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GOLF COURSES IN URBAN AREAS

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SUMMARY

In recent years, the demand for golf facilities has increased substantially. Often, the supply of golf courses in urban areas does not meet the demand for such facilities. However, golf course planning on a metropolitan-wide scale helps local governments to provide adequate golf facilities in desirable locations at the right time.

The purpose of this study is to guide planners, recreation directors and government officials in planning for future public golf courses and preserving existing privately-owned facilities in metropolitan areas having an urban population of 50,000 or over. More specifically, the study is intended to guide planners in the proper approach for including golf courses in the General Recreation and Open Space Plan.

Planning for public golf courses actually involves planning for daily-fee courses. Whether a daily-fee course is publicly owned or privately owned is relatively unimportant for planning purposes since all daily-fee courses serve the same need. This study, therefore, discusses methods of estimating the existing and future demand for daily-fee courses and ways of determining the adequacy of such facilities in meeting the demand. Furthermore, it discusses factors which are pertinent to locating daily-fee courses.

All daily-fee courses should be surveyed in order to obtain information needed for their evaluation. A survey of golf courses should include an inventory of existing and planned daily-fee courses and information on the capacity of these facilities. The supply of

golf courses should be evaluated in respect to the demand for them. Three methods of estimating the demand for regulation daily-fee courses are: (1) the housing unit method; (2) the population method; and (3) the family-income method. The population method can also be used for estimating the demand for par-3 courses.

Four factors that should be studied in determining the approximate or specific location for new golf courses are: (1) the distribution of golf course demand among the districts of the metropolitan area; (2) site factors; (3) environmental factors; and (4) relationship to major thoroughfare plan.

Reserving sites for future public golf courses is often desirable. This may be done through the use of subdivision regulations or the official map ordinance.

This study also discusses various tools which may be employed by local governments for preserving privately-owned golf courses. The five tools discussed are: preferential property taxation, acquisition of easements, outright purchase, lease, and eminent domain.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The game of golf, once considered the recreation of an exclusive group, has become in recent years a popular activity for individuals of almost all economic levels. Although the number of games played per year has increased rapidly, there has been a lag in the development of golf courses to meet the growing demand. Projections of existing trends indicate that there will be a continuing increase in golfing. In most urban areas, however, neither local governments nor private developers seem to have given sufficient thought to the methods of planning for these facilities. Without proper planning, the problem of providing adequate golf facilities in desirable locations at the right time will be difficult to solve. In urban areas where land is rapidly being developed for more intensive uses, advance planning for golf courses is particularly desirable.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to provide information and offer recommendations which will aid planners, recreation directors and government officials in planning for future public golf courses and preserving all or parts of existing public and private golf facilities. More specifically, the study is intended to guide planners in the proper approach for including golf courses in the General Recreation and Open Space Plan. Since a system of golf courses is required only in large

cities and metropolitan areas, the thesis is designed primarily to be a guide when planning for golf courses in metropolitan areas having an urban population of 50,000 or over.

Methodology

Information for this study was obtained through interviews and correspondence with city planners, park and recreation directors and personnel, golf course managers and golf course architects and planners; and through the examination of pertinent literature. Existing regulations, standards, and concepts were evaluated.

Classification of Golf Courses

For purposes of clarity, golf courses are classified according to: (1) ownership and patrons permitted to use them; and (2) the number of holes, the pars and the length of the course.

Ownership and Patrons Permitted

Golf courses can be divided into four principal categories when classifying them according to ownership and patrons:

1. A public golf course is one which is owned and operated by a governmental body and is open to the public.
2. A semi-private golf course is one which is open to the public but is owned and operated privately.
3. A private golf course is one which is owned and operated privately and is open only to those persons who are members of the club. Some private courses are open to non-member transients on the payment of a green fee.
4. A special golf course is one which is owned and operated

operated either privately or publicly but open only to persons connected with a particular school, company or other organization (but not including clubs).

Holes, Pars and Course Length

The following is a classification of golf courses based on the number of holes, the pars and the course length.

1. A championship course is one usually having a total course length of approximately 6700 to 6900 yards and ordinarily covering 140 to 180 acres of land. It consists of 18 holes having pars ranging from 3 to 5. This thesis includes championship courses with standard 18-hole courses.

2. A standard 18-hole course (also called regulation course) is one usually having a total length of 6,200 to 6,600 yards and ordinarily covering 100 to 160 acres of land. The 18 holes have pars ranging from 3 to 5.

3. A standard 9-hole course is one usually having a total length of 3,100 to 3,400 yards and ordinarily covering 50 to 80 acres of land. The pars for the nine holes range from 3 to 5.

4. A par-3 course (also called pony or short course) is a short version of the standard course. It may have either 9 or 18 holes. The total length of the course varies considerably from one course to another. However, the United States Golf Association¹ has set the maximum yardage of an individual hole for a par-3 course at 250 yards.² Some short courses today have a few par-4 holes, i.e., a par-60 course which has four par-4 holes and 14 par-3 holes. Although these courses may not technically be considered par-3 courses, they are so considered for

purposes of this thesis.

Trends in Golf Course Demand

The National Golf Foundation, Inc.³ reports that in recent years the number of persons playing golf has increased. In turn, more golf facilities have been and are continuing to be built in an attempt to meet the increasing demand for them. Presently, the largest number of golfers play on public courses and the smallest number play on private ones. It appears likely that the number of golfers and, thus, the demand for golf facilities will continue to increase.

Increase in Number of Golfers

During the post-war period the number of golfers has increased steadily and substantially. According to estimates of the National Golf Foundation, Inc., the number of persons playing 15 or more rounds of golf a year has increased from 2,449,905 in 1946 to 6,000,000 in 1965. An estimated one million more persons played fewer than 15 rounds in both 1963 and in 1964.⁴ Data of the National Golf Foundation, Inc., further indicate that in recent years the number of women and junior golfers playing 15 rounds or more per year has increased at a rate noticeably higher than the overall rate. The table on page 5 illustrates this.

Extent to Which the Different Types of Courses are Used

Of the total golf players in 1964, an estimated 16 per cent played on private courses, 38 per cent on semi-private courses, and 46 per cent on public courses.⁵ However, of the 7,893 golf courses existing in 1964, 3,764 (48 per cent) were private, 3,113 (39 per cent) were semi-private, and only 1,015 (13 per cent) were public.⁶ Although there are

fewer public courses than any other type in the country, nearly 50 per cent of all the golfers play on them.

