



## City of Hamilton Report for Consideration

**To:** Chair and Members  
Planning Committee

**Date:** January 13, 2026

**Report No:** PED24135(b)

**Subject/Title:** Self Storage Facilities Review – Amendments to the Rural Hamilton Official Plan and Zoning By-law No. 05-200 (CI-24-E)

**Ward(s) Affected:** City Wide

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### Recommendations

- 1) That City Initiative CI 24-E respecting amendments to the Rural Hamilton Official to establish a policy framework for Self Storage Facilities in the Rural Area, **BE APPROVED** on the following basis:
  - a) That the draft Official Plan Amendment, attached as Appendix A to Report PED24135(b), be adopted by Council; and,
  - b) That the proposed amendment to the Rural Hamilton Official Plan is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024.
- 2) That City Initiative CI 24-E respecting amendments to Zoning By-law No. 05-200 to introduce updated regulations for Self Storage Facilities in the City of Hamilton, **BE APPROVED** on the following basis:
  - a) That the draft Zoning By-law Amendment, attached as Appendix B to Report PED24135(b), be enacted by Council; and,
  - b) That the proposed changes in zoning are consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, and comply with the Urban Hamilton Official Plan.

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## Key Facts

- Since a draft Rural Hamilton Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment were received by Council in September 2025 (Report PED24135(a)), staff have considered the submission and discussion at the public meeting of Planning Committee that occurred on September 9, 2025 and subsequent engagement with the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Subcommittee to inform the final draft Rural Hamilton Official Plan Amendment.
- The purpose of the Rural Hamilton Official Plan Amendment is to implement policy direction for considering self storage facilities within the Agriculture, Rural, Specialty Crop, and Rural Settlement Area Designations through a series of criteria, reflecting feedback received at Planning Committee and the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Subcommittee.
- The proposed amendments to Zoning By-law No. 05-200 introduce a definition for Self Storage Facilities and establish regulations for the use within the Mixed Use Medium Density (C5) Zone and the District Commercial (C6) Zone.

## Financial Considerations

There are no financial impacts associated with the recommendations of this report.

## Background

On September 11, 2024, Council received Report PED24135, which presented the Self Storage Facilities Policy Review Report prepared by MHBC Planning (the “MHBC Report”). The MHBC Report conducted a detailed research and best practices review of the self storage industry, assessed implications for implementing changes in Zoning By-law No. 05-200, and presented recommended changes to Zoning By-law No. 05-200.

Informed by the recommendations of the MHBC Report, draft zoning regulations were developed. Public engagement occurred through the Engage Hamilton platform with an online survey active between March 21 and April 22, 2025, garnering 203 responses. Further, a rural policy framework for self storage facilities was developed, informed by Planning Committee feedback and engagement through the self storage survey. On September 17, 2025, Council received Report PED24135(a), which presented draft amendments to the Rural Hamilton Official Plan and Zoning By-law No. 05-200 for consideration.

Since Report PED24135(a), the primary focus of the review has been on refinement of the proposed amendments to the Rural Hamilton Official Plan through consultation with the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Subcommittee. The draft Zoning By-law Amendment presented through Report PED24135(a) and received by Council is unchanged in this report.

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## **Analysis**

### **Policy Evaluation**

Reports PED24135 and PED24135(a) provided an analysis of the self storage facility use and permissions against the Greenbelt Plan, 2017, Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, as well as the Urban and Rural Hamilton Official Plans.

### **Zoning Evaluation**

Report PED24135(a) presented a recommended regulatory approach to self storage facility permissions as reflected in the draft Zoning By-law Amendment attached as Appendix B to that report. Commercial and Mixed Use, Transit Oriented Corridor, and Downtown Zones were assessed for the self storage use. Select Commercial and Mixed Use Zones have been recommended to reflect a balance between supporting evolving land use needs and preserving the intended function and character of each zone. This approach will enable the expanded permissions to be monitored as the self storage industry continues to evolve.

