

CENTENNIAL
BEACH & BLUFF IMPROVEMENTS



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Village of Winnetka Plan Commission
May 28, 2025



AGENDA

PROJECT OVERVIEW

ALIGNED MISSION

ENGINEERING & REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

RUBBLE MOUND REVETMENT WITH PIER

DOG BEACH AND LOCATION

ACCESS

PARKING

SPECIAL USE STANDARDS

CLOSING

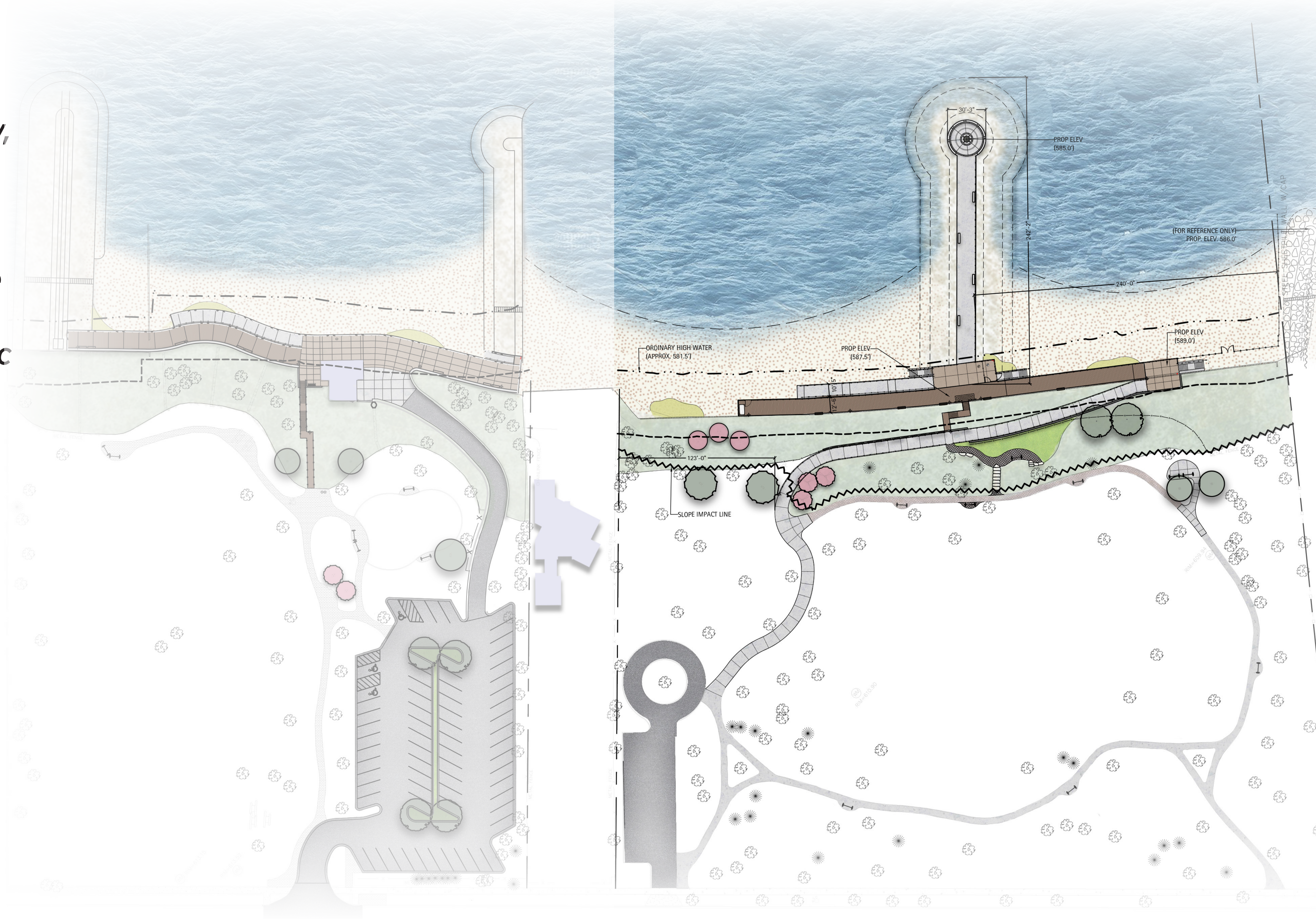
Project Overview



Purpose: The Park District aims to enhance Centennial and Elder Lane Parks to improve accessibility, safety, and shoreline preservation while balancing aesthetics and community input. The Park District recognizes the inherent conflict between residential zoning and public park usage and has sought to minimize impact on residential neighbors while enhancing public use.

Common Themes:

