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MVCC

Evaluation of Course Improvements

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Introduction

The MVCC Greens Committee, at the direction of the President, has assembled this report for the purpose of providing guidance for decisions on potential course improvements.

The first step the Committee took was to put forth their biggest and best ideas. Discussion of all those ideas followed. Some of the wackier ideas were exposed and discarded. The final outcome of this process was a list of ten possible improvements. Voting on the ten followed by secret ballot. The votes were tallied, and the Chairperson ranked them into a tiered system: “Strong”, “Moderate”, “Limited”, and “Rejected”.

The value of this process should not be underestimated. The Committee is comprised of many diverse perspectives: low handicappers, high handicappers, men, women, young, old, riders, walkers, and those who maintain the course. The results of this report do not reflect the opinion of just one person (we already have plenty of that at MVCC). Rather, what we have in this report is a representative sense of how the membership writ-large may view these projects.

The “Strong” projects are those the Committee saw as most important to implement. Only two were labeled as such: 1) Install Cart Paths, and 2) Install Red Tee Ball Washers at 5th, 6th, and 8th.

At the other end of the rating scheme, we see that three projects were “Rejected”. Discussion of the these three are included in this report because it may be informative to see why they were rejected.

A final section of this report lists those projects that were not examined at this time, but very well may need to be examined in the future.

Cost information in this report assumes all work is performed by contractors. Actual costs would need to be created through contractor consultation. No cost/benefit analyses have been performed for this report.

Recommended Projects

Install Cart Paths

Strength of Green Committee Recommendation: Strong

Estimated Cost: $25,000 (six sub-projects ranging from $2,000 to $7000)

In 1898 MVCC was born on a cow pasture. There was not at the time any idea there would come such a thing as a golf cart. MVCC was as a walking course, as was every other course in the world. But times changed.

The first golf cart came to MVCC in about 1975. It reluctantly arrived under the insistence of a prominent, elderly member who claimed he could not, or would not, play if he had no cart. So, accommodation was made and the first cart arrived. That cart bounced around the course pretty well except at the 3rd hole. The existing walking path there had to be improved. The improvement was crude, but it worked. MVCC had built its first cart path.

So strict was the use of that one cart that other golfers were only allowed to use it with a doctor's note (literally). Golfers then pretended to limp about claiming bone spurs and stubbed toes on illegible doctor's notes. That new system worked rather wretchedly for about another two years. Hopeful riders soon found that the one cart was overused and thus generally unavailable. So, MVCC bought another cart. Then another. Then… MVCC was dragging itself into the modern golf world one cart at a time. By about the mid-80's there was generally enough carts to accommodate the demand. So seemingly everyone was happy, right?

Not really. The problem was the course never upgraded to accommodate the traffic. Now 125 years after the club was born, we see carts scooting and bouncing about in all directions, into so many spots they should not go and into conditions the old cow pasture never intended. Perhaps not too bad an experience for the long-term, smarter members who could learn all the tricks. They learned which hummocks to avoid, where to slow down and hang-on, or

sometimes where to gun-it to get through wet spots. Whereas to the unfamiliar or to the less savvy, the cart experience at MVCC just remained an unworldly experience.

So, The Committee is saying that it is now time to consider some substantial cart path improvements. A summary list of the motivations to install more cart paths at MVCC may be stated as follows:

- Direct carts away from the more severe hummocks,
- Direct carts around wet areas,
- Direct carts away from greens,
- Reduce random fairway damage,
- Reduce wear and tear on carts,
- Allow the elderly and the handicapped to play more comfortably,
- Heck, allow younger players to be more comfortable too,
- And finally, to those more interested in raw economics, create tangible asset that motivates new members to join.

The Greens Committee "Strongly" advises the construction of a network of new cart paths. Table 1 provides a breakdown of where these new cart path segments might best be placed and some basis for estimating cost.

A generic solution for building cart paths has been used to estimate cost. First, grade the path with a backhoe. Second, layer-in a gravel base. Third, lay a geotextile (plastic mesh). And finally, layer a final surface material. The resulting product would look much like the cart path currently found at the 3rd. The Greens Committee estimates this configuration as costing about $10/foot. The basis for this is the ongoing 2024 cart path job at the 5th hole. That job will be monitored to see if the unit cost stated in the report is accurate.

