
The Applicant proposes to consolidate four existing lots into a single 2,676 m² (0.67-acre) parcel and construct a commercial warehouse complex comprising two single-storey, courtyard-oriented, flex-warehouse buildings: a three-bay eastern building and a four-bay western building, each approximately 557 m², totaling ~1,115 m².

This report to the Advisory Planning Commission (APC) addresses solely the requested variances, being:

1. To permit the construction of two (2) principal buildings on a single, legally consolidated parcel with shared access to Highway 16.
2. To reduce the minimum off-street parking requirement from one parking stall per 45 m² of gross floor area (approximately 25 stalls) to 16 parking stalls, including one accessible stall.
3. To fully waive the requirement for two (2) electric vehicle (EV) parking spaces and charging infrastructure for the proposed development.

Official Community Plan & Zoning: The subject property is designated as Highway 16. Commercial in the Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw No. 1935, and zoned C-2 Service Commercial Zone in the Town of Smithers Zoning Bylaw No. 1987 (see **Attachment 3**). The property also forms part of the Form and Character Development Permit Areas (DPAs) under the 'Highway 16 Corridor' category, as identified on Map 7 of the OCP Bylaw.

DISCUSSION:

The Applicant proposes to develop a seven-unit warehousing complex on the currently vacant, four-lot parcel located at 4351 Highway 16 (see **Attachment 4**). The intent of the development is to provide secure storage and functional workspace for contractors, tradespeople, and small business operators to conduct their business activities and store equipment and materials. The development is designed in a courtyard configuration, with parking provided for tenants and patrons directly in front of each warehouse unit along the frontage. A central maneuvering aisle and apron will be located within the courtyard to facilitate safe and efficient vehicle circulation. Access to the site will be provided by a double-wide crossing entrance and exit directly from Highway 16.

In a letter of intent (see **Attachment 1**), the Applicant has outlined the applicable variance criteria and provided a supporting rationale for each requested variance, demonstrating how the proposal meets the intent of the Zoning Bylaw while enabling the practical and functional design of the development.

Staff conducted technical review meetings as part of the assessment process and supports the requested variances for the reasons detailed under each respective variance.

Variance 1 Two Buildings: Since section 2.5.5 in the Zoning Bylaw stipulates one principal building per parcel, and the C-2 zone is silent on the permitted number of principal buildings, a variance is required to allow the proposed warehouse complex's two buildings on a single parcel.

Support for this request includes:

- The requested variance does not increase land use intensity, nor does it create negative impacts on the surrounding neighbourhood.
- The overall scale and function of the development remain consistent with the intent of the applicable zoning regulations.
- No subdivision is proposed, which is preferred due to shared access concerns, and no additional density is being created through this application.
- Although two buildings are proposed on the site, they are designed and intended to function as a unified commercial development with a shared, common access and integrated functionality.
- To formalize this arrangement, the lands will be legally consolidated under a single title and will operate under one civic address (with unit numbers assigned to each building). As such, the development will function as one cohesive commercial entity rather than as separate or independent uses.

Variance 2 Off-Street Parking: Section 2.10 of the Zoning Bylaw sets minimum off-street parking (Table 2.10.2, **Attachment 5**). The Applicant requests reducing the one stall per 45 m² commercial requirement to a value closer to the industrial warehousing rate of one stall per 90 m², balancing business needs with traffic safety, congestion control, and pedestrian access. A total of 16 stalls is proposed within the parcel, which equates to one stall per 70 m². While each warehouse unit has the capacity to accommodate internal vehicle storage, these internal spaces are not included in the calculation of required parking stalls for zoning compliance purposes.

Support for this request includes:

- Providing 16 parking stalls ensures operational flexibility while aligning with the reduced parking demand typically associated with warehouse uses in Industrial Zones, such as the M-1 (Light Industrial) or M-2 (Medium Industrial) designations.
- Warehouse uses generate lower customer traffic compared to retail or C-2 Service Commercial uses. As such, parking demand is reduced, with requirements driven primarily by employees rather than customers or drive-in visitors.
- The courtyard configuration removes vehicular maneuvering and queuing from the adjacent highway, enhancing overall traffic safety and minimizing highway access conflicts. While this design consolidates maneuvering activity within the internal courtyard parking area, instead of providing a row of parking, it provides a controlled and safer on-site circulation pattern.
- During regular business hours, the majority of tenants and users are anticipated to be off-site for deliveries, service calls, or other operational activities, with peak return occurring toward the end of the workday. Consequently, on-site parking demand during typical daytime hours is expected to remain moderate and within the proposed 16-stall capacity.

