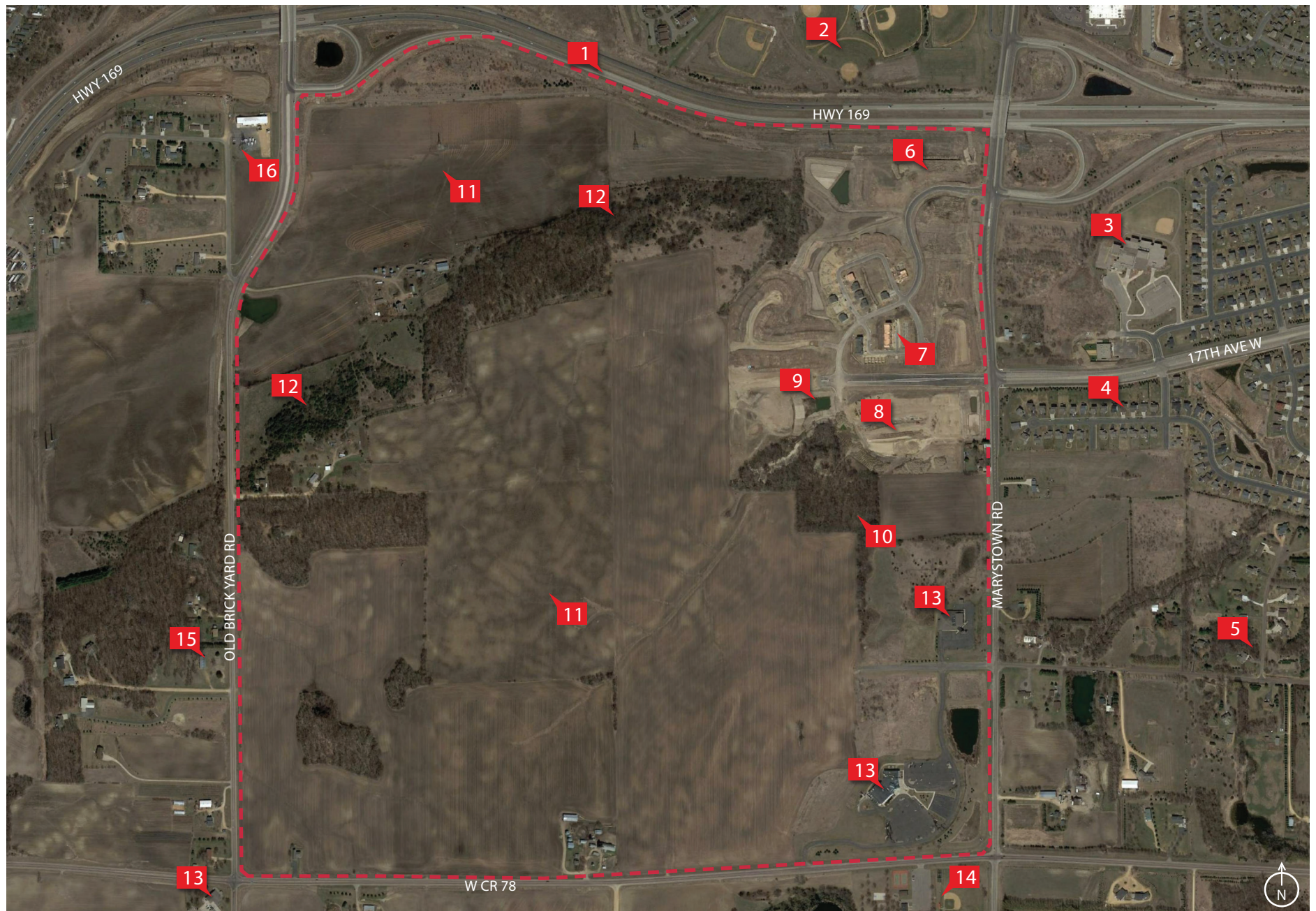


WINDERMERE PARKS

Address not yet identified



SATELLITE IMAGE SOURCE: ESRI

EXISTING PARK CONDITIONS (AND CONTEXT)