Table 1. Estimated Number of Golfers Playing 15 or More Rounds of Golf in the U. S. 1962-64

	1962	1964	Per Cent Increase in Absolute Number
At Private Courses			
Men	620,000	704,000	13.5
Women	225,000	275,000	22.2
Juniors	90,000	115,000	27.8
All	<u>935,000</u>	<u>1,094,000</u>	20.8
At Semi-Private Courses			
Men	1,455,000	1,866,000	28.3
Women	400,000	565,000	41.3
Juniors	145,000	215,000	48.1
All	<u>2,000,000</u>	<u>2,646,000</u>	32.3
At Public Courses			
Men	1,840,000	2,285,000	18.8
Women	500,000	660,000	32.0
Juniors	225,000	315,000	40.0
All	<u>2,565,000</u>	<u>3,260,000</u>	27.1

Source: National Golf Foundation, Inc. *Estimated Number of Golfers in the United States*. National Golf Foundation Information Sheet ST 3. Chicago: The Foundation, 1965.

Increase in Number of Golf Courses

The increasing number of persons playing golf has resulted in the construction of new courses. According to the National Golf Foundation, Inc., the number of private, semi-private and public golf courses in the United States increased from 5,691 in 1931 to 7,893 in 1965, an increase of 2,202. The number of private courses, however, decreased by 684 from its 1931 total of 4,448 to 3,764 in 1964. During this same time period, there was an increase of 2,414 in the number of semi-private courses from 700 to 2,569. On the other hand, there were 543 public courses in 1931 and 1,051 in 1964, an increase of 472 courses.⁷ During 1965, an estimated 460 new courses of all types were opened.⁸

Of the total number of courses in operation during the year 1964, an estimated 162 courses were college courses and 113 were industrial courses (those owned and operated by industries especially for their employees).⁹

Factors Indicating an Increase in Golf Course Demand

A number of factors suggest that the demand for golf courses will continue to increase in the future:

1. The population of the United States is expected to increase substantially and a larger proportion of the nation's population than ever before is expected to be residing in urban areas where there are limited outdoor recreation facilities.

2. The per capita disposable income is expected to increase, thus providing people with more money to spend. Estimates indicate that the per capita disposable income will be approximately \$4,100 in the year 2000 as compared to \$1,970 in 1960.

3. The work week is expected to decrease noticeably and the number of paid-vacation weeks is expected to increase. People are likely, therefore, to have more leisure time to spend in recreational activities.

4. Estimates further indicate that the demand for outdoor games or sports will more than double by the year 2000. The Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission estimates that by the end of the century the playing of outdoor sports will rank third (after driving for pleasure and swimming) in popularity among outdoor recreation activities.¹⁰

An additional factor suggests that golf facilities will be in greater demand in the future than they have in the past. The game of golf can be played by persons of almost any age group and by either sex. Golf is a sport that, once begun, tends to hold the interest of people for many years. The advent of the golf cart has permitted more and more older people to play the game and has attracted a greater number of women to golf by making the game more sociable and less tiring.

Planning Implications

The urban planner is largely responsible for seeking means of providing adequate recreational facilities and open space areas within urbanized areas. Since the demand for golf courses is continually increasing and since this particular type of recreational facility requires a large acreage of open-space land, planning for golf facilities in urban areas presents special problems for the city planner. He should not only be concerned with planning for new courses but, also, for preserving existing ones.

Golf course planning should be made an integral part of the Recreation and Open Space section of the General Plan. In order to plan for golf courses intelligently, they must be considered, first of all, in relation to all other recreation facilities in the area; and, second, in relation to the other major elements of the General Plan such as the Future Land Use Plan, the Major Thoroughfare Plan, and the Community Facilities Plan.

CHAPTER II

PLANNING FOR NEW PUBLIC GOLF COURSES

A golf course is expensive both to build and to maintain; often the monetary return on the initial investment is not substantial. A course also requires large land acreage which, in a metropolitan area, is difficult to acquire at a cost within the means of local governments. Because of these factors, a local government should be certain of the need for a new course and of the proper location before proceeding to build one.

Planning for public golf courses actually involves planning for daily-fee courses, i.e., public and semi-private courses. The only basic difference between these two types of facilities is that of ownership. Since they both operate on a daily fee basis, it would be unrealistic to consider only the demand for and adequacy of public golf courses. This thesis, therefore, discusses methods of estimating the existing and future demand for daily-fee types of courses and ways of determining the adequacy of such courses in meeting the demand. Furthermore, it discusses factors which are pertinent to locating both public and semi-private courses.

The following steps should be taken in planning for daily-fee golf courses on a metropolitan-wide scale: (1) surveying the existing supply of golf courses; (2) estimating the demand for golf courses; (3) determining approximate locations of new courses; and (4) in some

instances, finding adequate methods of reserving sites for proposed public golf courses. This chapter discusses these factors and offers recommendations.

Surveying the Existing Supply of Golf Courses

All daily-fee golf courses should be surveyed in order to obtain information needed for their evaluation. The survey should include: (1) an inventory of existing and planned daily-fee courses; and (2) information on the capacity of these facilities.

Inventory of Existing and Planned Facilities

An inventory of existing and planned golf courses provides the base for golf course planning. Undertaking an inventory should be a simple process since the information needed can ordinarily be obtained from the golf course manager. The following information should be collected for each existing and, where possible, each planned public and semi-private course:

1. Name and location of the facility and its classification according to (a) ownership and permitted users (public, semi-private and private) and (b) according to the number of holes, pars and course length (18-hole regulation, 9-hole regulation, 18-hole par-3 and 9-hole par-3). This information should also be collected for private courses.
2. The total acreage of the course.
3. The average time interval between the time when one foursome finishes the last hole and the next foursome does so. This time interval should be measured during one of the peak days when a maximum number of persons are playing on the course.

4. The extent to which golf carts are used. Approximately what proportion of the golfers use them?

In order to comprehend better the total golf course resources, a map of the metropolitan area showing the location of all golf courses should be made. A code should be used indicating the basic types of courses according to: (1) ownership and patrons permitted to use them; and (2) the number of holes, the pars and the course length. The total acreage of each facility and the capacities of the daily-fee courses should be indicated.

Capacity of Existing and Planned Facilities

The daily capacity of a golf course is measured in terms of the maximum number of 9-hole rounds of golf that can be played on the course during a given day.

