

Decision Note

Title:	Landscaping and Driveway Requirements for Small Apartment Buildings – Text Amendment
Date Prepared:	August 20, 2025
Report To:	Regular Meeting of Council
Councillor and Role:	Councillor Maggie Burton, Planning
Ward:	N/A

Decision/Direction Required:
To consider a text amendment to the Envision St. John’s Development Regulations to modify landscaping requirements and enable driveways for small Apartment Buildings with six or fewer Dwelling Units within a Residential Zone.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:
In June 2024, Council approved an amendment to the City of St. John’s Development Regulations, 2021 to enable a variety of housing types throughout residential areas. That amendment sought to remove barriers to developing housing and increase density throughout the City. As part of that amendment, “Apartment Building, maximum of 6 Dwelling Units” was changed from a discretionary use to a permitted use for the Residential 2 (R2), Residential 3 (R3), Residential Downtown (RD), and Residential Mixed (RM) Zones.

The current landscaping provisions listed in Section 7.6.1 of the Development Regulations do not include specific standards for Apartment Buildings and instead refer to the City’s Development Design Manual (DDM). Currently, Apartment Buildings are classed as a commercial operation under the DDM and are subject to the commercial design requirements. This means that small Apartment Buildings with five or six units are required to provide parking lots and meet commercial standards.

This amendment proposes to add new landscaping requirements to Section 7.6.1 of the Development Regulations, which are specific to small Apartment Buildings with six or fewer Dwelling Units within medium density residential areas. The intent of this amendment is to allow driveways instead of parking lots for small Apartment Buildings, recognizing that in most cases, these medium density residential developments should be subject to residential landscaping requirements rather than commercial development standards. As the development of a parking lot can sometimes be costly and challenging to accommodate on

small lots, this amendment seeks to reduce some of the barriers for developing this housing type and helps to support the development of more, small-scale Apartment Buildings.

For clarification, this amendment does not apply to Apartment Buildings with more than six units or Apartment Buildings within an Apartment Zone.

In addition to introducing landscaping requirements for small Apartment Buildings, this amendment also proposes some additional changes to the landscaping requirements. These changes include:

- Combining Section 7.6.1 Residential Development and Section 7.6.2 Non-Residential Development into one new Section 7.6.1 Landscaping.
- Rewording subsection 7.6.1(2) to clarify which uses require 50% front yard landscaping.
- Clarifying that the requirement for Hard Landscaping complies with the approved site drainage plan for the lot and would apply to all residential development.
- Removing the front yard landscaping requirements for Triplex, Four-Plex, and Apartment Buildings with a maximum 6 units from the various zone standards and adding these requirements to Section 7.6.1 Landscaping.
- Removing reference to maximum driveway width.
- Removing reference to the Commercial Development Policy and replacing it with the Development Design Manual.
- Adding in a new subsection to Section 8.14 Bicycle Parking which clarifies that no bicycle parking is required for small Apartment Buildings in a Residential Zone.

No new uses are being introduced with this amendment, and no changes are proposed to the existing front yard landscaping requirements for Single Detached Dwellings, Semi-Detached Dwellings, Duplexes, Townhouses, Triplexes or Four-Plexes.

The proposed amendment aligns with the policies of the Municipal Plan, and no Municipal Plan amendment is needed. Further analysis can be found in the attached amendment document. To implement this Development Regulations amendment, some changes are required in the DDM, and there will be a corresponding amendment.

Public Consultation

Public consultation will be carried out in accordance with Section 4.8 of the Development Regulations. Staff recommend public notification (not a public meeting) for this amendment as most of the changes proposed to the landscaping requirements are to clarify existing requirements, and the proposed changes to landscaping requirements for small Apartment Buildings with six or fewer Dwelling Units only applies to a handful of residential zones.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Not applicable.
2. Partners or Interested Parties: Residents and property owners in St. John's.

3. Is this a New Plan or Strategy: No

4. Alignment with Strategic Directions:

A Sustainable City: Plan for land use and preserve and enhance the natural and built environment where we live.

A Sustainable City: Facilitate and create the conditions that drive the economy by being business and industry friendly; and being a location of choice for residents, businesses and visitors.

