The Project Is Not the Hard Part. The Sequence Is.

Part 2 of Golf's Reinvestment Era

The Project Is Rarely Where the Mistake Starts

Golf Inc. recently reported that more private, public, and semi-private golf clubs are breaking large renovations into phases to reduce disruption, spread out costs, allow more time for permits and materials, and ease scheduling pressure. *(Source: Golf Inc., The Long Game of Renovation)*

That is not just a construction detail.

It is a strategy signal.

When a project is sequenced well, each phase can prove something before the next decision gets made. It can show how the market responds, how operations absorb the change, how members or guests adjust, and whether the original assumptions still hold.

That matters because the alternative is larger exposure with less feedback.

A facility can commit too much capital too early, absorb too much disruption at once, and learn too late that the project needed a different order, a different scope, or a different operating plan.

In golf facility reinvestment, the project is rarely where the mistake starts. The mistake usually starts earlier, when the sequence is not clear enough.

It starts when the first dollar goes to the most visible need instead of the most important one. When the timeline is built around excitement instead of readiness. When the facility knows what it wants to build but has not fully answered what has to be true for the project to work.

That is why sequencing matters.

A good project done in the wrong order can still create pressure. It can disrupt the operation, strain staff, frustrate members or guests, consume capital too early, or leave required infrastructure waiting in the background.

This is one of the most important disciplines of golf's reinvestment era.

Not just deciding what to build.

Deciding what must come first.

Why Sequencing Matters More Now

Sequencing has always mattered in golf projects, but the current market makes it harder to ignore.

Facilities are not making decisions in a quiet environment. Demand is strong, expectations are higher, costs are more visible, and customers have more choices for how they spend their time and money. Boards, owners, municipalities, and operators are all trying to make progress while balancing disruption, capital limits, staffing realities, infrastructure needs, and the pressure to show visible improvement.

That combination changes the risk.

This is not unique to golf.

In hospitality, phased construction is used to keep key amenities open and preserve operational flow while renovation work is underway. In airports, coordinated construction phasing is used to maintain passenger and cargo services, security measures, and daily operations while outdated facilities are replaced or modernized. In healthcare facilities, phased renovations are often required because continuous operation is critical and downtime has to be minimized. *(Sources: Lessen, Capital Projects in Hospitality; Aviation Pros/HNTB, Coordinated Construction Phasing on Airports; Facilities Management Insights, Making Phased Renovations Work)*

Golf is different from all those industries, but it is not exempt from the lesson.

When a facility is a live operating asset, the project cannot be separated from the experience, the staff, the infrastructure, or the financial model underneath it.

That is why sequencing is not just a construction issue.

A poorly sequenced project does not only create construction headaches. It can affect the daily operation. It can change the guest experience. It can put staff in a position where they are asked to deliver a better product before the facility is ready to support it.

It can also create a confidence problem.

Members, guests, city leaders, boards, and ownership groups can usually tolerate disruption when they understand the reason for it. What is harder to tolerate is disruption that feels disconnected, reactive, or poorly explained.

That is why sequencing is not only about project order.

It is about trust.

When the order makes sense, people can understand the tradeoffs. They can see why certain work must happen first. They can connect the inconvenience today to the value being built for tomorrow.

When the order does not make sense, even a good project can start to feel like a bad decision.

If you are already using phased decision-making or sequencing discipline in a golf project today, we would love to hear how it is showing up in practice.

What Gets Missed When the Sequence Is Weak

The danger in a poorly sequenced project is not always obvious at the beginning.

Early on, most projects still look exciting. The renderings look good. The announcement creates energy. The board or ownership group feels like progress is being made. Members, guests, or community stakeholders can usually understand that some disruption will come with improvement.

The problems tend to show up later, when the project starts interacting with the real operation.

That is when a facility learns whether the staffing model can support the new expectation. Whether the maintenance team can absorb the added complexity. Whether the tee sheet, parking, practice flow, food and beverage, cart traffic, or guest arrival pattern was fully considered. Whether the infrastructure underneath the project was ready. Whether the project improves the experience people actually use or simply improves the version of the facility people see in a rendering.

That is where sequence matters.

A facility can choose the right project and still create problems if the surrounding pieces are not ready for it. A new amenity can increase expectations faster than the operation can support them. A technology investment can create frustration if the programming and staffing model are not built around it. A course improvement can lose impact if drainage, irrigation, or maintenance capacity is still lagging.