To determine the capacity of a golf course under various conditions the following information must be known and applied to Table 2: (1) time span (the difference between the time when the course first opens in the morning and the time when the last golfers begin to play in the afternoon or evening); (2) time interval (the difference between the time when one foursome finishes the last hole and the time the next foursome does so); (3) whether the players are distributed among the various holes when the course opens for play in the morning; and (4) the number of holes on the course.

If for some reason the time interval cannot be obtained for a course, use the time interval of six or seven minutes recommended by Mr. Dennis Hogan, representative of the National Golf Foundation, Inc.¹¹

Table 2. Daily Golf Course Capacity

Time Span (in Hours) ^a	Time Interval (in Minutes) ^a	Daily Capacity of 9-Hole Courses ^b (Expressed in Number of 9-Hole Rounds)	
		Players Not Distributed	Players Distributed
8	5	384	448
	6	320	384
	7	275	339
	8	240	304
8 1/2	5	408	472
	6	340	404
	7	292	356
	8	255	319
9	5	432	496
	6	360	424
	7	310	374
	8	270	334
9 1/2	5	456	520
	6	380	444
	7	327	391
	8	285	349
10	5	480	544
	6	400	464
	7	344	408
	8	300	364
10 1/2	5	504	568
	6	420	484
	7	361	425
	8	315	379
11	5	528	592
	6	440	504
	7	378	442
	8	330	394

^aThe time span should be rounded off to the nearest one-half hour and the time interval to the nearest whole minute when using this chart.

^bFor planning purposes an 18-hole golf course is considered to be two 9-hole courses.

SOURCE: Based upon calculations made by the author. The capacity figures assume that only foursomes are playing.

The six-minute interval would be more accurate for courses having a comparatively flat or slightly rolling terrain and the seven-minute interval more accurate where the terrain is moderately rolling or hilly. Such a standard applies to both 9-hole and 18-hole courses. The standard assumes that two or three foursomes are playing per hole and that some golf carts are being used.

Two policies which, if practiced, enable a golf course to be used to its full potential are: (1) the distribution of golfers among the different holes at the time the course first opens in the morning; and (2) the extensive use of golf carts (by at least 75 per cent of the players).

The distribution of players among the different holes when the course is opened for play in the morning increases the capacity of a golf course. Whereas only two foursomes ordinarily begin play on a 9-hole course when the players are not distributed, 18 could begin play if they were distributed. The distribution of players would, therefore, enable approximately 16 more foursomes to play 9 holes of golf than would otherwise be able to play. Such an increase results in an additional 64 9-hole rounds of golf on a 9-hole golf course.

According to Mr. Charles Graves, recreation and golf course planner, the time interval standard can be reduced by about one minute if all or almost all of the players use golf carts.¹²

Estimating the Demand for Golf Courses

To evaluate the adequacy of golf courses, it is necessary to estimate the demand for such facilities. Although estimates of future demand

cannot be precise, they will provide an essential basis for effective planning.

Three methods of estimating the demand for standard public and semi-private golf courses are: (1) the housing unit method; (2) the population method; and (3) the family-income method. The population method is recommended especially for estimating the demand for par-3 courses.

Housing Unit Method

The housing unit method relates golf course demand (expressed in number of 9-hole rounds) to the number of housing units. This method involves five steps: (1) selecting the survey days; (2) making a survey to determine, by districts within the metropolitan area, the existing demand; (3) selecting the design day; (4) determining, by districts, the relationship between housing units and number of 9-hole rounds of golf played; and (5) projecting, by districts, the number of housing units and calculating the rounds of golf.

Selecting the Survey Days. In undertaking a survey of golf demand, the planner should keep in mind that the greatest demand for golf courses ordinarily exists on weekends. The survey should, therefore, be conducted every Saturday and Sunday during the golf season. The survey, however, should not be made on holiday weekends since the demand for golf courses is unusually high on these weekends when compared with the others. Furthermore, it is advisable to make the survey only during that part of the year considered by local recreation officials to be the golf-playing season.

Determining the Existing Demand. A survey should be conducted to determine the number of 9-hole rounds of golf played by persons living in each district. To do this the following information should be obtained from each person playing golf on a survey day: (1) the number of 9-hole rounds he plays on the survey day; and (2) the district in which he lives.

For golf course planning purposes, the whole metropolitan area should be divided into large and easily identifiable districts. The boundaries of such districts should be obvious land dividers such as expressways, major streets, and rivers. All land situated outside the metropolitan area may be designated as a single district. Any college or university (at which a substantial number of students live in on-campus dormitories) should be designated as an individual district. A college or university district should represent only its full-time students, including those who live off-campus.

A metropolitan map showing the districts and identifying them by numbers should be made and placed on display at the various golf courses where the survey is being made. The college or university district should be identified by the name of the institution.

The person collecting the green fees at each course being surveyed should be asked to collect the survey data for his particular course. He should record the number of 9-hole rounds of golf played at the course according to the districts from which the players come. The results of each daily survey should be dated.

Selecting the Design Day. The number of 9-hole rounds of golf played on the design day constitutes the base upon which golf facilities

will be evaluated. In order to select the design day the total number of 9-hole rounds played in the metropolitan area for each day during which the survey was made should be calculated and ranked. That day ranking highest should be selected as the design day. The term "demand" refers to the design day in the remainder of this discussion concerning the housing unit method.

Determining the Relationship Between Rounds of Golf Played and Housing Units. Determining the relationship between rounds of golf played and housing units involves establishing for each district (excluding the one representing golfers not living in the area) the relationship between the demand and the number of housing units or, in the case of college or university districts, the school enrollment. A ratio of the number of 9-hole rounds of golf played by persons living within a district on the design day to the number of housing units within the same district should be calculated for each district in the area. For a college or university district, a ratio of the number of rounds of golf played by full-time students to the school enrollment (full-time students) is needed. The number of 9-hole rounds of golf played is related to the number of housing units (or school enrollment) by districts because: (1) such a relationship is not expected to change radically over a five to ten-year period; (2) planning offices usually have existing and projected housing unit data and places of higher education ordinarily have student enrollment projections; and (3) the method is comparatively simple to use. It is assumed that the varying ratios of different districts will reflect any dissimilarities in the average income of people in those districts and that the ratios will remain

relatively constant throughout the planning period.