5. Alignment with Adopted Plans: Envision St. John's Municipal Plan and Development Regulations.

6. Accessibility and Inclusion: Not applicable.

7. Legal or Policy Implications: A text amendment to the Development Regulations is required

8. Privacy Implications: Not applicable.

9. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Consultation (public notification) is proposed. The amendment will also have a project page on the Engage St. John's Planning Page.

10. Human Resource Implications: Not applicable.

11. Procurement Implications: Not applicable.

12. Information Technology Implications: Not applicable.

13. Information Management Implications: Not applicable.

14. Other Implications: Not applicable.

Recommendation:

That Council consider an amendment to the Envision St. John's Development Regulations to modify landscaping requirements and enable driveways for small Apartment Buildings with six or fewer Dwelling Units within a Residential Zone.

Further, that the application be publicly advertised in accordance with the Development Regulations.

Prepared by: Faith Ford, MCIP, Planner III

Approved by: Lindsay Lyghtle Brushett, MCIP, Supervisor – Planning & Development

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Text Amendment - Landscaping and Parking.docx
Attachments:	- DRAFT DR Amend No. 66 2025 -Landscaping and Parking for Small Apt Buildings TEXT (ff).pdf
Final Approval Date:	Aug 21, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

No Signature - Task assigned to Ken O'Brien was completed by delegate Lindsay Lyghtle Brushett

Ken O'Brien - Aug 20, 2025 - 4:27 PM

Jason Sinyard - Aug 21, 2025 - 9:41 AM

City of St. John's Development Regulations, 2021

St. John's Development Regulations Amendment Number 66, 2025

Changes to Landscaping Requirements and Driveways for Small Apartment Buildings Text Amendment

August 2025



URBAN AND RURAL PLANNING ACT, 2000

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT

City of St. John's Development Regulations, 2021

Amendment Number 66, 2025

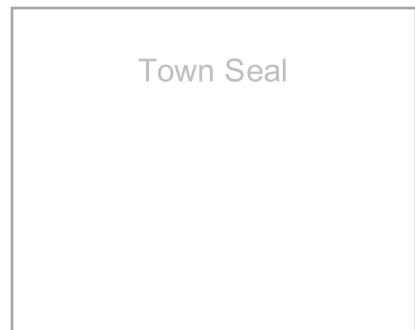
Under the authority of section 16 of the *Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000*, the City Council of St. John's adopts the City of St. John's Development Regulations Amendment Number 66, 2025.

Adopted by the City Council of St. John's on the 26th day of August, 2025.

Signed and sealed this ____ day of _____.

Mayor: _____

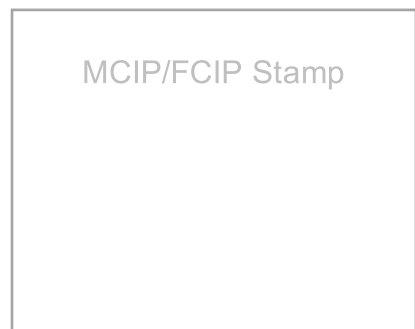
Clerk: _____



Canadian Institute of Planners Certification

I certify that the attached City of St. John's Development Regulations Amendment Number 66, 2025 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000*.

MCIP/FCIP: _____



Development Regulations/Amendment	
REGISTERED	
Number	_____
Date	_____
Signature	_____

CITY OF ST. JOHN'S

Development Regulations Amendment Number 66, 2025

BACKGROUND

In June 2024, St. John's City Council approved an amendment to the City of St. John's Development Regulations, 2021 in an effort to increase density throughout the City and remove barriers to developing housing. That amendment was prompted by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). One of the changes incorporated in that amendment was moving "Apartment Building, maximum of 6 dwelling units" from a Discretionary Use to a Permitted Use in several Residential Zones, including the Residential 2 (R2), Residential 3 (R3), Residential Downtown (RD), and Residential Mixed (RM) Zones.

Currently, Apartment Buildings are classed as a commercial operation under the City's Development Design Manual and subject to the commercial design requirements, including the commercial Parking Lot standards. This means that small-scale Apartment Buildings containing five or six units throughout the R2, R3, RD, and RM Zones are required to provide a Parking Lot, while similar medium density residential uses permitted in these Zones, such as a Four-Plex or Triplex, are permitted to have Driveways and do not require Parking Lots.

The City wishes to amend the Development Regulations to support the development of more small-scale Apartment Buildings with six or fewer units throughout Residential Zones, and to clarify the landscaping requirements for residential and non-residential development as set out in Section 7.6.1.

