



## Report

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**Subject:** Clean Yards By-law Final

**Department:** Corporate Services

**Division:** By-law/Property Standards

**Report #:** CPS-2025-059

**Meeting Date:** 2025-07-14

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### Recommendations

**That report CPS-2025-059, Clean Yards By-law Final, be received; and**

**That Council pass a Clean Yards By-law for the Town of Orangeville.**

### Overview

This report examines the current inefficiencies in the Property Standards By-law, which involves an extended process for maintaining yards and buildings alike, placing strain on resources and causing unnecessary delays. The proposed Clean Yards By-law offers a solution to these inefficiencies by streamlining the enforcement of minor exterior issues.

### Background

On May 26, 2025, staff presented Report CPS 2025-042 titled “Clean Yards By-law Proposal to Council. The report identified efficiencies by creating a standalone Clean Yards By-law, specifically to separate minor, exterior property maintenance concerns from the broader scope of the Property Standards By-law.

The new Clean Yards By-law would aim to enable faster compliance for common complaints (such as long grass, refuse, and snow removal) while allowing the Property Standards By-law to focus on critical issues affecting occupant safety and structural matters.

On June 23, 2025, staff attended a public meeting to present the proposed draft Clean Yards By-law. The presentation aimed to educate Council and residents about the proposed changes while addressing any concerns or questions raised during the meeting.

## Analysis/Current Situation

The Town of Orangeville currently relies on the Property Standards By-law, which involves comprehensive regulations of both building and yard maintenance, including appearance and structural conditions. The enforcement authority is grounded in the Ontario Building Code Act, necessitating a detailed process for addressing reported infractions. Key steps include inspection, issuance of an Order to Comply, and a compliance time that minimally extends over 14 days. The process is resource-intensive due to mandatory statutory orders and appeal rights, leading to a significant administrative burden even for minor concerns. A separate Clean Yards By-law is proposed to streamline the handling of exterior nuisance conditions, allowing for simplified enforcement steps, reduced compliance timelines, and discretionary appeal mechanisms that can be managed administratively rather than through a formal hearing.

### Council/Residents Questions/Input

Comments / Feedback	Staff Response / Recommendation
<p><b>Vegetation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current by-law limits grass and vegetation height to a maximum of 6 inches and requires properties to be free of natural debris. This contradicts a motion made in the Sustainable Orangeville Committee in the Pollinator Protection Plan, as such short restrictions could harm ecosystems and biodiversity by promoting clear-cutting of properties. Allowing natural debris can support insect habitation during winter.</li> <li>• Other municipalities set a minimum threshold of 30 cm (12 inches) and allow exemptions for naturalized, perennial, and front vegetable gardens. Our current limit of 6 inches warrants a reevaluation in line with these practices.</li> <li>• There is a “No Mow May” initiative by Bee City, adopted in municipal comparators such as Wasaga, to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scope of this project was to move the same restrictions from the current Property Standards By-law into a new Clean Yards By-law to facilitate an expedited process to enable officers to attend and address concerns in a more efficient manner. Council may direct staff to conduct a more comprehensive review to amend both the Property Standards By-law as well as the new proposed By-law. This would address comments and concerns relating to the maximum height of grass and weeds, natural debris on the property and consideration for an exemption month for grass cutting.</li> </ul>

