

MINUTES

City of San Diego
Municipal Golf Committee (MGC)
May 15, 2025

Meeting held at:

Balboa Park Club – Balboa Room
2150 Pan American Road West
San Diego, CA 92101

Mailing address is:

Torrey Pines Administration Building
11480 N. Torrey Pines Road
La Jolla, CA 92037

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present

Larry Barron
Dr. R. Lee Brown
Curtis B. Burkhead
Hal Corbin
Lauren Holst
Stephen M. Shushan
Richard Wallace

Members Absent

Marty Block
Kay McElrath
Britton Nelson

Staff Present

John Howard
Tim Graham
Matty Reyes
Gabriella Verendia
Annie Zachau

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. by Matty Reyes, Golf Course Manager

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved/seconded (S. Shushan / C.Burkhead) to approve the March 20, 2025, Minutes. Motion passed (7 ayes, 0 abstention). The vote was unanimous.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion was moved/seconded (R.Brown / L.Barron) to adopt the agenda as presented. (7 ayes, 0 abstention). The vote was unanimous.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The Chairperson's seat is currently vacant, and no report was given.

STAFF REPORT

Matty Reyes, Golf Course Manager

Mr. Reyes recapped recent major events, the 3rd Annual Torrey Pines Adaptive Golf Championship, held May 6th, Torrey Pines North Course, had 28 players, down from 43 in 2024, due to increased competition from other adaptive tournaments.

Torrey Pines Men's Club donated a \$20,000 sponsorship for the 2025 Adaptive Golf Championship, and we greatly appreciate their support.

CIF San Diego Section Boys' final scheduled for Wednesday, May 21st, at Torrey Pines South Course with 108 players. It was the first time CIF was contested on the South Course.

The July tournament schedule includes: Junior World Championship, San Diego City AM, and SCGA Amateur Championships.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR REPORT

John Howard, Deputy Director

Mr. Howard reported on three areas: rounds, budget, and maintenance. Balboa Park Golf Course 18- and the nine-hole courses, we are actually ahead 5,800 rounds on the 18-hole course and 3,400 rounds on the nine-hole course. We're potentially going to reach 86,000 rounds of golf on the 18 and 84,000 on the nine. While Mission Bay is 3,200 rounds ahead which is projected to hit 86,000 rounds, even with night golf not being available. We will see a few drop in rounds with Torrey Pines due to the fact that we hosted the Genesis Invitational in February. The North Course is potentially going to reach 91,000 rounds. The Division is projected 425,000 rounds played this fiscal year, reflecting strong growth in all three facilities.

The Golf Operations Division's FY26 budget expenses rising from \$28.7M at \$30.65M (+6.8%), with revenue rising only 6%. Personnel costs rose by \$1.6M due to the increase in employee salaries and the new Building Maintenance Supervisor role. Approximately \$4.8M returned to the City general fund through land use fees and revenue percentage. The North Course renovation at Torrey Pines included 600 tons of sand for playing condition improvements.

Mr. Howard noted that it is interesting that our revenue is not keeping pace with our expenses right now. Year over year, we're looking at about a 6% increase in our revenue, where expenses are going up by 10%. We will continue to monitor this trend closely.

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

101. San Diego Golf Customer Satisfaction Survey Presentation – Tim Graham

Mr. Graham presented the results of the 2024 Satisfaction Survey. The Division works with True North Research, which conducts the customer survey every two years and has done so on behalf of the Division since 2011. Over 1,100 randomly selected customers who rated City courses in fiscal year 2024 participated in the survey via telephone or email with a maximum margin of error of plus or minus 2.9%. So, what is the demographic makeup of our respondents? Residents made up 63% of respondents, while 37% were non-residents. With a gender breakdown of 85% male, 12% female and 2% preferring not to answer.