Construction cost rise in wet prone areas, such as on the right side of the 6th green. In cases like that, cart paths may need to be elevated, perhaps with an extra thick gravel base. Culverts may also then need to be installed.

The six proposed cart path segments could be done piecemeal, or collectively in larger jobs. The $25,000 total cost cited assumes piecemeal. Performing the job

as a whole would probably lower the total, as contractors prefer to enter jobs at large scale.

Would any of this construction work be disruptive to play? Answer is yes. A construction schedule would need to employed to provide minimal disruption to peak-season play.

Cart Paths (Table 1)

Site	Problems	Possible Solutions	Cost Components	Cost
1st	No cart path around the green. Riders run freely in all directions, often too near the green and over uneven terrain.	Construct a cart path starting 30 feet northeast of green (right side), continuing along the east tree line, and exiting at north side of the green at the 2nd fairway.	180 ft of cart path.	$2,000
2nd	Current dirt road on right side of green is rough. Also, there is rough terrain entering this road.	Construct a cart path starting 50 feet before the current dirt road on the right of the 2nd green. Improve that dirt road to cart path status and connect it to the existing cart path on the 3rd.	120 ft of cart path.	$2,000
4th	Rough dirt road from blue tee to red tee. Also, an irratic and sloped departure from red tee into the valley of 4th.	Build a new cart path starting at the terminus of the current 3rd cart path. Improve the dirt road to the red tee. Continue from red tee to the bottom of the valley of the 4th fairway.	375 ft of cart path.	$4,000
6th/7th	Ephemerally wet on right side of 6th green. Awkward riding and walking during wet periods.	Build a raised cart path starting about 25 feet from the right side of 6th the green. Extend that path to the white/blue tees, and connect there with the current cart which leads to the red tee.	120 feet of raised cart path with culverts.	$3,000
7th/ 8th	Ephemerally wet on right side of 7th green. Awkward riding and walking and during wet periods. Dirt road to 8th white tee is wet, rugged, and disfigured. Also, no formal cart path from 7th green to 8th red tee.	Build an elevated cart path starting about 25 feet from the right side of the 7th green. Improve the current dirt road and pass in front of the 8th white tee. Also, build a cart path spur from the 7th green to the 8th red tee.	300 ft of raised cart path with culverts. 75 ft of non-raised cart path.	$7,000
8th/9th	Steep and rugged in the upper 8th fairway (starting from "the tree"). No cart path around the 8th green. Steep hill from the 8th green to the 9th white tee. Rough dirt road from the 9th white tee to the 9th red tee. Steep and rugged from the 9th red tee down 60 feet into the 9th fairway.	Build one continuous cart path starting on the right side of the 8th fairway where the hill begins its steep climb (ie, perpendicular to "The Tree"). Pass along the 8th fairway edge, around the right side of the 8th green. Continue well around the backside of the 8th green, then up the steep hill and pass in front of the 9th white tee. Continue down the current dirt road to the red tee. Continue 60 feet down the 9th fairway.	650 feet of cart path.	$7,000

Install Red Tee Ball Washers at 5th, 6th, and 8th

Strength of Greens Committee Recommendation: Strong

Estimated Cost: $2,000

It is an expectation at fully operational golf courses to allow all golfers reasonable access to ball washers before teeing. Reasonable access is not currently afforded at the 5th, 6th, and 8th red tees, as in these three cases a red tee player would have to back-track to a white tee.

Red tee players pass by white tee ball washers at the 1st, 3rd, 4th, and 7th; thus, none are needed to be added there. Also, a 2nd red tee ball washer is not proposed because a ball washer there would impede drives launched from the white tee.

A solution is to add three Par Aide ™ ball washer (at approx. $700/ each) at the three proposed tees. Include trash can accessories if desired.

Level the 5th White Tee

Strength of Greens Committee Recommendation: Moderate

Estimated Cost: $1,000

The 5th white tee is not level to any acceptable standard.

It is not necessary to remove the old tee and rebuild. Rather, to correct the situation, the tee surface would be shaved down or built-up. This task could be performed with a power-rake. Gravel and sand could be added, in some appropriate fashion, followed by compaction and topsoil. The resulting final height of the final tee is not an important consideration. Most materials would be used in small quantities and most effort is labor. The job might best be performed in the fall, so as to not disrupt summer play.

The $1,000 estimated cost may also serve as a generic value for other tees in the future that may need leveling. Suffice to say the Committee will always be recommending that unlevel tees be made level.

