



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT BUDGET ANALYST REPORT

Date Issued: September 13, 2012

IBA Report Number: 12-36

NR & C Committee Docket Date: September 19, 2012

Item Number: 7

Golf Course Business Plan

OVERVIEW

On June 26, 2006, the City Council approved the Five-Year Golf Course Operations Business Plan (the “2006 Golf Plan”). The primary goals of the 2006 Golf Plan were to incorporate changes to the golf fees structure; develop plans for each golf complex to become financially self sustaining; establish a defined allocation of tee times for residents and non-resident golfers; establish how tee times were made available to the public; and provide a long-term capital improvement schedule. The 2006 Golf Plan provided direction for the Golf Division from FY 2007 through FY 2011. The outcomes of the 2006 Golf Plan are discussed in the Fiscal/Policy Discussion section.

In September 2011, the Park and Recreation Department formed the Business Plan Update Committee, an ad hoc advisory committee of stakeholders to assist in the update of the Golf Division’s Business Plan (“Business Plan”). The Business Plan Update Committee (the “Committee”) conducted multiple public meetings and workshops related to the development of the updated Business Plan, culminating in the approval of the updated Business Plan by the Committee on May 31, 2012 and approval by the Park and Recreation Board on June 21, 2012.

On July 25, 2012, the Golf Division of the Park and Recreation Department presented the Natural Resource and Culture (NR&C) Committee with the updated Business Plan. The Business Plan, similar to previous plans, provides guidelines, goals, and structure to the Golf Division to facilitate the successful operation of the golf complexes maintained by the City and to provide tools for the Golf Division to maintain long-term financial sustainability. Key components to the Business Plan are:

- No scheduled rate adjustments in FY 2013;
- Provides authority to the Park and Recreation Director, or their designee, to adjust rates within specific parameters to address under-utilization of courses or financial need;

- Creates a “rolling plan” to be updated as needed, thereby not being restricted to making desired changes at the end of the designated plan time period;
- Plans for the development of an active marketing plan, including the addition of a full-time Public Information Officer; and
- Discusses the anticipated capital improvement projects.

During the July 25, 2012 NR&C Committee meeting, the Office of the IBA was requested to review the best practices on the operation of golf courses and golf business plans; review issues raised by the Grand Jury in their report “San Diego Golf Course Operations Under the Five Year Business Plan” filed in May 2009; conduct a fiscal review of the overall golf system and each individual golf course over the life of the 2006 Golf Plan; conduct an analysis of the Golf System’s present assets including a review of conditions of the golf courses and potential impact of planned capital improvement projects would have on the Golf Enterprise Fund; update the cost-per-round calculation that was provided in IBA Report 06-28; and review golf industry metrics used for public and private courses. The following information has been compiled to address the request to the IBA.

FISCAL/POLICY DISCUSSION

2006 GOLF PLAN

In review of the primary goals set forth in the 2006 Golf Plan, the Golf Division has been successful in achieving the majority of the stated goals, with one key goal remaining problematic: establishing each golf complex as financially self-sustaining. The goals that have been substantially achieved include:

- Incorporating a simplified fee structure that addressed inconsistencies amongst the three golf complexes;
- Implementing a reservation system that improved customer service and eliminated broker reselling of tee times;
- Establishing and maintaining the target allocation of 70% of the tee times at Torrey Pines to be for resident golfers and 30% of the tee times for non-resident golfers:
 - For FY 2011 and FY 2012 the tee time allocations at Torrey Pines were 69% to resident golfers and 31% to non-resident golfers; and
- Improving maintenance standards and course conditions at each golf complex through facility upgrades:
 - Approximately \$11.3 million was expended for capital improvements from FY 2007 to FY 2011.
 - Independent customer satisfaction survey found range of 85% to 95% of golfers satisfied with golfing experience at three city-operated golf complexes.

Though it was the goal of the Golf Division to set rates to establish all three of the City maintained golf complexes to become financially self-sustaining, the Balboa and Mission

Bay Golf Complexes have yet to achieve that status. The table below illustrates the projected shortfalls for the Balboa and Mission Bay Golf Complexes for FY 2012.

