Depending on your perspective, time and/or money is the item you always need more of. At some point, unless staffing compliments increase with workloads, all the money in the world will not help you get the work done. The following is a description of general maintenance items, the equipment to do it, staff required and materials needed. You decide, is it about time or money?!

In Oakville we have 61 diamonds and 77 soccer fields. We host 16,000 players using our fields for 47,000 hours. What does all this mean to fields? Turf wear and tear. What does all this mean to you? You’d better find ways of doing more in less time with less money. If the field is lit, it will receive at least twice the play. If it is irrigated and lit, it will be used for tournaments assuming the quality of turf will be high. During tournaments, the field could see 5 to 6 games per day for 4 consecutive days. If applying appropriate funds to appropriate amounts of play, open up the purse strings on these fields – they will cost the most. Premier fields definitely see the largest percentage of funds, unfortunately the others must settle with being kept safe.

At a past Sports Turf Association Field Day, Marc Altman said put your money where your play is. In other words, don’t treat the infield the same as the outfield. If home plate sees most of the action, spend more there. Compaction will be more of a problem on 30% of a soccer field. Keep that in mind while going through the following points.

**BALL DIAMONDS**
First, always first, mark your irrigation heads. Whether aerating, overseeding or rolling, mark the heads. Damage to the lines is costly and will slow any operation down.

**Infield and Outfield $38, 1 hour**

Aerating can achieve so many things in the soil – whether to assist in moving water or increasing the \( {O_2} \) in the soil, therefore increasing microbial activity or relieving surface compaction. Optimum is 12 to 16 holes per square foot, 2 to 3 passes. It should be done with any renovation. Aerating should disturb the soil in a controlled way and be done when the crowns have time to heal. Some studies have shown it increases control when done prior to weed spraying.

**Infield** $40, 1/2 hour

**Outfield** $100, 1 hour

**Overseeding**
On infields, we use establishment rates of 20 pounds/1,000 square feet, on out
fields, we use 10 pounds. We like to overseed the infields 3 times and outfields once. During play we use a perennial ryegrass blend, in fall we use a Kentucky bluegrass.

**Infields** $120-$170, 1/2 hour  
**Outfields** $240-$340, 1 hour

**Topdressing**
We use a perennial ryegrass blend, in fall we use a Kentucky bluegrass.

**Grooming Infield & Warning Track**
Change the point of entry each time the equipment accesses the infield. Ensure the operator carries a rake and trash bags as well as a short check list. Stress the importance of speed, too much will cause lips to form on the edge of the infield. If grooming is done slowly, less infield material will be thrown out. Our infields are groomed daily, warning tracks 2x/week.

**Cutting Lips (Edge of the Infield)**
This is done when the season is not in play, spring or fall, and prior to tournaments for detailing. It will prevent a lip from forming. Be sure to mark the irrigation heads before cutting. Be prepared to add infield mix after hauling away debris, often existing mix cannot be leveled out adequately.

**Brooming Lips**
Five times per season will help stop a lip from developing. We use a sweepster 3’ broom with plastic bristles. Be sure to broom into the infield.

**Cutting and Fertilizing**
Not including fertilizer costs. Equipment to cut irrigated fields is floated and cut more often.

**Installing a Mound**
For permanent mounds we have used ‘Mound Master.’ It takes approximately 50

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bags at $5 a bag. It constructs a more permanent structure requiring less reinforcing. Be sure to have accurate measurements. Talk with the groups using the diamond first to see what they want. If reconstructing the infield, mark the mound dimensions and leave it until all other work is complete.

**Installing**  
$350, 8 hours  
**Maintaining**  
$75, 2 hours

**Home Plate Construction and Installation**

Purchase rubbers framed in and filled with concrete. We also use clay brick around the home plate area. This cuts down on constantly replacing material and checking for divots. Be sure to have at least 1-1/2 inches of material on top of brick so players can still ‘dig in.’

- With Clay: $850, 8 hours  
- Without Clay: $85, 1 hour

**Weekly Inspection**

This is one of the most important things you can do. Use a form to ensure the inspection is done and nothing is missed. It is the time when holes are filled and seeded; irrigation heads are checked; and lips, fence lines, base paths and home plate are level. Recommended inspection sheets are available from the Sports Turf Association.

**SOCCER**

Again, always begin with marking irrigation heads before starting work on the field.  
$38, 1 hour

**Aerating**

Soil strength is measured by its ability to hold when pressure is put on either vertically or horizontally. This is critical for traction. Moisture levels will affect soil strength. Aerating can improve moisture levels and air in soil.  
$140, 2 hours

**Overseeding**

Choice of seed depends on time of the year. During mid season play, germination times are critical, while in fall seeding, over wintering of seed is more of a factor. Guaranteed germination rates are on the bag, ask the supplier for them if they’re not. How you store the seed will also affect germination rates. When a seed is cultivated there is a goal. Wear resistance, drought resistance and disease suppression are all factors. There is a cost involved with developing new seed. They do it for a reason, find out what that reason is.

- Perennial Ryegrass Blend: $400, 2 hours  
- Kentucky Bluegrass Blend: $600, 2 hours

**Topdressing**

You want soil to hold nutrients in the root zone for the plant to take up. You also want the water to drain to keep the field playable. An optimum root zone will allow you to fertilize less frequently by cutting down on leaching. Be sure not to alter material too much from existing soils to avoid layering.

- Sand: $900, 4 hours  
- Soil: $700, 4 hours

**Layout and Lining**

Cutting down lines first with a push mower will help keep them longer, especially on irrigated surfaces. User builders block paint; mix it 1:1 with water.

- Initial Lining: $130, 3 hours  
- Weekly Lining: $65, 1 hour

**Painting Goal Posts**

Done once a year using latex paint.  
$55, 1 hour

**Cutting and Fertilizing**

Irrigated fields are cut with a mower, which is floated and cut 2 times per week. Non-irrigated fields are cut every 10 days. This cost does not include fertilizer.

- Irrigated: $75, 1 hour  
- Non-irrigated: $55, 1 hour

**Weekly Inspection**

As with the ball diamonds, designing and distributing a checklist is very worthwhile ensuring that work completed is recorded and all points are checked. Again, inspection sheets are available from the Sports Turf Association.