- 1 HIGHWAY 169
- 2 TAHPAH PARK
- 3 JACKSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 4 COUNTRYSIDE SINGLE FAMILY HOME NEIGHBORHOOD
- 5 GLEN ELLYN SINGLE FAMILY HOME NEIGHBORHOOD
- 6 CURRENT CONSTRUCTION - COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AREA
- 7 CURRENT CONSTRUCTION - RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- 8 CURRENT CONSTRUCTION - SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY
- 9 ENGINEERED STORMWATER POND
- 10 WOODED HILLY REMNANT
- 11 AGRICULTURAL LAND
- 12 WOODED BLUFF
- 13 CHURCH / PLACE OF WORSHIP / ASSEMBLY
- 14 JACKSON TOWN HALL AND TOWNSHIP PARK
- 15 RESIDENTIAL AND/OR FARMSTED LAND USE
- 16 INDUSTRIAL/COMMERICAL LAND USE

EXISTING PARK CHARACTER AND HISTORY

One of the larger-scale projects happening in Shakopee is an expansion of development in the southwest portion of the City. The Windermere area development is a development plan for an over 630-acre portion of the Jackson Township as part of the phased annexation of Jackson. To be composed of majority single-family homes arranged in curvilinear street layouts, there are commercial, light industrial, and mixed-use nodes planned to face the Highway 169 corridor to the north and Marystown Road and Old Brick Yard Road to the east and west, respectively. West County Road 78 bounds the development area to the south, with mostly residential land use planned with the exception of an existing church and potential small commercial node near the church.

Probably historically part of the greater pre-settlement Big Woods forest, this land has been heavily farmed for decades and is mostly agricultural with a few preserved natural areas due to their topographic nature. The most apparent feature is a great wooded bluff, almost one full mile in

length in the bounds of the development area. The top of the bluff is a high point in the area that provides sweeping views of the Minnesota River Valley, surrounding cities and townships, and a spectacular view of the Minneapolis skyline off in the distance, grounding the viewer in an inspiring sense of context within the City. Another part of this site that has been uniquely preserved is a small wooded hill (formerly a farmhouse location). This part of the site features the same view of the Minneapolis skyline inherently provided by the topography, but has the unique feel of being enclosed within a rich forest.

Zooming out to a City-wide scale, Shakopee's Natural Resource Plan generally outlines various goals for preserving, protecting, and enhancing natural resources within the city and provides guidelines and strategies for achieving those goals. Many of these goals are directly applicable to the Windermere area development, and are important to review while developing future development concept plans and plats. The mapping provided in the Natural Resource Plan illustrates the quality of natural resource areas in Shakopee, and reinforces the bluff in the Windermere area as a "better" and "best"-type resource in the city, with a buffer surrounding the bluff and corridors connecting the bluff to the greater natural environment context. The West End Land Use Plan also solidifies the preservation of the natural bluff. Some especially poignant goals call for the preservation/protection for the following: woodlands, vegetation for habitat diversity, wildlife resources, steep slopes/bluffs, and endangered species habitat, and corridors that can create connections for the natural environment. There are a handful of stand-out strategies provided for these goals that can be immediately implemented in the Windermere development area, including promoting the preservation of woodlands, preserve existing wildlife habitat and travel corridors, and using buffers and easements to preserve habitat and the integrity of steep slopes.

Some goals and strategies in the City's Natural Resource Plan also encourage promoting recreation opportunities for natural resource observations. The opportunity to incorporate natural resource protection, preservation, and allowing for low-impact access to these natural areas is rich in the Windermere development area if appropriately planned for.

WINDERMERE PARKS CONCEPT PLAN

Adjacent established neighborhoods to the east of Windermere feature trail systems and a couple of neighborhood parks that offer traditional play structures for younger children. Shakopee High School and Jackson Elementary School are also just to the east of Windermere. Over Highway 169 to the north, Tahpah Park provides for state of the art sports fields, and a sidewalk trail system connects Tahpah Park to Lions Park, and the trail connectivity continues along the Drainage Way Trail. Opportunities for connection are ample here, but one of the greatest opportunities is to provide a more naturalized and natural-resource based experience for park and trail users in this portion of the City.

