

Envisioning the Port Townsend Golf Course

A Community Discussion

June 2022

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INTRODUCTION

The Port Townsend Municipal Golf Course was developed in 1904 and includes a regulation-length 9-hole course, driving range, maintenance buildings, and clubhouse with a commercial kitchen for restaurant services, and retail sales. The golf course, once privately owned and operated, was converted to a public course in 1927 and first administered by Jefferson County but is now owned and operated by the City of Port Townsend. The city leases the golf course to a local business for management and operations. When converted to a public course, there were deed restrictions on the property. There is a deed restriction that the largest parcel will be used for municipal purposes only.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

Project Scope

Port Townsend Golf Club is an aging golf facility located in a small market with a mix of marketable amenities. The most recent study of the golf course was implemented in 2018 by the National Golf Foundation (NGF). The NGF completed the study of the viability of the PTGC and found that the facility is challenged by its declining physical condition and somewhat remote location which limits its potential market support. NGF has estimated that it would cost \$935,000 - \$1.2M to bring it up to standard to attract more visits and become a viable golf course. The upgrades would include improvements to the irrigation system and pump house, tree and stump removal, purchase of appropriate maintenance equipment, clubhouse repair, and course repair. Based on this analysis, the City Council decided not to pursue the recommendation because of the cost for both the capital and operations. They did authorize the issuance of a Request for Proposal and subsequently entered into an agreement for operations with the Gabriel Tonan group for a term of three years during which time the City would explore alternative uses for the Golf Course. The framework included in this document is for the subsequent community discussion to explore the long-term vision for the Golf Course. This community engagement plan includes securing a landscape architect to assist with concept planning alternative uses. It also includes creating a community stakeholder group and launching four phases of community engagement to envision the golf course. There is an option in phases 3-4 to expand this engagement process to include the Mountain View campus, as it may include complementary uses.

Previous Community Outreach

The city sought community feedback about the golf course during the Park, Recreation, and Open Space plan update. PROS Plan community engagement results showed limited use of the Port Townsend Golf Course and interest in golf in general. Most vision survey respondents did not have an opinion on the golf course's operation, investment, or use. For those who did have an opinion, most did not want to make capital investments, set a cost recovery policy, or explore partnership options. For those with an opinion, some did not want the city to stop operating the golf course, but others were supportive of exploring alternative options. In addition to the PROS planning process, staff launched a survey to begin a community engagement process in September 2020. This feedback led to multiple options for the Council to consider. In November 2020, Council unanimously directed staff to enter into a golf operations agreement with a vendor for 3 years, during which time staff would engage the community to explore the feasibility of alternate uses, including continued use for golf. This planned community discussion should take into consideration the long-term goals of all of the City's Parks and Recreation assets, the proximity of the Mountain View Campus, and the Mountain View Pool, and the need for a long-term financial sustainability plan.

PROJECT AREA

The options being considered will be limited to the golf course site, including the parking lot, pathways, trails, and clubhouse as depicted on the map (Exhibit 1). A small area within Port Townsend Golf Course, called the Kah Tai Prairie is 1.4 acres and is located in the southeast area of the golf course. The prairie has been the focus of preservation and restoration by the Olympic Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society since it was recognized as a unique botanical site in 1986. The Kah Tai Prairie is located within the Port Townsend Golf Course and is open to the public to enjoy. The city has an interest in master planning the Mountain View Campus (Exhibit 2) as part of Phase 3 of the community visioning plan. The Mountain View Campus is adjacent to the Golf Course and could have some complementary uses as part of the larger discussion.

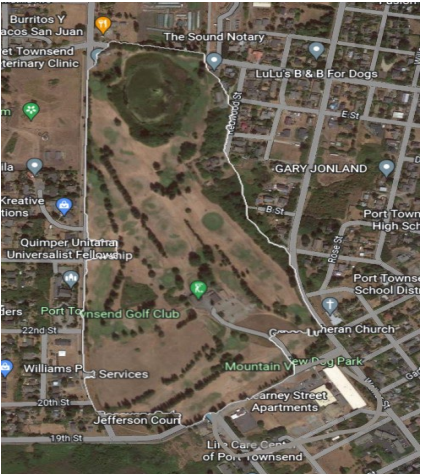


Exhibit 1: Port Townsend Golf Course. Operated by Gabriel Tonan Golf Shop, Inc. Also includes a management agreement for the Kah Tai Prairie.



Exhibit 2: Mountainview Campus: includes KPTZ, Food Bank, Red Cross, Working Image, Parks and Recreation office, IT, Police Station and YMCA (operating the pool/gym, some outdoor area). Also includes Dog Park and Pickleball courts.

STAKEHOLDERS

The city will recruit and seat a stakeholders committee to help guide the process of public engagement. A more detailed list of stakeholder members, including contact information, will be developed as the project moves forward.

