
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

9611 SE 36TH STREET | MERCER ISLAND, WA 98040

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SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING SETBACKS

These guidelines summarize the City of Mercer Island's setback regulations pertaining to existing building lots and single family residential construction, both new and remodels. A setback or "yard" is defined by Mercer Island City Code (MICC) as "an open, unoccupied space, unobstructed from the ground to the sky... on the lot on which a building is situated, required to be kept open by the yard requirements prescribed herein." A setback is the area between a structure and the property line or a critical area such as a watercourse, shoreline, or critical slope. Setbacks are measured from the portion of the structure closest to the property line or critical area. Construction is generally prohibited within the setback area.

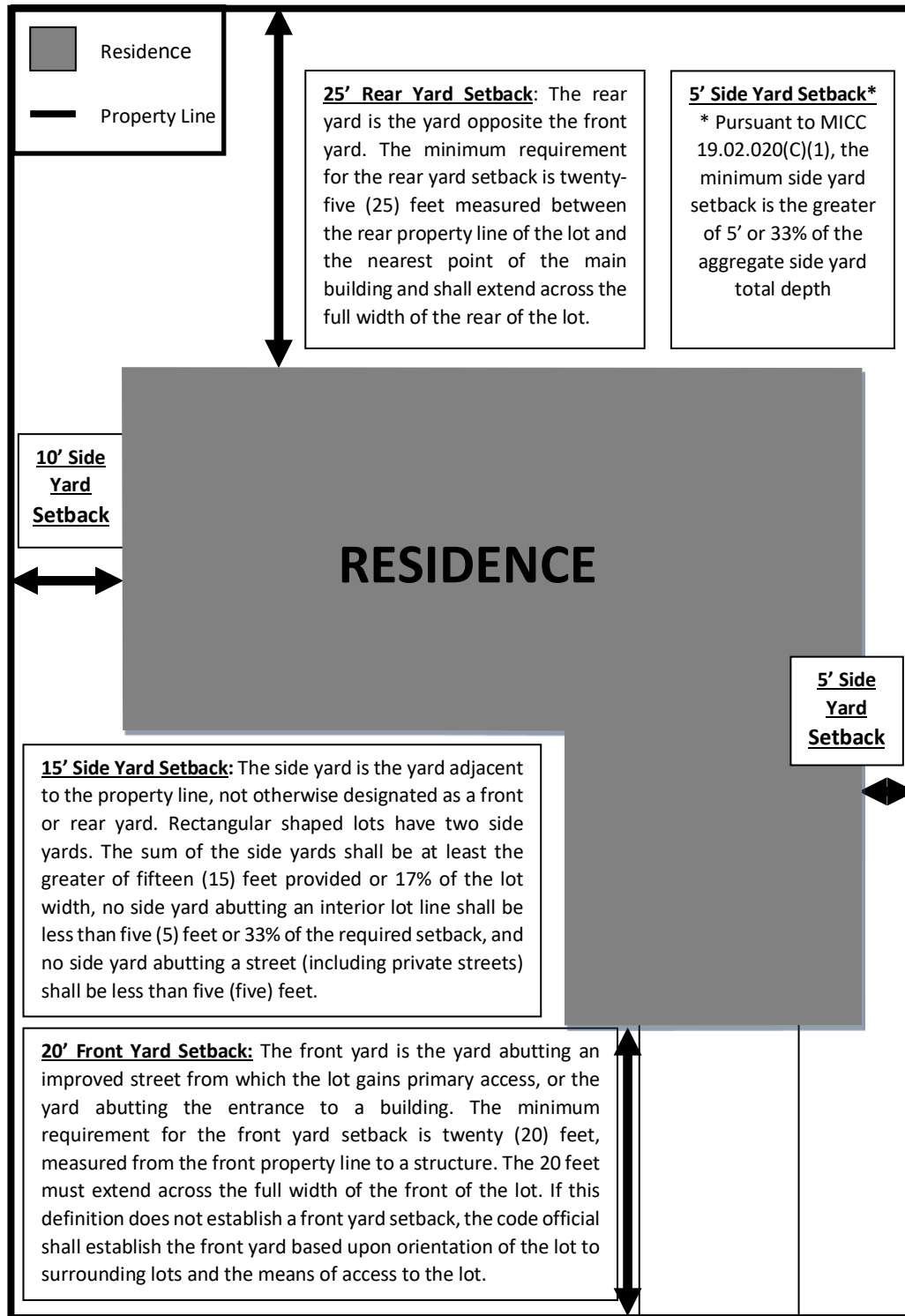
Mercer Island has minimum setback requirements that apply to all single-family residential zones (R-8.4, R-9.6, R-12 and R-15). In these Development Guidelines, references are made to the Unified Land Development Code (MICC Title 19):