This is one reason we built our Tech2Turf 360 and CRIS approach around readiness, sequencing, and decision confidence. The goal is not to make projects harder. It is to make sure the right questions are asked before a facility commits capital, absorbs disruption, or creates expectations it may not be ready to support.

The best sequencing conversations happen before the project becomes emotionally inevitable.

Once a project has momentum, it gets harder to ask the uncomfortable questions. People start protecting the idea. The conversation shifts from “Is this the right first move?” to “How do we get this approved?”

That is a dangerous shift.

Because the goal is not simply to get a project started.

The goal is to make sure the facility is stronger when the project is finished.

The Visible Project vs. the Required Project

Every facility has projects that are easier to see.

A clubhouse refresh. A new simulator space. A renovated patio. A better practice area. A short-game complex. A food and beverage upgrade. These are the projects that create excitement because people can picture them. They are easier to explain, easier to market, and often easier to rally support around.

There is nothing wrong with that.

Visible projects can matter. They can improve the experience, create new revenue opportunities, extend usage, and give people a reason to engage with the facility in new ways.

But visible does not always mean first.

That is one of the hardest truths in golf facility reinvestment.

The American Society of Golf Course Architects notes that every course eventually has to plan for renovation because living components change and infrastructure wears out over time, including irrigation system components, drainage pipes, pump stations, cart paths, bunkers, and greens complexes. ASGCA also emphasizes that recognizing the proper order of work is essential, especially when renovations are completed in phases. *(Source: American Society of Golf Course Architects, Golf Course Renovation)*

USGA has made a similar point from the course-care side: infrastructure improvements such as irrigation and drainage may not create the same visual impact as new bunkers, greens, or tees, but every playing surface is affected by them. Without the right infrastructure to manage moisture, course conditions can only improve so much. *(Source: USGA Green Section, Let’s Make Golf Course Infrastructure Exciting Again)*

That is why the required project cannot be treated as the boring project.

Sometimes the work that is hardest to see is the work that determines whether everything else can succeed.

But this is also where the industry must be careful.

Invisible work should not escape scrutiny just because it sounds necessary. Required projects still must prove value. They still must be scoped correctly, sequenced properly, and connected to the business, operating, and customer outcomes the facility needs.

We have seen too many capital conversations where visible projects are challenged hard because everyone can picture the spend, while infrastructure projects are treated as unavoidable without being measured with the same discipline.

Both approaches can create problems.

A visible project can be overbuilt because it is exciting.

An invisible project can be under-examined because it is necessary.

That is not reinvestment discipline.

That same logic shows up in bunker planning.

A facility may look at bunker work only through the lens of first cost. But if a bunker edge has to be rebuilt, repaired, washed out, reshaped, or maintained repeatedly, then the real cost is not just the original project. It is the lifecycle of the decision.

EcoBunker is one example of a company trying to challenge that thinking. Its synthetic revetted bunker system uses recycled artificial turf and is positioned around lower maintenance, reduced replacement cycles, and longer-term durability. EcoBunker has stated that natural turf revetted bunkers may need to be replaced about every five years, while its own system carries a minimum guaranteed 20-year lifespan. *(Source: EcoBunker, Synthetic Revetting More Sustainable than Natural Turf)*

Whether a facility chooses a product like that or not, the point is bigger than one vendor.

The better question is whether the facility is measuring the full life of the decision.

What looks more expensive upfront may be more disciplined if it reduces repeat replacement, lowers maintenance burden, protects playability, and keeps the facility from revisiting the same problem every few years.

That is sequencing discipline.

Not just asking, “What does this cost today?”

Asking, “What does this decision cost us over time?”

This matters even more as more capital looks at golf facilities through an investment lens.

New ownership and outside capital can be good for the game when it brings discipline, resources, and a willingness to improve assets that need attention. But the industry also has to be careful not to confuse transaction activity with long-term facility health.

A course can be acquired, repositioned, and improved in ways that create real value. It can also be pushed toward short-term optics if the deeper operating, infrastructure, staffing, and community realities are not understood.

That is not a criticism of investors.

It is a reminder that golf facilities are long-duration assets. They serve markets, communities, members, guests, staffs, and local ecosystems that do not always fit neatly into a short hold-period mindset.

The best ownership groups understand that. They do not just ask what can be improved quickly. They ask what must be protected, sequenced, and sustained.

That does not make the visible project wrong.

And it does not make the required project automatically right.

It means both must be placed in the right order and held to the right standard.

The required work may not always be the easiest to sell, but it still must be clear why it matters, why now, and what it enables next.

