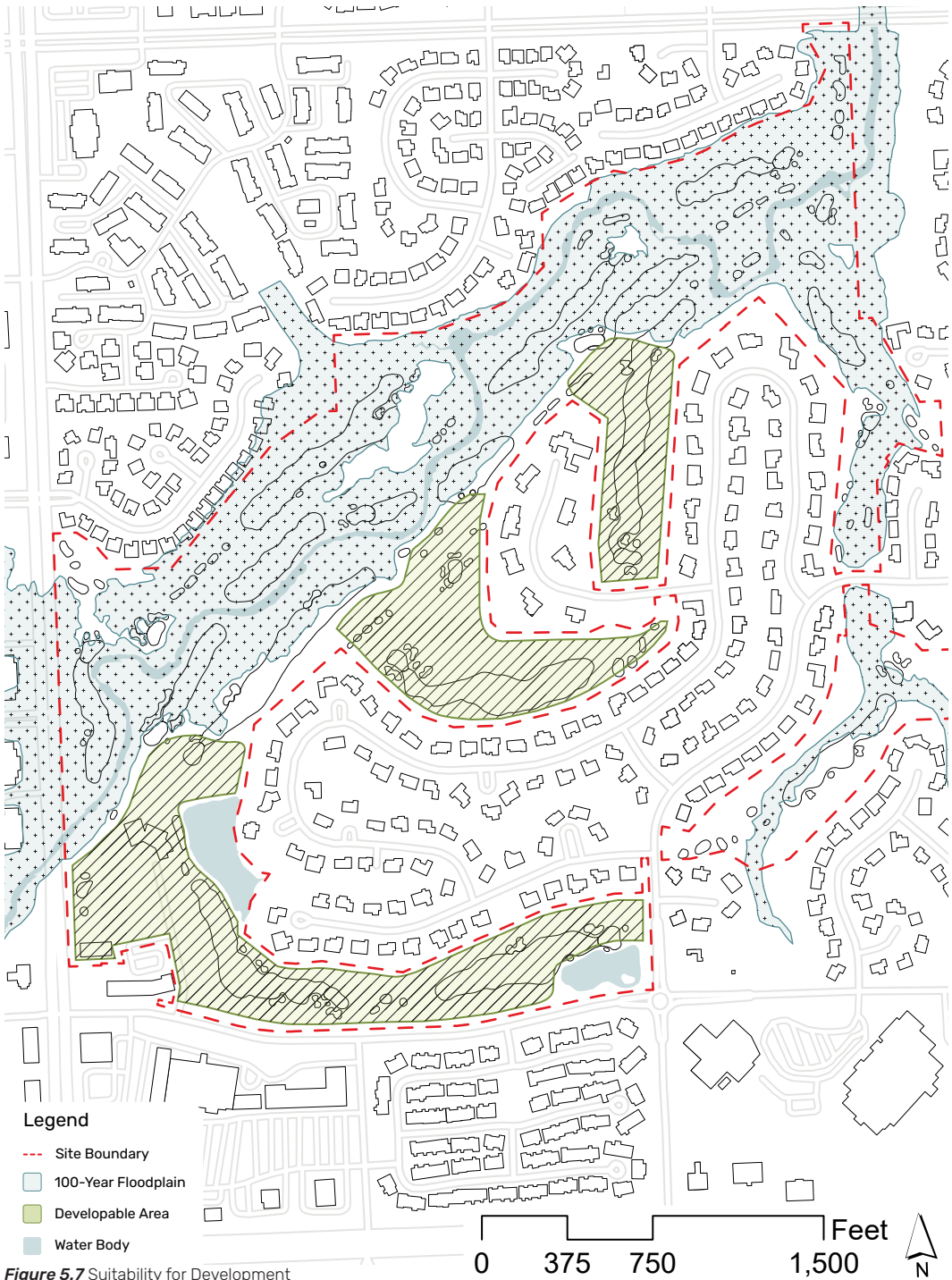


Figure 5.7 Suitability for Development

Existing Conditions

Currently vacant, Deer Creek Golf Club is severely underutilized and could be re-envisioned as having economic, social, and environmental opportunities. Parts of the golf course are visible by public right of way, and the city is partially maintaining the golf course adjacent to residential homes.

However, areas around the middle of the course and along Tomahawk Creek are overgrown and prone to flooding (see Figure 5.8). There are fallen limbs, degrading conditions along creek banks, and vast overgrowth of plants throughout the course. These conditions will only worsen as long as the course sits vacant.



Deer Creek Clubhouse



Tomahawk Creek



Creek Bank Erosion



Overgrown Tee Box



Overgrown Fairway



Overgrown Conditions



Burnt Putting Green



Fallen Tree on Cart Path

Figure 5.8 Existing Site Conditions

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis of the site was conducted to illuminate the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the study area (see Figure 5.9).

Connections to the existing Tomahawk Creek Trail network, urban greenspace, prestigious course reputation, and invested residents are strengths of the area. A few of the weaknesses are poor management and ownership, as well as poor maintenance of the course since the transfer of ownership.

The golf course has a multitude of opportunities, such as erosion mitigation, redevelopment plans, and turning the course back into a community asset. Some of the threats facing the golf course are its current vacant condition, the issues of flooding and erosion along Tomahawk Creek, and conflicting opinions of stakeholder groups.