OVERALL WINDERMERE CONCEPT PLAN

Because of the overall size of the Windermere development area, the site has been broken down into three sections for the purposes of parks identification and concept planning:

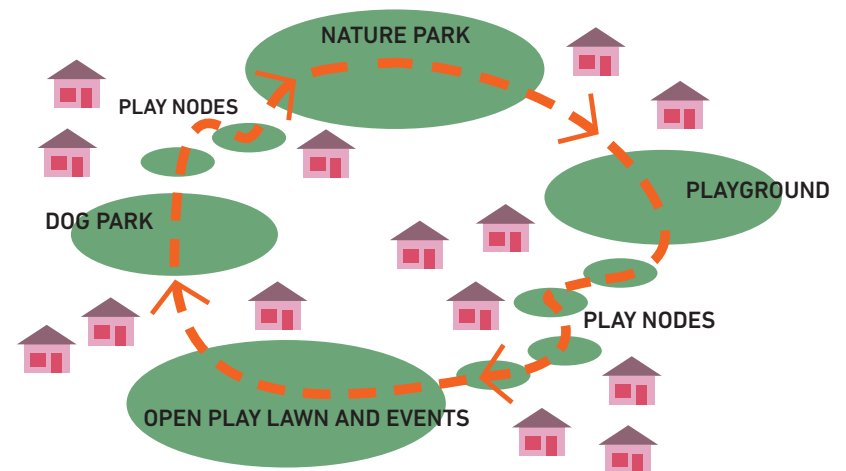
- » Windermere Central Play Park: a centralized active park that is rooted in nature play and immersion in a natural forest,
- » Windermere Bluff Park: a low-impact trail system for a recreational bluff experience featuring unique recreational opportunity.,
- » and the Windermere Green Spine: a connecting linear park interpreting the natural environment and providing for nodes of play throughout residential development.

