

# Golf Course Audit

## Highland Park Country Club and Sunset Valley Golf Club

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## INTRODUCTION

The golf courses of Sunset Valley Golf Course (SVGC) and Highland Park Country Club (HPCC) can be viewed as significantly different golf facilities. As far as playability and the overall golf experience, they have numerous similarities. History appears more abundant at SVGC but a sense of maturity and classic design is also present at HPCC. Each course has a parkland style setting with modest bunkering, integrated water features and an array of vegetation that tightly line the majority of each golf hole. An evaluation of each golf course is provided below outlining the opinion of a golf course architect relating to the history, playability and potential of golf course.

## HISTORY

***Sunset Valley Golf Course*** – Construction of the course seems to have occurred in the late 1910's with the course opening to the public in 1921. Brian Green, CGCS has been instrumental in researching and presenting a fantastic display of the history of the golf course in the form of a wall display in the clubhouse pro shop area. This is a consistent reminder to the golfers (and Park District members) at SVGC that the grounds here have played host to many national events, qualifiers and tournaments that included legendary golfers, Walter Hagen and Tommy Armor who have helped shaped the sport.

Minor renovations and modifications have been made to the course over the courses 90 years and many of the original features, subtleties and strategies of the layout still remain today. One alteration that was made to the numbering of the holes should be reconsidered and discussed. The original starting hole of the course was the current 8<sup>th</sup> hole with the course progressing from there. This change was implemented because golfers were stopping at the clubhouse after their second hole and thus slowing play. As a result of this change, the new first hole (the original 3<sup>rd</sup> hole) is a longer par 4 with a water hazard down the left side. This hole can prove to be very challenging and may also slow the start of the round.

The largest modification to the current course's original intent and playability has been the implementation of detention areas (lakes) and the planting of trees. The water features have provided relief / storage for drainage and flooding while contributing to the strategy and aesthetics of the course. The additional trees are the result of the replacement of the large Elm population that were devastated by the Dutch Elm disease in the early 1970's. As was the case on many golf courses, several trees were planted to replace one or two large scale Elm trees that had died. These trees are now mature and have an impact on the playability, original design intent as well as agronomic playing conditions.

***Highland Park Country Club*** – Hoping to be one of the elite, private golf clubs in the Chicagoland area, the golf course and clubhouse were constructed at Highland Park Country Club in 1961. The course operated with pristine course conditions and full membership for

many years. As the golf business model in Chicago changed (private to public) the club failed to retain a full membership and as a result became financially strained. In 1992, the City of Highland Park and the Park District of Highland Park purchased the property and the City agreed to manage the golf facility through January 1, 2014.

In the late 1990's a substantial portion of the property was sold for the development of single family homes and a retirement center. As a result of this development, the golf course was substantially altered. The impacts included the re-routing and renovation of several golf holes as well as the development of a full scale practice facility to the west which remains heavily utilized.



*Circa 1994 image of Highland Park Country Club*

*Current image of Highland Park Country Club*

Unable to sustain a private club business model, the City of Highland Park converted to a public golf course in 2002. The course remains a viable golf option for the people of Highland Park including a clubhouse that previously served private club members, with banquet facilities and dining amenities.

## **PLAYABILITY / DESIGN**

***Sunset Valley Golf Course*** – The golf course has many characteristics of a 1920's eras course.

The earthmoving and shaping of the course is minimal with fill pads for greens and tees constructed by nearby cuts in the form of bunkers or lakes. The course is a shorter 6,484 yard par 72 but plays longer than the yardage with little elevation change, semi-hydric soils and heavily vegetated areas adjacent to fairways. The par 4's range from 341 to 418 yards; the par 3's play at 156, 160, 171 and 208 and the par 5's play at 497, 514, 511 and 516.

The golf course property is on a north – south axis. As a result, the vast majority of the golf holes play either directly north or directly south. With a limitation in providing an east west orientation that would play either into or with the prevailing winds, variation in hole lengths is highly recommended for golfer interest. A suggested range for the par 4's would be from 300 to 490 yards, the par 3's from 110 to 200+ yards and the par 5's from the current 497 to 560 yards. This variation in lengths in addition to the water and sand hazards allows the player to use “every club in their bag” creating a memorable experience. This is something the course currently lacks.