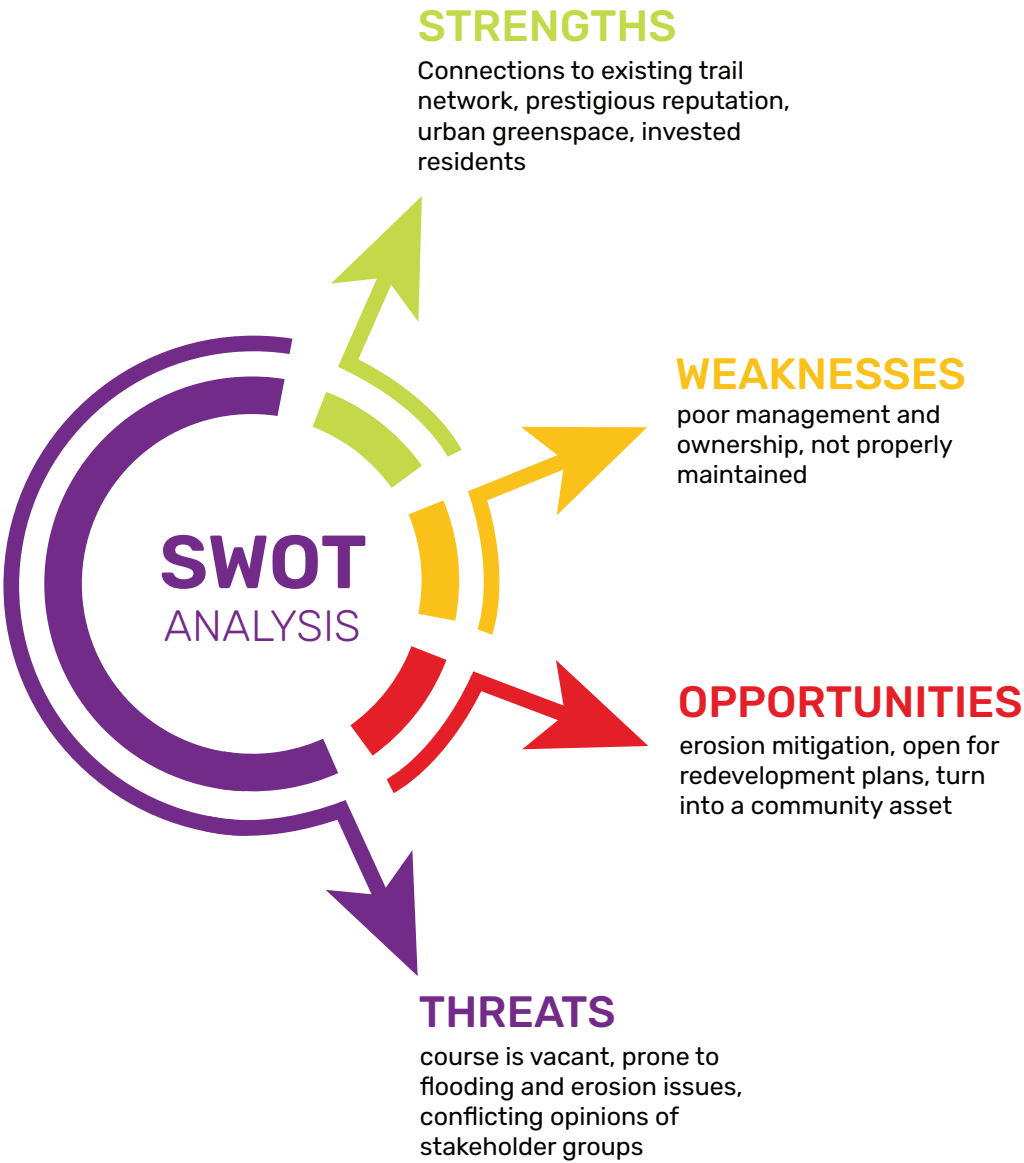


Figure 5.9 SWOT Analysis

Scenario-Based Design

Overview

The hypothetical design solution for Deer Creek is multi-faceted, providing three design scenarios that vary by development density. One of the pitfalls of the proposed multifamily development plan on this golf course was that it was the only option. Numerous members of the public and people on the city council and planning commission mentioned how they wished there was another option to consider. Given that they only had one option to choose from, the project was already constricted to a somewhat “do-or-die” outcome.

The following scenarios are organized by development density. Scenario 1 is low intensity, Scenario 2 is medium intensity, and Scenario 3 is high intensity (see Figure 5.10). The intent is to provide three conceptual design ideas with differing levels of development intensity, so hypothetically speaking, people participating in the project’s community engagement aspect could choose which scenario they’d prefer.

Scenario 1 - Low Intensity



Scenario 2 - Medium Intensity



Scenario 3 - High Intensity



Figure 5.10 Development Intensity Conceptual Scenarios

Design Focus & Strategies

The design focus and subsequent strategies relate back to the original project objectives to identify, explore, and propose by reflecting public feedback on the proposed design and information gathered from the research phases of the project.

DESIGN FOCUS

1

Establish a desirable community asset

2

Environmentally sustainable design

3

Provide appropriate redevelopment solutions

4

Strive to resolve conflicts surrounding redevelopment of the course

DESIGN STRATEGIES

1a.

a destination for residents (sense of place)

1b.

accessible and flexible greenspace

1c.

place for people of all ages to enjoy

2a.

capture and mitigate stormwater runoff

2b.

implement green infrastructure strategies

2c.

low-impact design (LID)

3a.

proper transition from current use

3b.

respond to existing site conditions

3c.

match current land use

4a.

understand engagement approaches

4b.

directly address public concerns

4c.

balance development and greenspace

Scenario 1

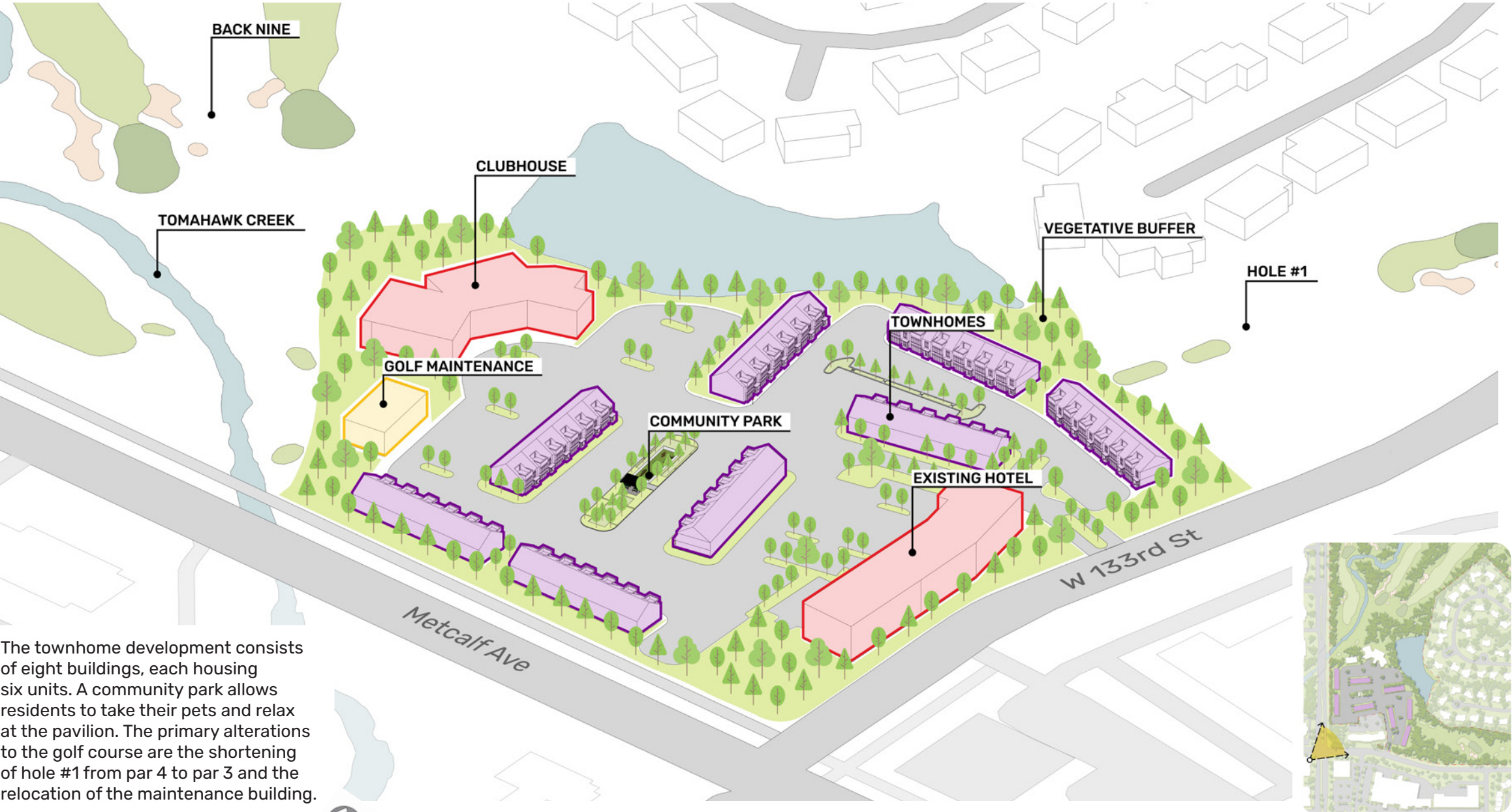
Scenario 1 proposes eight luxury townhome buildings that will match the price range of the area. This scenario is a significant reduction in both height and density from the proposed apartment plans. The clubhouse will still be its own building, along with the proposed maintenance garage, which remains separate from the residential community (see Figure 5.11). While all 18 holes of the golf course will remain operational, two alterations to the course are necessary – hole #1 will be shortened from a par-4 to a par-3, and hole #10 will be shortened but still remain a par-4.

- 1 Townhome Development
- 2 Community Park
- 3 Existing Clubhouse
- 4 New Maintenance Building
- 5 Existing Hotel
- 6 Hole #1
- 7 Back Nine of Golf Course



Figure 5.11 Scenario 1 Site Plan

Aerial Perspective



The townhome development consists of eight buildings, each housing six units. A community park allows residents to take their pets and relax at the pavilion. The primary alterations to the golf course are the shortening of hole #1 from par 4 to par 3 and the relocation of the maintenance building.



Figure 5.12 Proposed Low-Intensity Redevelopment Scenario

Townhomes



Bioswales and rain gardens help mitigate stormwater runoff and have a minimal impact on the erosion and flooding problems that exist along the Tomahawk Creek corridor.