Safety
Security
Access
Parking



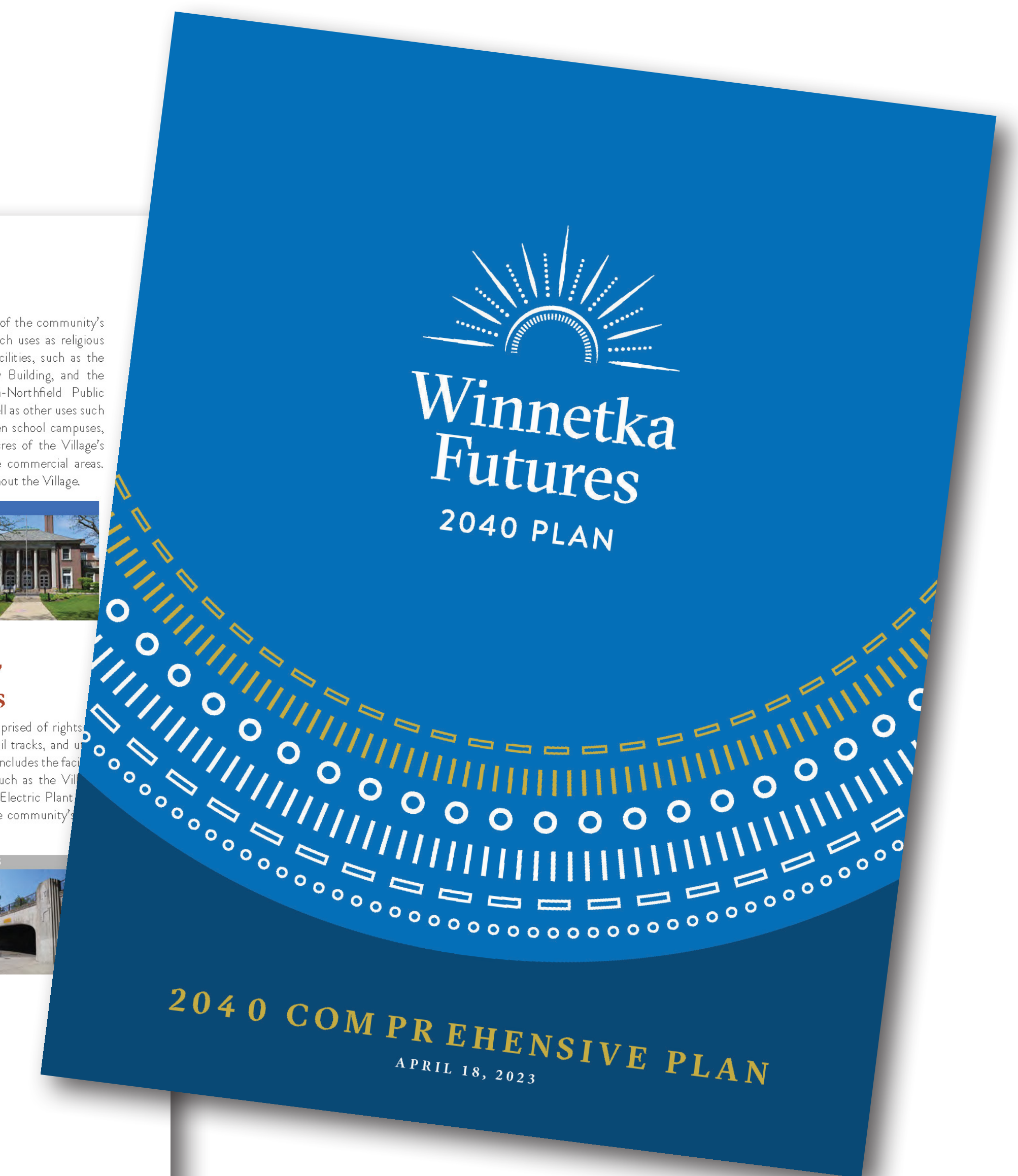
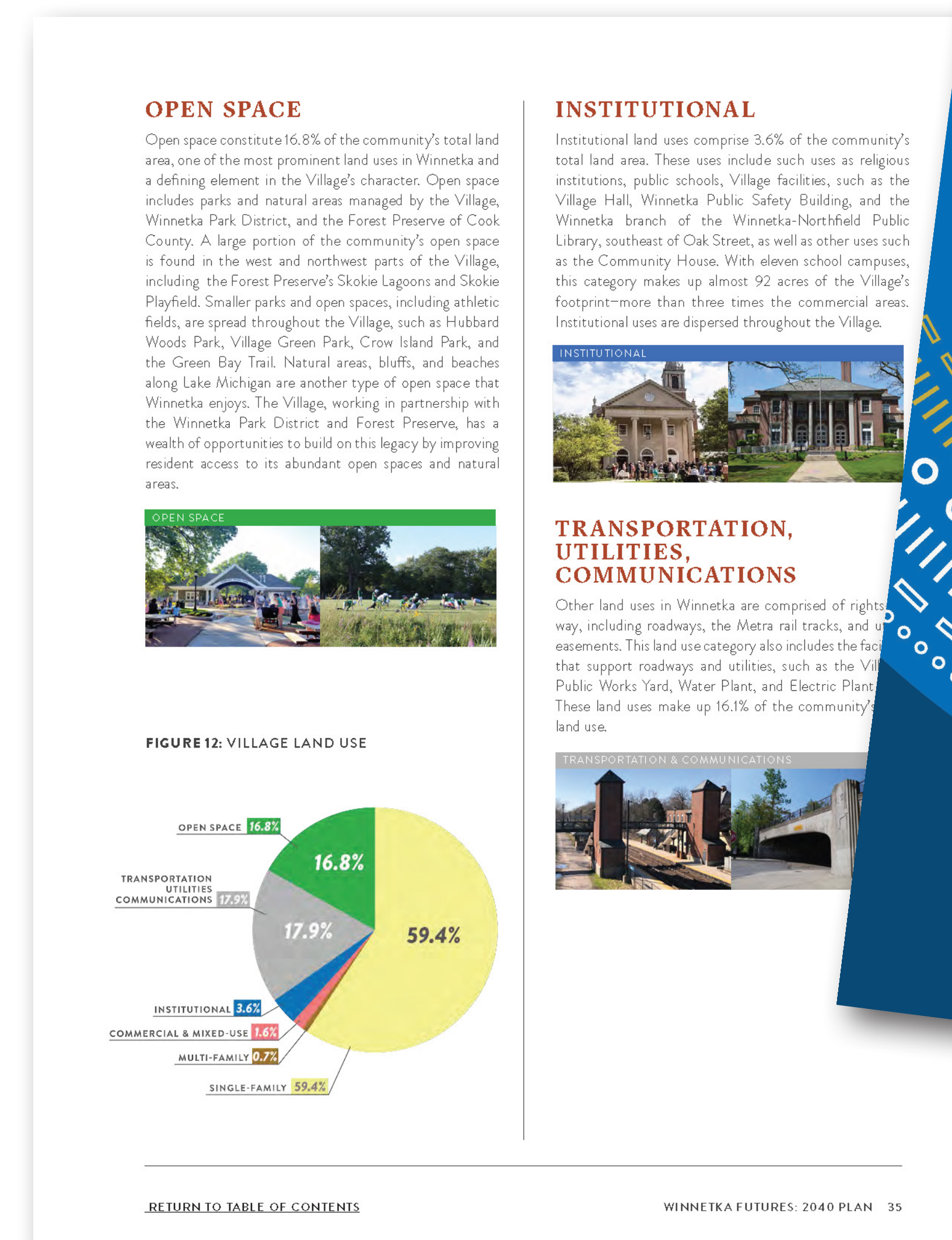
Aligned Mission



Village of Winnetka 2040 Comprehensive Plan

OVERVIEW AND IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

- On April 18, 2023 the Village of Winnetka adopted the **Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan** (Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Winnetka).
- The Village Comprehensive Plan recognized the **important role that the Park District plays** in creating a sense of place that is different from surrounding communities.
- The Village acknowledged the "wealth of opportunities it has working in partnership with the Park District to improve resident access to its abundant open spaces and natural areas."
see page 35 of the Comprehensive Plan



Winnetka Park District and the Village of Winnetka have an aligned mission to improve resident access to open spaces and natural areas including the lakefront beaches.

