

Department of Community and Economic Development  
Planning Division  
**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/CODE INTERPRETATION**

**MUNICIPAL  
CODE SECTIONS:**

RMC 4-2-110 and 4-2-120, Development Standards for Impervious Surfacing in Residential and Commercial Zoning Designations and RMC 4-11-090, definition of “Impervious Surface”

**REFERENCE:**

N/A

**SUBJECT:**

Clarification of the types of site improvements qualifying as “impervious surfacing”

**BACKGROUND:**

Recent amendments to Municipal Code regarding storm drainage place a maximum limitation on the total percent of a lot that can be covered with “impervious surfacing”. Further clarification of this term is needed for consistent implementation. A customer has asked whether his specific project, a brick patio laid over and backfilled with sand, would count toward the maximum allowable impervious surfacing. To ensure consistency in implementation among the various City staff dealing with the standards, clarification of some of the provisions is necessary.

**JUSTIFICATION:**

RMC Section 4-11-090 I currently briefly defines “impervious surface” as follows: “Any material that *substantially* reduces or prevents the infiltration of stormwater into the surface of the ground, including graveled surfaces”.

Further clarification of this term is needed in order for staff to consistently calculate the amount of impervious surfacing created by various types of site improvements.

The City’s newly adopted Surface Water Design Manual adopts the 2009 King County Surface Water Design Manual which defines the term (in part) as follows: “**Impervious surface** means a hard surface area that either prevents or retards the entry of water into the soil mantle as under natural conditions before development; or that causes water to run off the surface in greater quantities or at an increased rate of flow from the flow present under natural conditions prior to development (see also “new impervious surface”). Common impervious surfaces include, but are not limited to, roof, walkways, patios, driveways, parking lots, or storage areas, areas that are paved, graveled or made of packed

*or oiled earthen materials or other surfaces that similarly impede the natural infiltration of surface and storm water.”*

Other improvements in need of categorization include deck surfacing that is open (e.g. not covered with plywood), crushed rock, natural stone or other pavers, brick patios made with sand or concrete, and grasscrete-type material.

The County Manual identifies certain types of improvements which are given a 50% credit due to their permeability. However, the County Manual gives no credit to crushed rock, pavers/slate, or brick patios (sanded or concreted) and other similar installations.

**DECISION:** For the purposes of zoning standards implementation:

The following types of coverage materials are counted toward each zone’s maximum impervious surface limit: concrete, asphalt, decking that is not open, gravel, crushed rock, natural stone or other pavers, and brick patios made with sand or concrete. These are meant to provide guidance to staff and are not meant to provide an exhaustive list of impervious surfacing.

Open grid decking over pervious areas, wheel strip driveways, porous concrete, porous asphaltic concrete, permeable pavers, and modular grid pavement are semi-pervious surfaces and are counted toward each zone’s maximum impervious surface limit. However, these are counted at only 50% of the total area installed.

**PLANNING DIRECTOR  
APPROVAL:**

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C. E. “Chip” Vincent

**DATE:** August 10, 2010

**APPEAL  
PROCESS:**

To appeal this determination, a written appeal--accompanied by the required filing fee--must be filed with the City's Hearing Examiner (1055 South Grady Way, Renton, WA 98057, 425-430-6515) no more than 14 days from the date of this decision. Your submittal should explain the basis for the appeal. Section 4-8-110 of the Renton Municipal Code provides further information on the appeal process.

**CODE  
AMENDMENT  
NEEDED TO  
IMPLEMENT  
DETERMINATION:**

RMC Section 4-11-090, definition of Impervious Surface will to be amended to read as shown on Attachment A.

## Attachment A

RMC 4-11-090, Definition of Impervious Surfacing, should be amended to be more consistent with the definition found in the King County Surface Water Design Manual as adopted by the City of Renton to read as follows:

~~Any material that substantially reduces or prevents the infiltration of stormwater into the surface of the ground, including graveled surfaces.~~ **Impervious surface** means a hard surface area that either prevents or retards the entry of water into the soil mantle as under natural conditions before development; or that causes water to run off the surface in greater quantities or at an increased rate of flow from the flow present under natural conditions prior to development. Common impervious surfaces include, but are not limited to, concrete; asphalt; roofs; walkways; crushed rock; patios; brick, natural stone or other non-pervious pavers (even when set with only sand); decking that is not open grid; open grid decking over impervious areas; driveways; parking lots or storage areas; areas that are graveled or made of packed or oiled earthen materials; or other surfaces that similarly impede the natural infiltration of surface and storm water. Open grid decking over pervious areas, wheel strip driveways, porous concrete, porous asphaltic concrete, permeable pavers, and modular grid pavement are semi-pervious surfaces and are counted at only 50% of total area for purposes of evaluating compliance with the zoning standards' impervious surfacing maximum limitations. To be considered as a semi-pervious surface, the proposal must be in compliance with Appendix C of King County's Surface Water Design Manual and manufacturer specifications.