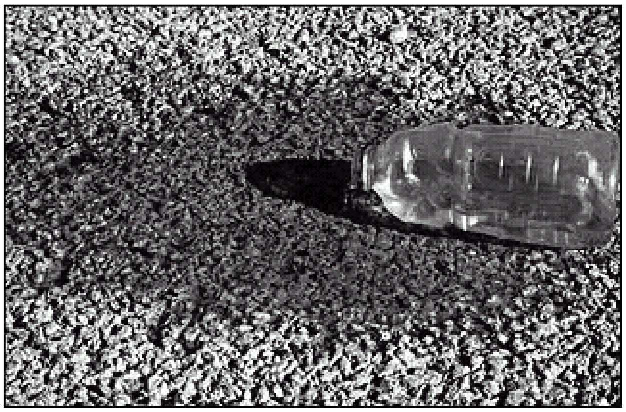
3.3.7 Porous Concrete

Limited Application
Structural Stormwater Control



Description: Porous concrete is the term for a mixture of coarse aggregate, portland cement and water that allows for rapid infiltration of water and overlays a stone aggregate reservoir. This reservoir provides temporary storage as runoff infiltrates into underlying permeable soils and/or out through an underdrain system.

REASONS FOR LIMITED USE

- Traditionally high failure rate and short life span
- Intended for low volume auto traffic areas, or for overflow parking applications
- High maintenance requirements
- Special attention to design and construction needed
- Should not be used in areas of soils with low permeability, wellhead protection zones, or recharge areas of water supply aquifer recharge areas.
- Restrictions on use by heavy vehicles

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Soil infiltration rate of 0.5 in/hr or greater required
- Excavated area filled with stone media; gravel and sand filter layers with observation well
- Pre-treat runoff if sediment present
- Provides reduction in runoff volume
- Somewhat higher cost when compared to conventional pavements
- Potential for high failure rate if poorly designed, poorly constructed, not adequately maintained or used in unstabilized areas
- Potential for groundwater contamination

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SUITABILITY

- ☑ **Water Quality**
- ✪ **Channel/Flood Protection**

SPECIAL APPLICATIONS

- ☐ **Pretreatment**
- ☑ **High Density/Ultra-Urban**
- ☑ **Other: Overflow Parking, Driveways & related uses**

Residential Subdivision Use: *Yes*
(in common areas that are maintained)

✪ in certain situations

3.3.7.1 General Description

Porous concrete (also referred to as *enhanced porosity concrete*, *porous concrete*, *portland cement pervious pavement* and *pervious pavement*) is a subset of a broader family of pervious pavements including porous asphalt, and various kinds of grids and paver systems. Porous concrete is thought to have a greater ability than porous asphalt to maintain its porosity in hot weather and thus is provided as a limited application control. Although, porous concrete has seen growing use in Georgia, there is still very limited practical experience with this measure. According to the U.S. EPA, porous pavement sites have had a high failure rate – approximately 75 percent. Failure has been attributed to poor design, inadequate construction techniques, soils with low permeability, heavy vehicular traffic and poor maintenance. This measure, if used, should be carefully monitored over the life of the development.

Porous concrete consists of a specially formulated mixture of portland cement, uniform, open graded course aggregate, and water. The concrete layer has a high permeability, often many times that of the underlying permeable soil layer, and allows rapid percolation of rainwater through the surface and into the layers beneath. The void space in porous concrete is in the 15% to 22% range compared to three to five percent for conventional pavements. The permeable surface is placed over a layer of open-graded gravel and crushed stone. The void spaces in the stone act as a storage reservoir for runoff.

Porous concrete is designed primarily for stormwater quality, i.e. the removal of stormwater pollutants. However, they can provide limited runoff quantity control, particularly for smaller storm events. For some smaller sites, trenches can be designed to capture and infiltrate the channel protection volume (Cp_v) in addition to WQ_v. Porous concrete will need to be used in conjunction with another structural control to provide overbank and extreme flood protection, if required.