Aligned Mission



Village of Winnetka 2040 Comprehensive Plan

SHARED PURPOSE AND MISSION

- The Village Comprehensive Plan **supports the Lakefront Master Plan's** shoreline and bluff stabilization **goals and visions**
see page 157 of the Comprehensive Plan
- **Acknowledges** that shorelines along Lake Michigan are experiencing **erosion and significant destruction** and that Winnetka's lakefront, both publicly and privately owned, has been **negatively impacted by shoreline erosion**
see page 157 of the Comprehensive Plan
- Acknowledges the Park District's recent efforts to monitor and restore its parkland
see page 158 of the Comprehensive Plan

“Our mission is to provide a balance of quality recreation and leisure opportunities while protecting assets, natural resources, and open space to benefit present and future generations.”



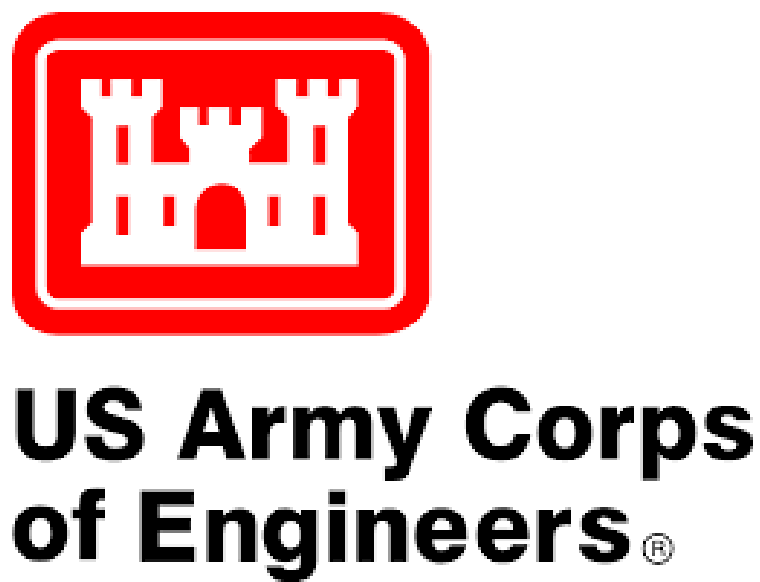
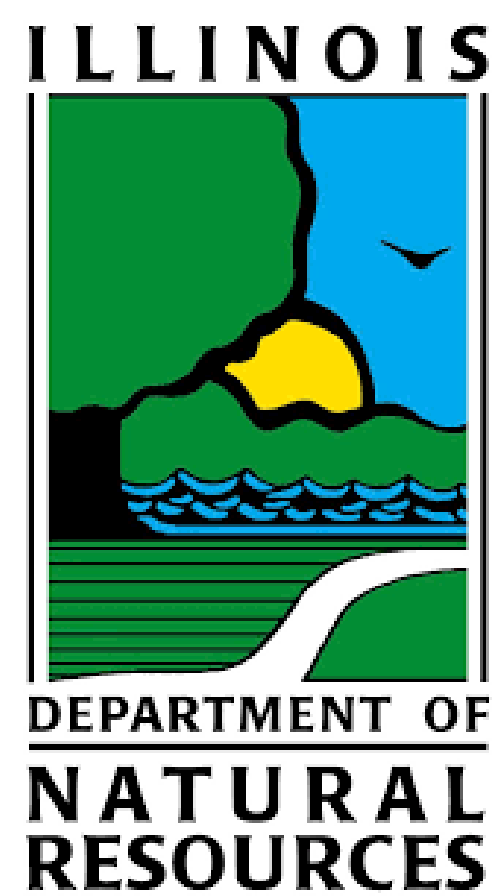
Engineering & Regulatory Compliance