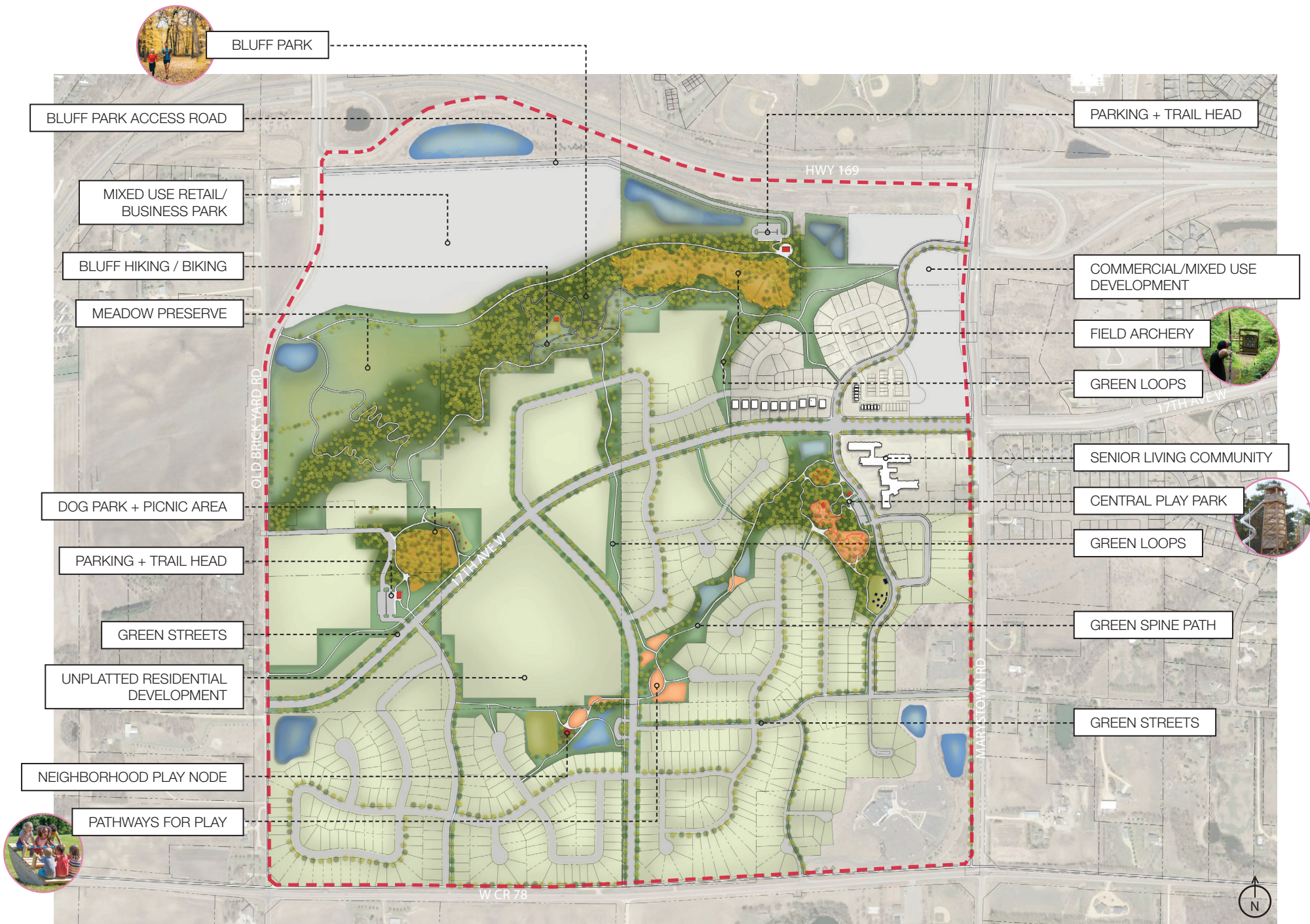
Though the site is broken down for concept planning at a more detailed scale, it is important to emphasize that the greater intent of the Windermere parks and trails concept plan is one of connectivity and intentional coordination of connecting green networks and spaces throughout this development as an example for future development frameworks in Shakopee. The past model of neighborhood development in the City has led to an existing park system where

most neighborhoods have had a small parcel dedicated to hosting a one or two amenity park space, such as a tot-style playground and a basketball half-court. As more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 3, these smaller parks serve the immediate neighborhood within a 10 minute or so walking distance, but don't feature enough amenity to encourage park use by those outside of the radius, can become one dimensional from the perspective of play and child development, and neighborhoods can "age" out of this model if and when there is a demographic transition.

The bigger idea that the Windermere Parks concept is presenting re-organizes the concept of neighborhood parks into a more connected network of green trails and more dynamic parks. Planning for larger amenity parks or playgrounds that serve a wider range of Shakopee residents in the area by featuring a more robust investment and variety of facilities creates an almost constellation-like network of facilities that are then connected through a green trail network woven throughout the greater development, with nodes along the path that provide play and respite along the way.

Connecting more expansive City and regional trail systems into this green network provides the greater community an opportunity to utilize this green network, weaving neighborhoods together and providing destinations for trail users.





WINDERMERE CENTRAL PLAY PARK



WINDERMERE CENTRAL PLAY PARK CONCEPT PLAN

Centered in a more active and mixed-use area of the Windermere development, the Central Play Park will balance innovative modern play concepts with gathering places for the surrounding community. Anchoring this northeast portion of the site at Highway 169 and Marystown Road will be a commercial node, a senior living community, single-family and affordable housing, as well as mid-density townhomes. With a bit more activity happening in this area, a park space should be activated with places to play and gather, with various looped trail options for local residents to enjoy and visitors to explore.

The Central Play Park at Windermere will feature premiere natural play and challenge play equipment for kids of all ages. Using the existing topography, a playful lookout tower anchors the northern end of the play portion of the park, giving children the opportunity to climb and overlook the Minnesota River Valley before sliding or climbing their way back down to the ground. Surrounding the lookout tower is the challenge play equipment - natural surfaces tracks for racing, boulder outcroppings built into the side of the hill for scaling, and other exciting active equipment that exercise the physical development for all age groups.