Golf Course	FY12 Projected			All
	Torrey Pines	Balboa Park	Mission Bay	
Revenue	\$13,542,809	\$2,581,690	\$1,575,203	\$17,699,703
Operating Expense	\$8,312,332	\$5,098,545	\$2,173,060	\$15,583,937
Operating Income/(Loss)	\$5,230,477	(\$2,516,854)	(\$597,857)	\$2,115,766
Capital Expenses	\$3,581	\$1,154,922	\$48,618	\$1,207,121

Source: SAP

Note: Figures do not include continuing appropriations related to capital improvement projects.

The 2006 Golf Plan established rates for non-resident golfers at the Torrey Pines Golf Complex such that revenues from this class of golfers generated in excess of the cost of operation would be used to address the capital improvement costs of the entire golf system, and any short-fall in revenues from any of the other golf complexes. As such, the Golf System has maintained positive net operating revenues throughout the 2006 Golf Plan period (FY 2007 through FY 2011). The table below provides a high-level review of the revenues and expenses, including the capital improvement expenses, for the Golf System from FY 2007 to FY 2011, Projected and Actual.

Projected

Course	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	Cumulative Totals
	All Courses	All Courses	All Courses	All Courses	All Courses	
Revenue	\$14,326,564	\$15,263,803	\$15,691,851	\$17,392,207	\$19,419,729	\$82,094,154
Operating Expense	\$12,126,546	\$12,853,349	\$13,717,271	\$14,620,432	\$15,766,220	\$69,083,818
Operating Income/(Loss)	\$2,200,018	\$2,410,454	\$1,974,580	\$2,771,775	\$3,653,509	\$13,010,336
Capital Expenses	\$6,050,000	\$2,000,000	\$850,000	\$8,800,000	\$1,400,000	\$19,100,000

Actual

Course	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	Cumulative Totals
	All Courses	All Courses	All Courses	All Courses	All Courses	
Revenue	\$17,158,719	\$16,265,104	\$16,915,971	\$16,380,294	\$16,093,846	\$82,813,934
Operating Expense	\$12,014,164	\$12,415,651	\$12,945,002	\$14,707,021	\$13,784,769	\$65,866,607
Operating Income/(Loss)	\$5,144,555	\$3,849,453	\$3,970,969	\$1,673,273	\$2,309,077	\$16,947,327
Capital Expenses	\$1,754,576	\$5,293,991	\$576,126	\$361,864	\$2,834,208	\$10,820,765

Source: SAP

Note: Figures do not include continuing appropriations related to capital improvement projects.

Cumulatively for the 2006 Golf Plan period, the actual revenues were approximately 1% over the projected revenues; the actual operating expenses were approximately 5% less than the projected expenses; and the actual capital expenditures were approximately 57% of the projected expenditures. Although the total golf rounds for the three golf complexes decreased from 340,677 in FY 2007 to approximately 264,014 in FY 2011, the set annual rate increases from the 2006 Golf Plan contributed to the consistency in the

revenues received during the 2006 Golf Plan period. The average annual rate increase ranged between 6.7% and 11.1%, depending upon the class of golfer and day/time of play. Reduced demand for golf rounds and attrition of personnel contributed to the decrease in the operating expenses and led to re-consideration and the reduction of capital improvement program expenditures originally projected in the 2006 Golf Plan.

UPDATED BUSINESS PLAN

The updated Business Plan has several components that are designed to build on the successes of the 2006 Golf Plan and provide the Golf Division tools to assist in addressing the issue of the Balboa Park and Mission Bay Golf Complex not being financially self-sustaining. The key features are as follows:

- Rates/No scheduled rate adjustments in FY 2013 – There are no scheduled rate adjustments for FY 2013. Rate adjustments are anticipated to be addressed on an as-needed basis. This is a change from the 2006 Golf Plan as the previous plan established a set schedule for the rate increases. While this feature allows for adjustments based on a financial need, it does not provide the certainty of a set schedule.
 - Resident golf fees are proposed to be kept as low as possible depending on local market rates, operational costs at each golf complex, and the long-term sustainability of the Golf Division.
 - Non-resident golf fees will be based on local and national market rates, operational costs at each golf complex, cost recovery for the capital needs of the Golf Division, and the long-term sustainability of the Golf Division.

