

## Text Amendment

- Proposed text amendment to section 5.1.D of the Watertown Zoning Regulations to classification and enforcement of commercial vehicles parked in residential zones.

To: Town of Watertown Planning and Zoning Commission

From: Mark Massoud, Administrator for Land Use and Building Services /Zoning Enforcement Officer & Cameron Natusch, Assistant Zoning Enforcement Officer

Date: December 18, 2025

Re: Section 5.1.D Commercial Vehicle Text Amendment Comparison

### Comparison Summary

	Old Regulations	New Regulations
<b>Considered Commercial Vehicle</b>	Broad view on commercial vehicles, including what is not allowed in residential zones	Based off FHWA class chart and weight
<b>Number of Commercial Vehicles Allowed</b>	One, except for those listed under "Commercial Vehicle Which Shall NOT Be Parked In A Residential Zone" One commercial vehicle which "Shall not be parked" is allowed by special permit approval More than one commercial vehicles of the other subcategories by special permit	Two up to 10,000 pounds GVWR One between 10,000 and 19,500 pounds by zoning permit Three class 1 through 5 or 1 class 6 or higher by special permit approval
<b>Screening</b>	Only when through special permit	All vehicles class three or higher or by special permit
<b>Agricultural Vehicles</b>	Allowed for use on a farm	Allowed for a permitted agriculture, farming, forestry, or nursery gardening use

### Edits

Small edits were made to the proposed regulations, mostly for grammar. Highlighted edits were added, and words with a slash through them indicate removal. The commercial vehicles of class six or higher were limited to one.

### Possible Changes Up to Commission

- Changes requested by resident Day Palmer attached.
- Allowance of certain types of earth moving vehicles in residential zones.
- Whether commercial vehicles must meet accessory building setbacks for zoning permit when already being screened.
- Any other changes up to the commission's discretion.

**EXISTING Watertown Commercial Vehicle Regulations:**

**“D. Accessory Parking Of A Commercial Vehicle**

1. **Commercial Vehicle - Overnight parking / storage of one (1) commercial vehicle may be allowed as an accessory use on a residential lot in any residential district provided that the table below shall indicate that the specific vehicle type is allowed in a Residential Zone.**

<p><b>May Be Parked In A Residential Zone Unless Considered a Commercial Vehicle</b></p>	<p>a. <b>Generally <u>NOT</u> A Commercial Vehicle (see factors below)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passenger car, convertible, station wagon</li> <li>• Sport utility vehicle (SUV), minivan, pickup</li> <li>• Farm vehicles used on a farm for activities associated with that farm</li> </ul>
<p><b>If Considered A Commercial Vehicle, One Such Vehicle May Be Parked In A Residential Zone</b></p>	<p>b. <b>May Be Considered A Commercial Vehicle</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full size pickup</li> <li>• Van, utility van</li> <li>• Mini-bus</li> <li>• Open or enclosed trailers used for commercial purposes</li> </ul>
<p><b>A Commercial Vehicle Which Shall <u>NOT</u> Be Parked In A Residential Zone</b></p>	<p>c. <b>Generally Considered A Commercial Vehicle --</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step van, box truck, walk-in truck</li> <li>• Landscape truck, dump truck, bucket truck</li> <li>• Tractor cab and/or trailer, oil truck, pumper truck, school bus</li> <li>• Earth moving equipment and similar types of construction equipment.</li> </ul>

2. Factors which may be used to decide whether a vehicle or a trailer is a commercial vehicle include, but are not limited to:

- a. Commercial registration.
- b. Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) greater than 10,000 pounds or vehicle class (Class 2 or above).
- c. The presence of logos or markings identifying a trade, business, service or commodity.
- d. Modifications such as equipment racks.