Projecting the Demand. This step involves estimating the number of 9-hole rounds of golf that will be played in future years by applying the ratios discussed above to the projected number of housing units and college or university enrollment. This should be done by districts for each year of the planning period for which this method is to be used.

The housing unit ratio cannot be applied to the number of 9-hole rounds of golf played by persons living outside the metropolitan area since housing unit projections would not be available for the many different areas from which such persons come. The planner should, therefore, relate the number of rounds played by persons living outside the metropolitan area to the number played by persons living within the entire metropolitan area and make projections based on this relationship. An assumption is made that the ratio of the number of rounds played by persons living outside the area to the number of rounds played by persons living within the area will remain relatively constant.

The housing unit method provides a reasonably accurate indication of golf course demand and needs by districts. However, this method is dependent upon the availability of housing unit and college or university enrollment projections. Therefore, it can only be used to project future golf course demand for that period of time for which projected housing unit and college or university enrollment data are available.

Population Method

The population method is commonly used in estimating the need for 9- and 18-hole regulation and par-3 courses today.

Several organizations recommend population-based standards for

estimating the need for daily-fee type, regulation courses. The National Golf Foundation, Inc., recommends one 18-hole daily-fee course (either semi-private or public) per 25,000 population.¹³ On the other hand, the National Recreation and Park Association recommends a public 18-hole course for every 50,000 persons living within an urban area.¹⁴ The California Committee on Planning for Recreation, Park Areas and Facilities recommends one daily-fee, 18-hole course for the first 20,000 population and another 18-hole facility for each additional 30,000 population.¹⁵

A population-based standard is especially desirable for estimating the need for par-3 courses. These courses appeal primarily to the novice and occasional golfer. Mr. Dennis Hogan of the National Golf Foundation, Inc., suggests that a standard of one 18-hole par-3 course per 100,000 population may be used as a rule of thumb.¹⁶ This standard for par-3 courses is probably adequate to estimate the need for par-3 courses.

Family-Income Method

Population-based standards for regulation courses are more realistic if modified to include only a certain segment of the population. Mr. Dennis Hogan, representative of the National Golf Foundation, Inc., states that those families with incomes of \$100 or more per week (approximately \$5,000 or more per year) can be considered "golf material," i.e., those persons who would most likely be golfers or become golfers.¹⁷

In developing the family-income-based standard, the California standard was corrected, first, to include only families. This, in turn, was corrected to include only families with incomes of \$5,000 or more

per year. This resulted in a standard which is reasonably applicable to metropolitan areas throughout the country; one 18-hole regulation, daily-fee golf course per 5,000 families with incomes of \$5,000 or more per year. This standard, when applied to projected number of families within the above income group, will provide a reasonably reliable estimate of the number of daily-fee courses needed in the future. Both the population and the family-income methods have the disadvantage of not estimating golf course needs by districts.

Locating New Golf Courses

In locating new golf courses, the planner should first determine what general localities within the metropolitan area are in need of new daily-fee courses.

General Locality

The planner can determine what general localities are in need of new golf courses by comparing the existing and future demand for daily-fee courses within each district of the metropolitan area to the capacity of the daily-fee courses in the same districts. These comparisons will reveal what areas have or will have golf course supply deficiencies. The existing and future demand for courses within each district can best be determined by the use of the housing unit method of determining golf course demand.

Once this has been done, the planner should determine what specific sites would be most appropriate for such facilities. The following factors should be studied in determining the specific location of new courses: (1) site factors; (2) environmental factors; and (3) relationship to major thoroughfare plan.

Site Factors

The most important site factors are: (a) acreage requirements; (b) site shape; (c) site conditions; (d) public utilities; (e) land costs; and (f) ownership patterns.

Acreage Requirements. The acreage needed for a particular golf course will be dictated by: the type of course and topography; and the development of any related facilities such as a parking lot, driving range, or swimming pool. The planner should select a site that will accommodate all presently planned facilities that may be needed in the foreseeable future. If there is any doubt as to the acreage needed, it is best to select a larger site.

The amount of land needed will be affected by the type of course and the topography of the land. Robert Trent Jones, golf course architect, states that a standard 9-hole course of 3,100-3,400 yards and a standard 18-hole course of 6,200-6,500 yards or more located on level land require a minimum of 50 acres and 110 acres, respectively. On gently rolling land, approximately 60 acres are required for 9 holes and 120 acres for 18 holes. On hilly or rugged land 70 acres are needed for 9 holes and 140-180 acres for 18 holes.¹⁸ The above standards give the minimum acreage of land needed for the course proper and may, therefore, necessitate parallel fairways.

The acreage needed for any related facility should also be determined. The golf course site should be large enough to accommodate any related facilities desired in addition to the golf course proper.

It is more difficult to arrive at acreage requirements for par-3 courses since there appears to be no set pattern of yardage. Data

collected from more than 100 par-3 courses by the National Golf Foundation, Inc. revealed that the median acreage was approximately 12 acres for 9-hole par-3 courses and approximately 22 acres for 18-hole par-3's.¹⁹ For planning purposes the author recommends that 15 acres for 9-holes and 30 acres for 18 holes be accepted as minimum acreage requirements for par-3 courses.

Par-3 courses having the longer fairways and having 18 holes are gaining in popularity among par-3 golfers. The par-3 golf center, which may include, in addition to the course, such facilities as a driving range, a miniature golf course and a putting green, is more in demand than a par-3 course alone. Charles M. Graves recommends that a standard of 40 acres be used when planning a par-3 golf center having an 18-hole course. This standard takes into consideration the acreage needed for the 18-hole course, driving range, miniature golf course, putting green, club house, automobile parking and buffer strips.²⁰

Site Shape. A site which approximates the shape of a rectangle is ordinarily most suitable for golf course purposes. The site, furthermore, should be wide enough so that most fairways can extend north and south. This reduces the problem of players facing the sun in the early morning and late afternoon.

Site Conditions. Although land can be made adaptable to golf courses through cut and fill and soil conditioning, such work is expensive. The planner should, therefore, be aware of the type of land desirable for golf courses and let this be a determining factor when selecting a site.

Most golfers prefer gently rolling terrain. Excessively hilly terrain is tiring for the golfers, usually creates too many blind shots, and is more expensive to keep well turfed.²¹ On the other hand, flat land tends to be monotonous for the players.