South of the challenge play within the greater play area is a nature playground rooted in activities that are more sensory, mentally challenging, and skill-building. Team activities such as constructing a shelter out of logs and sticks, solving nature-based puzzles, building castles out of soil and sand, or finding a comforting nest to silently observe others play from let children escape into the natural environment in an imaginative and engaging manner.

Setting these play areas in a wooded and topographically unique environment provides natural shade, enhances the nature play experience, and allows for the equipment and facilities to be integrated into the environment in a manner that adds a layer of connection and place to nature for children and their guardians who build these memories with them. Such a robust play experience would be a draw for those nearby and also from adjacent communities, working to weave the greater Shakopee

neighborhoods together here. An off-street parking lot would make visiting this park easier for those traveling from outside of the immediate neighborhood, removing parking from a busier set of adjacent streets. A shelter facility would provide restrooms and park information for visitors.

The south end of Central Play Park is already naturally cleared of most trees, and would be a great place for an open flexible lawn where the community can walk across the block to play catch, practice somersaults, host a senior yoga class, or establish a Windermere food festival with food trucks and vendor tents. This flex lawn would be one of two proposed outdoor "event" spaces in the Windermere area.

North of the play spaces and lookout tower is a picnicking area built within the wooded park, balancing between the more densely wooded area and the opened up pond area. A passive, woodland picnic experience is not found elsewhere in Shakopee, and is often not found outside of a campsite environment. This unique place of respite and gathering is available for residents across the street in the senior community, possibly for a weekly lunch excursion, for the greater residential community, or for a shady and cool place to take a break from the commercial area for visitors and workers in the area. Naturalizing and softening the edges of the highly engineered stormwater pond would provide a more aesthetic and pleasant overlook from the picnic sites, and build some buffer habitat in for species who may find resources in the stormwater pond.

Selective clearing, underbrush clearing, and invasive species removal will be a part of the preparation for the play and picnic areas. The green spine path begins in the Central Play Park, following a natural swale toward the southeast. See the following pages for the amenities featured along this green trail.

WINDERMERE GREEN SPINE



WINDERMERE GREEN SPINE CONCEPT PLAN

Central to the greater concept of the green spaces, parks, and trails within Windermere is a strong green spine. This green spine connects the Central Play Park to the Bluff Park in a looped manner, providing a lush green experience along its entirety.

The green spine features various sized nodes along its length to provide a unique and enriching linear park-like experience organized around a trail that follows the natural topography of the site. Starting at the Central Play Park, the trail traces a swale and weaves between stormwater feature ponds. The pathways for play stretch of the Green Spine begins here, with the first set of play nodes encouraging enriched play learning themed on water in the environment. A blue rubberized surface trail shoots off of the main path trail, inviting kids to chase and race each other down the “river” as they learn about how the Minnesota River flows alongside the City. At the end of this river path, a water play element allows children to have a hands-on experience playing and learning about water systems. Playful signage encourages interactions with lessons about stormwater ponds and naturalized buffer plantings that filter runoff before being captured in the ponds.

Moving further along the green spine, the next pathways for play node excites children about food systems and gardening. Alongside more traditional community garden plots are smaller plots where children can dig in the dirt, learn how food grows, and how gardening works. Children can run between and harvest berries with their families and friends, and make a direct connection with the food they eat and where it comes from, and how the land they now may live on was once used for farming. This food systems node is a part of a slightly larger community gardening and edible landscape open space, with plots for residents to garden together or care for a small orchard that they all share.

Making the first major street crossing, pedestrian markings complete with signage, rapid flashing beacons, and unique crossing paint creates a safe crossing. Once across the street, children find a series of pathways for play nodes that are all about music and sound. Outdoor musical equipment teaches how sounds are made with drumming, chiming, and even their own voices. The music play node also serves as the lively gateway to an

open park that functions in a more typical neighborhood park manner, with a modern play structure, park shelter, feature stormwater pond, and open play lawn sized appropriately for a pick up soccer game to serve the residential development on the west side of the Windermere area. Off-street parking in this park provides a safe way for those who would drive to the park a way to access the amenities here.