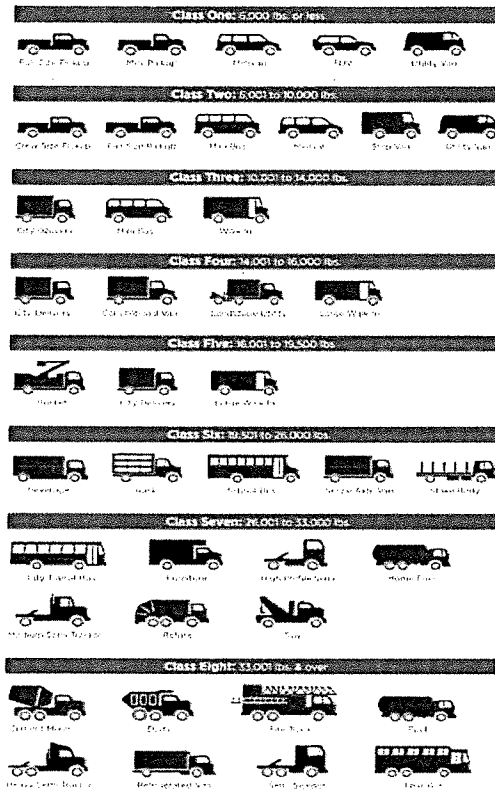
3. Exceptions may be made for temporary parking of public utility emergency vehicles or on-call service vehicles used as part of a resident’s employment when such vehicles are parked on the driveway.

4. Provided that such vehicles are screened to the satisfaction of the Commission, the Commission may, by Special Permit, allow the parking / storage of:

- a. More than one (1) commercial vehicle of the type categorized into Subsection 5.1.D.1.5 above, or
- b. A commercial vehicle of the type categorized into Subsection 5.1.D.1.c above.”

**PROPOSED Watertown Commercial Vehicle regulations:**

**Commercial Vehicle- Parking / storage of two (2) commercial vehicles may be allowed as an accessory use on a residential lot in any residential district provided that it is either class one (1) or class two (2) based on the Federal Highway Administration diagram found below.**



1. Factors which may be used to decide whether a vehicle or a trailer is a commercial vehicle include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Commercial registration.
  - b. Vehicles above class two (2).
  - c. The presence of logos or markings identifying a trade, business, service or commodity.
  - d. Modifications such as equipment racks.
2. One commercial vehicle from class three (3) to five (5) ~~or two commercial vehicles class one (1) to two (2)~~, may be parked on a lot by zoning permit approval from the Zoning Enforcement Officer provided there is proper screening from town roadways and the parked vehicle meets accessory structure setbacks.
3. By Special Permit approval, the Planning & Zoning Commission may permit the following:

- a. The parking of one commercial vehicle(s) that meet the definition of Class six or higher according to FHWA.
- b. The parking of three (3) or more commercial vehicles that meet the definition of Class 1 through Class 5 according to FHWA.
- c. In evaluating a Special Permit application under this section, the Commission shall consider the Special Permit Requirements in Section 8.4 of these Regulations and the following specific factors: the size, intended use, and hours of operation of the vehicle in question; other vehicles on the property; and physical characteristics of the neighborhood.

#### 4. Minimum Standards

All commercial vehicles within any residential zone, regardless of vehicle class unless otherwise stated, shall meet the following standards:

- a. No vehicle shall be parked so as to obstruct the view of traffic from adjacent driveways or streets.
- b. No vehicle containing hazardous materials or waste may be parked on a residential lot.
- c. Commercial construction vehicles, including but not limited to, backhoes, skid steers, bucket loaders, track vehicles, shall not be allowed unless expressly exempted in Section 5.1.D.10. below.
- d. No tanker trucks or similar type vehicles used for hauling liquids including but not limited to oil trucks, septic cleanout trucks, etc. shall be allowed.
- e. Parking of commercial vehicles in the front yard of a residence is prohibited. All commercial vehicles shall be parked:
  - a. On the driveway of the occupied residential lot;
  - b. In a parking area leased to the residential occupant; or
- f. The commercial vehicle shall be owned or operated by the permanent resident of the property on which it is to be parked.
- g. No maintenance or repair of a commercial vehicle shall be allowed on the adjacent street.
- h. All commercial vehicles of class three (3) or higher shall be screened to prevent from town roadways and neighboring properties.

i. No trucks, including but not limited to garbage trucks, which haul cargo that emits objectionable odors shall be permitted.

~~j. No trailer shall be attached to any parked commercial vehicle for longer than one day.~~

6. All applications for Special Permits shall include a detailed description of the vehicle including vehicle class according to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Any permits granted shall be for the specific vehicle class described in the application. Any changes from the vehicle class as approved shall require a new approval by the Commission.

7. Commercial vehicles subject to Special Permits shall be screened along the closest residential property line by appropriate evergreen trees, shrubs, fence, or a combination thereof. Exceptions and modifications may be considered by the Commission taking into consideration topography and proximity of adjacent residential structures.