The hazards on the course in the form of water and sand bunkers are very prevalent throughout the course. Skokie River impacts the playability of two golf holes #6 and 11 while four lakes are strategically placed to catch errant shots. The existing 32 bunkers are strategically and visually impactful in most cases but further consideration should be given to ensure that each of these high cost golf course elements is properly positioned.

The overall aesthetics of the golf course are enhanced by the addition of naturalized areas spread throughout the course. These areas provide a native habitat while also adding a unique texture and color to the visible pallet. Further enhancement and expansion of these areas would continue to enhance the environmental impacts that the golf course has on the ecological system while providing a wonderful golf experience for the players.

***Highland Park Country Club*** – The 1960's golf course appears to have a combination of a classic design style with a modern approach to design. The 6,610 yard par 71 has the ability to challenge every level of golfer with its length, substantial amount of trees, several ponds and approximately 50 bunkers.

The golf holes at HPCC vary in length with the par 3's playing at 115, 165, 198 and 198, the par 4's range from 310 to 465 yards and the par 5's are 550, 583 and 587. Unfortunately a lot of the golf holes appear to be very similar despite their length variations. The first impression from the teeing area is often a tunneling affect provided by the dense vegetation (the 1990's renovated holes #12, 13 and 14 are slightly more open). The heavy tree population serves a valuable purpose as a safety buffer for the tightly positioned golf holes, especially the middle of the property including but not limited to holes 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17.

The renovated golf holes have a different “feel” to them than the original 1960's holes. This is not necessarily a deterrent for golfers. The series of lakes on the 4<sup>th</sup> hole, the large scale wetland on the 5<sup>th</sup> and the more open feel of the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> provide a much needed break in the middle of the round from the dense trees on the remainder of the holes.

The private club setting at the clubhouse “provides a country club setting on a daily fee course” - the desire of the many golf courses constructed during the golf boom of the 1980's.

## **TURF CONDITIONS / MAINTENANCE**

*Sunset Valley Golf Course* and *Highland Park Country Club* – The turf conditions appear to be very similar when comparing the two golf courses. Poa annua, a perennial bluegrass variety that develops in tightly mowed areas that will out-compete the bentgrass, has overtaken most of the tees, fairways and large portions of the putting greens. This does not necessarily mean that the quality of the playing surface is poor but it does play differently than pure bentgrass and is maintained differently.

Invasion of poa annua into these areas makes it very difficult and expensive to attempt to tightly mow this turf under stressed conditions such as heat or moisture. The poa annua plant needs extensive leaf blades to survive so mowing has to be less frequent and higher, yielding an undesirable playing surface. Another negative affect that poa annua can have on the playability or visual aspect of a golf course is the lack of definition it provides. The height of cut between the poa annua fairway and the poa annua / bluegrass rough can provide some visual separation between the two but when the color of the two turfs are identical, the separate cuts can visually blend together. This provides a less than favorable condition for golfers from an aesthetic point of view and affects the overall satisfaction of the golf experience.

The largest contributor to the negative impact on turf conditions at both golf courses are the substantial amount of trees. Closely planted trees can prevent sunlight and air movement to the turf, which makes the turf weak. Any cart or foot traffic on the weak turf can eliminate the turf completely and result in a very poor playing surface for the golfer. This weakened turf requires additional care by the maintenance staff and that adds to expenses.

Inconsistencies in playing conditions on the turf can occur on both golf courses due to the differences in growing mediums throughout the golf course. Several greens on each course have been renovated from a native soil base to a sand base. Water percolation, sub-surface air movement, compaction and nutrient retention result in varied turf care. This type of situation tends to require additional labor costs and spending.

The table below depicts a comparison in the 2011 turf care expenditures between the two golf courses. The data has been gathered in various methods and may not represent the precise expenditures but do appear to be similar to that of comparable courses in the area.

