

ADD GOLF CAR PATHS TO YOUR MASTER PLAN

By James Martello, E-Z-Go Division of Textron, Augusta, GA



Cart paths can greatly enhance yearly revenue picture for most courses

Being in the golf car business, one of the first questions that comes to mind is . . . Why? Why car paths at all? Most of your southern courses and many Northern courses agree it is purely a matter of maximizing their golf car revenue.

In many wet situations car paths allow a course to remain open and capture a larger volume of play due to the never-ending availability of cars, which can greatly enhance your yearly revenue picture. Other important reasons for paths are to reduce soil compaction in heavily traveled areas and to standardize and direct traffic flow, thus reducing slow play problems.

Hilly courses utilize paths to minimize washout areas and soil erosion. Safety is also a factor to consider, especially in the early morning before the sun has a chance to burn off the dew.

Some of the considerations to take into account when in the planning stage of golf car path development are:

Path width: 6-10 feet with curbing or railroad ties along tee areas; with the norm being 8 feet.

Path depth: 6 inches depending on the material used and the use intended. Is it a *golf car path* or *maintenance road*? The norm has a 4 inch base consisting of stone,

gravel, sand, etc., with 2 inches of top paving. Some pregrading should be done to ready this area.

Material: LIMESTONE (traf-

TABLE 1

Cart path construction materials by percent use.

Asphalt	65
Gravel	45
Other:	17
9 mentions: Cement/concrete	
3 mentions: Dirt	
1 mention each:	
Limestone - Shells - Lava rock -	
Sand - Woodchips	
Don't have cart paths	12

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fic bond) - Used at 2-3 inch depths, depending on ground. This is a very resilient material and does present some periodic weeding and edging problems.

BLACK TOP - approximately \$1.50 per square foot. Some chippage can be expected around the edges. Easy to work with in forming the curbing.

CONCRETE - approximately \$2 per square foot. The best wearing surface and all agree the most durable. Very hard to walk on with golf spikes, but allows minimal maintenance and upkeep.

Regardless of material used, your cars should be equipped with power rib tires, which are thicker and allow longer tire in comparison to straight ribs.

In formulating your paths, ground conditions and traffic patterns are two important considerations. If conditions vary, it would be in your best interest to have whoever is going to do the work walk the course to inspect the different areas needing to be dealt with. Many people feel paths should be installed on new courses only after the course has been open from six months to a year; allowing the superintendent to get a feel for the traffic pattern, taking safety and playability into account. Others feel paths can be designed along with the new course. On existing courses, the superintendent and pro will have a good working knowledge of traffic patterns and how they relate to that operation.

Cost factors to consider include: material cost, pre and post grading, material and labor, direct labor, machinery rental and budget limitations. A golf course can vary these considerations from having an outside contractor doing the whole job to having the superintendent and crew performing this improvement or using any combination of club to outside help that the budget will allow. Most contractors are receptive to providing you with the best overall program within your limitations. Some courses even have long range programs consisting of two to three holes per year, taking cost factors into account.

I hope you will take the above factors into account and contact a local golf course architect firm or other courses in your area to help you gain the specific knowledge you need. **WTT**



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