- Provides authority to the Park and Recreation Director, or their designee, to adjust rates within specific parameters. Conceptually, this feature will allow the Golf Division to decrease rates to provide financial incentive to golfers to play during under-utilized periods and increase rates to address revenue shortfalls due to various reasons such as prolonged decreased play or an increased need for capital improvements. The need to provide competitive pricing is also cited as support for this feature. No defined procedure for the rate adjustment process has been developed at this time. The table below presents the utilization of the total rounds at each golf complex and type of golfer (Resident/Non-resident) for FY 2011.

FY11					
Course	<u>Rounds</u>			<u>Resident/Non-Resident</u>	
	Actual	Available	Utilization %	Resident %	%
Torrey Pines ⁽¹⁾	131,040	172,000	76%	69	31
Balboa Park ⁽²⁾	88,649	200,000	44%	78	22
Mission Bay ⁽³⁾	44,325	150,000	30%	55	45

(1) Includes Torrey Pines North and South Courses.

(2) Includes 18-hole course and 9-hole course.

(3) Includes night play.

- Creates a “rolling plan” to be updated as needed. This feature would allow for the plan to be reviewed and adjusted on an as-needed basis. Minor adjustments could be incorporated sooner than the end of a set plan time period while significant events would trigger a full update. Though this feature would allow for more timely updates, it does not provide for a defined definition for “significant” events.
- Plans for the development of an active marketing plan, including the addition of a full-time Public Information Officer – Currently the Golf Division does not have any personnel solely responsible for marketing the Golf System. It is anticipated that the development of a marketing plan and more aggressive marketing would additionally contribute to the ability of the Golf Division to remain competitive with other courses. No marketing plan has been developed or presented at this point.
- Discussion of anticipated capital improvement projects – General descriptions of future projects are discussed for each golf course but a long-term comprehensive capital plan including future cost projections was not presented.

2009 GRAND JURY REPORT

In May 2009, the report “San Diego Golf Course Operations under the Five-Year Business Plan” was filed by the San Diego County Grand Jury. In response to citizen concerns as stated in the report, specifically that local golfers were bearing an unfair financial burden of the golf operations, the Grand Jury undertook a study of the increasing green fees at the three City-operated golf complexes. There were no findings of any violation of rules or policies and no evidence of mismanagement. The Grand Jury provided several recommendations for the City:

- The City should make the golf budgets, revenue and expense statements, and related contracts readily available to the public;
- The City should make the Five-Year Golf Operation Business Plan available at the clubhouses on the three City-operated golf complexes; and
- The Golf Advisory Council should be reactivated as a liaison between the golfing community and the City.

The City confirmed that the first two recommendations have been incorporated into the normal business practice. The Golf Advisory Committee had previously been disbanded in 2006. During the development of the updated Business Plan, the City created the ad-hoc Business Plan Update Committee to be a conduit for public input. The Golf Division has acknowledged that as the Business Plan Update Committee was established only to assist with the updating of the Business Plan. A new committee, the Municipal Golf Committee, will be created on a standing basis to provide input on the implementation and monitoring of the Business Plan. The first meeting will in March 2013 though no make-up of the committee has yet been established.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Per the request of the NR&C Committee, the IBA researched best management practices for golf course operations. While there are several standard management practices related to the property maintenance of the golf courses and greens, there are no standard financial best practices specifically related to golf course operations. In review and discussion of the best management practices for the maintenance of the golf courses, the Golf Division ensured that they follow and are in compliance with these practices which relate to greens, tee boxes, fairways, bunkers, and trees.

However, as the Golf Division is an enterprise fund, and it is intended that the Golf System be financially self-sustaining, the IBA reviewed best management practices for operating and financially maintaining an organization. In review of these best management practices, specifically those noted by the Government Finance Officer Association (GFOA), the IBA has identified several practices that the Golf Division has not incorporated into their operations or were not presented with the updated Business Plan. These best management practices are:

- Long-Term Financial Planning – Long-term financial planning combines financial forecasting with strategic planning. Forecasting revenues and expenditures over a long-term period and aligning financial capacity with long-term service objectives facilitates decision making for accomplishing multi-year goals. The financial plan should look five to ten years in the future.
- Preparing and Adopting Multi-Year Capital Planning – Development and adoption of comprehensive multi-year capital plans facilitates effective management of capital assets. A multi-year capital plan will identify and prioritize expected needs based on a strategic plan, establish project scope and cost, identify potential funding sources, and consider future operating and maintenance costs. The capital plan should preferably cover a period of five or more years.
- Role of Master Plans in Capital Improvement Planning – Master Plans are long-range plans that act as a framework for the capital improvement plans. The GFOA recognizes the role of the Master Plans as one of the CIP's important elements.
- Adoption of Financial Policies – The GFOA recommends that financial policies in specific areas, including fees and charges and reserves, be developed by professional staff and adopted by the legislative body. Other enterprise operations such as Public Utilities and Development Services have developed written policies for their reserves.
- Public Participation in Planning, Budgeting, and Performance Management – The GFOA recommends the incorporation of public participation efforts in planning, budgeting, and performance management results processes. Creating public

