

Alternatives to Impervious Surfaces



As a West Burlington residential property owner, there are several alternatives you can use to decrease the impact of storm water runoff on your property. These may be used to accommodate an increase in Impervious Surface beyond the maximum allowable. You will need to consult with the City beforehand, to ensure that the materials used are adequate for the task.

Even in cases where the maximum will not yet be met, you are encouraged to consider these strategies for your property, as an extra measure for controlling the impacts of storm water runoff for yourself and your neighbors.

Permeable Pavers

A range of specialized paving materials are available, which have small cracks and openings that allow water to drain into the soil below. These can be used for driveways, walkways, or patio surfaces.



Rain Gardens

A rain garden is one composed of native, deep-rooted plant species that are especially capable of absorbing and retaining rainwater, much more so than ordinary turf grass.



They have both functional and aesthetic advantages, when maintained on a residential property. They are planted in a shallow depression below ground level, and are best positioned near a paved surface, downspout, or sump pump discharge.

Rain Barrels

This refers to devices specially designed to collect and store runoff diverted from the roof, which enters them directly from an attachment to a downspout.



Rain barrels often have an attachment for a hose, allowing the rain water to be recycled for landscaping and gardening purposes.

Cisterns

A cistern is a large underground tank that is used to collect rainwater. To enhance its usefulness, a downspout may be placed above it, to collect additional water from the roof.

If you have an older home that is already equipped with an underground tank, you may use this as a substitution. However, for safety purposes, the City's Building Inspector will need to evaluate it first.



City of West Burlington

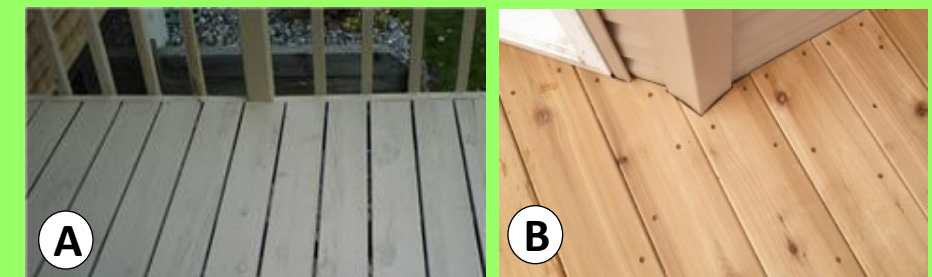
Maximum Impervious Surface Regulations for Residential Properties

What is an Impervious Surface?

An impervious surface is any form of ground cover which prevents the ready absorption and retention of water during rainfall events, resulting in runoff from the property. This can include, but is not limited to, any of the following hard surfaces:



Decks are considered pervious (A) if they are slatted – with crevices for water to seep through to the soil below. If the boards are sealed together (B), or there is a concrete layer beneath, then they are impervious.



****Note:** This provision only concerns the physical area, or surface footprint of a structure – not the *height, number of stories, or setbacks*.

Why is it necessary to regulate Impervious Surfaces?

The storm water runoff created by impervious surfaces can overwhelm the city's storm sewers, and result in costly consequences for the City and individual homeowners alike. Basements can flood, and water collects in puddles on patios, driveways, sidewalks, or alleys.

Limiting the amount of Impervious Surface allowed on individual properties helps ensure that no one is contributing more than their fair share of burden on the City storm sewer system. It also allows each homeowner's use of their property to be judged according to the same standard, citywide.



