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August 8, 2025

Honorable Councilmembers
Arts, Parks, Libraries and Community Enrichment Committee
City Clerk, Room 395, City Hall
Attention: Mandy Morales

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL FILE 24-0445 relative to operation and management of the tee-time reservation system

Summary

On May 17, 2024, City Council adopted Amending motion 5A for council file 24-0445 relative to the operation and management of the tee-time reservation system and efforts to address and stop black-market tee-time brokers from booking and reselling tee-times for profit, and related matters. Additionally, Amending motion 5B instructs the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) to report on a process that will ensure that the cost of cancellation is not a burden on seniors, low income individuals and individuals on fixed income.

Although motion 5A requests that RAP report on the management of reservation systems for other sports such as soccer and baseball and other sports with reservation systems for profit, this report will only focus on the golf reservation system. Sports field reservations do not follow the same model as golf. Patrons reserve sports fields through recreation centers and RAP's Municipal Sports Division by completing an application for use of the facility and submitting to appropriate staff.

Background:

RAP's Golf Division maintains and operates seven (7) 18-hole golf courses, three (3) 9-hole golf courses, two (2) 9-hole pitch and putt golf courses, and a golf training academy. The twelve LA City golf courses are all extremely popular and have been generating over one million rounds annually since 2021. The golf courses are also a good value, in line with the Golf Division's mission statement of providing well-maintained, accessible, and affordable golf courses for the enjoyment of the game of golf for City of Los Angeles residents and visitors. Demand for golf tee times increased



during the COVID-19 pandemic, while the supply of available tee times was reduced due to the lengthening of tee intervals from 8 minutes to 10 minutes. This supply and demand challenge has made it increasingly difficult for golfers to book tee times, particularly popular weekend tee times.

Media reports and feedback from the golfing community highlighted concerns regarding the brokering of tee times. While various manners of brokering and/or reselling of tee times may be occurring, one brokering practice of major concern involves brokers reserving tee times as they regularly become available to the public, advertising and selling these tee times for an additional fee, and then cancelling and immediately re-booking the tee times under the names of individuals who paid these additional fees.

When the City is made aware of unpermitted tee time brokering, it takes action to cancel associated tee times and suspend associated player card accounts. Website security measures have also been implemented by RAP's golf reservation management system vendor to identify and block suspicious web activity to help prevent the use of unpermitted bots or other computer programs attempting to obtain tee times.

Analysis / Findings:

In an effort to further address the brokering of golf tee times, RAP Board approved a pilot program to charge a \$10 non-refundable deposit for golf tee time bookings and was implemented on April 16, 2024. This program addresses public concerns about the difficulty of securing tee times.

Data comparison from May through October, 2024 (the first six full months of implementation) in 2024 versus the same period in 2023 shows significant improvement.

- In 2023, the # of tee times booked and cancelled on the web was 339,732
- In 2024, the # of tee times booked and cancelled on the web was 17,739
 - That's a decrease in cancellations of 94.8%
- In 2023, the # of golfer profiles with 60+ cancellations was 398
- In 2024, the # of golfer profiles with 60+ cancellations was 13
 - That's a decrease in cancellations of 96.7%
- In 2023, the # of golfer profiles with 10+ cancellations was 4207
- In 2024, the # of golfer profiles with 10+ cancellations was 374
 - That's a decrease in cancellations of 91.1%

The main concern from golfers is coming from senior golfers at our 9-hole golf courses. This \$10 deposit is nearly equivalent to their full green fee. The Golf Division will soon

be requesting a revised policy that would allow for a reduced non-refundable deposit at selected 9-hole golf courses.

Shortly after L.A. City implemented this non-refundable deposit on green fees, the Los Angeles County Board of Directors, Pasadena City (Brookside), and State of New York has referenced LA City also approved and adopted a very similar policy, implementing a \$10 non-refundable deposit as well as a \$10 per person no-show fee. This sets a precedent in the golf industry, making the golfer experience more enjoyable and tee times much more accessible.

Regarding seniors, RAP GOLF is currently drafting a Board Report to decrease deposit from \$10 to \$5 at 9-hole courses. The current \$10 deposit at 9-hole courses are disproportionately high percentage of the green fee, particularly the senior green fee. This same board report will recommend that 40% of all unreturned green fee deposits be deposited into our Tregnan Golf Academy to help sustain youth golf programming, equipment needs, and coaching, reinforcing our commitment to growing the game of golf and providing access to youth instruction.

In conclusion, the implementation of the non-refundable deposit policy has effectively encouraged golfers to commit to their tee times, resulting in a drastic reduction in the number of cancellations. This improvement has significantly enhanced the overall accessibility of tee times for all golfers.

Due to the early success of our pilot program, we conclude it has proven to be a highly effective solution to the difficulties of obtaining a tee time. Based on our findings, we plan on moving forward and making this program a permanent part of our operations.

Should you have any questions, please contact RAP Golf Manager, Rick Reinschmidt at rick.reinschmidt@lacity.org.

Recommendations:

That the council note and file this report.

Sincerely,



JIMMY KIM
General Manager