

KOHLER CO.'s PROPOSED GOLF COURSE IN THE TOWN OF WILSON

Kohler Co. has introduced plans to build an [18-hole, minimalist design public golf course](#) on land the company has owned in the Town of Wilson for more than 75 years. The project is currently undergoing an extensive review and approval process involving the Town and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Kohler Co. is committed to doing this project right, building on the company's long history of quality, innovation and environmental sustainability. The company has approached the project thoughtfully, with public feedback inspiring a [minimalist design](#) that preserves the major dune structures and embraces the land's natural contours. Our goal is to have a world-class destination, open to the public, that creates jobs and provides other economic benefits for the Town of Wilson and the region, and to do it in an environmentally responsible manner that will serve the community and enhance the land for generations to come.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS: Jobs and a Regional Boost

Kohler Co. commissioned Chicago-based economic consulting firm SB Friedman Development Advisors to conduct a detailed [economic analysis](#). SB Friedman has a track record of conducting economic studies for a variety of public- and private-sector projects. Key findings in the Friedman study on the golf course include:

- **The total estimated economic impact benefits the local area.**
The Friedman review analyzed the project and its total annual estimated economic impact would be \$20.6 million in Sheboygan County, with about \$9.7 million of that amount in the Town of Wilson. The study said that an 11-county region would realize a total estimated economic impact for operations and golf tourism of about \$25.1 million.
- **Hundreds of new full-time jobs will be created.**
When fully operational, the proposed golf course project will create the equivalent of about 227 new, full-time jobs. In addition, the construction and building of the course and related facilities will create an additional 95 jobs during construction.
- **Local and state governments will share in the increased tax revenue.**
When fully operational, the new course will generate more than \$1.1 million per year in new tax revenue, the majority of which will be paid by those who reside outside of Sheboygan County. While the Town of Wilson, State of Wisconsin and Sheboygan County will all receive a portion of the new tax revenue, another important recipient will be the Sheboygan school system, which will gain more than \$100,000 each year from the project.
- **The new jobs will create a multimillion-dollar boost in local salaries and benefits.**
The Friedman study estimates that about 168 full- and part-time jobs will be created at the course itself, and the analysis projects that will translate into an additional \$3.6 million in associated salaries and benefits in the region. Of these new jobs, 88 percent of them are expected to be filled by individuals who live in Sheboygan County. Additionally, construction is expected to generate \$12.5 million in economic impact for Sheboygan County annually over a three-year building period.
- **Tourists spend money when they visit.**
The Friedman study estimated that about 80 percent of the visitors to the new course will be individuals who come from throughout the nation and even overseas, resulting in 22,000 additional hotel room nights and \$6.5 million in new spending on food, beverages, lodging and retail goods while visiting Sheboygan County.

Environmental Impact: A Thoughtful, Minimalist Approach

Kohler Co. has filed an [Environmental Impact Report](#) for the project with the Wisconsin DNR. The EIR is a comprehensive, science- and engineering-based document that provides facts, analysis and hard data on a variety of important topics. It shows how Kohler Co.'s balanced and [minimalist approach](#) has been guided by the principles of avoiding, minimizing or mitigating any potential environmental impact. For example, the EIR reports that the project would:

Result in a net increase in protected wetland.

Scaled-back plans have reduced impacted wetland to less than 5 acres. Additionally, Kohler Co. would follow the State's mitigation program to preserve additional wetland, resulting in a net increase in protected wetland.

Remove invasive species, add more native plants and grasses and be sensitive to specific plants and wildlife.

Plans include removal of invasive species, including the thorny Japanese barberry. Native species and trees will be planted to enhance natural habitat, increase wildlife diversity and help transform parts of the site now classified as "degraded" into a healthier forest. The golf course plan avoids impact to special habitat or species of concern. Major dune structures will be preserved and more than half of the wooded area will be left intact.

Protect the watershed, groundwater and neighboring wells.

Kohler tested a number of options and found use of well water and creation of an irrigation pond for water supply to be the most environmentally sound approach. Analysis confirmed that a proper well system would not negatively impact the water table or groundwater. As a precaution to possible concerns, Kohler will establish and fund a special insurance program to rectify potential well issues for Town of Wilson residents, similar to the successful program used in the Town of Mosel and Whistling Straits.

Limit pesticide and fertilizer use and control runoff.

The course will use grasses and plants requiring minimal fertilization and establish an integrated pest management program to minimize chemical pesticide use. Kohler golf courses, on average, applied fertilizers at only 20 percent of authorized state and federal levels on fairways. There will be no runoff of pesticides or fertilizers into the Black River or Lake Michigan.

Expand public access and include a permanent legal easement for Timberlake homeowners.

Like Kohler Co.'s four other Sheboygan County golf courses, this course would transform private property to a public golf course. Upon project approval, Kohler will grant homeowners in the neighboring Timberlake subdivision a permanent legal easement to access the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Enhance public access to Kohler-Andrae State Park.

The plan affects about 4 acres of state parkland in an area already used by park staff for maintenance operations. This area is not normally accessed by the public. No public trails would be affected. Plans call for the golf course and state park to share an expanded entry road at the south end of the property, steering traffic away from neighboring homes to the north. To improve circulation, Kohler proposes that the state entrance road be modified by adding a roundabout.

Have minimal impact on traffic.

Neighboring roads and intersections would continue to operate at high levels of service, as determined by the State of Wisconsin. Other than the entrance, no major traffic improvements are required.

Adopt green building standards.

Clubhouse plans call for a minimalist design to include timber and canvas-like features. Environmentally sensitive design standards will be used to achieve eligibility for Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) green building certification.