



## **Largo Municipal Golf Course: Community Survey Summary Report**

Background: The City of Largo gathered feedback about the Largo Municipal Golf Course (LMGC) from community members during Spring and Summer 2020 to inform future planning and decision-making. Community members were invited to participate in the survey directly through social media messaging, e-newsletters, and on the Largo.com web page as well as through a postcard announcement of the planning efforts that was mailed to households (renters and owners) surrounding roughly a 1/2 mile radius of the LMGC. The majority of survey questions were optional to complete and included both close-ended and open-ended questions (i.e. each question may have a different number of respondents). This document provides an executive summary of the survey findings for the community survey. A separate survey was conducted with golf course customers specifically. For more information visit [Largo.com/GolfUpdates](http://Largo.com/GolfUpdates) or reach out to [connect@largo.com](mailto:connect@largo.com).

### **General Information:**

- 302 surveys were completed
  - 227 respondents were current or prior golf course customers
  - 74 respondents were not current or prior golf course customers

### **Key Findings:**

- The community expressed their thoughts very strongly that the LMGC should not turn into residential or commercial development sharing that the area already has sufficient residential and commercial development.
- The community shared that they value the green space in Largo and want green space to be preserved in the area.

### **Demographics:**

- **Are you a full time resident of Largo? (n=217)**
  - Yes (142)
  - No (75)
- **Are you a part-time resident of Largo (e.g., snowbird)? (n=72)**
  - Yes (51)
  - No (21)
- **Are you a resident of Pinellas County? (n=72)**
  - Yes (45)



- No (27)
- **Zip Code of Respondents \* (n=209)**
  - 33774 (92)
    - Area surrounding golf course, SW Largo
  - 33770 (32)
    - NW Largo
  - 33778 (13)
    - SW Largo / NW Seminole
  - 33771 (13)
    - Central and South Central Largo
  - 33773 (10)
    - South Largo / North Seminole
  - \*Zip Codes with less than 10 responses were not coded
- **Age of Respondents (n=192)**
  - 55-74 (121)
  - 35-54 (49)
  - 75 and older (14)
  - 20-34 (7)
- **Race/Ethnicity (n=190)\***
  - White / Caucasian (166)
  - Latino / Hispanic (4)
  - Black / African-American (2)
  - Asian / Pacific Islander (2)
  - \*This question was optional and some respondents chose not to reply or indicated "Other".

**What is your gender? (n=175)**

- Man (110)
- Woman (65)

**Quantitative Questions and Responses:**

**Survey Question: As alternative uses to the golf course may become a reality in the future, what other primary land uses for what is now the Largo Municipal Golf Course should we consider that may meet community needs? (Select all that apply) (n=145)**

- Trails and Park Land (124)
- Stormwater Management (green space) (76)



- Recreation Center (53)
- Housing / Residential (15)
- Commercial Development (6)

## Qualitative Questions and Responses

Many questions had the option to provide open-ended answers. The analysis team read and coded responses by theme of the answer. Responses that refer to a specific code and were repeated at least 15 times are recorded below.

### **Survey Question: To what extent do you feel your lifestyle would be impacted if the Largo Municipal Golf Course was replaced with a different use not related to golf? (Briefly describe any potential impacts to your lifestyle in the comment box.)**

- 113 survey responses to this question (n=113)
- 37 responses shared that they were **unsure about where they would go to golf** if LMGC closed and they might stop golfing if the LMGC closed due to the accessibility of the course and access to golf in the area. The quotes below share more from this perspective.
  - “As a senior, I would probably stop playing golf.”
  - “...The course provides much needed exercise for seniors and people of all ages that cannot be replaced by a recreation center or just more green space.”
  - “Negative impact with a rapidly decreasing number of public golf options in the greater Largo area.”
- 24 responses shared that they would miss the beauty and peace the open **green space** provides in Largo. Individuals want the space to stay green and open if the LMGC is closed. The quotes below elaborate on this point.
  - “Anything you do to alter the land use will impact not only the residents of this community but will impact the natural inhabitants of the community as well”
  - "Purposely bought our home that backs up to the golf course for the wildlife and openness."
  - "I bought my property here due to the peace and quiet."
  - "If the green space goes away, my lifestyle would be very impacted. If the green space stays but is used for activities other than golf, then no impact. We need the beauty and green space of this land for Largo."
- 17 responses shared that loss of the golf course would adversely impact their **community and social connections** stating that golf leagues provide a great outlet for meeting new people and fostering connections. The quotes below share more from this perspective.
  - "The Villas de Golf condominium complex would be negatively impacted forever. The social aspect would decrease and physical activities diminished."
  - "If this property were sold and developed, it would destroy the community"
  - "I would lose some social connections and exercise. I probably would not support whatever replaces it. Many golf courses already have shut their doors and reduced



locations to play at."