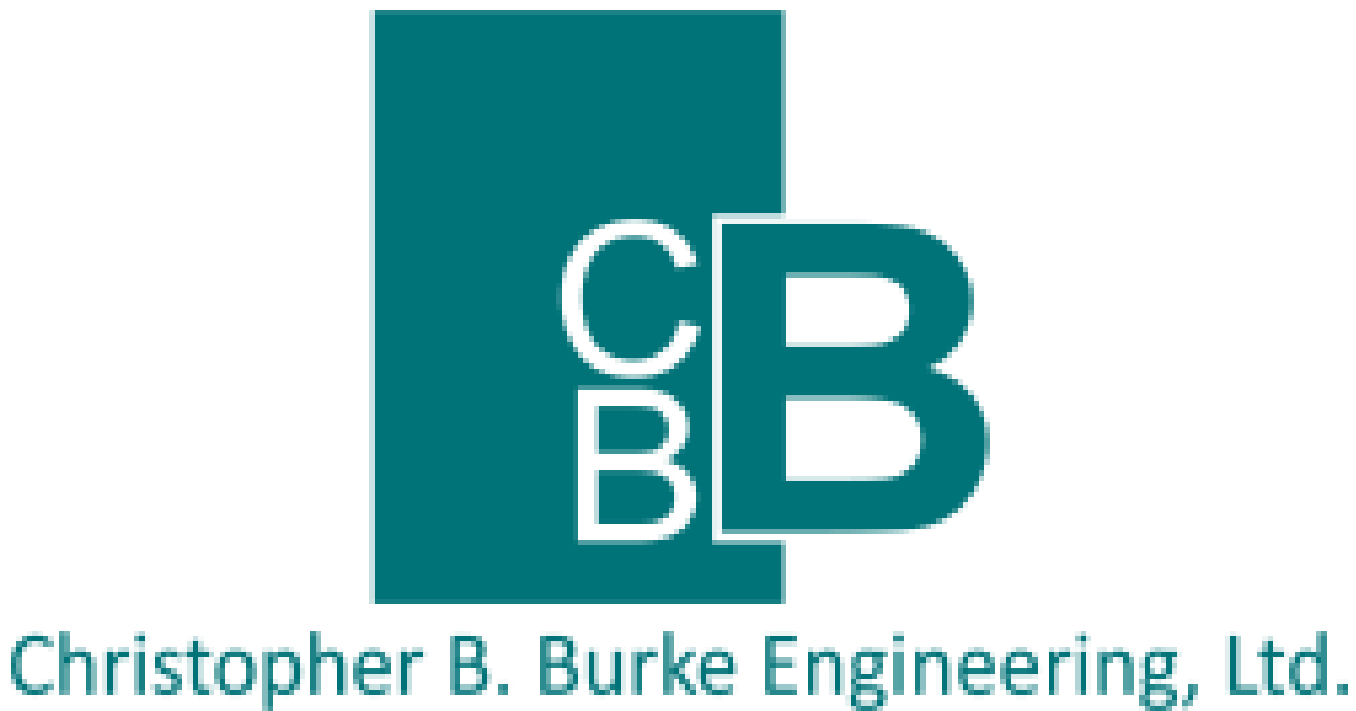
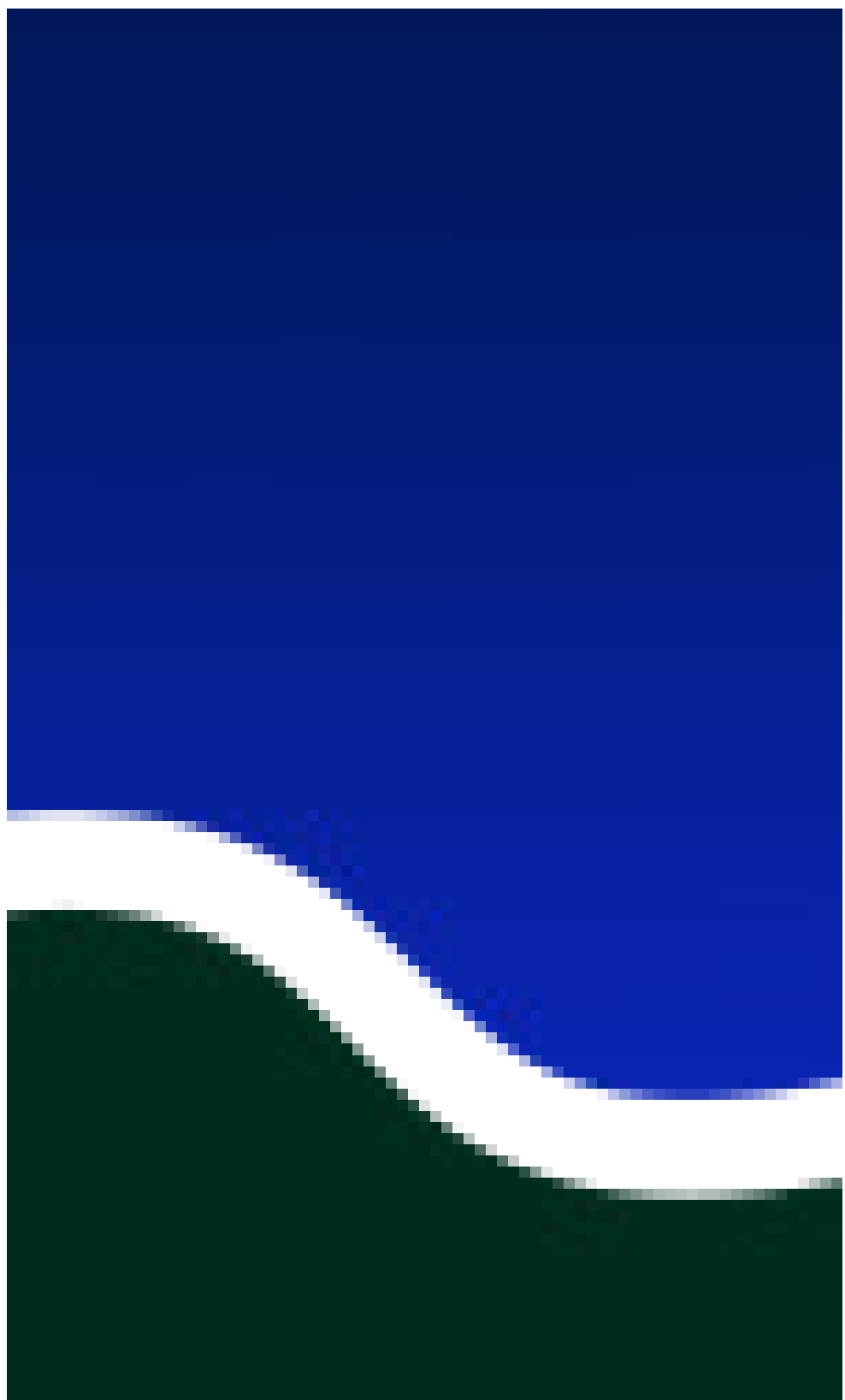
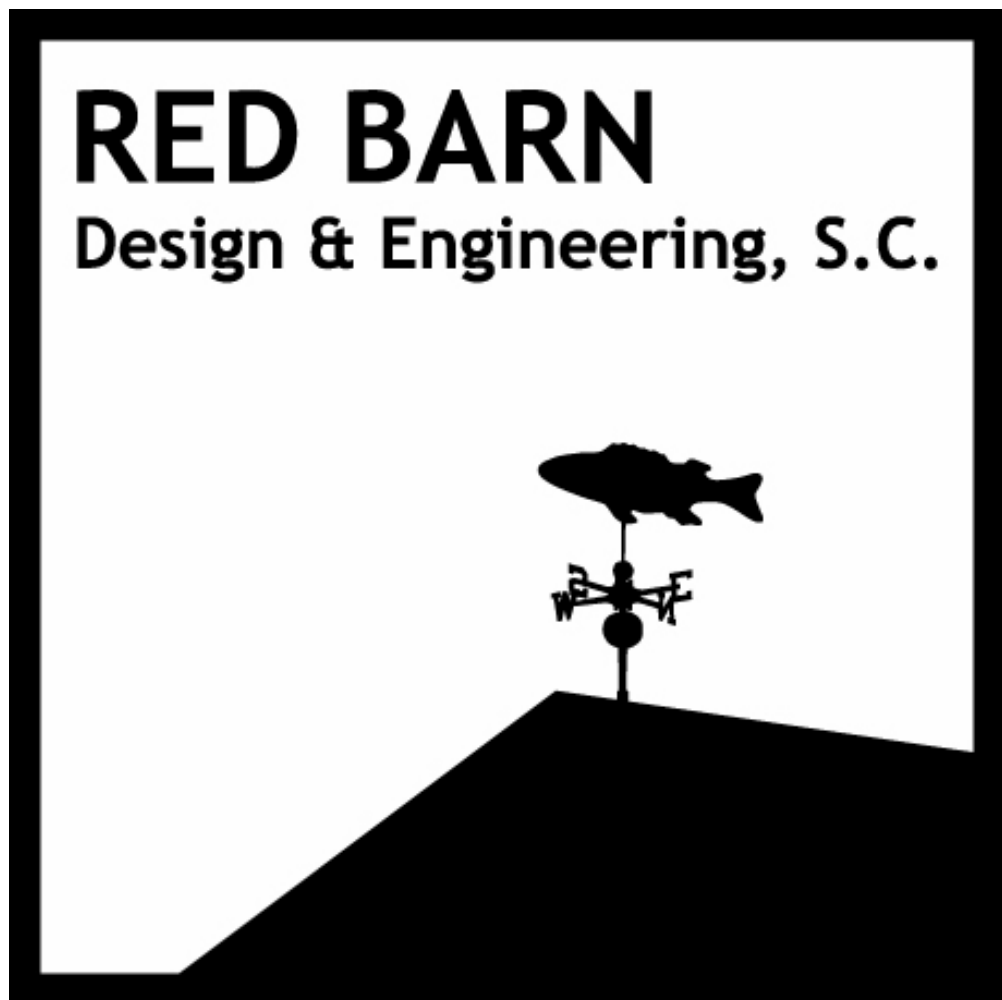
Expert-Driven Design: A dynamic team of experts have worked on the project at various stages from the Master Plan efforts to recent design and engineering. The current plan was developed by licensed engineers with decades of experience.

