

The Corporation of the Town of Deep River
REPORT
2026-PLAN-05

Council Meeting Date: June 24, 2026
Council Meeting Time: 6:00 PM
Council Meeting Place: Deep River Town Hall

Subject: Minimum Parking Requirements for Multi-residential development
Author: Christian Kaiser, Director of Growth and Sustainability

RECOMMENDATION(S):

BE IT RESOLVED THAT report number 2026-PLAN-05 “**Minimum Parking Requirements for Multi-residential development**” be received,

THAT Council directs staff to initiate the required public notice and engagement processes required by the Planning Act for amendments to the Town’s Zoning By-law, and,

THAT Council directs staff to present a by-law for Council’s consideration at a future meeting of Council to amend the Town’s Zoning By-law to implement changes to the minimum parking requirements for residential uses.

BACKGROUND:

The Town of Deep River’s Zoning by-law (bylaw 07-2024) requires that all properties provide off-street parking and sets out the minimum number of parking spaces, which varies by the use of the property. For residential uses, the following minimums are required:

Single Detached Dwelling, Semi-Detached Dwelling, Duplex Dwelling, Group Home, and Two Unit Dwellings	2 parking spaces per dwelling unit
Triplex Dwellings, Townhouses, Apartment Dwelling and Multiple Attached Dwelling	1.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit

The by-law also sets out the minimum size of parking bays (2.7 metres by 5.5 metres), and the location of parking areas (on the same property for residential zones).

As an example, a typical 2,500 sq. ft single family home would require at least 160sq.ft of parking, and a small 30-unit apartment building would require 45 parking spaces with a total area of 7,200 sq. ft, not including driveways, travel lanes, and turnaround areas.

Parking requirements vary significantly across municipalities in Ontario. While higher requirements are typical in smaller and more rural communities, many municipalities are lowering the required minimums. The Township of Russell, for example has proposed a reduction from 1.5 spaces / unit for multi-residential buildings to 1.2 spaces/unit. This is similar to the minimum rates required by the Town of Prescott (1.25 spaces/unit), Gananoque (1.25 spaces/unit), and the cities of Oshawa, Peterborough and Ottawa for suburban zones not serviced by public transit (all 1.2 spaces/unit).

The Planning Act, 1990, provides municipalities with the power to regulate parking provisions. Recent changes to the Act have given the Minister the authority to override municipal requirements and prescribe parking rates through regulations. To date these powers have been used to prohibit parking minimums in areas close to major transit stations.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE:

The provision of minimum parking increases the amount of land required for new development, promoting urban sprawl into undeveloped lands, and adding significantly to building costs. Large parking areas contribute significantly to local heat dome effects and increased stormwater runoff.

The Town’s zoning by-law requires large parking areas for high density residential use. When implemented, typically sized apartment buildings (three to four stories, 45 to 55

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apartments per building) become surrounded by parking areas, with little soft landscaping (trees, gardens and/or lawns) or common-use space (such as patios, seating areas, etc.). This significantly detracts from the “look and character” of Deep River.

This recommendation provides the opportunity to capitalize on the nature of Deep River regarding active transportation, the growing trends to reduce reliance on vehicle ownership without limiting the developer’s ability to provide their clients with the appropriate number of spaces to meet their needs.

Staff propose the following amendments to the parking requirements for multi-residential only uses (see Attachment 1):

- Reduce the minimum number of parking spaces required from 1.5 to 1.25 spaces/residential unit
- Allow parking spaces to be located on adjoining lots (allowing for more efficient use of shared parking areas between apartment buildings)

These amendments would reduce the land area dedicated to parking, resulting in more efficient land use, and increased soft landscaping.

It is important to note that reducing the minimum requirements does not ban or restrict the provision of parking. Residential property owners can still build parking if they believe it is required. This shifts the decision-making drivers about the amount of parking from regulation to market demand.

While reducing minimum parking requirements for new apartment buildings may increase demand for on-street parking; however, this impact in Deep River is likely to be moderated by local conditions. On-street parking supply is already limited and subject to winter prohibitions, which naturally constrains long-term reliance on street parking. In addition, many recent and proposed apartment developments are located close to municipal parking lots, providing an existing off-street alternative for residents and visitors.

Process requirements

The Planning Act, 1990, describes the process by which amendments to the Town’s Zoning By-law must be made. This includes a defined public notice period, minimum methods of providing public notice, and the holding of a public meeting where residents can provide their feedback to Council.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

The following alternatives were considered in the preparation of this recommendation:

- Larger decreases to parking minimums – while some municipalities have reduced their parking minimums by larger amounts, staff did not recommend this for Deep River at this time. The impact of the recommended reduction should be evaluated

over time before further reductions are implemented.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

There are no direct financial consequences of the recommendations of this report.

STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS:

Strategic Pillar: A Vibrant and Growing Community

- **Objective:** Encourage and support sustainable housing development

Strategic Pillar: A Healthy Environment

- **Objective:** Protect and grow our tree canopy, green spaces and forests
- **Objective:** Improve our storm water quality and infrastructure

CONSULTATIONS:

The following people were consulted in the preparation of this report:

- County of Renfrew Planning department

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Proposed amended wording of section 3.22 of the Town of Deep River Zoning By-law