



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

Background: The City of Largo gathered feedback about the Largo Municipal Golf Course (LMGC) from customers during Spring and Summer 2020 to inform future planning and decision-making. Customers were invited to participate in the survey directly through an email to all customers that had provided their contact information for the LMGC contact list, as well as through signage at the LMGC facility. Additionally, a postcard announcement of the planning efforts was mailed to households (renters and owners) surrounding roughly a 1/2 mile radius of the LMGC. Both paper and online surveys were available. A reminder email to complete the survey was sent out prior to the survey closing. The majority of the 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 customer survey. A separate "community" survey was conducted with community members of the general public. For more information visit [Largo.com/GolfUpdates](http://Largo.com/GolfUpdates) or reach out to [connect@largo.com](mailto:connect@largo.com).

### **General Information:**

- 1,328 surveys were completed
  - 1,154 respondents were current or prior golf course customers\*
- \*individuals that were not current or prior customers were invited to complete the community survey instead of the customer survey

### **Key Findings:**

- Customers of the LMGC expressed very strongly that the golf course should stay as it is, and many strongly opposed either residential or commercial development.
- With many other courses closing in the area, LMGC is affordable and an accessible course (affordable, approachable for all golf levels), particularly for senior citizens.
- More than half of the responses came from individuals who do not live in Largo.

### **Demographics:**

- **Do you live in Largo? (n=1,049)**
  - No (576)
  - Yes (473)
- **Zip Code of Respondents\* (n=1,027)**
  - 33774 (212)
    - Area surrounding golf course, SW Largo
  - 33708 (77)



- Redington/Maderia Beach
- 33770 (76)
  - NW Largo
- 33785 (67)
  - Indian Shores/Indian Rocks Beach
- 33778 (57)
  - SW Largo/NW Seminole
- 33771 (56)
  - South Central Largo
- 33776 (50)
  - Seminole
- \*Zip Codes with less than 10 responses were not coded
- **Age of Respondents (n=1,025)**
  - 55-74 (614)
  - 35-54 (166)
  - 75 and older (163)
  - 20-34 (65)
- **Race/Ethnicity (n=1,048)**
  - White / Caucasian (934)
  - Latino / Hispanic (10)
  - Asian / Pacific Islander (7)
  - Native American / Alaska Native (6)
  - Black / African-American (4)
- **What is your gender? (n=1,053)**
  - Man (745)
  - Woman (268)

## Quantitative Questions and Responses

- **When was the first time you visited the Largo Municipal Golf Course? (n=1,136)**
  - More than 5 years ago (667)
  - Over 1 year to 5 years ago (286)
  - 3 months to 1 year ago (125)
  - Less than 3 months ago (58)
- **How often do you visit the Largo Municipal Golf Course? (n=1,099)**
  - Several times a year (5-10 times a year) (300)
  - Nearly every week (263)
  - A few times a year (2-4 times a year) (262)
  - Multiple times a week (124)



- Nearly every month (87)
- Only for tournaments (63)
  
- **How satisfied are you with the 18-hole course at Largo Municipal Golf Course? (n=1,110)**
  - Very Satisfied (557)
  - Satisfied (482)
  - Unsatisfied (50)
  - Very Unsatisfied (21)
  
- **How satisfied are you with the other services on the Largo Municipal Golf Course property (cafe, pro shop, etc.)? (n=1,097)**
  - Satisfied (587)
  - Very Satisfied (378)
  - Unsatisfied (95)
  - Very Unsatisfied (37)

### Qualitative Questions and Responses

Many questions had the option to open-ended answers. Responses were coded by the theme of the answer. Responses in a specific code that were repeated at least 25 times are recorded below. A sample of quotes were selected to reflect the range of perspectives.

**What other ideas should the Technical Assistance Panel consider for future use(s) or improvements to the Largo Municipal Golf Course? Please share any and all ideas you'd like us to consider as we plan for the next 5-10 years, including: single-use or multi-use facility opportunities, golf-related, not golf-related (golf course/facility, driving range, trails and parkland, stormwater management area, residential development, commercial development, recreation center, etc.)**

- There were a total of 440 Responses (n=440)
- 305 responses shared that customers want the LMGC to remain as an 18-hole course sharing that the the course meets theirs needs, has variety of leagues, and is a good location. See a few quotes below sharing more insight.
  - "I love to golf. I hope that you do not choose to eliminate the Largo Golf course from our community. The course is very popular with visitors and locals alike."
  - "This is well developed, well managed property. Beyond being an asset to the community this asset at times shows a profit. In evaluating property, wouldn't efforts be better directed at property that is poorly developed and in a state of blite."
  - "I have been playing at Largo every year for 9 years and would like to continue to play there due to the location and the people we play with on Wednesday's pub league. Keita and Rich Sullivan do an excellent job and bring a lot of business to this course running



the league and tournaments once a month."

