

Unique development plan paves way for

By David K. Wells

Baltimore (Md.) County is preparing to act on its award-winning golf course master plan to develop additional public courses without taxpayer funding.

The plan includes a development schedule of publicly and privately owned sites; innovative management alternatives; and financing and development recommendations that will significantly increase the supply of public courses over the next 10 years.

Using the master plan as a guideline, a county agency is negotiating for a development site for the first of several county-owned facilities. Virginia's Fairfax County is also considering doing a master plan based on Baltimore County's, which has won awards for Baltimore County from the National Association of Counties and the plan's developers from the American Society of Landscape Architects.

BACKGROUND

Baltimore County is the largest in the Baltimore Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The county's 685,000 people are spread out over 600 square miles.

Yet, just seven of the 319 metropolitan areas surveyed by the National Golf Foundation have fewer public golf holes per capita. Baltimore County has 0.6 18-hole public courses per 100,000 people, compared to a national average of 2.7.

The county's four 18-hole average 65,000 rounds apiece. Playing time stretches 5-1/2 to 6 hours per round. No new public courses have been built in the last 20 years, despite a 65,000-person jump in population.

County leaders are concerned about the shortage for several reasons. First, golf is a popular and growing form of recreation. Second, golf courses attract businesses. Finally, they generate direct revenue in greens fees, cart rentals, practice range charges, equipment purchases and food and beverage sales.

Like many public agencies, Baltimore County's recreation department has been besieged by firms offering to build courses and developers seeking county support for projects.

But, rather than adopt a piecemeal approach to building public courses, in which the real need for golf might not be addressed or all financing options not be considered,

County studies golf

FAIRFAX COUNTY, Va. — Fairfax County's Board of Supervisors approved a \$58,000 study on building golf courses for the Park Authority.

The study would measure demand for golf courses in the county and recommend development plans for three vacant sites the Park Authority owns. The county already realizes about \$300,000 a year from each of the five 18-hole golf courses it runs.

the Department of Recreation and Parks commissioned a golf course master plan that included a strategy for developing new public courses.

THE MASTER PLAN

By competitive bids, the county selected a consulting team to prepare the Baltimore County Golf Course Master Plan. The winners were Legg Mason Realty Group Inc. (LMRG) of Baltimore, Daff-McCune-Walker Inc. (DMW) and

The McLoughlin Group (TMG) of Pleasantville, N.Y.

LMRG, a real-estate advisory subsidiary of a major securities firm, served as project manager with responsibility for demographic, economic and investment analysis.

DMW, a Towson, Md.-based land-planning and environmental firm with golf course development expertise, performed environmental and planning evaluations of proposed sites.

TMG, an international golf course consulting agency, evaluated playability, administration and business potential of proposed courses and the financial analysis of development.

The team found an immediate need for 10 public courses averaging more than 55,000 rounds apiece to meet the county's pent-up golf demand. The team used current and future population estimates, demographic information and par-

ticipation rates to determine the need. It also made projections for the years 1995 and 2000.

The team evaluated potential sites to determine environmental constraints and playability. Sensitive environmental issues in Maryland include wetland protection, sediment and erosion control, water quality, water supply, pesticide and nutrient management, agricultural preservation, wildlife habitat, air quality, noise, historical and ar-

