

Devens Enterprise Commission Policy for Porous surfaces

September, 2022

The Final Environmental Impact Report for Fort Devens established a number of environmental metrics which govern the growth of Devens, in addition to the Commercial Development Cap. These include traffic, water, wastewater, wetland impacts, and impervious surface coverage. **Acres of Impervious Area** is likely to be the measure that curbs development going forward. The FEIR limits Devens redevelopment to 984 acres of impervious area and at the last count this was found to be 808 acres. We will be conducting an updated count to zero in on the actual acres of impervious area remaining under this metric and will report this to the Commission

Porous pavement and vegetated roofs are not counted toward the impervious coverage cap. (They do count toward lot coverage). Fortunately (and by design), our regulations already help minimize impervious surfaces through various low-impact development techniques. As a result, many projects have less total impervious area than they otherwise would in another jurisdiction. 974CMR 4.08(5)(a) of our regulations states: *“For the purposes of stormwater management system design, the area of roof covered by vegetation may be considered pervious and subtracted from the total proposed impervious area.”* This same section also addresses requirements for permeable paving.

Lot coverage is defined as impervious surface plus porous pavement plus building footprint.

Impervious surface coverage is defined as impervious surfaces (includes building footprint).

To help ensure Devens redevelopment is able to stay under the 984 acre impervious cap and continue growing in a sustainable manner, Staff recommends that the Commission consider directing staff to explore additional regulatory options for reducing impervious surfaces. This could include options such as draft regulations requiring all parking spaces to be porous, allowing drive aisles to be asphalt or porous. Truck or heavy duty traffic areas could remain constructed of impervious materials. We could also look at requiring all roofs be vegetated roofs (except where mechanical systems dictate otherwise). Vegetated roofs are compatible with solar photovoltaic on rooftops. In fact, the vegetated roofs increase the efficiency of the PV system by reducing the albedo effect. Vegetated roofs to be constructed consistent with the Commission’s Vegetated roof policy.

Staff would consult with MassDevelopment and our peer review engineers about other options to encourage deployment of pervious materials and bring any suggestions/recommendations to the attention of the Commission.

Motion:

- 1) Staff is directed to explore options and prepare draft regulation amendments that will help reduce overall impervious surfaces while maximizing sustainable redevelopment in Devens.
- 2) While these regulation changes are being researched and drafted, the Commission should direct staff to encourage developers to deploy porous pavement and vegetated roofs in a manner consistent with this new policy for promoting porous surfaces.