- A. Single Family Regulations – MICC 19.02
- B. Yard Requirements – MICC 19.02.020(C)
- C. Critical Lands Regulations (MICC 19.07), including:
 - 1. Watercourse Corridors
 - 2. Shoreline Parcels (parcels within 200 feet of the shoreline)
 - 3. Wetland Areas
- D. Definitions – MICC 19.16

Please refer to the Mercer Island City Code for the full provisions of the above listed regulations.

Please call 206-275-7729 to schedule a meeting with planning staff to determine your setbacks for any irregular shaped lot or if you have any questions regarding the application of the setback regulations.

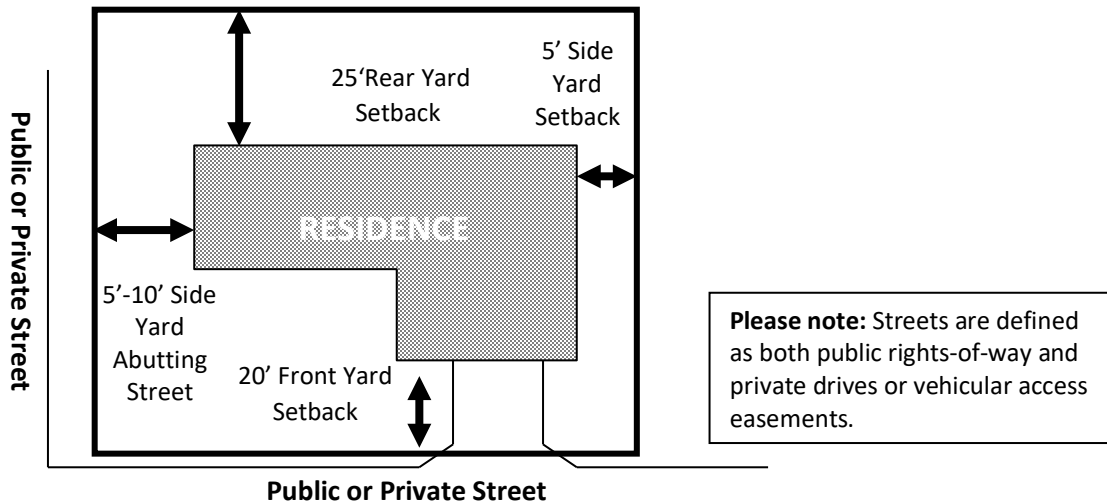
STANDARD RESIDENTIAL SETBACKS



VEHICULAR ACCESS (Public or Private Street)