<b>MAINTENANCE PRACTICE</b>	<b>HIGHLAND PARK C.C.</b>	<b>SUNSET VALLEY G.C.</b>
Payroll	272,000	432,277
Benefits	80,000	157,416
Equipment Repair / Maintenance	23,000	20,506
Chemicals	51,000	40,271
Fertilizer	8,500	10,490
Fuel	23,000	28,347
Landscape & Maintenance	17,000	3,048

Sand / Topdressing	10,000	14,730
Seed	8,200	1,905
Shop Supplies	10,000	19,554
Utilities	N/A	24,341
Outsources and Miscellaneous	57,300	*65,858
2011 Budget	560,000	818,743

\*Includes \$51,463 for golf cart leases.

As expected with similar turf characteristics and similar vegetative cover, the required chemical and fertilizer budgets are very similar. 2011 was a challenging year for turf conditioning since significant rains were experienced during the hot humid summer. This situation required an extensive amount of chemical applications to prevent turf loss. Equipment repairs are above average for both courses which can be expected with the older fleet of machines that each carries. HPCC does lease some pieces of equipment whose cost is reflected above in Outsources and Miscellaneous.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

***Sunset Valley Golf Club*** – With a vast majority of the course being in the floodplain of the Skokie River, the golf courses drainage system serves as the lifeline for the turf. A fairly extensive piping system and pumping system is currently in place that moves the water off the golf course quickly and efficiently but improvements to this system should be made. Feature drainage in bunkers, greens and tees appears to be minimal with the exception of the USGA greens and recently rebuilt bunkers.

The irrigation system was newly installed in 2005 along with a new pump station and control. This system should be adequate for at least another 5 years before an irrigation audit should be performed to confirm its efficiency and general operations. The water sources of the Skokie River (primary) and the 8" city main line (alternate) are great attributes for the water system. Continued maintenance and performance evaluations of these two pumping systems should continue as long as they are an integral part of the system.

The nine (9) bridges on the property desperately need attention. The approaches are deteriorating, the decking is crumbling and further examination needs to be completed on the abutments in terms of their effectiveness and safety.

The current condition of the asphalt cart paths is good in most cases. Attention will, however, need to be given to them to retain a high quality from this point forward. The fact that they are continuous throughout the golf course is advantageous on wetter days for the golfers as well as the maintenance staff. Access to and from the cart paths should be reviewed to reduce current wear patterns in the turf. A consistent curb should also be considered to be installed around all greens and tee complexes.

***Highland Park Country Club*** – Nearly the entire golf course is situated in the floodplain or floodway of the Skokie River so the drainage system is a premium requirement to relieve

flooding water and heavy rains. HPCC also serves as a passageway for water attempting to drain into the river that stems from Exmoor Country Club. The protected forest area located to the north of the old practice area stores some runoff from the adjacent properties but further information should be obtained in terms of the flood and water storage capacity.

There are several internal drainage systems that pull water out of the swales and low spots on the golf course and discharge them either into the property's lakes or the Skokie River. Without having access to current as-builts of the system, it is difficult to assess its functionality. Further information should be obtained by an engineering firm including piping and structures currently existing on the golf course and their functionality.



*Drainage from HPCC to Skokie River*

The irrigation system appears to be original in most cases. As with the drainage system, there are no as-builts of the system so some information is being derived from discussions with current employees that deal with the system on a daily basis. The sprinkler heads themselves are antiquated and physically deteriorating. They are currently being replaced when needed but a budget to replace them all while increasing the quantity for better coverage should be in place over the next two years. The piping system appears to be original but currently minimal efforts are required to repair leaks or damage. Life expectancy of an irrigation piping system is 30-50 years. That system will be due for replacement or major repair in the near future. The pump station and control system from Rainbird are relatively new and should be adequate for several years. The water sources of the Skokie River (primary) and the city main line (alternate) should be continually maintained for efficient performance.

