

APPENDIX A: COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS OF ROCK CREEK PARK GOLF COURSE
ROCK CREEK PARK GOLF COURSE REHABILITATION
NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 5, 2024

Over the last several months, the National Park Service (NPS) and National Links Trust (NLT) have engaged in community outreach efforts with various groups and individuals. One result of these efforts is the development of an alternative proposal for the Rock Creek Park Golf Course by a community group. The NPS and NLT commend those responsible for this alternative proposal for their creative thinking and engagement throughout the process.

This document compares the elements of the alternative proposal with the considerations that underlie the NPS/NLT design and identifies areas where the alternative proposal does not accomplish the major goals of the project or follow important recommendations from the Cultural Landscape Report (CLR). The analysis is not comprehensive in nature, but intended to illustrate some of the issues with the alternative proposal for the Rock Creek Park Golf Course rehabilitation.

Nine Hole Regulation Golf Course

NPS/NLT Proposal: Restoration of nine historic, William Flynn-designed holes; reconstruction of golf course infrastructure (including greens, tees, bunkers, irrigation system, etc) to address deferred maintenance; tree removal to address deferred maintenance where trees have encroached into historic hole corridors, inhibiting playability for golfers and the ability to grow/maintain turfgrass.

Alternative Proposal: Continued operation of the golf course in its current state using nine historic, William Flynn-designed holes (two holes of which are currently closed today due to lack of sunlight); minimal tree removal; no investment in golf course infrastructure.

NPS/NLT Plan Considerations:

1. Address decades of deferred maintenance
 - a. **Accomplish NLT's lease requirements** - NLT's lease with NPS requires it to invest in capital projects that address deferred maintenance at each of the courses. At Rock Creek Park Golf Course, the deferred maintenance includes all of the golf course infrastructure, including greens, tees, bunkers, irrigation system, cart paths, etc. as well as the encroaching trees which negatively affect growing conditions, narrow historic playing corridors, decrease playability and change historic viewsheds.
 - b. **Follow CLR recommendations to restore original hole corridors in order to improve growing conditions and increase playability** - the CLR recommends that the course "reclaim the former expanse of the fairways and remove encroaching woody vegetation to the greatest practical extent in support of improved playability."

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- c. **Remove invasive trees, shrubs and vines** - invasive removal improves tree and forest health while improving turf growing conditions near the edges of hole corridors.
- d. **Remove trees that pose a safety hazard to golf course users** - identify and remove trees (dead or poor condition) near enough to hole corridors that could pose a safety risk to golfers.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **Does not address the core deferred maintenance issue of tree encroachment** - while the alternative plan aims to present a “well-maintained regulation 9-hole course”, it does not address the narrow hole corridors, which is the root cause for the golf course’s poor turf conditions and current lack of play. The plan proposes to continue operating the golf course with the corridors as they are currently, which has not worked for decades.
 - **Invasive removal alone is not enough to create the required sunlight and airflow for improved golf course conditions.** The need for tree removal to accomplish this necessity was not determined by NLT alone. It was a conclusion reached by the CLR and by agronomic experts engaged to examine the conditions of the course. For example, a 2024 report on the Rock Creek Park Golf Course prepared by the USGA Green Section states that *“bermudagrass - [which constitutes the playing surface on the course] - requires a minimum of 8 hours of sunlight. As the trees have grown taller and wider each year, sunlight duration has greatly decreased and deterioration of turf quality has ensued. Our visit was during the middle of the day when the sun is the highest in the sky giving maximum sunlight penetration. Unfortunately, we observed many shaded areas which need to be remediated for a successful renovation and playable golf course. Simply put, the tree lines need to be pushed away from the playing corridors to increase sunlight.”*
 - **The narrow hole corridors left over in the alternative plan perpetuate the playability issues that cause golfers to stay away from the course.** From the same USGA Green Section 2024 report:
“Rock Creek [Park] Golf Course is accessible to the public which is an excellent opportunity for the community members to enjoy outdoor physical activity. These types of golf courses facilitate a high volume of golf rounds with many of them beginners or having intermediate level skills. Like me, these golfers do not hit the ball straight and need wide corridors to play the game which is not offered on many holes at Rock Creek [Park Golf Course]. This was evident by the empty parking lot as the golf course is currently not playable for the community. Minor tree management will not change this.”
 - Adequately addressing the deferred tree maintenance associated with the hole corridors proposed by **the alternative plan would require thousands of trees to be removed** in order to achieve adequate sunlight

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for turf growth and playability for golfers. This differs from the alternative plan which states only 20 trees would need to be removed and 12 trees pruned.

