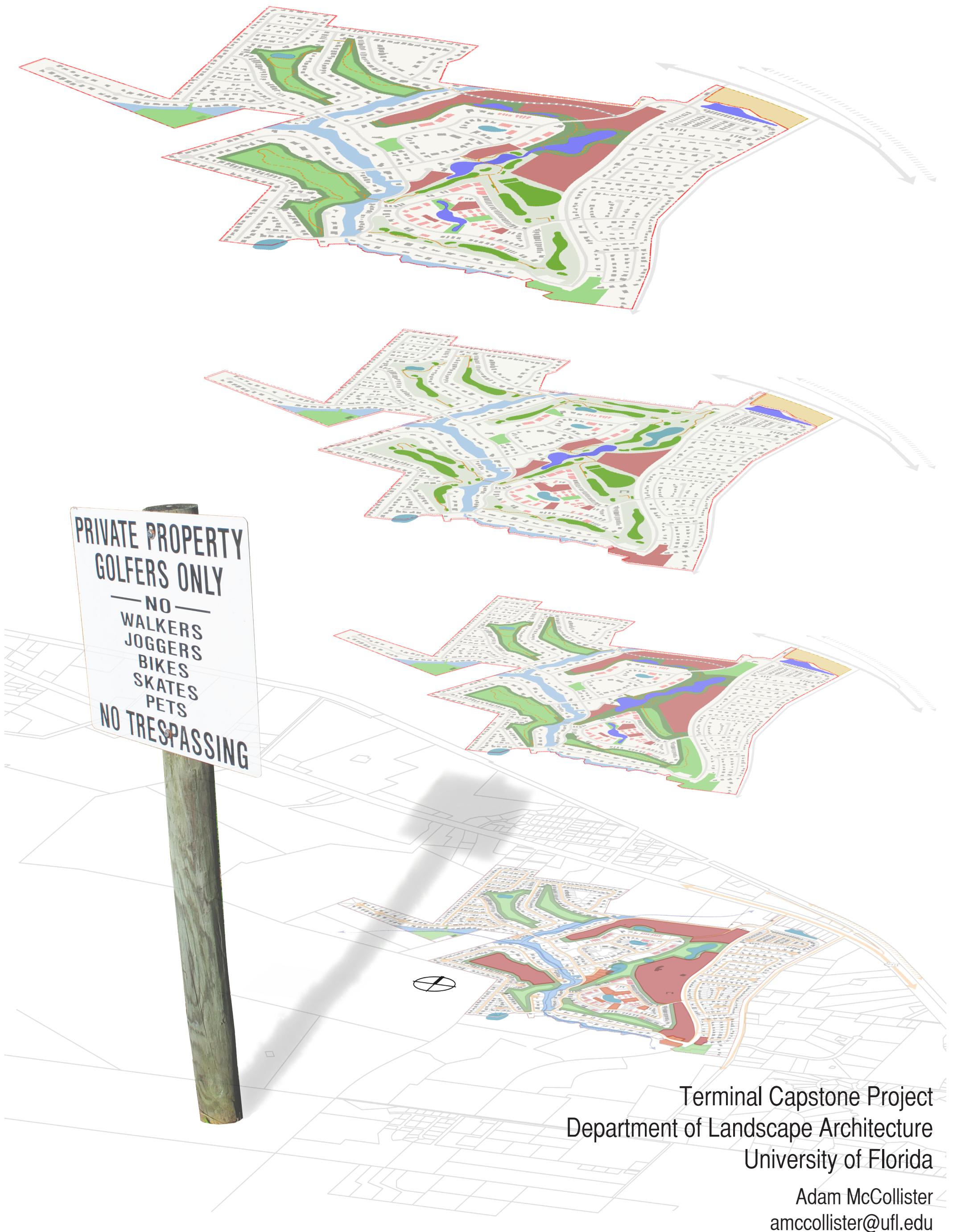


# Turkey Creek: A “Golf Course” Community Developing an Approach to the Conversion of Defunct Golf Courses



Terminal Capstone Project  
Department of Landscape Architecture  
University of Florida

Adam McCollister  
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Spring 2014



# Turkey Creek: A “Golf Course” Community

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Developing an Approach to the Conversion of Defunct Golf Courses

A Terminal Capstone Project

Prepared for:

The Department of Landscape Architecture  
University of Florida

Residents of the Turkey Creek Community  
Alachua, Florida

Turkey Creek Master Owner's Association

Mr. Wallace Cain, Owner  
Turkey Creek Golf Course

Prepared by:

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Spring 2014

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Robert R. “Bob” Grist, FASLA  
Associate Professor  
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# Acknowledgements

---

I would like to thank the University of Florida, and especially the Department of Landscape Architecture for their continued efforts to educate and inspire me along my journey. I have experienced tremendous growth in every aspect of my life over past five years in Gainesville and I was fortunate to be able to learn from an incredible group of faculty and staff. I humbly thank you all for sharing your time, energy, and guidance, each and every day.

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Finally, I would like to thank all of my studiomates for four amazing years of late nights, early mornings, and lots of laughter in between. I have gained much more than just a degree in landscape architecture from UF... you are my family, and I love you all. See you on the professional side.



# Dedication

---

I dedicate this book to:

My wife, for her support and sacrifice to ensure my success over the past five years. Thank you for all of your hard work and for keeping my head afloat on the days when I felt like I was drowning. Not many people can say they met the love of their life when they were thirteen years old. But, I can. I am a lucky man, Amber, I love you.

My parents, for their unyielding love and support through every decision I've made in my life

My Mom, for your creative mind and unparalleled work ethic

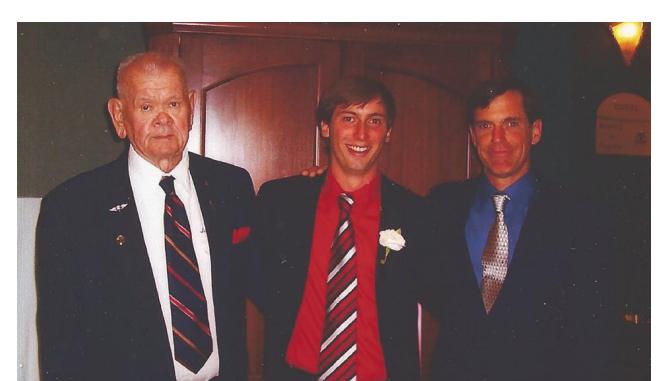
My Dad, for your raw intelligence and pure determination

My grandparents, Honey & Pop-Pop, for showing me the world with hearts full of love, trust, and respect. I miss you both every day. Oh, and thank you Honey for never allowing me to say "I can't"

I think it paid off

My sisters, for their inspiration, encouragement, and support throughout my life

Thank you, I love you all.





# Personal Goals & Objectives

---

Three years ago, when I first started to think about the issues of golf course closures, I was naturally inclined to assume there would always be an answer that maintained a portion of the golf course. I imagined this perfect scenario where all of my best laid plans solved all of the problems. Maybe I was bias, perhaps a little naive... probably both.

As time progressed and I began the proposal process for this project, my intention was to treat this as a site design scenario where I would choose a site and develop a final master plan with all of the experiential details. I would have had freedom to freely express my ideas and designs as what I thought was the best solution, making a lot of critical decisions along the way. The problem with that scenario is the fact that I personally do not have the experience or ability to make many of the critical decisions inherent to this sort of project. My solution most likely would have been viewed as a biased interpretation of one possible outcome, or worse, just another “academic exercise”. I wanted more than that. This is a real world issue, and one that is near and dear to my heart.



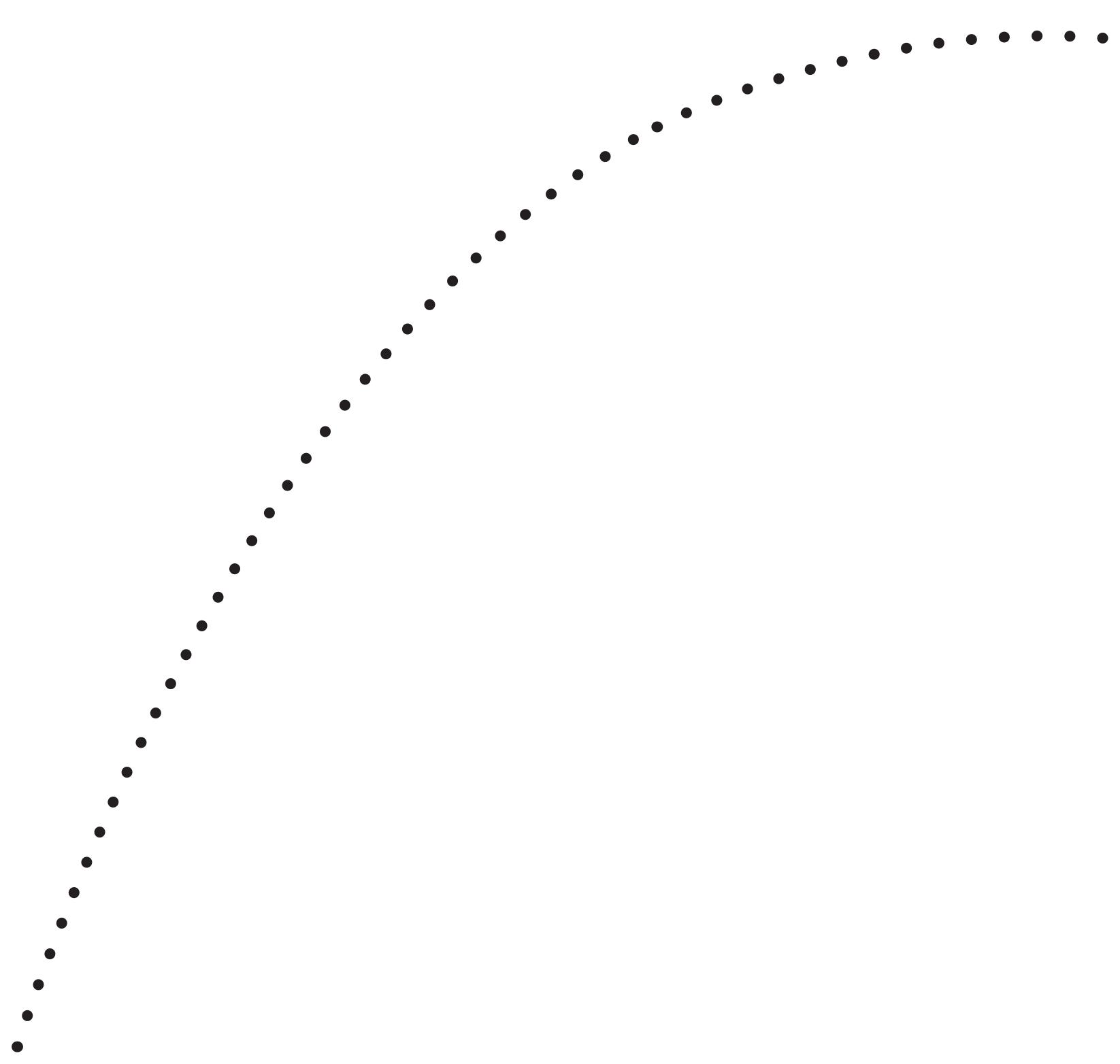
So, after much thought and being asked repeatedly by professors and professionals, “what do you want to get out of this?”, I realized I needed to change my approach. Instead of developing a single site plan of my own, I decided it would be much more beneficial and educational for me to attempt the creation of a model, or “tool kit”, that can be applied to any golf course community facing similar circumstances.

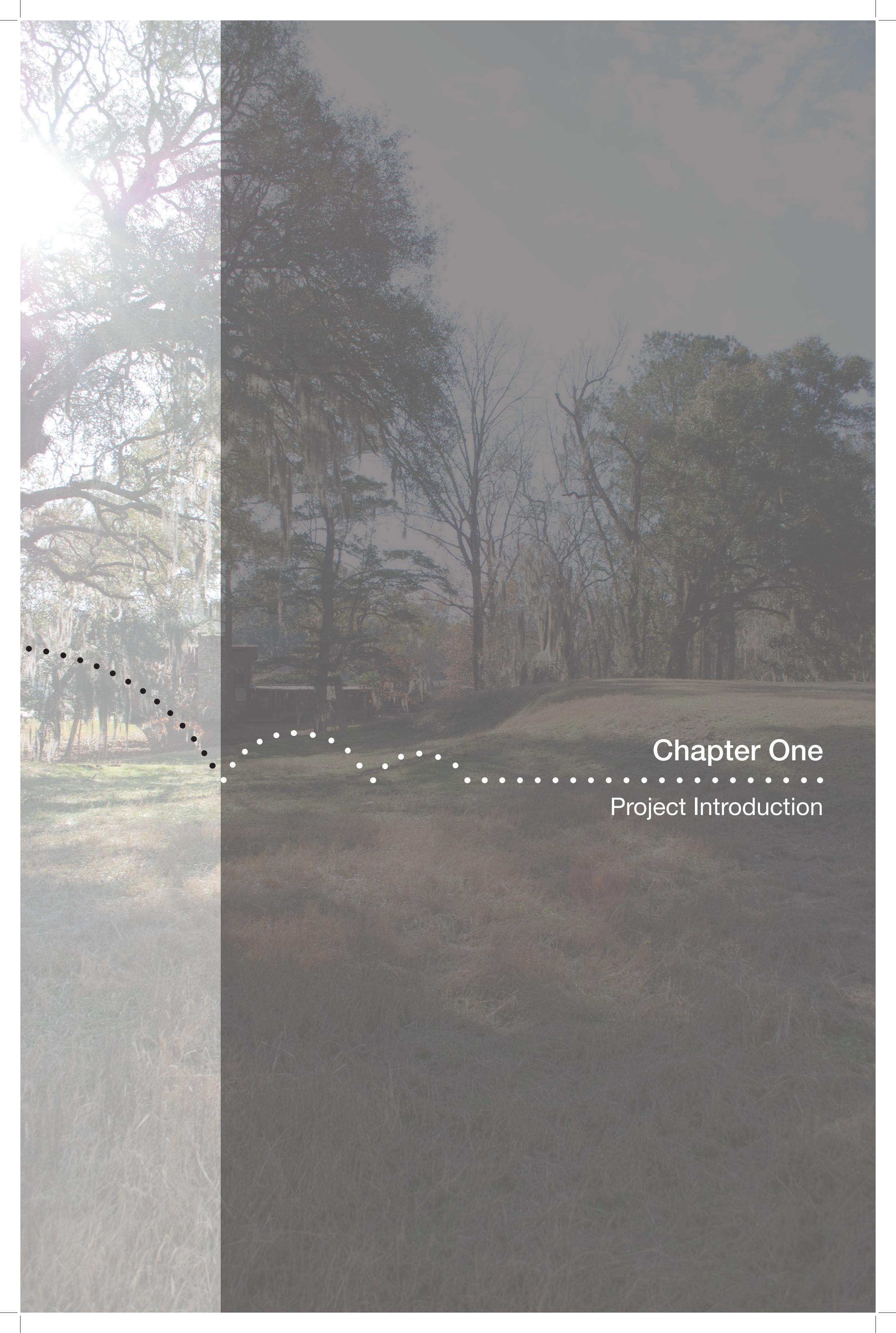
As an emerging professional in the field of landscape architecture, I hope this capstone project will help me to better understand the opportunities and constraints that this type of project presents, as well as the wide array of solutions that could enrich the lives of countless people and the environment. Combined with my previous experience as a golf professional, the real world implications and possibilities of this topic are very exciting to me and I hope to position myself at the forefront of this emerging niche.



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A landscape photograph showing a dense forest of tall, thin trees, likely cypress or similar, growing out of a body of water. The foreground is a grassy, slightly overgrown area. The sky is clear and blue.

# Chapter One

Project Introduction



---

JUNE 8, 2011:

“We may close 100 courses/year in the USA for the next 5 years...  
10 times more than will open.”



## Project Summary

Approximately 100+ golf courses are closing every year in the United States. This project attempts the creation of a model, or “tool kit”, that can be applied to any golf course community facing similar circumstances. This approach provides a systematic way of identifying the issue(s), developing a wide range of possible solutions, evaluating the solutions with criteria responsive to the issue(s), and sharing the findings with community stakeholders to facilitate discussion and the decision-making process.

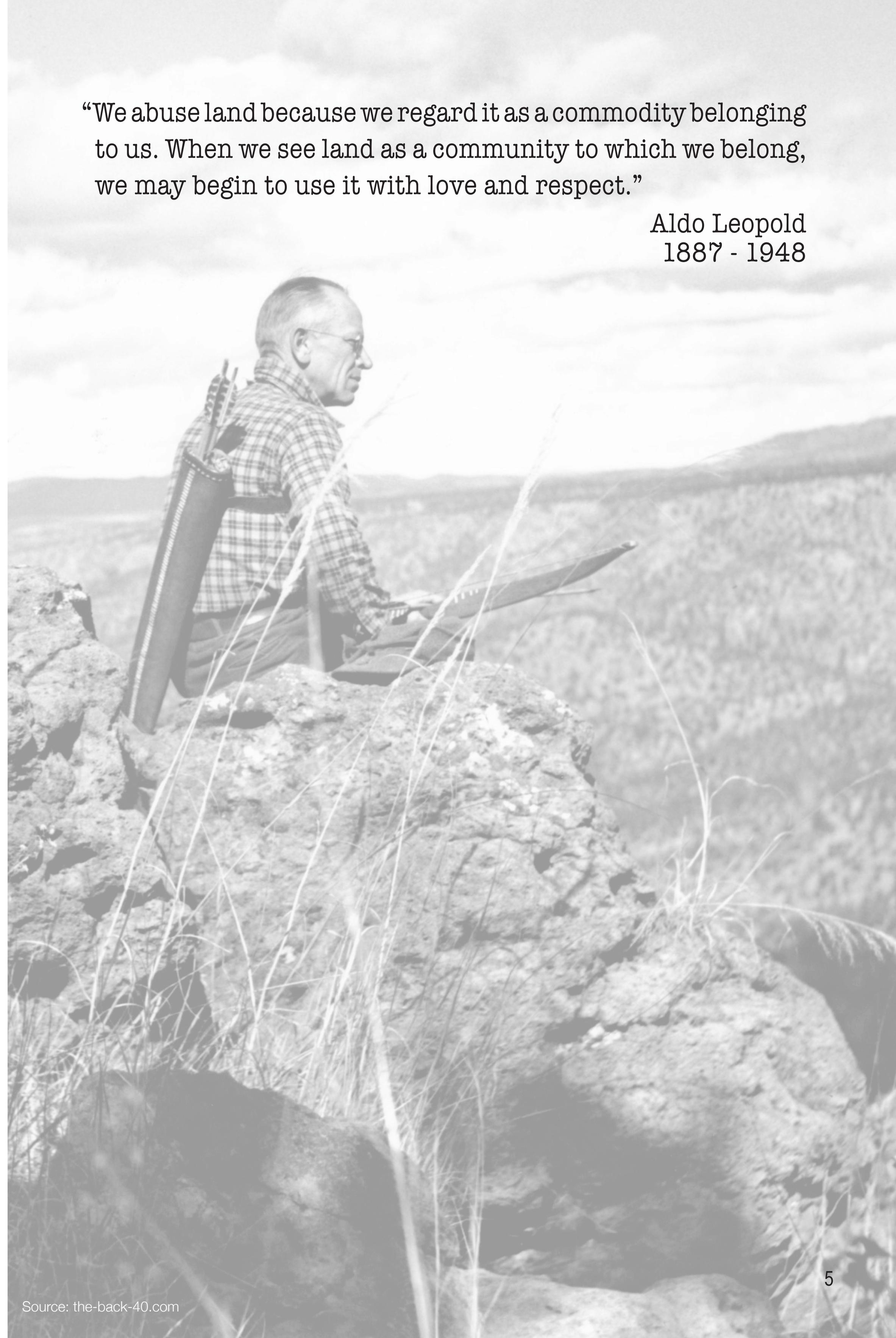
## The Big Picture

With the number of golf course closures growing so quickly, there is a high premium on converting these open spaces into real estate product for the highest bidder. However, the types and amount of infrastructure inherent to all golf courses (walking/cart paths, irrigation, electrical, lakes and ponds, scenic views) provide ample opportunity for creative and adaptive reuse into a space that benefits the entire community. This open green space is in a perfect position to become the unifying fabric for the surrounding community, instead of the segregating barrier that the previous golf course might have been.

An eighteen-hole golf course can range in size, anywhere from 100 to 200 acres or more. Closing 100 golf courses per year means there is a potential of 50,000 - 100,000 acres of open green space coming available in the next five years in the United States alone. The high land value is what makes this type of project so challenging. The tricky part is finding the ideal “win-win” scenario that provides the owner with a return on their investment while also not putting too much financial obligation on current residents.

