

Hermann Park Conservancy Frequently Asked Questions: **Hermann Park Golf Course Renovation**

What is changing about the Hermann Park Golf Course?

The course is being reimagined as an 18-hole course with the front 9 consisting of all par 3's and the back being a regulation-length course measuring 3,405 yds, allowing golfers to play the front 9 and/or back 9 either individually or consecutively. This modern layout reflects both the historic character of the site and the spatial constraints of its urban location, maximizing playability within the available land.

Why is the course being reconfigured from the existing 18-hole layout?

Hermann Park Golf Course sits on a uniquely small and historic site, measuring only 5,700 yards—one of the shortest regulation courses in Houston. With the addition of an expanded driving range, new clubhouse, and maintenance facilities, the traditional 18-hole layout is no longer feasible within the available land. The redesigned course, featuring a par-3 front nine and a championship-length back nine, preserves 18 holes while creating a more flexible, modern experience for golfers of all skill levels. This configuration reflects national trends in urban golf design that prioritize accessibility, environmental efficiency, and faster play. Importantly, the United States Golf Association (USGA) has confirmed that the new layout qualifies for official score posting and handicap tracking, ensuring Hermann Park remains a sanctioned and competitive course within Houston's municipal golf network.

What new features will be added?

The renovation includes a double-decker driving range, new First Tee programming facilities including an Adaptive Golf program being developed by Astros Golf Foundation and Texas Children's Hospital for individuals currently being treated for, recovering from, or living with injury, chronic disease or disability, which is a key addition given the course's proximity to the Texas Medical Center—and a new clubhouse that will feature a restaurant, pro shop, and offices. The existing clubhouse is expected to be repurposed as part of a new maintenance facility.

What other improvements are being made as part of this project?

The golf course renovation is part of a broader set of interconnected Park projects, including:

- The restoration of, and improvement to, the two-mile walking loop that encircles the course, addressing issues like erosion, pitting, and proximity to traffic.
- The Greenway Trail, which bisects the course, will include a new pedestrian path, dedicated bike trail, and a tunnel beneath South MacGregor Drive to safely connect Park users to the Bayou Greenways network along adjacent Brays Bayou.
- The reversion of some acreage from the existing course back to parkland. We are currently assessing this area—adjacent to the Judson Robinson Jr. Community

Center—for sports field development. This component of the project is still in the early planning stages.

How will I access the new golf course?

Given the traffic congestion along Hermann Park Drive, the primary entrance will remain on South MacGregor Drive for improved accessibility and safety and to reduce additional vehicles on Hermann Park Drive, the Park's only interior road.

What about parking?

We understand that parking is a frequent concern—some say there's not enough, others worry we're paving over too much green space. In reality, the renovation includes a modest and strategic addition of approximately 150–200 parking spaces, primarily in a new lot serving the relocated golf course clubhouse.

This new parking will help address long-standing challenges, especially on busy weekends and event days, without compromising the park's overall green footprint. And to be clear: the golf course is not being turned into a parking lot. It remains an 18-hole public course, with improved access and amenities.

Who will manage the golf course?

Currently operated by a private contractor, the course will transition to management under the Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) as part of the renovation plan.

How is the Golf Course renovation being managed, and what is the role of the Astros Golf Foundation?

The renovation is being managed through a three-party collaboration between the Astros Golf Foundation (AGF), the Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD), and Hermann Park Conservancy (HPC). AGF brings deep expertise in golf course redevelopment and is serving as the lead project manager and joint fundraising partner. HPARD will assume long-term management of the course once construction is complete. HPC is supporting through fundraising and project coordination as well as through project management in areas where the course interfaces with parkland.

This structure ensures that the project benefits from the AGF's successful track record, most notably their transformation of Memorial Park Golf Course, while remaining grounded in the city's public park system and supported by HPC's mission-driven stewardship. Together, the partners are designing and delivering a course that is accessible, environmentally sustainable, and tailored to serve a broad range of Houstonians, including youth and adaptive golfers.

What makes this partnership significant for Houston?

This collaboration brings together the strengths of a respected sports foundation, a major city department, and a dedicated nonprofit conservancy. The result will be a state-of-the-

art, publicly accessible golf course that honors Hermann Park's history, enhances recreational opportunities, and supports future generations of golfers through programs like First Tee. The partners are committed to ensuring that Hermann Park's historic course becomes a model of inclusivity, sustainability, and excellence in public golf.

What is being done to preserve the natural environment—and what will happen to the trees?

The renovation is grounded in a comprehensive commitment to environmental sustainability, water conservation, and ecological health.

Currently, the golf course uses approximately *66 million gallons of potable water per year*—a level that is no longer acceptable for a public park. Addressing the increasing concerns about the availability across the state of drinking water, the project will install a stormwater capture and reuse system to eliminate reliance on drinking water for irrigation.

The project also includes a full tree assessment led by certified arborists and an environmental consulting team. The goals are to:

- Preserve healthy, native trees wherever possible
- Transplant viable trees to other areas within Hermann Park
- Remove only those trees that are invasive, failing, or pose a hazard
- Plant hundreds of new trees to ensure a net environmental gain

Importantly, the iconic heritage live oaks that line the walking loop are a focus on the plan. They will be further protected through improved soil health, the planting of a native understory, and the creation of a buffer zone between the trees, pathways, and adjacent roads. These steps are essential to ensuring the longevity of some of the most beloved trees in the Park.

