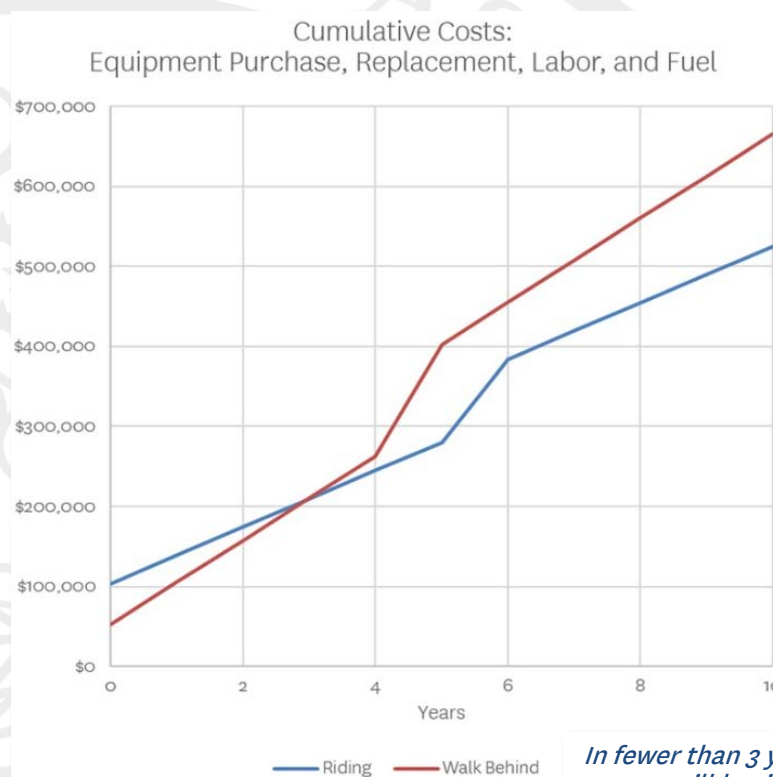


## Communicating The Need For New Equipment

By Brian Whitlark, agronomist, West Region | November 17, 2017



*In fewer than 3 years this golf course will begin to enjoy savings by switching from walk-behind mowers to riding mowers.*

Since the Great Recession, many golf facilities have deferred the capital expenditures needed to replace aging maintenance equipment. This has left them facing a variety of equipment-related issues including elevated costs for maintenance and repair, increased downtime and inferior mowing quality; all of which impact playing conditions.

New equipment purchases face a high degree of scrutiny and simply stating that a piece of equipment is too old won't necessarily justify replacement. Below are several successful ways of communicating the importance and value of investing in updated equipment:

1. **Quantify maintenance and repair costs** – A simple graph documenting escalating equipment repair and maintenance costs over time sends a powerful message.
2. **Quantify labor costs associated with equipment repairs** – Along with the labor costs incurred to make repairs are the lost labor hours that could have been

spent maintaining sharp mowing equipment and ensuring other equipment is operating at a high level.

**3. Utilize guest surveys** – There is a direct relationship between the quality and care of golf course maintenance equipment and course conditioning. If golfer surveys indicate a downturn in the quality of course conditioning, new equipment may help to improve golfer satisfaction.

**4. Track employee morale** – It is common to hear superintendents remark that new equipment boosts employee morale. If employees recognize that the facility is investing in equipment, they often feel the facility is investing in them as well. Golf facilities that invest in their agronomic team could experience less turnover and greater productivity.

**5. Compare operating costs** – New equipment may result in improved efficiency and reduced costs. For example, switching from walk-behind mowers to triplex mowers for putting greens can result in a rapid return on investment. Comparing the cumulative costs associated with an investment in updated equipment can help justify capital expenditures.

Putting yourself in the shoes of those whom must pay for an expensive piece of equipment can help determine how best to justify the need for large capital expenditures. If decision-makers recognize labor savings, potential for improved course conditions, or reduced repair and maintenance costs that often accompany new equipment purchases they are more likely to allocate the necessary funds.

For more information on managing equipment, please refer to the Green Section Collection, “[Equipment Management for Golf Courses](#),” and contact your local [USGA Agronomist](#).

## **West Region Agronomists:**

Patrick J. Gross, regional director – [pgross@usga.org](mailto:pgross@usga.org)

Larry W. Gilhuly, agronomist – [lgilhuly@usga.org](mailto:lgilhuly@usga.org)

Brian S. Whitlark, agronomist – [bwhitlark@usga.org](mailto:bwhitlark@usga.org)

[Information on the USGA’s Course Consulting Service](#)

[Contact the Green Section Staff](#)