

MAYOR
SHEILA
DeCiccio
CITY of WINTER PARK



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I am thrilled to share exciting new developments for our two city-owned golf courses—the WP9 and WP18. These aren't just places to play golf, they are cherished public parks with fairways, deeply woven into the fabric of Winter Park. They provide a place where families bond, neighbors connect, and players of all ages and abilities come together.

The WP9 is consistently ranked among the top five public nine-hole courses in the country, and the WP18 is blossoming into a true community gem. In fact, we now have over 100 people on the waitlist to become WP9 members—a clear sign of how treasured these spaces are. That's why our city has invested in thoughtful improvements to both courses, from upgraded greens and bunkers to a new maintenance facility and enhanced technology at the driving range.

In 1995, the City of Winter Park acquired the portion of the Winter Park Golf Course (WP9) it did not already own. In 2022, we acquired the Winter Pines (WP18) to perpetually protect those treasures as greenspace and assure the land would never be sold to developers. Both were purchased with bond issues. The on-going cost of operations of both courses are covered by the revenues from memberships, greens fees, cart fees, driving range fees, merchandising, food and beverage sales.

WP18 has made an operating profit every year since the city purchased it. While those profits don't fully cover the long-term bond debt, this land—95 acres purchased for under \$8 million at a 2.65% interest rate—is not just a golf course. It is permanently protected parkland. Prior to the city's purchase, development proposals threatened to eliminate this vital greenspace and add congestion to an already stressed area. Now, this land is not only preserved, it has also allowed us to improve stormwater infrastructure and reduce flooding in nearby neighborhoods.

Acquiring and maintaining greenspace is not a cost, but an investment in our quality of life. Every dollar spent helps ensure public access, community health, and a beautiful environment we can all enjoy for generations. This is one of the reasons that makes Winter Park the best place to live, work, and thrive!

I spoke with Jason Seeley, Director of the Parks & Recreation Department, to learn more about the many upgrades at both courses—from restored canals to new bun-

kers, enhanced pace of play systems, and ADA-compliant clubhouse improvements—please read the full update below.



WP9

Course Conditions

The WP9 had a record number of rounds in the month of January, exceeding 2024 by 1000+ rounds. The course also saw over 27,000 rounds played between October 2024 and March 2025, also a record number for the six-month peak/winter period. While the course has been extremely busy over the last few months we realize the conditions of the course, most noticeably the green complexes, are not in their normal condition. Staff brought in a USGA agronomist in March and are taking the necessary action to address the issue and bring the conditions of the course back to the level our community expects.

Amenities

Patio Space: In 2021 the city renovated the first green to increase size of the green. The increase in tee size helps reduce wear and tear on the tee box complex as it provides more locations to rotate between. This is a major factor in maintaining tee box conditions on a smaller course with many rounds. The increased patio space adds an alternative and overflow seating area for golfers before and after their round and provides an upgraded outdoor space for groups looking to rent the historic, Winter Park Country Club for an event.

Rain shelter: Most recently, the city added a new rain shelter on the right side of Hole 4. The city also updated its Thorguard® lightning prediction system last year. This system allows golfers (or anyone interested in potential for dangerous lightning strikes within Winter Park) to access real time lighting warnings on their phone. While the rain shelters throughout the course offer some immediate shelter for a passing rain shower, or a refuge of last resort, golfers should always heed the lightning prediction systems warning and seek shelter within a closed building when prompted to do so. For more information on Thorguard or to download the app, please

access cityofwinterpark.org/departments/parks-recreation/golf-courses/winter-park-golf-course/.

Upcoming Improvements

Construction of the new golf course maintenance facility is underway with completion expected by Fall 2025. The new maintenance facility will:

- house the golf maintenance team
- feature a rain shelter
- offer public restrooms

While the new maintenance facility will provide some additional features to improve maintenance and care of the various mowers and equipment used to maintain the course, it also gives the city the ability to convert the existing maintenance shop into an indoor columbarium and memorial garden as part of Palm Cemetery.

Bunker Liners: The bunker liners will assist in keeping the bunkers structurally sound, minimizing collapse during storm season. The liners also reduce the infiltration of common soil into the powdery bunker sand and improve drainage, reducing maintenance costs while providing a better bunker for the golfer that happens to wind up in one or several.

Winter Park Pines (WP18)

Since the acquisition of the Winter Park Pines Golf Course, the city has been very busy making improvements on and off the course to improve conditions as well as the overall golf experience.



Course Amenities

- Complete renovation of Clubhouse and Pro Shop that included both aesthetic improvements as well as infrastructure, bringing the clubhouse up to both city code and ADA compliance.
- Addition of outdoor 'beer garden' and increased covered patio dining area
- Renovation of driving range with high end synthetic turf as well as driving range ball machine

Pace of play

The city replaced the cart fleet shortly after purchasing the course and upgraded carts to include in-cart GPS. This helps with both course maintenance as well as pace of play. The city also made changes to how tee times are managed so rounds now average just over four hours.

Course Conditions

- Dredging of canals/creeks throughout course
- Rebuild of multiple bridges within the course
- Installation of new landscape throughout course
- Introduction of over 200 pine trees to the overall property and removal of dead, failing and invasive trees including some palms
- Replacement of several major irrigation areas
- Addition of four new bunkers

Course Rating

This past winter, the city made some slight changes to the course that resulted in additional total yardage as well as three additional strokes. USGA was on site to review the changes in early March officially making a Par 71 rather than a Par 68.

Upcoming Improvements

More improvements to the course are in the works with the city hoping to make continued improvements to the courses aged irrigation system. Additionally, the city is also looking at making some changes to the driving range by introducing golf tracking technology to the range. Through the use of software, sensors, and/or cameras in a similar manner to what is used for indoor training and Top Golf®, the city would be able to extend hours throughout the year. The use of the tracking technology would provide both a useful analytical tool for those wanting to improve their game or as a fun, introduction to golf and the course for non-golfers through its interactive game features. Similar updates are taking place or have taken place, at area courses such Rio Pinar, Dubsdread, and Clermont National.

Thank you for your continued support as we grow a more accessible, inclusive, and resilient Winter Park.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sheila DeCiccio'.

Sheila DeCiccio

Winter Park Mayor

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This newsletter is written by Winter Park Mayor Sheila DeCiccio to inform her constituents.
The views expressed are her own and are not intended to represent the entire WP Commission.