

# Green Section Record

## REGIONAL UPDATE

June 5, 2020



*When there are lots of good options, it's important to have a plan so that you don't end up asking for everything and getting nothing.*

## HAMBURGER, CHEESEBURGER, HOTDOG

BY CORY ISOM | AGRONOMIST, WEST REGION

Sometimes it can be hard deciding how to spend someone else's money. Without a well-thought-out plan, superintendents are likely to hear the same response that Spaulding received from his grandfather, Judge Smails: "You'll get nothing and like it!" Spaulding should have had a better plan.

Long-range planning is one of the key pillars in a successful golf course maintenance program. Developing a long-range capital plan for your facility helps course decision-makers understand the future needs of the golf operation. Not only does this clearly lay out what is on the horizon for course officials to digest and plan for, it also ends up serving as a road map for future course operations. Knowing what projects or expenditures are on the list for the next few years makes it easier to achieve the best outcome.

Short of building a new clubhouse, most capital expenditures for a golf facility are heavily weighted toward the golf course maintenance operation. However, other departments need capital infusion as well. Having them participate in long-range capital planning helps everyone involved to better grasp the entire facility's needs.



For information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service Contact the Green Section Staff.

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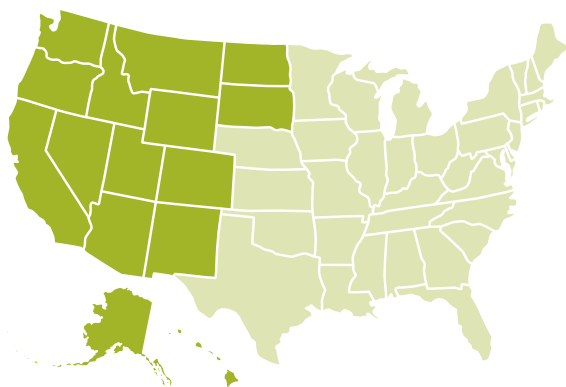
A good way to lay out such a plan would be to create a spreadsheet with three categories of future expenditures down the left side and the anticipated years of expense across the top. The three categories could be:

1. Immediate or Overdue: This category includes pressing needs like addressing health and safety issues and environmental hazards.
2. Recurring Expenses: These are investments that occur on a regular basis but do not necessarily require immediate action, like purchasing bunker sand and new equipment.
3. Wish List: These are larger improvements that are not necessary for current operations to continue. Examples include practice area expansion and bunker renovations.

In each year of projections, estimate the cost associated with each project or purchase in these categories. How many years you project is up to you, but I would recommend a minimum of five. Once you have done your homework on cost estimates, total up the columns at the bottom of each year to create your capital plan.

Long-range capital plans are rarely, if ever, set in stone. They act more like a guide or menu of where future funding could be allocated. Unexpected financial shortfalls or windfalls can subsequently alter planned capital expenditures. While you are not likely to get everything you ask for, creating a document like this shows course officials that you care about the facility and are taking steps to ensure its long-term success. That is a much better strategy than the Spaulding Smalls method.

For more strategies about optimizing a maintenance facility, please contact the USGA Green Section.



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