External:

- Tenants of Mountain View
- YMCA
- Golf Club
- Stewards of the prairie
- Park Board
- Arts Commission
- Teens from local HS.
- School District
- County
- Hospital District
- Housing

Internal:

- City Manager
- Park Board representative
- City Staff

MILESTONES

Task	Type	End Date	Owner
RFP and award of bid for Landscape Architect contractor: RFP, budget, selection/compile stakeholder group	Administrative	6-8/2022	PT
Phase 1 Community Outreach Develop key criteria/principles	Focus Groups	7/22-9/22	PT
Phase 2 Public Outreach Community Vision/Concept Ideas	Public Involvement	9/2022	PT, Contractor
Evaluate Data, Develop Concept options to share with the Community	Conceptual Design	10/2022	PT, Contractor
Phase 3 Public Outreach (Evaluate Concepts/Options) Gather feedback	Public Involvement	11/2022	Team
Evaluate Data, refine the approach Concept draft (s)	Conceptual Design	12/2022	Team
Final Recommendation: Final draft with a phased approach, transition plan, costing, and decision making.	Public Involvement	2/23	Team
Final Recommendation City Council Study Session	City Council	3/23	Team

METHODS FOR OUTREACH

The project manager will use the following methods to ensure all stakeholders are reached, informed, and engaged.

DIGITAL	PRINT/GRAPHICS	INTERACTIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create web content with an updated process. <input type="checkbox"/> eNews or designed email <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Video/Photography <input type="checkbox"/> Poll or survey <input type="checkbox"/> Media Release <input type="checkbox"/> _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Flyer <input type="checkbox"/> Fact Sheet/Brochure <input type="checkbox"/> Ads <input type="checkbox"/> PT Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Radio show <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Signage/Posters <input type="checkbox"/> Hard copy survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Task Force <input type="checkbox"/> Established Meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Board/Commissions <input type="checkbox"/> Interest Groups <input type="checkbox"/> Intercept events <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Event/Promotion <input type="checkbox"/> Open House <input type="checkbox"/> In-person poll/survey <input type="checkbox"/> Online Questionnaire <input type="checkbox"/> Public Meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Farmers Market

KEY MESSAGES

Currently, most expenses associated with the management of the golf course reside with the leaseholder as a part of their business operations. A large part of the maintenance is performed by volunteers. The City still retains responsibility for all capital needs, building maintenance and irrigation repairs to main lines (~\$8,000/year), and irrigation water costs (~\$15,000/year). In addition, the irrigation system would need to be replaced. This is part of the recommended capital improvement costs. The City does not have a source of funding to pay for the capital improvement needs (\$935,000-\$1.2M) identified in the most recent analysis. It is not financially sustainable for the City to continue to subsidize the golf course. In addition to the financial implications, it is often a best practice to explore the highest and best use of the land. It poses an opportunity cost if there are alternative uses that may better serve the wider community. If alternative uses are explored, the capital and operational costs of any alternate uses need to be considered as well.

The study, a Business Analysis of the Port Townsend Golf Club, was completed in 2019 and showed that the course would need “considerable investment in improvements and modernization” for its continuance as a golf course into the future.

PROS Plan community engagement results showed limited use of the Port Townsend Golf Course and interest in golf in general. Most vision survey respondents do not have an opinion on the golf course’s operation, investment, or use. For those who do have an opinion, most do not want to make capital investments, set a cost recovery policy, or explore partnership options. For those with an opinion, most do not want the City to stop operating the golf course, but others are supportive of exploring alternative options.

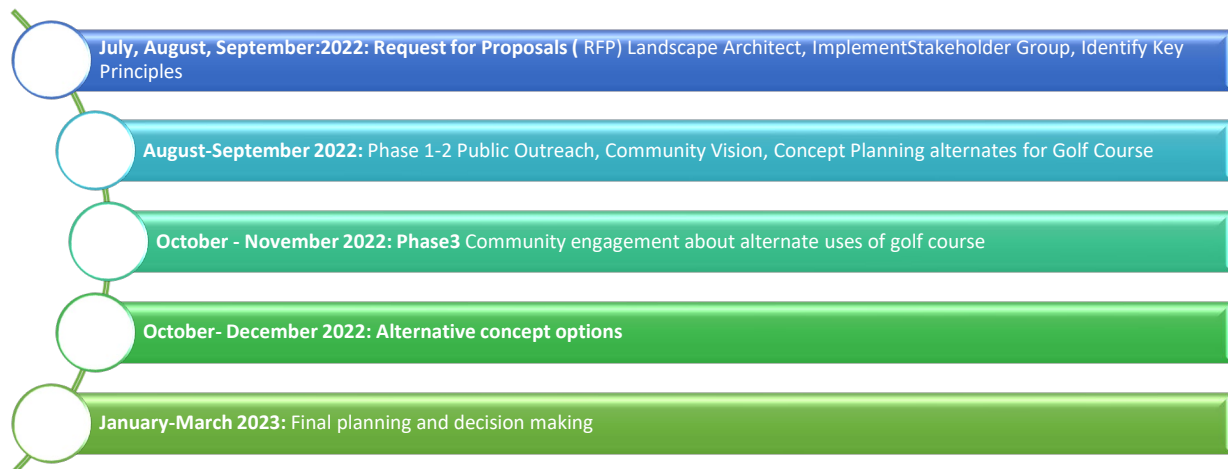
The City signed a lease for the operations of the course until December 2023. At the time the City decided to sign an operational lease through 2023, the City also identified a need to consider whether it should make additional investments in the golf course or identify alternative uses.