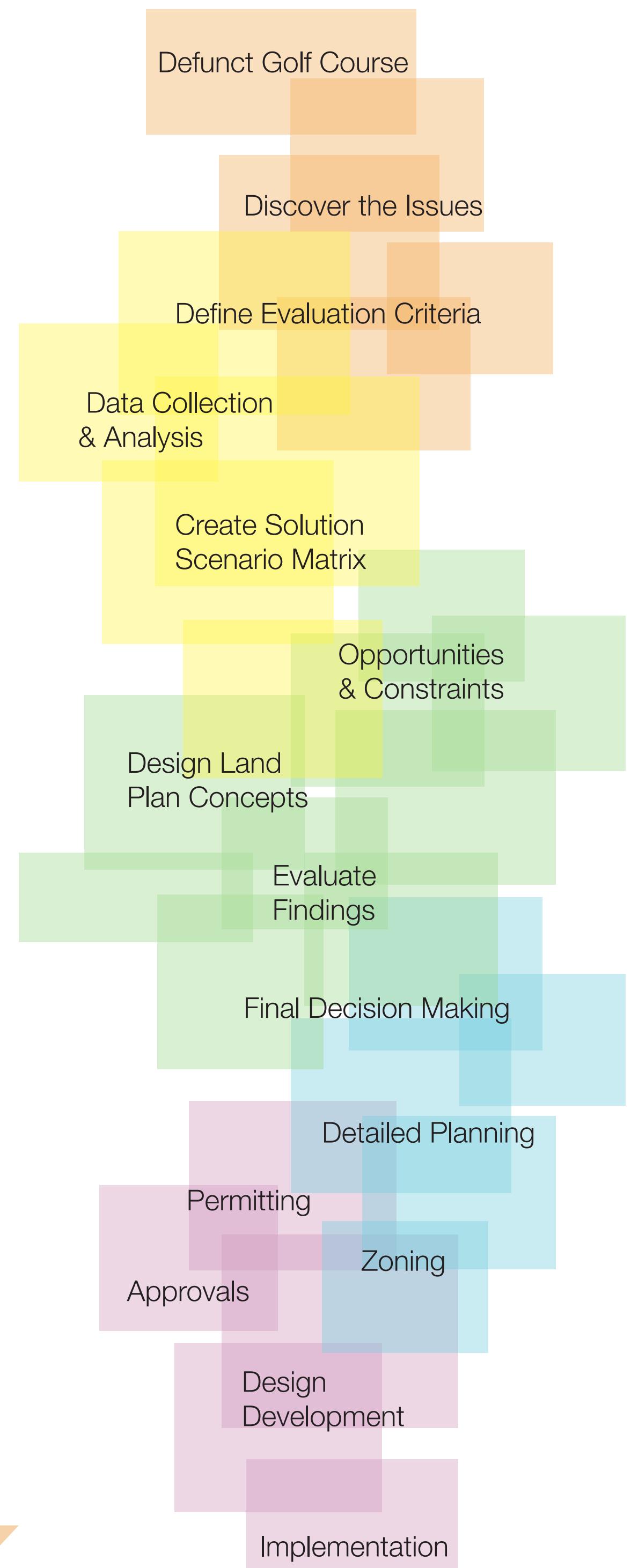
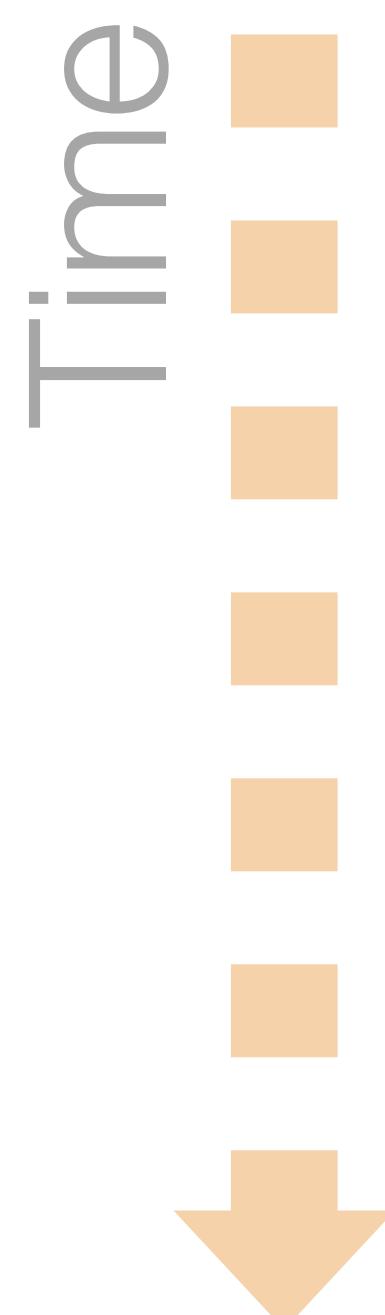
“We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

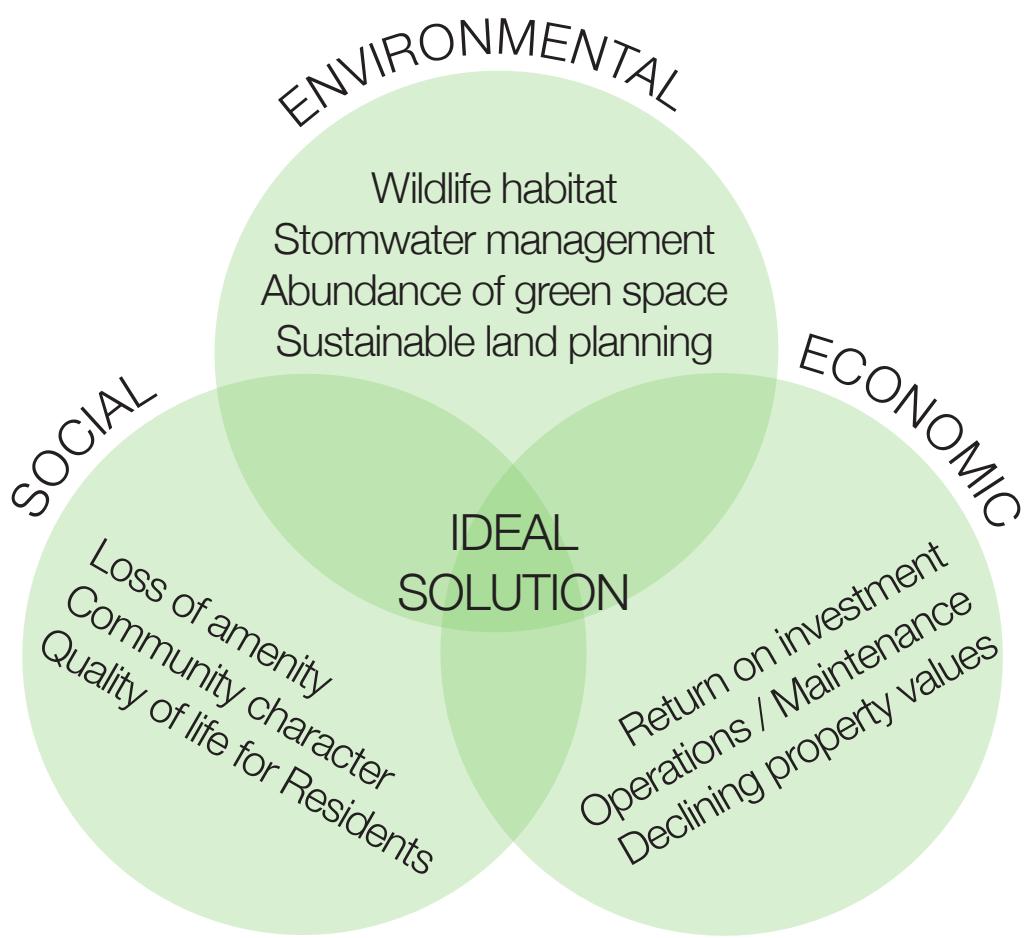
Aldo Leopold  
1887 - 1948



## The Conversion Process

Trying to determine the right course of action for a golf course under these conditions can be very taxing and requires a great deal of patience, cooperation and understanding. It is not uncommon for this type of project to take five years or more just to arrive at the design development phase. Nevertheless, with a proper process in place, this complex issue can be broken down into a logical process that is transparent, easy to follow, and empowering to all who are involved. It is important to remember that the majority of the closures are “residential courses” where the course was built as an amenity within a residential development. This elevates the issue by its ability to negatively impact how people live and their overall quality of life. It brings into play a social aspect that can be challenging to overcome, but extremely rewarding when accomplished.





## The Key Issues

Due to the high land value defunct golf courses are typically developed for the maximum return on investment. However, this precious green space is often intertwined throughout a community, providing an amazing opportunity for greenway connections, wildlife habitat, active park space, and much more

## The Scenario Spectrum

With such a long list of potential wants, needs, challenges, and opportunities presented by this type of project, there could be any number of possible outcomes along a broad spectrum of solutions.

In one area, you have the economically focused scenario. This might be ideal for an area with a growing population, low housing density, and little demand for golf and/or other open space amenities. This option will most often produce the greatest return on investment (ROI) for the stakeholders.

In a second area you have the conservation focused scenario (again, with no golf course to remain). This would include areas with minimal population growth, no need for density, high demand for open space, and/or greenway network connection opportunities. Conservation, and even reforestation with little/no additional development is one possible outcome with this scenario.

The third primary area of the spectrum involves the social realm. Golf courses are certainly considered an amenity, and most often a social experience, but they are also a tremendous barrier to anyone who doesn't play golf. Due to the amount of space required, golf courses provide little opportunity for additional amenities within a community of limited size and resources. These spaces can become outdoor recreational activities, community gardens, dog parks, playgrounds, bike and walking trails, and much more, typically at a fraction of the cost required to maintain the same space as a golf course. This newly energized space promotes a friendly social experience with great opportunity for interaction and community building.

Finally, there is the middle-ground scenario, where a portion of each spectrum area come together to create a custom-fit land plan that is tailored to the needs of the community, the owner of the golf course, the environment, and anything else that may be affected.

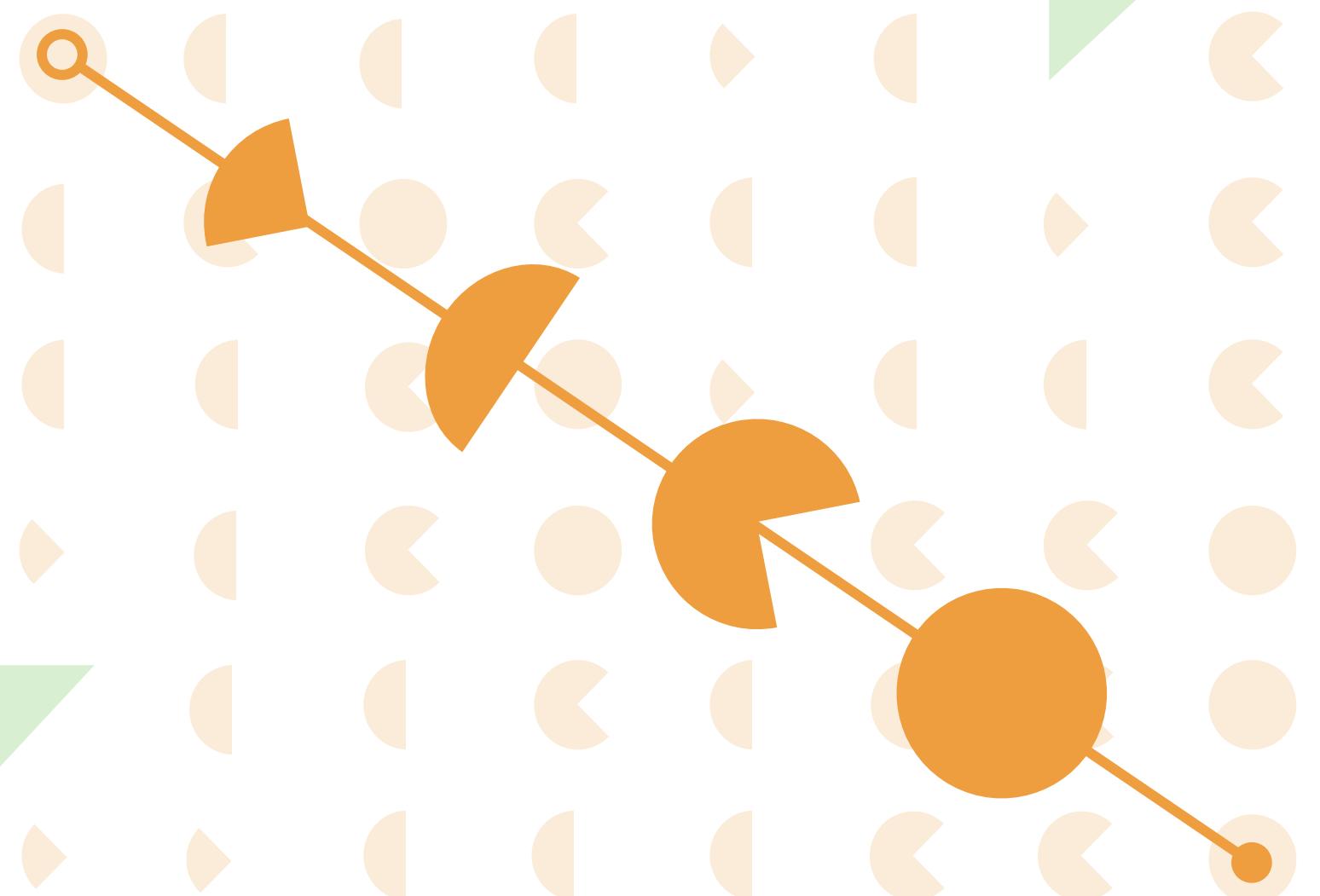


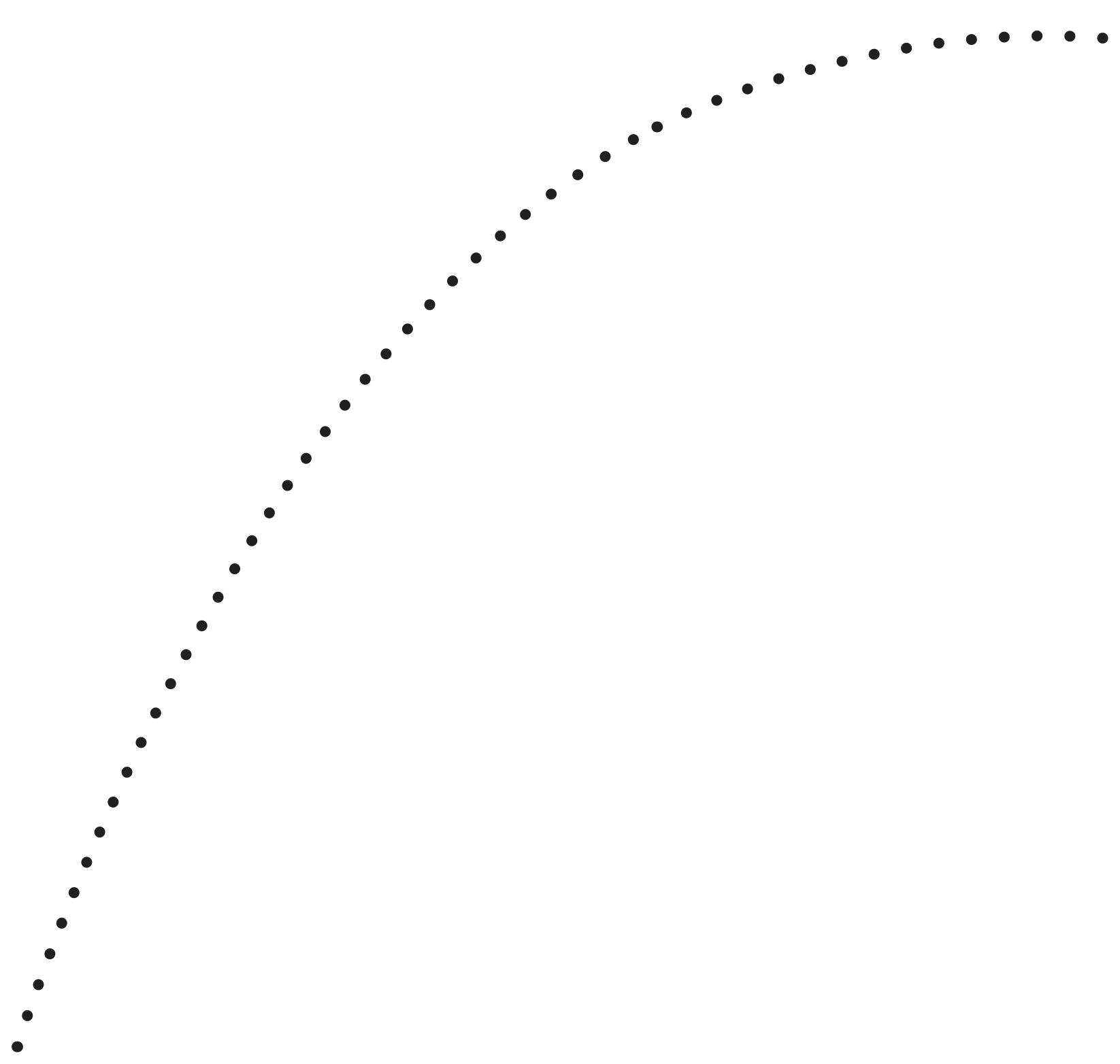
To develop the matrix is a relatively simple process once all of the pieces have been determined. With the golf course conversion matrix, the columns represent the big picture land plan scenarios while the rows represent evaluation criteria. Rating systems may vary and some criteria may even be weighted if necessary, but ideally the matrix remains quite simple. Land plan scenarios should only be developed once the data collection and analysis has been completed.

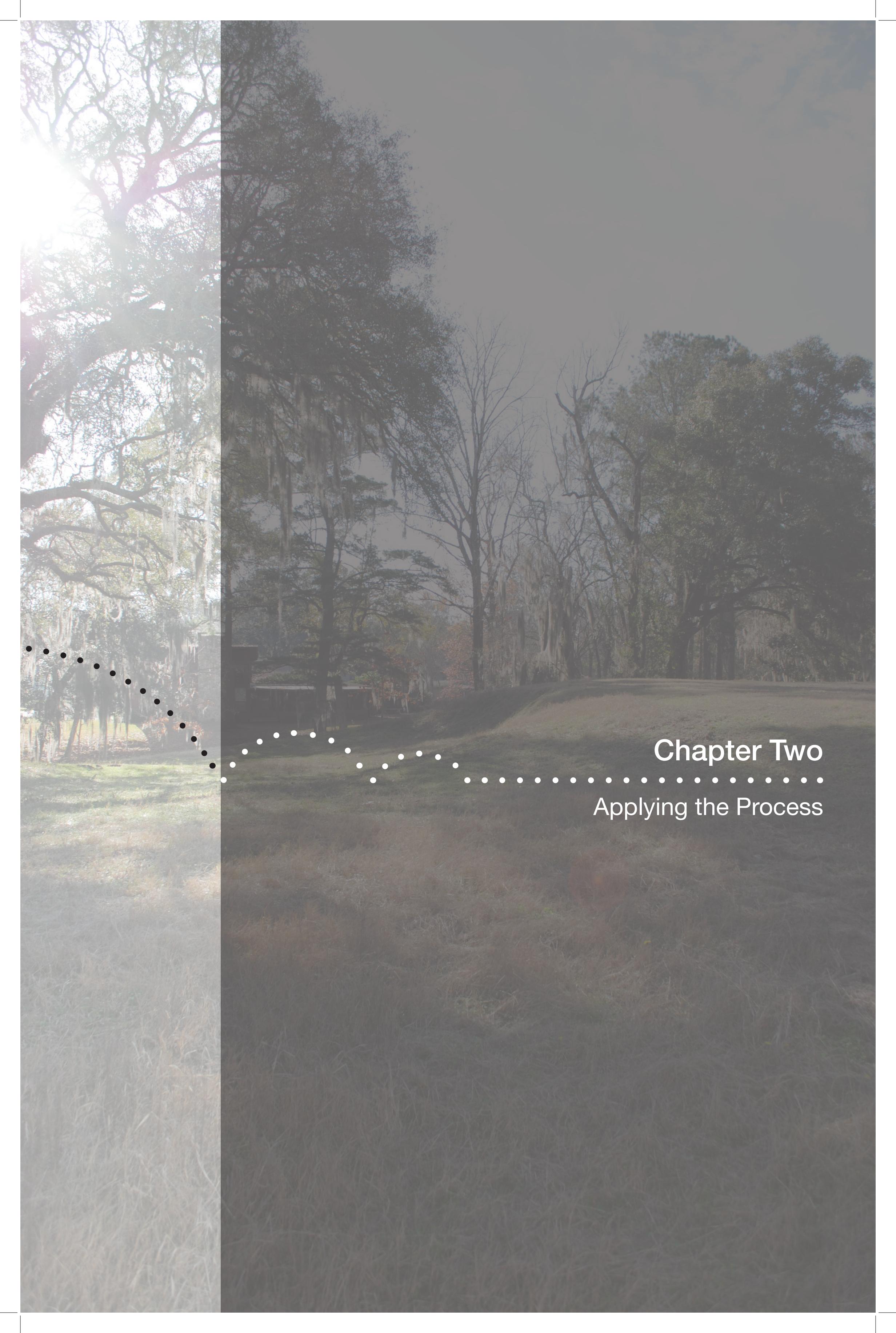
## DEVELOPING THE MATRIX

CONCEPTUAL LAND PLAN SCENARIOS  
*Considers extensive site-specific research and analysis while addressing the goals, objectives and needs of the community*

EVALUATION CRITERIA  
*Responds to the unique issues of each project in order to provide a fair and proper evaluation*





A landscape photograph showing a dense forest of tall, thin trees, likely cypress or similar, growing out of a body of water. The foreground is covered in tall, dry grass. The sky is overcast.

## Chapter Two

Applying the Process

# Welcome to Turkey Creek



The Turkey Creek community was established in 1974 in Alachua, Florida. Today, it's a 600-acre community of single and multi-family homes, situated midway between the cities of Alachua and Gainesville alongside US Highway 441. The community has grown up around the Turkey Creek Golf & Country Club and other amenities.



Turkey Creek is characterized as a community of open spaces, wide vistas, estate and villas lots located along the banks of Turkey Creek, in the shadow of the San Felasco Hammock Preserve & State Park.

Since the construction of the golf course in 1977, the community has identified itself as a “Golf Course Community.” In early 2011 that description was made void by the closure of the golf course and club due to a diminishing financial incentive to the owners. The decline of club revenues and its subsequent closure occurred during one of the worst financial recessions since the Great Depression. This had a lasting impact on the housing market, one that we are still recovering from today.

From age and ethnicity, to their general interests and hobbies, the residents of Turkey Creek are extremely diverse. Considering the somewhat secluded location and poor state of community amenities, there is not much for residents to do in the immediate area. In fact, you have to drive five miles in either direction to reach the nearest grocery store.



## Regional Considerations

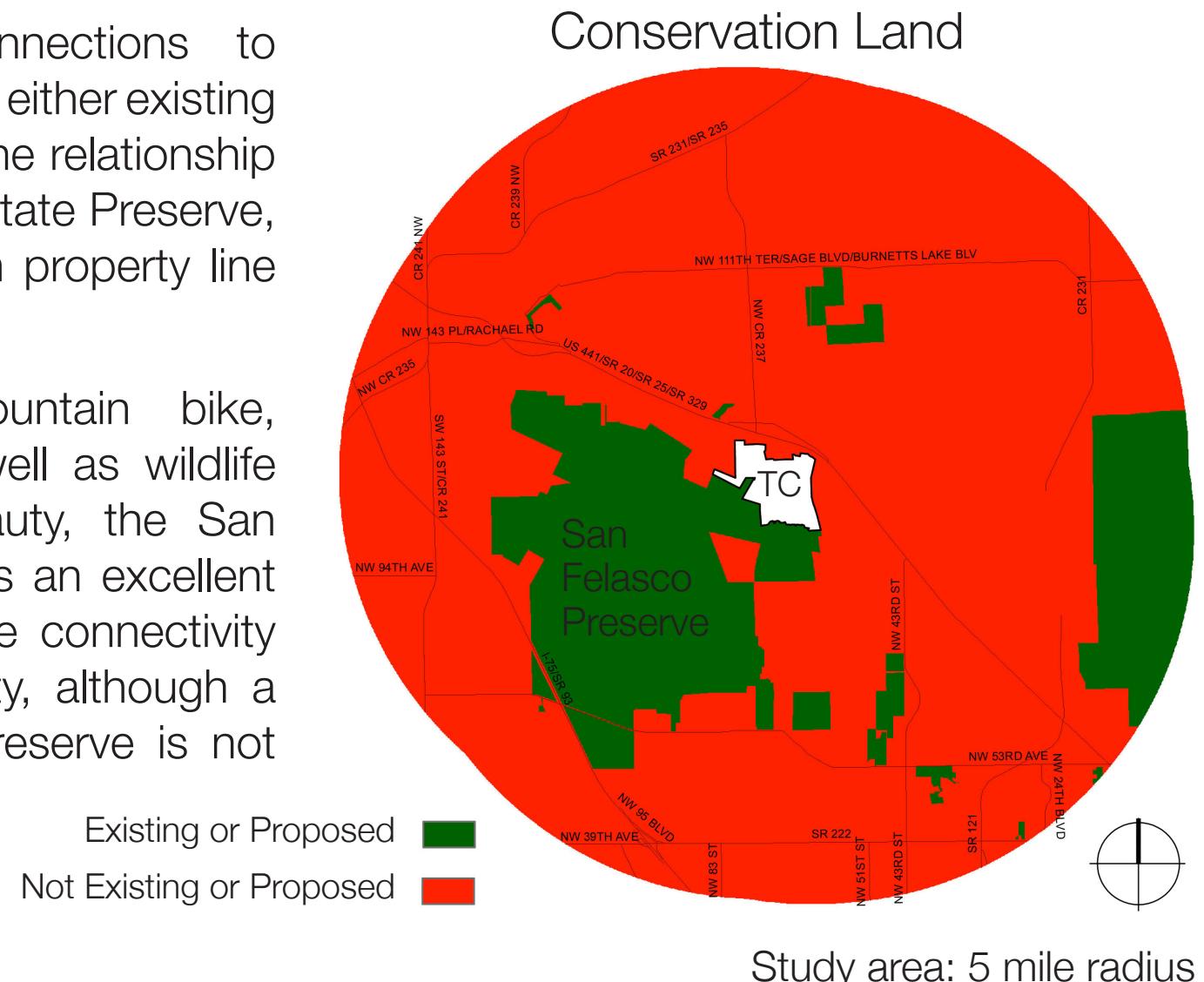
Being centrally located in the state of Florida provides Alachua County residents excellent connectivity to many of the state's primary hubs of activity. Turkey Creek is within a two-hour drive of eight International airports, countless professional sporting events, as well as some of the world's top theme parks and golf courses. Florida remains one of the premier golf destination in the world.