63% of respondents were 55 years or older, and 63% had a household income exceeding \$100,000. The graphic shown here outlines the overall performance ratings for city golf facilities. Golfers have weighed their experiences at Torrey Pines South, Torrey Pines North, Balboa Park and Mission Bay Golf Course, with response categories ranging from very poor to excellent. Torrey Pines South received the most positive ratings overall, with 92% of customers who had played at least one round in the past 12 months citing their most recent experience as excellent or good. Torrey Pines North also received high marks, with 89% of customers rating their most recent experience as excellent or good. Eight in 10 customers rated their experience at Balboa Park Golf Course as excellent or good, while seven in 10 customers rated their experience at Mission Bay as excellent or good.

While these numbers are encouraging, it's important to put them in context to get a better sense of whether the division is making statistically significant improvements to the customer experience. Notable improvements in this survey when compared to the 2022 survey include a plus 8% improvement in pace of play at Torrey Pines facilities, with a 7.5% improvement in the practice putting greens, a 6.8 percentage improvement in the driving range facilities, and a 5.2% improvement in course conditions. Balboa Park also saw significant gains in fairway conditions, which was 13.4% value for the fee, which was up almost 9%, and overall course conditions, which was up 7%, with 91% of those surveyed saying they would recommend the course to a friend or a colleague.

That 91% marks the first time in the survey's history that Balboa Park was the most recommended city golf course facility, narrowly ahead of other courses. So that's just a huge deal. Mission Bay also improved with its pro shop quality, which was up 49%, and restroom conditions, which were up 26%, which is unsurprising with the opening of a new Pro Shop in 2023, as well as a 12% improvement in availability of walk up tee times and an 11% improvement in the condition of the rest of the course. While the division continues to be pleased with the overall satisfaction of its customers, there are always elements of the operation that can be improved. Key golfer concerns include enforcing speed of play, increasing tee time availability, reducing fees and improving tee time information access as it relates to Balboa Park and Mission Bay.

102. Tee Time Presentation – John Howard

Mr. Howard presented the Golf Operations Tee Time. Now, before we get started, I think it's very important that we take a look at our shared definitions. I'm sure that everybody understands that a tee time is a designated start time that can be filled with up to four players. Now, one of the most important things that the committee members and the public need to understand is exactly what Mr. Graham just stated. There's a difference between access and utilization. So, access is the ability of a customer to reserve a specific tee time. Now at Torrey Pines, we have a tee time template, or excuse me, a tee sheet templates that strictly control access for online officers.

70% of all tee times are reserved specifically for residents of San Diego, while the additional 30% is held for non-residents. And that could be a combination of tournaments, hotel tee times and non-resident advanced reservations. When we look at the 78%, that's a combination of advanced reservations, men's and ladies' clubs standard reservations. At Balboa in Mission Bay, we do not control access. That's never been something that has been asked of the division. But with that, we do ensure that everyone is able to book tee times as well as they can. Now, when you start talking about tax or, excuse me, utilization. Utilization is the actual player mix of an individual tee time. As Mr. Graham said, a customer, a resident can book a tee time for up to four players, but it's up to them who they decide to bring.

The division does not dictate who they can bring based on their residency status. In 2005, the City of San Diego believed that they could provide a better service to customers by providing them direct access to the tee sheets. By implementing an advanced reservation program, we believe we could improve customer service, resident access, and the ability to secure a tee time. Customers then didn't have to utilize a third-party tee time broker, and they could book all the way up to 90 days in advance. We also believe that we are able to help customers by allowing them to plan ahead. Now, since we're dealing directly with the customers themselves, it has helped reduce fraud, it has reduced no shows, and it has kept customers committed to the tee times that they were securing.

By opening up the tee sheet earlier, we were able to remove barriers for guests who couldn't reasonably access the tee sheet via the phone in the IVR register system. This program also helped protect the Golf Enterprise Fund rather than diverting funds to private third-party entities. Now, when we began the advanced reservation program, it started with one phone line. That was my phone line. I went to one phone that was receiving all of these calls. In the first year, we obviously didn't have the staff that was able to effectively service all of these guests. We still pulled in over a million dollars in the first 12 months, which was additional revenue to the golf division. Now, over the years, that program has evolved. It has moved from one staff member to four answering phones in a very limited window.