- The alternative proposal suggests mowing/seeding of the holes to enhance playing surfaces throughout the course, but those efforts will not be successful without extensive tree removal (as evidenced by NLT's own efforts to do the same over the last four years).
 - **Does not address deferred maintenance related to golf course infrastructure** - based on the estimated costs cited, the alternative plan does not account for the greens, tees, bunkers and cart paths needing to be rebuilt. Golf courses are like any other built environment and require cyclic maintenance and capital investment in order to maintain their functionality. The golf course infrastructure at Rock Creek Park Golf Course has not received such reinvestment in decades, resulting in the deferred maintenance, poor conditions and lack of play we see today.
 - **Does not remove trees that are safety hazards** - trees that are dead or in poor condition and close to golf hole corridors pose a significant risk to users in an active recreation environment like the golf course.
 - **Understates costs** - the alternative states that renovating the golf course would cost approximately \$3.5M (including the irrigation/cistern infrastructure), however the actual costs to address deferred maintenance would be almost double that total:
 - Bringing greens, tees and bunker work to a modern construction standard for the nine hole regulation course would run approximately \$1.5M
 - Irrigation/cistern infrastructure, including fairway irrigation (which the course currently does not have) is approximately \$3M
 - Invasive and tree removal to re-establish hole corridors is at least \$1-1.5M (note: the invasive and limited tree removal in the alternative proposal would be at least \$500k).
2. Restore a playable, contiguous nine hole routing of William Flynn-designed golf holes
- a. **Retain the two primary landscape settings of the historic golf course** - the proposed routing incorporates holes from both the more open, pastoral front nine holes as well as the forested back nine holes of William Flynn's original design
 - b. **Represent the historical evolution of the golf course on the property** - the proposed routing includes the two holes (the proposed first and sixth) that date back to the original nine holes designed by Flynn on the property in 1923 before the course was expanded to 18 holes in 1927;
 - c. **Address golfer complaints about the current course** - Consistently throughout the planning process, golfers complained a) about poor turf conditions and b) that the current golf course is too easy for advanced players because of its short length and too hard for novice players because of its narrowness. The proposed routing adds length for advanced players using the back tees while increasing width for beginners. The restored green complexes, recapturing Flynn's design and

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constructed by Gil Hanse, will be fun and engaging for players of all ability levels.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **Does not include the historic first hole** - not including the first hole, which dates back to Flynn’s original 1923 design, loses an important connection to the architectural history of the golf course and negatively affects the historic viewshed from the clubhouse area looking south.
 - **Proposed first tee is far from the clubhouse** - the alternative first tee location is over 100 yards from (and not visible from) the clubhouse, which would make it difficult to manage operationally and negatively affect the intimacy of the current/historical golf course relationship to the clubhouse area.
 - **Does not address golfer complaints** - narrow hole corridors will continue to cause poor turf conditions, remain overly challenging for beginner and intermediate golfers and be unrepresentative of the original William Flynn design.
3. Reduce the impacts of tree removal as much as possible while addressing deferred maintenance and safety.
- a. **Minimize the number of regulation-length holes in the forested section of the property** - full length holes (par 4s and par 5s) require turfgrass coverage throughout 300-600 yard long hole corridors at a 40+ yard width, which in the forested section of the Rock Creek Park Golf Course property necessitates significant tree removal in order to recapture the full original corridor widths and the necessary sunlight exposure. Par 3s, on the other hand, only require turfgrass for a total length of about 50 yards around greens and tees, allowing tree removal to be much more targeted. Limiting the number of regulation-length par 4 and par 5 holes in the forested section to just one hole (the proposed 7th hole), reduces the total tree removal required to address deferred maintenance significantly. The proposed plan also includes two par 3s in the forested section of the regulation-length nine hole routing and repurposes two other forested hole corridors for par 3s incorporated in the Par Three course routing.
 - b. **Introduce native meadow habitat while respecting the historic landscape** - the proposed golf course routing does not utilize two of William Flynn’s original hole corridors, which are designated to be planted as pollinator meadow. Elsewhere on the course, native meadows are incorporated to serve as a buffer between the golf course and the surrounding forest and streams.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **Includes three full-length holes in the forested section of the property** - which will require hundreds of trees to be removed on those holes in order to address deferred maintenance and achieve the necessary sunlight/airflow and corridor width for playable conditions. **The total tree removals required to make the alternative 6th and 7th holes work would equal or exceed the tree removal required for NPS/NLT’s entire Par Three course routing.**