Sequencing Protects Trust

Trust is one of the first things a poorly sequenced project puts at risk.

Members can usually tolerate inconvenience. Guests can adjust to temporary disruption. Staff can work through a difficult phase. Boards, owners, and municipalities can defend a tough decision when the reason is clear.

What people struggle with is confusion.

They struggle when the order does not make sense. When one area is improved while a more obvious problem lingers. When a new amenity opens before the service model is ready. When a project creates more friction than leadership prepared people for. When the explanation changes halfway through. When the investment feels disconnected from what the facility actually needed most.

That is where confidence starts to erode.

And once confidence erodes, even the right project can become harder to support.

Golf Course Industry has written that renovation pitfalls often include under-spending, weak management follow-through, poor maintenance, lack of reserve planning, and treating renovation like a one-time fix instead of part of a long-term capital plan. That matters here because trust is easier to protect when the project is part of a coherent long-term plan, not a disconnected reaction to the latest pressure. *(Source: Golf Course Industry, Renovation Project Pitfalls)*

That is why communication alone is not enough. A weak sequence cannot always be fixed by better messaging after the fact. Communication matters, but it works best when the plan underneath it is coherent.

The best project leaders do not just announce what is happening. They help people understand why it is happening in that order.

That is what protects confidence through the uncomfortable parts of reinvestment. Not pretending there will be no disruption, but showing that the disruption has a purpose, the tradeoffs have been considered, and the facility is being strengthened in a way people can understand.

In this market, trust is part of the capital stack.

Once it is spent poorly, it becomes much harder to get back.

Sequencing Is Not a Brake on Progress

Sequencing can sound like a slower way to move, especially when a facility is under pressure to improve.

But done well, sequencing is not a brake on progress.

It is what makes progress hold.

That distinction matters.

This is not only a golf-industry lesson. It is a business lesson our leadership has seen across other industries as well.

Outside of golf, McKinsey has written about how complexity, old systems, and one-off workarounds can create a drag on future transformation. In one example, a large B2B company had to walk away from **25% of a $2 billion margin-expansion opportunity** because modernization had become too complex and costly. McKinsey also notes that a poorly sequenced approach can result in time and money being spent without meaningfully changing the underlying problem. *(Source: McKinsey, Breaking Technical Debt's Vicious Cycle to Modernize Your Business)*

The lesson for golf is not that a facility should think like a software company.

The lesson is that disconnected decisions compound.

The choice made for speed today can become friction tomorrow. A workaround can become the standard. A project that looked efficient in isolation can make the next project harder, more expensive, or less effective.

That is why sequencing is not about saying no to projects, slowing down vision, or making improvement harder than it needs to be.

It is about making sure progress compounds in the right direction.

A clear sequence helps a facility avoid the trap of activity without durability. It gives leadership a better way to move from idea to execution without losing sight of the operating model, the customer experience, the infrastructure, or the trust required to carry the project through.

The goal is not to delay the future of the facility.

The goal is to make sure each step makes the next one stronger.

What Comes Next

The point is not that every golf project has to move slowly.

The point is that every project must move in the right order.

That is what separates activity from progress. It is what separates a project that creates excitement from one that creates lasting value. It is what helps a facility protect capital, protect trust, and protect the experience people are counting on it to deliver.

In this reinvestment era, the best facilities will not simply ask what they can build next.

They will ask what needs to be true for the next investment to work.

That question changes the conversation.

It moves the discussion beyond cost, timing, and appearance. It forces a clearer look at readiness, infrastructure, operations, staffing, customer behavior, ownership expectations, and the long-term role the facility is trying to play in its market.

That is why sequencing matters.

Because the project is rarely the hard part.

The hard part is knowing what must come first.

We will post Part 3 early next week.

Part of that is practical. It gives us a little more time to keep the article thoughtful, grounded, and useful.

But part of it is personal too.

At Tech2Turf, we believe the whole point of this work is to help protect the places where people actually experience the game. That includes the local course where someone gets out for nine after work, plays with their kids, meets friends on a weekend morning, or finds a few quiet hours with family.

So yes, we care about the data.

But we also care about the Saturday morning tee time, the junior golfer getting started, the parent walking alongside their child, and the local course that gives a community a place to gather.

That is why the next article matters.

Across the country, municipal golf is no longer just a maintenance conversation. It is becoming a modernization conversation tied to access, recreation, community value, operating models, and long-term public asset strategy.

That is where Part 3 of **Golf's Reinvestment Era** goes next.

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