The cart paths are in moderate to good condition but will need continued attention. Many locations on the paths currently hold water and have substantial cracks. Cart ingress and egress points from fairways and tees should be reviewed as they relate to existing vegetation as significant wear patterns have been developed. Budgeting should include money for asphalt replacement over the next 5 years as well as the installation of consistent curbing around all greens and tee complexes.

## GOLF COURSE FEATURES

***Sunset Valley Golf Club*** - Through the course of time many of the features at SVGC have been renovated. As previously stated, nine (9) of the putting greens have been reconstructed to USGA Standards while the remaining nine (9) are original. In both cases, the shapes and sizes of the greens appear to have been altered. This however can be viewed as normal progression since operators of the greens mowers can lose as much as a ¼ to ½” of the putting surface every day if they are not extremely careful. Over a period of several years a green’s shape and size can change dramatically. The suggested primary improvements to the putting surfaces should be consistency of the growing mediums and re-capturing any lost green space that may have been previously established.

The bunkering on any golf course can define the personality and character of the course. The current bunkers at SVGC provide both strategic and penal value but lack visual and aesthetic value. Bunkers increase in size over time with the edging that is demanded to keep the turf from growing down into the sand. Eventually most bunkers become large ovals or circles that are unappealing characteristic to the bunkers at SVGC. Positioning of each hazard should be reviewed and all of the bunkers should be reconstructed with improved drainage, proper erosion control methods and new sand. The reconstruction would reduce maintenance requirements and improve aesthetics and playability.

The teeing areas at SVGC have improved as a result of reconstruction of holes #1, 4, 5 and 6. The shapes of the tees have also become consistent as a more square traditional look has been developed. Teeing ground improvements have been based on a Lohmann Designs Plan dated November 9, 2006. However, further examination of the course’s overall yardages (6,484, 6,093 and 5,297) may need to occur which would allow each level of golfer the opportunity to enjoy their round at SVGC.

***Highland Park Country Club*** - The original putting surfaces of the holes that were not involved in the renovation during the 1990’s have a tremendous amount of character and style. Just as with SVGC, the shapes and sizes have been greatly altered but could be restored with minimal effort.



*Hole #1 at HPCC*



The newer greens carry a similar style to the original but definitely have a slightly unique character to them. Consistency in growing medium and style are a challenge at HPCC and should be addressed.

The bunkering style is that of the late 60's era where reduced maintenance was the highest priority. Shapes were simple, slopes were gentle and ample room was provided around the bunkers to mow the grass with gang mowers pulled behind tractors. Advancements in construction technology and maintenance equipment have allowed the golf industry to become more creative and artistic with bunkers decreasing the labor costs. All of the bunkers at HPCC should be evaluated relative to their relevance to strategy, the handicap of the golfer and their visual impact.

The teeing grounds at HPCC are in need of dramatic improvement. Many of the tees are undersized for the amount of play they receive and inconsistent in shape and poorly positioned. Several of the back tees recently constructed are poorly positioned to adjacent holes (#4, 8 and 17), dangerous and significantly undersized as evidenced by the tire marks from the maintenance equipment attempting to cut the surfaces. All of the teeing grounds should be reviewed and potentially renovated at HPCC for consistency, functionality and playability.

## **TREES/VEGETATION**

***Sunset Valley Golf Course and Highland Park Country Club*** – The amount of trees at both golf courses has resulted in an unhealthy situation for the turfgrass and the playability of the course. The fairways for both courses have been reduced significantly in recent years as the trees planted in the late 1970's (as a result of the Dutch Elm Disease) are maturing and closing in on the playing areas. These trees do provide a much needed safety buffer between tightly placed golf holes, especially at HPCC, but thinning and selective clearing on each course should occur.



*Hole #9 at SVGC*



*Hole #1 at HPCC*

The infestation of the emerald ash borer should have a significant impact upon the ash population at both courses. SVGC is aggressively treating 50 ashes to prevent their loss of strategic value but anticipate the loss of +/-100 ash trees. SVGC also has a significant amount of willow trees that are approaching their life expectancy. Strong consideration will have to be

given to replacing some of these willows as they play an integral role in defining the strategy to some of the golf holes.