- "I would not like to see it changed. We need a golf course in this area. Everything around us is a membership country club. This completes our city of Largo. Do not close the golf course!!!"
- "Keep it the local golf course that we residents continue to enjoy. Definitely no more housing or retail. This area is too populated as it is. If retail is considered there will be more bought in other areas of Largo"
- 58 responses shared that they would like to see some facility improvements (e.g., tee boxes, greens, cafe, club house) to the course with suggestions that with upgrades the LMGC could make more income. See a few quotes below sharing more insight.
  - "Improve the tee boxes - make them more level, build them up, plant more trees."
  - "Improve the course- improve the tees and greens, along with those improvements, increase the green tees."
  - "Upgrade this course. You will not regret it. It is a very busy course as it is, and there are no decent alternatives in the area. People will pay a bit more for improved fairways and greens."
  - "Don't close or modify the golf course. But upgrade the club house to a full bar and restaurant."
- 58 responses shared that the space should be considered as a recreation area or disc golf course. Responses ranged from interest in trails, parkland and the addition of a disc golf course. The quotes below are a sample to share perspectives from the survey.
  - "It would be great to have a green space there that included trails and park land. The rec center is great down the road, but a better play area for all age children, more room for them to run around, a dog park area and water splash pad."
  - "General access to recreational usage"
  - "I love that Largo provides green space for use as recreation. I am very opposed to residential or commercial development. The golf course is one of few city owned golf courses in our area and love that it encourages recreation."
- 56 responses shared they would like the green space to remain (ie parks, trails). Responses expressed that the area already had sufficient development and value the green space. The quotes from the survey below share more details about this idea.
  - "Please consider that Pinellas does not need more concrete, but more green space. The best way to achieve this is to retain the green space we have, like the Golf course."
  - "Trails and parkland. Permanent residence for artisan market."
  - "I would like to see it kept as green space for recreational purposes. There are many trails in the area so that does not seem to be a need . The cost of the golf and the foot golf as well as the location make this a course the one we like to come to."
- 54 responses shares new ideas about how to sustain finances for the LMGC. Some ideas shared include a yearly membership for residents and hosting tournaments to raise funds. Below are some quotes that share more specific thoughts.



- "Invest in the golf course as needed and raise rates if needed to pay for improvements"
- "Whatever you do, please keep it golf related and don't make it private or so expensive that retired folks can't afford it."
- "Offer reasonable membership annual fees for Largo City residents, which could then give you a consistent revenue stream....like an expensive rec card....in exchange for free greens fees, or carts, whichever works best for the City."
- "This is a goldmine. Always full 6 months of the year. Only slow July and August. Many courses are closing in the area. We will be the only course left and can increase fees in future, not outrageous. In winter a player would pay \$50 east. Try to get residents year round discounts."
- 50 responses share that a driving range would add value to the LMGC and would get a lot of use as there are not many in the area. Quotes below share more about this topic.
  - "A driving range would be a nice addition since the area only has a couple of ranges."
  - "Keep the course but add a small driving range to generate more income This could be done by just using extra space maybe on the first hole by shortening it There are no practice places in this area other than East Bay and that's not very good."
- 45 responses shared that the space should not be used for residential development stating there is already sufficient residential development in the area and that the green space is needed in the area. The quotes below are a sample to share perspectives from the survey.
  - "Keep it as a golf course or open space. There's enough residential & commercial development already in Pinellas County"
  - "If not a golf course, then bike/hiking trails would be great. Anything but more buildings/housing. Our town is turning into a concrete jungle. We need trees and green space!"
  - "Please, please do not consider residential or commercial development. We do not need more buildings. the golf course is perfect for the area. If you must change the usage, parks and trails would be the only other use for the property."
- 42 responses shared that the LMGC could be made into a short course. Some responses shared that making the course shorter could allow some space to be used for a driving range or for other recreation space that is not golf related. See quotes from the survey below.
  - "A better designed and upgraded 9 hole course with decent amenities including restaurant would be attended. Taking away recreational use of the land would be detrimental to the area which has limited recreational facilities as it is."
  - "Make it a smaller course with a driving range would be great for players who don't have a lot of time to play"
  - "If the course was reduced to 9 holes I would really like the idea of adding a driving range or frisbee golf course. Just please keep it to the community for recreation."
- 32 responses shared that the space should not be used for commercial development. Individuals shared that there is already enough commercial development in the area and that green space adds value to Largo. Below are some quotes from the survey.



- "The existing course is a "park" enjoyed by hundreds of residents and visitors. It would be a shame to lose a beautiful park to any type of commercial use."
- "I love that Largo provides green space for use as recreation. I am very opposed to residential or commercial development. The golf course is one of few city owned golf courses in our area and love that it encourages recreation."
- "We do not need any more concrete structures. If it will not be a golf course then it needs to remain as green space or passive park area. Any development should revitalize abandoned shopping or business centers. We need more green space for our future."

