

Opportunities for Future Work

Using the data analysis in Attachment 1, Child Care Services Development Permit Data Analysis, the recommendations of the Child Care Services Parking and Traffic Study (March 3, 2025) in Attachment 2, and the stakeholder feedback received in Attachment 4, What We Heard Report: One Year Review of Child Care Services, Administration evaluated:

- Patterns of child care service development under the new Zoning Bylaw.
- Variances and refusals related to child care development.
- The traffic and parking characteristics of child care services in residential areas.

Overall, child care service approvals increased across the city in 2024 in comparison to the past five years (2019-2023), including a significant increase in the number of permitted developments. Although a variety of factors may be influencing this increase, such as increased government funding, these results suggest that Zoning Bylaw 20001 is allowing child care service development to occur where and when it needs to.

While child care service development permit approvals also increased in the small scale residential zones in 2024, these permit applications experienced a higher proportion of variances, refusals and appeals than in other zones. For this reason, Administration focused on evaluating the child care services regulations in the small scale residential zones which include:

- Minimum on-site pick-up and drop-off space requirements
- Locational requirements
- Maximum floor area requirements

Administration also reviewed special area zones to determine how many list Child Care Services as a discretionary use compared to similar standard zones.

A summary of the findings and recommended next steps are discussed in detail below.

Minimum On-site Pick-up and Drop-off Space Requirements

The minimum on-site pick-up and drop-off space requirement for child care services was identified as the most significant regulatory barrier to the development of child care services in the small scale residential zones. Of the 19 development permits issued with a variance in the small scale residential zones in 2024, 10 variances were made to the on-site pick-up and drop-off parking

space regulation. All three development permit refusals by the City listed failure to meet the pick-up and drop-off parking requirement as one of the reasons for refusal.

The City of Edmonton hired an engineering consultant to review pick-up and drop-off space data for 10 child care facilities in the RS - Small Scale Residential Zone and RSF - Small Scale Flex Residential Zone and to provide recommendations on the Zoning Bylaw's current pick-up and drop-off space requirement. The study made the following conclusions:

- A reduction in the minimum on-site pick up and drop off space requirement for child care services from 1.13 spaces per 10 children to 0.90 spaces per 10 children is appropriate
- Up to 50 per cent of the required pick up and drop off spaces are recommended to be allowed on-street without a variance in the RS - Small Scale Residential Zone and RSF - Small Scale Flex Residential Zone, when on-street parking is permitted adjacent to the development site.

The report found that the observed pick-up and drop-off demand rate for the study sites was about 20 per cent lower than the number of spaces currently required in the Zoning Bylaw. Reducing the Zoning Bylaw requirements to match the observed demand was recommended.

Furthermore, the study observed that, for the majority of sites, less than half of the on-site pick-up and drop-off spaces were used during peak hours. This suggests that available on-street parking spaces are often considered more convenient than on-site pick-up and drop-off stalls. On-street parking was observed to be high-turnover and low-duration and was not observed to significantly impact or interfere with adjacent land uses.

The study also found that not all trips are made by vehicle with 17 per cent of trips made by either pedestrian or bicycle.

Signage to dedicate on-street pick-up and drop-off spaces was not recommended in order to preserve efficient use of publicly available on-street spaces by all potential users. Furthermore, the study indicated that although signage may reserve the on-site pick-up and drop-off spaces for the associated child care facility, it does not necessarily influence whether people use the spaces. People will park where it is convenient for them.

Based on the variance data analysis and the traffic and parking study, Administration will explore reducing the minimum pick-up and drop-off space requirement for child care services.

Location Requirements

Currently, all child care services developed under the the small scale residential zones are only permitted:

- On corner sites that abut a collector or arterial road
- On any corner site where proposed in a former single detached house
- In an existing non-residential building
- On a site beside a non-residential zone

The data analysis did not identify the locational restriction as a major barrier to development of child care services, with only one variance to the regulation being issued in 2024 (out of 19 permits issued with variances) and no instances of it being listed as a reason for refusal.

In addition, the parking and traffic study concluded that child care services produce a higher vehicle trip rate during peak hours than small scale residential uses. This finding was expected and is part of the reason why corner sites are considered the most appropriate location for child care services in the small scale residential zones.

Given potential traffic impacts and that the current locational restrictions are not impeding child care development, Administration does not recommend exploring amendments to locational regulations at this time.

Maximum Floor Area Requirements

Currently, all child care services developed under the small scale residential zones are limited to a maximum floor area of 300 sq. m.

The data analysis in Attachment 1, Child Care Services Development Permit Data Analysis, did not identify the maximum floor area as a major barrier to development of child care services, with no instances of it being listed as a reason for variance or refusal.

A review of child care services approved in 2024 showed the average maximum capacity for child care services in small scale residential zones in 2024 was 45 children. This generally aligns with the scale and intensity of use that was intended when the maximum 300 sq. m. floor area was established for child care services in the small scale residential zones.

Given that the current maximum floor area does not appear to be impeding child care development, Administration does not recommend exploring amendments to the maximum floor area regulation at this time.

Child Care Services in Special Area Zones

In addition to the development permit analysis, Administration reviewed special area zones to determine how many list child care services as a discretionary use compared to similar standard zones.

Child Care Services is listed as a permitted use in 16 standard zones and a discretionary use in the River Valley Zone. Child Care Services is not listed in the IM - Medium Industrial Zone, IH - Heavy Industrial Zone, NA - Natural Area Zone, PU - Public Utility Zone or AG - Agriculture Zone.

Administration reviewed 46 special area zones that have similar development rights to the 16 standard zones that allow Child Care Services as a permitted use. Of the 46 special area zones reviewed, 17 list Child Care Services as a discretionary use.

Replacing discretionary uses with permitted uses, where appropriate, is intended to provide greater certainty in the development permit review process and clearly establish development expectations through regulations. Permitted uses also typically experience shorter review times and reduced likelihood of appeal when a development meets the regulations of the Zoning Bylaw.

Administration will explore changing child care services to a permitted use in special area zones, where appropriate, so that they align with similar standard zones that allow for child care services as a permitted use.