



Frequently Asked Questions About the 2021 Golf Course Renovation

What golf course architect has the club hired for this project and what is their background?

We have hired Bergin Golf Designs to help in this very important project for the future of the club. Bergin Golf Designs is led by Bill Bergin, whose background in the golf industry is distinct. Bergin played the world's best golf courses as a touring professional, gained an understanding of club operations and the ability of the everyday player as a teaching professional, and acquired technical design experience under the guidance of noted designer Bob Cupp. Since founding Bergin Golf Designs in 1994, Bergin has combined his strategic instincts and design experience with a dedication to detail in project management. Bergin Golf Designs has been involved in the planning and design of over 70 golf course projects, including more than 50 under his own banner.

The integration of Bergin's design vision and expertise, with the quality of his project management system, is unparalleled in the industry. A golf course designed by Bergin Golf Designs is challenging for the most skilled golfers, yet fun and friendly for the recreational player. With greens complexes that offer a wide variety of options for recovery and boast ample playing areas, short game skills are frequently on display. Bill believes in giving golfers a choice as to whether to attack or to navigate their way around one of his golf courses.

Prior to his work as a designer, Bill spent six years playing golf professionally, and three years as a teaching professional at Cherokee Town & Country Club in Atlanta, GA. During his competitive days, the former Georgia Amateur Champion played in excess of 250 professional tournaments worldwide, including three U.S. Opens, two British Opens and more than 50 PGA Tour events. Competing on courses such as St. Andrews, Royal St. George's, Pebble Beach, Olympic Club, and Baltusrol, and teaching golfers of all abilities have given him an astute awareness into the strategic quality of a golf course and how it affects all players. Highlighting Bill's playing career was a tournament-low 66 in the third round of the 1984 British Open at St. Andrews, leading him to a 14th place finish among the best golfers in the world. Bill Bergin is a former Class A PGA Professional and earned a Business degree from Auburn University.

Learn more about Bergin Golf Designs: www.bergingolf.com

When will the renovation take place?

The project would begin in the first quarter of 2021 and the duration of the project is estimated at 6-8 months. This includes construction and grow time for all 18-holes.

What is the cost of the renovation process?

The full scope of the project has not been finalized at this time; however, the cost of the project will be between \$2.8 - \$3.2 million, depending on the finalized scope.

Is it necessary to get a golf course architect to do the renovation?

As many of our members know, the front 9 holes were designed and developed by many of the founding members rather than a professional architect. While the club has been fortunate with the cost savings and outcome, there are inherent issues over the lifetime of the course that have come as a result. On a project of this scope it is very important to hire a professional golf course architect. As our club and area continues to grow and the game of golf evolves, we have a unique opportunity to work with a professional golf architect to make changes that will make the course better in terms of infrastructure (drainage, ground sloping etc.) and the playability of the course in general. Many of the challenges that need attention on our course require professional assistance. Bergin Golf Designs has a solid expertise in renovating more than 70 golf courses and their project management will be invaluable with regards to the future of our golf course.

Why is the club looking at doing a large renovation project?

There are two main reasons why the club is doing a renovation project. The first of those reasons is because of the need to replace our current greens due to their age and the significant amount of contamination of grass over the years. The renovation would fix the inherent issues of the greens with both size and contamination. It would additionally bring them up to USGA standards unlike the previous time the greens were re-done. The second reason for a renovation is to improve drainage on greens and fairways which will allow sustainability for years to come. These will fix some of the operational issues at the golf course and will also greatly enhance the membership experience at your club for generations to come.

Will the new design make the golf course too difficult for a high handicap player like me?

Along with the mechanical fixes, opportunities now will exist to make some strategic changes to the golf course. The concept of this course design is based on low to average and high handicappers. Our desire is for our course rating to go up (better players) and our slope rating to go down (average to high handicappers). For example, we want our golfers to be able to play the ball on the ground for the average to high handicappers (ex: ability to play the around water hazards, etc.) which will mean less forced carries and more generous landing areas.

I keep hearing about how small our greens are currently; will the renovation make the greens bigger and why is this so important?

Like any golf course with older greens ours have shrunk through the years. This is mostly due to the encroachment of the collar grasses toward the greens themselves. Smaller greens mean less pin-able locations and more foot traffic in confined areas which can lead to wear patterns and turf loss. The renovation will add about an acre to our greens complexes which will allow for more hole locations and a more dispersed traffic pattern.

Following a rain storm hole 7 is usually the determining factor of whether the course will be open and whether power carts will be allowed due to poor drainage and lack of cart path. Will this be addressed?

Yes, the design plan for hole 7 is quite extensive with new drainage going in throughout the whole fairway as well as shaping of the fairway so that the slope of ground and gravity will help move water toward the new drainage. Also, a cart path will be added on the right-hand side of the hole.

Why can't we renovate 9 holes at a time so that we can play golf at our club?

