



ADM2026-001

Date: February 27, 2026

Submitted by: Pierre Voisine, CAO

Subject: Review of Permitting and Licencing Bylaws

Nature/Goal

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the work currently underway to modernize the City's permitting and licensing framework. The objective is to ensure that all bylaws, processes, and customer-facing services reflect today's municipal realities and service expectations. By updating outdated bylaws and introducing a consistent, streamlined review and approval system, the City aims to improve service quality, strengthen enforcement, and simplify interactions for residents and businesses.

Directive/Previous policy

At present, the City does not have a unified directive or corporate standard that guides how permitting and licensing processes should function across departments. This modernization initiative addresses that gap by aligning bylaws, operational practices, and customer service expectations under a consistent and coordinated corporate approach.

Department's recommendation

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Committee of the Whole recommends that Council approve continuing with the review of applicable bylaws and the development of a centralized, modernized permitting and licensing system.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Committee of the Whole recommends that council approve a new costing approach to follow a user-pay model, where fees are one-time basis, reflecting the work required by City administration.

Background

Municipal bylaws generally fall into two key categories:

- Regulatory Bylaws – which set rules, standards, and expectations for residents.
- Authorization-Based Bylaws – which require permits, approvals, reviews, or inspections.

Many of the City's existing bylaws are outdated, inconsistent, and challenging to apply within today's legal and operational context. As provincial legislation continues to evolve, municipal bylaws must also adapt to remain relevant, fair, and enforceable.

Administration is conducting a comprehensive review—particularly of bylaws tied to permitting and licensing—to ensure they are:

- Legally sound
- Practical to administer
- Clear for users
- Supported by appropriate enforcement mechanisms

- Written in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Discussion

The current administrative framework governing our municipal bylaws has become a patchwork of outdated regulations that no longer align with the operational realities of a growing Clarence-Rockland. Our bylaws generally fall into two categories: those that regulate community expectations and those that authorize activities through permits and inspections. However, many of these instruments are inconsistent and increasingly difficult to apply within today's evolving provincial legal context. To maintain fairness, relevance, and enforceability, Administration is undertaking a comprehensive review to ensure our bylaws are not only legally sound but also equipped with the practical tools necessary for modern municipal governance.

The current permitting and licensing system has developed organically over time, resulting in a lack of unified structure that creates confusion for our residents and unnecessary complexity for our staff. To resolve these systemic issues, we have invested in a new digital platform that will serve as the backbone of a consistent, user-friendly experience. This technology will replace manual hurdles with a dedicated customer portal where residents and businesses can submit applications online, track progress in real-time, and benefit from a transparent, automated workflow. This transition ensures that every critical step—from inter-departmental reviews to final inspections—is tracked with precision, improving our internal efficiency and accountability.

To further support our residents, we are complementing this technological shift with the creation of plain-language Bylaw Guides. These resources are designed to strip away legal complexity, making our requirements accessible and easy to navigate, which in turn fosters voluntary compliance and reduces administrative friction. Furthermore, we are integrating the requirements of external partners, such as the Eastern Ontario Health Unit, into our internal processes so that applicants have a complete understanding of all regulatory expectations from the outset. This holistic approach ensures that the path to approval is clear, predictable, and professional.

Finally, we are modernizing our enforcement capabilities by transitioning toward Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs). As provincial legislation allows, this shift will provide a more efficient and consistent method for ensuring compliance without the delays inherent in traditional legal channels. Our intention is not to alter the core purpose of our existing bylaws, but to transform them into workable, enforceable tools that reflect a modern Clarence-Rockland. By moving forward with this strategy, we are

ensuring that our administration remains a leader in service delivery, transparency, and municipal excellence.

Over the next few months, a number of modifications will be proposed to permitting and licencing Bylaws, with a synopsis of the changes proposed. Initially, we are asking Council to review and approve the following:

1. Specialty Sales / Garage Sales bylaw 2001-23

A new Garage Sale Citizen Guide will replace the former by-law-based approach with a clearer, simpler, and more resident-friendly framework that focuses on communication rather than regulation. The previous by-law required formal registration and imposed administrative and enforcement burdens that residents rarely followed. The new guide eliminates the permit requirement entirely and instead provides straightforward, plain-language rules on allowable sale locations, maximum sale days, signage, safety, and acceptable items. It consolidates all expectations—such as keeping sales on private property, limiting to four days per year, restricting commercial activity, and requiring sign removal within 24 hours—into an easy, accessible format that promotes voluntary compliance. This approach reduces red tape for residents, improves public understanding of expectations, and maintains safety and nuisance standards through clear guidelines and the ability to issue Administrative Monetary Penalties through other existing Bylaws when necessary.

