



The Town of Oro Valley Pro Forma

Town Council members will use the pro forma document to decide the fate of Pusch Ridge Golf Course's after May 2023

BACKGROUND

In 2021, the Town of Oro Valley approved a three-year provisional trial to keep the Pusch Ridge course open. Spring 2024 will mark the end of the provisional three years. The Town Council will decide on the course's fate for budgeting and planning reasons in early 2024.

A motion by Councilmember Steve Solomon, seconded by Councilmember Harry Greene, was presented and approved to the Town Council to direct the Town's staff to develop a 'pro forma' document that Town Council members will use to decide the course's future fate.

FOPRG (and the neighboring three HOAs) were asked to provide a document that would provide our perspectives and answer three questions that would be used to help build the proforma.

The questions were:

1. What is working well?
2. What are your ideas for improvement?
3. What capital projects are a priority for your group over the next five years?

Attached is FOPRG's response that was sent to the Town staff.

We will inform readers of any Town meetings, surveys, or correspondence needed to help persuade the Town Council to keep Pusch Ridge open after May 2023.

For the last year, FOPRG Board and Advisors have been working closely with the Town to promote the reinstatement of the course for upcoming years.

A motion by Councilmember Steve Solomon, seconded by Councilmember Harry Greene, was presented and approved to the Town Council to direct the Town's staff to develop a 'pro forma' document that Town Council members will use to decide the course's future fate.

The following is a draft outline summarizing the analysis that the Town Staff will be producing and delivering to the Council in January 2024:

1. Context, history, and public policy

2. Description of course facilities and conditions
3. Financial performance
4. Public benefit activities
5. Performance
6. Water analysis
7. Public perception
8. Market conditions assessment
9. Recommended practices for municipal golf courses (operational improvements)
10. Financial projections
11. Management structure
12. Other items

To develop the list of potential capital projects, a tour of the facilities and course has been organized for all respective Town departments and divisions to identify potential projects and needs. These tours will occur in mid-December 2023. They are being organized/conducted by Town and El Conquistador Golf staff.

Town staff has been working on developing project scopes, justifications, and costs for each identified project. Town staff will highlight which capital projects are necessary for facility preservation, which are required to continue operating the course, and those that would be nice to have.

Town staff has requested that the three surrounding HOAs (who have been paying a yearly financial contribution to the Town for aid in the continuing operation of the course) and FOPRG provide the Town with documentation that answers:

- What is working well?
- What are your ideas for improvement?
- What capital projects are a priority for your group over the next five years?

FOPRG will inform readers of Town meetings, surveys, or correspondence needed to help persuade the Town Council to keep Pusch Ridge open after May 2023.

FOPRG's Response

Submitted to the Town staff on December 15, 2023



Response from Friends of Pusch Ridge to Request for Input Regarding Pusch Ridge Golf Course Analysis
December 15, 2023

Introduction

Staff from the Town of Oro Valley is working with Indigo Golf to provide the Oro Valley Town Council with an “analysis of the continued feasibility, [and] capital improvement requirements . . . for the Pusch Course . . .” As part of the development of this analysis, Staff has invited Friends of Pusch Ridge Golf to provide their input. Staff is initially seeking input on three areas:

- A. What is working well?
- B. What are your ideas for improvement?
- C. What capital projects are a priority for your group over the next five years?

We believe it is important for Friends of Pusch Ridge Golf to also comment on other aspects of analysis that the Town Staff identified and is compiling for the Town Council’s consideration:

- Context, history and public policy
 - *This is the major Town owned recreational facility east of Oracle Road*
 - *Because of its proximity to the El Conquistador Resort, this facility has been an introductory venue to thousands of first-time visitors to Oro Valley as well as to numerous businesses, associations and social groups.*
 - *The course has hosted and continues to serve multiple generations of golfers.*
 - *This facility showcases up close, the Pusch Ridge peaks like no other Town owned facility.*
- Description of course facilities and conditions
 - *It is important to include within the description of the course, the tennis operation, access to the Linda Vista Trail, the parking facility, the building facility including racquetball courts and its congruence with the Town’s premier resort and conference center, The El Conquistador Resort.*
- Financial performance
 - *Evaluation of the financial performance needs to be tempered consistent with all other Town owned recreational amenities and not primarily viewed as a traditional for-profit golf operation.*
 - *Financial performance needs to be assessed in terms of net costs to the town in relationship to its delivered benefits to the community – image, resident value and support to local business.*
- Public benefit activities
 - *Diversity of users, number of users, frequency of use, events, social interactions and its contribution to a sense of community.*