Driving Range

NPS/NLT Proposal: 48 Bay Driving Range using the existing 9th and 10th hole corridors; 24 bays on each of a two level structure connected to the clubhouse on the east end and the driving range pavilion on the west end; lights for use during some evening hours; covered/shaded bays on lower level.

Alternative Proposal: 30 Bay Driving Range using the existing 1st and 2nd hole corridors with mobile canopy for shade; bays on one level, on turf, with mats; netting to contain golf balls; no lighting.

NPS/NLT Plan Considerations:

1. Uses the natural topography of the site to minimize negative visual and environmental impacts
 - a. **No large nets to contain golf balls** - because the range faces uphill into bowl-shaped topography framed by vegetation, no nets are required to contain golf balls (the proposal does include a very small, 10 foot high net along the farm road to protect pedestrians on the proposed eco-trail, which will tuck in well under the tree line to avoid adverse effects to the golf course landscape)
 - b. **No tree removal** - the proposed range site is already open and does not require any impacts to trees
 - c. **Additional tree planting** - Opportunity to plant a significant number of new trees around the border of the range location
 - d. **Preserves historic viewsheds** - placing the range in the center of the property preserves the historic view corridors looking north and south from the clubhouse that are specifically called out by the CLR
 - e. **Structure that fits the landscape** - two level range connects two hills in the center of the site, allowing the range to sit low in the landscape and preserve views through the structure from the south.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **Requires extensive and massive netting** - the proposed alternative plays downhill into a space that a) is too small for a driving range to contain balls without nets, b) has terrain that falls away to the edges of the range boundaries and c) is immediately adjacent to the 9th hole on the golf course creating a major safety concern; this would require the installation of nets 150 feet tall or higher to contain balls within the range boundaries.
 - NOTE: A comparable municipal facility in Florida recently installed nets at heights up to 150 feet tall on a completely flat site for containment and safety purposes. Given the topography of the proposed alternative site at Rock Creek Park Golf Course, netting would most likely need to be higher, in the 200 foot range.

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- **Negatively impacts the historic viewshed and golf course** - a huge net would divide the space between the current first and last holes on the golf course, destroying a viewshed specifically called out as important in the CLR; the first hole, one of only two holes on the current golf course that dates back to the original Flynn nine-hole course design (later expanded to 18 by Flynn), would be lost to the range.
 - **Not bird friendly** - nets that catch golf balls cannot be made friendly to birds and their proposed locations - immediately adjacent to the surrounding forest edge - is particularly disruptive to their habitat.
2. Emphasizes accessibility
- a. **Space for community partners and programming** - the range design specifically carves out space for NLT's community partners and internal programming (connection to indoor classrooms, driving range pavilion, etc)
 - b. **Access during non-work hours** - lights at our driving range (that notably have no light spillage into adjacent neighborhoods) allow people who otherwise would not be able to play golf during daylight hours to have access in the evening and night during spring, fall and winter
 - c. **ADA accessible** - each of the two levels of the proposed driving range are ADA accessible

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **No adjoining facilities for community partners and programming** - the alternative location for the range does not connect to any indoor or covered space that would be needed for community partners (First Tee - Greater Washington, DC, etc.) or other NLT programming
 - **No access to golf during non-work hours** - during spring/fall/winter golfers would not have access to the range after work hours
 - **Questionable ADA access** - the topography where the proposed alternative range bays are located has significant slope over which it would be difficult to achieve ADA accessibility without building retaining walls or some other type of structure
3. Appropriate sizing and economic impact
- a. **Range size that the site and the market can support** - the 48-bay range design incorporates input from Troon, analysis of the historical performance of the East Potomac and Langston driving ranges, the needs of our community partners and programs and the spatial/visual considerations important to a historic site.
 - i. NOTE: The proposed Rock Creek range has less than half the total bays as East Potomac and the same general number of bays as the Langston range.
 - b. **Economic impact that drives programming and maintenance** - the very high-margin range revenue, of which approximately 20% comes during lighted usage, will facilitate both community programming and the long-term maintenance of the diverse vegetative areas on the property, help NLT accomplish