The self storage facility use is recommended in the Mixed Use Medium Density (C5) Zone, as its predominantly commercial, transit-supportive, and pedestrian-oriented built form can accommodate the use in a manner that maintains the zone's intended function. In the District Commercial (C6) Zone, permissions were also considered appropriate given its role in supporting community-serving retail and service commercial uses within a predominantly commercial context. Self storage facilities will continue to be permitted in the Arterial Commercial (C7) Zone.

These recommendations were subject to internal staff evaluation and public and stakeholder review to inform a Hamilton-specific approach to changes to self storage facility permissions in Zoning By-law No. 05-200.

### **Proposed Rural Hamilton Official Plan Amendment**

A rural policy framework has been developed to evaluate self storage proposals within the rural area. The policy framework presents criteria for the consideration of the use in limited circumstances with the assessment considering whether limited permissions could help cluster services and meet the consumer needs of rural area residents while ensuring permissions remain limited, context-specific, and focused on sites transitioning from non-conforming rural industrial uses. In this way, the protection of agricultural viability and rural character is reinforced, consistent with the Rural Hamilton Official Plan.

Through Report PED24135(a), staff proposed criteria for the evaluation of self storage facilities for properties within Rural Settlement Areas, as follows:

- The site must be transitioning from a legally established non-conforming or legally established non-complying rural industrial use;

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- The facility must serve the needs of Rural Hamilton and be compatible with surrounding land uses and rural character;
  - The use must not adversely impact nearby agricultural operations;
  - Proposals must receive approval of a Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Control application; and,
  - Facilities are only permitted within Rural Settlement Areas and are prohibited elsewhere in the Rural Area.

The evaluation framework applied to Settlement Commercial lands within Rural Settlement Areas because they are the locations within the rural area where limited, small-scale, non-farm commercial uses are contemplated under the Rural Hamilton Official Plan. These areas are the most appropriate and least intrusive locations for considering self storage facilities, allowing the use to cluster with community-serving functions and meet local needs while remaining separate from prime agricultural lands.

In response to discussion at the September 9, 2025, Planning Committee and subsequent engagement with the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Subcommittee, staff assessed whether limited scenarios could be considered for self storage facilities in the Agriculture, Rural, and Specialty Crop Designations on lands transitioning from a legally established non-conforming or legally established non-complying rural industrial use.

The evaluation framework has been refined in consideration of the use in limited circumstances on lands outside of Rural Settlement Areas that are transitioning from an existing legal non-conforming rural industrial use. This expanded framework maintains the underlying principles first applied to Rural Settlement Areas including context sensitivity, the protection of agricultural viability, and restricting consideration to sites in transition, acknowledging that certain long-standing rural industrial properties may represent opportunities for reuse that does not affect the agricultural capacity of surrounding lands.

To support this approach, the evaluation criteria has been expanded to include the requirement to complete an agricultural impact assessment, and limits placed on outdoor storage. These measures are intended to address compatibility with surrounding agricultural lands, support rural character, and direct the use to locations where it can be accommodated while safeguarding agricultural viability.

A summary of the evaluation criteria for Self Storage Facilities in the Rural Hamilton Official Plan (RHOP) is provided in Appendix D.

### **Proposed Zoning By-law No. 05-200 Amendment**

The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment was originally presented through Report PED24135(a). Updates include the introduction of a standalone definition for Self Storage Facility and zoning regulations to distinguish the use from traditional warehousing that better reflect the evolving nature of the industry. The final draft Zoning By-law Amendment is included in Appendix B with the supporting rationale included in Appendix C.

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The new definition of Self Storage Facility distinguishes self storage from the broader “Warehouse” use.

**Self Storage Facility**

Shall mean the use of a building or part thereof, for the storage of goods in individual storage units, for a fee.