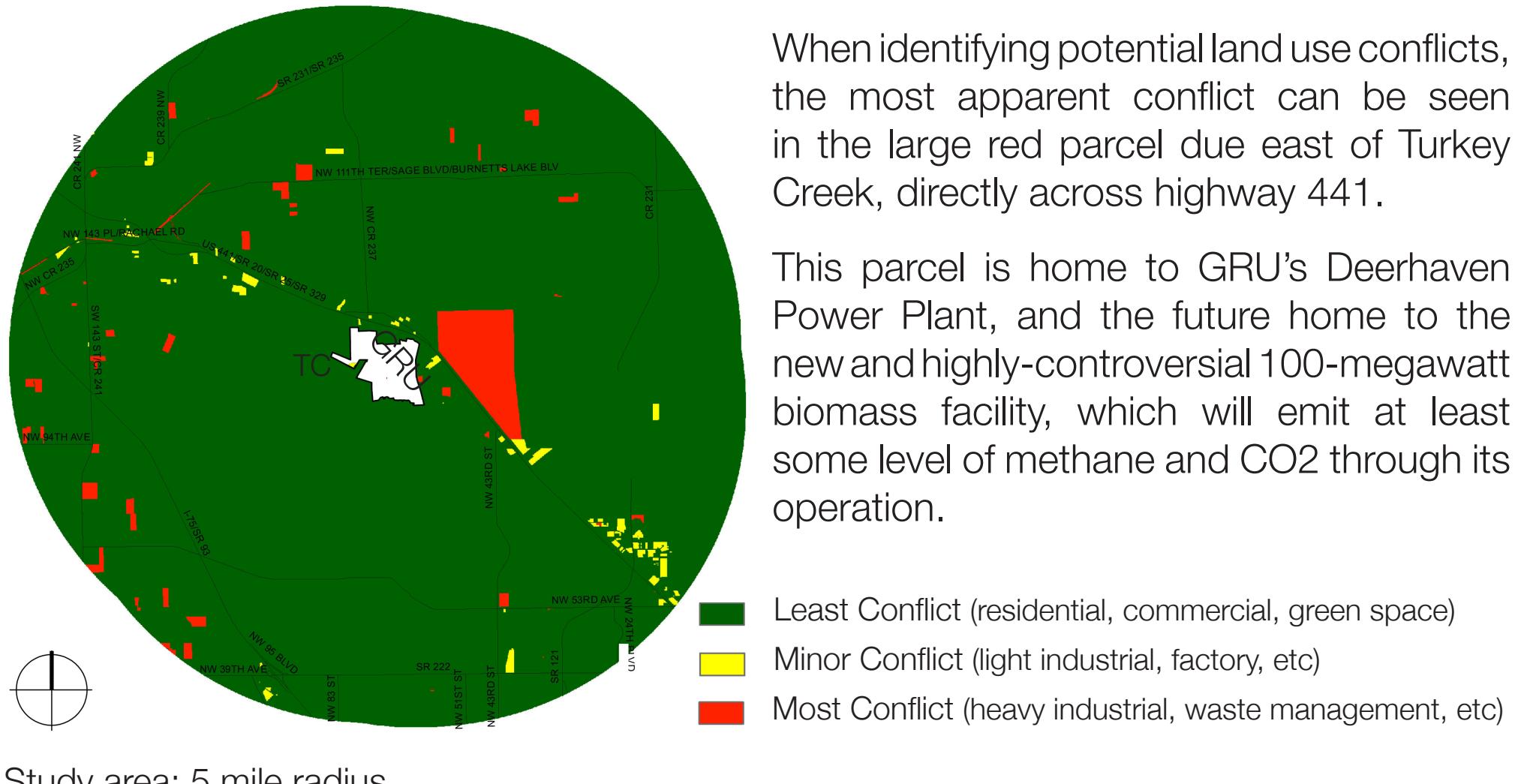
## Immediate Context

Looking at potential connections to adjacent conservation lands, either existing or proposed, you can see the relationship to San Felasco Hammock State Preserve, which borders the southern property line of the community.

Riddled with horse, mountain bike, and pedestrian trails, as well as wildlife and abundant natural beauty, the San Felasco State Park provides an excellent opportunity for green space connectivity to Turkey Creek Community, although a direct connection to the preserve is not permitted.



## Potential Land Use Conflict



When identifying potential land use conflicts, the most apparent conflict can be seen in the large red parcel due east of Turkey Creek, directly across highway 441.

This parcel is home to GRU's Deerhaven Power Plant, and the future home to the new and highly-controversial 100-megawatt biomass facility, which will emit at least some level of methane and CO<sub>2</sub> through its operation.

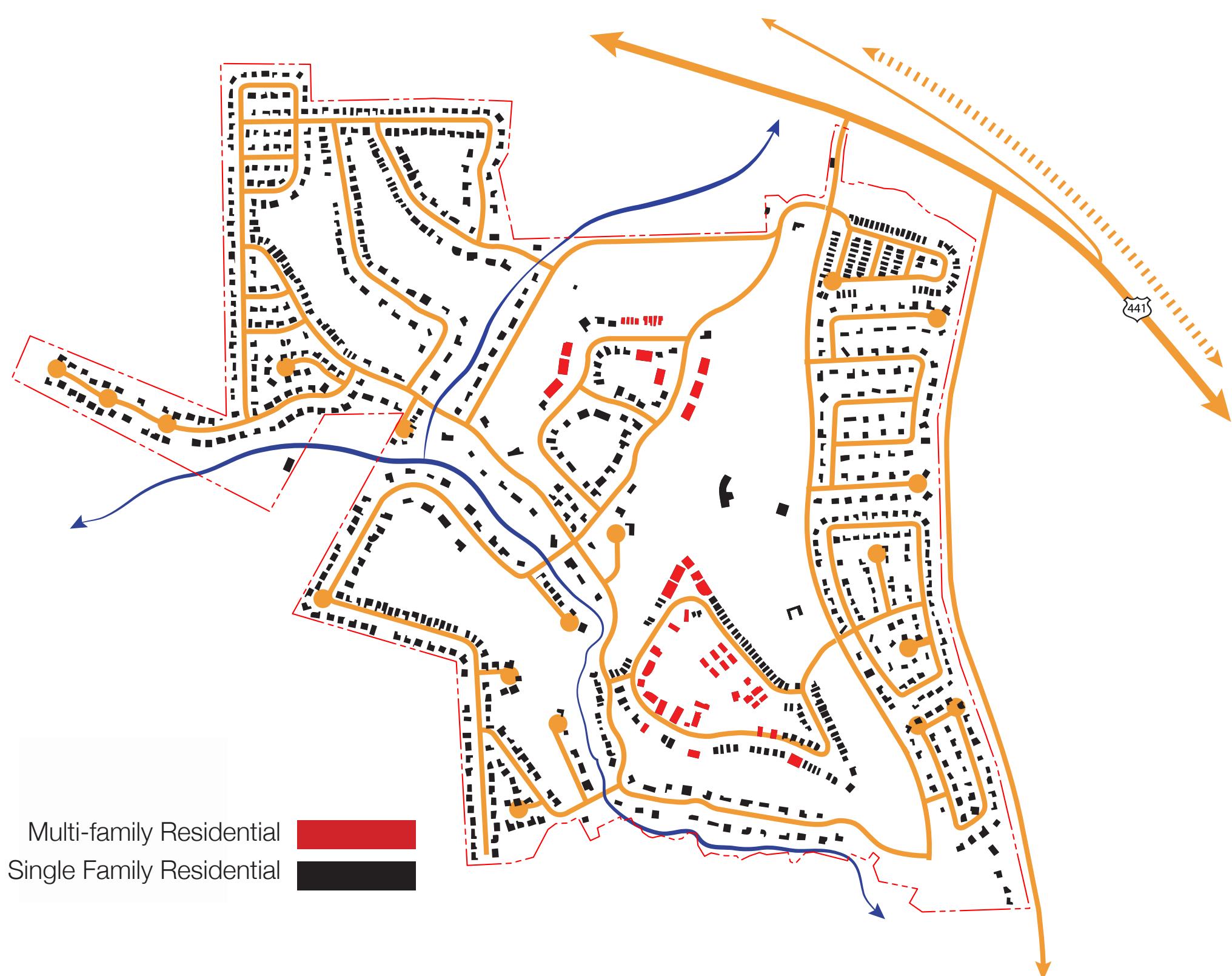
## Inventory of Physical Features

Turkey Creek Community is a Development of Regional Impact (DRI) and is zoned as a planned unit development (PUD) through the City of Alachua. The golf course is identified as recreational land and open space in those documents. The community gets its name from the small creek that flows through the development while splitting it into three sectors. The nearly 60 feet of elevation change on site is a substantial amount for the state of Florida. San Felasco Hammock State Preserve borders the southern property line of the community. However, the dominant land feature is a 150-acre golf course that meanders throughout the entire community.



The course contains multiple ponds, wide vistas, scenic views, a great deal of topography change, and a wide variety of landforms inherent to a golf course (raised tee boxes and greens, bunkers, sloped fairways, etc.) An additional 50 acres surrounding the clubhouse includes a pool and tiki bar, tennis and racquetball courts, horse shoe pit, and an RV / boat / trailer storage area. Also on site, located in the southeast corner of the community, is a small park with a picnic area, playground, basketball and tennis courts, and a multi-purpose open space with soccer goals included.

The current zoning of the community allows for medium density residential, 4 to 8 density units per acre (du/ac), excluding the golf course which is entitled as open space. However, 10 acres surrounding the existing clubhouse and pool have been rezoned to allow for 67 multifamily units (6.7 du/ac). This may seem like a significant amount of development, but the stark reality is that most developers (in Florida at least) will not “get their hands dirty” for less than 250 units. In the development world, anything less than 250 units is not worth the time and cost of permitting, labor, transportation, and overall logistical headache.



The majority of existing multi-family residential is clustered in two primary areas at the center of the community. There also happens to be a significant number of vacant residential parcels in these areas, making them the primary focus for any proposed multi-family residential. Whoever assumes ownership of the golf course may wish to strategically purchase other parcels within the community to achieve the final land plan scenario.

Any situation involving changes to golf course entitlements will require a substantial amount of planning and government approvals, but if the proposed plan makes a significant improvement to the community and their resident's quality of life, that time spent will be well worth the effort.

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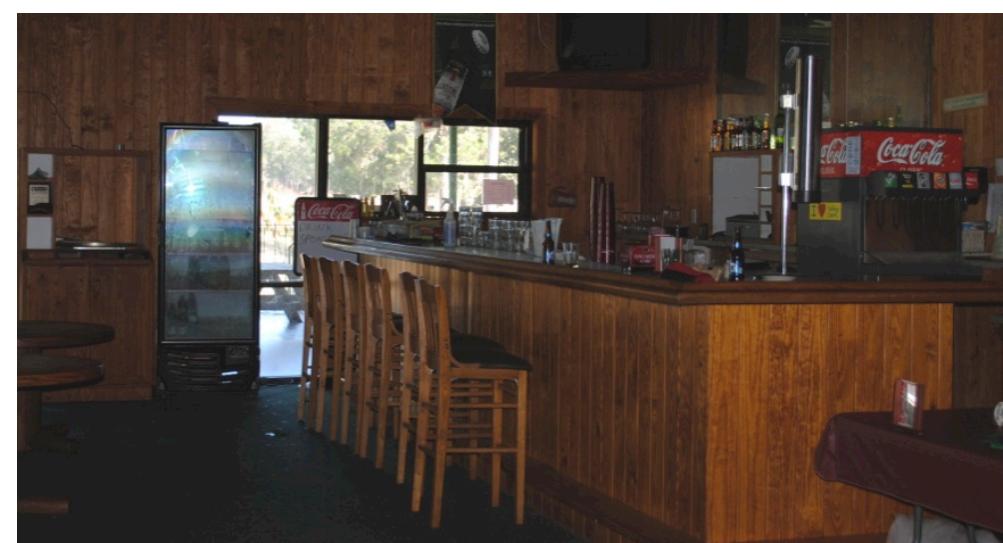
## Discovering the Issues

Since the closure of the club facilities, upkeep of the golf course has been cut to a bare minimum resulting in a negative community appearance. The community and the MOA are concerned about the effect the course closure and its current condition has on the community, home values, and overall quality of life for residents. These concerns have resulted in serious discussion and (at times) heated debate about the future of not only the golf course but of the community as a whole.





Additionally, there is an abandoned 29,000 square foot clubhouse at its center, causing the community to have lost a great deal of its social and economic vitality. Along with the pool and tennis courts, the clubhouse area used to be the social center of the community, but now is nothing more than an eye-sore. On a positive note, the golf course irrigation and pool pump system is practically brand new and fully functional.



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## Defining the Evaluation Criteria

These criteria are placed along one axis of the matrix as a guide to evaluating the conceptual land plan scenarios. The most important part of this task is ensuring that the criteria responds directly to the issues, both of which should be stated explicitly.

### Issues

High land cost and need for owner's return on investment (ROI)

Cost to maintain as an 18-hole golf course is too high for current level of support

Property values continue to decrease with every year the golf course is closed.

Homeowners will bear the primary financial burden of whatever land plan is chosen

Lack of amenity options within the community

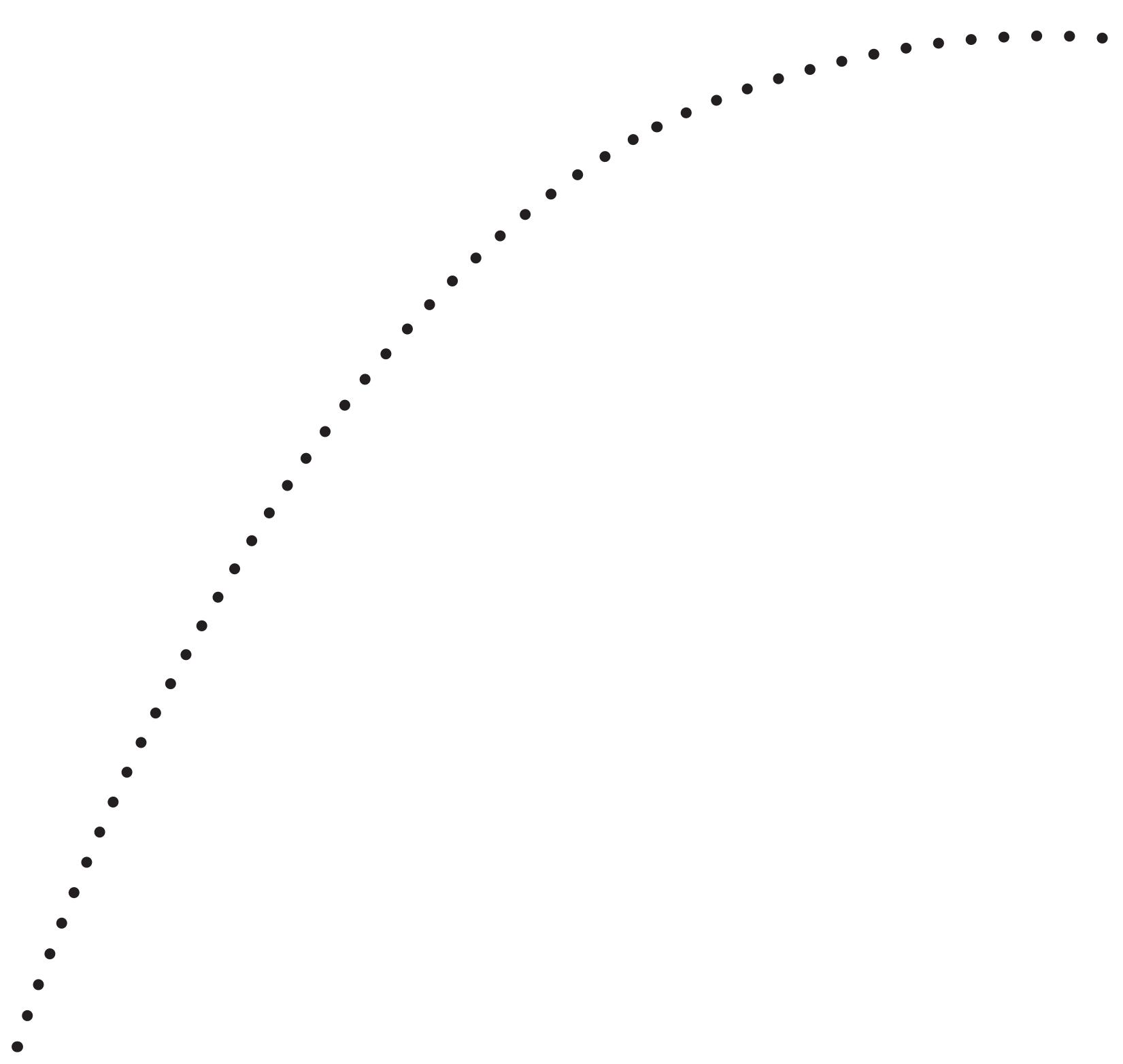
Diminishing community character and overall quality of life for residents

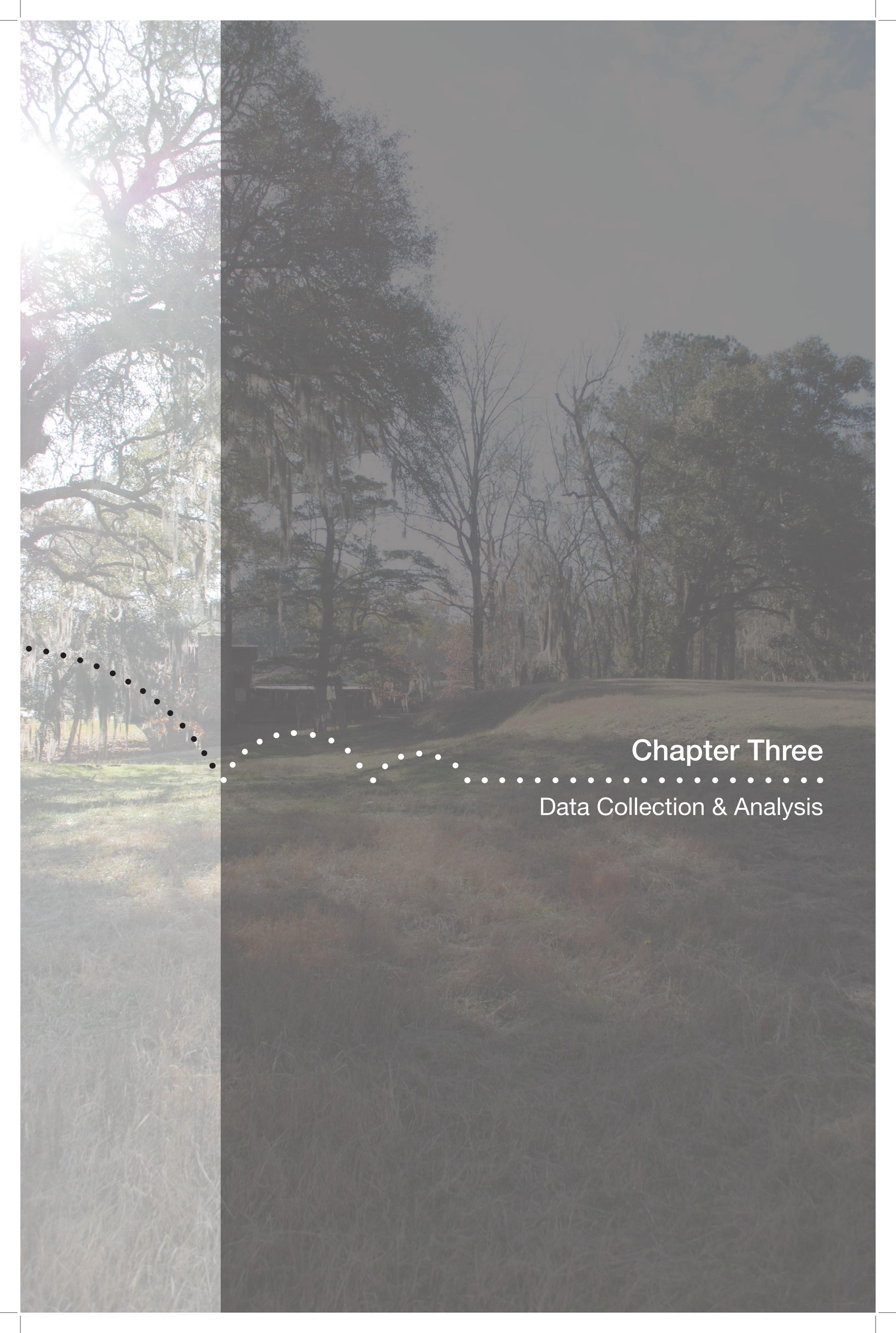
Sensitive environmental context; proximity of Turkey Creek and San Felasco Hammock Preserve; golf course use is not currently sustainable

---

## Evaluation Criteria







A photograph of a forest scene. In the foreground, there is a field of tall, dry grass. In the middle ground, a path or clearing leads towards a dense stand of tall trees, possibly eucalyptus, with many bare branches. The sky is overcast.

## Chapter Three

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### Data Collection & Analysis

# Turkey Creek Golf Course Community Market Analysis Report

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June 21, 2013

**Prepared For:** Turkey Creek Master Owners Association  
11820 Turkey Creek Boulevard  
Alachua, FL 32615

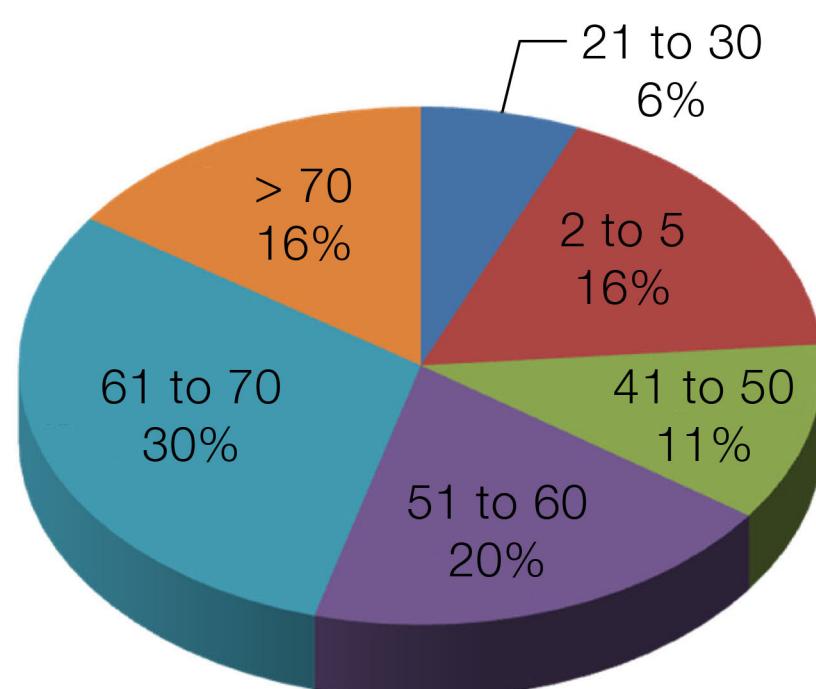
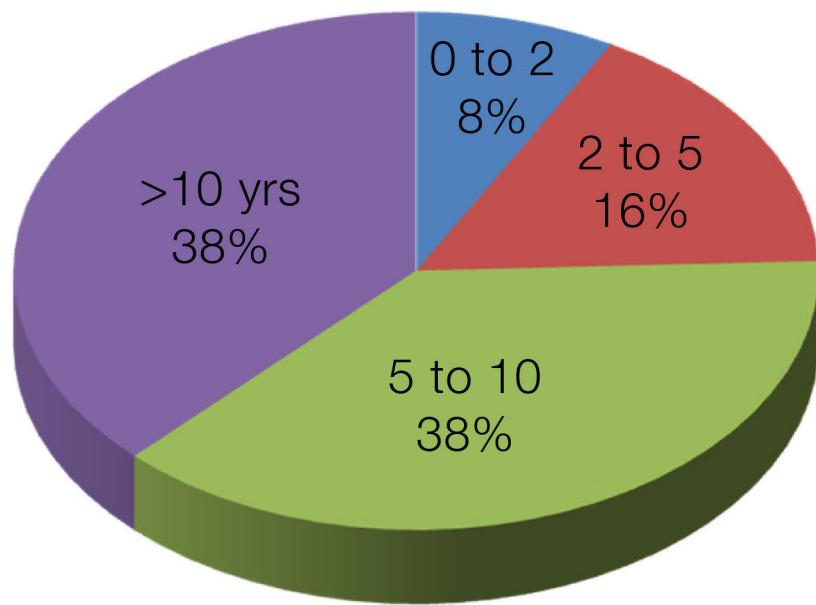
**Prepared By:** Timothy Becker, LLC  
Timothy Becker, Principal  
107 NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Gainesville, FL 32601  
(239)405-2897

The following survey results and golf course evaluation information was acquired from a third-party Market Analysis, conducted in June 2013 by Timothy Becker, LLC. Local realtors who have bought or sold homes in Turkey Creek in the last seven years were surveyed, along with community residents and golf course management experts.

