

STAFF REPORT



To: Mike Pilon, Chief Administrative Officer
From: Samantha Willock, Municipal Planner
Subject: Zoning By-law Update – Public Consultation Responses
Date: May 19, 2026

Overview:

On April 23, 2026, an open house was held to discuss the proposed revisions to the Zoning By-law. This consultation was well attended, with over 100 residents participating. Approximately 200 written comments have been received from the public from the initiation of the project until April 30th. The majority of the comments received from the public were in response to the proposed regulations on camping trailers and home businesses. This report highlights the consistent themes of these comments.

Staff are looking for Council direction on any revisions to the draft regulations based on the comments received. The direction provided will be incorporated into Version 3 of the Zoning By-law, which will then be published for further public input. An open house and special Council meeting to discuss Version 3 will be held in late June.

Camping Trailer Regulations:

Draft Regulations:

Below are the two version of the proposed regulations for the occupancy of camping trailers. Version 1 included the regulations which were proposed by the Planning Advisory Committee. Version 2 is the amended regulations that were decided by Council and relied upon for public consultation. Section 4.26.1, the Storage of Recreational Vehicles did not change between the two versions.

Version 1	Version 2:
<p>4.26.2 Occupancy of Travel Trailers:</p> <p>a) No travel trailer shall be occupied in any zone between November 15th and May 15th of the following year for living, eating or sleeping purposes.</p> <p>b) On a vacant lot zoned Shoreline Residential (SR), Rural Residential (RR), or Rural (RU), the following provisions shall apply to the use and occupancy of travel trailers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. No more than four (4) travel trailers shall be permitted on a lot at any one time;ii. Of the four (4) travel trailers permitted under subsection (i), no more than two (2) may be permanently situated on the lot.	<p>4.26.2 Occupancy of Travel Trailers:</p> <p>a) No travel trailer shall be occupied in any zone between November 30th and April 15th of the following year for living, eating or sleeping purposes.</p> <p>b) No camping trailer shall be permanently situated on a lot unless adequate sanitary services are provided in the form of a Class 4 septic system, or a privy or outhouse constructed and maintained in accordance with the Ontario Building Code.</p> <p>c) On a vacant lot zoned Shoreline Residential (SR), Rural Residential (RR), or Rural (RU), no camping trailer shall be located closer to any</p>

<p>iii. Any travel trailer not permanently situated in accordance with subsection (ii) shall not remain on the lot for more than fourteen (14) consecutive days.</p> <p>iv. No travel trailer shall be located closer to any lot line than the minimum required setbacks for the principal use permitted in the applicable zone;</p> <p>v. No travel trailer shall be permanently situated on a lot unless adequate sanitary services are provided in the form of a Class 4 septic system, or a privy or outhouse constructed and maintained in accordance with the Ontario Building Code.</p> <p>c) On a lot which contains a principal dwelling in the Residential One (R1), Residential Two (R2), Shoreline Residential (SR), Rural Residential (RR), Rural (RU), and Agricultural One (A1) zones, the following provisions shall apply to the use and occupancy of travel trailers:</p> <p>i. No more than two (2) travel trailers shall be permitted to be used or occupied at any one time;</p> <p>ii. Every travel trailer shall be located in accordance with the minimum setbacks set out in section 4.30.1;</p> <p>iii. No travel trailer shall be permitted to be used or occupied for more than fourteen (14) consecutive days.</p>	<p>lot line than the minimum required setbacks for the principal use permitted in the applicable zone;</p> <p>d) On a lot which contains a principal dwelling in the Residential One (R1), Residential Two (R2), Shoreline Residential (SR), Rural Residential (RR), Rural (RU), and Agricultural One (A1) zones, every camping trailer shall be located in accordance with the minimum setbacks set out in section 4.26.1.</p>
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Public Response:

Over 100 residents submitted comments on the proposed camping trailer regulations. The concerns most commonly identified are provided below:

Opposition to Proposed Regulations:

1. Winter Use

Many comments received identified that many residents use their trailer for recreation purposes during the winter (e.g., fishing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, etc). Comments range from requesting any restrictions on winter use be removed, to asking for a clear distinction that occasional recreational use is permitted in the winter months but not full time occupancy.

2. Setbacks

Comments frequently refer to preferring a 15 metre setback instead of an 18 metre setback. Residents also identified that the regulations require the trailer to be located in the backyard

instead of a certain distance from the road, which can be very restrictive for large properties where the house is built far back from the road.

Staff comment: It is my understanding that when a previous Council discussed implementing a trailer by-law, it was unofficially agreed that the required setback would be 15 metres from all property lines. This regulation was never formalized by by-law. The current draft Zoning By-law proposes an 18-metre setback from any watercourse, which aligns with the minimum setback for a dwelling. Depending on the zone in which the trailer is located, the proposed side yard setback ranges from 1.5 to 4.5 metres, and the rear lot line setback is between 1.5 and 15 metres. Staff recommend that 4.26.1(iii) and (iv) be amended to state that no recreational vehicles are permitted in the required front yard setback. This will require camping trailers on Rural, Rural Residential, and Agriculturally zoned properties to be a minimum of 10 metres from the road.

3. Septic Requirements

Residents refer to the requirement for an approved sanitary septic system (septic bed, outhouse, privy, etc.) as burdensome. The comments also state that the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority is responsible for septic systems and introducing regulations will be an unnecessary duplication of their existing enforcement abilities. Comments identify that trailers have holding tanks and residents will not discharge effluent into the waterways as it pollutes their space. Some of the provided comments recommend allowing other alternatives such as composting or incinerating toilets, or honey wagons.