Together, these efforts reflect a holistic and forward-looking approach to making Hermann Park more resilient, sustainable, and welcoming for generations to come

How much will the project cost?

The estimated cost of the golf course renovation is \$30 million. This does not include additional improvements, such as the Greenway Trail and Loop renovation nor the other associated projects made possible by the renovation such as the recreational fields.

What is the historical significance of the Hermann Park Golf Course?

Hermann Park Golf Course is recognized as one of the earliest integrated municipal golf courses in the United States. The renovation will ensure this story is told through a permanent interpretive display inside the new clubhouse, as a meaningful part of the course's legacy.

How can the community get involved?

This project is a renovation of an existing golf course, and is not a reimagining of the space for a new use. The land's limited size, environmental needs, and operational requirements dictated much of the layout. That said, there are many components where community input matters such as trail features, ways to honor and interpret the course's history, clubhouse programming, and other visitor amenities. A public open house, ongoing updates, and direct outreach to project partners are opportunities to share ideas and help shape these elements.

Why is the new course layout different from before?

The new design keeps Hermann Park Golf Course as an 18-hole facility, with a par-3 front nine and championship-style back nine. This configuration made it possible to fit critical improvements within the limited footprint, including a much larger driving range, stormwater reuse infrastructure, new clubhouse and maintenance facility, as well as dedicated facilities for youth and adaptive golf. These changes strengthen the course's long-term sustainability and increase access for more players.

Will the new layout still allow for tournament play?

Yes. The course will continue to host tournaments, charity events, and youth competitions. The combination of par-3 and regulation holes enables creative tournament formats, from nine-hole scrambles to full-length championship play, while also supporting First Tee and adaptive golf programming. The flexibility of the design broadens—not limits—the kinds of events that can take place and aligns with national trends toward shorter, faster formats that welcome more players into the game.

Will the course still host tournaments and charity events?

Yes. The renovated course will continue to support tournaments, leagues, and charity events, with expanded event spaces and amenities to make them even more successful.

How will the project support young golfers and players with disabilities?

The renovated course will serve not just as a place to play, but as a platform for expanding access, education, and inclusion in golf. A new partnership with the First Tee program will bring structured, character-building golf instruction to youth in the area—many of whom may be picking up a club for the first time.

In addition, the course will offer adaptive golf programming, designed specifically for children and young people of all abilities. Given Hermann Park's proximity to the Texas Medical Center, this is a meaningful and deliberate step toward creating a more inclusive recreational space for the broader community.

These programs will be supported by new facilities, including a driving range, practice areas, and a new clubhouse with indoor space for instruction and community events.

How does this project benefit Houston's larger municipal golf system?

In addition to restoring one of Houston's most historic public courses, the Hermann Park project strengthens the entire citywide golf network. The new double-decker driving range is expected to generate significant revenue for HPARD's Special Golf Fund, which supports maintenance and improvement of other City-operated courses. By expanding both access and financial sustainability, Hermann Park's redevelopment helps modernize Houston's municipal golf system and ensures it continues to serve players citywide for generations to come.

What will happen to the people who work at the course now?

We know many golfers have come to know and appreciate the staff currently working at Hermann Park Golf Course. While BSL Golf Corp's contract will end, we expect that most of these employees will be offered the opportunity to continue working at the course under HPARD once the City assumes management. The goal is to make this a smooth transition from one employer to the next, retaining familiar faces and maintaining a welcoming experience for regular players.

Why does the project require closing the course?

The renovation involves major infrastructure and landscaping work that cannot be completed safely or effectively while the course remains open. This includes replacing the entire irrigation system, installing a stormwater capture and reuse system, rebuilding greens and fairways, expanding the driving range, reconfiguring the course layout, as well as building a new clubhouse and maintenance facility. Working within an active golf environment would significantly slow progress and increase costs. By closing the course, crews can work more efficiently and complete the improvements in the shortest possible timeframe. The City of Houston and Astros Golf Foundation are committed to reopening the course as soon as it is ready for safe, high-quality play.

Where can people play while Hermann Park Golf Course is under construction?

During construction, golfers will have access to several affordable public courses across Houston. While Memorial Park Golf Course is a high-quality option, we understand it may be priced out of reach for some regular users of Hermann Park. Fortunately, the City of Houston owns a number of accessible municipal courses that are priced similarly to Hermann Park Golf Course:

HPARD-Operated Public Golf Courses

- **Gus Wortham Park Golf Course** – 7200 Central St.
Restored historic course along Brays Bayou with affordable rates and strong community reviews. Managed by Houston Golf Association.
- **Sharpstown Park Golf Course** – 6600 Harbor Town Dr.
Known for its affordability and welcoming atmosphere for players of all skill levels.

- **Melrose Golf Course** – 401 E. Little York Rd.
A 9-hole neighborhood course with practice amenities—ideal for casual play or quick rounds.
- **Memorial Park Golf Course** – 1001 Memorial Loop Dr.
A premier PGA-caliber municipal course with broader appeal, though sometimes at a higher price point.

We are working closely with HPARD and local partners to ensure that clear signage and public communications help guide regular players to alternative options during the construction period.