Figure 5.13 Townhomes and Stormwater Mitigation Strategies

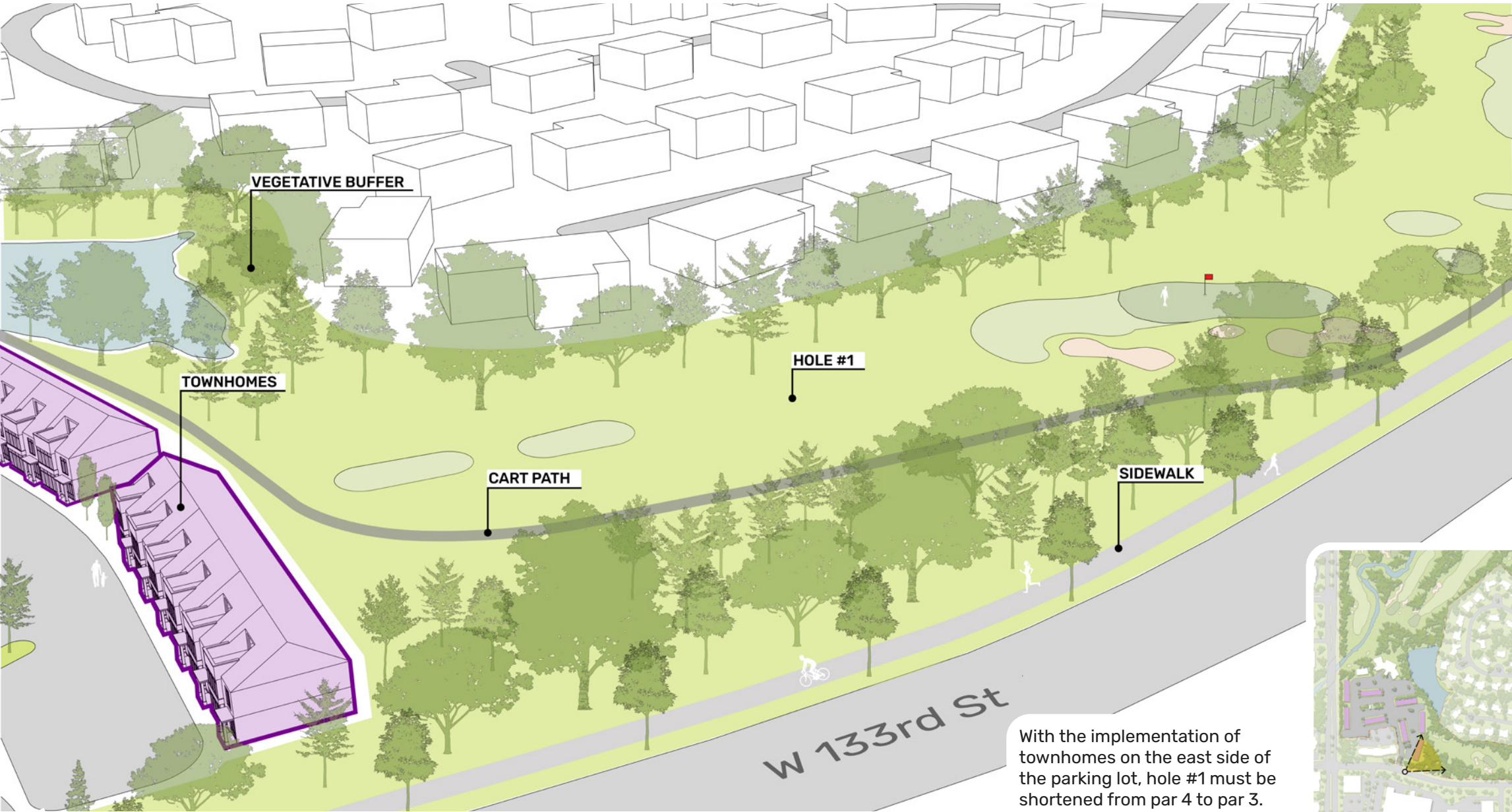
Community Park



The community park has a dog park and pavilion that serves as a gathering place for residents. Bioswales feed into the rain garden to capture, filter, and store stormwater runoff.

Figure 5.14 Community Park and Rain Gardens

Shortened Hole #1



With the implementation of townhomes on the east side of the parking lot, hole #1 must be shortened from par 4 to par 3.



Figure 5.15 Hole 1 Shortened to Par 3

Takeaways from Design Scenario

Low-Intensity Development

This scenario provides a viable option to “save the golf course,” which was an overwhelming desire of the Deer Creek community and public officials. It significantly reduces the height and density of the previously proposed apartments. This plan addresses most of the residents’ concerns, such as mass, density, and golf course operations. However, the economic viability of this plan may be compromised due to a lack of density compared to the apartment plan.

Scenario 2

Scenario 2 proposes redevelopment of the front nine of the golf course with 55 single-family homes. This plan focuses on utilizing the green space of the existing course and inserting lots where future development is suitable. A greenbelt connects the proposed development with portions of the existing course, providing residents with areas to recreate and exercise. Pavilions, along with a playground, pickleball courts, a fishing pond, and trails, provide residents with amenities to enjoy intertwined within the development (see Figure 5.16). The back nine of the golf course will still remain operational along with a portion of the existing clubhouse.

- 1 Single-Family Cluster 1
- 2 Single-Family Cluster 2
- 3 Clubhouse Extension and Plaza
- 4 Greenbelt
- 5 Park Pavilion
- 6 Playground
- 7 Back Nine of Golf Course



Figure 5.16 Scenario 2 Site Plan

Aerial Perspective

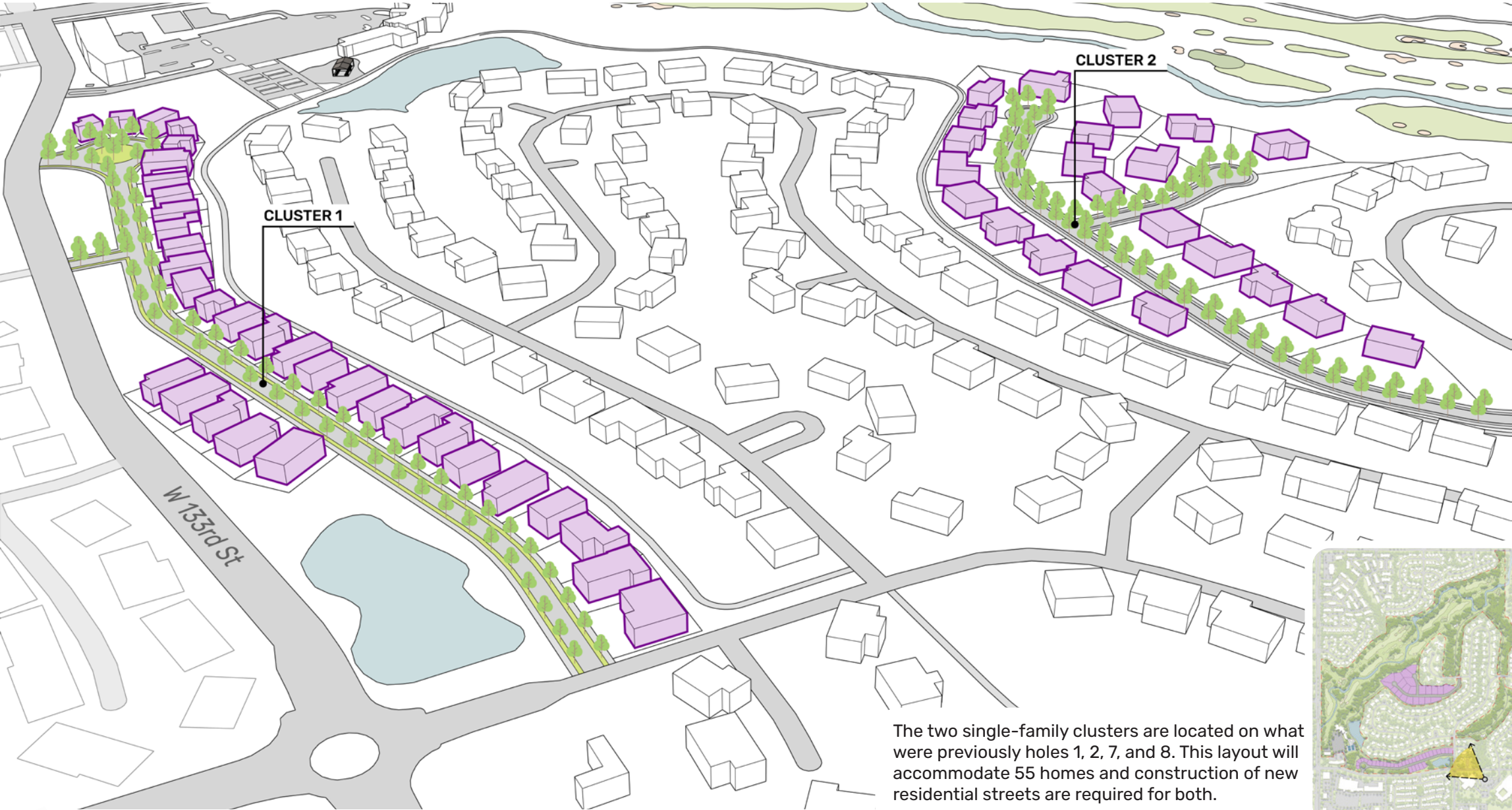


The front nine of the golf course will be redeveloped with two single-family development clusters and an extension of the existing clubhouse that serves the surrounding community. A greenbelt will wrap around the redeveloped portion of the course and include two pavilions, pickleball courts, and a paved trail.