Safety has to be the highest priority when evaluating the removal of any tree on either of these courses. Health, quality, playability and underlying turf conditions would be the next criteria to evaluate.

## **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FACILITIES**

***Sunset Valley Golf Club*** – The golf course does not currently have a practice facility nor does the property allow for the development of one. The only option for some type of practice facility would be to develop the existing wooded area between the 6<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> holes.

***Highland Park Country Club*** – It is unfortunate that the current practice facility is not immediately adjacent to the clubhouse. However, the width of the property near the clubhouse does not permit a full size facility. The original practice field east of the 9<sup>th</sup> hole would have been adequate in the 1960's since very few people actually practiced before a round of golf. However, by today's player requirements it does not perform well. A potential use for the area would be a youth player academy that would focus on developing the golf skills of youth golfers. The area is accessible through the parking lot and is far enough from the clubhouse activities.

The 1990's practice facility that is currently operated by the City of Highland Park has potential to be one of the elite practice facilities in the state of Illinois. The site has ample amounts of space providing very creative practice targets for both short and long shots while the large teeing space has the potential for an all weather area that can be utilized in the winter months. The current short game practice area can be renovated to fully maximize the space to provide an ultimate short game experience.

One of the most positive aspects of the facility is the access from Skokie Boulevard. The signage to the facility should be greatly improved to fully maximize curb appeal.

## **GOLF COURSE STRUCTURES**

***Sunset Valley Golf Club*** – Unfortunately, the small size of the clubhouse does not permit the hosting of banquets or golf outings. However, the size of the clubhouse does minimize the cost of operations and overhead. Discussions may occur in regard to re-locating the clubhouse due to its challenging accessibility placing it on the north end near Central Road. Fortunately the golf course layout would accommodate such a move without a significant amount of renovation required. This option should be strongly considered if it is determined that a lack of accessibility is limiting this facility.

The turf care facility appears to be undersized and deteriorating at a very rapid pace. The storage of equipment outdoors is undesirable and can result in added equipment repair affecting the longevity of the machine. The quality of this building is very poor and reviewing the option of

exchanging locations with the park departments should occur. The parks department may have more flexibility with outdoor storage and accommodation of a smaller space.

The halfway house is a very well built structure that serves the purpose of shelter and vending. However, the infrastructure of the potable water line that feeds the building is currently a PVC pipe, not copper. This does not follow City Codes and should immediately be addressed.

***Highland Park Country Club*** – The clubhouse at HPCC was originally designed to deliver a private club experience. The layout and style reflects the character of the late 60's early 70's but remains a very functional building today with banquet capabilities and large golf outing options. The fact that the structure was expanded to accommodate additional Park District activities such as fitness, swimming and basketball is a positive since it maximizes the exposure to the golf course.

The turf care facility is an original structure as well that appears to serve the need of the turf care staff very well. The location of the facility impacts any future development of the practice facility to the east, but relocating the facility may not be financially feasible. A location near the public works building may be more appropriate with the occasional delivery of materials and ingress / egress of equipment.

## CONCLUSION

The residing golfers of the City of Highland Park and the Park District of Highland Park have been provided access to two reasonably priced and well maintained golf courses. Both courses, Highland Park Country Club and Sunset Valley Golf Course, offer a challenging but fair test of golf that involve strategy, good hazard placements, dense vegetation and interesting contours. The course conditions are generally good despite challenging budgets, a variety of growing mediums and heavy shade. Weather patterns and flooding can and will be the cause of any turf issues that arise on these heavily based poa annua turfs.

