

Town of Skaneateles
Lot Coverage –Impermeable Surface INTERIM Guidelines

Page 1

Date: January 2021

Maximum Lot Coverage and Impermeable Surface are zoning requirements (see 148-12 Definitions for exact text) fulfilling important roles in the Town’s efforts to address storm-water run-off and to protect the water quality of the Town’s surface waters – especially Skaneateles Lake.

The Minimum Open Space requirement specifies the amount of land to be retained as undeveloped green land (lawn, shrubs, trees, plantings, gardens, and other forms of vegetated area) and limits the total amount of development that might occur on a lot. It varies from 80% to 20% of lot area depending on the district and land use. Most of the town is in the RR and RF districts where there is an 80% Minimum Open Space requirement. This means that on a typical residential lot that a maximum 20% of the lot may be developed or occupied by man-made improvements (house, garage, shed, walks and driveways).

However, a portion of that 20% developable space is further limited to be below the Maximum Impermeable Surface requirement (typically 10% of total lot area). This requires the Town and property-owner to distinguish between improvements that are considered permeable (allowing water to penetrate the ground) and those improvements that are impermeable (designed to shed water to adjacent areas). The intensity and character of a lot’s development is shaped by how these improvements are defined and interpreted.

The following guidelines are intended to help explain how the Town will interpret, apply, and enforce the Total Lot Coverage and Impermeable Surface Requirements of the Zoning Code.

Permeable Paving systems for walks, paths, and patios

Materials - can be comprised of any man-made or natural material that is cut, molded, or otherwise shaped to meet the size and installation specifications below. Examples include washed gravel, clay brick, concrete pavers, slate, limestone, fiberglass, or plastic.

Maximum Size – the maximum size of an individual paving unit (paver) is **3 x 3 ft.** Pavers may be irregular in shape but in no case shall they exceed **9 sq. ft.** in area.

Installation method – pavers should be placed over a dry permeable granular base; all gaps between pavers are to be filled with sand or a comparable permeable granular material. Soil base, soil filler or any self-hardening filler (polymeric sand) is **not** recommended.

Minimum Gap Spacing – each paver shall have a surrounding gap that has a minimum uniform gap-width. This gap-width shall be based on whether the pavers are regularly or irregularly shaped.

- Regularly shaped pavers may be either rectangular (includes squares) or non-rectangular shapes (includes circles, hexagons, octagons, etc.). There shall be a 1-inch gap-width: for every 1 ft. of length on the **shortest** side of a rectangular shaped paver; **or** a 1-inch gap-width for every 1 ft. across the diameter of a non-rectangular paver. Fractional portions of paver length shall be rounded to the nearest foot.
- Irregularly shaped pavers might be natural or processed stones or other materials and may have a variety of uneven measurements. For these pavers, the Town Codes Enforcement Officer shall establish a minimum uniform gap that is based on the ratio 1” gap/ 1 ft. of paver length and based on a representative side length of all the pavers to be used within a specified paving area.
- Wood edging for purpose of decoration or to hold pavers in place will be considered permeable and shall also not require a spacing gap to the adjacent pavers.

<i>examples NON-common pavers</i>	<i>Common “retail ”pavers</i>
<i>(Greater than 1’x1’)</i>	<i>(Equal to OR Less than 1’x1’)</i>
3 x 3 ft paver - 3” gap.	1’ x 1 ft. paver – minimum gap per installation instructions
3 x 2 ft paver - 2” gap.	6” x 1 ft. paver - ” “ “
2 x 2 ft paver - 2” gap	3” x 8” brick - ” “ “

Town of Skaneateles
Total Lot Coverage –Impermeable Surface INTERIM Guidelines

Date: January 2021

Page 2

Walls

Walls will be subject to the Total Lot Coverage and Maximum Impermeable Surface requirements depending on size, composition, and purpose.

These guidelines **do not alter** when a wall is subject to approval for special permit or site plan review. (see also 148-5-4.J – determining steep slope location).

Retaining walls –Limited Exemption – Dry-laid retaining wall(s) cumulatively **less than 20 sq. ft.** in area and without walkable surfaces **will not** be subject to Total Lot Coverage or Maximum Impermeable Surface requirements.

Retaining Walls – Open Space – Dry-laid retaining wall(s) cumulatively **greater than 20 sq. ft.** in area **will be** subject to calculation for Total Lot Coverage, however – the first 20 sq. ft. shall not count.