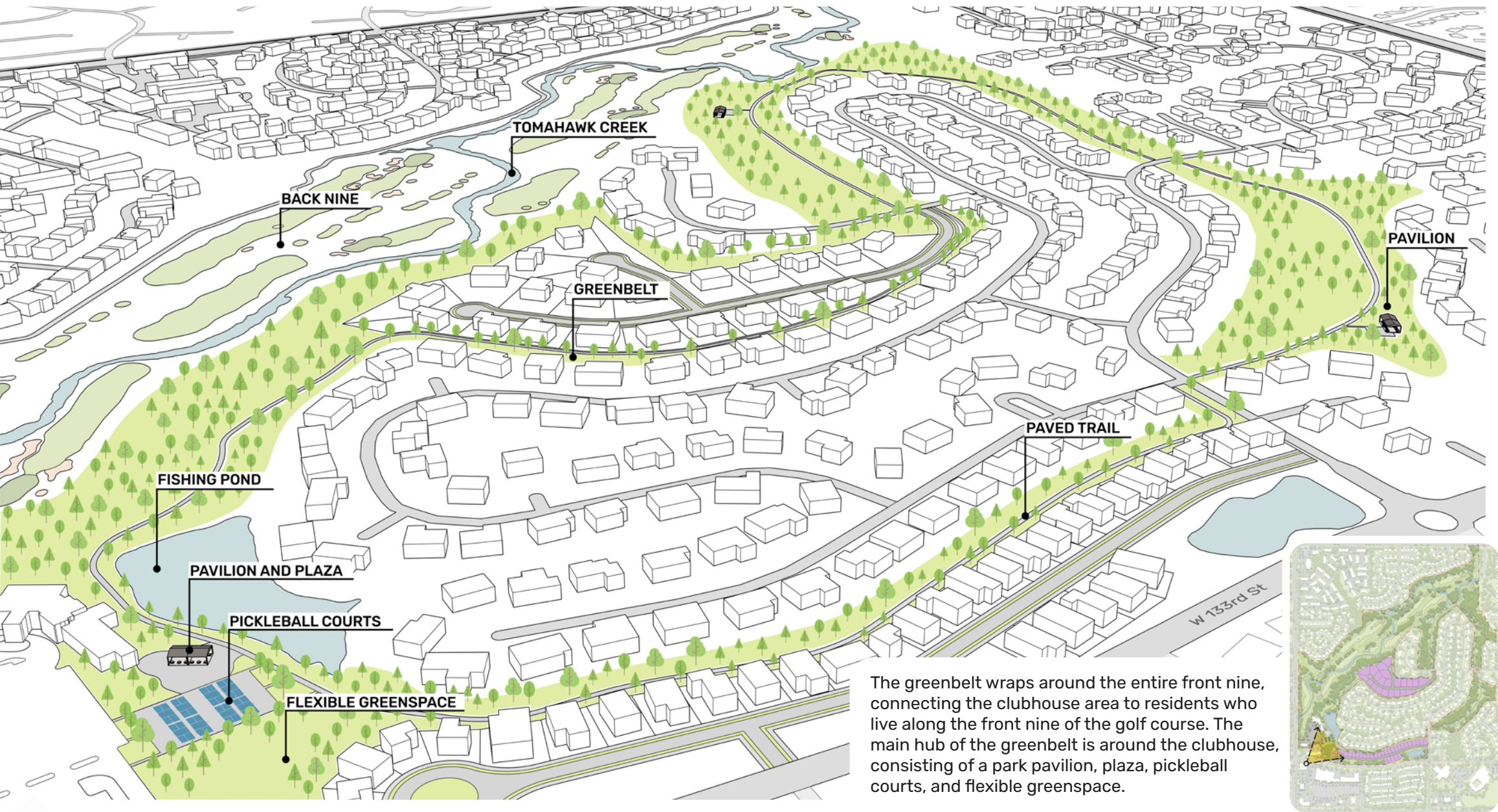
Figure 5.17 Proposed Medium-Intensity Redevelopment Scenario

Single-Family Homes



 **Figure 5.18** Two Single-Family Development Clusters

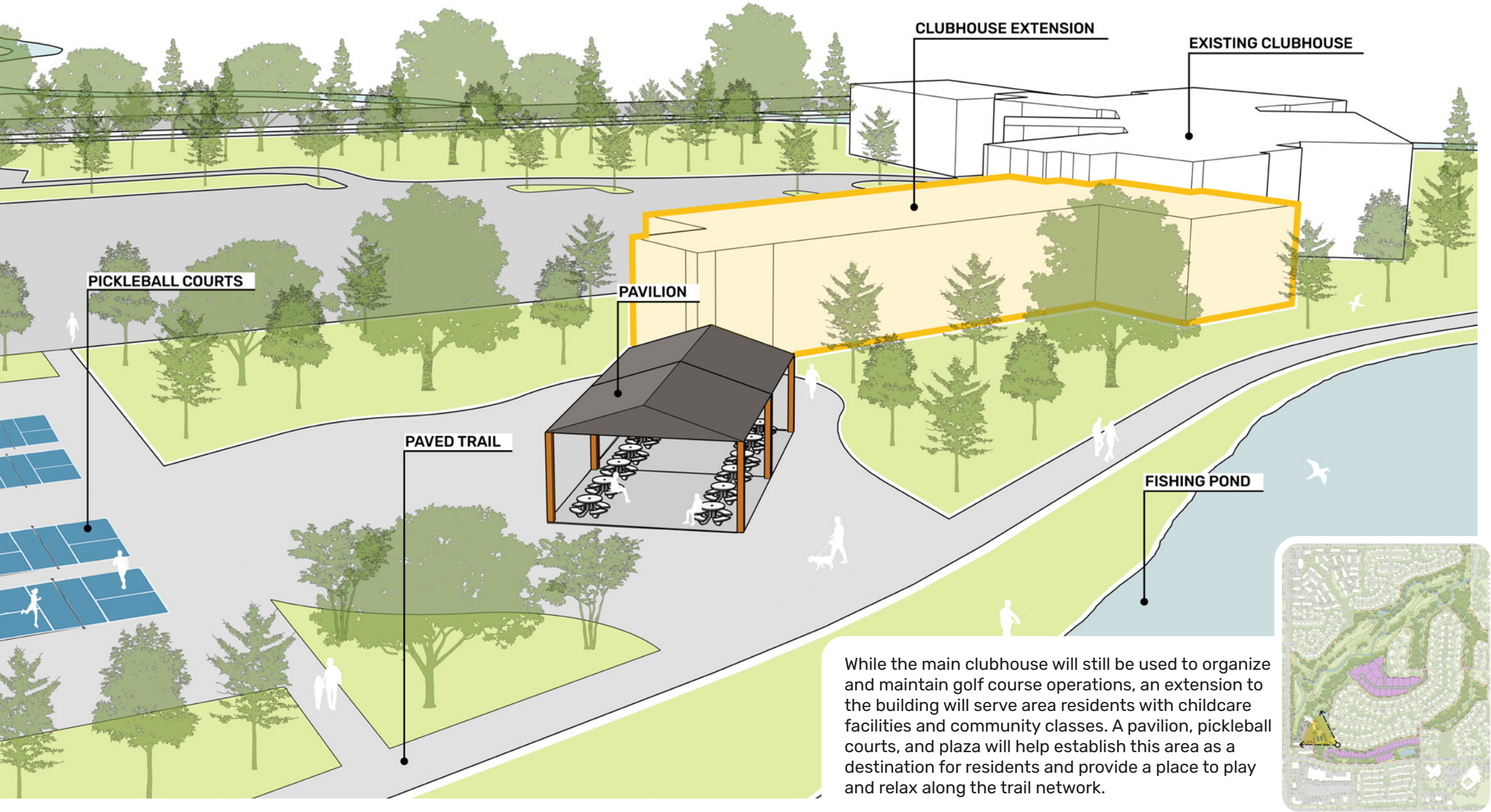
Greenbelt Programming



The greenbelt wraps around the entire front nine, connecting the clubhouse area to residents who live along the front nine of the golf course. The main hub of the greenbelt is around the clubhouse, consisting of a park pavilion, plaza, pickleball courts, and flexible greenspace.