Variance 3 EV Charging Stalls: The Applicant seeks a waiver from the requirement for two EV charging stalls, as site constraints, heavy vehicle traffic, and safety risks make locating them safely impractical for the active warehouse. Smithers Fire and Rescue strongly recommend that EV charging stations be located as far away from buildings as possible.

Staff support for this request includes:

- Parking stalls be located directly adjacent to building faces, and the courtyard configuration does not provide safe buffer zones for charger placement without materially altering circulation.
- Staff recognize that installing EV charging infrastructure adjacent to warehouse bays used for storing tools, equipment, and contractor vehicles introduces elevated fire-exposure risk and increases emergency-response complexity.
- The installation of fixed charging infrastructure would constrain vehicle maneuverability and loading operations within the courtyard, reducing overall operational efficiency and flexibility.
- Additionally, existing parking stalls are located directly adjacent to building façades, and the current courtyard configuration does not provide adequate setback or buffer zones for safe charger placement without materially altering vehicle circulation patterns and site functionality.

Conclusion: Staff support the three variances, as the proposal aligns with the intent of the C-2 Commercial Service Zone, supports local business growth, addresses regulatory constraints, and is unlikely to negatively affect surrounding properties, representing a reasonable community-minded development.

RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS:

Planning review and approval costs will be covered by the Form and Character Development Permit with Variance application fee, with no additional cost to the Municipality.

LEGISLATION / POLICY CONSIDERATIONS:

Town of Smithers Zoning Bylaw No. 1987, Section 2.10 Parking (see **Attachment 5**); Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw No. 1935, Section 6.2.2 Objectives, 6.2.2.1 Highway 16 Commercial, Policy 2. The DVP is also generally supported by Section 8.2, Policy 8 Section 8.3, and Policy 7, which encourages commercial development and redevelopment along the Highway 16 Corridor (see **Attachment 6**).

The Applicant is also seeking a Controlled Access Permit from the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MoTT).

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:

The Applicant is responsible for all costs associated with any additional municipal water, sewer, and stormwater connections as required under the Development Permit. Application processing costs are covered by the application fee. No additional asset management impacts are anticipated.

CONNECTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Developing the vacant land within the Highway 16 Corridor directly supports the Town's Strategic Priority of ***Economic Prosperity - Supporting diversification of local economy.***

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Large-footprint development increases impervious surfaces, altering natural hydrology and increasing runoff and pollutant loads. The two proposed buildings, along with the courtyard parking, and maneuvering aisles, require comprehensive stormwater management to mitigate potential environmental impacts. The Owner must ensure proper connection to the Town's stormwater system to prevent site contaminants from entering the natural environment. This will be addressed through the development permit and building permit processes.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Notification and communication for this application will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act, the Town of Smithers Development Procedures Bylaw, and the Town of Smithers Public Notice Bylaw.

ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

Section 2.10.9 (c) of the Town of Smithers Zoning Bylaw No. 1987 sets minimum accessible parking requirements based on total stalls. One accessible space is required for lots with up to 20 stalls, and two are required for lots with 21–75 stalls. Therefore, if no parking variance is granted and the proposed parking increases to 21 or more stalls the development must provide two accessible parking stalls.

ALTERNATIVES / OPTIONS:

Recommend that Council deny the variances requested as part of the Form and Character Development Permit application.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. DEV 26-022 Application D26-01
2. DEV 26-022 Subject Property Map
3. DEV 26-022 OCP and Zoning Maps
4. DEV 26-022 Ortho-Photos of development location
5. DEV 26-022 Table.2.10.2 Zoning Bylaw No. 1987
6. DEV 26-022 Relevant Sections of OCP Bylaw No.1935.

Respectfully submitted:



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Reviewed by:



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Approved for Submission:



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