TOWN OF Herndon VIRGINIA

Town Council Work Session
Agenda Item 2.a.

Agenda Item: **Herndon Centennial Golf Course Hole #9 Protective Netting Request: Data Review and Mitigation Options**

Meeting Date: September 8, 2026

Category: Discussion

Prepared by: Kirstyn Jovanovich, Deputy Town Manager

Description:
This is a discussion in response to residents' request to install a protective netting along the Herndon Centennial Golf Course at Hole #9. Based on available information and data, staff has prepared several mitigation options for discussion and direction.

Background/Timing Impact:
On April 14, 2026, staff received an email complaint from a resident within the Estates at Eagle Lie community regarding golf balls leaving the Herndon Centennial Golf Course and impacting adjacent private properties and the neighborhood's quality of life. Staff met with the resident on April 17, 2026, to discuss their concerns in detail. The resident specifically requested that the town take action and install a protective netting system along the golf course at Hole #9 to stop routine golf balls from exiting the golf course onto adjacent properties in this area. Residents in this area have raised this issue with Town staff on multiple occasions since 2024. In August 2024 and May 2025, residents contacted the Town requesting protective netting along Hole #9, citing property damage from stray golf balls. The residents were advised that at that time, the town was completing a tee box realignment project (completed June 2025) that might partially address the issue the residents were experiencing by realigning the tee boxes further away from adjacent properties and reducing impact from errant golf balls leaving the course.

In response to the April 2026 complaint, a cross-departmental team reviewed available data, conducted site visits, evaluated potential mitigation options, and held an onsite community meeting. Staff considered several factors in evaluating the residents' concerns: a review of claims records related to golf ball impacts; risk to trail users and overall resident safety; recent removal of vegetative barrier in this area along the W&OD Trail; impacts from the recently completed tee box realignment project; the overall health and density of the vegetative barrier on the golf course in this area; analysis of Hole #9's cone of safety; origination analysis and contributing factors related to how golf balls might end up on adjacent properties; and input received from residents in this impacted area.

The review of this information indicates a few key points:

- Location of Reported Claims: Prior to July 1, 2026, no claims had been filed in this area during the 2019-2026 reporting period; one claim is currently pending. In addition, on average there are three golf-related claims filed per year, totaling approximately $3,000 annually.
- Trail and Resident Safety: Town records contain no documented incidents of personal injury caused by errant golf balls in this area. While no risk can be entirely eliminated, available data suggests the probability is low. The data does not indicate a significant personal injury risk from active play.
- Invasive Plant Removal: In April 2026, Dominion removed invasive vegetation along the corridor behind the Burwick Drive properties as part of routine easement maintenance. This reduced the natural buffer between the golf course and neighboring properties and likely contributed to an increase in golf balls reaching adjacent private properties. Dominion has a replanting plan and is in communication with staff. Easement maintenance, including replanting and invasive removal, is continuing in Fall 2026.
- Tee Box Realignment Project: In June 2025, the Town completed a tee box renovation and irrigation project. The Hole #9 tee box was realigned to reduce directional conflict between play patterns and neighboring properties. During the community meeting, some residents noted a decrease in golf balls entering their property since project completion last year.
- Golf Course Vegetation Buffer: Staff noted a gap in the buffer along Hole #9 on the golf course side near the 150-yard marker, serving as a utility access point for Dominion.
- Hole #9 Cone of Safety: This defines the expected ball flight corridor and the buffer area intended to contain errant shots within the course boundary. Staff reviewed this analysis in evaluating where netting or other physical barriers might be most effective in intercepting balls before they exit the course perimeter.
- Origination Analysis and Contributing Factors: Based on 48,000 rounds per year, an average of three claims annually, and analysis of Hole #9's cone of safety, shot geometry is inconsistent with active tee shots as the primary source for balls on adjacent properties. Wildlife has been documented removing and relocating balls from the course into surrounding areas. Balls may also be displaced by routine maintenance operations on the course, trail, or adjacent properties. Taken together, the data suggests that the majority of golf balls found on neighboring properties are likely not the result of active play.
- Community Meeting: On June 24, 2026, staff met with residents from the Estates at Eagle Lie community to hear directly from residents on their experiences, as well as to share staff's findings to date.

Based on this information, staff prepared the attached report for the Town Manager, outlining potential mitigation options. As the community's specific request to install a netting solution in this area is a capital investment, staff is seeking Council direction regarding next steps.

Mitigation Options

Option	Cost Estimate/Budget	Timing
1. Vegetation Enhancement Focus + Course Signage + Golf Course Master Plan	$33,000 - $45,000 (Vegetation); Master Plan funds included in FY 2027 Enterprise Fund; signage costs - operational	Plantings - Fall 2026 and/or Spring 2027 Signage - Immediate Master Plan - include comprehensive evaluation of course impacts on adjacent properties
2. Minimum Netting System + Vegetation Enhancement + Course Signage	$179,700 - $191,700 (Vegetation: $33,000-$45,000 + Minimum Netting: $146,700) signage costs - operational	Plantings - Fall 2026 and/or Spring 2027 Netting - FY 2027 Budget amendment or FY 2028 Budget request Signage - Immediate

Netting System Estimates

All estimates are rough order of magnitude and actual costs are likely to exceed the ROMs provided below.

Length	Height	ROM
450LF	60'	$146,700
450LF	80'	$1,248,874
700LF	60'	$244,500

Timing Impact:

The FY 2027 Adopted Budget does not include appropriated funding for additional vegetation or netting systems. If Council provides direction to move forward with either of these mitigation strategies, a budget amendment will be required if implementation is anticipated prior to June 30, 2027. Otherwise, directed mitigation strategies can be considered as part of the FY 2028 Budget process except for near-term vegetation work and signage, which may proceed at an operational scale.

In addition, the FY 2027 Adopted Budget includes funds for a Golf Course Master Plan, which is in the initial planning phases. Capital investment decisions, including any netting solution, can be evaluated as part of that process to ensure course impacts are reviewed comprehensively rather than addressed through isolated, standalone actions.

Strategic Focus Area:

Strong Fiscal Stewardship

Thriving Community
Good Governance

Fiscal Impact:
Funds for additional plantings or a netting system are not included in the FY 2027 Adopted Budget and would require a budget amendment to implement either or both mitigation strategies; any appropriation would come from the Golf Course Enterprise Fund. The FY 2027 Adopted Budget includes funding for a Golf Course Master Plan, currently in its initial planning phase. Mitigation Option 1 is estimated at $33,000–$45,000 and Mitigation Option 2 at $179,700–$191,700; both are rough order of magnitude estimates and actual costs are expected to exceed these figures.

Legal Impact:
N/A

Staff Recommendation/Next Steps:
Staff has presented mitigation options for Town Council consideration and is seeking direction on whether to pursue mitigation activities, and if so, which option or combination of options to prioritize.

Attachments:
1. Memo - Golf Course Impacts