The best soil for growing golf course turfs is sandy loam. It is recommended that analysis be made of the soil from each site under consideration. This can be done at a low cost by the county agent. After making the analysis, the county agent can inform the planner as to the site most desirable from a soil standpoint for developing and maintaining turf.²²

The land should be surveyed to determine, generally, the extent to which trees, stumps, and stones will have to be removed and the extent, if any, to which swamp areas will have to be filled in or drained. Some patches of woodland are desirable since they provide some of the best natural hazards if properly located in relation to the course. On the other hand, too many trees located in those portions of the property to be used for fairways can result in high expenditures for clearance. Filling in or draining swamps can also be expensive.²³

A site having a pond or creek or having terrain that is suitable for developing an artificial pond is desirable. A body of water provides a hazard and increases the aesthetic quality of a course.

Public Utilities. Assuming that all other location factors are equal, a golf course should be located where water, sewerage and electric facilities are presently available or where they can be extended at reasonable cost.

Land Costs. In metropolitan areas, the comparatively high cost

of land is often a major factor in determining the location of a golf course. In selecting a site, however, the planner should consider the land cost in conjunction with development costs. Some sites are more costly to develop than others. The total cost of acquiring the land and developing it should be estimated for each site under consideration.

Ownership Patterns. The ownership pattern of land is significant when acquiring the amount of land required for golf courses. The more parcels of land under different ownership, the more difficult it becomes to acquire them. The fact that there are several owners involved, alone, will make the effort more lengthy since purchase agreements will have to be made with each owner. The major problem is being able to acquire all the properties at a reasonable price. When a purchaser must acquire all the properties of a particular site, a property owner may be tempted to hold his land after the other owners have accepted the offer of the purchaser. Such an owner is in a position to demand an excessively high payment for his land.

Such complications can best be avoided by selecting land held under a single ownership or owned separately by a few persons who are willing to sell at a reasonable price.

Environmental Factors

A golf course is both a recreational facility and a comparatively large open space which is usually well-landscaped. Such a facility is, therefore, capable of increasing the value of surrounding land. At the same time, the attractiveness of the golf course as a recreational facility can be affected by the use of the land adjoining or near it. For these reasons, the golf course should be located where it can be valuable

to the community from an environmental standpoint and where the surroundings can enhance the attractiveness of the golf facility.

Land Use. The golf course usually benefits most when surrounded by residential, agriculture, open space or other recreation land. When located adjacent to one of these uses, the green, open space atmosphere, which is one of the characteristics that draws persons to the game of golf, is increased.

Residential land benefits more than other forms of land uses by being located in close proximity to a golf course. Lots facing on or located near a golf course generally have higher values for that reason. The aesthetic qualities of a golf course not only increase the initial value of residential land surrounding it, but they also help maintain higher property values and stabilize them over an extended period of time. While increasing the value of residential lots, a golf course also increases their marketability. The local government benefits most from a property tax standpoint by having golf courses located near or adjacent to residential land.

Other Recreation Facilities. A golf course should be located within, adjacent to or near other recreation facilities if possible. By being located within easy reach of another recreation facility a golf course can increase the demand for and, therefore, the use of both the golf course and the other facility. Such an arrangement makes it convenient for golfers to take members of the family or friends who do not play golf to the other recreation facility when going to play golf.

Open Space. Golf courses should also be located where there is a need for open space. The planner should first determine where a golf

course is needed as a recreational facility. The open space plan should then be consulted to determine if any of the localities designated to be permanent major open spaces coincide with those that are desirable for golf courses. If the planner finds that certain localities are in need of both a golf course and a permanent large open space, such localities should be considered for golf course sites.

Relationship to Major Thoroughfare Plan

Golf courses should be located where they are easily accessible by major automobile routes. The major thoroughfare plan can be helpful in locating golf courses. The time required for a golfer to reach a course can be shortened and the problem of finding a course simplified if the golf course is located near either a freeway or major arterial road. Locating one or two fairways adjacent to a major thoroughfare is also desirable. This provides good advertising for the facility to transients and other persons who may not be aware of its existence or location.²⁴

By consulting a future thoroughfare plan the planner may be able to prevent future conflicts between thoroughfares and golf courses. In a number of cities golf courses are being divided and, therefore, partially or completely destroyed by new expressways. In most of these cases, the golf course was constructed before the need for a new expressway was realized. But today, future thoroughfare plans determine the need as well as the approximate location of future freeways and major arterials years in advance.

Reserving Sites for Future Golf Courses

If the planner is recommending specific sites for future public

golf courses he should also recommend methods of reserving such sites until they can be acquired or leased for this purpose. Two planning tools which may be employed to reserve land that is to be used ultimately for a public purpose are land subdivision regulations and the official map ordinance.

Land Subdivision Regulations

Land subdivision regulations often contain provisions that permit the local government to keep land that has been designated for future public use free from any development for a reasonable period of time. Sites to be reserved are ordinarily established in the master plan. The subdivision regulations refer to the proposed sites presented in the master plan as those for which the reservation provisions are to apply. Some ordinances specify a maximum length of time from the date of submission of the preliminary or final plat for which land can be reserved. The maximum period ranges from 30 days to 5 years.²⁵ The following subdivision regulation excerpts refer to a master plan and set a maximum period for the reservation of land designated as a building site or public open space.

Where, as indicated by the Master Plan, a subdivision contains, wholly or in part, a proposed public open space or a proposed site for public building, such area shall be dedicated to a public agency, or reserved for acquisition thereby within a period of five years by purchase or other means.

(Portsmouth, Ohio, Sec. VI, I)

Dedication of all other (than natural or scenic features) public open spaces within the subdivision will be required in accordance with the master plan of Salt Lake City. Where this plan calls for a larger amount of public open space than the subdivider can be reasonably expected to dedicate, the land needed beyond the subdivider's fair contribution is to be reserved for acquisition by the City, provided such acquisition is made within 5 years from date of approval.

(Salt Lake City, Utah, Sec. 6813(D))

On the other hand, some regulations do not specify a maximum time period for reserving sites. Of these, a number do require reservation while others make such action voluntary. Reservation without a maximum time period is preferable to that having one.²⁶ The period of reservation should extend until the last lot of a subdivision in question is sold. At that time the local government should acquire the site or terminate the reservation.