- "During the season I golf every week there. It is not just the exercise that we all get but the camaraderie we all enjoy. It would really bother me to see it be anything but a Golf Course."
- 15 responses shared that they would be adversely affected by an increase in **traffic** if the golf course were replaced. Responses shared a theme of concern for traffic on roads that were already busy as well as noise pollution. The quotes below share thoughts from the survey.
  - "More traffic, noise, pollution, and potentially more accidents. Keep the green space for the health and wealth of the people of Largo."
  - "additional traffic in an already crowded area."
  - "It would change the neighborhood's traffic, noise and peacefulness of the area."

**Survey Question: Please describe any other benefits of the Largo Municipal Golf Course.**

- 121 Survey responses to this question (n=121)
- 41 responses shared that a benefit of the LMGC is that it provides a beautiful **green space** for the community and the wildlife in the area. They also shared that it is helpful for stormwater management. The quotes below share more individual perspectives on this benefit.
  - "A wonderful opportunity for the creation of an ecological passive preserve for the enjoyment of the entire community, not only those who can golf."
  - "As a resident and sometimes golfer, we enjoy the beauty and serenity of viewing the golf course. We love watching all the players young, old, female, male as well as children enjoy their time together. Praying you will keep the golf course."
  - "It is a welcome relief to see an open area such as the golf course in such a densely populated area."
- 30 responses shared that the LMGC is a place for **recreation and outdoor exercise** for our community. Quotes below express the thoughts on this topic.
  - "Enables a variety of recreational opportunities for residents and nonresidents alike. Provides welcome green space in a high density area, promoting a more healthful atmosphere and providing visual appeal."
  - "Provides needed exercise for senior citizens that they normally would not get elsewhere. Golf provides a much greater range of exercise than walking."
  - "There's a physical exercise benefit for the body in playing golf or getting around the course by walking. It's an exercise for many seniors in the community that they can participate in."
- 19 responses shared that LMGC provides a place for **community, social connection and networking** that is important for the social wellbeing of our residents and sense of belonging. The quotes below share more insight on this perspective.
  - "Beautiful green space, great alone or more people's social activity and fun for adults and children."
  - "A place to call home"



**Survey Question: What do you see as local services and amenities that need improvement in this community, thinking about the surrounding area within 2 miles of the Largo Municipal Golf Course?**

- 121 Survey responses to this question (n=121)
- 31 responses shared there is a need for **infrastructure repairs** such as fixing sidewalks and streets as well as adding street lights to the area. The quotes below highlight the hope for these improvements.
  - "Some streets are in pretty bad need of repair. A lot of the area isn't attractive, too many trees were removed for construction. Way too many billboards, this has been getting worse. A couple of run down neighborhoods. Vandalism. Some of the road medians could be improved with wildflower plantings. They are very boring."
  - "Separate sidewalk and bike lane on Vonn Rd. I understand the reluctance of bicyclers to be on the narrow roadway, but bicycle riders often do not respect that the sidewalk is primarily for pedestrians nor do they understand the limitations of older walkers hearing, balance and reaction time."
  - "Transportation, especially pedestrian, biking. All of those green spaces should be interconnected with a safe trail network and better public transportation."
- 29 responses shared they **do not see anything they would improve** in the area.

**Survey Question: Is there anything else you'd like to share that we should keep in mind for future planning efforts related to the Largo Municipal Golf Course?**

- 93 Survey responses to this question (n=93)
- 42 responses shared that they see the LMGC have great value to the community and want to see it **stay open and operational as a golf course**. Some quotes that speak to this point are listed below.
  - "The Largo Golf Course has been a staple in the community for decades. There is truly no benefit from a resident's standpoint of using the land for another purpose."
  - "Don't get rid of a golfing venue, just Market it properly, as it is not now. The clubhouse is just ridiculous and large and unused based on the footprint it uses. Get parking closer to the clubhouse, have 9 quality holes well maintained, and a driving range (first quality) With a bar and you own the surrounding area. You would get vacation families to bring kids to hit balls, eat and so on while in the beaches area. One of a kind. You just don't know how to market it but certainly it could be a big success if done properly."
  - "The course is unique...its the only one around...don't make it a 9 hole course and add a driving range that can offer lessons etc.."
  - "Put in the needed repairs to the course and raise the fees if you must. Otherwise there is nowhere else to go in a reasonable distance. Please don't detract from the community."