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its subsequent rehabilitation projects at Langston and East Potomac, and allow for money to be set aside for capital improvements in the future so that the facility remains in good shape throughout the life of the lease and beyond.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **Range bays take up more space** - the 30 bays proposed in the “more modest-sized” alternative plan would actually take up more linear space on the site than the 24 bays-per-level two-level range in NLT’s plan
- **Large amount of grading required** - the proposed range bays would be located on topography that slopes significantly, requiring either a) an enormous amount of grading and retaining walls/structure to make level or b) a number of smaller terraces built into the hillside that would make ADA access challenging and increase the amount of linear space used by the range
- **No connectivity to the Food & Beverage (F&B) program** - the range would be located too far away from the clubhouse to adequately serve food and drinks to range users, which makes for a worse range experience for users
- **Understates costs** - the alternative proposal states the cost of the new range would be \$20k for grading/mats and \$60k for a professional grade canopy. The actual costs of the proposed range would be at least \$3-5 million
 - **The proposed net would cost at least \$2 million**
 - A professional grade canopy for 30 bays would cost \$200-400k
 - The grading of the range bays and associated infrastructure would be significantly more complicated and expensive than projected

Par Three Course

NPS/NLT Proposal: a nine hole par three course using two of the more forested back nine corridors and two of the green sites from William Flynn’s design; start and finish near the clubhouse.

Alternative Proposal: a four hole “par 3 mini practice course” on the east side of the property; remote start and finish to the course away from the clubhouse; no tree removal; repurpose three existing greens (two original William Flynn green sites) and build one new green.

NPS/NLT Plan Considerations:

1. Utilize hole corridors not used by regulation course while limiting environmental impacts
 - a. **Incorporate historic William Flynn playing corridors** - the course primarily uses two original hole corridors and two original green sites.
 - b. **Reduce overall maintained turf area** - par three courses require less maintained turf than regulation length courses. The decision to incorporate a par three course

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and convert two original hole corridors to pollinator meadows reduces the overall acreage of maintained turf on the site.

c. Minimize tree removals

- i. Par three holes require less maintained turf and therefore less tree removal to create appropriate sunlight and airflow compared to restoring the forested hole corridors to their original widths. This is highlighted in the USGA Green Section 2024 Report: “*Your golf course architect is using existing historical playing corridors to fit multiple short holes into, which is a great use of space minimizing impact to trees.*”
- ii. The par three course requires removal of up to 271 trees for two holes in order to avoid removing 700+ trees to address the deferred maintenance needed to restore the original 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th hole corridors

d. Maintain 18 total holes on property - the CLR recommends keeping 18 total holes, with two loops of nine holes that each start at and return to the clubhouse.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **Uses relatively open front nine corridors** - using the current 4th, 5th and 6th corridors for par threes instead of longer holes puts more of the regulation length course in the forested corridors, requiring more tree removal.
- **Requires tree removal to avoid conditioning and playability issues** - for example, on the second hole of the proposed alternative routing, the teeing ground would be covered in shade for much of the day, as would the green
- **Only four holes** - in combination with the nine hole regulation course, this would mean 13 total holes on property.
- **Does not address deferred maintenance related to golf course infrastructure** - the existing greens, tees and bunkers used by the alternative par three course routing need to be rebuilt, which is not incorporated into the cost estimates.

2. Improve accessibility

- a. **Approachable option for beginners; appealing to experts** - par three courses are growing in popularity worldwide amongst all types of golfers because they are short enough for new golfers to easily play but can be designed to have fun and engaging shots for better golfers.
- b. **Less expensive, faster to play** - the par three course will be cheaper and faster to play than the regulation length course.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **Lack of detail regarding use** - the remote start/finish and proposed connection to facilities built into the maintenance complex appear to only work if it is not part of the public/commercial offerings at the course.