Renovating 9 holes at a time is a possibility, but not the best option for our club. With the substantial amount of fill dirt needed for building up certain fairways to aid in drainage, doing the whole course at once will give us freedom of being able to obtain the material from

anywhere on property. Also, due to the growing season for the new turf being our summer months, splitting up the project would have us under construction for 2 full summers. This concept isn't the most efficient from a construction or economic standpoint.

What type of grasses will be used for the project and will these grasses be sod or sprigs? Also, can you please explain what sprigs are?

For the greens, we will be using Tif Eagle (Bermuda grass) sprigs. Sprigs are small plant parts which usually contain rhizomes or stolons. Sprigs are produced from tearing turf into plant parts. Once sprigs are planted, new plants are developed from the nodes that start to grow and produce roots and shoots. The young plants develop additional plants, and as they mature, a sod-forming turf occurs. Sprigs are used for the greens because once fully grown in, the grass will be full without the seams that happens when laying sod. This helps to ensure a consistent and smooth putting greens complex. For the fairways and the tie-ins around the greens, we will be using Tif Tuf (another Bermuda grass) sod. Lastly, we will continue using Zeon Zoysia on the new tee areas in conjunction with what Golf Course Superintendent, Kelly Barker, and his staff have been doing over the past few years.

How long will the golf course be shut down and where will I be able to play golf?

The renovation project is anticipated to take 6 to 8 months. This includes construction and grow time for all 18-holes. Prior to this time, club management will provide added membership benefits during the closing period which will include reciprocals/special pricing at other local courses, offerings and games at our short game area (coming spring 2019) and practice facility areas.

A lot of tree and brush clearing is currently happening. Why is it happening now, and will it continue with the renovation project?

Kelly and his staff have been doing a lot of clearing and tree work, weather permitting, the last couple of months. The main reason behind this work right now is to improve sunlight and air flow to the golf course. These are two major factors that help with keeping turf healthy and is especially important when caring for turf grass that is as old as ours. Clearing will continue with renovation with an eye on sunlight and air flow. The idea is for the course to feel more open and feel larger than the actual acreage. Also, this will allow us to have the course fit in with the natural habitat of the area – for example, beach, water, sand dunes, pines, etc.

Why is it so important to have USGA spec greens?

Currently our greens do not meet USGA (United States Golf Association) standards for greens. The big consideration with that is what you can't see, that is what is under the grass. A USGA green features a layered design that includes underground drainage pipes, a 4-inch layer of drainage gravel and a 12-inch layer of sand-based rootzone mix. The materials used to build a USGA green are carefully selected to withstand golfer and maintenance traffic, drain rapidly and provide an excellent growing environment for putting green turf.

I am concerned that due to this renovation project we will lose many members because of the course closure. Has this been considered?

Retention of membership is always top of mind and our hope would be to retain all members throughout this club enhancement. A larger concern would be not fixing course conditions and the golf course deteriorating over time. Not acting at all would lead to major member loss that would be more difficult to overcome. By acting now, we are strengthening the club for the future, building our reputation in the local community and most importantly - providing a better member experience.

What will this renovation cost me and will I be assessed?

The financial position of the club as it relates to this project has been vetted by our management team, Finance Committee and professional management company. We feel confident about how this project will be funded through a combination of available funds and incurred debt. Most importantly, our financial plan for this project will be setting the club up for future financial success. Due to the financial stability of the club and the project plans, there are no plans to access our equity members.

Will initiation fees and monthly dues go up as a result of the renovation?

Based on market and customer analysis, the club's membership committee in coordination with the finance committee is looking at a potential increase in initiation upon re-opening of the golf course. Members' dues will not increase as a direct result of the renovation; however, modest increases in dues can be expected as in the past. (club dues have a modest increase typically every year and/or every other year)

With a multi-million-dollar commitment and expenditure, can we bring this to a vote among the Equity members?

In keeping with the club ByLaws set in place by our members, based on the operational need of this project and how it will be funded, it will not go before the equity membership for a vote. With that said, we will be hosting a series of town halls and will have several forms of communication to ensure all questions and concerns are addressed and answered as it is vital to have the members involved.

SRGBC was in very serious financial shape only years back. Aren't we in danger of that happening again should the economy change and member numbers drop or tourist traffic is down?

There has been much consideration for all these things. While there are always risks, based on the economy predictions and financial predications of our club, we strongly feel this project is a necessity for the future growth and development of our club. By not fixing the inherent issues and maintaining our product, we would be potentially putting our club at future financial risk.

How can we justify such a huge golf course redesign with the following concerns at our club (Vue's small kitchen, need for more activities space, need for more office space, clubhouse improvements needed, improvements to Mulligans needed, etc.)?

The board of directors and management team agrees there are needs in many areas of the club. Those needs and future needs will forever be a part of the planning committee's goals. With that said, the board of directors (in collaboration with the planning committee, finance committee and management team) has placed the course renovation as priority #1 on the 5-10 year plan at the club due to the operational need. It doesn't end here; however. As we are financially able, our members can expect to see improvements and future plans beyond the course renovation as a part of the 5-10 year plan.

Please email any questions you may have after reading this to the General Manager Michael Bickett at michael@santarosaclub.com