Install a Water Station

Strength of Greens Committee Recommendation: Moderate

Estimated Cost: $2,000

From at least the 1950s to the pandemic (2020) there was a water fountain on the course. The original site for the fountain was at the 7th white tee. In 1974 a new fountain was built as a monument at the 6th blue tee. In the 1990's that same monument was hauled back to the 7th white tee and reconnected to the water line. But it's flow was weak and the taste questionable. Covid killed the whole concept of community water supply, and thus the water supply was disconnected. The monument now remains idle at the 7th tee.

The Greens Committee recommends that a water station be made once again functional somewhere on the course. The possibilities comprise what has existed in the past, perhaps with the addition of the idea of using an urn (a water cooler). A major downside of an urn, however, is that it may create an undesirable maintenance situation. An urn would have to be monitored, cleaned and replenished, probably on a daily basis in peak season.

It seems reasonable to first determine if the existing monument can be refurbished. It may be able to be serviced by an existing water line coming down the 3rd. Is that line adequate and functioning? Is the water quality or taste acceptable? If none of these things are resolvable or otherwise acceptable, then lastly consider the urn.

If the decision is made to move the station back to the far end of the course, then likely the best location would be at the 6th red tee (not at the 6th blue tee). All patrons naturally pass the 6th red tee.

Enlarge the 8th Blue Tee

Strength of Greens Committee Recommendation: Moderate

Estimated Cost: $3,000

It's too small. It's so small that there is only one spot to tee a ball. Moreover, the tee is sufficiently small as to force golf companions to stand uncomfortably close to the hitter or (especially with a foursome) to step off the tee entirely. Basically, the 8th tee is too small for a classy course like MVCC.

A tee enlargement project does not provide the simplicity as does a releveling project (see 5th Tee). Expansion of a tee likely means a rebuild. And if one is to rebuild, then one might as will do it right. That is, don't make it too small again. Go for it. There is little downside to having a big tee.

The $3,000 estimated cost is abstract. The actual cost will depend on size and design.

It would be easy to decommission the current 8th blue tee in mid-season. Doing so allows the project to be completed under a relaxed, comfortable schedule. In other words, the project could be done in mid-season without too much disruption to course play.

Level the 6th Green

Strength of Greens Committee Recommendation: Limited

Estimated Cost: $10,000

The primary reason to consider leveling the 6th green would be to mitigate the significate issue of too many putted balls accelerating and rolling off the green. We all know this experience. What otherwise could have been an easy par can morph into a triple bogie. Many golfers think this is unfair. Also, the green slope is so dramatic that much of the green cannot allow alternate pin placements. Thus, the green not only offers excessive slope, but also offers little variety.

Again, as with any significant change at MVCC, controversy will exist. Some will want to leave the green as-is (including some Greens Committee members). Some will want to change it (including some Greens Committee members). Regardless of perspective, it is erroneous to think that MVCC greens have never under gone change to improve their slope (the 4th green was releveled sometime before the 1950s). If are you going to change any current green at MVCC to improve its slope characteristics, the Greens Committee has concluded it should be the 6th green.

There are many design possibilities to consider if this project were to be undertaken. One is to cut the back side of the green down. A second is to raise the front side up, or to expand the green in the front. A third is to make the whole green much bigger by leaving what exists and merging it into a new, more level green to the left. There is plenty of room to work with. It is not appropriate for the Committee to suggest a design at this time.

Level Driving Range Parking

Strength of Greens Committee Recommendation: Limited

Estimated Cost: $1,500

The existing parking area for the driving range (ie, on the firehouse side) is steeply sloped and only accommodates about two vehicles askew. Many patrons avoid that parking area altogether and park their vehicles in the maintenance area. The too small and steeply sloped parking area on the firehouse side presents an unpleasant incongruity to the otherwise first-class range. Parking in the maintenance area should not be allowed.

A solution is to create a level gravel parking area on the firehouse side that accommodates about three vehicles. There is plenty of property to work with. If the best place for the newly constructed parking is close to range, then maybe consider adding a screen to protect parked vehicles from shank shots.