advisory groups or committees, which are often ongoing, can be used to gather and transmit information, discuss alternatives, and monitor implementation of plans. The Golf division did create an ad-hoc committee during the development of the updated Business Plan, however the committee was not envisioned to be a standing committee.

GOLF METRICS / OTHER GOLF AGENCIES

As requested by the NR&C Committee, the IBA reviewed golf industry metrics presented in several benchmarking resources. The most common referred to golf metrics are Revenue Per Available Tee Time (RevPATT) and Revenue Per Utilized Round (RevPUR), as these are a quick reference to the profitability related to tee times (primary source of revenue for most golf courses). The RevPATT calculation takes the total revenue generated from the rounds of golf and divides by the total rounds available at the course to get to the resulting figure. The RevPUR calculation takes the total revenue generated from the rounds of golf and divides by the total rounds of golf played to get to the resulting figure. While these metrics may be commonly referenced in comparing courses, particularly for private golf courses, they may not be the best metrics to monitor the City's Golf Division. These metrics do not provide good insight into the factors that are necessary for their calculation such as green fee rates and tee time intervals. Tee time intervals are a key factor in determining the total round available for each course.

In discussion with the Golf Division, the primary goal of establishing metrics or benchmarks would be to provide year-to-year comparisons and provide necessary information to decision makers. As such, benchmarks that would provide more detail about the operation of the Golf Division would better serve decision-makers. Such benchmarks would include:

- Target Number of Round – number of rounds targeted by the Golf Division
 - Serves as goal for increased/managed play and tiers for additional maintenance costs
- Number of rounds played
- Course Utilization Percentage – figure illustrating usage by course and time/day
 - Report of this figure would be used to manage potential times/areas of under-utilization
- Total Operating Costs separated by Personnel and Non-Personnel costs
 - Information provided by complex and by course
 - Serve as tool to monitor areas of changes in expenses
- Total Operating Costs as a percentage of Total Costs (operating and capital)
 - Information provided by complex and by course
- Total Revenues
 - Revenues could be identified as green fees, other golf revenue, food and beverage, merchandise, and other revenue
 - Information provided by complex and by course
- Change in rates presented in dollars and percentage from prior year

Reports from the National Golf Course Owners Association and the National Golf Foundation include similar information.

Additionally, the IBA has updated the cost per round calculation that was originally presented in IBA report 06-028. The original calculation identified all the operating costs associated with each golf course and divided by the total rounds played at each golf course to determine the cost per round per golf course. The updated cost per round calculation is presented as an appendix to this report. The table below provides a comparison of the updated cost per round calculation for FY 2011 and the projected cost per round as presented in the 2006 Golf Plan. Additional information is provided in Appendix A.

Cost Per Round per Course		
Complex/Course	FY 2011	2006 Golf Plan
Torrey Pines		
North Course	\$46.71	\$27.91
South Course	\$80.36	\$56.50
Balboa Park		
18-hole	\$58.65	\$35.31
9-hole	\$23.50	\$3.36
Mission Bay		
18-hole	\$46.89	\$20.16

In consideration of one of the key elements of the updated Business Plan, the IBA reviewed several other municipalities as to whether or not the golf courses have and/or utilize the ability/flexibility to adjust their rates during the year or offer financial incentives to attract golfers. We also looked at how and when golf courses were able to adjust their rates; whether committee/board approval is required; and what the adjustment is based upon. The table below provides the information gathered from various municipalities.