Modifications or additions to the standard design have been used to pass flows and volumes in excess of the water quality volume, or to increase storage capacity or treatment. These include:

- Placing a perforated pipe near the top of the crushed stone reservoir to pass excess flows after the reservoir is filled
- Providing surface detention storage in a parking lot, adjacent swale, or detention pond with suitable overflow conveyance
- Connecting the stone reservoir layer to a stone filled trench
- Adding a sand layer and perforated pipe beneath the stone layer for filtration of the water quality volume
- Placing an underground detention tank or vault system beneath the layers

The infiltration rate of the soils in the subgrade should be adequate to support drawdown of the entire runoff capture volume within 24 to 48 hours. Special care must be taken during construction to avoid undue compaction of the underlying soils which could affect the soils' infiltration capability.

Porous concrete systems are typically used in low-traffic areas such as the following types of applications:

- Parking pads in parking lots
- Overflow parking areas
- Residential street parking lanes
- Recreational trails
- Golf cart and pedestrian paths
- Emergency vehicle and fire access lanes

Slopes should be flat or gentle to facilitate infiltration versus runoff and the seasonally high water table or bedrock should be a minimum of two feet below the bottom of the gravel layer if infiltration is to be relied on to remove the stored volume.

Porous concrete has the positive characteristics of volume reduction due to infiltration, groundwater recharge, and an ability to blend into the normal urban landscape relatively unnoticed. It also allows a reduction in the cost of other stormwater infrastructure, a fact that may offset the greater placement cost somewhat.

A drawback is the cost and complexity of porous concrete systems compared to conventional pavements. Porous concrete systems require a very high level of construction workmanship to ensure that they function as designed. They experience a high failure rate if they are not designed, constructed and maintained properly.

Like other infiltration controls, porous concrete should not be used in areas that experience high rates of wind erosion or in drinking water aquifer recharge areas.

3.3.7.2 Pollutant Removal Capabilities

As they provide for the infiltration of stormwater runoff, porous concrete systems have a high removal of both soluble and particulate pollutants, where they become trapped, absorbed or broken down in the underlying soil layers. Due to the potential for clogging, porous concrete surfaces should not be used for the removal of sediment or other coarse particulate pollutants.

The following design pollutant removal rates are conservative average pollutant reduction percentages for design purposes derived from sampling data, modeling and professional judgment.

- **Total Suspended Solids – not applicable**
- **Total Phosphorus – 50%**
- **Total Nitrogen – 65%**
- **Fecal Coliform – insufficient data**
- **Heavy Metals – 60%**

Pollutant removal can be improved through routine vacuum sweeping and high pressure washing, insuring a drainage time of at least 24 hours, pretreating the runoff, having organic material in the subsoil, and using clean washed aggregate (EPA, 1999).

3.3.7.3 Design Criteria and Specifications

- Porous concrete systems can be used where the underlying in-situ subsoils have an infiltration rate greater than 0.5 inches per hour. Therefore, porous concrete systems are not suitable on sites with hydrologic group D or most group C soils, or soils with a high (>30%) clay content. During construction and preparation of the subgrade, special care must be taken to avoid compaction of the soils.

- Porous concrete systems should typically be used in applications where the pavement receives tributary runoff only from impervious areas. Actual pervious surface area sizing will depend on achieving a 24 hour minimum and 48 hour maximum draw down time for the design storm volume.

- If runoff is coming from adjacent pervious areas, it is important that those areas be fully stabilized to reduce sediment loads and prevent clogging of the porous paver surface. Pretreatment using filter strips or vegetated swales for removal of course sediments is recommended. (see sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2)

- Porous concrete systems should not be used on slopes greater than 5% with slopes of no greater than 2% recommended. For slopes greater than 1% barriers perpendicular to the direction of drainage should be installed in sub-grade material to keep it from washing away, or filter fabric should be placed at the bottom and sides of the aggregate to keep soil from migrating into the aggregate and reducing porosity.

