



## Memorandum

**Date:** August 5, 2013

**To:** Mike Smith, Community Development Director

**From:** Jon Morrow, Stormwater Program Manager

**Re:** Impervious Area Standards

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In response to the recent Council discussion on impervious area, there are currently no requirements in our permit or current City Code that would require specific impervious surface standards. Section 4-8 of the Public Works Development Standards provides guidance on Low Impact Development that includes pervious pavement and other techniques for stormwater volume and quality management. However these standards are not mandatory.

Currently, applicants for development permits incorporate Best Management Practices (BMPs) from the Eastern Washington Stormwater Manual to meet the code requirements for volume and water quality of stormwater runoff. Area dedicated to stormwater varies dependent upon the BMP selected. In Ellensburg the problem often encountered in site development is the high groundwater table and inability to get adequate water quality enhancement in the soil before reaching groundwater. For this reason most stormwater designs rely on water quality swales and stormwater detention with discharge metered to reflect the pre-development release rates.

Pervious surface does provide for release of stormwater to groundwater and promotes aquifer recharge. However, due to the shallow groundwater table stormwater must receive treatment before discharge to the soil. In other areas of the state where groundwater is a significant depth below the ground surface there is adequate soil thickness for treatment and contaminant removal. In Ellensburg that is not the case, and stormwater designs are tailored towards treatment and discharge rather than treatment and recharge. Council may wish to incorporate language to require impervious surface limits for other reasons, but this regulation is not necessary for stormwater, nor is aquifer recharge in issue in Ellensburg.