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3. Operational and financial implications
 - a. **Start and end the course near the clubhouse** - proximity to the clubhouse helps to manage the flow of golfers on and off the course as well as preserve the historic spatial arrangement of the golf course routing.
 - b. **Contribute to financial stability** - while the par three course will be among the most affordable golf course options in the DC area, it should meaningfully contribute to the economics of the golf course.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **Routing** - the course starts far away from the clubhouse and does not finish near where it starts (or near the clubhouse), making it difficult to manage operationally
- **Not a viable source of revenue** - the number of holes would limit its use to practice or programming, versus a course substantial enough to produce meaningful revenue while also contributing to programming.
- **Understates costs** - the total estimated cost of the four hole practice course is stated at \$20k “for some grading for two new tees and one new green”; the actual cost to construct a four hole course would be over \$500k.
 - Each green complex needs to be rebuilt or newly constructed at a cost of about \$80-100k per green.
 - New tee construction and turf establishment would come to \$100k
 - Tree work would be an additional cost.

Maintenance Building

NLT Proposal: New 7,500 square foot maintenance building constructed along the east side of the entrance road from 16th St NW; entry aligned with Joyce Rd intersection; architectural style consistent with other built structures on the property; screened from road and golf course with vegetative plantings.

Alternative Proposal: New maintenance building constructed along the east side of Joyce Road at the base of the slope alongside the existing fourth hole; facade visible on 16th St NW used for marketing; no vegetative barrier; building includes locker rooms and restrooms for First Tee - Greater Washington, DC participants.

NPS/NLT Plan Considerations:

1. Meet operational needs of a modern golf facility.
 - a. **Running water** - the current maintenance building does not have running water, a major impediment to operations and a safety concern
 - b. **Increased storage space** - the building will have enough space to securely store the fleet of equipment required for golf course maintenance including an expected

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conversion to an electric maintenance fleet; the current maintenance building does not.

- c. **Wash pad** - a modern wash pad allows for equipment to be washed safely with the water contained and treated.
- d. **Space for increased staff** - with the increase in maintenance crew size, there is a need for office space and a break room for the staff. The current building has neither of these things.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **Adding public/community programming space to the maintenance facility** - the alternative proposal adds a locker room and restrooms to the maintenance building in order to serve as an operational hub for the proposed mini par 3 course. From a conceptual standpoint, combining a space where maintenance machinery is in regular use, with space for golf course users (including children/community partners) is a major safety hazard and would create a multitude of operational hurdles.
- **Understates costs** - the alternative proposal quotes the cost of the maintenance facility as equivalent to that of solely the physical structure in the NPS/NLT plan (\$1.5M); with this, it understates the total costs as it omits the cost of site work and also does not account for the added square footage required to house the locker room and restroom facilities of its proposed public/community programming space.

2. Appropriate and accessible location

- a. **Accessible from 16th St and Joyce Road** - easy access to 16th St for employees and deliveries; entry aligned with Joyce Road solves logistical issues for larger trucks making deliveries.
- b. **Accessible to the golf course** - located on the property to provide quick and direct access to and from the golf course for maintenance equipment
- c. **Stormwater Management** - meet environmental requirements for bio-retention around new built structures in Washington, DC per DOEE guidelines.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **Located in a floodplain** - By shifting the location further down the slope and closer to Joyce Road, the alternative proposal locates the facility in the middle of a floodplain

3. Visually and architecturally appropriate for the historic landscape

- a. **Minimize visual impact** - the building's location in the hillside helps obscure it from view from the roadway and from golfers on the course. This will be enhanced by surrounding the site with a mix of evergreen trees, large deciduous trees and mixed shrubs to further screen the structure from the road and golf course.

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- b. **Consistent architecture** - by using similar architectural language to other built structures on the property, the portions of the building that are visible will fit aesthetically.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **Increased negative visual impact** - located in a flat area close to the entry road that does not provide an opportunity to screen the building.
- **Not consistent with historic landscape** - the proposed use of the facade for marketing to traffic on 16th St. NW is inconsistent with the CLR's recommendations and is inappropriate in the context of a National Park setting.