If the Park District of Highland Park were to decide to acquire Highland Park Country Club at the end of 2012 and operate both golf courses, it may be in their best interest to provide a varied golf experience with each course. One of the courses could remain a parkland style with dramatic bunkering and the other a more open modern links style experience. Sunset Valley Golf Course has larger safety buffers between each golf hole and thus gives more opportunity for a creative links type feel although some trees would need to remain for safety purposes. The golf holes could be thinned out of vegetation, bunkers renovated and a rolling links feel would be created with some minor grading within the limits of the floodplain guidelines. The original greens would be rebuilt to USGA standards, all greens re-seeded with a new variety of bentgrass and some tee work would be required. The costs for constructing these improvements can vary

dependent upon the final scope of work. A preliminary budget range of construction costs for **Sunset Valley Golf Club** would be:

**a) Site Preparation -**

Contractor mobilization, layout, clearing \$ 215,000 – 575,000

Site Preparation Breakdown	Mobilization	Layout and Staking	Clearing
<i>Minimum</i>	\$ 40,000	15,000	200 Trees
<i>Maximum</i>	\$ 65,000	20,000	600 Trees

NOTES: Mobilization is defined by the cost for the contractor to bring in people and equipment while also providing management throughout the project. Clearing is estimated at a cost of approximately \$800.00 per tree.

**b) Earthwork -**

Topsoil, earthmoving, shaping \$ 100,000 – 240,000

Earthwork Breakdown	Topsoil	Earthmoving	Shaping
<i>Minimum</i>	2,000 cubic yards	8,000 cubic yards	30 Days
<i>Maximum</i>	5,000 cubic yards	25,000 cubic yards	60 Days

NOTES: Minimum work for earthwork would include a small amount of tees, no greens, all bunkers and some fairway grading. Maximum would include most feature complexes and fairway grading throughout. Topsoil is estimated at \$4.00/cy and earthwork is \$6.00/cy while shaping is typically \$1,500.00 per day.

**c) Infrastructure -**

Drainage, Irrigation, Paths and Bridges \$ 450,000 – 875,000

Infrastructure Breakdown	Drainage	Irrigation	Cart Paths	Bridges
<i>Minimum</i>	\$ 65,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 50,000	3 Bridges Replaced – others repair only
<i>Maximum</i>	\$ 85,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 95,000	9 Bridges Replaced

NOTES: Drainage improvements are for golf course features such as bunkers and greens with some improvements to the fairway included in the maximum. Cart path work includes some repair of very poor areas and curbing included in the maximum budget only. Bridges are estimated at \$75,000 for new installation. Demolition of the existing bridges would need to be a separate cost.

d) **Feature Construction -**  
Greens, Tees and Bunkers

\$ 165,000 – 400,000

Feature Breakdown	Greens	Tees	Bunkers
<i>Minimum</i>	0 sq. feet	25,000 sq. feet	90,000 sq. feet
<i>Maximum</i>	54,000 sq. feet	50,000 sq. feet	90,000 sq. feet

NOTES: For the maximum costs of green and tee construction, the greens and tees that are currently not USGA or a sand mixture would be converted at a cost of \$4.25 per sq. feet for greens and \$1.10 per sq. feet for tees. All bunkering is anticipated to completed in both the minimum and maximum.

e) **Grassing -**

Seeding greens, tees, fairways and roughs \$ 100,000 – 200,000

Grassing Breakdown	Finish Shaping	Green Grassing	Tee Grassing	Fairway Grassing	Rough / Native Grassing
<i>Minimum</i>	12 acres	0 greens	25,000 sq. feet	2 acres	9 acres
<i>Maximum</i>	40 acres	18 greens (110,000 sf)	50,000 sq. feet	15 acres	20 acres

NOTES: The maximum cost for green grassing reflects grassing of all 18 holes (110,000 sq. feet) to one consistent turf species at an estimated cost of \$60,000. The rough grassing reflects mostly disturbed areas around improved features and does include the converting of 9 existing rough acres into naturalized prairie areas under the maximum cost estimate.