Port Townsend Golf Club is an aging golf facility located in a small market with a mix of marketable amenities. The NGF completed a study of the viability of the PTGC and found that the facility is challenged by its declining physical condition and somewhat remote location which limits its potential market support.

As such, the City faces a challenge in continuing to operate the PTGC, and it is only with new investment and a change in operating structure can this golf facility become a sustainable amenity for the City. In summary, NGF believes that the City can improve the operational condition and economic performance of the Port Townsend Golf Club through action on the following NGF recommendations:

1. Make a new investment in the PTGC facility, focusing on improving the condition of the golf course and clubhouse (estimated cost of \$1.2 million+).
2. Change the operating structure by not renewing the operator lease and committing to a form of City self-operation (possibly with an F&B concession).
3. Hire the appropriate senior staff to manage and maintain the facility, including a PGA (or LPGA) designation for operations oversight and a GCSAA designation for golf course maintenance oversight.
4. Improve the marketing of PTGC, especially in technology, improved website, email program, and direct initiatives with Port Townsend lodging establishments.
5. Commit to a new focus on attracting less-traditional segments into golf (women, kids, minorities, etc.) through enhanced player development programming.

Timeline



Community Engagement

Role of the stakeholders:

- Regular meeting attendance: stakeholder meetings and public meetings.
- Listening to what you hear from the community and representing the desire of the wider community in this stakeholder group.
- Guiding project team (not decision making)
- Sharing your ideas with the Project team and city
- Presenting with the project team at Parks Board and City Council meetings
- Be a facilitator for break-out groups at larger meetings.
- Lead intercept events as needed.

Goals of Phase 1 Community Engagement:

- Review of PROS plan, Community Strategic plan
- Facilitate focus/interest groups to develop key criteria/principles to guide the community discussion.
- Align the key criteria/principles with previous planning efforts, and community discussions.

Goals of Phase 2 Community Engagement:

- Review the golf course’s current status and a most recent study
- Start the visioning process of what it could be.
- Pros/Cons of the golf course or repurposing
- Solicit feedback on a vision
- LA starts to draft concepts.

Goals of Phase 3 Community Engagement:

- Reflect on 2-3 Concept plans by LA
- Interactive process, what does the community like, what do they not like.
- Public input to guide final designs and decide on the golf course.

Goals of Final Recommendation Community Engagement:

- Gather feedback on concept plan (s)
- Cost out the concept plan
- Align with Mountain View Campus launch of the master plan
- Take recommendation to Council

Phase 1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT June – August 2022

Date	Task	Meetings	Status
July- September 2022	Stakeholder recruitment and kick-off	2-3	
	Outreach: press release, radio show, market, distribution announcement, online		

	questionnaire, web presence, social media push. Schools, community groups		
	Hold focus groups to identify key principles to frame the planning process.	4-5	
	Stakeholder review of data and provide guidance	1-2	
	Brief Parks and Trails Commission	1	
	Brief City Council	1	

PHASE 2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT September – November 2022

Date	Task	Meetings	Status
September 2022	Stakeholder preparation	1-2	
	Plan for the first phase of public engagement	1-2	
	Outreach: press release, radio show, market, distribution announcement, online questionnaire, web presence, social media push. Schools, community groups		
	Public open house #1, virtual open house, online survey.	1 in-person, 1 virtual	
	Stakeholder review of data and provide guidance	1-2	
	Brief Parks and Trails Commission	1	
	Brief City Council	1	

PHASE 3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: January – March 2023

Date	Task	Meetings	Status
October - November 2022	Stakeholder meeting kickoff of Phase 3	1	
	Stakeholders: Plan for second public engagement	1	
	Outreach: press release, radio show, market, distribution announcement, online questionnaire, web presence, social media push. Schools, Community Groups		
	Public Open House #2,	1 in-person, 1 virtual	
	Stakeholders: review input and provide guidance	1	
	Meeting: Parks Board/City Council Study Session Update	2	

FINAL RECOMMENDATION & DECISION MAKING: April - May 2023

Date	Task	Meetings	Status
January -March 2023	Stakeholders	1-2	
	Outreach: press release, radio show, market, distribution announcement, online questionnaire, web presence, social media push. Schools, Community Groups		
	Public Open House #3		
	Stakeholders review input and final concepts, provide guidance	1-2	
	Briefing Parks Board	1	
	City Council briefing and discussion/decision	2-3	