 **Figure 5.19** Greenbelt Connectivity and Programming

Clubhouse Addition



While the main clubhouse will still be used to organize and maintain golf course operations, an extension to the building will help serve area residents with childcare facilities and community classes. A pavilion, pickleball courts, and plaza will help establish this area as a destination for residents and provide a place to play and relax along the trail network.

Figure 5.20 Clubhouse Addition and Programming

Takeaways from Design Scenario

Medium-Intensity Development

With this proposal, the back nine of the golf course would remain operational, and the front nine would transform into a majority greenspace, other than the single-family homes. The greenbelt helps to buffer new development from existing, and an extension to the clubhouse will help serve the public by providing an area for gathering and recreation.

Scenario 3

This scenario proposes a complete redevelopment of the golf course with a combination of single-family homes and townhomes. The existing clubhouse will be remodeled as a community center and serve as an amenity for the public. A green belt connects the surrounding neighborhood from one end of the course to the other (see Figure 5.21). What was once the back nine would become a publicly accessible park.

- 1 Townhome Development
- 2 Single-Family Phase I Development
- 3 Single-Family Phase II Development
- 4 Single-Family Phase III Development
- 5 Greenbelt
- 6 Flexible Lawn
- 7 Outdoor Eventspace and Workout Area
- 8 Playground
- 9 Park Pavilion