### **Do you have any other comments you'd like to share?**

- There were a total of 300 responses (n=300)
- 49 responses shared they would be disappointed and upset if the LMGC closed because it has been an important part of the community for years. Quotes below express the thoughts on this topic.
  - "Would hate to see the end of the Largo Golf Course - we have thoroughly enjoyed playing there for many years."
  - "With the ongoing loss of multiple golf courses it would be a shame to lose one of the last options in this area."
  - "Losing Largo Golf Course would be a big blow to your senior citizens. This is a sport you hope to do till you are no longer physically able."
  - "I really like this course and would be extremely disappointed if I could not play golf at it."
- 46 responses shared they had nothing further to share with us
- 35 responses shared that they chose to live or vacation in the area because of the LMGC. Some individuals shared they would consider moving or vacationing elsewhere if the course no longer existed. Below are quotes that speak to this point.
  - "I moved to this area, in part, because of the golfing opportunities. With the Possible closing of the Largo course and the Pelican going private, this would be one more hit against the area. Opportunity seems to be dwindling for residents and visitors alike."
  - "Would very much like to keep the golf course, as we bought our condo because of the golf course !!!!"
  - "As a foreign guest I really like the opportunity to play there! This is important to me to choose the area for vacations!"
  - "We are snowbirds that spend winter months in Indian Shores. Largo Golf course is close by and very enjoyable for us to use. It is a big reason why we vacation in the area. If it closes we may need to look elsewhere to stay."
- 28 responses shared there are many golf courses closing in the area and LMCG is one of the only course left in the area that is affordable and does not require a membership. Below are some quotes that add additional context to this code.
  - "It's perfect just as it is. We have already lost the Tides and now the Landings is closing."



Enough is enough. Bardmoor is in jeopardy as well."

- "Too many of the local golf courses are closing. High end golf courses are pricing out a lot of us golfers. If you close Largo GC, it will be a sad day for a lot of us golfers."
- "Pinellas County is losing green space at an alarming rate. The only large tracts of undeveloped land are our golf courses. Bay Point, the Tides, and possibly Bardmoor are facing development, fortunately the county will keep Bay Point green, but it's another golf course closed and the residents of that area were lucky to have Largo to fall back on. This course is worth saving for future generations."

- **Additional Commentary**

- The facility is particularly accessible for seniors, those with disabilities, newer golfers, and youth learning golf for the first time, as well as its affordability.
- Comments related to funding were shared including: many parks in the area being minimally used and still costly to maintain, not understanding the financial situation of the golf course, openness to paying a bit more if needed, some said it's too costly for the size and quality, others shared suggestions on how to improve marketing with discount rates during certain seasons or for certain groups, increase visibility of marketing, and others suggested adding priced activities such as disc golf or a driving range.
- Several commented that lost green space is very difficult to get back, and were very against any type of concrete development (residential, commercial, etc.)

### **What are the main reasons you choose to golf at LMGC or elsewhere most often?**

- Some reasons that individual choose to golf at LMGC are because it is a quick course to play, reasonable price, convenient location, and friendly staff members. The quotes below share more about why people chose LMGC.
  - "Distance and I like it and time spent on the Largo is faster to play. I might add that I am a senior citizen and do not play the longer ones as I have trouble reaching the green in most cases."
  - "Largo is walkable for older golfers, while most of the others are not. It is a great layout for senior golfers."
  - "Largo Golf Course is the PERFECT PAR 3 COURSE! Usually can finish 18 holes in under 2.5 hours! Closest to my location! Best/Friendliest Monthly Scrambles!"
  - "Location is very important, convenience and fair prices. We love Largo Golf Course."
  - "Largo Municipal affords a player such as myself a fast 9 holes with a short commute from my home. Price is affordable and enjoyable to the beginner or less accomplished player. It is a fun time for the average women player as well."
  - "I golf at the Largo Course primarily due to the service oriented staff and the availability of tee times. (I can only visit from out of town from May-December, 5-6 weeks per year.) The staff is one of the attractions at the course - very professional and courteous. Also, since I am willing to golf mid to later in the day, tee times are often more available. Also, very reasonable pricing is a small factor."



- "We are snowbirds from Germany and we love the area of Largo"
- "Largo is convenient for all the players I associate with and have played with for almost 20 years. I guess you can say it's sort of a social club."
- "I like Largo and only play others for variety. Need to keep greens up to good shape like they were before Otherwise nice little course"
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- Individuals who choose to golf at other locations more often shared they do so because it is a longer course and less expensive for the experience. The quotes below share more insight on my individuals choose other courses.
  - "The course is longer than Largo and is more of a challenge"
  - "Largo is expensive for the type of course it is. I am in two other leagues and those courses give leagues a fair discount. Largo should do that also."
  - "Cost is reasonable (usually less than Largo) and it is a full course. I can't hit a driver at Largo, but my girlfriend likes it and it is a fun little course to work on my iron play. I would in most cases prefer a bigger course rather than an executive course with so many par 3's."