



City of Austin
Planning Development Review Department

To: Building Contractors
From: Leon Barba, P.E., Building Official
Date: March 31, 2011
File: Code Interpretation Manual

INTERPRETATION NUMBER: CI2011-0002

TITLE: Accessible Pathway and Accessible Parking
CODE EDITION: 2009 International Building Code
SECTION: Chapter 11, Accessibility
PURPOSE: Can alternative materials such as granite gravel or gravel be acceptable as a paving material for accessible routes of travel and parking on a commercial project?

No. An accessible route is defined as a continuous, unobstructed path connecting all accessible elements and spaces of a building or facility. Exterior accessible routes include parking space aisles, curb ramps, crosswalks at vehicular ways, walkways, ramps and elevator lifts.

Under the Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS), Chapter 4.5.1, soft or loose materials such as sand, gravel, bark, mulch or wood chips are not suitable for ground surfaces along an accessible path. Typically, granite gravel is a crushed material that is angular in form. The material may be compacted sufficiently at initial placement, however, the material may erode or become saturated from rain or irrigation systems and not provide a stable nor firm surface as required by the TAS.

In certain situations, granite gravel may be used as part of an accessible path. This would be limited to walking trails or areas with recreational type developments, such as parks. Where allowed, running slope shall be no more than 5% (1:20) and cross slopes shall be no more than 2%. Drainage must also be addressed to keep water from ponding or allowing excessive velocities across the granite gravel surface.

In all other situations, the accessible route and parking space(s) should be constructed with a hard permanent surface such as concrete or an asphalt paving material. Use of pavers or other materials is discouraged because these materials may shift over time and create an irregular or unstable surface.

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