ASHLEY MEGHAN

The strategic approach to municipal success

COUNCIL BRIEF

Update to Zoning By-law

Prepared for:

Township of Papineau-Cameron

Date:

September 10, 2026

Update to Zoning By-law

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Direct staff and the Township's planning consultant to proceed with the Open House and statutory Public Meeting process pursuant to Section 34 of the Planning Act for the Township of Papineau-Cameron Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law (Version 2, September 2026).

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a summary of the changes incorporated into Version 1 of the Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law for the Township of Papineau-Cameron, and to seek direction to proceed to the statutory Open House and Public Meeting required under Section 34 of the Planning Act.

The draft By-law was prepared by Ashley Meghan Consulting Corp. (AMCC) following a review of the Township's existing Zoning By-law, the Official Plan of the East Nipissing Planning Board, and the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024. The draft was presented to Council at a Special Council meeting in July 2026, at which Council provided detailed direction on a number of provisions. This report summarizes those changes and recommends advancing the By-law to the public consultation stage.

Background

The Township of Papineau-Cameron's existing Zoning By-law is outdated and no longer reflects current provincial policy, land use patterns, or community priorities. AMCC was retained to prepare a comprehensive update that:

- Is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024;
- Conforms to the Official Plan of the East Nipissing Planning Board;
- Reflects the rural character and lifestyle values of Papineau-Cameron; and
- Reduces unnecessary regulatory burden while maintaining protections for natural resources, agricultural land, and public safety.

A Special Council meeting was held in July 2026 to review the draft By-law. Council provided substantive direction on several provisions. Version 2 of the draft reflects those revisions and is now ready for public consultation.

Summary of Changes

The following summarizes the substantive changes incorporated into Version 1 of the Draft By-law. These changes reflect Council direction received at the Special Council meeting in July 2026, as well as refinements made by AMCC to modernize the By-law and reduce redundancy with applicable provincial legislation.

Zone Structure

The draft By-law introduces a two-tier rural zone structure to better reflect the varied character of land uses across the Township:

- Rural Commercial (RU1) Zone — applies to areas with greater service accessibility and a broader range of commercial, light industrial, and mixed uses, including areas near Highway 17 and other road frontage corridors.
- Rural (RU2) Zone — applies to the broader rural landscape, maintaining a more limited use list consistent with rural character, natural resource protection, and low-density residential uses.

This structure responds to Council's direction to recognize that some areas of the Township function more like settlement areas, where contractor operations, equipment storage, and light commercial uses already exist in practice and should be accommodated in zoning. A Limited Service Rural (LSR) Zone is also retained for lands without year-round maintained road access, where municipal service delivery cannot be guaranteed.

Recreational Vehicles

The recreational vehicle provisions have been revised to better reflect the reality of rural property ownership in the Township, where large lots are commonly used for recreational purposes involving multiple trailers or camper units. Key changes include:

Scaled RV Permissions:

Rather than a blanket limit on recreational vehicles per lot, the number of permitted RVs is now scaled to lot size. This allows larger properties to accommodate more recreational users while protecting smaller lots — particularly waterfront lots — from the septic and servicing concerns associated with multiple units.

Lot Size	Maximum RVs Permitted
Less than 2 hectares	1
2 ha to less than 20 ha	2
20 ha to less than 40 ha	3
40 hectares or greater	5

Sewage Management:

The previous blanket prohibition on holding tanks has been replaced with a more practical framework. Given that recreational vehicles are permitted on a seasonal — not year-round — basis, holding tanks are

now a permitted alternative to a full septic system, provided they are pumped regularly by a licensed waste hauler and records of service are maintained and available to the Municipality upon request. Direct on-site discharge of black or grey water remains prohibited.

A licensing mechanism under the Municipal Act is also referenced to allow the Township to impose a licence fee for recreational vehicles on any lot of record, providing a tool to track units and recover service costs if required.

Storage Containers

Storage containers, including sea containers, are now explicitly permitted as an accessory use subject to the following provisions:

- Compliance with the Ontario Building Code, where applicable;
- No use for purposes prohibited in the applicable zone, and no use for human habitation;
- Location in the side or rear yard as a default, with front yard placement permitted where the lot configuration makes it the only practical option, provided screening is provided;
- Compliance with accessory structure setbacks in the applicable zone; and
- Where more than three storage containers are located on a lot, screening from view of any abutting road or adjacent lot is required.

This change responds to Council's direction to permit sea containers as a practical rural storage solution. The previous Official Plan restriction on storage containers was noted as a potential policy conflict; Council accepted this approach on the understanding that it carries a degree of risk if the By-law were challenged on Official Plan conformity grounds.

Swimming Pools

The swimming pool provisions have been retained substantially as they appeared in the existing By-law. Following a review of the Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24) conducted as part of this project, it was confirmed that the OBC **does not** contain enclosure or fencing requirements for private (residential) swimming pools. Public pools are regulated under Section 3.11 of Division B of the OBC; however, no equivalent regime exists for private pools.