Clubhouse and Surrounds

NLT Proposal: New clubhouse approximately 10,000 square foot footprint; connected to driving range and driving range pavilion; indoor/outdoor F&B operation; programming space for NLT and community partner programs; headquarters space for First Tee - Greater Washington, DC; solar and geothermal systems; Himalayas putting green; modified parking lot; pedestrian/bike access from 16th St NW; ecological trail open to the public.

Alternative Proposal: Renovation of existing Mission 66 style clubhouse; one-story addition with a series of uncovered terraces on top looking west; snack bar; no dedicated space for community programs and partners; solar; Himalayas putting green; modified parking lot; no pedestrian/bike access.

NPS/NLT Plan Considerations:

1. Address operational needs
 - a. **Pro shop, restrooms and internal office space** - the basic needs of a golf course operation.
 - b. **Storage space for electric golf carts** - the cart storage located within the clubhouse structure is centrally located to facilitate efficient operations. Storing the carts in a structure allows NLT to convert the golf cart fleet to electric power (as opposed to the current gas-powered golf cart fleet at the course).
 - c. **Management of driving range, first tees** - the proximity of the clubhouse to the driving range and first tees of the Regulation Course and Par Three Course allows efficient management of the flow of golfers through these areas.
 - d. **ADA compliant** - the current clubhouse is not ADA compliant and would be difficult to retrofit.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

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- **Renovating the existing building is costly** - NLT/NPS explored re-using and/or adding to the existing clubhouse (as proposed in the alternative plan) but was told by experts that renovating the interior of the clubhouse would be extremely expensive due to structural walls that break the space up awkwardly and the need to make the building ADA compliant.
 - **Difficult to make ADA compliant** - a one-story addition to the lower floor of the clubhouse will be difficult to make the whole clubhouse ADA compliant. The bathrooms of the current clubhouse are on the lower level without any means of access from the upper level other than stairs. Retrofitting an elevator into the current clubhouse to facilitate a route to the lower level without going outside the building would be difficult and expensive.
 - **No space for golf cart storage** - there is no space allocated to store and charge golf carts in the alternative plan.
 - **Disconnected from driving range and first tees** - distance to first tees and driving range will create operational difficulties and require more staff to manage the golf operations effectively.
2. Provide a gathering space for golfers and non-golfers in the community
- a. **Robust F&B program** - providing a robust F&B operation allows the clubhouse to act as a community hub, attracting both golfers and non-golfers for casual dining in a space that highlights the site's natural beauty. There will be no other F&B location like it in Rock Creek Park and community members should not have to belong to a country club to enjoy a meal overlooking rolling hills and a beautiful landscape.
 - b. **Outdoor seating under trees** - By placing outdoor seating on the east side of the building underneath shade trees and in the shadow of the clubhouse, the seating will be more tolerable in the hot summer months.
 - c. **Integration with Himalayas putting course and driving range** - the putting course and driving range are designed to be extensions of the clubhouse for golfers and non-golfers. The location of the clubhouse directly adjacent to the putting course and connected to the driving intentionally creates a natural interplay between these three central aspects of the facility.
 - d. **Picnic pavilion** - a free-to-use gathering point for the community overlooking a historic viewshed and within close proximity to the F&B operation and other amenities that differentiate it from other picnic pavilions in the park.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **Lack of amenities for non-golfers** - the proposed alterations to the clubhouse are designed expressly for golfers and do not capitalize on the opportunity to create a true community gathering place at the golf course.
- **Outdoor seating in direct sun** - by orienting the outdoor seating on the west side of the building, patrons will be in direct sun during hot summer months and exposed during the cooler fall and spring months.