**Survey Question: Of the potential alternative uses to the Largo Municipal Golf Course listed above**



**(trails and park land; stormwater management; recreation center; housing/residential; commercial development), are there any specific uses that you feel the City should avoid? If so, why?**

- 121 Survey responses to this question (n=121)
- Responses showed that the community feels very **strongly against** using the LMGCC land for **commercial or housing development** because of the negative impact it would have on the communities around the golf course. The responses shared a **concern about over-development**, the habitat for native wildlife, and the **importance of green space** for recreation. Quotes below from the survey share more detail about this.
  - "Please, no commercial or residential development. Don't make us any more like Ulmerton Road! This is a wonderful community as it is."
  - "Housing and business development should be avoided. There are plenty of neighborhoods and homes already in the nearby community which could be redeveloped and used for better purposes. The area would attract more residents and visitors if existing commercial and residential spaces were updated and redeveloped. This space is important as green space or no-cost recreation. SW Rec is too costly for residents... sure a membership is cheap, but then you still have to pay for every activity after that, which makes it pointless. I live in walking distance from it, and only ever use the park because the costs are too high at the rec center."
  - "Commercial Offices, retail stores, housing development. The golf course property is completely surrounded by condos and single family neighborhoods. There are numerous vacancies in existing commercial and retail spaces both east and west of the golf course. Large multifamily development is not compatible with the single family existing neighborhoods that are adjacent."
  - "AVOID Housing/residential AND Shopping center. It would be sandwiched in between older homes to the west, older condos on the east, older apartments to the north and a narrow area on Walsingham road to the south. Housing or shopping would generate much more noise, have lots more vehicle emissions, more concrete, less green spaces, require more maintenance and would congest an area that is already having major problems with amount of traffic and traffic flow. Driving range NO - as there are residential areas on 3 sides and the potential for wild balls would be great and large nets are ugly. Not to mention all the large birds of prey in the area could be in danger."
  - "Yes, housing residential , expansion of the Rec Center & commercial development should all be avoided. We need the green space!"

**Survey Question: What do you see as the strengths of this community, thinking about the surrounding area within 2 miles of the Largo Municipal Golf Course, in regard to local services and amenities?**

- 141 survey responses for this question- (n=141)
- The responses showed that the area has a wealth of **strengths such as the access to green space for recreation, proximity to shopping centers, beach access, and strong neighborhood**



**communities.**

- 66 responses shared that the green spaces, parks, and access to the Pinellas Trail are strengths of the area surrounding the LMGC.
- 61 responses shared that the proximity of shopping centers (i.e. grocery, business, retail stores) is a strength of the area.
- 33 responses shared that the proximity of restaurants is a strength of the area.
- 31 responses shared that the proximity of recreation centers is a strength of the area.
- 30 responses shared that the LMGC being close to their home is a strength of the area.
- 30 responses shared that the access to the beaches is a strength of the area.
- 19 responses shared that the area has strong neighborhoods that are safe, friendly, affordable and well-established.
- 16 responses shared that the area has many opportunities to connect with a faith community as a strength of the area.
- Below are additional quotes from the survey that share thoughts about the strengths of the surrounding area.
  - "Proximity to the beach. Opportunity for shopping (box stores, grocery, pharmacy etc.). Retail stores, library are close enough. Good combination of outdoor recreation and green space availability (picnicking area, walking and bike trails etc). Good mix of residential communities, condos, private homes etc."
  - "The area has all the services that anyone could want, shopping, healthcare, restaurants, etc. Very easy to get everything you may want. Easy to get around---everything is accessible. City of Largo considers all its citizens when they govern the city."
  - "All the green spaces and the bicycle trail make Florida a destination for exercise and good health. On the last page I didn't recognize The names of all the parks but I've been to most of them. My whole family loves to bike ride and to walk through the parks, and on the beaches. Most of all we all love to golf and would hate to lose Largo!"
  - "Proximity to and opportunity to connect nearby green spaces to create a network of passive acres. Opportunity to preserve this resource from development."