Official Map Ordinance

The official map ordinance is designed to prevent the construction of buildings and other structures in the beds of mapped streets and, in some ordinances, in public building sites, parks and other open spaces. The official map shows the precise location of sites to be reserved for future public needs. The official map ordinance prohibits the issuance of building permits for construction within the reserved sites with no compensation; however, exceptions are granted if the reservation results in a hardship for the owner.²⁷

Several states have enabling legislation permitting site reservation for public parks or open spaces in addition to future streets. Among these states are: Georgia, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Washington²⁸ and Wisconsin.²⁹

In these states, the official map ordinance may possibly be used to reserve land for future public golf courses and to preserve existing non-public courses that the local government may wish to acquire if the present owner decides to convert the land to another use. Mapping such sites will put the community on notice as to the specific location of proposed future public golf course sites.

The official map ordinance, of course, cannot reserve future public sites indefinitely. Two states, Michigan and Pennsylvania, which permit the reservation of future public open spaces have established time limitations for the reservation period. A time limitation is in effect a means of relief. It insures the property owner that his rights are not infringed upon.³⁰ The other states (Georgia, Maine, Minnesota, Washington and Wisconsin) do not specify time limitations on the reservation period but provide other means of relief in hardship cases.

Georgia's official map enabling legislation requires that a site designated on the official map for future public use be reserved until the owner of the site begins to incur economic losses due to his property having to remain vacant because of the reservation. If an owner of such a site begins to incur economic losses for the above reason, he would be able to appeal for relief. In such case, the board of appeals could grant either alternatively or conjunctively relief as follows:

(a) Where such land is not in use, to grant the appellant tax relief, which relief, if accepted by the taxpayer, shall thereafter estop him and his successors, in title for a period of five years as to any claim except for the fair value of his property upon its subsequently being taken; (b) where the relief sought involves the construction or enlargement of a building or structure within any such mapped lines to grant a permit for it but, in so doing, it shall have the power to specify the exact location, ground area, height, materials and construction, and other details and conditions of extent, character, and duration of the building, structure, or part thereof to be permitted; (c) where the relief sought is freedom from interference with the free sale and disposition of such property, to order the governing authority, within not more than one hundred days, to either (1) institute condemnation proceedings or negotiations to acquire the property, or (2) permit the same of the property free and clear of the restrictions imposed by reason of the adoption and recording of the mapped street, public building site, or open space herein referred to but subject, however, to any valid and applicable zoning regulations . . . 31

The above proposals provide local governments with a means of reserving future public golf course sites for a period of time sufficient for them to acquire such sites. This approach for reserving sites for future public use is, therefore, recommended.

CHAPTER III

PRESERVING EXISTING GOLF COURSES

A golf course plan may call for the preservation of some semi-private and private golf courses. Preferential property taxation, acquisition of easements, outright purchase, lease, and eminent domain may be used to preserve existing golf courses. However, not all of the methods to be discussed can be used by local governments in every state. Many states do not have the proper enabling legislation.

Preferential Property Taxation

One factor that is sometimes responsible for the conversion of non-public golf courses to other uses is increasing property taxes. As urban development becomes more intense and as the need for more developable land near golf courses becomes greater, land values and, therefore, property taxes generally increase. Taxes on golf courses in rapidly growing urban areas may increase also because of increased tax rates necessary to meet the demand for community facilities and services in nearby residential developments. All taxable property including golf courses must share the cost of providing these new facilities and services.

High property taxes levied on the comparatively large acreage of golf courses may result in an intolerable tax burden which may induce or force golf course owners to convert their land to more profitable urban uses. Preferential property taxation might preserve existing non-

public golf courses without a local government's obtaining direct control of the property.

Several states have legislation permitting some form of preferential property taxation to encourage owners to continue to use their land for agriculture, forestry, recreation or other forms of open space. These state statutory and constitutional tax provisions for preserving open land vary in type, procedure required, and application or coverage.

Three basic forms of preferential taxation that may be helpful in preserving golf courses on either a temporary or long-term basis are: (1) tax exemption; (2) preferential assessment; and (3) tax deferral. Although some existing legislation authorizing preferential taxation does not apply to golf courses or open space in general, examples of such legislation are discussed since they could be modified to include golf courses.

Tax Exemption

Tax exemption is used to a limited extent in the United States for preserving private property devoted to conservation and recreation purposes. Ordinarily, tax exemption enabling legislation applies to land owned by non-profit organizations. To the author's knowledge, there are no ordinances or statutes which specifically exempt golf courses from property taxation. However, non-profit golf courses may possibly be able to qualify for tax exemption under legislation having provisions which apply generally to recreation and open space lands owned by non-profit organizations. A golf club may be considered a non-profit organization if all profits are used for capital improvements.

Tax exemption must be uniform in order to be legal. In most

states tax exemption must be authorized by statute. For instance, the New York Tax Law provides: "All real property within the state is taxable unless exempt from taxation by law." The Court of New York in *Troy Union Railway Co. v. City of Troy*, 277 App. Div. 351 (1929) has construed the phrase "by law" to mean state law or statute.³²

Complete tax exemption for golf courses, however, may not be politically feasible when considering the community's need for revenue. If this is the case, a compromise in the form of partial tax exemption may be more desirable. An example of partial tax exemption that has implications for a golf course preservation program is a New York statute under which a redevelopment company may be exempt from taxes only as to the value of its real property in excess of the assessed valuation at the time the property was acquired. In effect, the assessed valuation is fixed at the former level.³³ Tax exemption legislation that would freeze the assessment of golf courses in a manner similar to that above may induce owners of golf courses to keep lands used for golfing in their present use.

Tax exemption, however, has disadvantages. The owner is free to convert his land to a more profitable urban use at any time without penalty and the local government is not able to recover "lost" taxes if the owner does so. Its effectiveness is dependent upon the determination of golf course owners to continue using their land as golf facilities. Tax exemption in itself will not preserve golf courses. It simply gives an owner a continuing tax advantage and does little to impede eventual sale for development at a considerable profit.

Preferential Assessment

Preferential assessment is an assessment based upon the value of land under its present use rather than its potential value. As with tax exemption, it acts as an inducement for preserving golf courses. The chief limitation of preferential assessment is that it does not penalize the property owner when and if he develops his land for a more profitable urban use. The laws as written do not permit the government to recover "lost" taxes.

In 1960, the California Constitution was amended to provide for preferential assessment of non-profit golf courses. Section 2.6, Article XIII of the Constitution reads as follows:

Parcels of ten acres or more used exclusively for non-profit golf course purposes for at least the previous two successive years, shall be assessed with reference to no factors other than those relevant to such use.

