



Jon Young

# How Important Are Asphalt Consultants?

**D**o it yourself (DIY) or hire a consultant? That is the question asked by many property and facility managers when it comes to taking care of their asphalt parking lots.

## Ask yourself the following questions:

- Can I make an evaluation of the pavement condition?
- Am I familiar with the applicable rules, regulations and standards?
- Do I know what paving and maintenance options are available?
- Do I know how to make a bid package of plans and specifications?
- Am I familiar with construction permits needed and typical practices?

It's a DIY project if your answer to the above questions is a "yes," but if most of your responses are a "no," it may be time you consider hiring a professional civil engineering company as your consultant.

Property and facility managers need to maintain or improve their parking lot for the comfort and use of their tenants or customers. Often, they request contractors to bid on their job without any plans or specifications. This process typically results in the bidders having different interpretations of the scope of work. The submitted bids end up having very different quantities and costs, making it difficult for a manager to determine which bid will give them the results they desire.

## As part of their services, a consultant can:

- Evaluate the existing pavement deficiencies and determine the appropriate repair.
- Determine if the pavement needs to have a surface treatment applied



or the lot repaved.

- Help the manager to prepare a clearly defined scope of work that balances the options for improvements within the available funding.
- Discuss construction phasing of the project to minimize the effect on the occupants of the facility.
- Prepare a set of plans and specifications that contractors can use to estimate their work, resulting in comparable bids.
- Inform the manager of the required permits and provide help and guidance for obtaining them.
- Review the bids for compliance to the plans and specifications.
- Assist during the construction to see that the work is in general conformance with the plans and specifications.

If you decide to hire a consultant, how do you find one? A couple of suggestions for finding a consultant are: 1) ask other managers who they have used for their facilities, and 2) check with the Hawaii Asphalt Paving Industry for their list of consultant members who have experience with the design and construction of parking lots.

Before you select a consultant, you may want to discuss your project with two or three companies to gain an under-

standing of their approach to solving your situation. Select the consultant who has the best understanding of your needs and has the qualifications to provide the services needed for the project. Based on these criteria, the selected consultant may not have the lowest fee, but will strive to design a quality project that will save money not only during design and construction, but over the life of the project. Most importantly, select a consultant that you feel comfortable working with.

If you are unfamiliar with the requirements of the design and construction process, please consider hiring a consultant to help you. A consultant will act as your expert on parking lot improvements, and will work with you to achieve your goals for the project with considerations of your schedule and budget. Best of all, a consultant will help to ensure the result of your project matches your expectations and is something you can be proud of.

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