The survey used was a web-based survey that was emailed to over 1,300 addresses provided by the TCMOA. Additionally, a paper version of the survey was placed in the TCMOA offices to allow for those who do not have email or are not comfortable with online surveys to voice their opinion. In all, the survey produced 486 responses, eight of which were paper surveys. That equates to a 37% response rate, which is higher than the average response rate of 30% for online surveys. Each resident was asked to provide some demographic-based information to allow for an understanding of each respondent.

## Resident Profile

Years Living in Turkey Creek

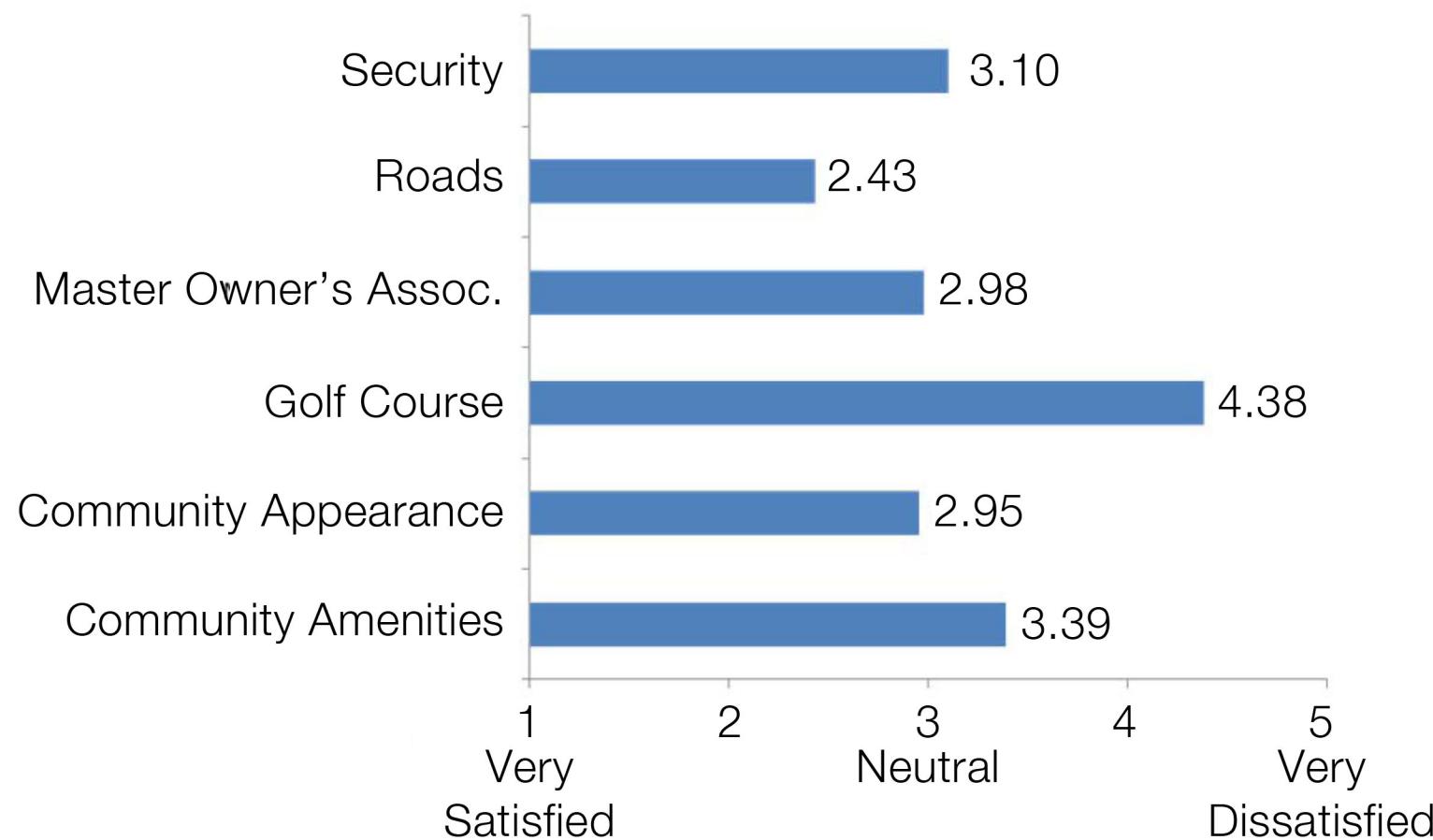


Age Group of Responders

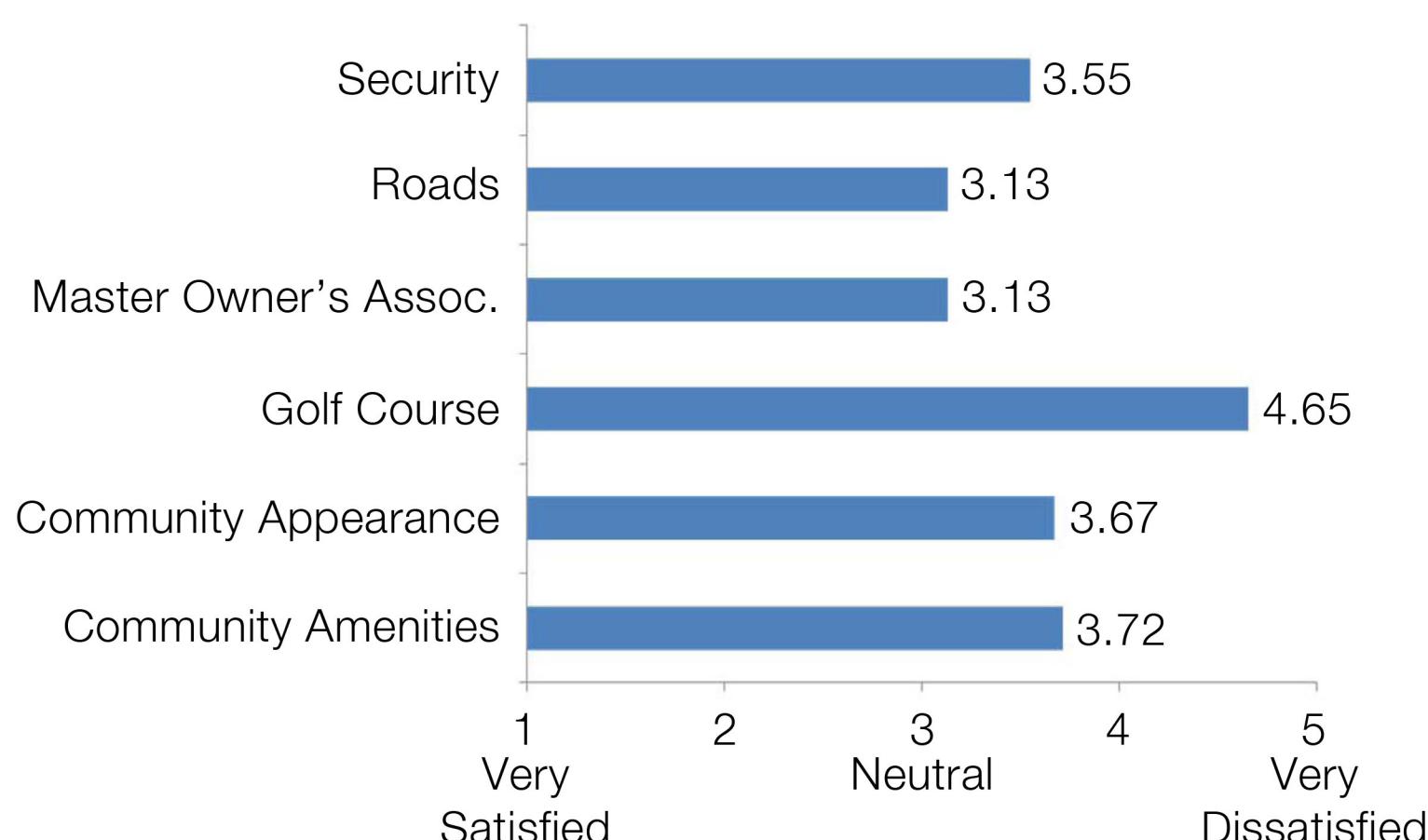
- 38% of residents have lived there for over ten years.
- An additional 38% of residents have lived here for 5-10 years, meaning over 75% of the residents were living here as the golf course started to decline and subsequently close.
- Although still dominated by an older to middle-aged age population, 77% over the age of 40, a trend of young families has been seen moving into the community over the last decade. This “next generation” of residents have unique needs and demands compared to their older neighbors.

## Satisfaction Levels

When asked about the level of satisfaction with the factors below at the time of purchase, most residents were neutral about the majority of features, but overall dissatisfied with community amenities and the golf course.

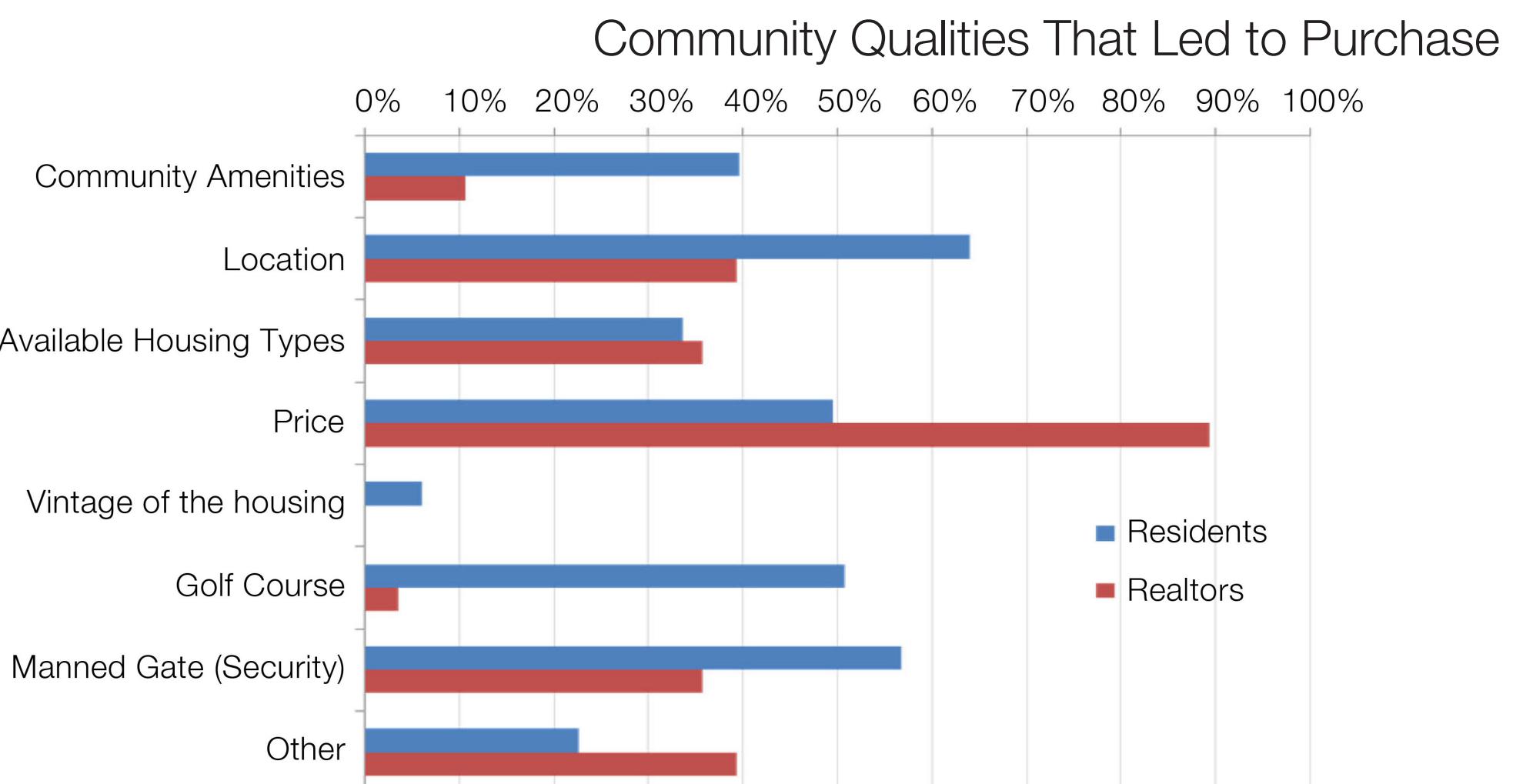


When asked about the level of satisfaction now, compared to when they purchased, most residents feel the same about most items, but feel worse about the condition of the security, community appearance, community amenities, and especially the golf course.



Finally, When asked if the MOA dues are fair for value received, there is a pretty even split amongst residents: 39% disagreed - 26% were neutral - 35% agreed

When asked whether or not they thought the golf course negatively impacts their home values: an overwhelming 86% agreed



### To Buy, or Not to Buy?

In order to determine the level of support within the community, the survey asked if the residents would support the community buying the golf course. Sixty-three percent of the respondents said they would. It is unclear whether the HOA documents would allow the community to buy the facility without a vote of the membership. If a vote is necessary, the weighting of votes for the HOA is not the same as the response to this survey.

Therefore, even if the respondents voted in the same manner as they responded to the survey, it is likely that the results would not be the same. Nevertheless, this response rate still illustrates a significant desire for the community purchase of the golf course. However, it is evident from the comments that there is a divide between purchase for a golf course and purchase for conservation:

**“Quit trying to force owners to bail out a very badly managed operation. Encourage them to file bankruptcy and move on.”**

**“Realize that only a small group of residents play golf.”**

**“Check with conservation groups to see about establishing permanent green space.”**

**“Cease all discussions about Special Tax Districts”**

**Would you support the community purchase of golf course?**

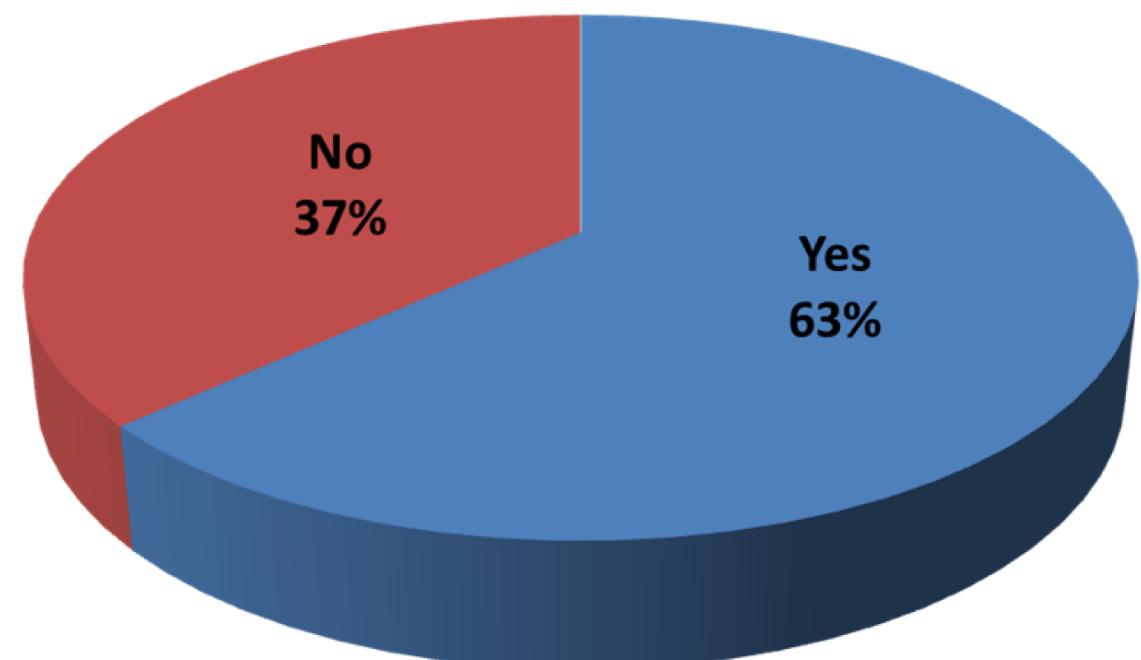


Figure 23 - Support for purchase of golf course

## Golf Course & Market Evaluation (Source: Timothy Becker, LLC)

When attempting to develop solutions for this contentious issue, it is critical to understand the golf business including everything involved in the day-to-day operation and maintenance of a golf facility. It is also important to understand if there is an opportunity for the golf course to be profitable if it were reopened.

### The Golf Market

Alachua County is home to seven golf courses: five residential courses along with the University of Florida and Ironwood golf courses. Several years ago, the City of Gainesville commissioned a study of Ironwood to help determine a course of action that would improve the appeal of the facility and ultimately reduce the deficits in operation from the facility. The city asked the National Golf Foundation Consulting Group (NGF) to provide the study. The NGF concluded that the Alachua County market is an “inactive” market characterized by low participation rates and low per capita supply. However, part of the research concluded that a significant amount of rounds from local golfers were being exported to Ocala and other areas due to a lack of quality courses in Gainesville. The closing of the Turkey Creek club added to that dilemma, as Turkey Creek is considered by many as one of the best layouts in the area.

Alachua County Population by Age - 2012			
	Population	Core golfers	Occasional Golfers
0 - 4	13,174	0	0
5 - 9	11,798	271	283
10 - 14	11,609	267	279
15 - 19	22,943	528	551
20 - 24	42,624	1833	2302
25 - 34	37,922	1820	2768
35 - 44	25,112	1582	1205
45 - 54	28,976	1652	1043
55 - 64	28,703	1923	574
65 - 74	15,749	913	189
75 - 84	8,438	0	0
85+	3,908	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>250,956</b>	<b>10789</b>	<b>9194</b>
Avg. rounds/yr.		30.1	2.6
Total rounds	<b>324,749</b>	<b>23,904</b>	
Rounds per GC (7)	<b>49,808</b>		

Figure 26 - Golf Participation - estimate for Gainesville

area.

As consumers feel better they start spending more money on discretionary items like golf, and Florida is seeing an increase in consumer sentiment, according to UF's Bureau of Economic and Business Research. One factor having a positive impact on the overall market is the continued closure of struggling courses. Nationally, there was and continues to be an oversupply of golf holes, which puts downward pressure on prices. However, 2012 marked the **seventh consecutive year** of a net reduction in the number of golf holes nationally. Gainesville has not participated in that since the closure of Turkey Creek. Gainesville remains a very low “capita to golf hole” market. Therefore, oversupply is not an issue. More to the point, Gainesville has an undersupply of quality golf. Optimistically, there is enough demand, demographically, to support seven courses in the

## Financial Viability ((Source: Timothy Becker, LLC)

The success of the golf course comes from a combination of sufficient rounds, sufficient price per round and additional revenue from food and beverage and golf merchandise sales. That revenue needs to be combined with a highly efficient operation to minimize operational costs. Gainesville, because of the quality of golf courses, has been a low-price market. In that environment, it is difficult to make operational numbers work if you spend too much on the purchase of the club.

To assess the ability of Turkey Creek to profitably perform in the current market, Timothy Becker, LLC used the NGF Operating & Financial Performance Profiles report for 2010 (the latest edition). They also consulted with Billy Casper Golf (BCG), a world-renowned golf course management firm to assess the local market but also to verify the results of the NGF report as it applies locally.

The NGF survey has a sample size of 83 facilities that are similar to Turkey Creek. The average financial information is provided in Figure 27. A typical facility, run professionally, should perform in a similar fashion to this benchmark. Additionally, according to the NGF survey, the total average revenue per round for the sample facilities was \$42.86, implying an average number of rounds per year at 34,601. This is consistent with the demographic study for the Gainesville market.

BCG believes that Turkey Creek could be a \$1.4 million to \$1.6 million revenue per year club that would consistently make operating profits, given a well-managed facility. This is also confirmed by review of the operational performance of Turkey Creek prior to the decline in the condition of the course and particularly the greens. In fact, Turkey Creek was performing better than this benchmark operating statement while generating only 25,000 rounds per year.

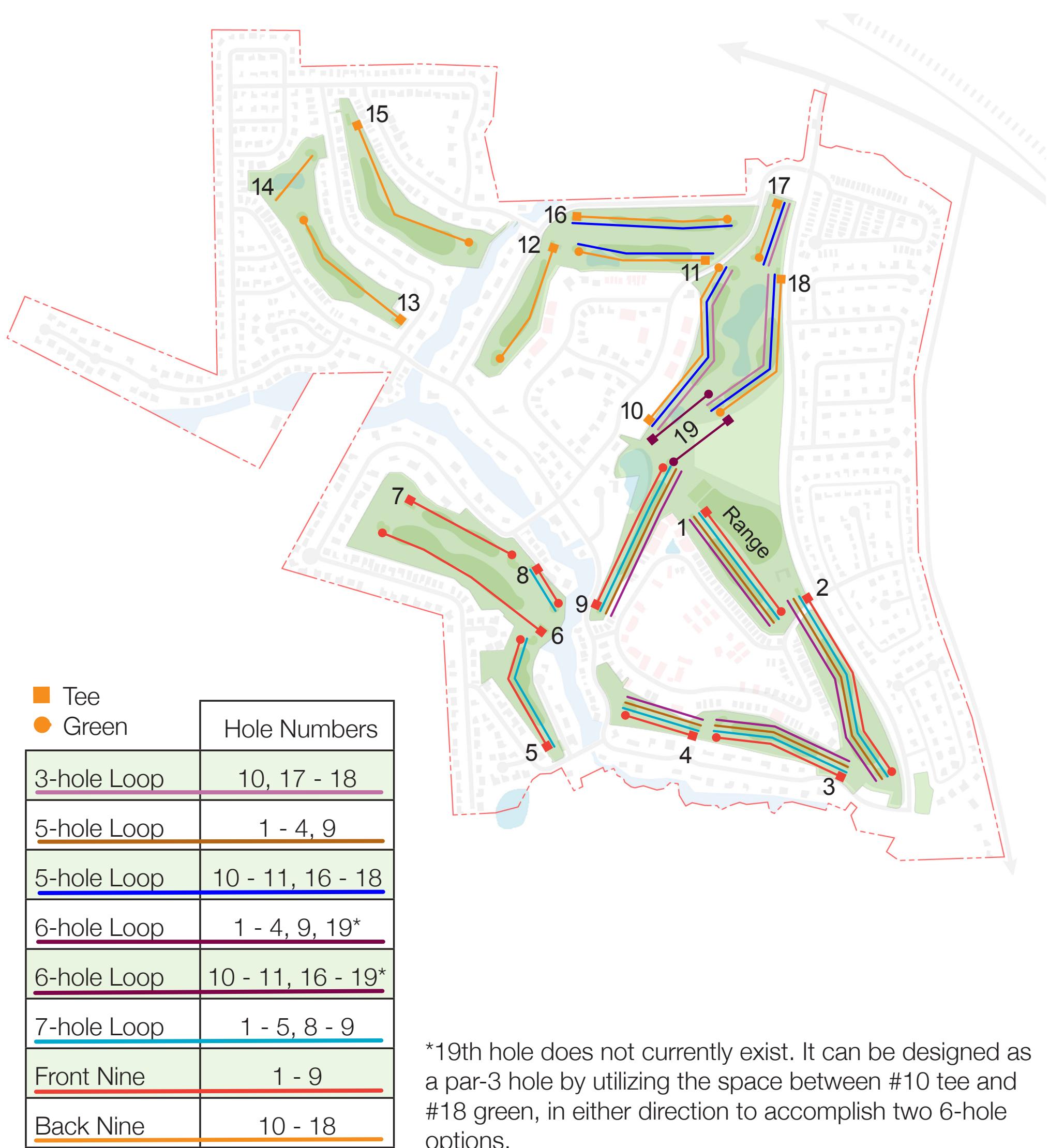
However, it is important to remember that these numbers do not take into account the initial purchase of the facility. A golf course operation is a low margin operation and care must be taken not to overpay for the purchase.