Project designed in accordance with IDNR, Army Corps of Engineering Standards, and The Village of Winnetka

REGULATORY AGENCIES



(CURRENT TEAM) DESIGN AND ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS



MASTER PLANNING CONSULTANTS

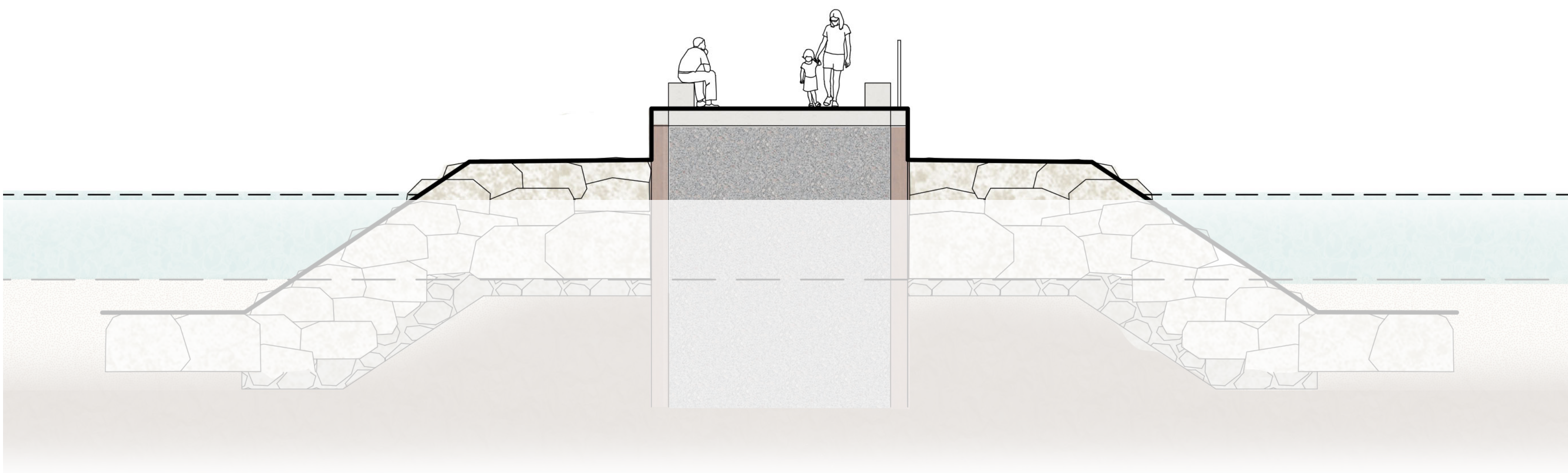
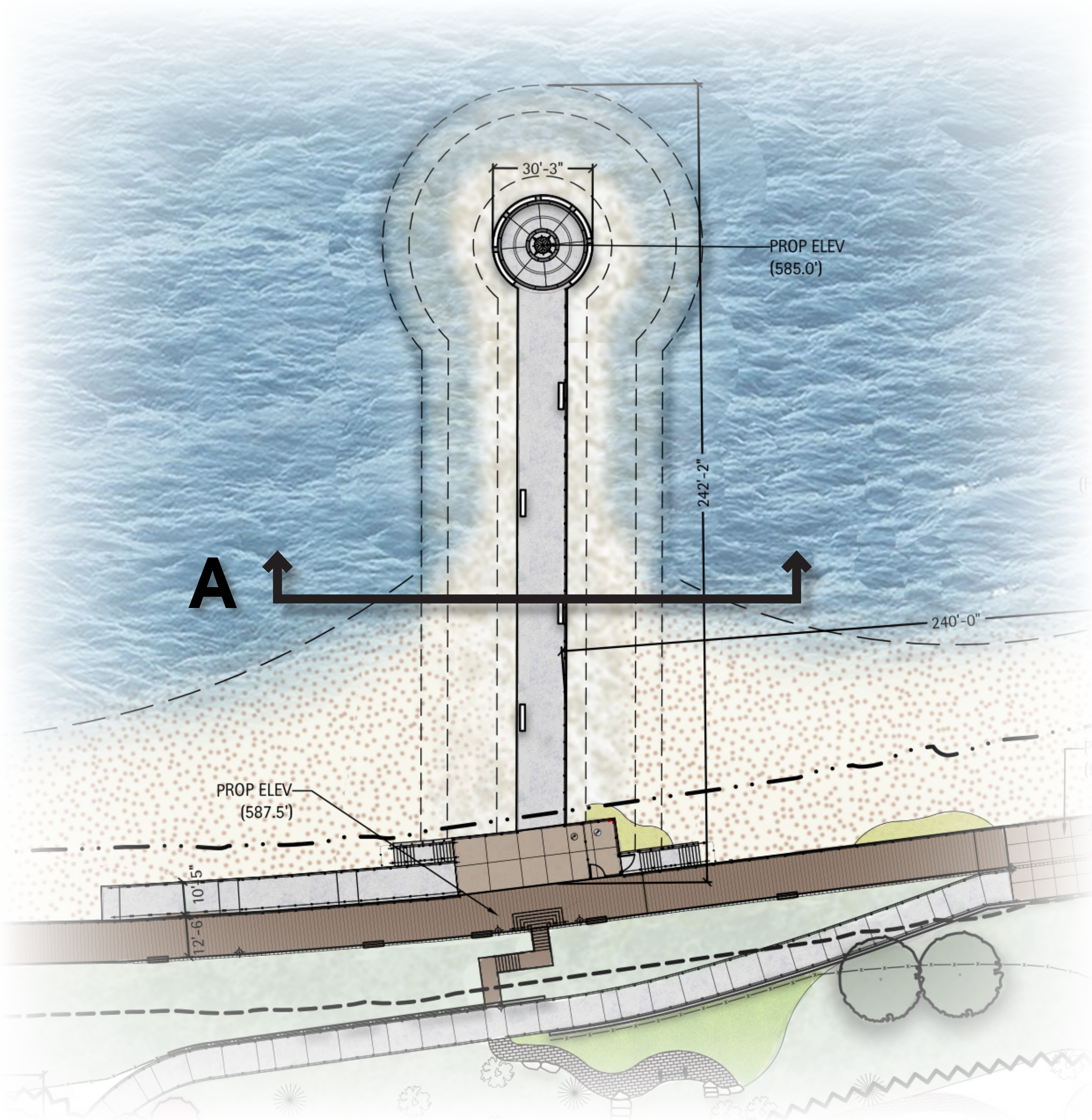


Rubble Mound Revetment with Pier Structure



Structure Justification: The proposed rubble mound structure aims to reduce rip current velocities and retain sand for beach preservation.