- A minimum of four feet of clearance is recommended (may be reduced to two feet in coastal areas) between the bottom of the gravel base course and underlying bedrock or the seasonally high groundwater table.

- Porous concrete systems should be sited at least 10 feet down-gradient from buildings and 100 feet away from drinking water wells.

- To protect groundwater from potential contamination, runoff from designated hotspot land uses or activities must not be infiltrated. Porous concrete should not be used for manufacturing and industrial sites, where there is a potential for high concentrations of soluble pollutants and heavy metals. In addition, porous concrete should not be considered for areas with a high pesticide concentration. Porous concrete is also not suitable in areas with karst geology without adequate geotechnical testing by qualified individuals and in accordance with local requirements.

- Porous concrete system designs must use some method to convey larger storm event flows to the conveyance system. One option is to use storm drain inlets set slightly above the elevation of the pavement. This would allow for some ponding above the surface, but would accept bypass flows that are too large to be infiltrated by the porous concrete system, or if the surface clogs.

- For the purpose of sizing downstream conveyance and structural control system, porous concrete surface areas can be assumed to 35% impervious. In addition, credit can be taken for the runoff volume infiltrated from other impervious areas using the methodology in Section 3.1.

- For treatment control, the design volume should be, at a minimum, equal to the water quality volume. The water quality storage volume is contained in the surface layer, the aggregate reservoir, and the sub-grade above the seasonal high water table – if the sub-grade is sandy. The storm duration (fill time) is normally short compared to the infiltration rate of the sub-grade, a duration of <u>two hours</u> can be used for design purposes. The total storage volume in a layer is equal to the percent of voids times the volume of the layer. Alternately storage may be created on the surface through temporary ponding, though this would tend to accelerate clogging if course sediment or mud settles out on the surface.

- The cross-section typically consists of four layers, as shown in Figure 3.3.7-1. The aggregate reservoir can sometimes be avoided or minimized if the sub-grade is sandy and there is adequate time to infiltrate the necessary runoff volume into the sandy soil without by-passing the water quality volume. Descriptions of each of the layers is presented below:

  <u>Porous Concrete Layer</u> – The porous concrete layer consists of an open-graded concrete mixture usually ranging from depths of 2 to 4 inches depending on required bearing strength and pavement design requirements. Porous concrete can be assumed to contain 18 percent voids (porosity = 0.18) for design purposes. Thus, for example, a 4 inch thick porous concrete layer would hold 0.72 inches of rainfall. The omission of the fine aggregate provides the porosity of the porous pavement. To provide a smooth riding surface and to enhance handling and placement a coarse aggregate of 3/8 inch maximum size is normally used. Use GDOT No. 8 coarse aggregate (3/8 to No. 16) per ASTM C 33 or No. 89 coarse aggregate (3/8 to No. 50) per ASTM D 448. See the GCPA specifications (referenced).

  <u>Top Filter Layer</u> – Consists of a 0.5 inch diameter crushed stone to a depth of 1 to 2 inches. This layer serves to stabilize the porous asphalt layer. Can be combined with reservoir layer using suitable stone.

  <u>Reservoir Layer</u> – The reservoir gravel base course consists of washed, bank-run gravel, 1.5 to 2.5 inches in diameter with a void space of about 40% (GADOT No.3 Stone). The depth of this layer depends on the desired storage volume, which is a function of the soil infiltration rate and void spaces, but typically ranges from two to four feet. The layer must have a minimum depth of nine inches. The layer should be designed to drain completely in 48 hours. layer should be designed to store at a minimum the water quality volume (WQ_v). Aggregate contaminated with soil shall not be used. A porosity value (void space/total volume) of 0.32 should be used in calculations unless aggregate specific data exist. .

