OPEN SPACE FOR SALE: THE STATE OF GOLF COURSE FACILITIES IN THE US AND THEIR POTENTIAL FOR REPURPOSING

Kelly Cederberg
• Quick background on golf industry
• Why should we care?
• Data on closed golf courses
WHAT IS HAPPENING TO GOLF COURSES?

Golf courses nationwide are struggling
- 211.5 18-hole equivalent courses closed permanently in 2016
- 10 years where more golf courses have closed than opened
- Projected to be 150-175 more in 2017

ngf 2017
WHY?

- Primarily due to economic boom
Number of golf courses was at its peak in 2006
GOLF PARTICIPATION

- NGF reports that since 2010, 2 million less people play golf
- Expensive
- Time consuming
GOLF COURSES ARE WATER HOGS

- Average water use in Tucson - 324-350 acre ft/year
- In 2008, cost = $66,000
- In 2011, cost = $258,000

Source- DMAFB, 2016
1. Establish new shade trees
2. Establish native vegetation throughout the site
3. Create designated multi-use turf areas for community events
4. Maintain existing large exotic tree species
5. Provide a new splash pad
6. Golf (only 23 users rated it #1)

*Survey of 235 recreation users at Davis Monthan Air Force Base, 2017
"Based on water usage, parks are cheaper to run and benefit more people."

- Regina Romero,
  Tucson City Council
WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

OPPORTUNITY

- Open space preservation and access
- Urban habitat
- Stormwater detention
- Sustainable development including walkability, variety of housing types, mixed-use infill, etc.

Landscape architects have the skill set to take a leading role in the redesign of these parcels in order to create healthier and more resilient communities.
WHERE ARE THESE COURSES?

States with the most closures in the last 5 years

1. OH (73 courses)
2. FL (67.5 courses)
3. TX (55.5 courses)
4. MI (54.5 courses)
5. CA (46 courses)
6. NC (42.5 courses)
7. PA (39.5 courses)
8. IL (36.5 courses)
9. NY (34.5 courses)
10. SC (33 courses)

• AZ ranks 27th with 10 closures
• Every state has had at least one 9-hole course close

*National Golf Foundation, 2017*
Golf course closed
No trespassing
Violators will be prosecuted
to the fullest extent of the law

MY DATABASE

- Methods - local articles and business journals
- 250+ golf courses and counting
- Most notable or controversial
WHERE ARE THESE CLOSED COURSES?

Urban, Suburban or Rural Areas?

Urban = 50,000 +
Suburban = 2,500 - 50,000
Rural = - 2,500

Survey of 150 closed courses in the past 10 years
ARE THERE PLANS FOR THESE PARCELS?

- NO PLANS: 27%
- LOOSE PLANS: 36%
- PLANS: 37%
Survey of 150 closed golf courses in the last 10 years

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THESE COURSES?

Current state as seen via Google Earth from Dec. 2014 - Jan. 2017
DISPUTES BETWEEN HOMEOWNERS AND LAND OWNERS

27 out of 150 golf courses (18%) of golf courses were identified as either in or having been in a dispute usually having to do with re-zoning issues.

Ahwatukee Lake Golf Course
Of the golf courses with plans or loose plans, what is the intended future use?
(100 courses)
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<th>DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>OPEN SPACE</th>
<th>COMBINATION</th>
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<td>• Residential communities</td>
<td>• Parks</td>
<td>• Parks and housing</td>
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<td>• Shopping &amp; commercial</td>
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<td>• Industrial</td>
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<td>• Soy bean fields</td>
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NEXT STEPS

- Keep building closed golf course database
- Find out more about golf courses in disputes
- Ownership and how that influences repurpose
- Property values on repurposed golf courses