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- **Disconnected from other aspects of the facility** - the alternative proposal's clubhouse is disconnected from the more social aspects of the facility - specifically the driving range and Himalayas putting green - limiting its appeal as a community gathering hub.
3. Improved access for the community
- a. **Evening programming** - F&B and the other amenities immediately adjacent to the clubhouse (driving range, putting green, outdoor seating area) will complement each other as an evening entertainment option for golfers and non-golfers in the community.
 - b. **Pedestrian/bike path from 16th St NW** - facilitate access from the neighborhoods surrounding the course and from the nearby bus stop so that a car is not the only way to get to the course. This is consistent with NPS access efforts nationwide.
 - c. **Ecological trail** - formalize historical non-golf usage of the golf course property by providing a safe, well maintained hiking trail through the golf course and meadow habitats for birders, wildlife viewers, hikers, runners, etc in the community.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **No lighting to support evening programming** - denies access to golf and the other amenities at the course for community members that cannot use the facility during the day.
 - **No pedestrian/bike access** - this presents a major accessibility issue and is out of alignment with the NPS' sustainability goals.
 - **Does not accommodate hikers/birders/etc** - the current usage of the golf course by these groups is only possible because of the lack of golfers playing the course.
4. Increase capacity for internal programs and community partners
- a. **Offices and programming space for First Tee headquarters** - In working with First Tee - Greater Washington, DC in the design of the facility, NLT has provided significant administration and programming space for the organization that will allow for them to triple the number of kids who can take part in programs at the facility.
 - b. **Infrastructure for Jack Vardaman Workforce Development Program (JVWDP)** - the additional clubhouse space and the increased revenue from operations will enable the JVWDP - NLT's summer youth employment internship and caddie program that provides an income, life and job skills, and pathways to college scholarship to local kids and teens - to have an annual cohort of 45 interns/caddies (as is currently the case at Langston).
 - c. **Flexible space for other internal programs and other partners** - the clubhouse meeting rooms, the driving range and driving range pavilion, the Himalayas putting green, the picnic pavilion and the outdoor F&B seating space provide ample room for summer camps, non-profit partner programs, golf lessons, etc.

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Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **Lack of detail** - it is unclear how the renovated clubhouse and addition provides the space necessary for the First Tee, JWDP, and other programming that is critical to NLT's mission and the success of the project.
5. Energy efficiency
- a. **Geothermal energy** - the clubhouse will use an extremely energy efficient geothermal system for heating and cooling.
 - b. **Solar energy** - placed on the roof of the driving range pavilion.

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal:

- **No geothermal energy** - the alternative proposal does not include an investment in this sustainable energy system.

Cost Analysis

Alternative Proposal: approximately \$8M all in

NPS/NLT Cost Analysis of Alternative Proposal: \$15-20M, based on assumptions derived from the limited information provided

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal Cost Analysis:

- **Lack of expertise** - Throughout the entirety of the alternative proposal, the cost projections of various elements are often significantly underestimated. This is likely due to an incomplete understanding of the site's complexities and limitations, as well as lack of consultation with experts in these specialized areas.
- **Costs make the scaled down project not economically viable** - the key to economic viability at Rock Creek Park Golf Course is ensuring the investment in the rehabilitation can be paid back via the revenue produced by an improved golf course product coupled with new amenities (driving range, F&B, par three course). The alternative plan does not adequately address the core problems with the golf course and it vastly underestimates the total cost involved to accomplish the project it has laid out. This combination would not improve the Rock Creek Park Golf Course facility enough to justify the investment, thereby putting future projects at the other courses in the city at risk.
- Examples of underestimated costs:
 - o **Regulation Course** - the alternative states that renovating the golf course would cost approximately \$3.5M (including the irrigation/cistern infrastructure), however the actual costs to address deferred maintenance would be almost double that total:

