



CITY OF SAN MATEO

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Agenda Report

Agenda Number: {{item.number}} Section Name: {{section.name}} Account Number: File ID: {{item.tracking_number}}

TO: Park and Recreation Commission

FROM: Joanne Magrini

PREPARED BY: Parks and Recreation Department

MEETING DATE: May 07, 2025

SUBJECT:
Poplar Creek Golf Course VIP Membership Program – Presentation and Feedback

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive a presentation on the current VIP Membership Program at Poplar Creek Golf Course and provide feedback on the proposed pilot program changes for resident reservations.

BACKGROUND:

In October 2020, foreUP software was selected to provide tee sheet and point-of-sale (POS) services for Poplar Creek Golf Course. In July 2021, a VIP membership program was launched allowing members to sign-up online with a credit card and get billed \$29.99 monthly in exchange for a variety of benefits including discounted tee times, advanced booking window for members, free access to short game practice area, and range card discounts. The most notable benefit of the program is a 14-day advance booking window for access to tee times. The minimum term for the membership is thirty (30) days and members can cancel anytime. Currently city residents that purchase a \$20.00 per year resident card, may book eight (8) days in advance and receive discounted rates. All other patrons may book seven (7) days in advance and pay the non-resident rate. Rates can be found online at <http://poplarcreekgolf.com/rates/>. The program has been extremely well received. There are approximately 250 members per month 34% of which are city residents. The average annual revenue generated by this membership program in the past two fiscal years is \$90,000.

Since the inception of the VIP membership program, Poplar Creek Golf Course has experienced annual rounds of over 80,000 which have exceeded all prior fiscal year numbers dating back to 2008. The only exception was in fiscal year 2023 when the area experienced an excess of inclement weather during the fall and winter seasons. During this same period, Poplar Creek has not only had a steady number of players annually but has also had revenue growth in many key areas including green fees, driving range revenue, and membership dues. The annual revenue has exceeded annual operating expenditures, leading to a net positive cash flow and contributions to the City's general fund.

Staff is proposing a short-term 6-month pilot program to make advance tee time reservations more accessible for City of San Mateo residents without requiring them to sign-up for the VIP Membership Program. There are currently eight (8) tee times per hour which VIP members can book fourteen (14) days in advance. The proposed changes would restrict access to three (3) tee times per hour in the mornings (prime tee times) to residents only. VIP members would still have access to the other five (5) tee times per hour, fourteen (14) days in advance. Residents would get access to these three (3) tee times per hour and would also have access to any tee times not already booked by VIP members ten (10) days in advance. The three (3) tee times reserved exclusively for residents would then be released to everyone, including VIP members, seven (7) days in advance (the normal booking window for everyone). The proposed changes to the program will allow residents who do not wish to participate in the VIP membership program to access prime tee times which can be difficult to obtain with the current program.

The demand for tee times at Poplar Creek and many other public golf courses has been extremely high for the past several years and staff believe this trend will continue. Although it is nearly impossible to forecast what these changes would cause in membership numbers, it is possible that some current members will no longer see the value in this monthly membership and decide to cancel.

Staff solicited feedback from resident and non-resident VIP members and results from that phone survey showed 100% were happy with the current membership program, the 14-day advance booking window and the current inventory of tee times available to them. Only 58% of them said they would stay in the VIP program if the proposed changes became permanent. Staff does not believe these changes will result in a large enough increase in rounds played to offset the potential loss in membership dues. The proposed changes will however make access to prime tee times for City of San Mateo residents who do not wish to enroll in the VIP membership program, more accessible.

Due to the closure of the restaurant and banquet facility (Par3) at Poplar Creek, staff has decided to delay the rollout of this pilot program to avoid any further disruption to golfers. We anticipate the start of this program to coincide with the re-opening of the restaurant and banquet facility. Once initiated, staff will solicit feedback from VIP members and residents on the pilot program and report any financial impacts the program might have. This information will be presented at a future Parks and Recreation Commission meeting to further evaluate the VIP program and receive any recommendations on additional changes to the program.

BUDGET IMPACT:

The proposed changes to the program could result in a loss of approximately \$37,000 in annual membership dues annually.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

This presentation is not a project subject to CEQA, because it is an organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5).)

NOTICE PROVIDED

All meeting noticing requirements were met.

ATTACHMENTS

None

STAFF CONTACT

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