ANALYSIS

This amendment proposes the following:

- 1) Repealing Section 7.6.1 Residential Development and Section 7.6.2 Non-Residential Developments and replacing it with one section that includes Landscaping for both residential and non-residential developments.
- 2) Add a new subsection to Section 7.6.1 to clarify Apartment Buildings in a Residential Zone with six or fewer Dwelling Units do not require a Parking Lot or need to meet commercial development requirements of the Development Design Manual. This would allow small-scale Apartment Buildings to have Driveways instead of a Parking Lot, provided the proposed development can meet the City's landscaping and snow storage requirements. Apartment Buildings with six or fewer units will still be permitted to have a Parking Lot, and in cases where a Parking Lot is proposed, the commercial design requirements of the Development Design Manual will continue to apply.
- 3) Remove the reference to the maximum 6 metre Driveway width in Section 7.6.1 and specify that Driveways shall be designed in accordance with the Development Design Manual.

- 4) Remove reference to the Commercial Development Policy and replace it with reference to the Development Design Manual.
- 5) Clarify that the requirement for Hard Landscaping to comply with the approved site drainage plan for the Lot applies to all residential development.
- 6) Remove the landscaping requirements for Triplex, Four-Plex, and Apartment Building from various zones and add landscaping requirements for these uses to Section 7.6.1.
- 7) Add a new subsection to Section 8.14 Bicycle Parking to clarify that no bicycle parking is required for Apartment Buildings in a Residential Zone with six or fewer units.

Municipal Plan policy 4.3.3. encourages a suitable transition in intensity, use and form of development between low-density residential areas and newly proposed medium or high-density residential uses. As Parking Lots are not often found in low density residential neighbourhoods, allowing Driveways for Apartment Buildings with six or fewer units will help the transition between these uses, other medium density developments, such as Triplex and Four-Plex, and low density uses.

The proposed amendment recognizes that these smaller-scale Apartment Buildings with six or fewer units are compatible with and similar to other medium density residential developments permitted throughout the City's Residential Zones, and in many cases, it is more appropriate to treat these developments as residential rather than commercial operations under the Development Design Manual requirements.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

To be completed after public consultation.

ST. JOHN'S URBAN REGION REGIONAL PLAN

The proposed amendment is in line with the St. John's Urban Region Regional Plan and an amendment to the Regional Plan is not required.

ST. JOHN'S DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AMENDMENT NUMBER 66, 2025

The City of St. John's Development Regulations, 2021 is amended by:

- 1) Repealing Section 7.6.1 Residential Development, which states:

"7.6.1 Residential Development

(1) The Front, Side, and Rear Yards of a residential Lot shall be covered with Landscaping.

(2) With the exception of Lots with a zero metre Building Line, Lots on a cul-de-sac bulb, Apartment Building, Cluster Development, Four-Plex, Townhouse Cluster, and Triplex at least 50% of the front Yard shall be covered with Soft Landscaping and all Landscaping shall be continuous on the Lot.

(3) Notwithstanding Subsection 7.6.1(2), at least 45% of the front Yard of a

Townhouse Lot within the Residential 3 (R3) Zone shall be covered with Soft Landscaping and all Landscaping shall be continuous on the Lot, with the exception of Townhouse Lots within the Downtown Snow Removal Area (Map 8).

(4) At least 40% of the front Yard of a Lot on a cul-de-sac bulb shall be covered with Soft Landscaping and all Landscaping shall be continuous on the Lot.

(5) In addition to zone requirements, Apartment Building, Cluster Development and Townhouse Cluster shall be Landscaped in accordance with the Development Design Manual.

(6) The Driveway, excepting Apartment Building, Cluster Development, Townhouse Cluster, and Townhouse within the Residential 3 (R3) Zone, shall be completed with a hard surface acceptable to the Manager of Regulatory Services, shall not exceed 50% of the front Yard, and each entry to a Driveway shall not be wider than 6 metres at the front Lot Line in accordance with the Development Design Manual.

(7) Excepting Apartment Building, Cluster Development or Townhouse Cluster, Hard Landscaping shall comply with the approved site drainage plan for the Lot.”

and substituting the following:

“7.6.1 Landscaping

(1) The Front, Side, and Rear Yards of a residential Lot shall be covered with Landscaping.