  <u>Bottom Filter Layer</u> – The surface of the subgrade should be an 6 inch layer of sand (ASTM C-33 concrete sand or GADOT Fine Aggregate Size No. 10) or a 2 inch thick layer of 0.5 inch crushed stone, and be completely flat to promote infiltration across the entire surface. This layer serves to stabilize the reservoir layer, to protect the underlying soil from compaction, and act as the interface between the reservoir layer and the filter fabric covering the underlying soil.

  <u>Filter Fabric</u> – It is very important to line the entire trench area, including the sides, with filter fabric prior to placement of the aggregate. The filter fabric serves a very important function by inhibiting soil from migrating into the reservoir layer and reducing storage capacity. Fabric should be MIRFI # 14 N or equivalent.

Underlying Soil – The underlying soil should have an infiltration capacity of at least 0.5 in/hr, but preferably greater than 0.50 in/hr. as initially determined from NRCS soil textural classification, and subsequently confirmed by field geotechnical tests. The minimum geotechnical testing is one test hole per 5000 square feet, with a minimum of two borings per facility (taken within the proposed limits of the facility). Infiltration trenches cannot be used in fill soils. Soils at the lower end of this range may not be suited for a full infiltration system. Test borings are recommended to determine the soil classification, seasonal high ground water table elevation, and impervious substrata, and an initial estimate of permeability. Often a double-ring infiltrometer test is done at subgrade elevation to determine the impermeable layer, and, for safety, one-half the measured value is allowed for infiltration calculations.

- The pit excavation should be limited to the width and depth specified in the design. Excavated material should be placed away from the open trench as not to jeopardize the stability of the trench sidewalls. The bottom of the excavated trench should not be loaded so as to cause compaction, and should be scarified prior to placement of sand. The sides of the trench shall be trimmed of all large roots. The sidewalls shall be uniform with no voids and scarified prior to backfilling. All infiltration trench facilities should be protected during site construction, and should be constructed after upstream areas have been stabilized.

- An observation well consisting of perforated PVC pipe 4 to 6 inches in diameter should be placed at the downstream end of the facility and protected. The well should be used to determine actual infiltration rates.

- A warning sign should be placed at the facility that states, “Porous Paving used on this site to reduce pollution. Do not resurface with non-porous material. Call XXX-XXXX for more information.”

- Details of construction of the concrete layer are beyond the scope of this manual. However, construction of porous concrete is exacting, and requires special handling, timing, and placement to perform adequately (LACDPW, 2000, Paine, 1992, Maryland, 1984).

3.3.7.4 Inspection and Maintenance Requirements

Table 3.3.7-1 Typical Maintenance Activities for Porous Concrete Systems

Activity	Schedule
• Initial inspection	Monthly for three months after installation
• Ensure that the porous paver surface is free of sediment	Monthly
• Ensure that the contributing and adjacent area is stabilized and mowed, with clippings removed	As needed, based on inspection
• Vacuum sweep porous concrete surface followed by high pressure hosing to keep pores free of sediment	Four times a year
• Inspect the surface for deterioration or spalling • Check to make sure that the system dewaters between storms	Annually
• Spot clogging can be handled by drilling half-inch holes through the pavement every few feet • Rehabilitation of the porous concrete system, including the top and base course as needed	Upon failure

To ensure proper maintenance of porous pavement, a carefully worded maintenance agreement is essential. It should include specific the specific requirements and establish the responsibilities of the property owner and provide for enforcement.