8. Nothing herein shall be construed to permit a home-based business that is not otherwise permitted under the Regulations. Any home-based business that is conducted in conjunction with the parking of a commercial vehicle must meet the applicable requirements and be registered with the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

9. Nothing herein shall be construed so as to prohibit commercial vehicles parked temporarily while engaged in providing products or services to the owner of the property.

10. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit commercial vehicles that are used as part of the following:

a. a permitted agriculture, farming, forestry, or nursery gardening use;

b. a permitted earth excavation, removal, or deposit activity authorized under Section 13.1 of these Regulations;

c. The temporary, occasional parking of a commercial vehicle on residential property by a contractor and/or town or public utility employee required for "on-call" services.

d. a use of facility operated by the Town of Watertown, a Fire Department, State of Connecticut, or Federal Government;

e. a maintenance facility in support of a multiple dwelling project on the lot, or in support of a Special Permit use, if authorized under such Special Permit.

11. Pursuant to Section C.G.S. 8-6, the Zoning Board of Appeals is prohibited from varying any provision of this section.



### STAFF REFERRAL REPORT

TO: Watertown Planning & Zoning Commission; Town Manager of Watertown, Administrator of Land Use and Zoning Enforcement Officer, and Assistant Zoning Enforcement Officer

FROM: Emely Ricci, Community Planner II, NVCOG, 49 Leavenworth Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Waterbury (203) 757-0535

DATE: July 16, 2025

NVCOG FILE NO.: WTTN-04-070325-Z  
MUNICIPALITY: Town of Watertown  
DATE RECEIVED: July 03, 2025  
TYPE OF REFERRAL: Zone Change and Text Amendments  
DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING: August 06, 2025  
APPLICANT: Watertown Planning and Zoning Commission

#### DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSALS:

The Town of Watertown Planning and Zoning Commission has initiated a proposal for one (1) zone change and three (3) text amendments. They are as follows:

- 1. Zone Change.** The Town of Watertown Planning and Zoning Commission proposed a zone change for the properties at 58, 140, and 184 Commercial Street, Watertown, CT to change from Restricted Industrial District IR-80 to Shopping Center Business District B-SC. The Commission is also proposing a zone change for properties at 0 and 421 Bunker Hill Road, Watertown, CT to change from Restricted Industrial District IR-80 to Residential District R-70. *The Planning and Zoning Commission states these changes would better align with current zones in the area.*
- 2. Text Amendment: Vehicle Sales.** The Town of Watertown Planning and Zoning Commission proposed a text amendment to the Business Districts Vehicle-Related use table in Section 2.2.G. The proposal would establish Section 2.2.G.7 that would allow new vehicles sales and services via Special Permit in the B-SC zone and Section 2.2.G.8. that would allow used automobile storage and sales in enclosed buildings via Site Plan Approval in the B-SC zone.
- 3. Text Amendment: Commercial Vehicle Classification and Enforcement.** The Town of Watertown Planning and Zoning Commission proposed a text amendment to Section 5.1.D - Accessory Parking of a Commercial Vehicle of the Town of Watertown Zoning

Regulations to better classify and enforce commercial vehicles parked in residential zones.

4. **Text Amendment: Poultry in a Residential Zone.** The Town of Watertown Planning and Zoning Commission proposed a text amendment to Section 5.20 - Keeping of Animals In a Residential Zone to replace the word "chicken(s)" with "poultry."

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **Zone Change.** NVCOG Staff finds the proposed zone map change to not be regionally significant and not have intermunicipal impact.
2. **Text Amendment: Vehicle Sales.** NVCOG Staff finds the proposed text amendment to The Town of Watertown Zoning Regulation Section 2.2.G to not be regionally significant and not have intermunicipal impact.
3. **Text Amendment: Commercial Vehicle Classification and Enforcement.** NVCOG Staff finds the proposed text amendment to The Town of Watertown Zoning Regulation Section 5.1.D to not be regionally significant and not have intermunicipal impact.
4. **Text Amendment: Poultry in a Residential Zone.** NVCOG Staff finds the proposed text amendment to The Town of Watertown Zoning Regulation Section 5.20 to not be regionally significant and not have intermunicipal impact.

\* \* \* \* \*

This staff recommendation is transmitted as written above unless we receive comments or objections within five days of the time you receive this proposal. If objections cannot be resolved within the scope of the original recommendations, you may submit a reconsideration request to the Regional Planning Commission for further discussion of the findings.