The introduction of a standalone definition for Self Storage Facility provides greater clarity and reflects the changing nature of the use away from vehicle oriented, land intensive built form and function.

The following zones are proposed to permit self storage facilities:

- Mixed Use Medium Density (C5) Zone;
- District Commercial (C6) Zone; and,
- Arterial Commercial (C7) Zone.

In the Mixed Use Medium Density (C5) Zone, the proposed regulations manage ground-floor presence, prohibit drive-up units, and limit visibility along key frontages, which serves to promote the pedestrian-oriented characteristics of the zones where built form is intended to support active street frontages and transit-supportive environments.

In the District Commercial (C6) Zone, these same regulations are applied to ensure consistency in how self storage facilities are integrated within areas intended to serve daily and weekly shopping needs. An additional Gross Floor Area limit of 10,000 square metres is also proposed for self storage uses, aligning with the scale of other commercial permissions within the zone and reinforcing compatibility with the predominantly commercial function of C6 zoned lands.

In the Arterial Commercial (C7) Zone, self storage facilities are currently permitted under the broader Warehouse definition which aligns with the intended scale and function of the zone. No new regulations are introduced for this zone given its large-format, vehicle-focused character; however, a technical update to the Warehouse definition is proposed to remove the outdated reference to “Mini Storage Facility.” This targeted change applies only within the C7 Zone and is intended to align terminology with the introduction of Self Storage Facility as a standalone use, thereby avoiding duplication between definitions while maintaining the existing permissions framework.

**Parking**

Parking standards have also been established for the Self Storage Facility use in Zoning By-law No. 05-200. The proposed rates are aligned with those for warehouse uses. While the parking demand associated with the storage units is low and comparable to a warehouse use, the rates also account for the more active needs of accessory office and retail components. The proposed rates differentiate between areas of the city to ensure an appropriate supply of parking for accessory retail/office

functions. This approach applies consistency with existing parking provisions for warehouse, retail, and other commercial uses in Zoning By-law No. 05-200.

## **Alternatives**

Should Council choose not to approve the report recommendations, the existing regulatory framework will remain in effect, reflecting the traditional self-storage business model which would limit the City's ability to respond to the evolving nature of the use.

## **Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities**

1. Sustainable Economic & Ecological Development
  - 1.2. Facilitate the growth of key sectors
3. Responsiveness & Transparency
  - 3.1. Prioritize customer service and proactive communication
  - 3.2. Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving

## **Previous Reports Submitted**

[PED24135\(a\) – Self Storage Facilities Review – Draft Amendment to the Rural Hamilton Official Plan and Draft Amendment to Zoning By-law No. 05-200 \(CI-24-E\)](#)

[PED24135 – Self-Storage Facilities Review \(CI-24-E\)](#)

## **Consultation**

Staff consulted with the Development Planning, Sustainable Communities, and Heritage and Urban Design Sections within the Planning Division. As detailed in PED24135(a), public and stakeholder consultation occurred through the Engage Hamilton project webpage and accompanying survey, social media posts and presentation to the Development Industry Liaison Group (DILG). Further, staff attended the September 22, 2025, meeting of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Subcommittee to discuss and hear feedback on the proposed rural policy framework.

Staff consulted with the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (Corridor Management Office / Operations Division – Hamilton/Niagara) since the rural evaluation criteria includes the requirement that proposals in the rural area be directed to arterial roads or provincial highways thus affording the province the opportunity to comment on the draft amendments. As of the writing of this report, staff have not received comments.

Notice of the Public Meeting was placed in the Hamilton Spectator on January 2, 2026.

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## **Appendices and Schedules Attached**

Appendix A: Draft Rural Official Plan Amendment  
Appendix B: Draft Zoning By-law No. 05-200 Amendment  
Appendix C: Summary of Modifications to Zoning By-law No. 05-200  
Appendix D: Summary of Evaluation Criteria for Self Storage Facilities in the Rural Hamilton Official Plan (RHOP)

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