

ASPHALT VS. SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS – GO GREEN OR GO HOME?

*By: Michael Shereck, Regional Site Engineer, Rose Paving Co.,
and Ernest Wong, Principal, Site Design Group, Ltd.*



Spring is almost here, and what does that mean for most? Baseball and “Going Green!” Within the past few years, the green movement has swept the country and the world in ways we never could have imagined. Many U.S. businesses have altered their practices to become more sustainable, to keep up with the changing environment. This includes everything from increasing recycling efforts and using energy-efficient light bulbs to obtaining LEED certification points. As an asphalt paving company we, too, had to take a long, hard look and come up with ways to reevaluate our products and provide alternative solutions to our customers. In December of 2007, an opportunity presented itself, for both the baseball industry and Rose Paving.

Baseball stadiums around the country have made a commitment to “go green” in 2008 – through practices like energy use, purchasing, concession operations, water use, recycling and transportation. In the midst of all of this, Rose Paving had an opportunity to compare the cost and sustainability of a traditionally paved asphalt parking lot versus a permeable paved parking lot, for the home of a local World-Champion baseball team. Issues such as parking configurations, entrance and circulation patterns, security issues, pavement types, and landscape treatments, along with lighting improvements and identity treatments were explored in the beginning stages.



Corporate Headquarters 7300 W. 100th Place • Bridgeview, IL 60455
(888) 773-ROSE • rosepaving.com

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Ultimately, the permeable paved parking lot design was chosen, due economic savings, aesthetics, and most notably the storm water run-off capabilities. How does this fit in to the green movement, exactly? Permeable paved surfaces are better equipped to handle stormwater, due to the fact that it simply drains down, through the paver bricks, into the ground. There is no need for an underground water collection system, as the supporting bed of gravel underneath the pavers acts as a natural filter. This aligned with the City of Chicago's commitment to go green, and the new stormwater management ordinance.

Asphalt pavement has its benefits; but, for certain surfaces, there are alternative solutions available. Permeable paver surfaces are excellent for various parking lots including restaurant outdoor dining areas, lifestyle centers, drive lanes, and alleyways. Permeable paver surfaces withhold an immense amount of weight, making this solution more durable than traditional asphalt surfaces. The permeable paver bricks, manufactured by Unilock®, give the appearance of a rectangular design which can be incorporated into many different contemporary and classic design situations. In this case, the pavers support the heavy traffic loads exerted upon large stadium parking areas as well as allow stormwater to seep downward, trapping heavy metals and pollutants, rather than run off.

With all the competition to “go green,” companies of all industries are researching, reevaluating, and moving forward with various products and services to protect our precious environment. Rose Paving was given the opportunity to pinch hit in this unique situation, which has forever changed our company's capabilities. In today's world, we really must “go green,” or go home.



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