**Total Preliminary Budget Cost Range - \$ 1,030,000 – 2,290,000**

At Highland Park Country Club the goal would be to preserve the parkland style of course with the major changes in aesthetics to the bunkers and improved teeing grounds. The renovation costs would include but may not be limited to: the removal and maintenance of several trees, renovation to all tee complexes, converting the remaining original greens to USGA standards, re-seeding all greens to an improved bentgrass turfgrass while recapturing lost pin locations, and converting the bunkers to a more dramatic style that can also retain a minimal maintenance requirement. Additional drainage improvements and extensive irrigation upgrades would also be included. The estimated construction costs for the aforementioned improvements to **Highland Park Country Club** would be as follows:

a) **Site Preparation -**

Contractor mobilization, clearing \$ 215,000 – 485,000

Site Preparation Breakdown	Mobilization	Layout and Staking	Clearing
<i>Minimum</i>	\$ 40,000	15,000	200 Trees
<i>Maximum</i>	\$ 65,000	20,000	500 Trees

NOTES: Mobilization is defined by the cost for the contractor to bring in people and equipment while also providing management throughout the project. Clearing is estimated at a cost of approximately \$800.00 per tree.

**b) Earthwork -**

Topsoil, earthmoving, shaping \$ 75,000 – 125,000

<b>Earthwork Breakdown</b>	<b>Topsoil</b>	<b>Earthmoving</b>	<b>Shaping</b>
<i>Minimum</i>	500 cubic yards	6,000 cubic yards	25 Days
<i>Maximum</i>	2,000 cubic yards	8,000 cubic yards	45 Days

NOTES: The minimum earthwork would include renovation to all tees, no greens, all bunkers and some fairway grading. The maximum estimate would include all tees, all non-USGA green complexes, some fairway grading and all bunkers. Topsoil is estimated at \$4.00/cy and earthwork is \$6.00/cy while shaping is typically \$1,500.00 per day.

**c) Infrastructure -**

Drainage, Irrigation, Paths and Bridges \$ 360,000 – 1,845,000

<b>Infrastructure Breakdown</b>	<b>Drainage</b>	<b>Irrigation</b>	<b>Cart Paths</b>
<i>Minimum</i>	\$ 65,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 45,000
<i>Maximum</i>	\$ 150,000	\$ 1,600,000	\$ 95,000

NOTES: Drainage improvements are typically for feature improvements and some fairway drainage. The maximum estimated costs would include a recommended small pumping system to move the water off the golf course quicker. The irrigation system repairs under the minimum costs include replacing old sprinklers and adding new ones in deficient areas. The maximum irrigation cost represents a nearly entire new system. Cart path work includes some repair of very poor areas in both minimum and maximum estimates with curbing installed at greens and tees for the maximum price.

**d) Feature Construction -**

Greens, Tees and Bunkers \$ 230,000 – 630,000

<b>Feature Breakdown</b>	<b>Greens</b>	<b>Tees</b>	<b>Bunkers</b>
<i>Minimum</i>	0 sq. feet	112,000 sq. feet	85,000 sq. feet
<i>Maximum</i>	94,680 sq. feet	112,000 sq. feet	85,000 sq. feet

NOTES: The variance in the range of costs is reflected in the conversion of the non-USGA greens to USGA recommendations for consistent sub-soils in the greens. All tees and all bunkers would be renovated in both scenarios.

e) **Grassing -**

Seeding greens, tees, fairways and roughs    \$ 205,000 – 305,000

<b>Grassing Breakdown</b>	<b>Finish Shaping</b>	<b>Green Grassing</b>	<b>Tee Grassing</b>	<b>Fairway Grassing</b>	<b>Rough</b>
<i>Minimum</i>	12 acres	0 greens	112,000 sq. feet	1 acres	9 acres
<i>Maximum</i>	27 acres	18 greens (120,000 sf)	112,000 sq. feet	5 acres	18 acres

NOTES: The maximum cost estimate for green grassing reflects grassing of all 18 holes (120,000 sq. feet) to one consistent turf species at an estimated cost of \$66,000. The remainder of the grassing would consist of repairing the disturbance from the renovation to the bunkers, tees and some fairway grading.

**Total Preliminary Budget Cost Range - \$ 1,085,000 – 3,390,000**

If the Park District of Highland Park were to decide to acquire Highland Park Country Club and choose to operate only one of the courses, the decision of which could to eliminate would indeed be a difficult one. The decision would have to strongly rely on current cash flow as well as the potential of inside and outside revenue at each facility.