Accordingly, the fencing and enclosure provisions in this By-law are not duplicative of the OBC — they represent the only regulatory framework governing private pool enclosures in the Township. The provisions have been retained with minor drafting refinements. The setback requirements, front yard restrictions, and hotel/motel exception remain unchanged.

Note: The Township does not currently have a standalone pool and fence by-law. Should Council wish to address pools in a more detailed or distinct fashion in the future, a separate by-law under the Municipal Act would be the appropriate mechanism.

Solar Energy Systems and Renewable Energy

The draft By-law introduces a comprehensive but permissive framework for residential and accessory-scale renewable energy systems, consistent with Council's direction to support personal energy independence without imposing unnecessary restrictions. Key elements include:

Rooftop Solar Panels:

Permitted on the roof of any legal building in any zone, with no cap on coverage area. Panels may exceed the maximum permitted building height by 1.0 metre and must comply with OBC structural and fire safety requirements.

Ground-Mount Solar Panels:

Permitted as an accessory use in the Rural, Rural Commercial and Limited Service Rural zones, subject to accessory structure setbacks. Front yard placement requires screening. No cap on panel count or array area applies — previous draft restrictions on ground-mounted arrays have been removed at Council's direction.

Solar Farms:

Solar farms are defined separately from residential solar installations and are not permitted as-of-right in any zone. Any proposal meeting the definition of a Solar Farm requires a Zoning By-law Amendment. This ensures that large-scale commercial energy installations are subject to a full public process while not restricting residential or farm-scale solar use.

Small-Scale Wind Turbines:

Permitted as an accessory use in the RU1, RU2, LSR, and CR zones, subject to height limits of 20 metres and setback requirements tied to total height plus a 10-metre buffer. Turbines over 3 kW require a Noise Impact Statement.

Home Industry

The Home Industry provisions have been updated to better reflect the economic realities of rural property ownership in Papineau-Cameron, where contractor operations — including tree services, excavating, and other equipment-based trades — are commonly operated from rural residential properties. Key changes include:

- Maximum floor area for Home Industry buildings increased from 100 square metres to 300 square metres, to accommodate equipment storage buildings of a scale appropriate to rural lots;
- The proximity requirement for accessory buildings increased from 75 metres to 150 metres of the principal dwelling, providing greater flexibility on large rural lots;
- Commercial vehicles and equipment may be stored in the interior side or rear yard and must be screened from view where practicable — the previous requirement for only "licensed motor vehicles" has been replaced with language that captures commercial equipment such as excavators, floats, and skid steers;
- A provision has been added clarifying that occasional loading, unloading, and maintenance of equipment does not in itself constitute a public nuisance;

- Outdoor storage of equipment and materials associated with the Home Industry is permitted in the interior side or rear yard, with screening required; and
- The motor vehicle repair bay limit of two bays has been clarified to apply specifically to repair uses, not to all home industries involving vehicles.

These changes support Council's stated objective of facilitating individual property rights and economic activity on rural lots while maintaining the residential character of the land and protecting neighbouring properties from nuisance impacts.

Items Discussed but Not Included in the By-law

The following items were discussed at the Special Council meeting but were not incorporated into the Zoning By-law, for the reasons noted:

Short-Term Rentals (Airbnb / VRBO):

Short-term rentals are not regulated in this By-law. Council determined that while the use may become an issue in the future — particularly in waterfront areas — it does not yet warrant regulation. Should the issue become more prevalent, a *licensing by-law* under the Municipal Act is recommended as the preferred tool over zoning, as it avoids grandfathering concerns, applies immediately to all existing and new operators, and is more flexible to administer.

As-of-Right Four-Unit Residential:

Council confirmed that the Township will not implement the provincial as-of-right permission for up to four residential units per lot. Given the absence of municipal water and sewer services, dry well concerns experienced in the region, and the Township's rural character, Council determined that this permission is inappropriate in the local context.

RV Licensing By-law:

Council indicated their intent to prepare a separate licensing by-law for recreational vehicles (campers and trailers) to address fire and emergency access, greywater disposal compliance, and tax base considerations. This can be brought forward as a separate deliverable, if Council is interested.

Zoning Schedules

Draft zoning schedules are being prepared concurrently with the text of this By-law. The schedules will implement the two-tier rural zone structure (RU1/RU2), update the Mineral Aggregate Resource (MX) Zone to reflect active licences only, and confirm the boundaries of all other zones, including the Environmental Protection (EP) Zone in consultation with the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority.

A rough draft of the schedules will be made available for review at the Open House, and formal mapping will form part of the Public Meeting materials.

Required Process

Pursuant to Section 34 of the *Planning Act*, the passage of a comprehensive Zoning By-law requires:

Open House:

An informal public information session to present the draft By-law to the public prior to the statutory Public Meeting. Notice is provided in accordance with the Planning Act.

Public Meeting:

A statutory meeting held before Council at which the public may present their comments on the draft By-law. Notice must be given at least 20 days prior to the meeting.

Council Decision:

Following the Public Meeting, Council may adopt the By-law as presented, or with modifications. Given that Papineau-Cameron holds delegated approval authority, the By-law comes into force following the 20-day appeal period, provided no appeals are filed with the Ontario Land Tribunal.