



# ALDERPERSON AGENDA ITEM MEMO

To: **Community Affairs Committee**

From: Robin Brannin, Alderperson District 3

Date: January 15, 2026

Subject: Review of Commercial and Residential Vehicle Parking Regulations in Residential Districts  
(Zoning Code Sections 24.11.060B and 24.11.060C)

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## **A. Background/Rationale**

The City of Wauwatosa zoning code regulates off-street parking and the parking of commercial vehicles within residential zoning districts under Section 24.11.060. The intent of these regulations is to preserve neighborhood character while allowing reasonable use of residential properties.

As vehicle design, usage patterns, and enforcement practices have evolved, portions of the existing code—particularly those related to commercial vehicles—no longer clearly reflect current conditions in Wauwatosa or how the ordinance is enforced today. This has resulted in confusion for residents, inconsistent expectations and enforcement, and challenges in applying the code uniformly.

In reviewing proposed updates to **Section 24.11.060C (Parking of Commercial Vehicles in Residential Districts)**, it has become clear that corresponding language in **Section 24.11.060B (Residential Districts)** must also be reviewed to ensure consistency between parking allowances for commercial vehicles and residential vehicles.

This agenda item is intended to initiate a policy-level discussion of both sections of the code to ensure clarity, consistency, and enforceability while maintaining neighborhood standards.

## **B. Key Issues for Consideration**

Based on a review of the zoning code and current enforcement practices, the following recommendations are proposed and reflected in the attached draft ordinance language for **Section 24.11.060C**:

### **1. Increase the Vehicle Weight Threshold**

Update the gross vehicle weight threshold used to help define a commercial vehicle from the current level to 10,000 pounds, recognizing that many modern pickup trucks and work vehicles exceed lower thresholds while still functioning as personal-use vehicles.

### **2. Allow One Commercial Vehicle per Residential Property**

Permit one commercial vehicle per residential lot, even if it meets the commercial vehicle characteristics outlined in the ordinance.

### **3. Restrict Only Heavy Commercial Vehicles**



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**Clarify that semi-tractors, box trucks, and similar heavy commercial vehicles remain prohibited from being parked outside a garage in residential districts - allowing for standard passenger size commercial vehicles.**

## 4. Require Parking on Paved Surfaces

Require any permitted commercial vehicle to be parked entirely within a garage, upon a paved parking slab, or upon a paved driveway leading directly from the street to the garage or paved parking slab.

To ensure consistency with the proposed updates to commercial vehicle parking regulations and to clarify allowable parking locations for all vehicles in residential districts, it is recommended that **Section 24.11.060B** be amended as follows:

1. **Strike Subsection 1**, which addresses the location of off-street parking spaces within residential setbacks.

*Off-street parking spaces accessory to residential uses may be located in any setback except required front and street side setbacks. A two-unit residential building with attached garages is allowed to have 2 of the 4 required parking spaces located on paved areas in front and/or street side setbacks.*

2. **Retain and reinforce the requirement** that all motor vehicles parked on property occupied by residential uses must be located within a garage, upon a paved parking slab, or upon a paved driveway leading directly from the street to the garage or paved parking slab.

*No motor vehicles may be parked on property occupied by residential uses unless they are within a garage, upon a paved parking slab, or upon a paved driveway leading directly from the street to the garage or paved parking slab.*

This approach maintains a clear and enforceable standard that prohibits vehicle parking in yards or on lawns, while simplifying the code and aligning residential vehicle parking requirements with the updated commercial vehicle parking language.

These recommendations are intended to simplify the ordinance, improve consistency in enforcement, and better align regulations with current conditions in Wauwatosa while continuing to protect residential neighborhood character.

## 5. Fiscal Impact

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with this review. Any future amendments would be evaluated for administrative or enforcement implications prior to Council consideration.

## 6. Requested Action

Community Affairs Committee review the proposed ordinance amendments to Zoning Code Section 24.11.060 and 24.11.060B provide direction on whether the recommended changes should advance through the formal zoning code change process.



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## 7. Attachments

File: Draft Recommended Code Changes – Section 24.11.060 (Commercial Vehicle Parking in Residential Districts)