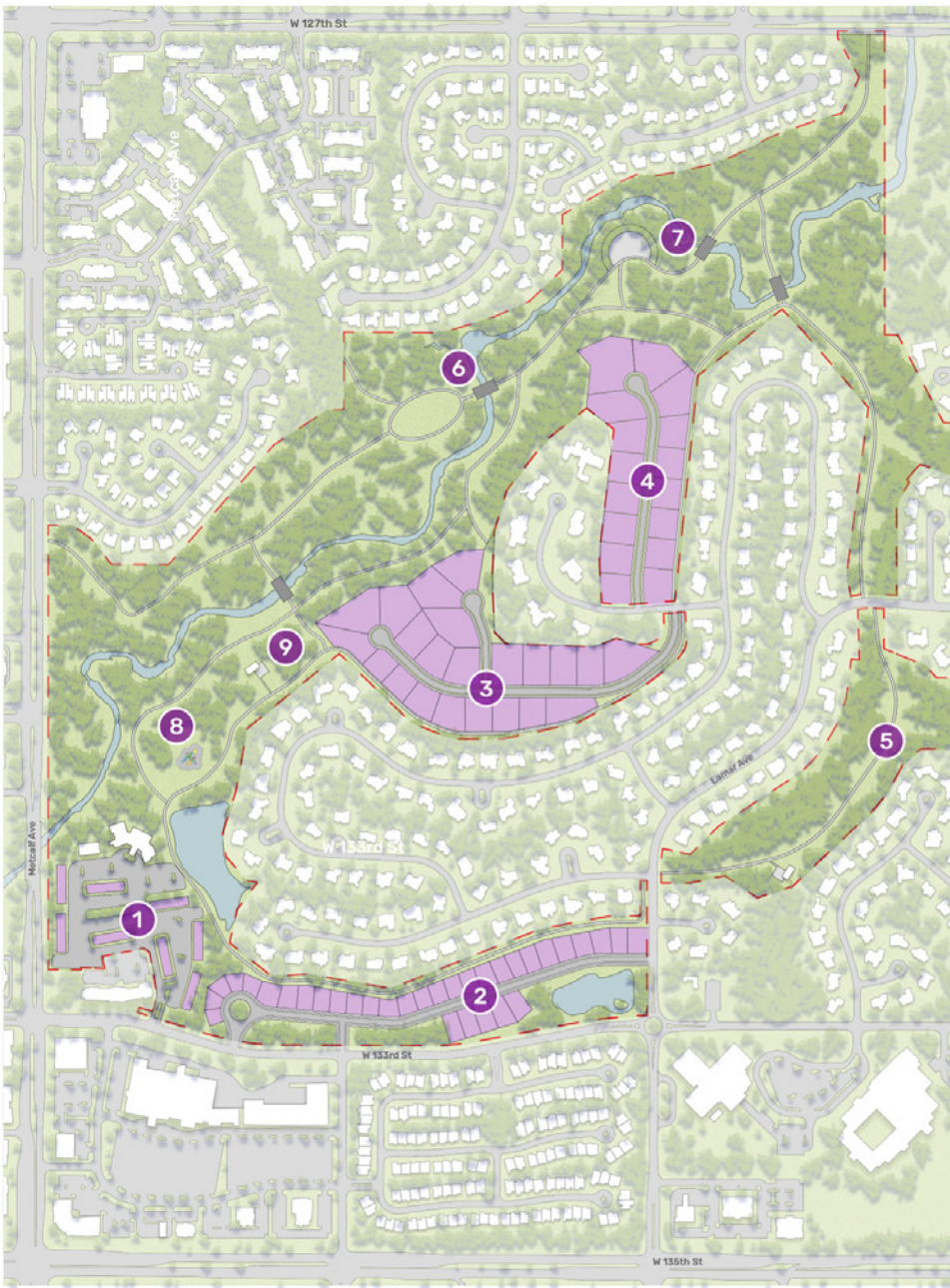


Figure 5.21 Scenario 3 Site Plan

Aerial Perspective

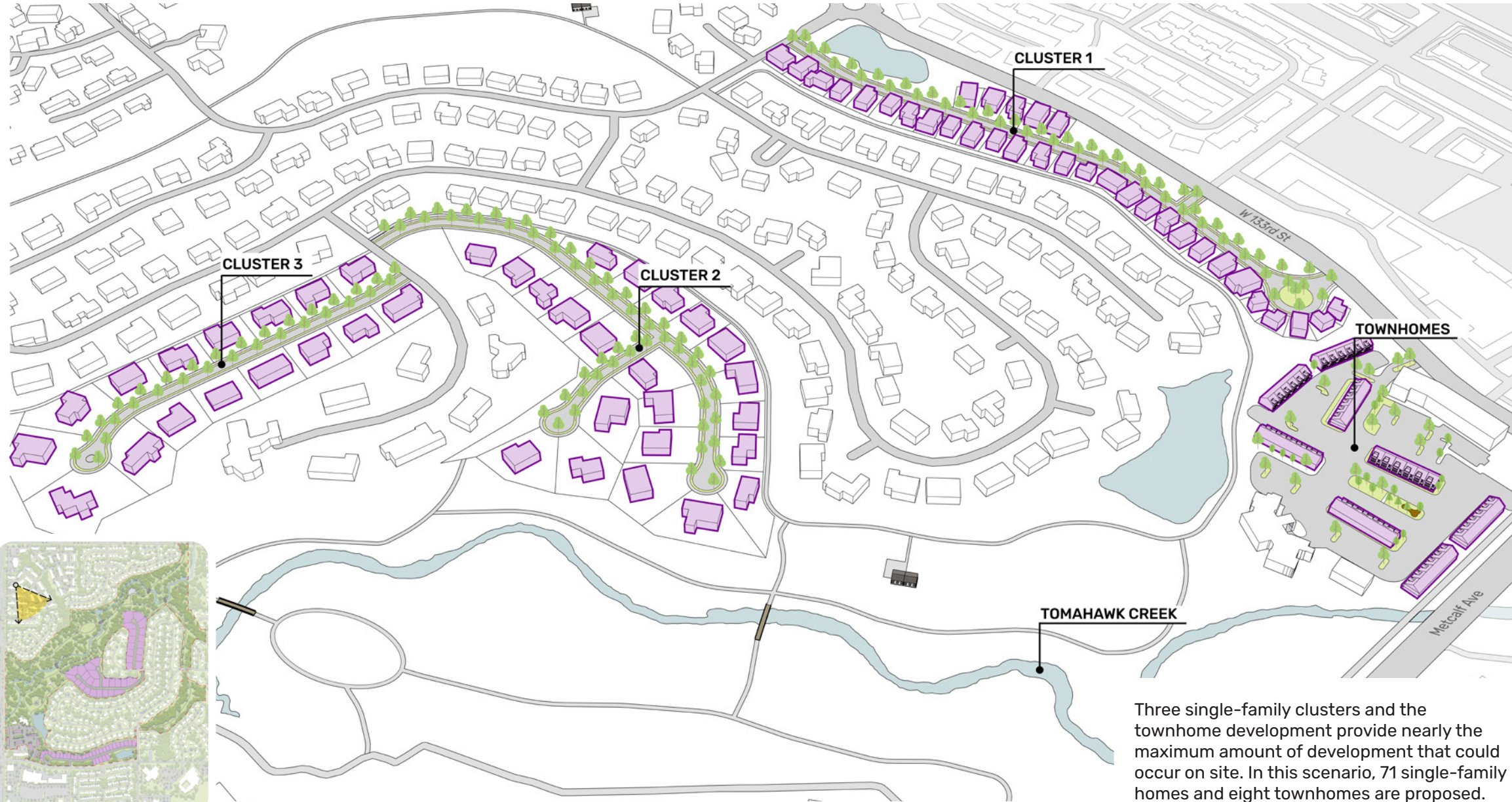


Three single-family home clusters and the townhomes make up the development portions of this scenario. The back nine of the golf course is reimagined into a community park with an outdoor exercise area, flexible greenspace, playground, pavilions, and trails that wrap around the site in a greenbelt.



Figure 5.22 Proposed High-Intensity Redevelopment Scenario

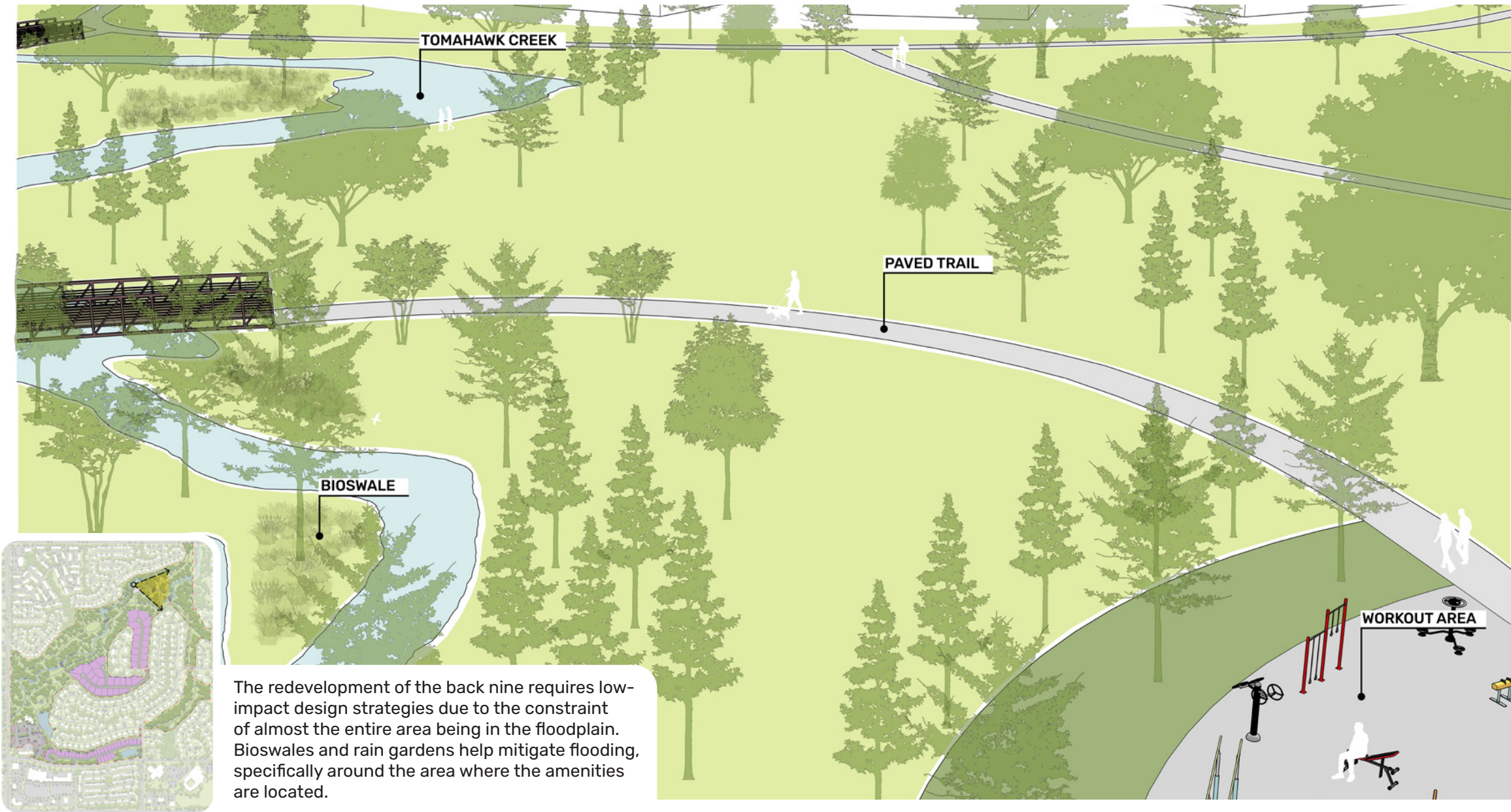
Townhomes & Single-Family Homes



Three single-family clusters and the townhome development provide nearly the maximum amount of development that could occur on site. In this scenario, 71 single-family homes and eight townhomes are proposed.