3.3.7.5 Example Schematics

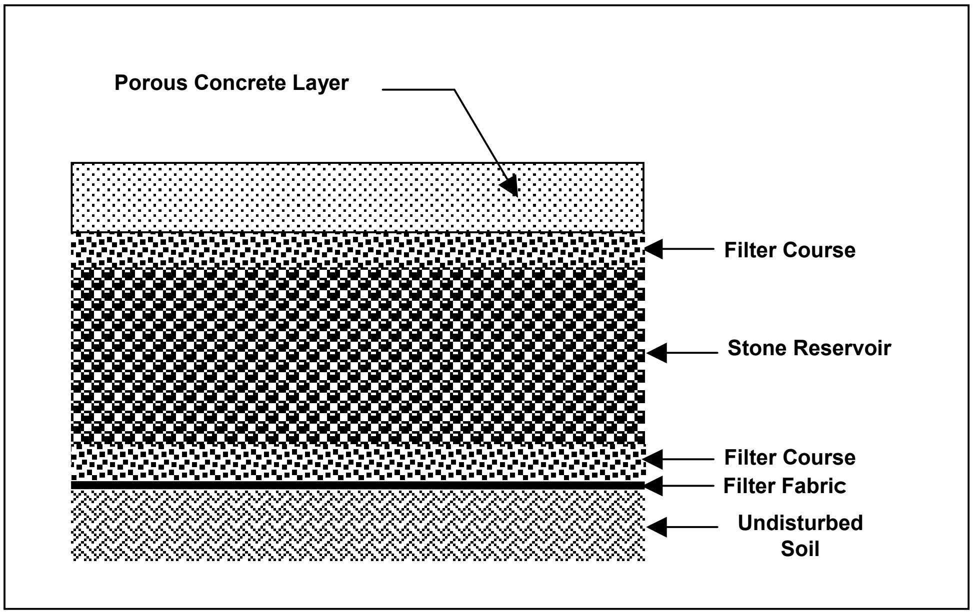


Figure 3.3.7-1 Porous Concrete System Section
(Modified From: LAC 2000)

Figure 3.3.7-2 Porous Concrete System Installation

Figure 3.3.7-3 Typical Porous Concrete System Applications
(Photos by Bruce Ferguson, Don Wade)

3.3.7.6 Design Example

Data

A 1.5 acre overflow parking area is to be designed to provide water quality treatment using porous concrete for at least part of the site to handle the runoff from the whole overflow parking area. Initial data shows:

- Borings show depth to water table is 5.0 feet
- Boring and infiltrometer tests show sand-loam with percolation rate (k) of 1.02 inches/hr
- Structural design indicates the thickness of the porous concrete must be at least three inches

Water Quality Volume

R_v = 0.05 + 0.009 **I** (where **I** = 100 percent)
= 0.95

WQ_v = 1.2 R_v A / 12 = 1.2 * 0.95 * 1.5/12 converted to cubic feet from acre-feet
= 6,207 cubic feet

Surface Area

A porosity value n = 0.32 should be used for the gravel and 0.18 for the concrete layer.

All infiltration systems should be designed to fully de-water the entire WQ_v within 24 to 48 hours after the rainfall event at the design percolation rate.

A fill time T=2 hours can be used for most designs

Chose a depth of gravel pit of three feet (including layer under concrete) which fits the site with a two foot minimum to water table (other lesser depths could be chosen, making the surface area larger). The minimum surface area of the trench can be determined, in a manner similar to the infiltration trench, from the following equation:

$$A = WQ_v/(n_g d_g + kT/12 + n_p d_p)$$

$$= 6{,}207/(0.32*3 + 1.02*2/12 + 0.18 * 3/12)$$

$$= 5{,}283 \text{ square feet}$$

Where:

A = Surface Area
WQv = Water Quality Volume (or total volume to be infiltrated)
n = porosity (g of the gravel, p of the concrete layer)
d = depth or gravel layer (feet) (g of the gravel, p of the concrete layer)
k = percolation (inches/hour)
T= Fill Time (time for the practice to fill with water), in hours

Check of drain time:
depth = 3*12 + 3 inches to sand layer = 39 inches @ 1.02 in/hr = 38 hours (ok)

Overflow will be carried across the porous concrete and tied into the drainage system for the rest of the site.