Given the Gainesville market compared to others, the estimated value of the course is between \$1.0 million and \$1.5 million. However, keep in mind those values imply an operating golf course. Currently, with no revenue, the value to an investor is zero. Therefore, in order to evaluate the potential current value of the property we need to consider the cost to refurbish the property to an operating level, which could range from \$900,000 to \$2,400,000 depending on the level of revitalization needed.

Benchmark Operating Statement (NGF)		
Green Fee Revenue	\$	957,000
Other Golf Revenue	\$	69,100
Food & Beverage Revenue	\$	226,800
Merchandise Revenue	\$	104,100
All other revenue	\$	126,000
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,483,000</b>
Total maintenance expenses	\$	641,700
All other operating expenses	\$	734,100
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,375,800</b>
<b>Net Revenue (Loss)</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>107,200</b>

Figure 27 -Benchmark Operating Statement

## Golf Course Routing Analysis



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Golf participation is steadily decreasing in the United States. This is obviously due to a range of issues, but two of the primary issues are the fact that golf costs too much, and it takes too long to play. Not many people these days, other than retirees, have the time to play five hours of golf every weekend. With that said, who said a golf course has to be eighteen, or even nine holes? Why not twelve, seven, or even three holes? Any amount that allows people to enjoy the game for its good qualities while avoiding the typical time/cost issues should be considered a viable option. Also, with a little creative design thought, some layouts may be achieved that will still allow golfers to play a standard eighteen hole round.

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## Precedence Based Design

Turkey Creek Community is one of hundreds of golf courses facing these issues today. Part of the data collection and analysis process includes the evaluation of case studies that relate to the golf course in question. The following is a short list of case study material I have gathered with a list of the significant information relative to the issues at Turkey Creek.

### *Oak Ridge Golf Course – Union County, New Jersey*

- 67-acre 9-hole course turned in a \$410,000 annual loss prior to closing
- Course was fully converted to park space with bike and walking trails, and an archery range

### *Glen Miller Links – Richmond, Indiana*

- 85 year-old course needed \$5 million in improvements
- Parks Board elected to downsize to three practice holes and convert remaining space to “general recreation”

### *DeLand Country Club – DeLand, Florida*

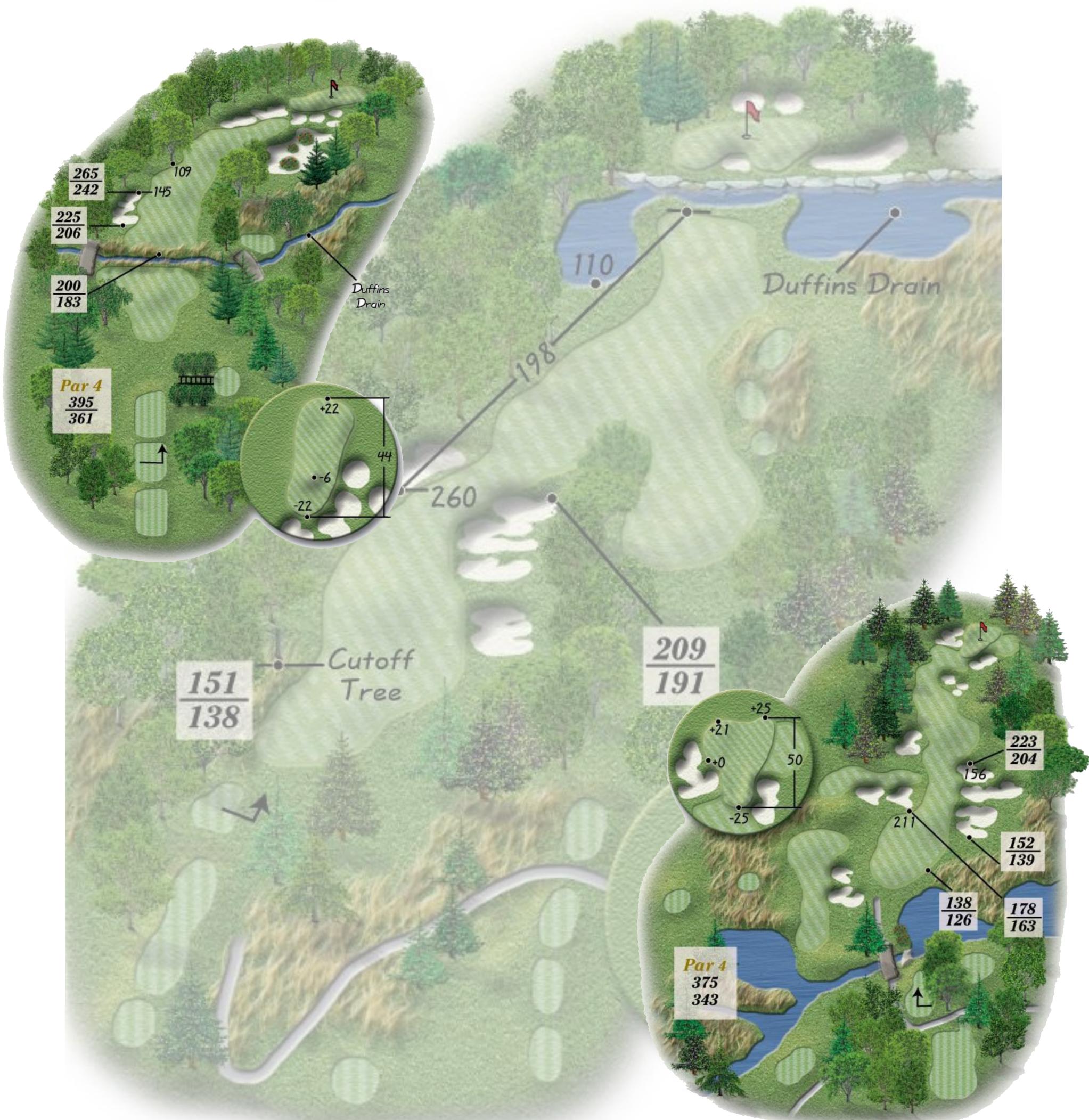
- 105-acre course closed September 2012 due to “economic conditions”
- 35 acres will be converted into commercial space (approx. 100,000 sq. ft.)
- Remaining 70 acres will be developed to accommodate 240 homes & a 120-bed assisted living facility

### *Municipal Courses – New Orleans, Louisiana*

- Following Katrina, city had to decide what to do with four municipal courses covering 520 acres
- Repurposed a portion of the land into a 50-acre Festival Ground
- Additional land now features a boardwalk, dock, meadow concert venue, nature trails, and a very popular walking/jogging trail

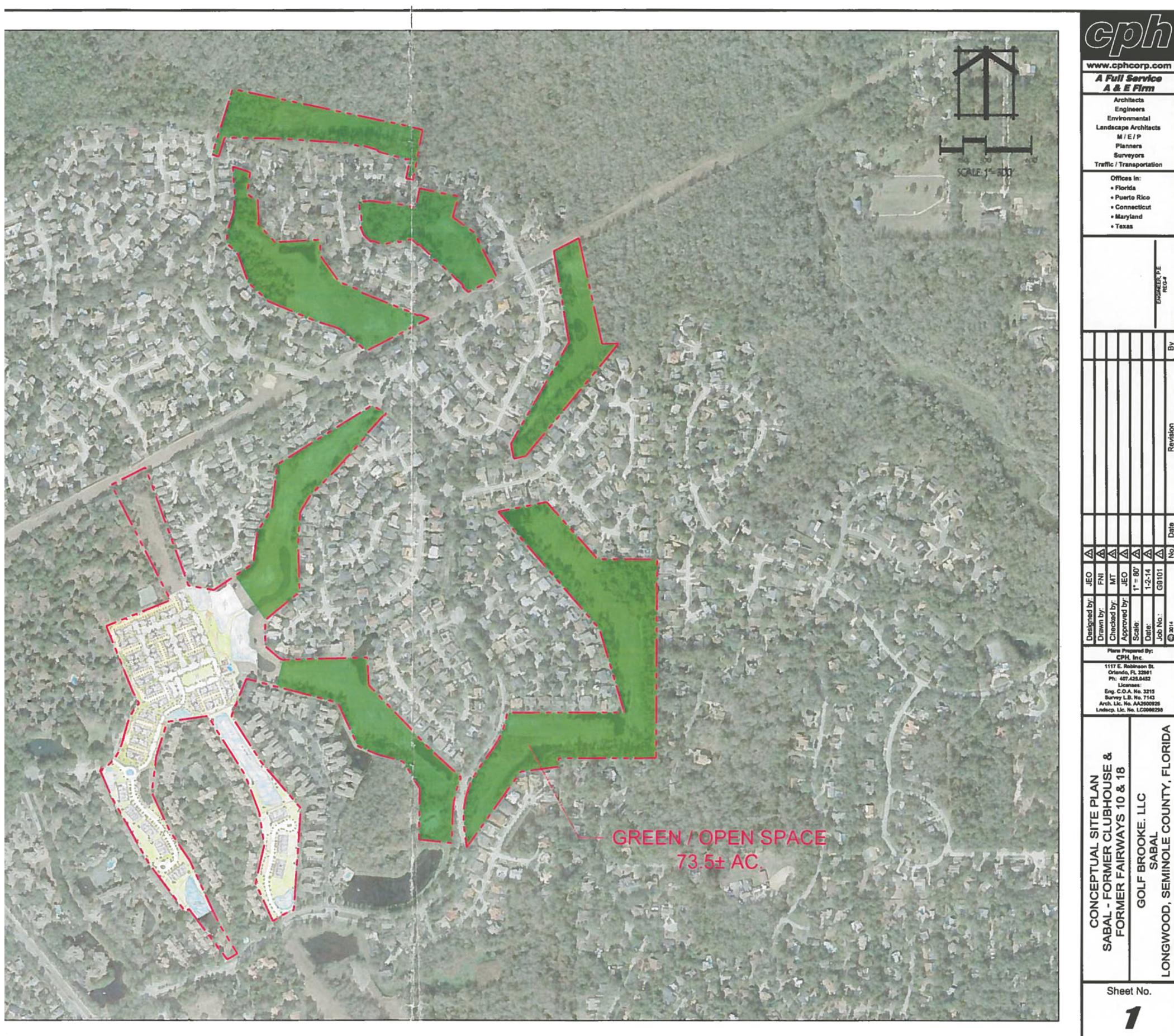
## Rich Harvest Farms – Sugar Grove, Illinois

- Private landowner amassed 1,820 acres of farmland
- Built one hole to satisfy his personal desire/passion of golf course architecture
- Eventually added two new holes, then three more, bringing the total to six holes
- A creative layout of tee boxes allowed the six holes to be played as 18 unique holes
- Done so well, the course was elected to host the 2009 Solheim Cup (the LPGA's Ryder Cup equivalent), a very prestigious honor for such a unique and “untraditional” golf course

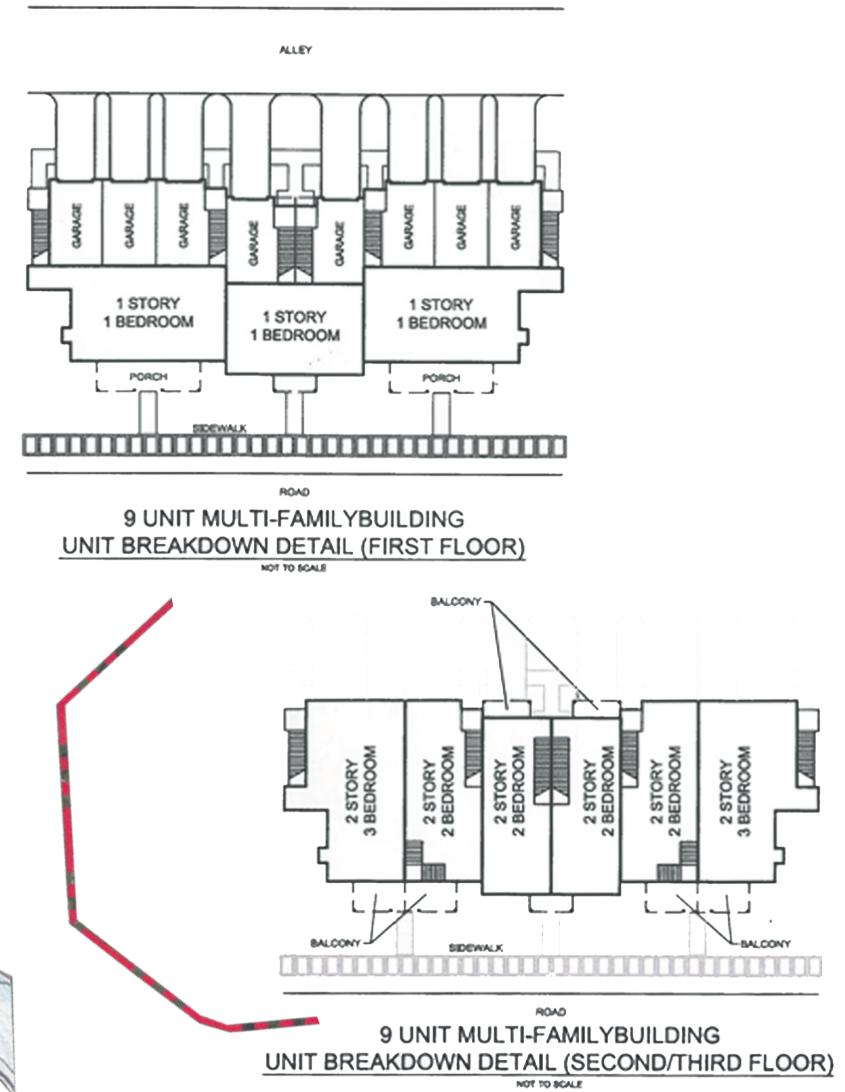


## Sabal Point Golf Course – Seminole County, Florida

- Closed in 2006
- 286 multi-family units being developed at previous clubhouse location and hole numbers 10 and 18.
- 3 holes were purchased by assisted living facility within the community
- 73.5+/- acres of remaining green/open space was taken “offline” for conservation and/or stormwater management; no golf was retained
- Took nearly eight years to arrive at the following land plan
- Now in the Implementation phase; construction expected to begin this year
- Source: CPH, Inc. - Sanford, Florida



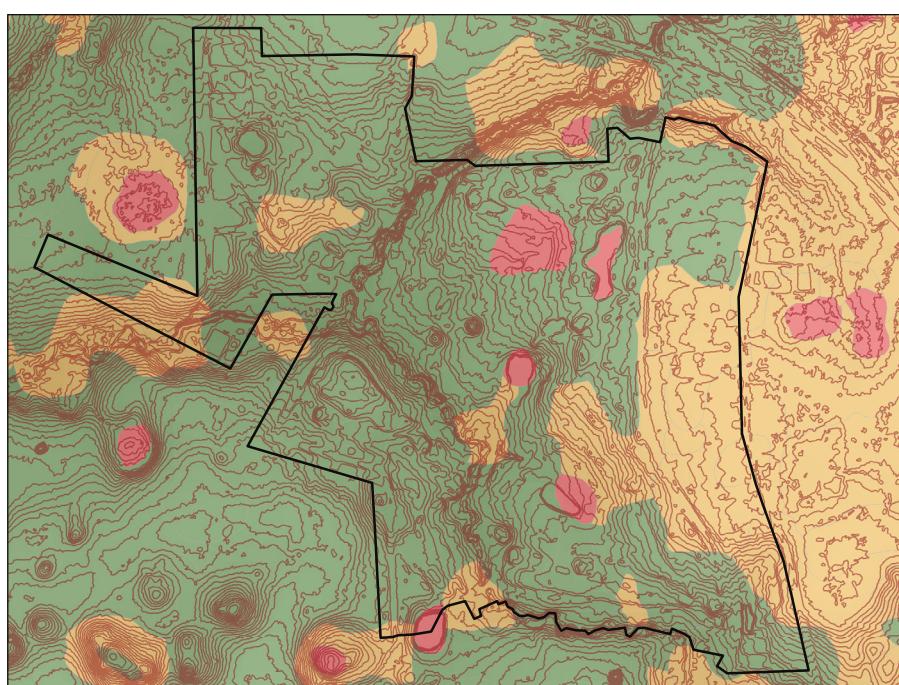
<u>BUILDING PROGRAM</u>	
MULTI-FAMILY / APARTMENTS	240 UNITS
SINGLE-FAMILY / TOWNHOUSE	46 UNITS
TOTAL UNITS	286 UNITS
LAND AREA CONSISTS OF FORMER CLUBHOUSE AREA AND FORMER FAIRWAYS No. 10 AND 18.	



Typical 60' minimum landscape buffer adjacent to existing residential; provides sense of privacy and helps to ease the "not-in-my-backyard" challenge.

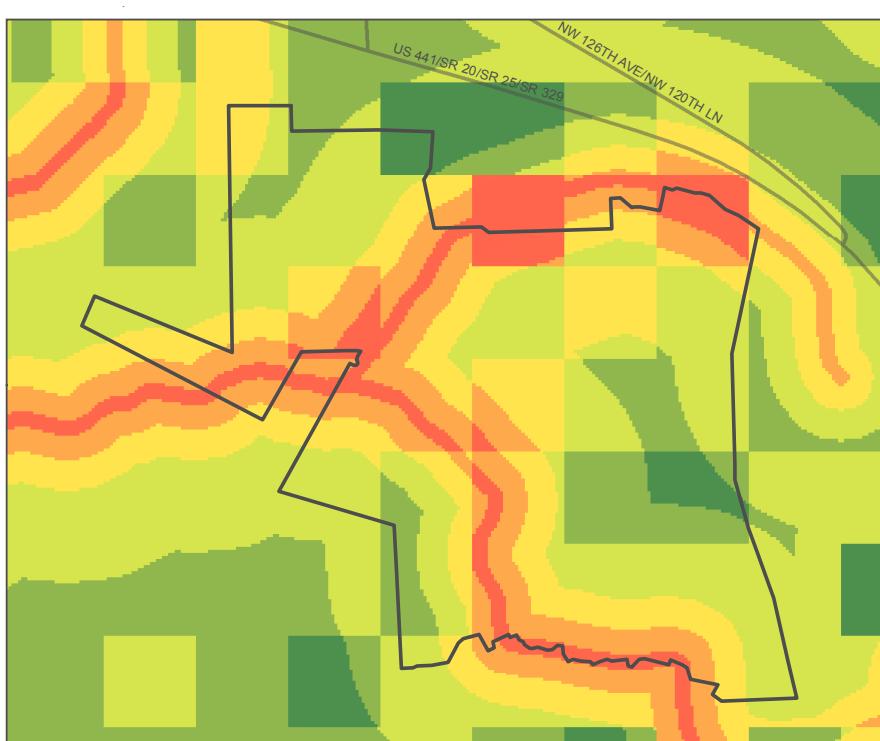
Note:  
areas with low canopy cover can be planted to increase privacy, improve microclimate, provide numerous ecological benefits, as well as the possibility of being utilized as a walking/biking trail corridor

## Environmental Inventory and Analysis



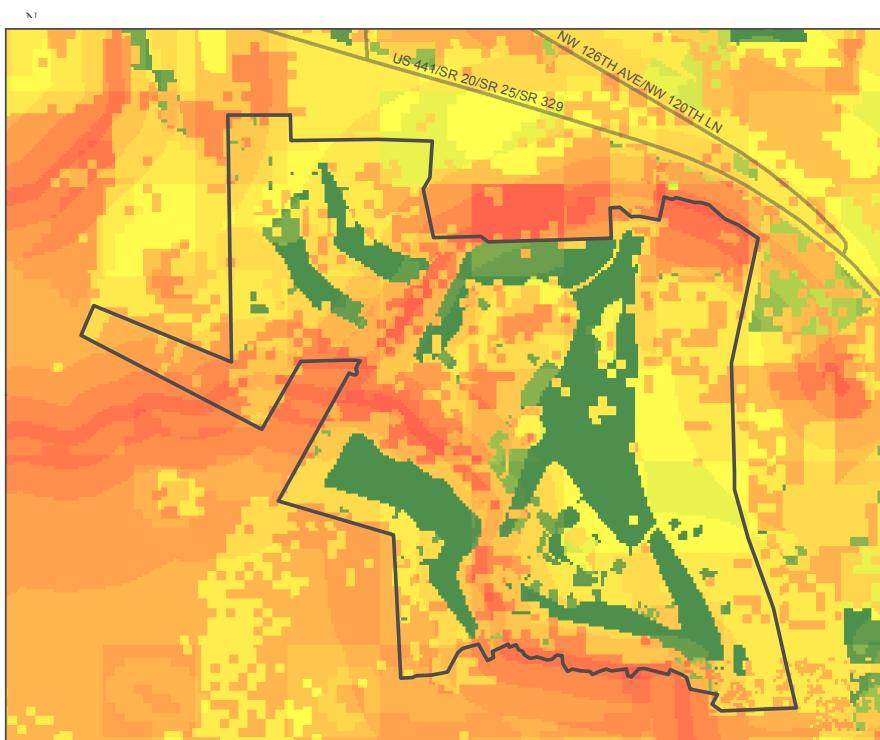
### *Soil & Drainage Suitability*

Over 90% of the site has sandy, well-drained soil, suitable for a wide range of opportunities. It is unclear as to whether there would need to be any major soil remediation before allowing agriculture to be planted on a golf course parcel. Further soil testing would need to be done in this case.



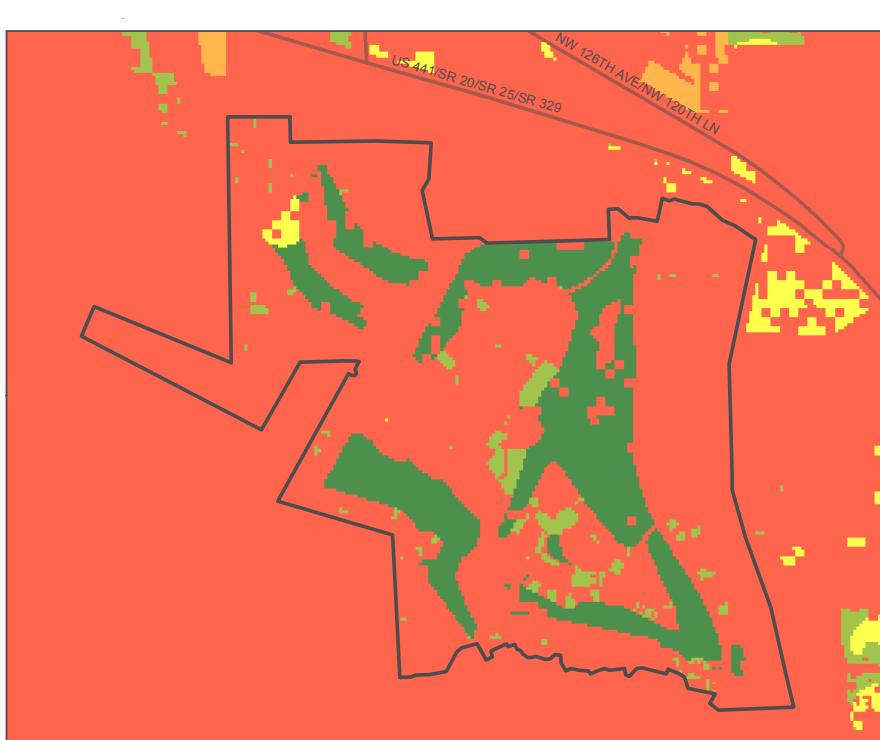
### *Critical Areas for Runoff Mitigation*

Establishing a runoff mitigation buffer helps to determine the areas where exceptional stormwater management efforts should be made to protect water quality. In this case, Turkey Creek eventually finds its way to an aquifer recharge area within the San Felasco Preserve. Water quality protection is of the upmost concern for any plan moving forwards.