Green connections running in all directions through the greater development area add another layer of connectivity to the surrounding communities and within Windermere, setting aside land and reinforcing a green street typology to ensure long-term green corridors for resident enjoyment as well as to re-create habitat connections that have been lost over time.

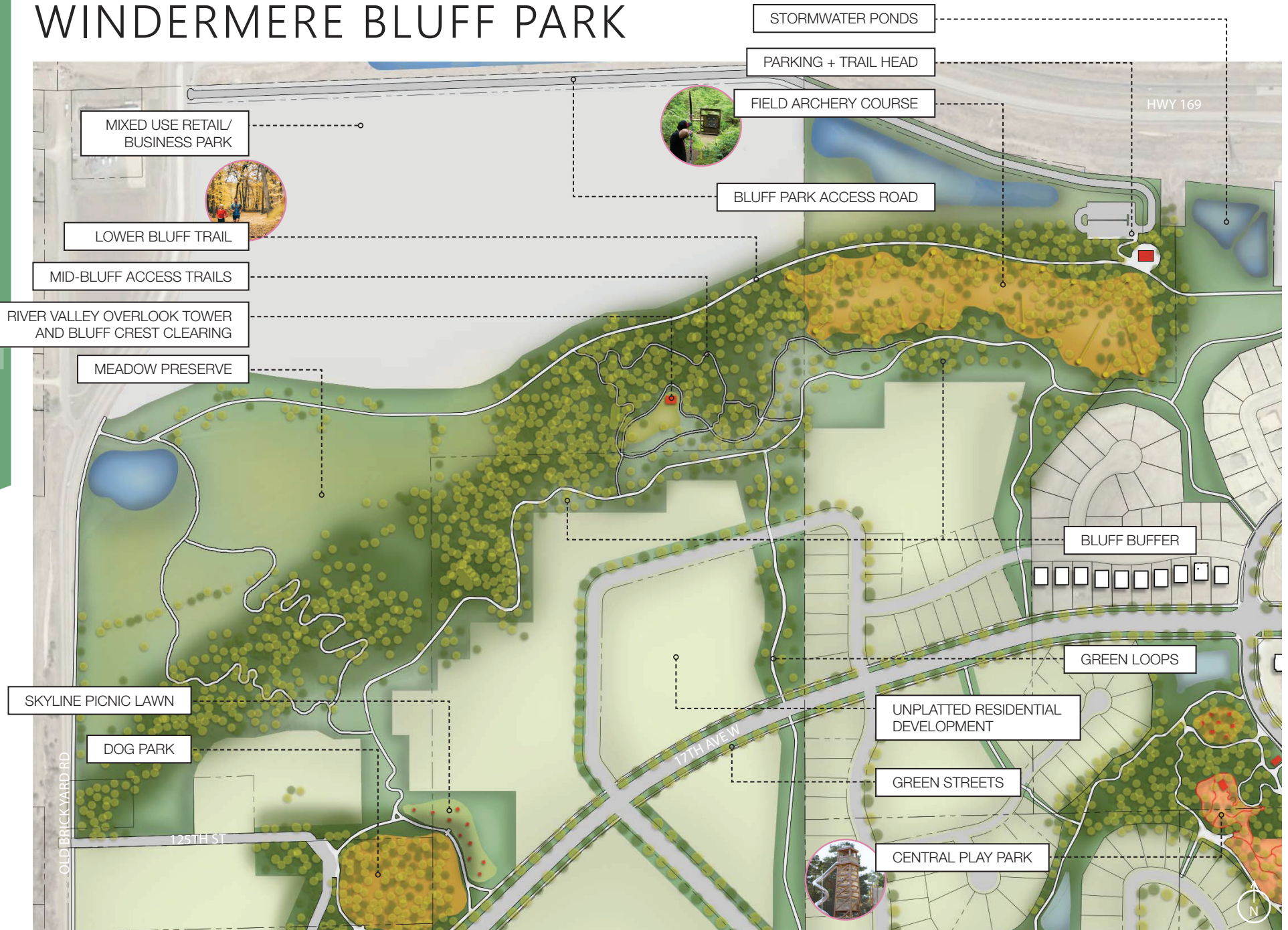
Moving north, the next marked street crossing across 17th Ave W brings users closer to the bluff and the beginning of the more regionally-oriented portion of Windermere. A larger parking lot and trail head off of this new street serves the dog park and bluff amenities with shelter, park information, and restrooms.