- Performance
 - *Performance needs to be evaluated consistent with other Town owned recreational facilities – are the numbers of players and economic impact beneficial to the Town’s image, general plan and quality of life? Is the current level of use/popularity sustainable? Does its use reinforce Oro Valley’s desired sense of community?*
- Water analysis
 - *The key is to have a long-term, continuous improvement plan to reduce water use via improved irrigation efficiencies, reduction in turf not impacting playability, and enhancement of desertscape.*
 - *Can this facility be used as a proving ground for innovations in recreational water use to sustain quality of life in the desert Southwest?*
- Public perception/Market conditions assessment
 - *There has been a remarkable shift in the use and popularity of this golf course since the pandemic. We believe the shift is sustainable given a continued focus on serving the needs of the community.*
- Recommended practices for municipal golf courses (operational improvements)
 - *Given the course’s influence on visitors and potential new residents / businesses, it needs to be marketed as a community showcase and not simply as a municipal golf course.*
- Capital Investments
 - *Capital investments should also be evaluated in terms of a consensus vision for the facility and its contributions to economic activity for the Town and its private businesses.*
- What is working well?
 - *Friends of Pusch Ridge Golf was formed to market the golf course to assure optimum value from this Town asset. Indigo Golf has been a great partner in fulfilling the expectations of the target markets for the golf course. The continued growth of play, customer satisfaction and price/value are exceeding all expectations.*
 - *The Friends marketing plan has been successful – attracting a strong base of weekly league play, increasing awareness of the course to visitors and apartment dwellers, increasing the diversity of those who play, support of local business and reinforcement of the theme, Fast, Fun and Affordable.*
 - *Indigo has established a consistency to the operation including guest services and the course’s physical product.*
- What are your ideas for improvement?
 - *Friends of Pusch Ridge Golf appreciate Indigo Golf and the Town’s support of the marketing plan and strategies it has pursued during the three-year provisional period. However, any further suggestions for facility and operational improvements must be aligned with the Town’s vision for the facility in the longer term to realize its highest and best use.*
 - *The focus on improvements needs to be on supporting a consensus marketing strategy – enhancing the quality of the operation and experience as a resort facility and not just a municipal course.*
 - *Formalize the support from both the El Conquistador Resort and Westward Look.*
 - *Exploration of volunteer participation in course operations.*
 - *Formalize collaboration to market the entire Pusch Ridge Facility – golf and tennis.*

- **What capital projects are a priority for your group over the next five years?**

- *Friends of Pusch Ridge Golf are not in a position to prioritize needed capital investments to the facility as they related to facility use, whether it remains a golf course or not.*
- Our desire for any capital investments are based upon the following criteria:
 - Improving the playability of the course to assure continued growth, in terms of rounds played, appeal to a diverse audience and a positive financial return on investment.
 - Assuring continuous improvement in the course's environmental sustainability – water use efficiencies, wildlife habitat protection, stormwater management, etc.
 - Preservation of the facilities in ways that protect and enhance adjacent property values.
 - Enhancement of the facilities for the benefit of economic activity and tourism.
- Pro shop building enhancements to create a more congruent perception with the adjacent tennis operation and the El Conquistador Resort.
- Water use improvements to improve environmental sustainability and a better year around appearance / use. Stormwater harvesting, testing of other conservation technologies.
- On course enhancements to justify strong value for price – sufficient carts to meet demand, cart path repair/replacement, signage updates, a more permanent on-course restroom, enhancements to the practice area, etc.
- Improvements to landscaping, drainage, safety and security assets including the sanitation and aesthetic appeal of the pond area.
- The ADA compliance investments at the facility resulted in several parking spaces being removed from general parking. The continued growth of play of both tennis and golf has resulted in complaints about limits to parking. The expedient staging of golf carts in parking spaces has also contributed to these complaints. Assuming use popularity remains the same and continues to grow, additional parking and a dedicated golf cart staging area separate from the parking area should be considered.

Summary Response

1. What is working well?

- a. The Town – Indigo – HOA - FOPRG Golf Partnership

2. What are your ideas for improvement?

- a. Formalize a clear Town vision for the property consistent with the next general plan.
- b. A collaboratively developed marketing and operation plan to achieve and sustain this vision.

3. What capital projects are a priority for your group over the next five years?

- a. Friends of Pusch Ridge Golf are not in a position to prioritize capital needs. Our desire is for the Town to invest appropriately so that the facility can continue to positively serve the community.
- b. Capital investment in this facility should appropriately align with the Town's vision for this asset.
- c. Capital investments should be consistent with OV's Path Forward 2026 General Plan, and initially, invest to preserve the course and adjacent facility, enhance playability and environmental sustainability – with a critical focus on water use efficiency.