4. Grandfathering Existing Trailers

Comments received request that trailers which are already situated on properties should be deemed legal non-conforming, or 'grandfathered' and allowed to remain where they are.

Staff Comment: Trailers are not permanent structures and as such, are not subject to legal non-conforming provisions. Further, there is no method of confirming the location and duration of use of existing trailers as they do not require building permits which would have included a site plan.

5. Affordability

Various comments identify concerns with the current housing affordability crisis, and that residents sometimes use trailers as a permanent or temporary solution to finding affordable housing.

Staff Comment: Housing affordability was considered in the drafting of this zoning by-law; provisions have been introduced to allow for more additional residential units and removed the minimum dwelling size.

Other comments reference the impact these regulations will have on the nature of West Nipissing, family connection, mental health, and the ability to relax. Residents also often noted that policies should differ for lots in town and large rural properties.

Support for Trailer Regulations:

Comments were also received that supported the proposed camping trailer trailers. Frequent themes were:

1. Services

It's important to ensure proper disposal of sanitary waste as well as grey water to protect the environment. Regulations should be added in to specifically address grey water as people may opt for an outhouse or other sanitary servicing approach that doesn't accommodate grey water. Should the regulations be amended to allow winter occupancy, proper servicing is even more important because waste disposal is made harder when the ground is frozen, and improper servicing can significantly increase contamination in the spring.

2. Winter Use

Comments support limiting winter occupancy as it reflects the operational realities of winter conditions, including reduced municipal services, limited emergency response capacity, and challenges related to road maintenance and safe access. The restriction also mitigates the waste contamination identified above.

3. Setbacks and Applicable Regulations

Trailers should be subject to the same zoning provisions as a dwelling, including setbacks, number of accessory structures, servicing, etc. to ensure equity. This will also prevent trailers from being located in flood prone areas. Comments suggest the regulations should be clear about the number of accessory structures that are permitted on these lots.

4. Property Values and Taxes

Trailers are not assessed structures so these landowners are paying a vacant land tax rate while having multiple occupied trailers on the lot and using all municipal services. This is not equitable for those that construct a dwelling and pay full property taxes. Residents are concerned that lots with multiple trailers and numerous accessory buildings may also negatively impact the property value of adjacent properties.

5. Number of Trailers

Many comments in support of camping trailer regulations believe that there should be a limit on the number of trailers permitted on a lot. The recommendations are generally for 1-2 per property, or a limited ratio based the lot area.

Home Business Regulations:

Approximately 50 comments were received pertaining to home businesses with the vast majority of the comments being in reference to home gyms. Almost all of the comments submitted are in opposition to the proposed regulation limiting the number of clients serviced at one time to three (3). Other home-based business comments related to the restriction on the number of clients being applied to home daycares. Version 2 of the draft by-law exempts home childcare from the number of client restriction as the number of children is regulated by the Child Care and Early Years Act.

Those in support of the regulations reference concerns with safety due to the increased traffic and on-street parking, and the impact on the residential character of the area. Comments opposing the restriction identify the need for safe spaces, mental health benefits of fitness activities, and challenges with the financial feasibility of renting commercial spaces or reducing the number of clients.

Those opposing the regulation have recommended multiple alternatives, including removing the limit on the number of clients entirely, increasing the number to eight (8) for home wellness uses, and removing the client limit in rural areas.

Other Comments:

Comments have been received on topics other than trailers and home businesses. Four additional items have been provided below, however this is not a comprehensive list of every comment received. Public input that was presented orally at the April 23rd Open House can be found attached as Appendix 1. A copy of all written comments received up to April 30th is provided as Appendix 2.

Public Comment	Staff Response
Lot size and frontage requirements in the Rural Residential and Rural zones should be reduced (comments recommend lot areas ranging from 4,000-8,000 square metres and 30-40m of frontage)	The current Zoning By-law requires 1 hectare in area and 60 metres of frontage. The draft Zoning By-law proposes a reduced lot area of 8,000 square metres (2 acres).
Recommendation to increase the number of permitted accessory structures in the Rural Residential zone	Currently, Rural Residential zones are limited to three (3) accessory structures.
Allow abattoirs in the Agricultural and Rural zones	Abattoirs are an industrial use that is subject to provincial rules and regulations. The draft zoning by-law permits abattoirs in the Heavy Industrial zone (M2); any proposals for an abattoir in another zone would require a Zoning By-law Amendment application. Scoped processing of livestock raised on-site secondary to the principal agricultural operation is permitted as of right as an on-farm diversified use.
The permitted lot area coverage for On-Farm Diversified Uses and Agriculture-Related uses should be increased.	The regulations provided are in accordance with provincial guidance and align with the regulations in other municipalities.

Conclusion:

Staff are seeking Council direction on revisions to the draft zoning regulations based on the public input received. These changes will be incorporated into Version 3 of the Zoning By-law, which will be made available for more public input. An open house and special Council meeting to discuss version 3 will be held in late June.

Prepared By:

Samantha Willock, Municipal Planner

Attachments:

Appendix 1 – April 23rd Open House Summary

Appendix 2 – Consolidation of Written Public Comments to April 30th, 2026

Reference Material:

Zoning By-law 2014/45