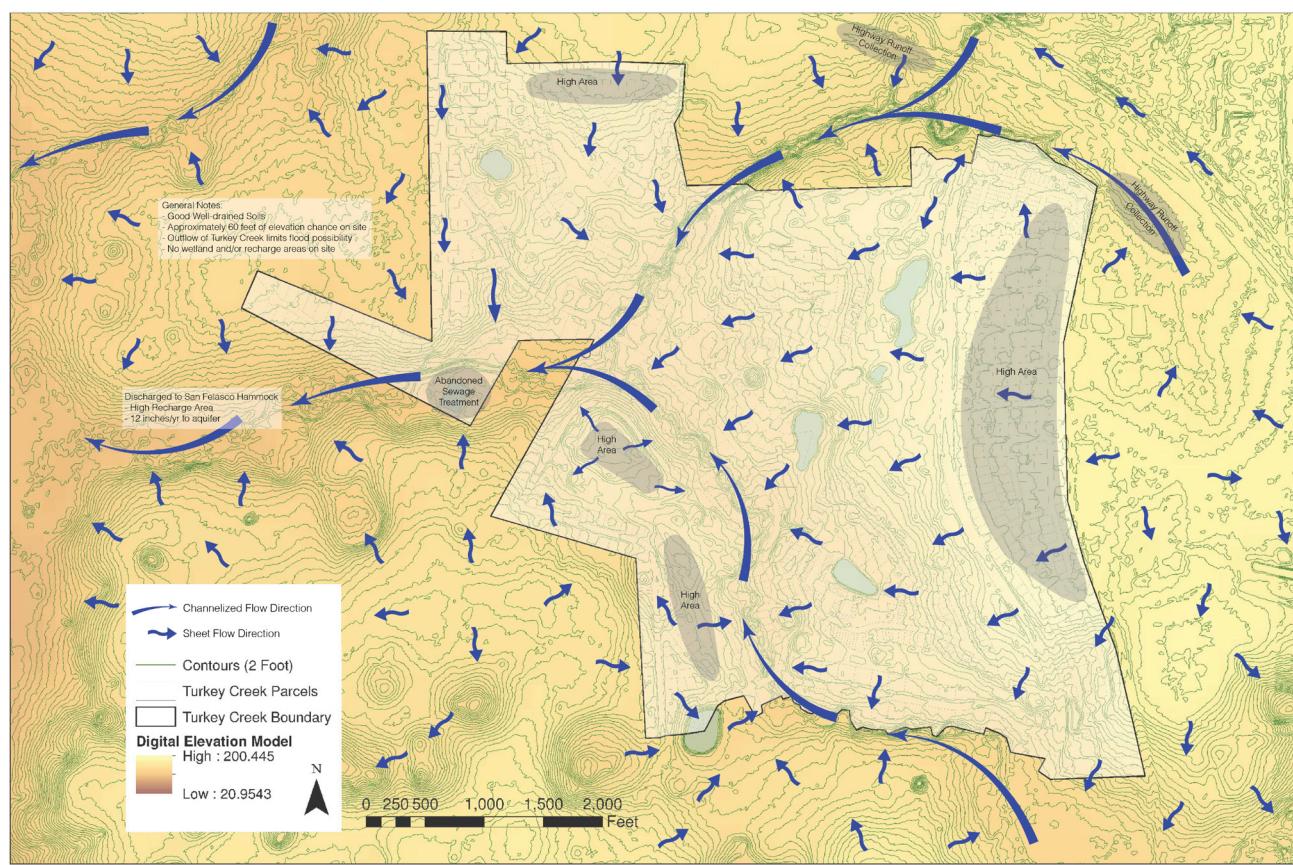
### *Areas Suitable for Community Agriculture*

Based on soil drainage characteristics and sun exposure, the dark green areas are the prime areas for community gardens (pending soil quality tests).



### *Areas Suitable for Active Recreation*

Overlaying soil characteristics with land use data and open space provides a visual of the gross open green space that is available for active recreation.



## Topography & Drainage

With very little culvert piping, the community relies on grass swales to convey water as it moves down approximately 60 feet of elevation towards Turkey Creek. Considerable stormwater management issues may need to be considered depending on the level of future development (if any)

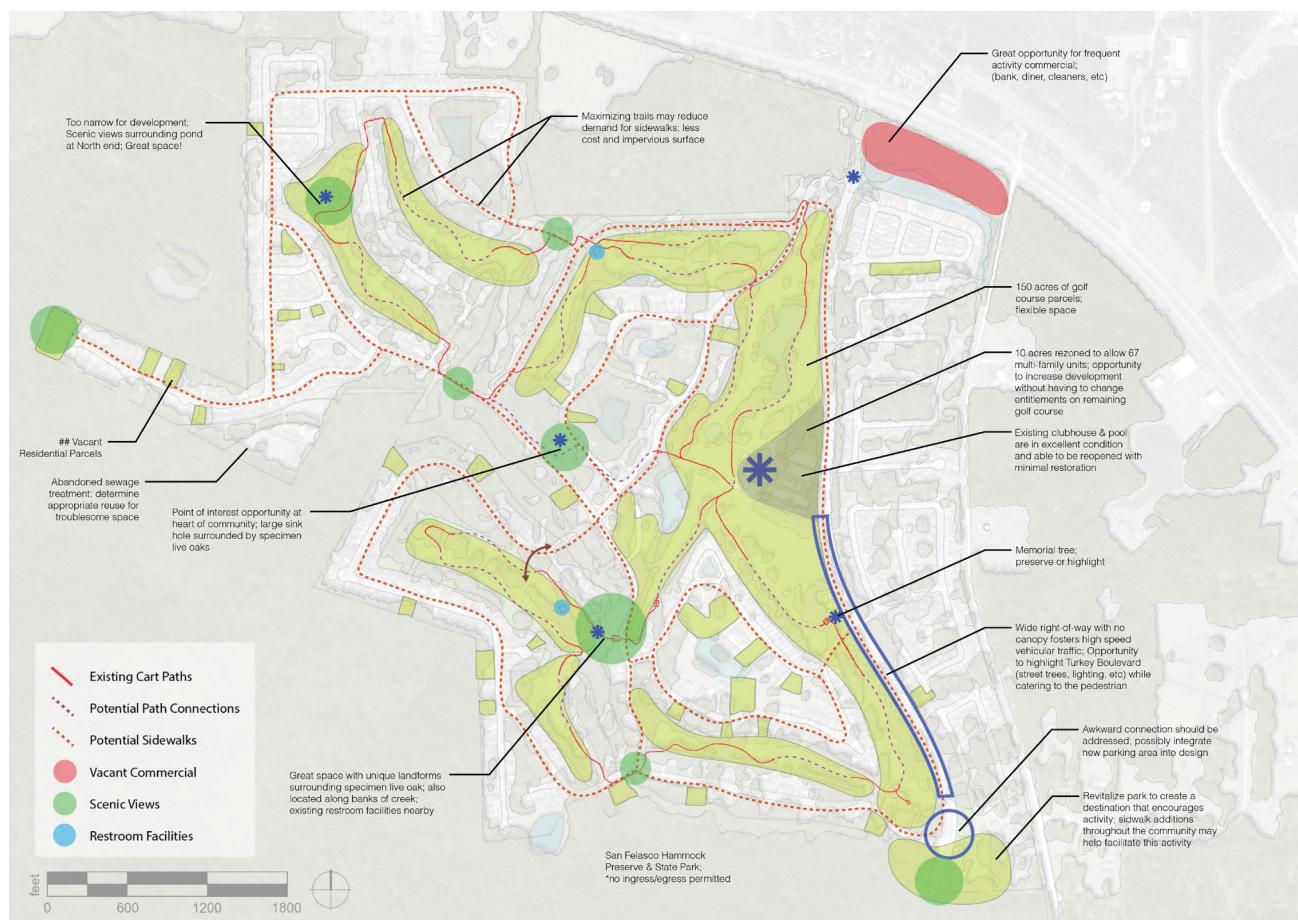
## Tree Canopy Cover

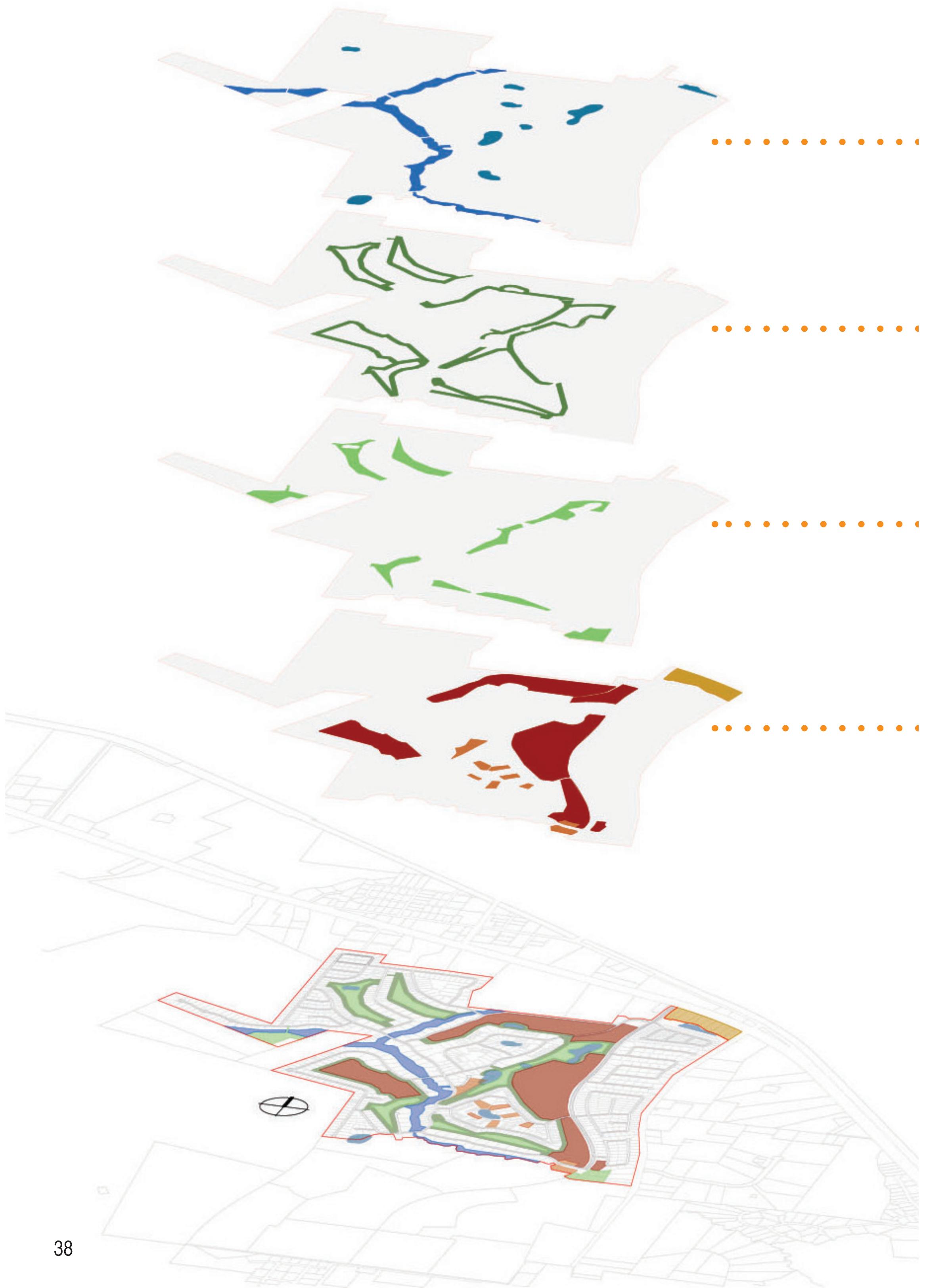
It's important to remember that even though golf courses are seemingly wide open spaces, there is still typically an abundance of tree canopy cover. This should definitely be taken into consideration when developing a final plan.



## Site Visit Inventory

Walking the entire site provided me with the opportunity to see first-hand a number of the scenic views and wide vistas offered by Turkey Creek, and the surrounding golf course, and the community.





## Systems Layering Analysis

Four distinct systems that provide a framework for all land plan scenarios

Hydrology; **33.6 AC**  
existing stormwater detention and stream corridor

Water is sacred, especially in Florida. It is critical to protect these areas, regardless of the land plan outcome. Utilizing these areas as amenities could improve the aesthetics and health of the community while also shedding light on important environmental issues

Landscape Buffer / Potential Trail Corridor;  
typical 60' minimum from all existing residential **42.8 AC**

A crucial layer to the system. It serves multiple functions from ecological services and wildlife habitat, to providing a sense of privacy from any potentially intrusive development. This area also serves as a potential corridor for walking/biking trails and greenway connectivity

Net Open Green Space;  
not suitable for development **32.0 AC**

Once the buffer has been established, the remaining golf course parcels are evaluated for development suitability, based on size/width, location within the community, and ease of access from existing roadways. Any space that does not meet the minimum requirements is designated as potential open green space or outdoor recreation

Gross Buildable Area;  
suitable for development **82.2 AC**

Finally, once the previous systems have been identified, the remaining space is all of the area that meets minimum requirements for development. It is important to note that all of this space is not intended to be built on, it is simply recognizing all of the areas that are suitable for development. After all, we want to preserve green space throughout this process. Higher densities with greater floor-to-area ratios (F.A.R.) is one way of achieving this goal

## Opportunities and Constraints

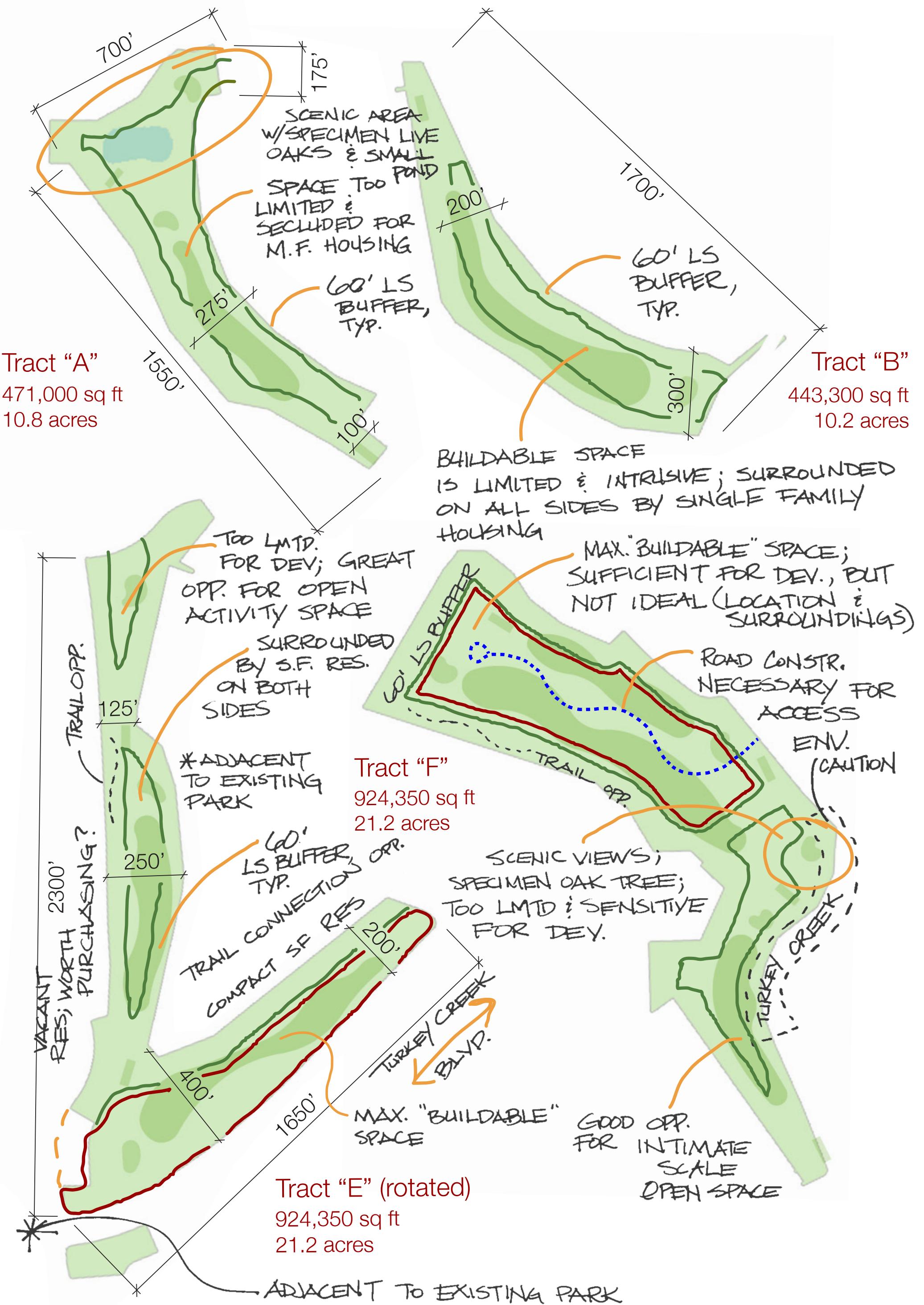
Golf tract “A” is an excellent area for open green space activity or even community gardens. The stormwater pond at the northern end is the centerpiece of a scenic landscape surrounded by specimen live oaks. The area (formerly the par 3, hole no. 14) has great potential for This tract’s limited space, remote location, and proximity to single family housing make it unsuitable for development.

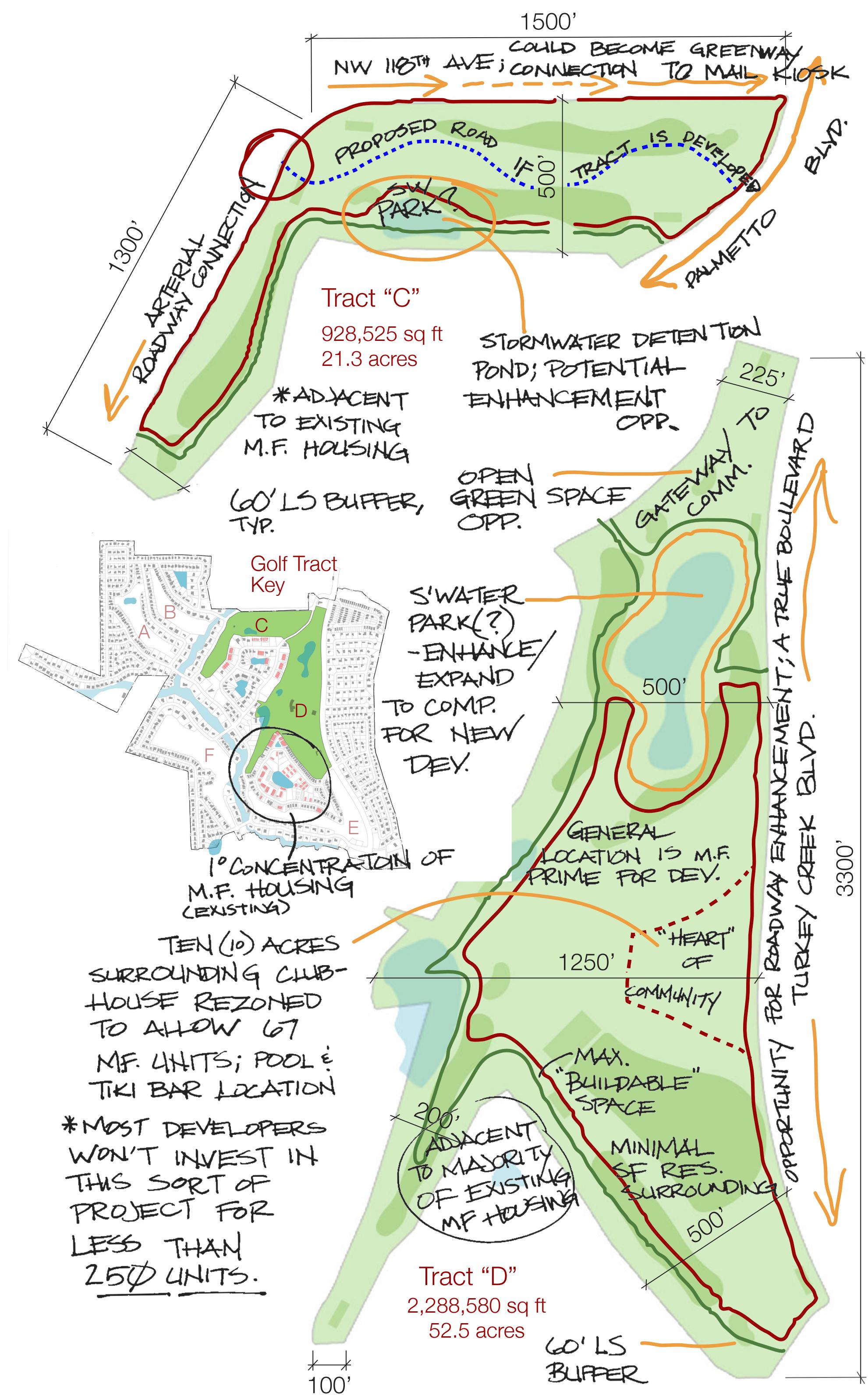
Tract “B” is very similar to “A” in it’s limited space and being surrounded by single family residential. Also, this tract in particular has very limited potential for vehicular access. Being adjacent to Turkey Creek makes this area an opportunity for becoming a node where multiple systems interact. Capitalizing on this may open up educational opportunities as well.

The eastern edge of tract “E” sits along the main entry drive, Turkey Creek Boulevard. Although the street lacks a bit of luster, it is in a prime position to become a scenic tree-lined boulevard that provides a real sense of arrival for residents and visitors alike. Proximity to the community entrance is a heavily weighted criteria when locating multi-family residential. Being located with frontage to the main entry drive, along with ample landscape buffer, and adjacency to existing multi-family residential makes this tract a prime candidate for development. Great lengths should be taken to preserve the natural character of the community and promote low impact development (LID) practices.

Tract “F” is very interesting with some of the more dynamic topography changes on site. Also located adjacent to Turkey Creek, this tract has a number of scenic view opportunities and is overall pretty flexible as far as its suitability. Vehicular access would not be an issue (with the construction of a new interior road), but being located so far from the community entrance makes this tract a less suitable candidate for proposed development. There is enough space to have double-loaded lots through half of the tract, but overall I believe this tract is better suited for outdoor recreation activities, dog parks, and other social programs. There also happens to be an existing restroom facility on this tract, making it an even better option for becoming a node of activity.







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## Opportunities and Constraints

Tract “C” is one of the primary options for future development. It is a rather large parcel with prime location near the entrance of the community. One option would be to construct a new road that was better aligned with existing roadways, which would also allow a portion of NW 118th Avenue to become a greenway trail connection to the Master Owner Association office and mail kiosk. This arrangement would also allow the new road to be aligned with residential lots on both sides (double-loaded) while still leaving ample landscape buffer between proposed and existing residential.

Being located on Turkey Creek Boulevard with close proximity to the community entrance makes tract “D” an excellent candidate for development. Its location at the perceived “heart of the community” with the existing clubhouse, pool, and tiki bar make this tract a subject of contentious conversation. With very little adjacency to existing residential, this tract is most definitely the primary location for future development. The 67 units that have been approved around the clubhouse area are a good start, but they are nowhere near what is needed to sustain the future of Turkey Creek Community and Golf Course. That few of units may be enough to help pay for the maintenance of the golf course as open space, but reopening the golf course in any form will certainly require year-round fiscal support from the community.