Modification for Community / Aesthetics: Lower rubble mound designed to what is minimally necessary as per the Village of Winnetka Lakefront Construction Ordinance.



SECTION A - Looking East

Safety

Focus

- Shoreline Design & Engineering
- Bluff Erosion Protection
- Public Site Access/Open Clear Sight lines

Refer to Park District Response Documents:

Exhibit 1 - Plan Evolution

Traces the design progression for Elder and Centennial Parks from 2023 - 2025. Includes evolution of shoreline protection strategies and bluff safety features in response to community concerns and changes in municipal regulations.

Exhibit 3 - Resolution 05-25-23

Identifies removal of deteriorated and hazardous structures (e.g. Elder Pier, existing steel groins, remnant wooden piles, etc) and establishes protection goals from long-term erosion and beach loss.

Exhibit 4 - Definition of Terms

Clarifies risks such as littoral drift, erosion, rip currents, and how infrastructure included in the Elder-Centennial design mitigates them.

Exhibit 5 - Illinois Beach State Park (IBSP)

Provides an overview of the IBSP project and how the scale and conditions differ greatly from our project conditions. Cites State Park drownings to illustrate the IBSP design solution has not been proven to be any safer.

Exhibit 8 - Elder and Centennial Park & Beach

Includes stormwater control and bluff stabilization to reduce washouts and hazards. Details plans to improve deteriorated pathways and ensure safe traversal.

Exhibit 11 - Winnetka Beach Videos

Shows overtopping waves and flood risks supporting safer design proposals (e.g., raised boardwalks).

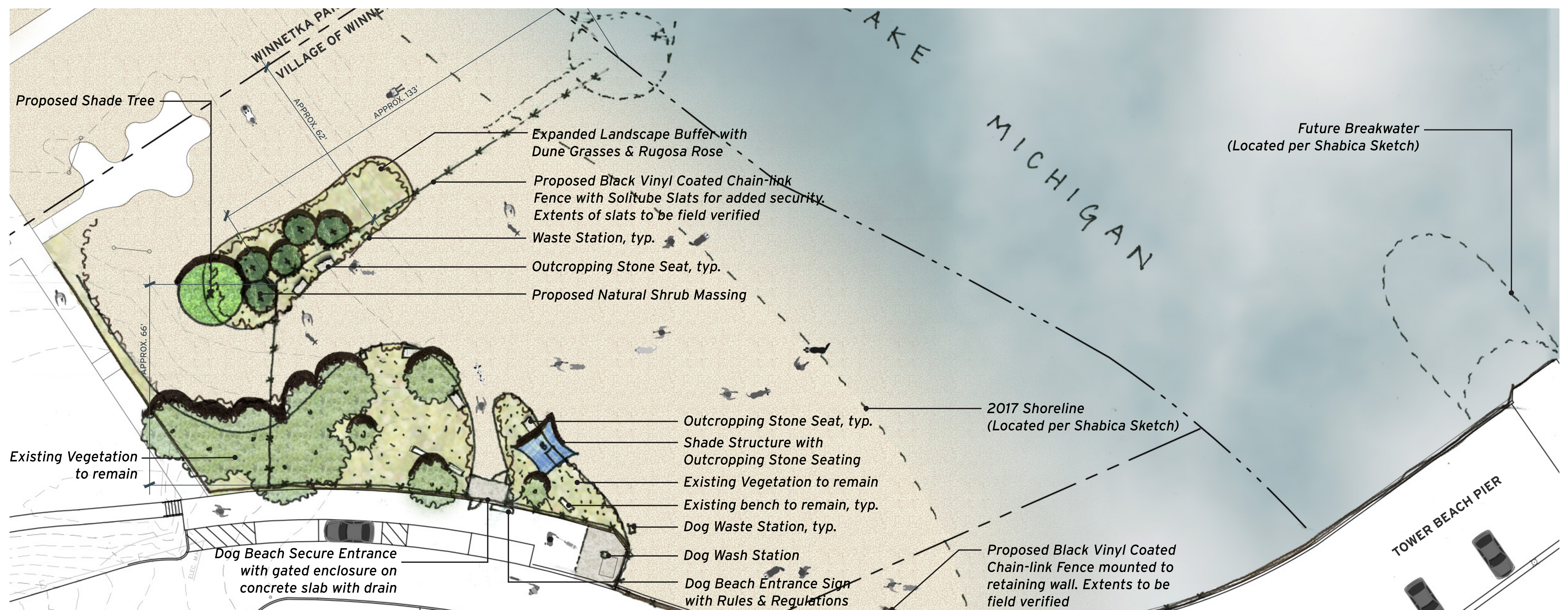
Exhibit 14 - Shabica Presentation

Coastal engineering overview explaining shoreline conditions and breakwater as key solution.

Dog Beach and Location

Community Preference: The decision to keep the dog beach at Centennial was driven by thorough study of alternative options and extensive community feedback and considerations of safety and environmental impact

Safety Considerations: The rubble mound revetment with the solid core pier structure reduces riptide velocities and provides separation from the public swimming beach



A conceptual plan diagram of a dog beach at Tower Road Beach studied in 2022 to explore alternatives to the Centennial dog beach location. The plan was not chosen due to limited space for swimmers and dogs, more substantial wave action at Tower due to exposure from N/NE winds, and safety risks of riptides due to wave action against the Tower Road pier vertical sheet pile wall. Study was conducted over a span of 6-9 months in 2021 - 2022.



Security

Focus

- Beach Closure Protocols
- Site Configuration and Delineation
- Regulatory Reviews

Refer to Park District Response Documents:

Exhibit 6: Village Counsel Legal Opinion

Asserts that the public will retain access rights and that no private control over public land is being ceded.

Exhibit 7: Cook County Animal Control Ordinance

Explains requirement for fenced enclosures in off-leash dog areas. Justifies dog beach fencing as a legal and safety necessity.

Exhibit 10: North Shore Beaches

Demonstrates successful use of physical structures (groins, piers) to separate uses and avoid conflicts (e.g., dog vs. swimming).