2. Business Licensing bylaw 2019-20

The proposed Business Licensing By-law (Draft 2026) modernizes the City's approach to regulating businesses by introducing clearer definitions, a standardized licensing and renewal process, and integrated zoning and safety compliance checks. It formalizes pre-inspections and interdepartmental reviews, strengthens enforcement through the Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS), and adds transparent appeal mechanisms via Screening and Hearing Officers. The by-law also establishes consistent obligations for licensees, including nuisance prevention, accessibility compliance, and mandatory liability insurance, while improving administrative clarity related to file handling, licence posting, and record retention. Importantly, the updated framework clarifies that transient or itinerant businesses completing work in the City that do not maintain a physical business premises within Clarence-Rockland will not be required to obtain a municipal business licence. Together, these updates replace the outdated 2019-20 framework with a comprehensive, fair, and enforceable

system that enhances public safety, supports compliance, and improves customer service for businesses operating in Clarence-Rockland.

3. Chip Wagons bylaw 2017-84, 2024-111 & Mobile Food Services bylaw 2006-16, Now called Refreshment Vehicle By-law

The new Refreshment Vehicle By-law modernizes and consolidates the City's regulation of mobile food operations by replacing the outdated Chip Wagon and Mobile Canteen by-laws with a single, comprehensive framework. The updated by-law introduces five clear licence classes, expands definitions to cover all types of mobile food units, and establishes consistent application, inspection, and zoning requirements for every vendor. It adds modern health, fire, electrical, and fuel safety standards; formalizes Site Plans, separation distances, and washroom access requirements for static Chip Wagon operators; and introduces restrictions for high-traffic corridors such as Laurier Street. The by-law also incorporates Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPS), strengthens enforcement and appeal processes through Screening and Hearing Officers, and standardizes rules for generators, waste management, nuisance control, and hours of operation. Together, these changes create a fair, transparent, and safety-focused system that aligns mobile food vending with current municipal practices and public expectations.

[Recommendations or comments from committee/ other departments](#)

N/A

[Financial impact \(expenses/material/etc.\)](#)

Refreshment vehicle Licencing:

Administration is proposing a revised fee structure for Refreshment Vehicle licences. Unlike standard business licences, refreshment vehicles require annual inspections due to food safety and public interaction. Fees have been adjusted to reflect the level of oversight associated with each classification.

The proposed annual licence fees, which include a \$63 administration fee, are:

Class A – Pedal- Powered Canteens: \$125

Class B – Pre- Prepared Food Vehicles: \$525

Class C – Ice Cream/Frozen Product Vehicles: \$525

Class D – Special Event Mobile Canteens: \$700

Class E – Chip Wagons/Cook- on- Site Static Vendors: \$700

Administration is also recommending a new Special Event Fee for short-term participation at festivals or community events:

Classes B & C: \$75 per week

Classes D & E: \$250 per week

This structure allows temporary vendors to operate without obtaining a full annual licence while ensuring the City recovers inspection and administrative costs associated with these operations.

While the increase in fees is a significant increase, they represent a one-time only fee approach. While it would be preferable to use a cost recovery model, this approach is not feasible. Some files require more work than others, which would create discrepancies in costing. Additionally, costing would be beyond what is proposed in this report.

Business Licensing will be a standard \$500 fee, including the \$63 Administrative fee.

Legal implications

The Bylaws have been written in accordance with provincial laws providing Municipalities with these powers. The changes reflect good business practices and equitable and fairness approach. Historically, the City was unable to address all the non-compliant aspects of these requirements creating an uneven application.

Risk management

N/A

Strategic implications

These changes are in line with the City's strategic plan, specifically through community cohesion to make Clarence-Rockland a desirable place to do business.

Supporting documents

New Business Licence Bylaw

New Refreshment Vehicle Bylaw

2019-20 Business Bylaw

2006-16 Regulating the operation of Mobile Canteens Bylaw

2017-84 licensing and Regulating Chipwagons bylaw

Schedule A Administrative Monetary Penalty Business Licensing Bylaw

Schedule C Administrative Monetary Penalty Refreshment Vehicle Bylaw

CR Garage Sale Quick Facts