## Exploring the Options

Basic scenarios can be determined once the data and analysis has been gathered. These scenarios revolve around three main principals:

economic - amount of development

social - future of golf course space

environmental - amount of conservation

Additional considerations and detailed planning will come at a later time. For now, the goal is to evaluate the big picture scenarios and choose the most ideal for further exploration.

Maximum Development (>500 Units) No Golf - Limited Park Space
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Minor Development (250 Units) 18 Hole Golf
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Minor Development (250 Units) Reduced Golf
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Minor Development (250 Units) No Golf
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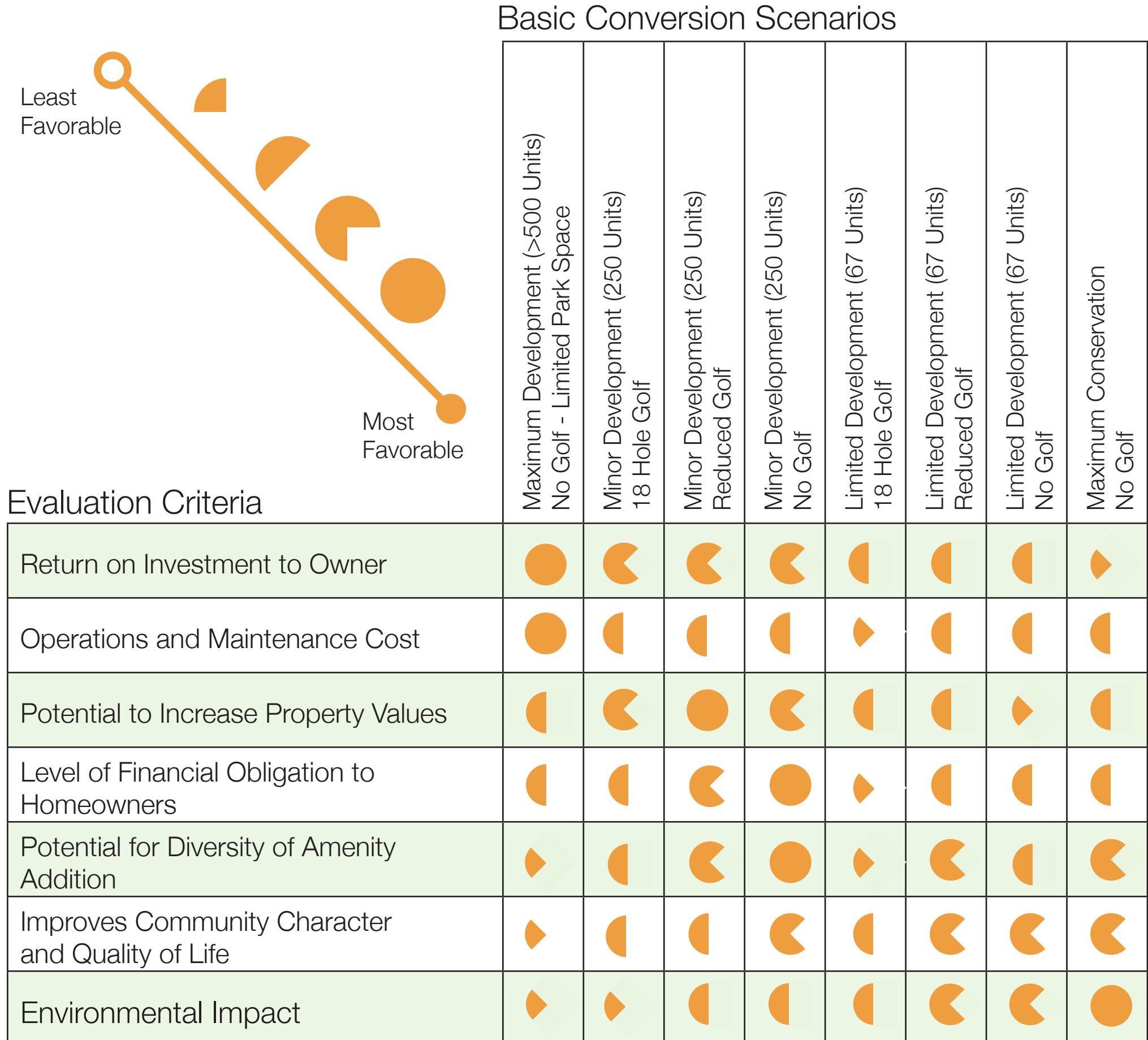
Limited Development (67 Units) 18 Hole Golf
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Limited Development (67 Units) Reduced Golf
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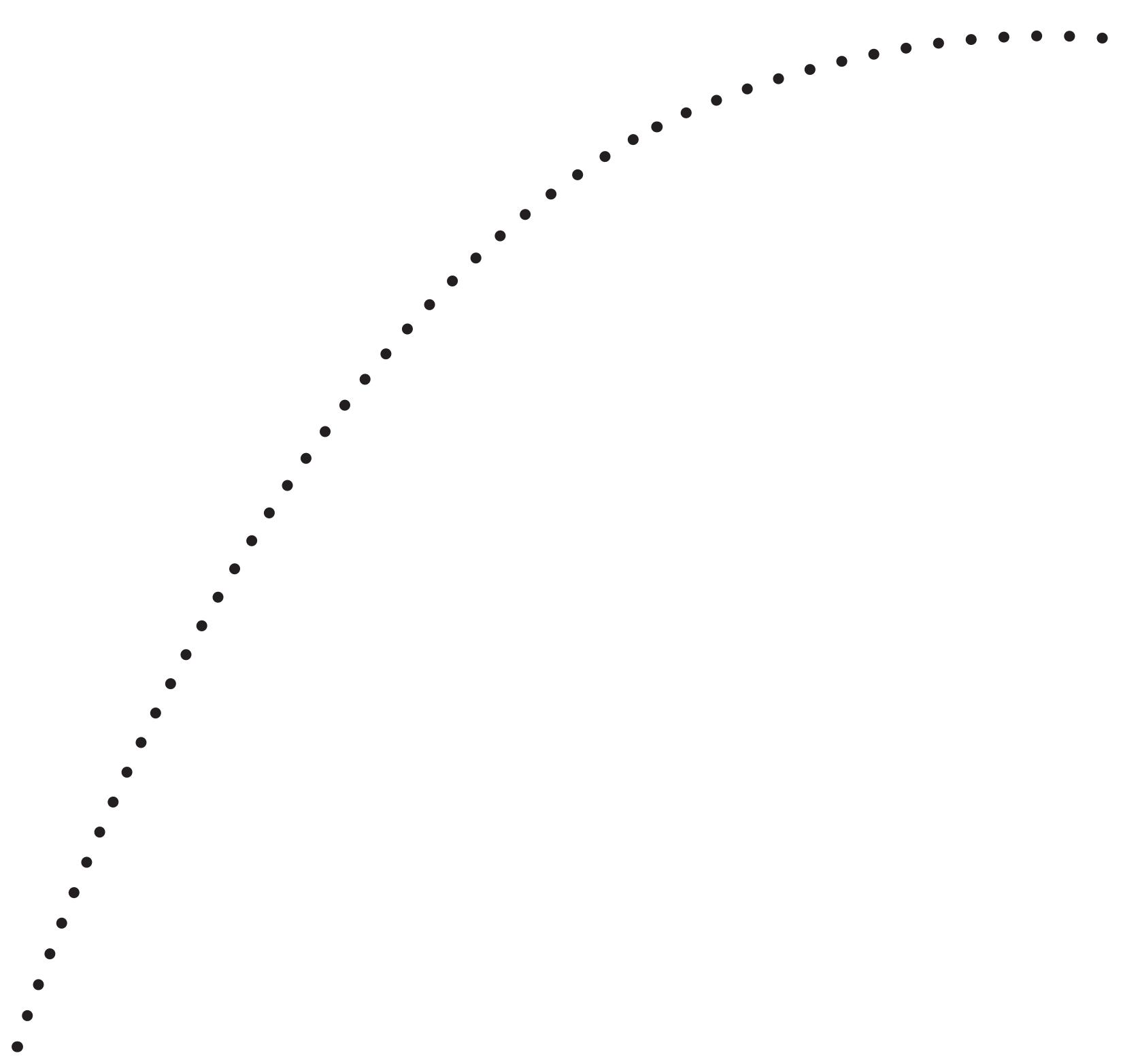
Limited Development (67 Units) No Golf
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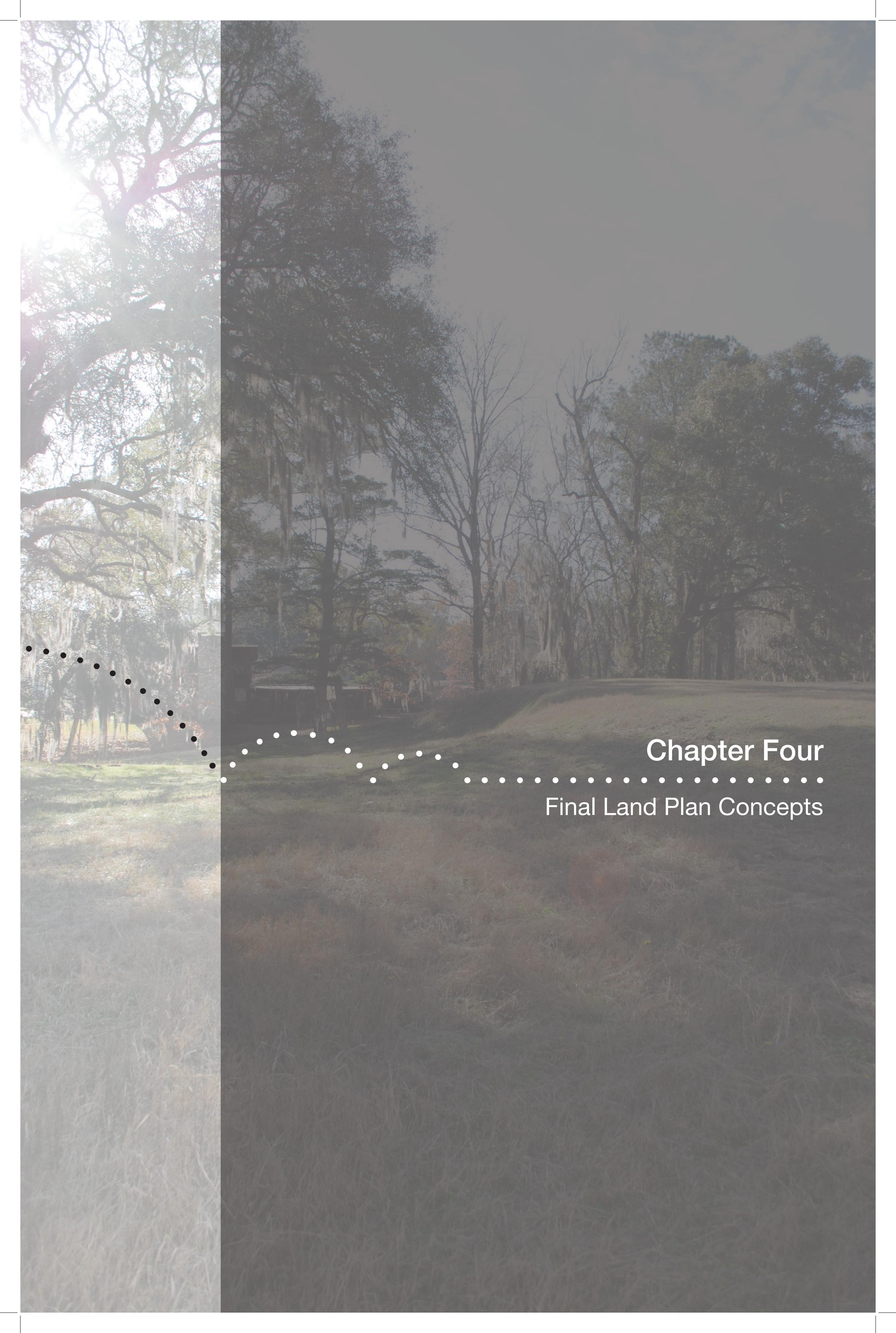
Maximum Conservation No Golf
---------------------------------

## The Matrix Loaded



Any proposed development beyond the 67 pre-approved multi-family units will require significant government approvals, but it may be worth the effort in order to ensure the sustainable future of Turkey Creek Community. If done carefully and with attention to detail, minor development can be accomplished without diminishing the environment or community character, and quality of life will only increase.





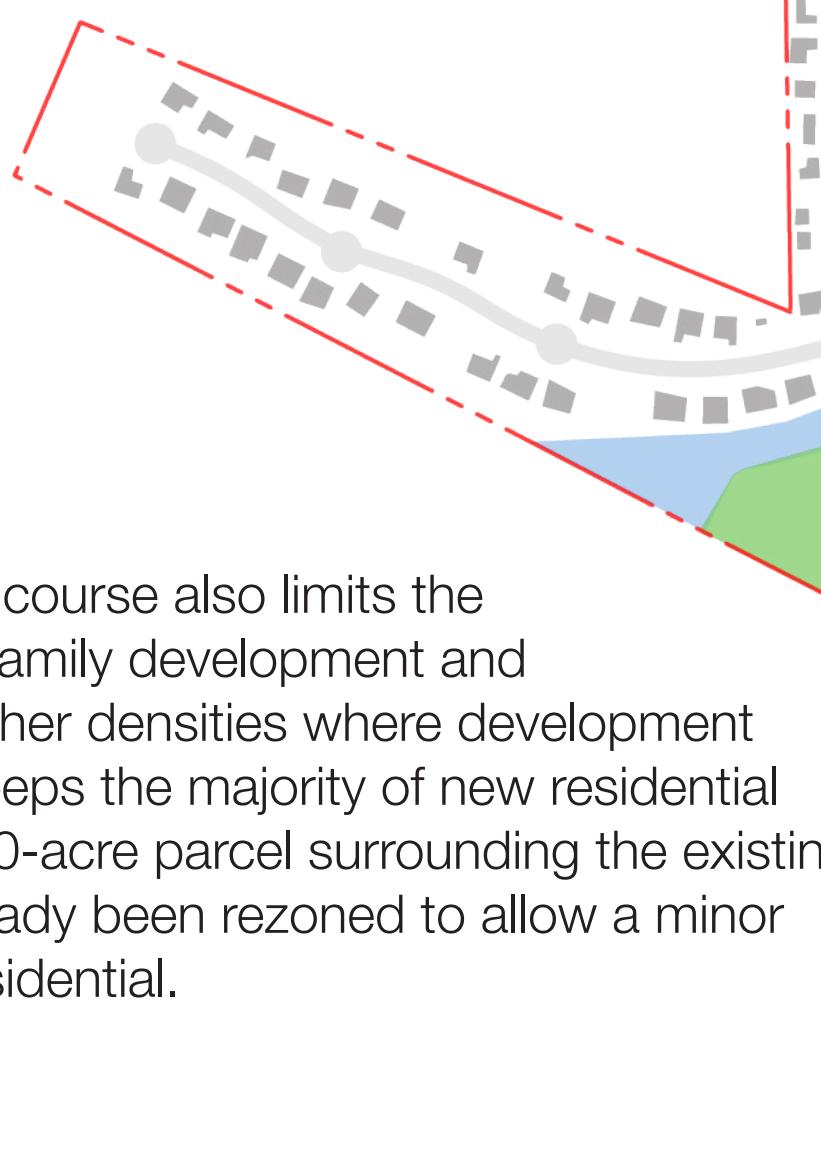
## Chapter Four

Final Land Plan Concepts

## Land Plan Scenario One:

### Complete Golf Course + Limited Development

Considering the regional golf market analysis and desires of over 50% of residents, one solution is to reopen the entire 18 hole golf course. However, even with that level of support, this would likely prove to be a substantial financial risk for all involved. With the least amount of development, the success of this land plan relies heavily on the willingness of residents to support the operation of the golf course. This may come in the form of monthly fees and club spending minimums. The local golf market may not be enough to financially support this option on its own.



Reopening the entire golf course also limits the space available for multi-family development and subsequently requires higher densities where development occurs. This land plan keeps the majority of new residential development within the 10-acre parcel surrounding the existing clubhouse which has already been rezoned to allow a minor amount of multi-family residential.

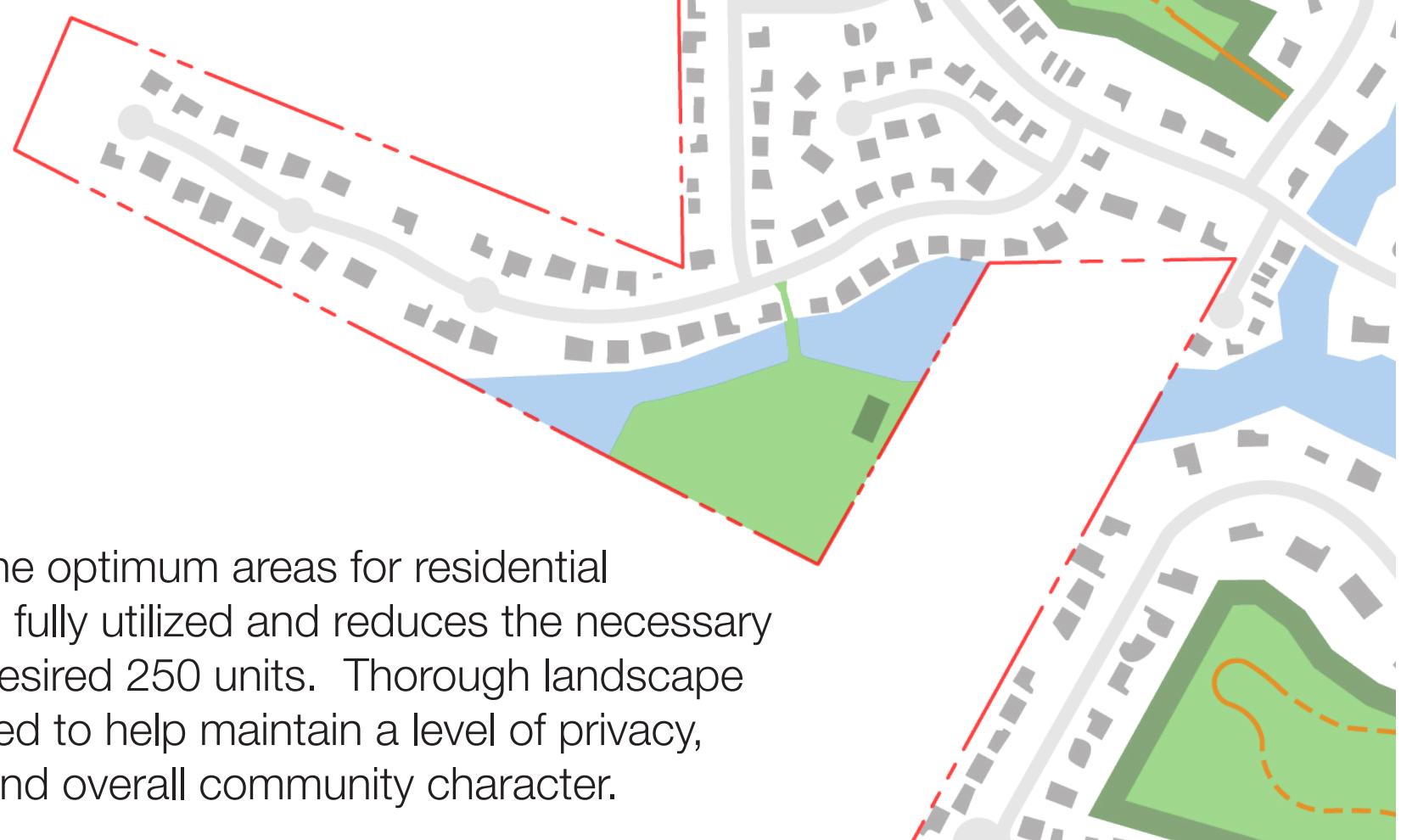
LEGEND	
	GOLF COURSE
	RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (250 UNITS)
	DENSITY UNITS PER ACRE
	OPEN SPACE / ACTIVE RECREATION
	LANDSCAPE BUFFER / PASSIVE RECREATION
	STORMWATER ENHANCEMENT AREAS
	COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT (OFF SITE)
	EXISTING CART PATH REUSE
	PROPOSED CART PATH / TRAIL CONNECTION





## Land Plan Scenario Two: No Golf Course + Minor Development

Choosing not to reopen the golf course is the most suitable option for maximizing the golf course owner's ROI while minimizing the amount of financial obligation to homeowners. Without the heavy burden of a golf course maintenance budget, residents would have the opportunity to experience a wide range of outdoor recreational activities, community gardens, dog parks, playgrounds, bike and walking trails, stormwater parks, and much more at a fraction of the cost. Financial support from the community will be needed for any option moving forward, but this option provides the greatest diversity of community activities at a minimal cost.