From a golf experience and architectural standpoint, the golf course that would remain must offer the most opportunity for enjoyment to every level of golfer while also providing a memorable experience that makes the player want to return. Currently both golf courses lack that memorability and the way to provide it is with strong aesthetics, risk/reward strategy and sound turf conditions. Of the two golf courses, the piece of property that offers the spatial opportunities to renovate the golf course and provide these traits is Sunset Valley Golf Course.

The course renovation should build on the sites positive attributes while taking advantage of some of the open areas adjacent to the existing golf holes. This renovation would need to be accompanied by a commitment to a higher level of maintenance by the Park District. The ideal finished product would still remain an affordable, challenging yet fun golf course that every level of golfer would enjoy and want to play regularly.

In looking at the SVGC golf facility as a whole and as a business, there are a few challenges that are difficult to overcome: 1) access to the golf course clubhouse is logistically challenging, 2) the size and functionality of the clubhouse does not promote outside revenue such as banquets or even golf outings that can be very profitable, 3) the maintenance facility is antiquated and in very poor condition and 4) the lack of a player development facility (i.e. practice range, short game area) does not build players for future generations.

In an attempt to solve these challenging issues, the Park District may want to consider a few options that would come as a large investment with a potential of a long term yield. The first would be relocating the clubhouse to the north portion of the property with access off of Central Road. The location provides better ‘drive by’ exposure while also allowing for a new design that

can optimize revenue generating streams. A clubhouse such as the Wilmette Golf Course's new facility may be a good example of the desired structure with its 22,000 square feet size, banquet facility that can sit up to 150 people, grill style restaurant and indoor golf cart storage. The cost to construct that particular building was approximately \$7,000,000. However recent structures such as the 16,000 square foot clubhouse at Bowes Creek Country Club for the City of Elgin cost approximately \$3,650,000 and the 15,000 square foot clubhouse at Thunderhawk Golf Club for the Lake County Forest Preserve was approximately \$2,000,000. The differences in costs can vary greatly with the site preparation, indoor components (furniture and fixtures) and parking requirements.

If the clubhouse were to be relocated, it may also be prudent to open up the entire east property boundary for golf course improvements by removing the Parks Department equipment storage facility. This of course can only be done with proper approvals and the availability of another facility to accept the equipment.

The existing maintenance facility has convenient access off of central road and is somewhat centrally located on the golf course, but is in extremely poor condition. Ash from the old dump is still present in the air and throughout the facility creating a poor work environment for those that remain in the building. A proper facility should have storage space for all golf course operations equipment, adequate space for outdoor dry material storage (such as sands, gravels, etc) and mechanical operations for repairs and maintenance of every piece of owned or leased equipment. An estimated cost for a typical 8,000 – 10,000 square foot building include: \$600,000 for the structure, \$70-100,000 for FFE (lifts, racks, shelves) and \$200-250,000 for outdoor components such as rinse racks, fueling stations and storage. These costs do not include any site work or reclamation of the ash pit.

In regard to the practice facility, the entire property has been reviewed for the potential of a standard 10-13 acre player development facility to be constructed. The most optimistic situation would be to relocate the current maintenance facility to the Parks Department equipment storage facility on the east side of the property and construct a practice facility at that the current maintenance location. Unfortunately, this location does have limited space and would require high netting surrounding the entire facility and a maximum of a 150 yard shot from the tee to a designated target. This option does not seem very desirable but the Park District would need to decide if this is an acceptable solution.

If feasible, the Park District could retain the practice facility at Highland Park Country Club only and operate it as a family friendly state of the art player development facility. Renovations to the facility would create a sense of practicing on a real golf course with all variations of shot potentials present. The short game practice area would be preserved and improved to allow for mastery of the most challenging aspects of the game of golf.

This type of growth at Sunset Valley Golf Course would come at a significant cost. A cost / benefit analysis would have to be developed to fully appreciate the long term potential of such a large investment.