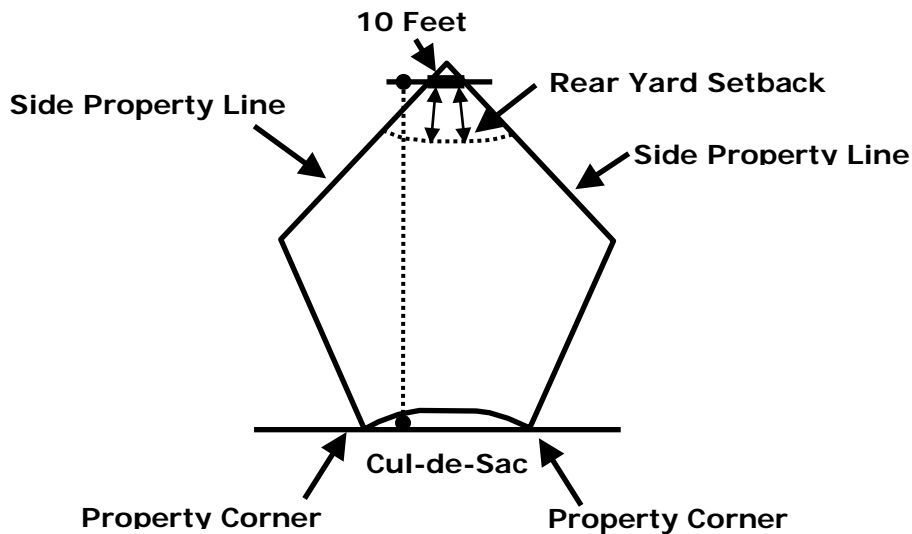
CORNER LOT

On corner lots, the front yard shall be measured from the narrowest dimension of the lot abutting a street. The yard parallel and adjacent to the widest dimension of the lot abutting a street is a side yard. The minimum requirement for the front yard setback is twenty feet (20'), measured from the front property line to the structure. The minimum setback for the side yard abutting the street is five feet (5') – drawn as ten feet (10') in this diagram. The rear yard is the yard opposite the front yard. The minimum requirement for the rear yard setback is twenty-five feet (25'). The remaining yard is a side yard with a minimum setback requirement of five feet (5').



IRREGULAR SHAPED LOTS

Many lots on Mercer Island are not rectangular in shape or do not have lot lines that are at right angles to one another. In these cases, the rear setback is determined by drawing a line or lines from side lot line(s) to side lot line(s). The line(s) must be at least 10 feet in length, parallel to, and a maximum distance from the front lot line. The rear yard setback extends fully across this lot line, and has a width of 25-feet. See diagram below:

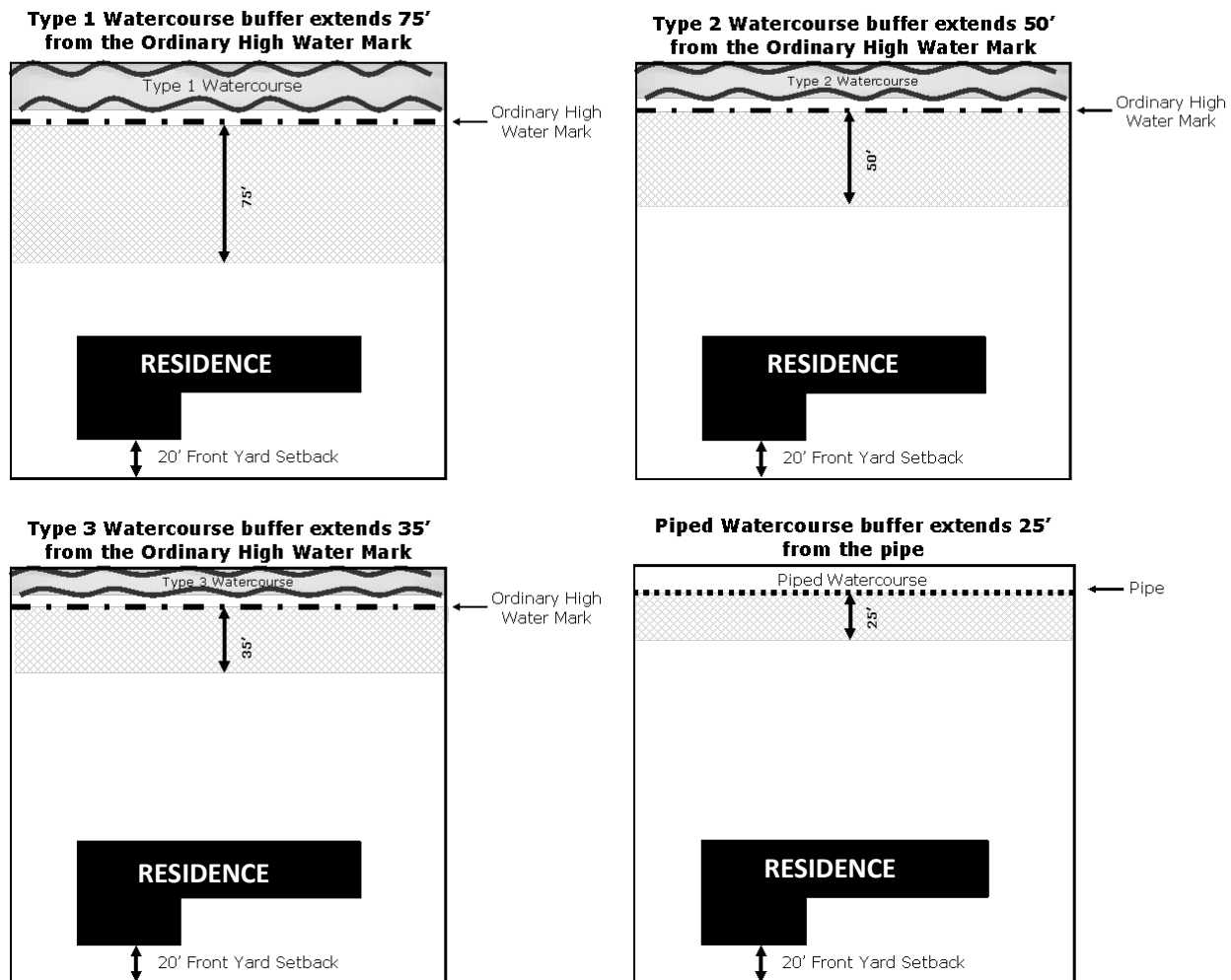


WATERCOURSES AND WATERCOURSE BUFFERS

Watercourses are natural courses or routes generally consisting of a channel with a bed, banks, or sides throughout its length, along which surface waters naturally and normally flow from higher to lower lands with some regularity (annually in the rainy season). Watercourses does not include irrigation and drainage ditches, grass-lined swales, canals, storm water runoff devices, or other courses unless they are used by fish or to convey waters that were naturally occurring prior to construction.

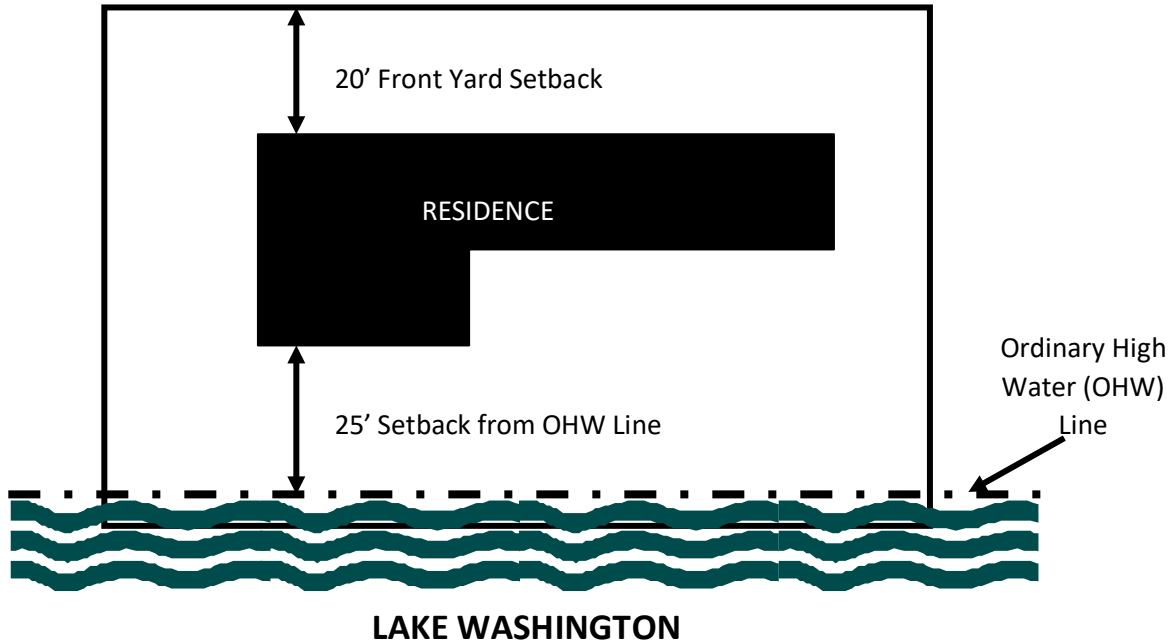
MICC 19.07.070 currently designates the following four classes of watercourses:

- A. **Type 1 Watercourse** - Watercourses or reaches of watercourses used by fish, or are downstream of areas used by fish. There is a standard 75-foot buffer
- B. **Type 2 Watercourse** - Watercourses or reaches of watercourses used by fish, or are downstream of areas used by fish. There is a standard 75-foot buffer
- C. **Type 3 Watercourse** - Watercourses or reaches of watercourses used by fish, or are downstream of areas used by fish. There is a standard 75-foot buffer
- D. **Piped Watercourses** - Watercourses that are piped, channelized or culverted. There is a standard 25 foot buffer.



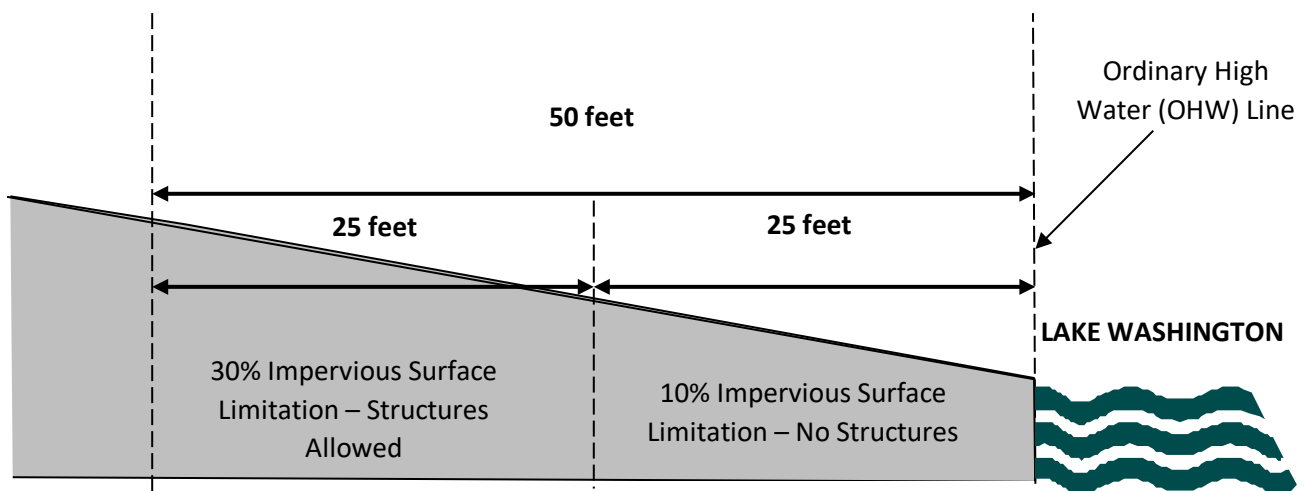
WATERFRONT LOT SETBACK

On a waterfront lot, the setback for all structures (including fences over 48" in height) is 25 feet from the Ordinary High Water (OHW) line. Regardless of the location of access to the lot, the front yard may be measured from the property line opposite and generally parallel to the OHW line.



WATERFRONT LOT – IMPERVIOUS SURFACE LIMITATIONS

Impervious surface coverage is limited within 50 feet of the OHW line on waterfront lots. As described above, no structures are permitted in the first 25 feet from the OHW line. Impervious surface coverage is limited to 10 percent in these first 25 feet. Between 25 and 50 feet landward of the OHW line, impervious surface coverage is limited to 30 percent and structures are allowed:



Distance from OHW	Impervious Surface Limitations
0 – 25 feet	10% - No Structure(s) Allowed
25 – 50 feet	30% - Structure(s) Allowed