Retaining Walls – Impermeable Surface – Any dry-laid retaining wall with a walkable top surface **will be** subject to calculation for Maximum Impermeable Surface and Total Lot Coverage.

Seawalls - (see staff letter of 2/12/2008) Exempt from impermeable surface calculation but included in Total Lot Coverage when used solely for erosion control and **without** a walkable surface.

Landscaping walls – limited exemption– any dry-laid landscaping wall installed for decorative purposes and when less than 1-foot vertical height **will not** be subject to Total Lot Coverage.

Mechanical and Other structures

Mechanical pads – are pad(s) installed flush to the ground surface to support mechanical equipment (such as: HVAC, A/C, generators) and when cumulatively equal to or less than 16 sq. ft. **will not** be subject to Total Lot Coverage or Maximum Impermeable Surface requirements. More than 16 sq. ft. cumulatively on a lot shall be subject to Total Lot Coverage or Maximum Impermeable Surface requirements – the first 16 sq. ft. shall not count.

Light -flag poles, signs & pedestals – these minor elements **will not** be subject to Maximum Total Lot Coverage or Maximum Impermeable Surface requirements when they are individually **less than 4 sq. ft.** in surface area. More than 16 sq. ft. cumulatively on a lot shall be subject to Maximum Total Lot Coverage or Maximum Impermeable Surface requirements – the first 16 sq. ft. shall not count. Decorative elements such as a trellis or pergola are exempt from these requirements.

Pools – only the water surface of a pool is considered part of the permeable area as defined in the code.

Driveways & parking lots – are defined as an impermeable surface regardless of surface treatment or covering. A driveway shall be considered a vehicular path leading to or from any building opening or door sized to accommodate a typical motor vehicle (car, truck, boat, trailer). The driveway shall be shown on any submitted plans and shall be calculated as part of impermeable surface coverage.

Lot Coverage Calculation Worksheet

OPEN SPACE – An area of land not developed with structures and used for recreation, agriculture, landscaping, or forestry or left in its natural state.

IMPERMEABLE SURFACE – Any roofed or other solid structure or material covering the ground through which water does not readily penetrate, including, but not limited to concrete, oil and stone, tar or asphalt pavement or compacted gravel. Regardless of the construction materials, any area, which is used for driveway or parking purposes, including disturbed grass, ground cover, or dirt, shall be considered impermeable. A deck with spaced boards at least 1/8 inch apart, a swimming pool surface, and a patio with a permeable paving system shall not be considered impermeable. Any other surface which does not satisfy the definition of "Permeable Surface" shall be deemed an impermeable surface.

LOT COVERAGE, TOTAL -Total lot coverage is the percentage of lot area occupied by permeable and impermeable surfaces, exclusive of public road rights-of-way and private rights-of-way that were established by the Town Planning Board.

IMPERMEABLE SURFACE COVERAGE – The ratio between impermeable surface and total land area of a lot (excluding public rights-of-way) expressed as the percentage of land covered by impermeable surfaces.

IMPERMEABLE SURFACES	EXISTING	PROPOSED
House	SF	SF
Accessory Structures	SF	SF
Driveway***	SF	SF
Concrete Pads or Sidewalks	SF	SF
Other**	SF	SF
Total Impermeable Surfaces	(a) SF	(c) SF
Total % of Impermeable Surface Coverage (Total Impermeable surfaces ÷ Lot area = % impermeable surface]	%	%

PERMEABLE SURFACES	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Swimming Pool Surface	SF	SF
Wood Deck w/Spaced Boards	SF	SF
Open joint Patio & Walks	SF	SF
Other – Paving Systems	SF	SF
Total Permeable Surfaces	(b) SF	(d) SF

LOT COVERAGE CALCULATION	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Total Lot Coverages (Impermeable + Permeable)	(a+b) SF	(c+d) SF
*Lot Area (in Square Feet. An acre = 43,560 SF)	SF	SF
Total % Lot Coverage [(total lot coverage) ÷ lot area = Total Coverage %.	%	%

* Lot area must be calculated to the road boundary or right-of-way, not the centerline. In the case of lakefront property, the area must be calculated to the mean lake line elevation of 865.02'-NGVD.

** Storage sheds, detached garages, pole barns, etc.

*** All driveways must be calculated as impermeable.