(2) With the exception of Lots with a zero metre Building Line, at least 50% of the front Yard of a Single Detached Dwelling, Duplex, Semi-Detached Dwelling, or Townhouse shall be covered with Soft Landscaping and all Landscaping shall be continuous on the Lot.

(3) Notwithstanding Subsection 7.6.1(2), at least 45% of the front Yard of a Townhouse Lot within the Residential 3 (R3) Zone shall be covered with Soft Landscaping and all Landscaping shall be continuous on the Lot, with the exception of Townhouse Lots within the Downtown Snow Removal Area (Map 8).

(4) Notwithstanding Subsections 7.6.1(2) and 7.6.1(3), at least 40% of the front Yard of a Lot on a cul-de-sac bulb shall be covered with Soft Landscaping and all Landscaping shall be continuous on the Lot.

(5) At least 30% of the front Yard of a Triplex or Four-Plex shall be covered with Soft Landscaping and all Landscaping shall be continuous on the Lot, except for Four-Plex within the Residential 1 (R1) Zone which shall have at least 40% of the front Yard covered with Soft Landscaping that is

continuous on the Lot.

(6) In addition to zone requirements, Apartment Building, Cluster Development, and Townhouse Cluster shall be Landscaped in accordance with the Development Design Manual.

(7) The Driveway shall be completed with a hard surface acceptable to the Manager of Regulatory Services, shall not exceed 50% of the front Yard, and shall be designed in accordance with the Development Design Manual, except for Apartment Building, Cluster Development, Townhouse Cluster, Four-Plex, Triplex, and Townhouse within the Residential 3 (R3) Zone.

(8) Hard Landscaping shall comply with the approved site drainage plan for the Lot.

(9) An Apartment Building within a Residential Zone as identified in Section 10.2 that contains six (6) or fewer Dwelling Units on one lot is not considered a commercial operation as defined in the Development Design Manual and may be exempt from commercial development requirements, subject to the following:

(a) At least 30% of the front Yard shall be covered with Soft Landscaping and all Landscaping shall be continuous on the Lot.

(b) Snow storage shall be provided in accordance with the Development Design Manual.

(c) The Driveway shall be completed with a hard surface acceptable to the Manager of Regulatory Services and shall be designed in accordance with the Development Design Manual.

(10) Notwithstanding Subsection 7.6.1(9), the commercial development requirements of the Development Design Manual shall apply where a Parking Lot is proposed for an Apartment Building in a Residential Zone that contains six (6) or fewer Dwelling Units.

(11) For non-residential development and commercial operations, all areas designed to be traversed by motor vehicles shall be curbed and completed with a hard surface in accordance with the Development Design Manual and the approved Landscape plan for the Development.”

2) Repealing Section 7.6.2 Non-Residential Development, which states:

“7.6.2 Non-Residential Developments

(1) All areas designed to be traversed by motor vehicles shall be curbed and completed with a hard surface in accordance with the Commercial Development Policy and the approved Landscape plan for the Development.”

And renumbering the remaining sections.

- 3) Adding the following to Section 8.14 Bicycle Parking as Section 8.14(5):
“(5) Notwithstanding Subsection 8.14(1), where an Apartment Building in a Residential zone contains six (6) or fewer Dwelling Units, no bicycle parking is required, except along a planned bicycle network, in which case bicycle parking will be at the discretion of the City Engineer.”
- 4) Repealing minimum Landscaping from the zone standards for Triplex in the following zones:
 - Residential 2 (R2) Zone
 - Residential 3 (R3) Zone
 - Residential Downtown (RD) Zone
 - Residential Mixed (RM) Zone
 - Apartment 1 (A1) Zone
 - Apartment 2 (A2) Zone
- 5) Repealing minimum Landscaping from the zone standards for Four-Plex in the following zones:
 - Residential 1 (R1) Zone
 - Residential 2 (R2) Zone
 - Residential 3 (R3) Zone
 - Residential Downtown (RD) Zone
 - Residential Mixed (RM) Zone
 - Apartment 1 (A1) Zone
 - Apartment 2 (A2) Zone
- 6) Repealing minimum Landscaping from the zone standards for Apartment Building in the following zones:
 - Residential 2 (R2)
 - Residential 3 (R3)
 - Residential Downtown (RD)
 - Residential Mixed (RMD)