

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