A 2-3 acre dog park is nestled into the naturally existing wooded area at the top of the bluff here. The only current dog park in Shakopee is on the far east side of town near the Southbridge neighborhood, 7 miles from the Windermere development. A dog park on this side of town at a robust scale and unique shady quality would provide this popular amenity for residents in the area and reduce the need to travel too far to exercise your pet. A dog park requires little for infrastructure,

Coming out of the dog park heading toward the bluff, the woods open up to a sunny clearing that overlooks the Minneapolis skyline and greater Minnesota River Valley. Skyline park would feature natural soft turf surfacing sprinkled with picnic tables and open spaces for laying a blanket out. A passive and calm space, this area provides a top-of-the-world respite for gathering.

The green spine continues north to meet up with the Bluff Park path systems. See the following pages for the natural feature amenities planned for the bluff area.

WINDERMERE BLUFF PARK



WINDERMERE BLUFF PARK CONCEPT PLAN

When most people thinking about the natural resources within the City of Shakopee, images of a powerful river coursing through scenic wetlands and wooded riverbanks typically come to mind. However, the Windermere Bluff is a unique and inspiring amenity that, though a different type of natural resource, elicits just as inspiring offerings. From the crest of the bluff, one can look west to Carver and Chaska, to the north over the Minnesota River Valley and beyond, and all 20 miles to the downtown Minneapolis skyline. The steep slopes of the bluff still host what are likely natural remnants of the historically expansive Big Woods forest of central and southern Minnesota, until European settlers began to clear the land for cultivation. The bluff is a protected natural feature, and a wide, naturally vegetated buffer should be maintained along the entirety of the top and bottom of the bluff to reduce the amount of impact that proposed development would have on the integrity of the vegetation and habitat the bluff supports. This buffer would also act as an additional layer of seclusion for trail users who desire the most natural wooded experience as possible in this part of the City.

A natural surface trail at the top of the bluff provides users with a top-of-the-world experience, opening views to Shakopee's neighboring communities and environment. A lookout tower adds an additional attraction to get just that much higher above the land and observe the Minnesota River Valley up and down a large portion of its corridor. A

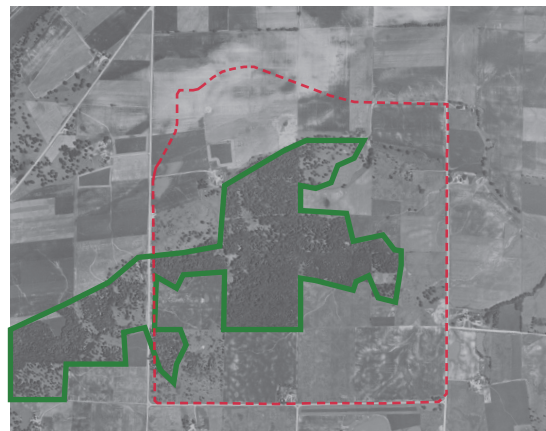
small naturally occurring clearing near the lookout tower provides areas of respite, seating, and signage that interprets the landscape for curious visitors. The bluff top trail connects at carefully selected locations to allow users to travel down the bluff and connect to the lower bluff trail. These connected trail systems not only allow controlled access around the bluff, but also provides loop options for varying trail distances depending on a user's ambitions that day.

For an interesting and unique amenity, a field archery range is built into the bluff side on the northeast portion of the bluff. The lower side of the bluff at this end is a topographically sensible place to provide parking for bluff visitors, and a small trailhead/restroom shelter can anchor the trail entrance here and serve as a point of check in for the field archery range.