California is the only state permitting preferential assessment of golf courses. Other states, including Maryland and Oregon, have preferential assessment enabling legislation which applies only to agriculture land. Although preferential assessment provides an inducement for keeping golf courses undeveloped, it may not be a desirable means of preserving them. Under preferential assessment, the local government gives an owner of a golf course a tax advantage subject to no penalty without obtaining, in return, an assurance that it will not be developed for more profitable urban uses at a later date. This fact, alone, would weaken its political feasibility.

Preferential assessment and tax exemption for golf courses serve the same purpose and have similar benefits and shortcomings.

Tax Deferral

Tax deferral provides a more effective means of preserving golf courses than tax exemption or preferential assessment. Under this method, some of the taxes due at the end of each fiscal year are deferred. However, a property owner must pay all or some of the deferred taxes if and when his land is developed for a more profitable urban use or when an agreement for tax deferral is breached by the landowner. The longer taxes are allowed to accumulate the less profitable it becomes for an owner to convert his land to a more intensive urban use. Over a long period of time accumulated taxes may make conversion prohibitive.

An excellent example of basically sound legislation permitting tax deferral for golf courses is a 1950 amendment to the Assessment Act of the Province of Ontario. It reads as follows:

36a -- (1) Any local municipality may enter into an agreement with the owner of a golf course for providing a fixed assessment for the land occupied as a golf course to apply to taxation for local improvements.

(2) Where a golf course has a fixed assessment under an agreement under subsection 1.

- (a) the golf course shall be assessed each year as if it did not have a fixed assessment;
- (b) the treasurer shall calculate each year what the taxes would have been on the golf course if it did not have a fixed assessment;
- (c) the treasurer shall keep a record of the difference between the taxes paid each year and the taxes that would have been paid if the golf course did not have a fixed assessment and shall debit the golf course with this amount each year during the term of the agreement and shall add to such debit on the 1st day of January in each year 4 per cent interest on the aggregate amount of the debit on such date; and
- (d) the taxes paid on the fixed assessment shall be distributed among the bodies for which the municipality is required to levy in the proportion that the levy for each body bears to the total levy.

(3) Every agreement shall be registered in the registry office or land titles office, as the case may be, in the county in which the golf course or any part thereof is located.

(4) Any agreement may be terminated on the 31st day of December in any year upon the owner of the golf course giving six months notice of such termination in writing to the municipality and the owner shall,

(a) pay to the municipality the amount debited against the golf course including the amounts of interest debited in accordance with clause (c) of subsection (2); or

(b) require the municipality to purchase the golf course for an amount equal to the fixed assessment.

(5) Where a golf course has a fixed assessment under subsection (1), the agreement shall terminate when the land in respect of which the fixed assessment is given or any portion thereof ceases to be occupied for the purposes of a golf course and the owner shall comply with clause (a) or (b) of subsection (4).

(6) Any dispute between the municipality and the owner of the golf course in relation to an agreement of this section shall be settled by the Ontario Municipal Board and the decision of the Board shall be final. 1955, c. 4, s. 16.³⁴

It is recommended that this act be used as a guide for the composition of state legislation authorizing the deferral of taxes on golf courses. However, proposals for state enabling legislation based on the example given above should include a provision permitting the local government to terminate the agreement at any time at no cost to the owner.

To the author's knowledge, there is no state legislation in the United States similar to the provincial act quoted above. However, several states have proposed or have passed legislation that permits a form of tax deferral for various kinds of open space land.

A Nevada law of 1961, for instance, provides for preferential assessment and a recapture of deferred taxes on agriculture land. An owner of land used exclusively for agriculture may make a contractual agreement with the county assessor to have his land assessed solely on its value as agriculture land. The contract must provide: (1) that the

land be assessed at its full value for agricultural purposes; however, the assessor must also make note of its potential value for non-agriculture uses; (2) that for the contractual period the owner shall be taxed solely on the value of land for agriculture purposes; and (3) that when the land is sold or its use changed, the owner must pay the difference between the taxes actually paid and those that would have been paid if they had been based on the potential value of the land. The recovery of deferred taxes would be retroactive for up to five years.³⁵ This last fact limits the effectiveness of the Nevada law. A five year accumulation of deferred taxes may not be substantial enough to keep an owner from converting his land to a more profitable urban use.

In 1961, a Constitutional amendment and implementing legislation for the State of California were proposed (but never passed) for a program of tax deferral on agriculture land. If passed, these proposals would have given any owner of land used exclusively for agriculture for two successive years a right to apply to the assessor to have such land assessed at its value as agriculture land only. The owner would have had to agree in writing that upon the sale of the land or a change in its use "the property shall be subject to an additional levy for taxes in an amount equal to the difference between the taxes paid or payable . . . and any greater sum of taxes that would otherwise have been paid" and an annual interest of 6 per cent would also be charged for the period of time during which the agreement was in effect. Taxes could be recovered for a period of up to seven years.³⁶

Hawaii enacted a tax deferral law in 1961 that is contingent on zoning. It permits an owner or lessee of land in either an agriculture

or conservation district to dedicate land to specific permissible uses and thereby obtain tax assessments at values corresponding to such uses.

The pertinent provisions of the Act are as follows:

(c) The approval by the director of taxation of the petition to dedicate shall constitute a forfeiture on the part of the owner of any right to change the use of his land for a minimum period of ten years, automatically renewable indefinitely, subject to cancellation by either the owner or the director of taxation upon five years notice at any time after the end of the fifth year. In case of a change in major land use classification by a State agency, such that the owner's land is placed within an urban district, the dedication may be cancelled within sixty days of the change, without the five years notice, by mutual agreement of the owner and the director of taxation.

(d) Failure of the owner to observe the restrictions on the use of his land shall cancel the special tax assessment privilege retroactive to the date of the petition, and all differences in the amount of taxes that were paid and those that would have been due from assessment in the higher use shall be payable with a five per cent per annum penalty from the respective dates that these payments would have been due. Failure to observe the restrictions on the use means failure for a period of over one calendar year to use the land in that manner requested in the petition or the overt act of changing the use for any period. Nothing in this paragraph shall preclude the State from pursuing any other remedy to enforce the covenant on the use of the land.³⁷

In 1961, an unsuccessful attempt was made in Massachusetts to adopt legislation permitting deferred taxation for various forms of open land. The proposals provided that local assessors could designate property as classified open land, upon application of the owner, if the land is within the limits of a proposed new or enlarged park or public right-of-way or is duly zoned for agricultural, forest or other open space uses. After the tax assessor and the local planning agencies determine that the land is restricted against development, a certificate to this effect would be issued to the owner and recorded with the Register of Deeds. Thereafter, the owner would receive a deferral of real property taxes as follows: for the first three years, 90 per cent; for the

succeeding years, 70 per cent; and thereafter, 50 per cent. All deferred taxes would have to be paid by the landowner if the restrictions to keep the land open are relaxed. These provisions would go with the title to the land.³⁸

If passed, this bill would probably have been effective in preserving golf courses provided a golf course was one of the designated forms of open space.