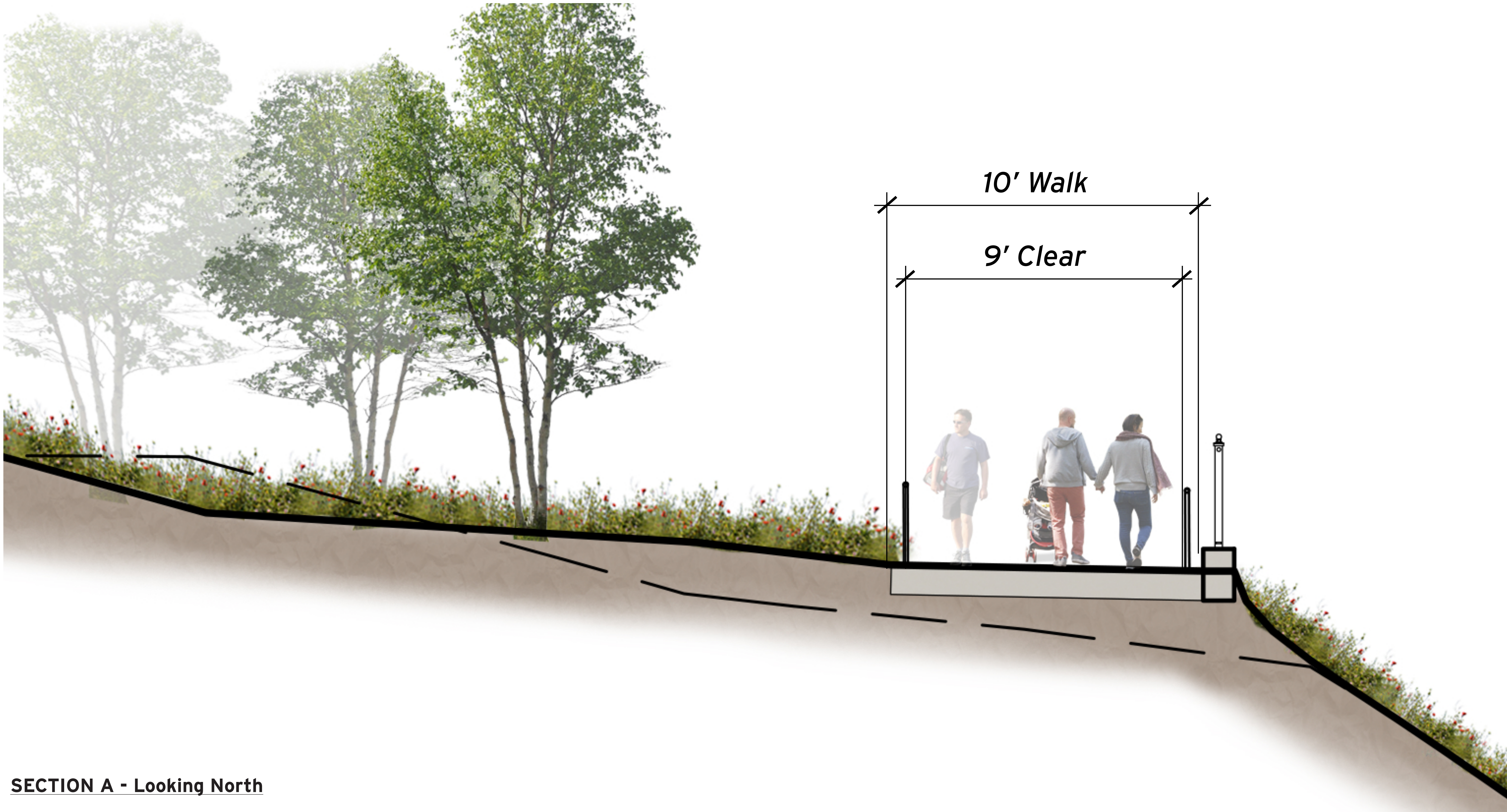
Exhibit 8: Elder and Centennial Park and Beach

Details spatial planning to maintain public access while enforcing dog beach rules.

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Park and Beach Access



SECTION A - Looking North



Access

Focus

- Physical Site Access for all
- Passage Along the Shoreline

Refer to Park District Response Documents:

Exhibit 2: Dog Beach History

Outlines committee-led decisions based on safety, accessibility, and spatial equity. Explains rejection of alternative locations due to lack of adequate access and separation.

Exhibit 3: Resolution 05-25-23

Promotes ADA access through new boardwalk and path systems. Provides for safe emergency and maintenance vehicle access.

Exhibit 9: Lake Michigan Shoreline 2002-2024

Documents sand depletion and narrowing of beaches, supporting need for access-preserving improvements.

Exhibit 12: ADA Access

Shows compliant slope standards, rest intervals, and preference for inclusive design over lifts. Illustrates multi-use path function: accessibility + emergency + maintenance.

Parking

Access

- Access and Parking to these two sites will remain the same
- Centennial Parking functions well, with the 11 current parking places the lot itself should not have significant issues or congestion when entering or leaving the park.
- The additional parking available at Elder Lane Park is within close proximity to Centennial and has a traffic signal which provides a controlled crossing for the neighborhood.

