
Draft: Zoning In On Amenity Areas

The Basics

Amenity areas have become increasingly common in multi-unit residential developments such as apartments and townhouses. While low density housing forms and neighbourhoods are traditionally planned with sufficient private backyards and new dedicated public parkland, intensification in urban environments requires careful attention to provide enough amenity space to support access to outdoor space and compact living spaces.

Amenity areas can include both indoor and outdoor spaces, such as gyms, lounges, children's play areas, gardens, balconies and rooftop patios. As Whitchurch-Stouffville looks to support more multi-residential types of housing, the Zoning By-law can play a role in meeting the need for more indoor and outdoor amenity space for residents, supporting a strong quality of life

Reasons for Change

- Guide new developments to include private and common amenity spaces for residents
- Support the livability of multi-unit residential developments
- Foster social connection and healthy communities

Current Situation

Zoning By-law 2010-001-ZO defines 'indoor amenity area' as spaces for residents of a building, such as indoor pools, activity rooms, fitness facilities, or lounges. The By-law regulates amenity areas as follows:

- **Residential New Five (RN5) Zone** – 2.0 m² of indoor amenity area per dwelling unit in apartment buildings over 18 units in size
- **Residential Multiple One (RM1) Zone** – 10.0 m² of outdoor amenity area (not defined) per apartment unit
- **Residential Multiple Two (RM2) Zone** – 2.0 m² of indoor amenity area per dwelling unit in apartment buildings over 18 units in size

The Town's Official Plan encourages the integration of indoor and outdoor private amenity spaces which consider the needs of residents of all ages and abilities within multi-residential development. In medium and high density residential and mixed-use areas, the Official Plan provides directions for the adequate provision of both indoor and outdoor amenity space.

Looking Elsewhere

Many municipalities have zoning by-law provisions that address amenity areas. The approaches vary greatly between municipalities, with the most common approach being to require a certain amount of amenity area per unit, for developments over a certain number of units.

Municipality	Amenity Space Requirements
Richmond Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amenity space required for high-rise, mid-rise, and low-rise buildings with 20 units or more at a rate of 2.0 m² per dwelling unit, at grade or on a rooftop ▪ 50% of required amenity space must be provided as contiguous common space
Markham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amenity space requirements are set for each zone ▪ For multi-residential uses, rates range from 10.0 m² to 36.0 m² per dwelling unit or 25% of the lot area ▪ For mid-rise and high-rise uses, the by-law sets requirements for both common indoor and outdoor amenity areas
Guelph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The by-law distinguishes between private and common amenity areas and sets rates in each zone, by dwelling type ▪ Detailed provisions for the location and design of amenity areas are provided ▪ For apartments, the by-law requires 20.0 m² of common amenity area per unit
Ottawa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amenity area is required for developments with more than 8 dwelling units at a rate of 6.0 m² per dwelling unit ▪ The by-law requires that where provided, at least one communal area must be 54.0 m² in size to provide a larger, contiguous amenity space



Going Forward

The Town's Zoning By-law should continue to set out requirements for amenity areas considering increased permissions for multi-unit developments and new mixed-use areas, including the two Major Transit Station Areas. The objective of amenity area regulations should be to provide residents with access to outdoor space and amenities that support more compact living. Regulations should also consider the scale of development that is anticipated to take place in the Town and costs of amenities which can shape the cost of new housing.

Consideration should be given to the amenity space needs for different types of homes. For example, apartment residents would benefit from both indoor and outdoor amenity space, while townhouse residents may have more private indoor floor space and benefit primarily from outdoor amenity space.

Let's discuss!

When developing updated amenity area regulations in the Zoning By-law...

- Should amenity areas be required for multi-unit dwellings without access to a backyard, such as stacked townhouse dwellings?
- Should updated definitions for both outdoor and indoor amenity areas be added to the Zoning By-law?
- Should the Zoning By-law distinguish between private and communal (shared) amenity areas?
- Should there be different amenity area requirements in Downtown Stouffville, where there is a concentration of public amenities?