<p>promote pollinator health through exemptions to lawn height limitations. Implementing similar exemptions could be beneficial.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is a growing interest in transitioning from artificial turf lawns to naturalized gardens, as long as they do not interfere with sightlines or do not encroach onto Town lands. Such changes might warrant consideration for by-law exemptions.</li><li>• Would this by-law include Town-owned facilities as well?</li></ul> <p><b>Refuse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clarification on whether dog excrement is included within the scope of this by-law</li><li>• Does this by-law address the presence of large green bins, such as the renovation bins or dumpsters, on driveways?</li><li>• When garbage is left on the road after garbage day due to weight or too many bags, and a sticker is placed on the bag, is this addressed within the by-law? It is believed that property owners should be responsible for returning such garbage to their premises and not leaving it on the road.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The intent of this by-law and the Property Standards By-law is to address long grass and weeds and similar vegetation. Gardens do not fall into this scope that are maintained.</li><li>• Yes, Town owned facilities would fall under this by-law as well.</li><li>• Yes, dog feces would fall under the definition of refuse. So, no property may permit any animal feces or excrement to remain on the property.</li><li>• This by-law does not speak to dumpsters or storage containers on the property's driveway. This is addressed under our Zoning By-law 1990-022, Section 5.36, In an ER, R, and D Zone, dumpsters and/or storage containers may be permitted in the front yard during a single period of up to 90 days in any 12-month period.</li><li>• The only time that garbage may be placed out on the road is for garbage collection as per the County of Dufferin Waste Collection By-law. If garbage is found on the road outside of those provisions, an Order to Comply may be issued to remove it. If compliance is not obtained, the Town may utilize the enforcement tools, such as remediation</li></ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The issue of derelict vehicles has become significant. What does the Town define as a derelict vehicle?</li></ul> <p><b>Other items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When we speak to the prosecution, we acknowledge the Town does not have a lawyer or prosecutor on staff, but does the Town have a Lawyer on retainer or a local lawyer?</li><li>• Is by-law enforcement complaint-based, or do our officers proactively seek out violations?</li></ul>	<p>at the cost of the property owner or further legal action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The proposed Clean Yards By-law defines in detail what a derelict vehicle is. If a vehicle is not roadworthy or would not pass a safety test, missing a licence plate, damaged or missing body parts, it would be considered derelict and would not be permitted on the property unless the property is zoned to permit it.</li><li>• The Town does use the same lawyer for all of its by-law court matters.</li><li>• The by-law team addresses non-parking-related matters on a complaint basis only and does not proactively inspect properties for violations. The by-law team utilized a progressive enforcement model, which means we focus on education first by means of Orders, Notices and continued communication. If compliance cannot be achieved, the Town will move to enforcement by means of remedial action or further legal action. The only proactive enforcement the Town takes is parking enforcement.</li></ul>
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**Changes/Additions Made**

Change From	Change To
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Section 2.1 Every Owner shall ensure that turf grass or similar vegetation is kept trimmed to a maximum height of 15 cm (6 inches), in front of, alongside, or at the rear of any <b>property</b>;</li><li>• Addition of Section 2.2</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Section 2.1 Every Owner shall ensure that all long grass, brush, undergrowth and weeds is kept trimmed to a maximum height of 15 cm (6 inches), in front of, alongside, or at the rear of any <b>property</b>;</li><li>• Section 2.2 Notwithstanding section 2.1, this By-law does not apply to open space <b>Town</b> lands that have been naturalized.</li></ul>

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**Corporate Implications**

This report will not generate direct corporate implications. However, it is worth noting that by allowing officers to attend and address complaints more efficiently, the proposed Clean Yards By-law will facilitate operational improvements. This efficiency is likely to lead to fewer Property Standards Appeals since the streamlined processes under the Clean Yards By-law do not provide for an appeal process and will allow for quicker compliance. Additionally, the ability to remediate properties faster will enhance overall administrative efficiency and resource allocation.

**Conclusion**

The Clean Yards By-law aims to expedite compliance and enforcement for exterior nuisances by eliminating the mandatory timeline and appeal processes required by the Property Standards By-law as set out in the Building Code Act. This approach is expected to reduce the number of property standards appeals and improve resource allocation. Therefore, staff recommends passing the Clean Yards By-law to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness.

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## Strategic Alignment

### Strategic Plan

Strategic Goal: Community Vitality

Objective: Well-Being

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## Notice Provisions

Not Applicable

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Respectfully submitted,

Antonietta Minichillo  
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**Attachment(s):** Clean Yards By-law – Draft.docx