It was only Monday through Friday from 9 to 3 p.m. Now, even at this point, we didn't have enough staff to field every call that was coming in, and residents really looked at

this as a special occasion rather than an everyday type of use. Now, in 2015, an audit came out, and the golf division committed to transitioning the reservation system to an online reservation system, which launched in May 2000. We did put forward the advanced reservation program online in 2019, and we've seen an increase in participation year over year from residents. So, as you can see here, this is a visual representation of how tee times are broken up. 71% of all tee times are allotted to residents of State Diego. As I said earlier, this comprises men's and women's clubs, high school golf leagues, advanced reservations, as well as our standard weekly reservations.

That remaining 29% you can see is broken up between non-resident advanced reservations, hotel tee times, and outside terminals. And one thing to note is the time frame that we use, we look at from the time we open is generally about 6:20 in the morning to one hour after twilight. That's how we calculate our 70%. Now recently there's been a lot of discussion about access to tee times throughout our system. And I believe that, I believe I'm very confident that we are doing everything we can to ensure that we protect resident access at every single one of our facilities. The one thing that I don't think has been discussed is the increase in demand and continual reinvestment back into our properties.

Over the course of the last 50 years, there have been a number of factors that either increased or decreased the amount of demand at our facilities. For example, in 2000, there were 90 golf courses in the County of San Diego. But today there are only 72. That's a reduction of 20% in the supply of tee times in the County. Over that same period, the population of San Diego has increased by 160,000 residents. And that represents a 13% daily increase in overall potential demand. As you can see from this slide, there are also recent activities that have influenced the demand at our facilities. Right after Covid 2021 we had an increase of 42% in our resident ID card sales, which represented 10,000 new customers who were accessing tee times across our facility. We also have the 2021 US Open.

In 2022, the North Course was closed for approximately two months, which also reduced the supply of available tee towns. Currently, we have 41,000 resident ID card holders. That represents a 71% increase in the last four years. So, where does this data lead us? Well, I don't believe that we have an access problem at our facilities at Torrey Pines. Tee times are strictly regulated to ensure residents can access 70% of all tee times. I don't believe our golf courses have an affordability problem for residents in San Diego. Since our last report, an overwhelming majority of customers earn over \$100,000 per year. I do believe that, depending on a player's preference, there could be a demand problem. There is only one 8:00 a.m. Saturday tee time, and only one customer is going to probably book that time.

So, the real question is, what are we trying to solve? Is it a demand problem? If so, there are ways that we can combat that. We could increase the prices. But I'm not sure if that's exactly what everybody is looking for us to do. There are areas that I would recommend studying. Those include potentially raising rates to reduce demand. We could institute a low-income fee waiver for residents who can't afford those rates. We can institute

booking fees at Balboa and Mission Bay to improve access to those tee times. We could also increase the advanced reservation booking fee at Torrey Pines to potentially reduce that demand. There are other options. We could look at potentially eliminating access to our special user groups. But that too would come at a tough challenge.

Public Comments:

None.

Staff/Committee Comments:

Dr. R. Lee Brown commented that Golf should be looked at with a wellness activity approach. The importance is not only physical, but also mental, to the community.

ACTION ITEM(S)

201. Election of Chair and Vice-Chairperson – Matty Reyes

Marty Block and Mr. Brown were nominated for Chairperson.

A vote was conducted to elect a new Chairperson for the Municipal Golf Committee. (Five votes for Mr. Block, two votes for Mr. Brown). Mr. Block was appointed as the new Chairperson.

Stephen Shushan and Mr. Brown were nominated for Vice-Chairperson.

A vote was conducted to elect a new Vice-Chairperson for the Municipal Golf Committee. (Four votes for Mr. Shushan, three votes for Mr. Brown). Mr. Shushan was appointed as the new Vice-Chairperson.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m. by Matty Reyes, Golf Course Manager

Next Regular Meeting: **Thursday, July 17th, 2025, 6:00 p.m.**
Balboa Park Club
2150 Pan American Road West
San Diego, CA 92101