

Community Engagement Summary
Task Force On Municipal Golf in Madison Parks
May 18, 2020

Per the authorizing resolution, the Task Force on Municipal Golf was charged with soliciting input from local stakeholders, including members of the public who use the courses for golfing and non-golfing purposes, as well as those who do not. Staff provided all previous survey data and public comment prior to 2019 to members of the Task Force during the early stages of the assignment. Since the Task Force's work began, approximately 4,300 contacts have been made, soliciting feedback via survey, focus group meetings, two (2) public input meetings and various email, phone calls. The survey was open for 41 days, and was announced through a press release, social media posts, the Task Force's website and via email to golf contacts and parks contacts. Nearly 4,100 people responded to the survey and many followed up with more detailed email responses. The focus group of golfers consisted of seven (7) regular golfers, those who golf all four courses, a high school golf coach, a woman and a person of color and various ages ranging from grad student to retired, who were selected by staff and invited to participate in a facilitated discussion. The public input meetings were attended by approximately 150 members of the public, who received an update on the work completed by the Task Force to date and overview of the four (4) possible scenarios being considered by the Task Force. Approximately 50 additional emails, editorials and phone calls were received by people wishing to share their perspectives. In addition, each of the Task Force's meetings were open to the public and anyone wishing to speak could register to do so.

As with anything that people are passionate about, golf draws a large number of supporters and followers. The vast majority of people who provided input for the consideration were regular golfers, but a number of people who use the courses for non-golf related purposes also provided feedback. While the majority of respondents were white males over the age of 50, females, non-binary/third gender individuals and people of color from youth to over the age of 64 also responded as either golfers or non-golfers. The following is an overall summary from these engagement efforts:

- Accessibility and affordability are key concerns. There is significant concern from golfers that closure of any sort will significantly impact the local golf market, making the game more expensive and reducing the number of tee times available.
- Impacts of decisions must be evaluated, particularly as it relates to youth and seniors. A closure or significant reduction at Yahara would have the greatest impact on youth within the city.
- Overwhelming majority felt the Enterprise system must go away and golf be treated as a park service that is allowed to keep greens fees that are generated. There was some concern by non-golfers of sharing the financial burden.
- Capital investment by the City to some degree is essential to the future of the program.
- No real support for sale of park land among golfers or non golfers. Those that did support sale was for the purpose of reinvesting.
- While the majority of golfers opposed any sort of hole closures, there seemed to be more support for reducing Yahara by 18 and or reconfiguring courses to non-standard sizes (ie 9-14 hole par 3) and shortening play in some way.
- Most non-golfers indicated they felt there were too many holes of golf within the program.
- A number of people felt considering different operational models was necessary, along with diversified marketing and offerings.