

# PLANNING A GOLF COURSE

by Edwin Seay

To build and maintain a quality golf course and overall recreation facility, there is no substitute for proper planning. Whether it be the development of a new course or remodeling and updating an existing course, an early comprehensive Master Plan is essential.

If you were building a house, you wouldn't construct it room by room as you need the space. You would carefully decide what type of home would meet your needs, leaving options open for later changes or expansion. The same principle holds true for golf courses.

The early retaining of a golf course architect as a member of the consulting team can often make the difference between success and failure. It may also affect whether the project can be brought in under budget.

The following steps are all essential as part of the Master Planning phase:

1. *Arrange for take-out and permanent financing so the project has ample funds for completing construction and for first-year maintenance.*
2. *Conduct an environmental impact study.*
3. *Conduct hydrological studies and make a flood report.*
4. *Run soil tests and slope analysis.*
5. *Conduct an erosion control and retention base study.*
6. *Test well(s).*
7. *Determine the site of sewer treatment plant, if required.*
8. *Conduct a tree study.*
9. *Determine the direction from which the facility will be served with utilities (electricity, gas) and drinking water.*
10. *Conduct a space analysis and determine preferred*

*locations for the clubhouse, parking, maintenance, and supplemental recreational facilities like tennis courts, bathhouse and pool.*

11. *Determine the traffic circulation system and effects of and upon nearby residential developments.*

The golf course architect can't make all the decisions about the building of a course, but along with members of the team, the architect can make the difference between a mediocre course and a great one.

And to keep a course at a high level of quality, the planning doesn't end when the facility becomes playable. Updating and remodeling have to be a continuing project. In the long run, continuous planning and supervision is less expensive than waiting until a course deteriorates to a point where it has to be remodeled.

Too often courses are remodeled in a haphazard way with no consideration of the effect on the overall facility. There is no better way to ruin a good course than hit and miss renovations.

Several steps should be taken as part of a remodeling program to insure the best results. They are:

1. *Consult the golf course architect to gain his expertise in the project.*
2. *Obtain an up-to-date topographical map of the entire golf course and clubhouse grounds area, showing all physical features (buildings, roads, parking, trees, water, etc.) as well as greens, fairways, sandtraps and topography.*
3. *Obtain an up-to-date aerial photo of the course at same scale as 2 (one inch = 100 feet).*
4. *Meet with the architect and*

*course committee to decide upon desired improvements.*

5. *Review the architect's improvement plan and make revisions to conform with your group's wishes.*

6. *After finalizing the Master Plan, have it adopted by your board of directors.*

7. *Have your architect provide you with an itemized cost estimate for the plan on a hole-to-hole basis.*

8. *In consultation with the architect, develop a priority schedule in manageable phases extending over two or three years.*

9. *Ask your board of directors to fund or budget the required money each year covered by the agreed-upon plan.*

I can't emphasize enough the need for regular modernization of courses. I would estimate that at present as many as 50 percent of the courses in the U.S. are in need of some kind of remodeling. Adoption of Master Planning techniques can save these courses a lot of trouble in the future.

Proper planning can be financially beneficial as well as offering a great opportunity to keep facilities at a high quality level. For more information about Master Planning or for a list of golf course architects, contact the American Society of Golf Course Architects, 221 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, Ill. 60601. □

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