

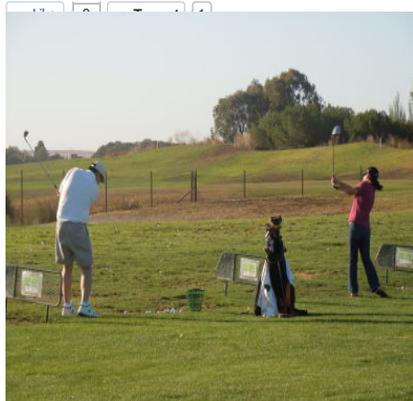
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With a Few Strokes, Shoreline Golf Course Comes Out of the Rough

Whether it's the better economy, a smart decision by Mountain View's City Council—or both—the municipal golf course continues to improve.

Posted by [Claudia Cruz](#) (Editor) , September 02, 2013 at 11:42 PM

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CA. Photo Claudia Cruz.

By Rachel Strober

Just a few years ago, Mountain View City Council members debated what to do about the \$700,000 they lost annually from the city's municipal golf course.

Now, with an outside private management group, the [Shoreline Golf Links](#) course has made strides to attract players and lessen the drain on the city's resources.

The city assumed control of the course in 1995, a little over ten years after its completion. The course, situated on the 750-acre Shoreline property north of Highway 101, is open to the public 364 days a year.

"Before, golf was the big money maker in our town," Tom Means, a Mountain View city council member told the [Washington Street Journal](#) in 2011. "Fridays used to see Shoreline and other local courses packed; now, he said, 'it's just like dead.'"

But Shoreline Golf Links' situation mirrored that of hundreds of other courses that suffered from a lack of business during the recession. The [National Golf Foundation \(NGF\)](#) reported that well over ten times as many courses closed than opened in 2012. The NGF also estimated a 10 percent loss (55 million) in the number of rounds played per year from 2000 to 2011.

San Jose resident and veteran golfer Steve Kanally shared he noticed a dismal number of players at Shoreline, and pretty much everywhere else, during this time.

"[Before the recession] you couldn't exactly get the tee time you wanted, you had to adjust your schedule to go there," Kanally said. "[Later], you could just about walk on any time you got there without a tee time."

The City of Mountain View outsourced the management and maintenance of the course to Touchstone Golf in January 2012. The agreement saved the City nearly \$1 million annually, according to their [budget report](#).

Since that time, Director of Marketing at Shoreline Golf Links Robbie Gray explained they've done a number of things to successfully increase business. A new frequent players program offers a sort of membership with discounts, a major change which has enrolled over 350 players. The course also hosts three times as many tournaments. Gray says the course is in the "best condition it's been in for years," due to a number of renovations, including new sand.

"Shoreline has done a good job, I've seen them making an effort out there," John Moraski, a Mountain View resident and frequent of the course, said.

Moraski has golfed on and off at Shoreline and also at the Palo Alto municipal course for the past three years, but says lately Shoreline has become his main course. Moraski noted the poor quality of the Palo Alto course's greens, the most important factor for him, and the visible work put in at the Mountain View site.

"I'm really happy for the affordable course," Moraski said.

Others appear to agree with Moraski. Gray shared that the course has seen a major increase in play and has become "quite busy now," even sometimes resulting in a bidding war of sorts for teeing times.

Indeed, Moraski's only complaint has been the course's flow with increased foot traffic and slow players, a sentiment echoed in Shoreline's [Yelp reviews](#).

Shoreline also faces complaints a bit more out of their control, like the course's blustery morning winds and the constantly renewed amount of goose droppings (the course shares the land with Shoreline's bird sanctuary).

Looming ahead include the increasing traffic on North Bayshore from commuters, a problem the City of Mountain View has begun [to address](#). Both Gray and Kanally noted the recent build-up of traffic, but neither saw it as a threatening problem.

For now, however, Shoreline Golf Links Course seems to have made it out of the rough.

Additional reporting by Katherine Hafner

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