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- Bringing greens, tees and bunker work to a modern construction standard for the nine hole regulation course would run approximately \$1.5M
- Irrigation/cistern infrastructure, including fairway irrigation (which the course currently does not have) is approximately \$3M
- Invasive and tree removal to re-establish hole corridors is at least \$1-1.5M (note: the invasive and limited tree removal in the alternative proposal would be at least \$500k).
- o **Par 3 Course:** the total estimated cost of the four hole practice course is projected at \$20k “for some grading for two new tees and one new green”. The actual cost to construct a four hole course following best practices would be over \$500k:
 - Each green complex needs to be rebuilt or newly constructed at a cost of about \$80-100k per green.
 - New tee construction and turf establishment would come to \$100k
 - Tree work would be an additional cost.
- o **Driving Range:** the alternative proposal states the cost of the new range would be \$20k for grading/mats and \$60k for a professional grade canopy. The actual costs of the proposed range would be at least \$3-5 million.
 - **The proposed net would cost at least \$2 million**
 - A professional grade canopy for 30 bays would cost \$200-400k
 - The grading of the range bays and associated infrastructure would be significantly more complicated and expensive than projected.
- o **Maintenance Building:** the alternative proposal quotes the cost of the maintenance facility as equivalent to that of solely the physical structure in the NPS/NLT plan (\$1.5M); with this, it understates the total costs as it omits the cost of site work and also does not account for the added square footage required to house the locker room and restroom facilities of its proposed public/community programming space.
- o **Clubhouse:** the alternative proposal quotes a \$2.5M estimate for the clubhouse renovation/addition, Himalayas putting green and parking lot work but these alterations appear as if they would cost at least \$7M, but likely more
 - Based on the sketch provided, but without knowing exactly what is included in the plan, the clubhouse renovation and addition would be in the range of \$6M.
 - The Himalayas putting green would cost about \$250k on its own
 - The parking lot expansion occurs in an area of significant grade change and would require extensive grading/retaining walls to function, especially next to the proposed driving range location in the plan. This would cost \$750k or more.

Design Input

NLT Proposal: consultation with golfers and community members throughout the last five years; engaged dozens of experts; consulted with other successful municipal facilities around the country

Alternative Proposal: limited consultation with golfers; consultation with environmental groups

NPS/NLT Plan Considerations:

1. Learning from other successful projects and industry leaders
 - a. **Design inspiration** - over the last decade, municipal golf has seen successful renovation and restoration projects at different scales across the country. NLT observed what was successful and well-received elsewhere and used it as inspiration throughout the design process
 - b. **Meetings and guidance** - NLT traveled to and met with leadership of several newly renovated municipal golf courses around the US (including in Virginia, Pennsylvania, California, Florida, Massachusetts and more) to discuss their learnings and solicit guidance for the design of the Rock Creek Park Golf Course rehabilitation
 - c. **NLT Symposium** - each of the last three years, NLT has convened experts in municipal golf for an annual symposium in Washington, DC to discuss issues relevant to affordable and accessible golf, including panels focused on operations, renovation/rehabilitation projects, environmental stewardship, architecture and other topics
2. Experts from a variety of fields
 - a. **Golf industry** - golf course operators (most prominently, Troon - the largest golf course operator in the world), golf course architects, golf course builders, agronomists (from Troon, United States Golf Association and independent consultants), irrigation designers, PGA Teaching Professionals, golf course environmental management professionals
 - b. **National Park Service** - ecologists, biologists, historical architects, accessibility experts, agronomists, historians, arborists, historical landscape architects, fire and safety experts
 - c. **A&E team** - historians, architects, landscape architects, engineers, arborists, hydrologists
3. Community feedback
 - a. **Gathering ideas from golfers and community members for a significant period of time** - NLT have solicited feedback from golfers and community members since obtaining the long-term lease of the public golf courses in the city; NLT has held numerous events over the last four years at the three DC courses and in public forums during which the Rock Creek Park Golf Course

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rehabilitation project has been presented, encouraging discussion with and feedback from the community

- b. **Input from community partners** - NLT has incorporated the recommendations and ideas of a host of community partners - most prominently the First Tee of Greater Washington - that are stakeholders at the Rock Creek Park Golf Course site and/or have a history of successful programming at golf courses in the area
- c. **Formal planning processes** - the Section 106 and EA processes have public comment mechanisms that have informed and influenced the project
- d. **Demonstrated local and regional support for the project** - outreach to the local and regional golf community and community at-large has resulted in overwhelming support from thousands of people that has been documented in a number of ways

Related Issues with Alternative Proposal

- **Limited user input not representative of the DC golf community** - the limited sample size of Rock Creek Park Golf Course golfers cited as the basis for the alternative proposal is not representative of the golf community in the DC area. For example, interviewing golfers at the facility completely misses the vastly bigger population of Washington, DC golfers that choose to play elsewhere (often traveling much further afield, including to Langston, East Potomac and the suburbs) rather than play at Rock Creek Park Golf Course because of the deteriorated conditions.
- **Lack of consultation with experts** - the alternative proposal includes many elements where input from an expert in their field (agronomist, golf course architect, golf course operator, etc) would have helped immensely to make the proposal more realistic