

INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

February 13, 2025



To: City Council
From: City Manager Department
Prepared by: Christopher Freeland, City Manager
Subject: **Approval of Design Enhancements as Part of the Players Course Redesign**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **APPROVES** the staff-recommended enhancements to the area surrounding the Indian Wells Golf Resort Pavillion and other design features recommended by the Golf Resort Advisory Committee as presented in this report; and

AUTHORIZES the City Manager to execute a change order in the amount of \$50,000, for the 75/25 bunker sand blend; and

FINDS the project to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15060.

BACKGROUND:

At the October 24, 2024, City Council meeting, the City Council awarded the bid for the redesign of the Players Course, which included a small budget to have Chris Hermann, Hermann Design Group, provide a site plan for additional enhancements to the area between the Players and Celebrity Courses, as well as the area around the pavilion. In addition, the Council delegated various course design features (e.g., tee markers, sand quality, benches, etc.) to be discussed by the Golf Resort Advisory Committee with recommendations to the City Council.

Pavillion Area Enhancements

After discussions with Troon staff and John Fought, Chris Hermann has provided the attached site plan to enhance the area around the pavilion and the connectivity of the two golf courses (Attachment No. 1). These proposed enhancements do not alter the previously approved golf course redesign of the Players Course, Players putting green, short game course, or fire road.

The proposed enhancements include:

- Removal of the path leading from Celebrity #9 to the bridge. Instead, golfers finishing Celebrity #9 will be redirected to the cart path leading to the Fairway Grill.
- Planned location for the four-sided golf clock that has been ordered.
- Revised landscaping separating the fire road from the pavilion.
- Addition of a short hedge delineating the pavilion special event grass to provide added privacy for those hosting events at the pavilion.
- Potential to incorporate public art as you cross the bridge.

A slight modification to the proposed plan is anticipated to accommodate golf cart travel between Celebrity #9, the existing wedding event space, and the new Celebrity putting green. Troon and John Fought will incorporate any necessary changes to preserve these areas and further enhance the landscaping in the entire area.

Finally, Chris Hermann has proposed expanding the east patio area of the pavilion to provide a better connection between the pavilion and the special event lawn. This is not part of the proposed project, but it could be considered in the future when the City analyzes improvements to the pavilion to better insulate the facility.

The Golf Resort Advisory Committee reviewed the proposed site plan at their February 3, 2025, meeting. There was no objection to the plan. They did suggest further discussion on the installation of a digital reader board, rather than a public art installation. Staff will have further discussions with the Golf Resort Advisory Committee on digital signage at a future Committee Meeting.

If approved, Troon will incorporate the design enhancements into the existing redesign budget. Any additional funding requests will be brought back for Council discussion before approving any change orders.

Players Course Design Features Recommendations

At the February 3, 2025, Golf Resort Advisory Committee meeting, the committee unanimously approved new tee markers and flagsticks. Attachment No. 2 illustrates the new flagsticks, flag design, and tee markers that will be incorporated into the Players Course redesign and simultaneously placed on the Celebrity Course.

The Golf Resort Advisory Committee also discussed different sand quality to be included in the Players Course redesign. Their discussion was on two distinct United States Golf Association sand utilized on premier golf courses (75/25 and 50/50). The 50/50 mixture was recommended by Troon, due to cost, and incorporated into the project bid. A change in the sand quality will require a change order for the project.

- A 75/25 Sand mixture is a blend of 75% Augusta White and 25% Desert Tan Sand. It is whiter and brighter than a 50/50 blend.
 - *Pros:*
 - High aesthetic visual during winter months
 - Enhances definition of bunkers
 - *Cons:*
 - More maintenance to maintain proper color
 - Shorter life cycle with contamination (Native Soil & Algae)
 - Imperfections are more noticeable
 - High solar radiation and reflection during periods of heat
 - Slightly more expensive than 50/50 blend
- 50/50 Sand mixture Sand is a blend of 50% Augusta White and 50% Desert Tan Sand. It is less white and brighter than a 75/25 blend.
 - *Pros:*
 - Less labor intensive
 - Longer life cycle with contamination (Native Soil & Algae)
 - Replaced more infrequently
 - Solar radiation and reflection are less
 - Cheaper than 75/25 blend
 - *Cons:*
 - Different color aesthetic
 - Not as defining around bunker surrounds

After extensive discussion, the Committee unanimously approved the 75/25 bunker sand mixture for the Players Course. Their support was based on the desire for the new Players Course to have the higher quality sand that would make the course “pop.” The cost differential between the 75/25 and 50/50 is approximately \$40,000 every two years. The Committee also expressed concern about the increase in maintenance that the 75/25 sand mixture would have on staffing. Troon confirmed the 75/25 mixture would have some impact on staffing, but that it would be absorbed within the additional staffing already being needed to maintain the new Players Course in its premier state.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The costs to enhance the area between the Players Course, Celebrity Course, and Pavillion Area are expected to be absorbed within the current Players Course Redesign. If approved, Staff will confirm with Troon the costs to make these improvements and report back if the costs require a change order, prior to commencing work.

A change order in the amount of \$50,000 for the 75/25 sand mixture will be charged against the contingency budget for the project.

Costs for tee markers, flagsticks, and flags will be absorbed in the IWGR budget.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):

This action has been reviewed per the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State and local CEQA Guidelines, and the City's environmental regulations. The City, acting as the Lead Agency, determined that the ordinance is not subject to CEQA pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2), 15060(c)(3), and 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, because it will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change to the environment as there is no possibility that the action would result in a significant environmental impact, and because it does not constitute a "project" as defined in Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Site Plan-Pavillion Area Enhancements
2. Flagsticks and Tee Markers Design Renderings