 **Figure 5.23** Three Single-Family Development Clusters and Townhomes

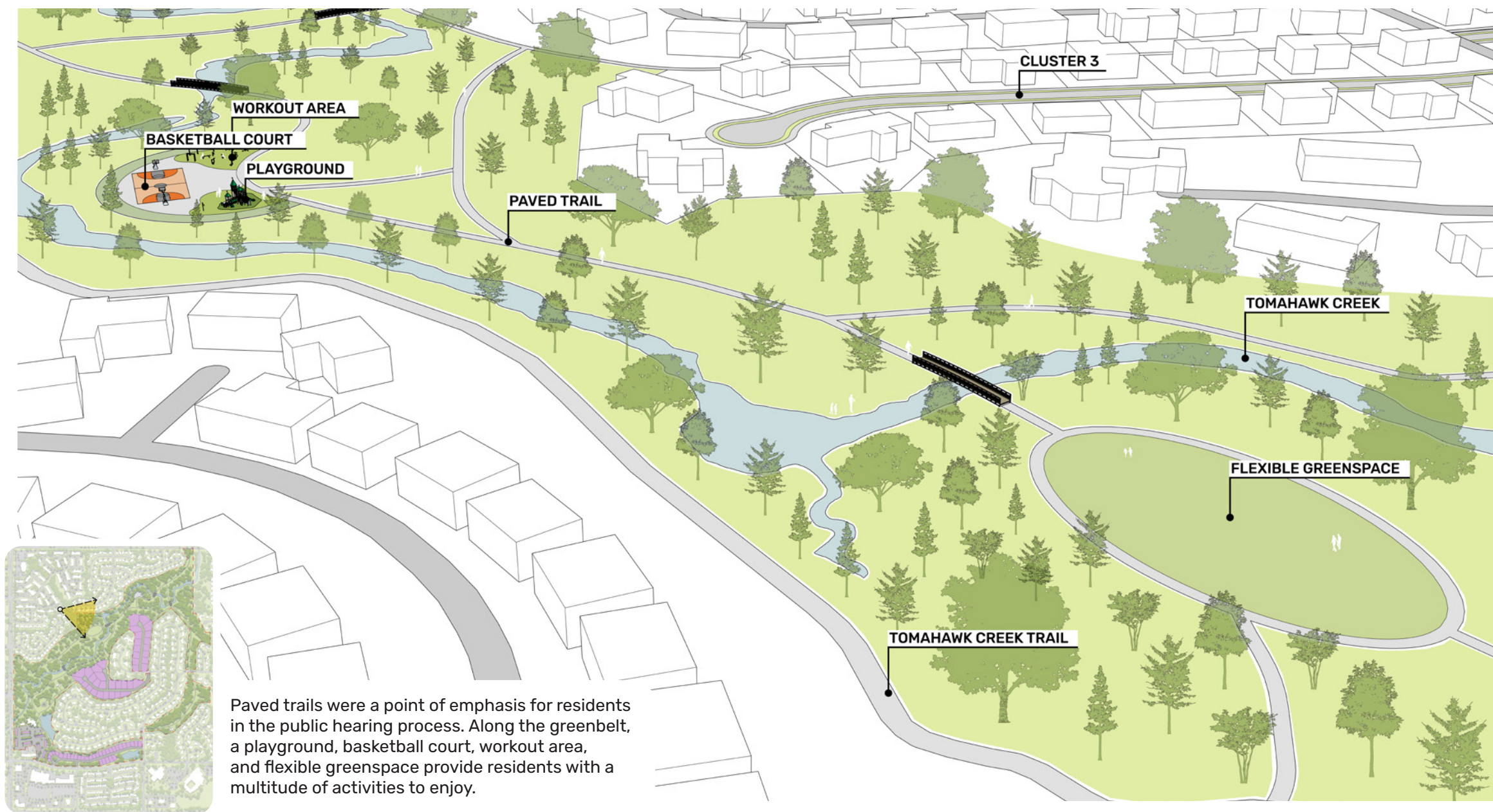
Low-Impact Design Strategies



The redevelopment of the back nine requires low-impact design strategies due to the constraint of almost the entire area being in the floodplain. Bioswales and rain gardens help mitigate flooding, specifically around the area where the amenities are located.

Figure 5.24 Low-Impact Design Strategies to Mitigate Flooding Issues

Public Amenities



Paved trails were a point of emphasis for residents in the public hearing process. Along the greenbelt, a playground, basketball court, workout area, and flexible greenspace provide residents with a multitude of activities to enjoy.

Figure 5.25 Public Amenities along Tomahawk Creek

Takeaways from Design Scenario

High-Intensity Development

This scenario provides an appropriate balance between development and green space throughout the study area. The greenbelt buffers new development from existing homes and helps to mitigate views of other homes from where the golf course will be redeveloped. A renovated clubhouse will serve as the neighborhood's community center, and numerous other amenities, such as playgrounds, pavilions, exercise areas, greenspaces, and paved trails, are located throughout the development.

Analysis of Design Scenarios

Scenario 1 directly addresses the size and density conflict brought up in the multifamily proposal through much lower-density townhomes (see Figure 5.26). This scenario also provides a viable option to save the golf course. It’s also a proper land use transition from single-family homes.

Scenario 2 directly addresses all four goals by implementing a greenbelt that balances greenspace, development, and two single-family home tracts.

Scenario 3 adequately addresses all four design goals and the subsequent objectives through three single-family tracts, townhomes, and an accessible and flexible park where the back nine of the course once was.

Design Focus & Strategies		Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
1	1a			
	1b			
	1c			
2	2a			
	2b			
	2c			
3	3a			
	3b			
	3c			
4	4a			
	4b			
	4c			

Figure 5.26 Design Scenario Analysis

Assessment of Hypothetical Design

Reflecting on the document review and case study analysis process’ the hypothetical design for Deer Creek Golf Club has many of the features highlighted in the precedent studies and directly addresses the public’s concerns and desires for the course.

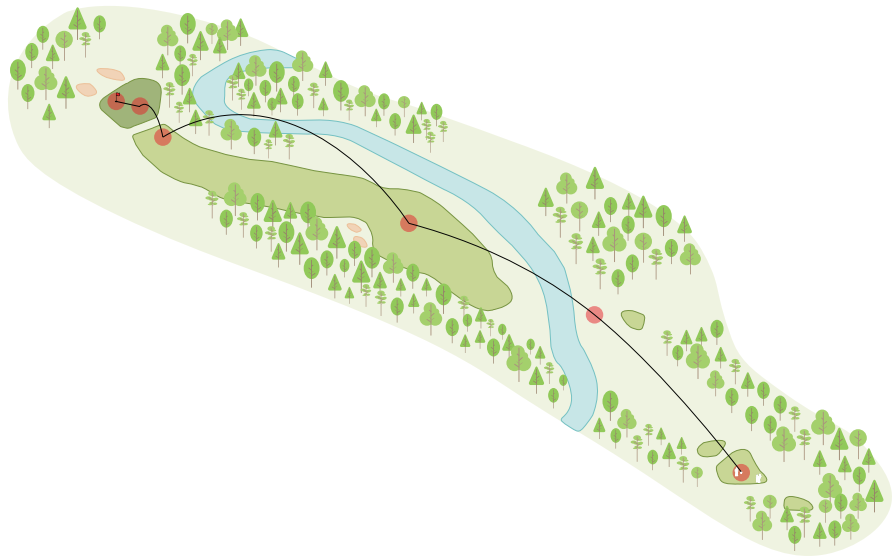
- 1
- Establish a desirable community asset
- 1a. a destination for residents (sense of place)
1b. accessible and flexible greenspace
1c. place for people of all ages to enjoy

- 2
- Environmentally sustainable design
- 2a. capture and mitigate stormwater runoff
2b. implement green infrastructure strategies
2c. low-impact design (LID)

- 3
- Provide appropriate redevelopment solutions
- 3a. proper transition from current use
3b. respond to existing site conditions
3c. match current land use

- 4
- Strive to resolve conflicts surrounding redevelopment of the course
- 4a. understand engagement approaches
4b. directly address public concerns
4c. balance development and greenspace

CONCLUSION



contents

summary of key findings
relate back to objectives
discussion
limitations
future research and contribution
references
image references
irb approval
interview questions



Summary of Key Findings

The research question posed, *“How can vacant golf courses be re-envisioned to balance the interests of both developers and residents of surrounding communities?”*

Community engagement is a method often used to address land use disputes and conflicts of interest between stakeholder groups. Throughout this study, it can be concluded that community engagement is not only an effective path to resolving the problems facing Deer Creek but the same methods could also be applied to other vacant golf courses. A sustainable and effective end product can be achieved by involving both developers and residents in decision-making processes about golf course redevelopment projects.

As observed through the case study analysis and stakeholder interview process, golf course redevelopment projects that utilize effective community engagement strategies can be a major asset to the surrounding community. This study not only addresses but thoroughly answers the research question, and the proposed methodology could be utilized for a multitude of vacant golf courses in need of redevelopment.

Relate Back to Research Objectives

The first design goal of establishing a desirable community asset is met through accessible and flexible greenspace that increases the quality of life and could be programmed to host community gatherings and events. Incorporating environmentally sustainable design strategies is achieved through green infrastructure and low-impact design such as bioswales and rain gardens that would help mitigate the effects of development in the area. Each of the three scenarios provides an appropriate alternative design solution in comparison to the proposed apartment plan. Both the single-family homes and townhomes are gradual transitions and a continuance of the current land use. These designs directly address public concerns such as inappropriate rezoning, loss of greenspace, abutting homes, and increased flooding and erosion issues.