Easements or Development Rights

Another method of preserving golf courses is the purchase of easements or development rights. This would forbid the owner's using the land for any other than a stipulated purpose or purposes. The owner, who retains the land title, must use the property in accordance with the contract made. An easement purchase agreement which runs with the land can carry various stipulations, including a time limit or perpetuity clause. The right of development usually reverts to the original owner or his heirs should the government decide later that the property in question is not needed for the stipulated purposes. The purchase of development easements is probably one of the most effective methods of stabilizing land use while permitting the land to remain in private ownership.

The General Municipal Code of New York State authorizes municipalities and counties to secure open space easements as follows:

Section 247. Acquisition of open spaces and areas. 1. Definitions. For the purpose of this chapter an "open space" or "open area" is any space or area characterized by (1) natural scenic beauty or (2) whose existing openness, natural condition, or present state or use, if retained, would enhance the present or potential value of abutting or surrounding urban development, or would maintain or enhance the

conservation of natural or scenic resources.

2. The acquisition of interests or rights in real property for the preservation of open spaces and areas shall constitute a public purpose for which public funds may be expended or advanced, and any county, city, town or village after due notice and a public hearing may acquire, by purchase, gift, grant, bequest, devise, lease or otherwise, the fee or any lesser contractual right necessary to achieve the purposes of this chapter, to land within such municipality.

3. After acquisition of any such interest pursuant to this act the valuation placed on such an open space or area for purposes of real estate taxation shall take into account and be limited by the limitation on future use of the land.³⁹

Other states having similar variations of the above act include California, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

Theoretically, the acquisition of golf course easements involves a payment to an owner for the differential between the value of his land for residential or other appropriate purposes and its value as a golf course. Whether this would actually be the case depends upon the time and place. In rapidly urbanizing areas, the speculative value of the development rights is such that easements could cost as much as the fee simple title.

The purchase of golf course easements has certain advantages over fee simple purchase to both the landowner and the public. The owner receives tax protection. Since the land cannot be legally subdivided, the assessment cannot be raised to match the value of the land for more profitable uses. The local government could benefit in three ways:

(1) it could possibly conserve a golf course at a cost less than that required for obtaining fee simple title; (2) it would retain the golf course on the tax rolls; and (3) it would not have to operate or maintain the course.

Outright Purchase

Outright purchase is one of the surest methods of preserving golf courses. When used alone, it can be the most desirable way of preserving golf courses needed for public use. In addition to being used alone, purchase of fee simple title can be used in connection with a leaseback or saleback agreement.

Purchase-Leaseback

Purchase-leaseback is an arrangement whereby property is purchased and then leased back, ordinarily, to the original owner. Its use enables a local government to guarantee the continuous existence of a golf course through purchase without having to assume the responsibility of operating and maintaining it.

Although the land is taken off the tax rolls upon purchase of the property by the government, the local government receives income in the form of rent.

Purchase-Saleback

Under the purchase-saleback arrangement, property is purchased and then sold with certain deed restrictions, usually, to the original owner. This approach is designed to accomplish, basically, the same thing as the acquisition of development rights; however, it may be simpler to administer than the latter. Furthermore, unlike the purchase-leaseback arrangement, the land remains taxable. Purchase-saleback permits the local government to include deed restrictions requiring that the land remains as a private or semi-private golf course. Any course preserved in this fashion should be taxed on its value as a golf course since the deed restriction would forbid development of the land for any

other purposes.

Special legislation may be required before the local government can enter into either a purchase-saleback or a purchase-leaseback agreement. The California Legislature, for instance, enacted a law in 1959 that authorizes any county or city to use either purchase-saleback or purchase-leaseback to protect urban open spaces, with covenants or contractual arrangements to limit future use of the property to an open use.⁴⁰

Lease

Local governments can preserve golf courses by leasing them from their owners. This method is especially desirable for preserving golf courses that will be needed only temporarily. For example, a local government may wish to reserve a golf course only temporarily when the site on which the course is located should be used for another purpose from a general land use plan standpoint, and at the same time, the local government needs time to develop a new public course that will meet the needs that the existing one is presently meeting.

If made to extend over many years or used in connection with a purchase agreement, leasing may be a desirable method of preserving golf courses that will be needed for an indefinitely long period of time. A lease-purchase agreement enables a local government to acquire a fee simple title without having to pay the original owner for the cost of the land when the agreement is made. Under such an agreement the rent is actually in payment for the property. After an amount of rent equal to the value plus a reasonable rate of interest has been paid, the local

government is given the fee simple title. The advantage of a lease-purchase agreement over outright purchase is that it enables the local government to spread the cost of acquisition over a number of years.

Eminent Domain

Eminent domain may be used to acquire an existing golf course if its owner refuses to sell. Both state and local governments have the constitutional power and, in most cases, the statutory authority to acquire land for recreational purposes by eminent domain. The law concerning land acquisition for recreational purposes is so clear that a recent authoritative treatise on the law of open space stated the following:

The public purpose of adequate parks and recreation facilities is now so clear that, understandably, there is no issue as to the fundamental legal power to spend money for land acquisition, or to condemn land, for such purposes. Public parks and playgrounds, beaches, swimming pools, zoos, golf courses--none presents a constitutional problem.⁴¹

The local government should use the power of eminent domain to acquire a needed existing golf course only when it is about to be developed for another use and when there are no practical alternative methods of preserving it. Even though condemnation proceedings may be tedious and time consuming they could easily be justified if such action resulted in the acquisition and, thus, preservation of a needed golf course.

The above methods provide local governments with the tools necessary for the preservation of golf courses. A golf course preservation program, however, can be effective only if the appropriate methods are selected and implemented in time.

Through the formulation and subsequent implementation of a comprehensive golf course plan and the establishment of an effective golf course preservation program, local governments can help provide the metropolitan area with an adequate system of golf courses.

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