

TAKING GOLF OUT OF GOLF COURSE: TRAJECTORIES TO CONVERT FACILITIES TO PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVES

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1 ABSTRACT

Over 1,500 golf courses nationwide have closed in the past ten years according to National Golf Foundation (NGF) research. The purpose of this study is to identify closed golf course facilities that have turned into parks or open space preserve and examine the details of these conversions having to do with ownership and funding. These precedents serve as examples for stakeholders who are trying to figure out what to with these closed golf courses. Methods included gathering filtered observational data to identify the cases to review and follow up on those cases with a survey. Based on a sample of 21 U.S. golf course facilities that have been converted to public parks or open space, 11 of the parks were formerly public golf courses and 10 were formerly private golf courses. 18 of the parks and open spaces are owned by public entities, and three are owned by non-profits. They were acquired and repurposed using many diverse solutions including partnering with land conservation organizations and other non-profit organizations and gathering diverse public funding sources. Closed golf courses offer the potential for conserving large parcels of open space to fill community needs such as ecosystem enhancement, recreation, habitat, and stormwater detention. 42% of the 365 closed golf courses examined in the initial stages of this study had no clear plans for future use. Identifying how other courses have been able to convert to parks provides valuable examples for golf course owners, municipalities, neighborhoods and other stakeholders that are currently looking for ways to move forward with repurposing closed golf courses.

1.1 Keywords

Golf Course, Land Use Change, Parks, Open Space Preservation