Also, In this land plan, the optimum areas for residential development have been fully utilized and reduces the necessary density to achieve the desired 250 units. Thorough landscape buffering would be utilized to help maintain a level of privacy, greenway connection, and overall community character.

feet 0 300 900 1500

GOLF COURSE	N / A
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (250 UNITS) <i>DENSITY UNITS PER ACRE</i>	36.4 ACRES 6.7
OPEN SPACE / ACTIVE RECREATION	62.2 ACRES
LANDSCAPE BUFFER / PASSIVE RECREATION	54.4 ACRES
STORMWATER ENHANCEMENT AREAS	17.2 ACRES
COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT (NOT ON SITE)	8.1 ACRES
EXISTING CART PATH REUSE	1.9 MILES
PROPOSED CART PATH / TRAIL CONNECTION	2.5 MILES

LEGEND

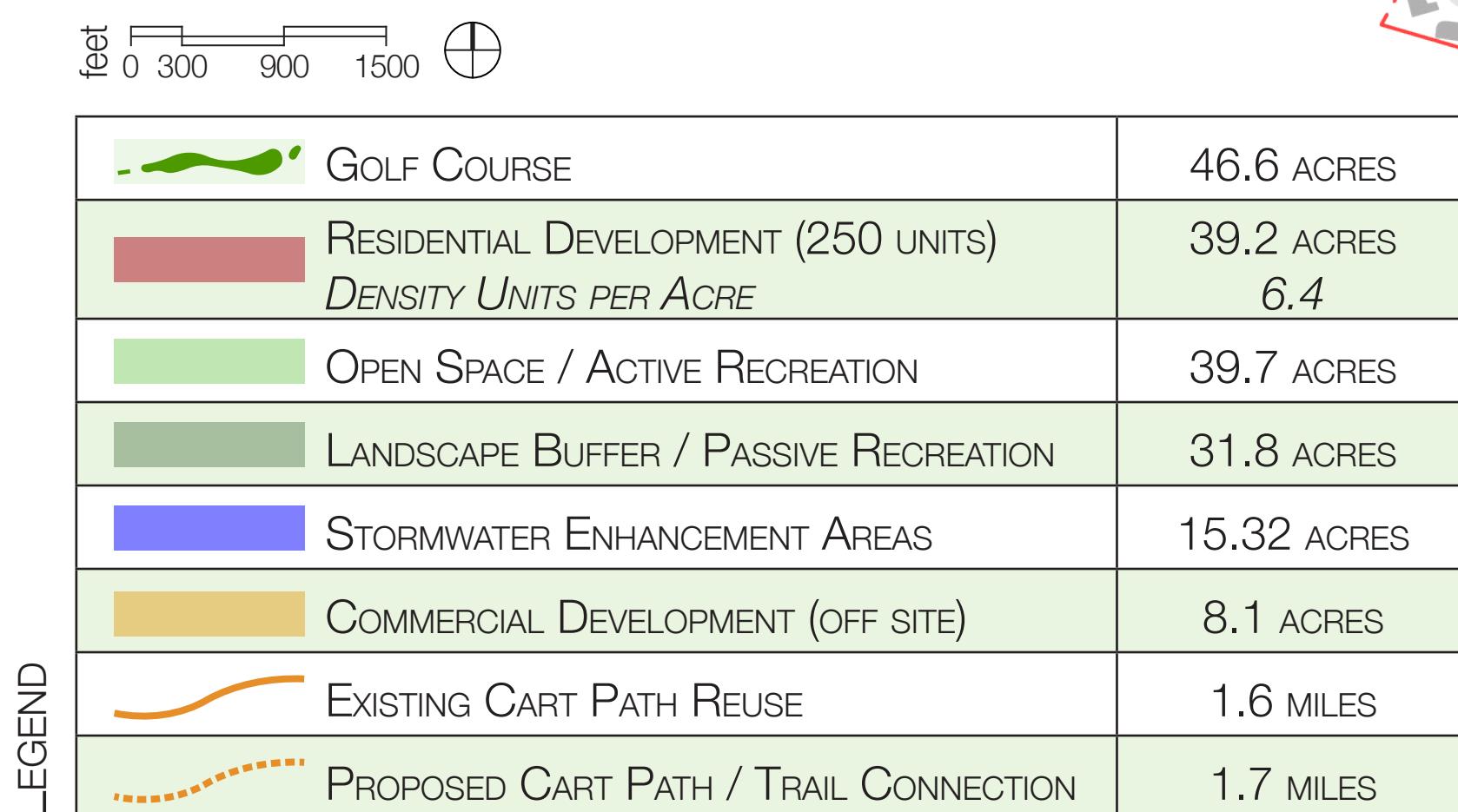


## Land Plan Scenario Three:

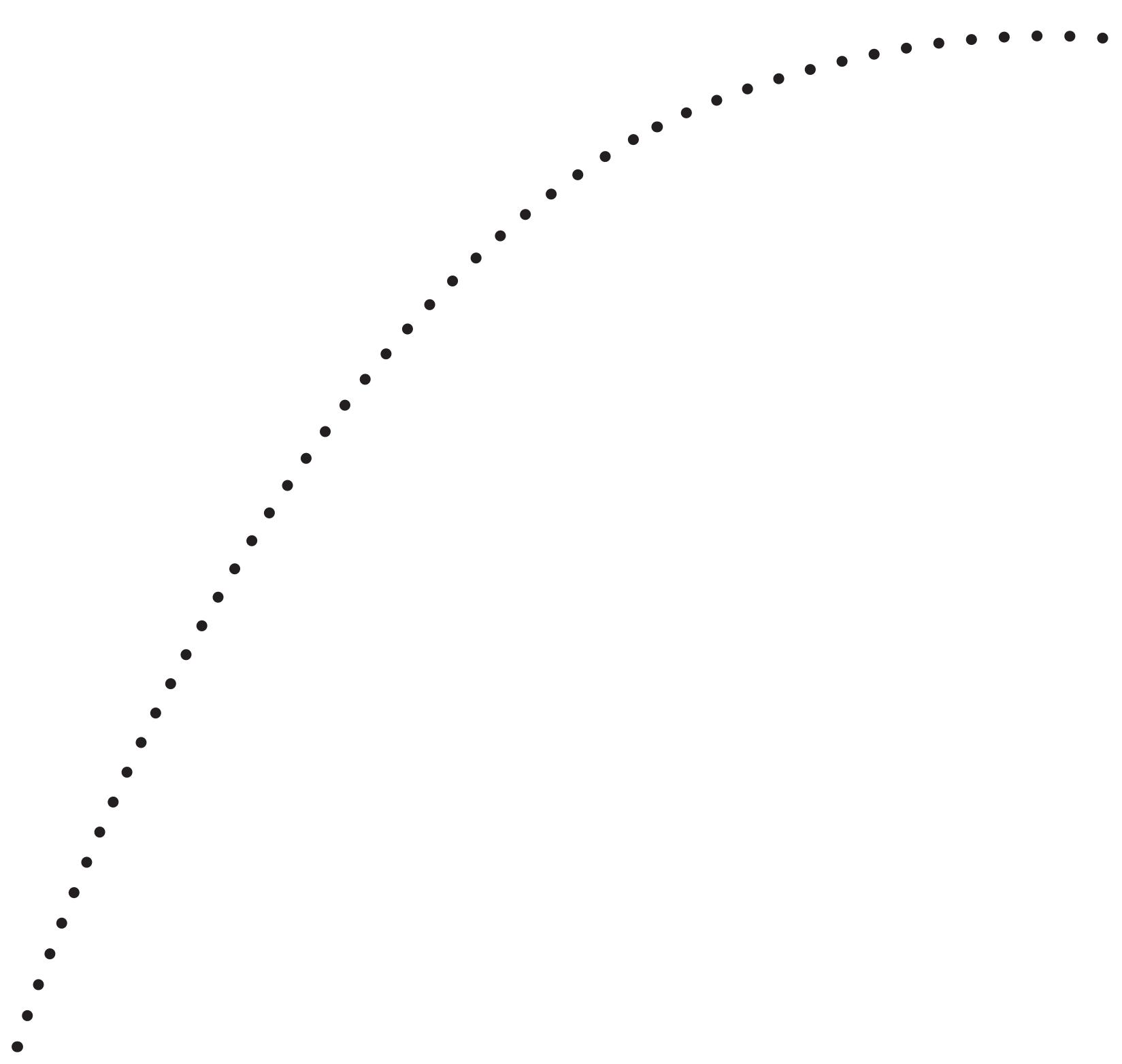
### Reduced Golf Course + Limited Development

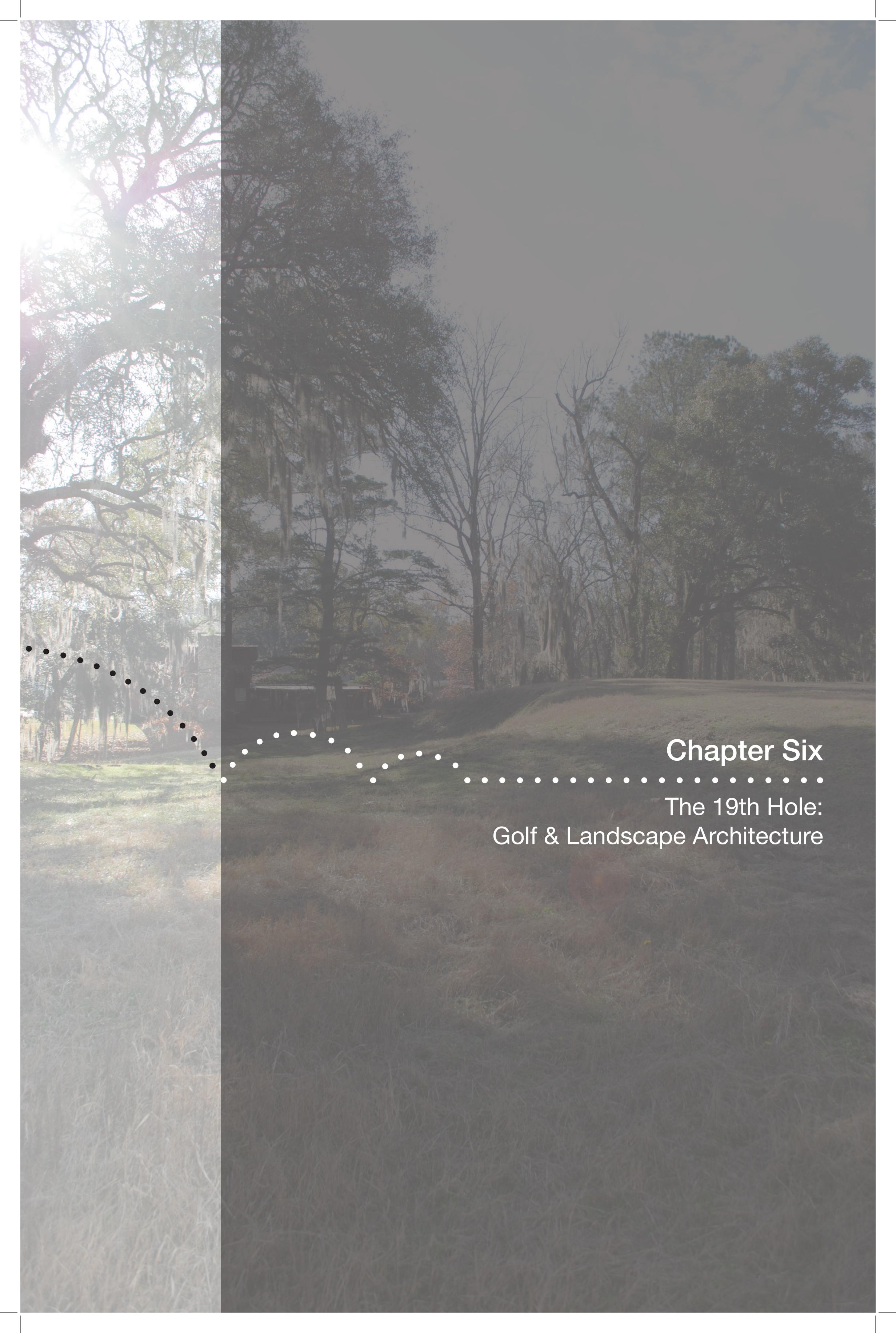
After considering every potential golf course routing option, and considering the optimum locations for residential development, scenario three focuses on a 6-hole golf course layout, which could be creatively designed to offer 18 unique golf hole experiences. This option is aimed to provide at least some level of golf amenity to residents, while also meeting the necessary space and density requirements for financial stability.

This land plan also repurposes over 70 acres of existing golf course. This open green space can be transformed into a wide range of amenity options (as mentioned in Scenario Two). Overall, this plan offers a wide range of amenities for the entire community to enjoy, including golf, as well as achieving substantial ROI for the owner and minimizing the financial obligation to homeowners.









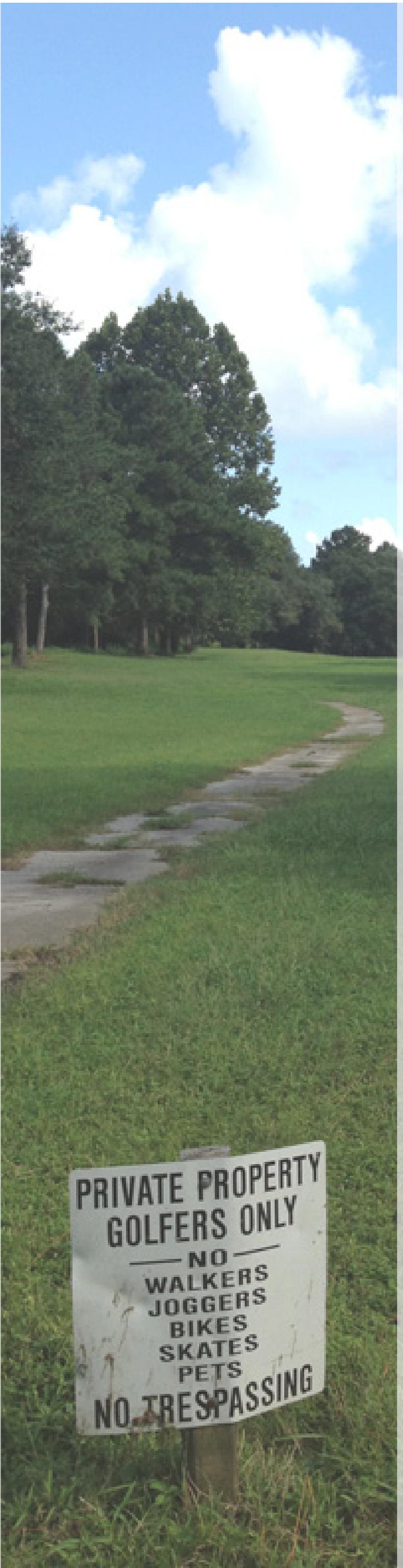
## Chapter Six

The 19th Hole:  
Golf & Landscape Architecture

As someone who spent four years working as a golf professional, and nearly twenty years as an avid player, it is no secret that I am passionate about the game of golf. Whether its the Boy Scout nature-loving side of me, or the athletic competitive side, I love the game and everything it has to offer. At the same time, I am fully aware of its flaws and still very unsure about the overall sustainability of golf courses in general. In the end though, I think golf is a tremendous asset to our youth, as it teaches many valuable lessons and can easily transcend any background or economic status. It is still the only sport I know of where you call penalties on yourself.

I am interested in growing the game, not growing golf courses.

With that said, I hope to see a shift in the mindset of our golfing world, where it is perfectly acceptable (and common) to play a four, five, eight, or eleven hole golf course. The best of the best championship golf courses are not going anywhere. However, the one in your backyard may be the next to go belly up. What would you want to have in your backyard if the golf course closed? Now, imagine asking that same question to 1,200 residents and trying to come up with a single solution that works for everyone. The process can be a challenge, but the rewards are well worth it. Let the golf course be your communities connecting fabric, not a segregating barrier. Regardless of the outcome, the key is to remain cooperative and open-minded to the possibilities throughout the process.



With an open-minded and straight forward approach to the problem, the complex issues being faced by so many golf courses can be logically evaluated in order to make the best decision for the greatest good.

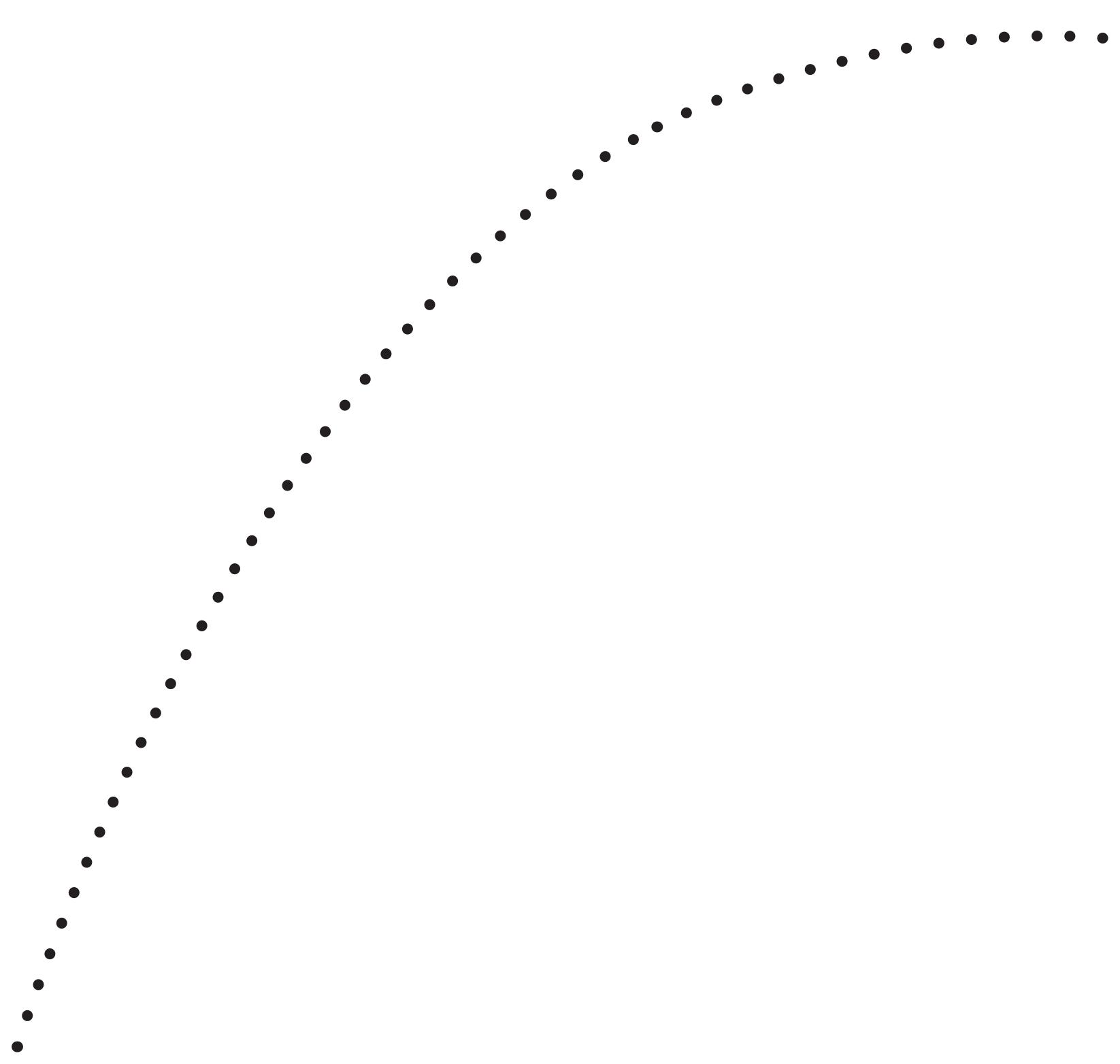
Golf is not dead, it's just on a market-induced diet.

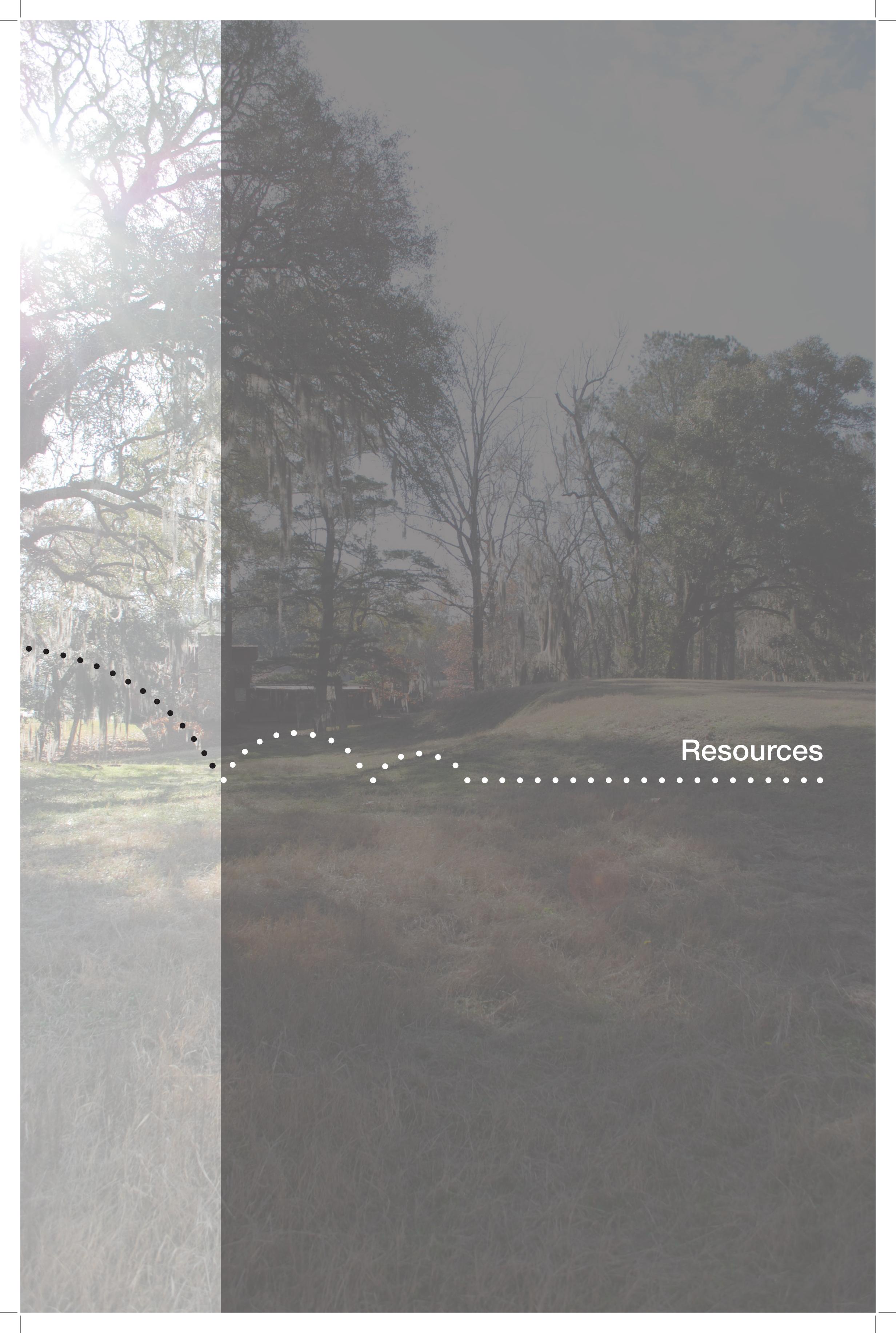
With approximately 100+ golf courses closing every year in the United States, we should aim to “keep the pounds off” and learn from our mistakes while looking at creative and responsible ways to repurpose, or convert, defunct golf courses.

This project was focused on the creation of a model, or “tool kit”, that can be applied to any one golf course community facing similar circumstances. By systematically identifying the issue(s), developing a wide range of possible solutions, and evaluating the solutions with criteria responsive to the issues, I was able to develop three conceptual land plans that will be useful in facilitating thoughtful discussion.

Experiences as both a golf professional and in school have taught me many invaluable lessons, including what it will take to become a successful landscape architect, and I am truly excited to see what my future holds.







## Resources

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## Listing of All Resources to Date:

- Rules and Governing Documents – Turkey Creek Master Owner’s Association
- Ordinance 07-06 – City of Alachua
- Interview – Wallace Cain, Golf Course Owner
- Interview – Walter Smith, Former General Manager
- Interview – Sarah Beavers, Manager of TCMOA
- Excellence Restored: A Guide to Golf Course Renovation – American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA)
- An Environmental Approach to Golf Course Development – ASGCA
- Building a Practical Golf Facility – ASGCA
- Turkey Creek Real Estate Analysis – Mike Sullivan via YouTube.com
- Alachua County Property Appraiser (Parcel / Property Data)
- Alachua County Department of Growth Management (Land Use, Zoning, Comp. Plan, etc.)
- How great is the new Bandon Preserve 13-hole course? – CBSsports.com
- Rural Redfield club grows to rare, 10-hole golf course – AberdeenNews.com
- Origin of the 18 Hole Round of Golf – United States Golf Association
- A Golf Course Experiment: Why Not Five, Seven, 12 Holes? – Wall Street Journal
- Interview – Bob Griffioen, Owner of Island Hills Golf Course (case study)
- E-mail Correspondence – Erik Larson, Larsen Golf Architecture President, ASGCA Past President
- Professional Team Strategy for Repositioning Properties Associated With Golf Courses in Today’s Markets – EDSA / Dave Armbruster
- “The Original Six” - Rich Harvest Farms
- The Pellucid Perspective & State of the Industry Report – Pellucid Corporation (Golf Market Research)
- Turning Golf Courses Into Parks – Governing.com
- Reclaiming Golf Courses – LandThink
- Taking Back the Fairways for Parks – Keith Goetzman
- Sabal Point Redevelopment Site Plan - Javier Omana; CPH, Inc
- Turkey Creek Golf Course Community, Market Analysis Reportt - Timothy Becker, LLC

A special thank you to all of the personal and professional contacts that aided me throughout the course of this project:

CONTACT NAME	COMPANY	TITLE
Wallace Cain	Turkey Creek Golf Course	Owner
Sarah Beavers	Turkey Creek Master Owners Association	Manager
Timothy Becker	Timothy Becker, LLC	Principal
Jeff Raimer	West Bay Golf Club / PGA of America - S. Florida Section	Director of Golf / Past President
Jim Koppenhaver	Pellucid Corp	Principal
Javier Omana	CPH, Inc.	Vice President / Planning Associate
Dana Fry	Fry / Straka Global Golf Course Design	Partner / Golf Course Architect
Erik Larsen	American Society of Golf Course Architects / Larsen Golf	Past President / President
Alex Kline-Wedeen	Rich Harvest Farms Golf Course	General Manager
Dave Armbruster	EDSA	Senior Partner
Marty Misner	Misner Realty / Turkey Creek Resident	Turkey Creek Resident
Randy Brown	Florida State Park Service	Park Manager - San Felasco Hammock