



# New York State Turfgrass Association, Inc.

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The New York State Turfgrass Association strongly opposes Brad Lander's reckless proposal to convert four of New York City's twelve municipal golf courses into housing developments. This misguided plan ignores the significant recreational, economic, and environmental benefits these spaces provide to the diverse communities they serve.

New York City's municipal golf courses offer accessible and affordable recreational opportunities across the five boroughs. These 12 public courses accommodate golfers of all skill levels, promoting physical activity, mental well-being, and outdoor engagement. Mr. Lander argues that golf participation has declined, citing outdated statistics from 2003 to 2018. However, he conveniently omits the sport's resurgence in recent years. In New York, golf rounds surged by over 20% during COVID-19, and demand remains strong, with the National Golf Foundation reporting a seventh consecutive annual increase in participation, reaching over 28 million golfers in 2024. This growing interest underscores the increasing need for public golf facilities in urban areas.

NYC's public courses are more than just recreational spaces; they are economic engines that generate millions in revenue and support local businesses. In 2023 alone, these courses brought in approximately \$17 million in greens fees, with around 600,000 rounds played. Beyond direct revenue, the golf industry fuels job creation and boosts surrounding businesses, including retailers, restaurants, and tourism-related services. Statewide, golf contributes billions to the economy and sustains tens of thousands of jobs.

Beyond recreation and economics, municipal golf courses provide critical environmental benefits that urban areas desperately need:

- **Urban Cooling** – Green spaces mitigate the urban heat island effect by lowering local temperatures.
- **Stormwater Management** – The permeable surfaces of golf courses absorb rainfall, reducing runoff and flood risks while replenishing groundwater.
- **Air Quality Improvement** – Vegetation captures carbon dioxide and filters pollutants, contributing to cleaner air.
- **Wildlife Habitat** – These green spaces support biodiversity by providing habitats for numerous species.

Repurposing municipal golf courses for development is a reckless and shortsighted idea that would destroy vital green space in a city already starved for outdoor recreation. Instead of eliminating well-maintained, ecologically valuable golf courses that serve a diverse population, NYC should prioritize the development of its many vacant lots and underutilized spaces. The New York State Turfgrass Association urges city leaders to reject this ill-conceived proposal and protect these essential public assets for future generations.