

Go slow on new courses, Hawaii planner warns

HONOLULU, Hawaii — "When in doubt about approving new golf courses, be conservative until better information about water resources is available."

That was the message to state and county planning commissions from Harold Masumoto, director of the Office of State Planning. He pointed out that not enough is known about Hawaii's underground water resources and the impact golf courses might have on them.

A recent planning office study found 68 courses in Hawaii — 29 on Oahu, 18 in Maui County, 13 on the Big Island, and eight on Kauai.

The report cites Hawaii Real Estate Research and Education Center data which indicates a demand for 44 more golf courses now, 14 more by the year 2,000. Another 102 courses have been proposed.

Hilo golf courses targeted for new taxes by council

HILO, Hawaii — Increased revenue and more control over existing and proposed courses are City Council targets in its effort to create a new tax class for golf courses.

The tax rate, at least double the current highest real property tax rate of \$10 per \$1,000 valuation, would be placed on golf course land and "all other facilities related to the game of golf," according to a bill introduced by Councilmen Brian De Lima and James Arakaki. Pro shops, hotels or lodges and any other accessory facilities would be included.

De Lima noted that many courses are membership only and that surrounding communities often benefit little from their development.

"The people who develop golf courses are going to welcome this because they don't want to deal with a situation where they don't know what's going to be asked of them," De Lima said.

Muni course plan put on hold in Pa.

ELIZABETHTOWN, Pa. — An 18-hole municipal golf course proposed in Elizabethtown Borough and West Donegal Township — a plan under study for a year — has been side-tracked.

Waste Management Inc., which owns most of the 140 acres called the Old Elizabethtown Landfill, is no longer considering a lease agreement. A spokesman for SCA Services of Pennsylvania, an affiliate of Waste Management, said it would not be in SCA's best interest to pursue the proposal at this time because of ongoing Superfund activities at the landfill.

The firm wants to complete work with the federal Environmental Protection Agency at the site before pursuing an agreement. Clean-up is not expected to begin for four or five years.

According to the report, proportionately more people play golf here than in any of the 50 states.

OSP found that 18 per cent of Hawaii's residents are golfers, as are 19.8 per cent of visitors from the mainland and 12 per cent of Japanese visitors. The number of Hawaiian golfers is expected to rise, since the state has the fastest-growing population of elderly residents in the nation.

In Hawaii, the report notes, golf courses often are built as amenities for resorts, and not as profit centers. Golf courses fill hotel rooms, is the

widely-held belief.

Sales of adjacent homesites add to the profit margin for golf course developers, OSP found. Developers of "stand-alone" golf courses don't get such economic benefits, and in some cases developers sell high-priced international memberships to make up the difference.

The report cites a need to irrigate arid areas, a trend toward upscale resorts and creation of courses on lava rock as factors adding to costs.

Expanding on the economic theme, the report suggested a combination of impact fees and develop-

ment agreements would offer the best option for funding community improvements.

Golf courses provide more employment than comparable use of the same land for growing sugar or pineapple.

A 200-acre course could employ between 80 to 100 workers, while the same acreage could be handled by a single agricultural field hand.

Masumoto emphasized that environmental and community groups, which oppose golf course development, are far better organized than developers.

Ky. courses may face water cuts

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Four courses siphoning water from Floyds Fork of Beargrass Creek won't have future unlimited access.

The Senate Counties and Special Districts Committee has approved a bill giving local fiscal courts authority to stop courses and other non-farm businesses from drawing significant amounts of water from streams.

Midland Trail Golf Club, Valhalla Golf Club, NTS Lake Forest and Persimmon Ridge were cited as large water users.

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