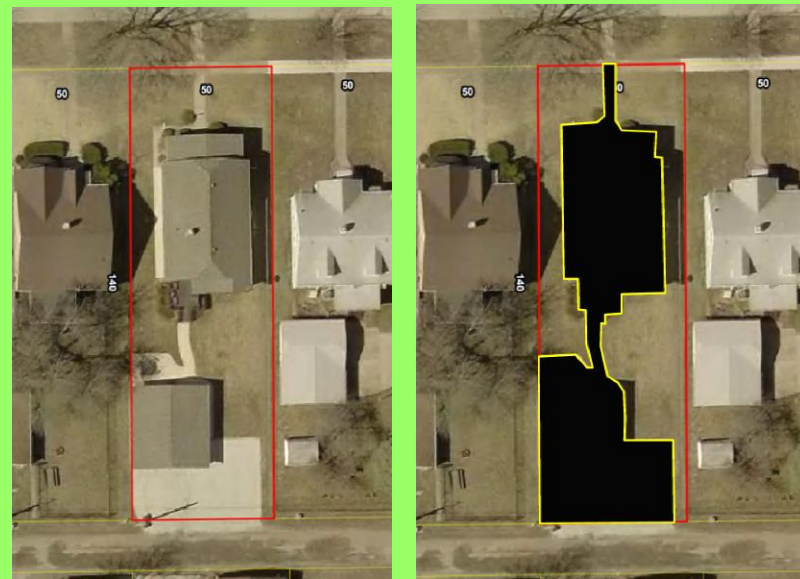
The Requirements

How much Impervious Surface can I have on my property?

The amount of Impervious Surface allowed is proportional to the overall size of your property. Basically, the larger your property is, the less amount of land area may be covered by Impervious Surfaces, and vice versa. Smaller sized properties likely require a larger percentage of space be devoted to desirable home amenities such as patios, decks, sheds, or driveways. Larger properties tend to have more excess space to devote to open yards, lawns, and vegetation such as trees, bushes, and flower gardens.

The following table shows the maximum allowable impervious surface for residential lots, based on the overall size of each lot, whether single, two, or multi-family.

Single and Two-Family* Residential	
Lot Size	Maximum Impervious Surface
6000 SF or less	60% of total lot area
6,001 – 7,500 SF	55% of total lot area
7,501 – 10,000 SF	50% of total lot area
10,001 – 15,000 SF	45% of total lot area
15,001 – 20,000 SF	40% of total lot area
20,001 – 25,000 SF	35% of total lot area
25,001 – 30,000 SF	30% of total lot area
30,001 or more	25% of total lot area



Lot Size: 7,000 SF
Impervious Area: 3,700 SF (53% of total)

*A Duplex counts as a single lot.

Multi-Family Residential*	
Density	Maximum Impervious Surface
2-4 Units per Dwelling	55% of total area of the complex
5 or More Units per Dwelling	60% of the total area of the complex



11-unit condominium complex
Lot Size: 92,600 SF
Impervious Area: 51,000 SF (55% of total)

*Includes Apartment, Condominium, and Townhome complexes

What happens if my property already exceeds the maximum allowed?

This provision of the Zoning Ordinance is not retroactive, meaning that it does not require that changes be made to existing properties that do not conform. The provision is designed to regulate future development in West Burlington, not to impose new and arbitrary requirements on existing homes.

What if I want to add onto my existing home?

While this provision protects pre-existing structures and paved surfaces on a non-conforming property, its requirements still apply to any significant addition to an existing home, such as a new patio, a widened driveway, or enlarged garage. If your property already exceeds the maximum amount of impervious surface allowed, then you will not be allowed to add any more, unless you use one of the substitutions illustrated on the back of this handout.

What if I plan to rebuild my existing home?

If you intend to rebuild a new house, garage, or shed on the site of the old one, and your property currently exceeds the maximum impervious surface allowable, you may only rebuild if the surface footprint of the new structure will be **the same** or **smaller** than the old one. The replacement structure may not increase the amount of impervious surface present. This includes structures that were damaged by fire or other natural disaster.

Rebuild

Same Owner

Same size or smaller



What if I'm redeveloping a property that was previously non-conforming?

If you are developing a new home on the site of a previously demolished home, or have purchased the property with the intention of demolishing the existing, unoccupied dwelling, then this will be treated the same as a new home on a previously undeveloped site. In such a case, the new home must comply with the maximum impervious surface requirement, regardless of whether or not the previous dwelling was in compliance.

Redevelop

New Owner

Must conform

