

## Golf resort of the future

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parks, some are strictly for vacation and retirement living and still others are a blend of all these elements. The one common denominator of trans-urban life is that the genesis and focal point of planning is golf. In fact, one real estate expert estimates that close to 20 per cent of such housing starts in the past year have been tied in with a golf course.

To the golf industry, as an industry, this presages a pronounced change in the physical layouts upon which golf will be placed a generation from today. Perhaps even more important are the changes that will take place in the attitudes of golfers and golf business people because of this new concept. These changes, of course, are still shrouded in the mystery of the murky future.

The recreational planning that goes into the making of a successful golf course still requires a careful study of all factors involved in the question "is the course economically feasible?" For the developer, this question must certainly be answered, because it will become much more complex and, of course, will involve greater amounts of money.

The factors that must be considered in golf course planning are: the economic condition of the community; type and amount of employment population; condition of existing facilities; commercial activities in the area, and the area's appeal to families and investors who are golf-oriented.

How have some of the developments of this type fared? One of the biggest trans-urban developments is Boca Raton, West on the east coast of Florida, just five miles from the famed Boca Raton resort hotel.

Boca Raton, West, when completed in 10 years or possibly less, will have four championship golf courses adjacent to clusters of condominium apartment buildings, a hotel, clubhouse, swimming pools, tennis courts, bridle paths, lakes, gardens, waterways, roads and over 1,400 acres of land.

Prospects thus far, and for the future, are limitless if Boca Raton

expectations are indicative of how the public will accept these leisure complexes. Arvida Corp., parent company of the Boca Raton project, reported a net income of \$2,435,000 for 1968, an amount more than double the corporation's income for 1967. Arvida's real estate sales for the year totaled \$15,244,000, an increase of \$3,458,000 over 1967's

\$11,786,000.

These happy figures have spurred Arvida to rapidly move ahead with development and construction programs in its rather leisure-oriented communities. President Brown L. Whatley caps this by saying: "The momentum we have achieved in our operations during 1968 may be expected

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## SELECTING A SUITABLE SITE

Proper soil is of primary importance in selecting a suitable site. Natural features, which make the game more interesting and reduce development and maintenance costs, also are advantageous. Among these features are:

1. *Soil.* Preferably sandy loam.
2. *Drainage.* Adequate to prevent standing water and disease. Installing tiles is often necessary. Swampy, low land near rivers should be avoided because of the added costs for moving earth and drainage.
3. *Terrain.* Gently rolling, but not so rugged or hilly that players would tire easily or be forced to use a power-driven cart, that many blind shots would be required, or that the cost of turfing would be unreasonable. Flat land may need bulldozing to build up knolls.

4. *Trees, rivers, creeks and ponds.* To add interest to the game and increase aesthetic beauty of the course. (Trees also screen parallel fairways.) Heavily wooded sites are undesirable, however, because of high costs for removing trees, stumps and stones. Rivers, creeks and ponds also serve as a natural water supply.

5. *Weather and climate.* Sufficient rainfall to maintain water supply. Mild enough climate for reasonably long-playing season and minimal damage to greens and fairways during the off-season.

Site selection is based on these factors as well:

1. *Shape.* Preferably rectangular, not an irregular, strung-out site. Less land is needed for a well-designed course, maintenance crews can work more ef-

ficiently and distances do not seem so great to golfers.

2. *Utilities.* Availability of public service water, sewer and electricity.

3. *Accessibility.* Especially important for public courses dependent on transient green fees. One or two holes parallel to the highway create interest in the course and improve appearance along the highway.

4. *Past use of the lands.* On a rundown farm, most of the soil's natural plant food may be depleted and excessive amounts of fertilizer will be needed for proper cultivation of the turf. Well-maintained pasture land usually makes a good golf course site.

Because few available sites have all these qualifications, costs to correct deficiencies generally must be incurred. The total development cost is an important consideration in site selection, particularly when comparing one site with another. In certain geographic areas some features may be entirely lacking and must be artificially created. In other locations, those deficiencies which cannot be corrected (for example, a short playing season) must be allowed for in the operational economics of the golf course project.

The suggested minimum size for a nine-hole course is 50 acres for level terrain and 70 to 90 acres for a hilly site. An 18-hole course requires at least 110 acres, but if the terrain is rough, 140 to 180 acres may be necessary.

Some acreages for average courses are as follows:

9 holes	83 to 88 acres
18 holes	87 to 180 acres
27 holes	163 to 181 acres.