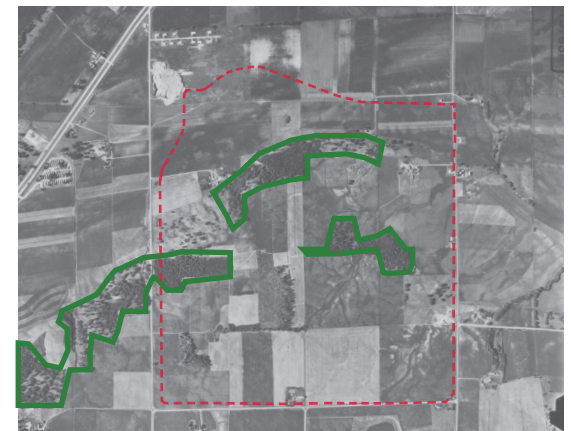
Field archery would be the second archery experience provided in Shakopee, but is a vastly different experience than the current range across from downtown. Field archery is an immersive archery sport that challenges archers to locate and hit targets at not only varying distances, but across varying terrain and obstacles. Targets may be tucked at a higher grade than the shooting point, providing a more dynamic experience to the sport, or through a narrow opening in some trees. The wooded and varied terrain of the bluff is a perfect host to this modern sport. Precautions and careful course design would be imperative to ensure that not only are trail users and archers kept safe, but to ensure that the facility is as non-impactful to the bluff as possible.



SHAKOPEE WOODED BLUFF - 1937
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BEGINNING, BLUFF
VEGETATION COVER REMAINS MOSTLY IN TACT
ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA LIBRARIES



SHAKOPEE WOODED BLUFF - 1951
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVANCING, BLUFF
VEGETATION FRAGMENTATION BEGINNING



SHAKOPEE WOODED BLUFF - 1964
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT MAXED OUT, BLUFF
VEGETATION FRAGMENTATION ADVANCED

WINDERMERE PARKS

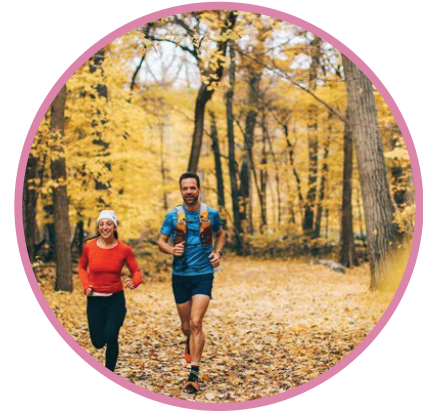
CENTRAL PLAY PARK LOOKOUT TOWER AND CHALLENGE PARK



The lookout tower atop the natural hill in the challenge play portion of Windermere's Central Play Park has a playful feel to it. Views of the region are especially captured from the top of this tower, providing a highly unique experience in Shakopee. Kids will be challenged to climb up and down the tower, and to scale outcroppings built into the hill.

WINDERMERE PARKS

BLUFF PARK FIELD ARCHERY AND LOWER BLUFF TRAIL



Nestled into the nooks and crannies of the bluff is a low-impact field archery course, providing a unique recreational experience to the Windermere development and creating a regional draw to the area. A natural surface trail follows the top and bottom of the bluff for running, walking, or light bicycling in this beautiful, preserved area.

WINDERMERE PARKS

PATHWAYS FOR PLAY ALONG GREEN SPINE



Pathways for play node: Music and Sounds

Children are drawn to exploring noise - coming across a piece of equipment that produces unique and fun sounds excited imagination and flexes creativity.



Pathways for play node: Sensory

Imagine coming across a series of large boulders that encourage you to climb, a tunnel to crawl, and a spiraling path to skip down. Sensory play elements exercise physical and mental abilities in children.



Pathways for play node: Food and Gardening

Children can collect ripe berries or tree fruit with their family, learn how their everyday food grows, or get their hands dirty with equipment that allows them to till the soil and see plants grow from sprout to a mature vegetable ready to eat.



Pathways for play node: Water

Water play and learning is interpreted at the stormwater pond locations along the green spine. Children play with moving water and use play elements in the landscape to learn how water systems work in their City.