Discussion

The maintenance and operation of each design scenario are different. Since scenario 1 will only have minor impacts on the operation of the golf course, maintenance will still be managed through GreatLIFE. Scenario 2 closes nine holes, but the back nine of the golf course will remain open for patrons. Thus, GreatLIFE will still be responsible for maintaining the back nine, and the Deer Creek HOA will manage and monitor the maintenance of the greenbelt on the front nine. The entire golf course closes with scenario 3. Therefore, if the property is still owned by GreatLIFE, they are responsible for maintenance and upkeep. If Johnson County Parks and Recreation purchases the property as a park, they will maintain the area.

Limitations

Access to documents in the document review process was limited. Many of the actual development plans and construction documents were challenging to access.

A small sample size was a limiting factor in the case study analysis. Due to the stakeholder interviews being a part of the case study analysis, finding people willing to have an interview with presented a challenge. Greater insight into the community engagement process could’ve been made with another case study and stakeholder interviews.

Although public feedback was summarized and analyzed in the document review process, not all community members spoke at the public meeting process. Therefore, only the concerns and feedback of those who spoke at said meetings were addressed.

A site visit was conducted in September 2023; the course was extremely overgrown, which made it difficult to access certain parts of the course, mainly along Tomahawk Creek. Degraded bridges and cart paths made it difficult to walk and bike along the course.

Although community engagement strategies were researched and analyzed for this project, direct communication with the Deer Creek community was not advisable due to the fact that the redevelopment of the course is still pertinent.

Future Research and Contribution

This project has the potential to contribute to the knowledge and practice of how community engagement can be used as a tool for community conflict resolution and its relevance to addressing conflict surrounding vacant golf courses across the United States. This research fills a gap in the field of landscape architecture due to the absence of community engagement in the golf course redevelopment process.

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Chapter 3

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Figure 3.2. Jundt, H. Site Selection in Overland Park, KS. [Map]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

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Figure 3.8. Jundt, H. Census Block 2 adapted from ArcGIS Pro. [Map]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 3.9. Jundt, H. Social and Economic Demographics of Study Area [Pie Charts]. Information retrieved from PolicyMap: <https://www.policymap.com/newmaps#/> . Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 3.10. Jundt, H. Study Methods. [Diagram]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

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Figure 4.9. Jundt, H. Deer Creek Redevelopment Timeline [Diagram]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 4.10. Jundt, H. Case Study Analysis Process [Diagram]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

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Figure 4.15. Jundt, H. Themes from Stakeholder Interview #2. [Icons]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

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Figure 4.17. Landworks Studio. (n,d). Open House Format. [Photograph]. Accessed February 2024.

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Figure 4.22. WDG Architecture. (n,d). Brookridge Concept Sketch. [Image]. Accessed November 2023. <https://www.wdgarch.com/projects/brookridge>

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Figure 4.26. Jundt, H. Stakeholder Interview Themes. [Diagram]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 4.27. Jundt, H. Key Takeaways from Case Study Analysis. [Icons]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 4.28. Jundt, H. Synthesis of Research Phases into Design Goals. [Diagram]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Chapter 5

Figure 5.1. Jundt, H. Land Use & Zoning adapted from ArcGIS Pro. [Map]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 5.2. Jundt, H. Topography adapted from ArcGIS Pro. [Map]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 5.3. Jundt, H. Hydrology adapted from ArcGIS Pro. [Map]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 5.4. Jundt, H. Canopy Cover adapted from ArcGIS Pro. [Map]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 5.5. Jundt, H. Transportation and Accessibility adapted from ArcGIS Pro. [Map]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 5.6. Jundt, H. Recreation Opportunities adapted from ArcGIS Pro. [Map]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 5.7. Jundt, H. Suitability for Development adapted from ArcGIS Pro. [Map]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 5.8. Jundt, H. Existing Site Conditions. [Series of Photographs]. 2023.
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[Photograph of Tomahawk Creek]. 2023.
[Photograph of Overgrown Fairway]. 2023.
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[Photograph of Overgrown Tee Box]. 2023.
[Photograph of Burnt Putting Green]. 2023.
[Photograph of Fallen Tree on Cart Path]. 2023.

Figure 5.9. Jundt, H. SWOT Analysis. [Diagram]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 5.10. Jundt, H. Development Intensity Conceptual Scenarios. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 5.11. Jundt, H. Scenario 1 Site Plan adapted from ArcGIS Pro. [Graphic]. Adobe Photoshop, 2024.

Figure 5.12. Jundt, H. Proposed Low-Intensity Redevelopment Scenario adapted from SketchUp. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 5.13. Jundt, H. Townhomes and Stormwater Mitigation Strategies. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 5.14. Jundt, H. Community Park and Rain Gardens. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 5.15. Jundt, H. Hole 1 Shortened to Par 3. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

Figure 5.16. Jundt, H. Scenario 2 Site Plan adapted from ArcGIS Pro. [Graphic]. Adobe Photoshop, 2024.

Image References

- Figure 5.17.** Jundt, H. Proposed Medium-Intensity Redevelopment Scenario adapted from SketchUp. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.
- Figure 5.18.** Jundt, H. Two Single-Family Development Clusters. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.
- Figure 5.19.** Jundt, H. Greenbelt Connectivity and Programming. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.
- Figure 5.20.** Jundt, H. Clubhouse Addition and Programming. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.
- Figure 5.21.** Jundt, H. Scenario 3 Site Plan adapted from ArcGIS Pro. [Graphic]. Adobe Photoshop, 2024.
- Figure 5.22.** Jundt, H. Proposed High-Intensity Redevelopment Scenario adapted from SketchUp. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.
- Figure 5.23.** Jundt, H. Three Single-Family Development Clusters and Townhomes. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.
- Figure 5.24.** Jundt, H. Low-Impact Design Strategies to Mitigate Flooding Issues. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.
- Figure 5.25.** Jundt, H. Public Amenities along Tomahawk Creek. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.
- Figure 5.26.** Jundt, H. Design Scenario Analysis. [Graphic]. Adobe Illustrator, 2024.

IRB Approval



TO: Hyung Kim
Landscape Archit & Comm Plan
Manhattan, KS 66506

FROM: Lisa Rubin, Chair
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 01/12/2024

RE: Proposal #IRB-11932, entitled “Finding the Fair(Way): Utilizing Participatory Design to Repurpose a Vacant Golf Course in Overland Park, KS.”

MODIFICATION OF IRB PROTOCOL #IRB-11932, ENTITLED, “Finding the Fair(Way): Utilizing Participatory Design to Repurpose a Vacant Golf Course in Overland Park, KS”

EXPIRATION DATE: Exempt

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB) has reviewed and approved the request identified above as a modification of a previously approved protocol. **Please note that the original expiration remains the same.**

All approved IRB protocols are subject to continuing review at least annually, which may include the examination of records connected with the project. Announced in-progress reviews may also be performed during the course of this approval period by a member of the University Research Compliance Office staff. Unanticipated adverse events involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the IRB, and / or the URCO

It is important that your human subjects activity is consistent with submissions to funding / contract entities. It is your responsibility to initiate notification procedures to any funding / contract entity of any changes in your activity that affects the use of human subjects.

Electronically signed by Lisa Rubin on 01/12/2024 4:53 PMET

Interview Questions

Appendix A

Interview Questions

These interview questions serve as a part of the case study analysis process. Design professionals and local government officials will be interviewed in order for the researcher to get a better understanding of the golf course redevelopment projects they were involved with. The following are a set of interview questions that will be posed to design professionals and local officials in an effort to gather insight into their community engagement processes when working on a golf course redevelopment project.

- 1. Why did the team value input from the community when designing this project?
- 2. Did the design team encounter any conflicts of interest between the municipality, design professionals, and residents?
- 3. How was the community engagement process organized?
 - a. Was it broken into small chunks / workshops?
 - b. Or a large event?
- 4. How did the publics input get incorporated into design decisions?
 - a. Were there specific design moves made because of public feedback?
- 5. What went well throughout the process?
- 6. What problems, if any, did the community engagement process present?
- 7. How did you balance competing interests amongst residents or other members of the community?
- 8. After completion of the project, is there anything you or the team would’ve done differently in the engagement process?
- 9. Did the project largely represent the desires of the community?