Agency	Number of City-Owned Courses	Number of City-Operated Courses	Authority to adjust rates during the year	Authority to approve rates	Basis for rate adjustments
Coronado*	0	1	Yes	Golf Division	Based upon course conditions
Chula Vista	3	0	N/A	Leasee	To be determined by Leasee
San Francisco	6	1	Yes	Golf Division	Based on competition/market
Phoenix	8	7	Yes	Golf Division	Based on competition/market
Las Vegas	4	0	N/A	Leasee	To be determined by Leasee
Los Angeles (County)	19	0	No	Board of Supervisors	Based upon annual market rate survey
Los Angeles (City)**	13	13	No	Park and Recreation Commission	Based upon financial sustainability

*Leased from the Port of San Diego.

**Planning study to develop plan to allow for adjustment of rates by Golf Division.

Three of the municipalities have provided their respective Golf Divisions the authority to adjust rates during the year based upon market conditions and/or course conditions, and the City of Los Angeles is planning to study this feature. Although LA County lease all of their County-owned golf courses to private operators, through the structure of the

agreed upon leases, the County Board of Supervisors maintain the ability to set rates. A rate review is conducted annually following the completion of a market rate survey.

REVIEW OF GOLF SYSTEM'S CURRENT ASSETS

In reviewing the current condition of the Golf System's current assets, specifically the capital assets related to each golf course, the Golf Division does not have a comprehensive report that evaluates of all golf assets. The Golf Division does have capital improvement needs listed for each golf course separately with the justification for project prioritization. The development of a multi-year capital improvement plan as discussed in the Best Practices Section would address this issue. Below is an abbreviated list of the asset conditions and capital needs per golf complex:

Torrey Pines Golf Complex: Master plan North Course and Practice Facilities

- Cart paths are needed
- Fairway bunkers do not drain properly
- Greens need to be expanded to reduce wear
- Green side bunkers need adjustment
- Irrigation heads failing due to wear
- Irrigation control system outdated

Balboa Park Golf Complex: Master plan and Construction of a clubhouse and parking lot

- Club house built in 1930
- Outdated electrical wiring
- No banquet facilities (needed for tournament support)
- Inadequate cart storage and charging capabilities
- Inadequate parking

Mission Bay Golf Complex: Replacement of Clubhouse and Course Infrastructure

Existing clubhouse

- Electrical wiring needs to be replaced
- Collapsed sewer service line
- Removal of lead paint
- Does not meet current ADA requirements

Golf Course Infrastructure

- Outdated irrigation system
- Lighting system needs replacement
- Outdated oil-filled electrical transformer

RECOMMENDATIONS

In review of the updated Business plan, the IBA would make the following recommendations based upon our review of best management practices:

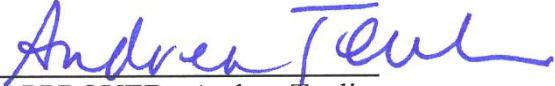
- Development and presentation of a Five-Year Financial Outlook during the City's budget process, to be updated on an annual basis
- Development and presentation of Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan, to be updated on an annual basis
- Development of Master Plan/General Plan for each of the City-Operated Golf Complexes

- Establishment of written procedures for adjusting the green fees
 - Should the City consider authorizing an entity/committee other than the City Council to adjust rates, a defined process for adjusting rates should be developed
 - Justification for rate adjustments should be supported by historical utilization reports or other supporting documents
 - In consideration of historical rate adjustments, potential caps to limit adjustments should be considered
- Establishment a written policy for the Golf Fund’s Operating Reserve
 - Currently the Golf Division follows a guideline for budgeting their Operating Reserve, approving a written policy would solidify this process
- Establish ongoing public advisory committee for the Golf System
 - Golf Division has already agreed to create the Municipal Golf Committee
 - Make up of this committee should ensure input from multiple stakeholders
- Establish a timetable for a complete plan update
 - If a “rolling” plan is considered, while this type of plan allows for minor adjustments on an as needed basis, it does not set a specific time for a full review. Requiring a complete update no more than five years from the approval date would provide certainty for a comprehensive review.

CONCLUSION

On July 25, 2012, the Golf Division presented their updated Business Plan to the NR&C Committee. During discussion at this meeting, the IBA was requested to review several items, including the best management practices for golf courses. In review of the updated Business Plan, the IBA has identified several actions that would assist the Golf Division in their effective management of the City-operated golf complexes and would provide the decision-makers valuable information to base future decisions upon. The IBA recommends that the NR&C Committee consider these recommendations regarding incorporating several best management practices into the Golf Division operations and request the Golf Division to respond to these considerations.


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Attachment: 1. Appendix – Cost per round calculation