Rejected Projects

Level the 3rd Green

Strength of Recommendation: Rejected

Estimated Cost: N/A

The reason to level this green would be to slow the effect of a properly driven ball from rolling off the back side. In dry conditions, as we all know, perfect drives often cannot hold the green. USGA "Regulation" play for a par 3 assumes a drive is on the green, thus allowing a regulation two-putt. The green has too much slope to allow for a regulation par. Some golfer's find this condition bizarre and irritating, and as a result, may view MVCC as being unfair.

On the other hand, there are aficionados that find this quirkiness as challenging, charming, and part of a long tradition at the MVCC signature hole. At least if one does have a perfect drive, a good chip back onto the green will generally hold.

Regardless of whether one is for the status quo or one is for improvement, this project would be controversial to the membership. Some would like the change; some would hate it. Bottom line is there is another MVCC green that has a more severe imperfection to consider (see 6th Green).

Build a New 3rd Blue Tee

Strength of Recommendation: Rejected

Estimated Cost: N/A

The project consideration was to convert the bald mound just right of the 2nd green dirt path into a new 3rd blue tee. If a new tee was placed there it would allow for a more elevated and longer drive to the 3rd green, as compared to current blue tee. Using this new spot would certainly make the hole more challenging. So why has this project idea been rejected?

The current blue tee adequately serves as a proper back tee for the 3rd hole. The view is still fine and the green is still blind from the tee. The current blue tee already embraces a tough hole, especially when one considers any ball landing on the green is hard to hold (see 3rd Green). Also, adding a new blue tee on the mound next to the 2nd green would impact play on the 2nd green. Players on the 2nd would feel a sense of being too close to players on the 3rd. It is already nice to just leave the mound as is: a fine buffer between the two holes.

Level the 1st Green

Strength of Recommendation: Rejected

Estimated Cost: N/A

The approach shot onto the 1st green provides a challenging experience. It is a blind shot and the ball can bounce near and around the green in many quirky ways. The well hit shot may not behave. The well hit shot may very well roll off the left side of the green, due to the exaggerate slope on the left side. Indeed, so many balls find their way to that depressing little spot. So why not mitigate it? Why not raise the left side of the green so that well hit balls would more often be allowed to hold the green?

Because when one considers all the unfairness of the layout, it is indeed not the most unfair green on the course (see 6th Green). Of the three or four other green beasts on the course it is the 1st which is the friendliest. Some well hit shots do hold the green. Also, if one finds that their ball has rolled off the left, it is usually a well struck chip shot from there that will hold. Would it be better to fix the green? Maybe. But then enters the inescapable MVCC philosophy of how much do you want to mess with the charm and quirkiness of our beautiful little course. In the end, it the conclusion of the Greens Committee that the 1st green should remain its charming self.

Unexamined Projects

Planting and Removing Open Space Trees

Open space trees are those found in the fairway, at the edge of the fairway, and around greens. There were no open space tree issues in need of evaluation during the preparation of this report.

Forest issues are addressed by the Forest Management Committee.

Safety Screens

The need for adding safety screens may happen for a variety of reasons, such as when trees are removed, old screens are in disrepair, or when the course is reconfigured. There were no safety screen issues in need of evaluation during the preparation of this report.

Irrigation

Irrigation is considered maintenance. The Superintendent is in charge of maintenance. The Superintendent is, however, welcome to seek advice from the Greens Committee, as he may wish.

Flood Management

Flood control and other aspects of surface water management are considered maintenance. The Superintendent is in charge of maintenance. The Superintendent is welcome to seek advice from the Greens Committee, as he may wish.

Summary

The Greens Committee, at the direction of the President, has assembled this report for the purpose of providing guidance for potential course improvements. Seven projects emerged from the process as being worthy of consideration as a course improvement (Table 2). Each of these are supported by the Greens Committee as being "Strong", "Moderate", or "Limited".

Summary of Endorsed Projects (Table 2)

PROJECT	Greens Comm. Support	Cost	Concluding Remark
Install Cart Paths	Strong	$25,000	Provides significant improvement to the overall MVCC golf experience.
Ball Washers at Red Tees	Strong	$2,000	Easy to do.
Level the 5th White Tee	Moderate	$1,000	All tees should be level, all the time.
Install a Water Station	Moderate	$2,000	Will be well appreciated on a hot day.
Enlarge the 8th Blue Tee	Moderate	$3,000	A small tee makes a course feel small.
Level the 6th Green	Limited	$10,000	Controversial, but deserves discussion.
Level Range Parking	Limited	$1,500	Makes the driving range classy.

End of Report