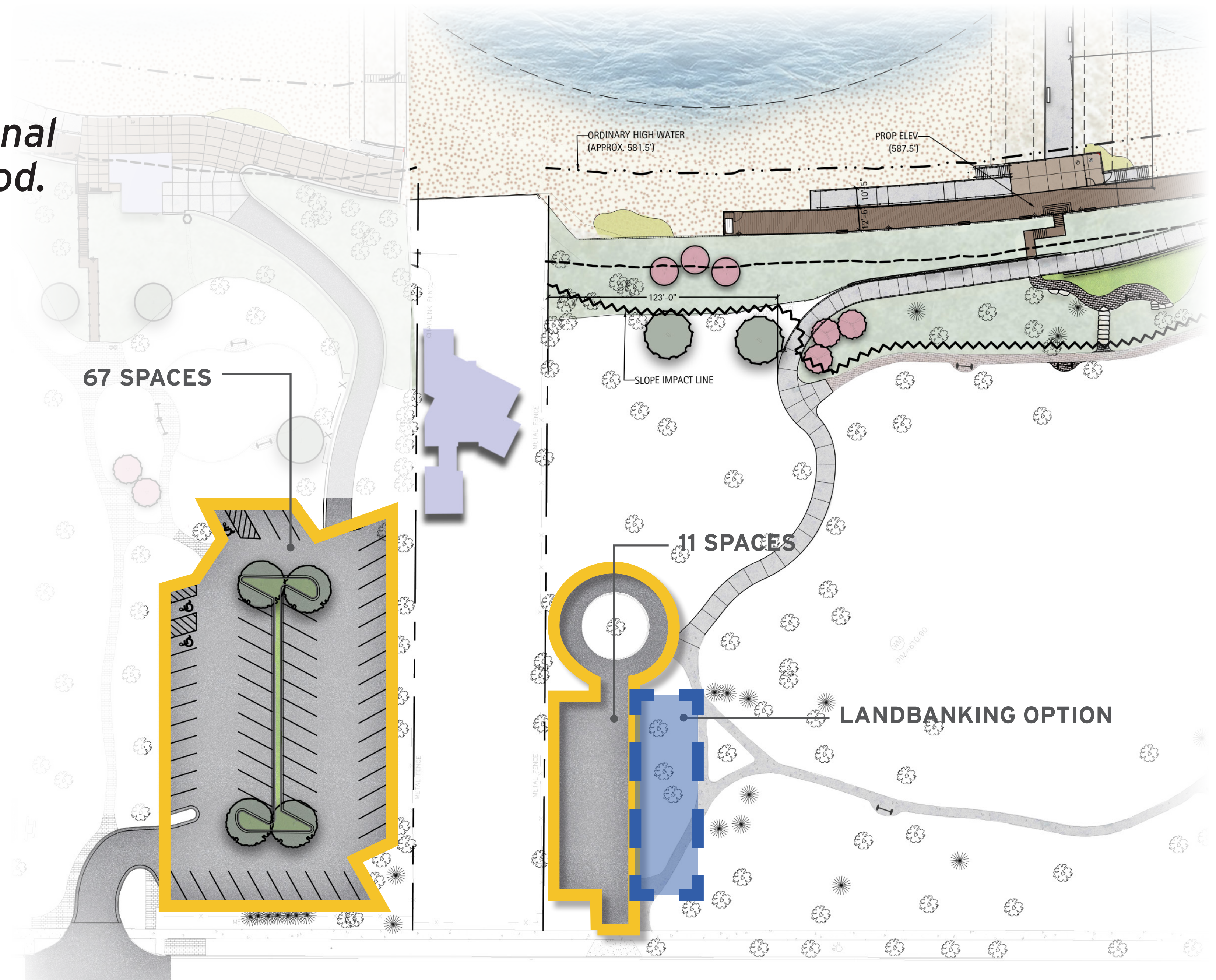
Parking

- The proposed plans allow for 78 combined parking places, which is more than the combined 64 spaces between Tower and Maple Parks. As a system, the Winnetka Park District provide 142 parking spaces for the swimming beaches, Lloyd provides another 56 for the boating beach and launch for a overall parking total of 198 Park District owned spaces.

See 8.5.1 Page 202 of Comprehensive Plan for Reduced Demand for Parking, preserving walkability and bikeability for the Village

Conditional Options:

- **Land Bank Parking Options**
(willingness to expand parking in lieu of green space)
- **Shuttle Options**
- **New Trier High School parking** (pending agreement with NTHS)



Parking

Focus

- Traffic Flow
- Parking Capacity
- Site Access for Vehicles

Refer to Park District Response Documents:

Exhibit 1 - Plan Evolution

Includes diagrams showing site layout, including parking configurations over time.

Exhibit 3 - Resolution 05-25-23

Notes that future boardwalk may connect to Elder restroom and suggests potential unification of park properties affecting parking.

Exhibit 13 - Professional Qualifications

Provides engineering and planning firms involved in parking and traffic studies.

Exhibit 14 - Parking and Access Study

Evaluates available parking at Elder and Centennial vs. regional benchmarks. Confirms that the combined lots provide more spaces than Tower and Maple beaches. Notes potential for expansion if needed and identifies shared public lot usage at New Trier.

Special Use Standard #1



Special Use Permit Standard #1

That the establishment, maintenance and operation of the special use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort, morals or general welfare;

We believe the standard is met, as the proposed improvements align with community needs and support public health, safety, and welfare. The project enhances existing amenities without expanding programming, while strategically minimizing impacts on surrounding areas. Additionally, the improvements contribute and address environmental concerns like erosion to protect and enhance the shoreline and surrounding community spaces as identified as a priority in various Park District plans as well as the Village 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Special Use Standard #2



Special Use Permit Standard #2

That the special use will not be substantially injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity which are permitted by right in the district or districts of concern, nor substantially diminish or impair property values in the immediate vicinity;

We believe the standard is met, as the proposed improvements align with the established use and character of the area and will not diminish the enjoyment or property values of nearby properties. The beach and park have been longstanding community assets with no negative impact on adjacent properties, as shown by nearby property investments. The design also complements surrounding structures and is compatible with district guidelines without increasing traffic or parking demands.

Special Use Standard #3



Special Use Permit Standard #3

That the establishment of the special use will not impede the normal and orderly development or improvement of other property in the immediate vicinity for uses permitted by right in the district or districts of concern;

We believe the standard is met, as the proposed improvements maintain the park's established role in the community and will not disrupt future development in the area. The improvements retain the property's character and do not negatively impact surrounding properties or discourage future investments, as demonstrated by ongoing nearby developments.

Special Use Standard #4 & #5



Special Use Permit Standard #4 & #5

That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress in a manner which minimizes pedestrian and vehicular traffic congestion in the public ways;

We believe both standards are met, as existing infrastructure supports safe and efficient access and parking for the proposed improvements. Current parking, utilities, and access roads are sufficient, with the park being primarily accessible on foot for local residents and the proximity to Elder for supplemental parking nearby. The reduction in dog beach scale further ensures minimal impact on traffic and parking, while drainage and utility needs are adequately met by existing facilities. Since the Village does not have an established parking standard, we have provided a plan based on our experience meeting public needs at other beach sites, such as Tower Road and Maple Beaches, where parking has proven sufficient.

Special Use Standard #6



Special Use Permit Standard #6

That the special use in all other respects conforms to the applicable regulations of this and other Village ordinances and codes. In the event that the application for special use permit involves a request for variation from the terms of this title, such request, subject to required notification procedures, may be considered at the same public hearing at which the proposed special use is reviewed by the Board of Appeals.

We believe the standard is met, as the proposed improvements comply with all relevant Village ordinances and codes, aside from the specific variations and exceptions outlined. Additionally, the Zoning Ordinance allows for nonessential public uses as special uses across all Village districts, ensuring alignment with Village requirements.

Conclusion

Key Takeaways:

- *Thoughtful, expert-led design*
- *Balanced approach to community needs*
- *Long-term benefits outweigh short-term concerns*

Why We're Here: *We are seeking a positive recommendation to the Village Council in favor of the proposed Centennial Park and Beach Project*





THANK YOU

Questions?

