

# Warrant Article 24 – Proposed Zoning By-Law Changes Regarding Parking Requirements for Restaurants

**Overview**  
**April 2016**

*Rob Anderson*  
*Community Development Director*



# Zoning Update for Restaurant Parking

- There has been a desire for new restaurants in town by residents;
- With a population of over 40,000 and a median household income of \$88,296 we should be more popular with the food service industry;
- However, in Billerica's outreach to restaurant groups, developers, and within planning circles the restaurant parking requirements have been identified as one of the reasons why Billerica is a secondary choice; and
- Billerica has the opportunity to be more aggressive and proactive by enacting a minor zoning change to spur greater intensification of development.



# Restaurant definition

## **RESTAURANT**

An establishment serving food and drink to patrons seated in a dining area with service being provided to the patrons by wait staff. Take-out orders may be permitted as an incidental and subordinate percentage of the business. A restaurant may not offer drive-through or drive-up window service. A bakery is not a restaurant.



# Comparing us to our competition

	Current Zoning	70 Seat Restaurant with a shift of 10
<b>Billerica</b>	Must have One (1) space per 2 ½ seats, including all outdoor sitting areas and deck areas used for seating, plus one (1) space per employee.	38
<b>Chelmsford</b>	1 space per employee on the largest shift and 1 space per 2.5 seats based on the maximum rated legal seating capacity of the facility	38
<b>Tewksbury</b>	One (1) space for every two and one half (2½ ) seats plus one (1) space for every employee on the largest shift	38
<b>Framingham</b>	Restaurants, clubs, theaters and other similar places of assembly; 1 per three occupants; plus 1 per two employees	29
<b>Bedford</b>	One parking space for each four seats of rated capacity or one space for each four persons normally expected on the premises at the time of maximum use plus such additional spaces as shall be required for the number of employees' vehicles which can be reasonably expected at any one time on the premises.	28
<b>Littleton</b>	Restaurants: one (1) space per four (4) seats, plus one (1) space per employee on the larger shift.	28
<b>Reading</b>	For restaurants with seating, one (1) space for every four (4) persons of the rated seating capacity of the facility, plus one (1) space for every employee on the largest shift.	28
<b>Marlborough</b>	Clubs, restaurants, taverns and other eating places shall provide one parking space for every three seats, plus one space for every three employees.	28
<b>Franklin</b>	Restaurants, theaters and assembly halls: one space per 2.5 seats; if seats are not fixed, one space per 60 square feet of gross floor area.	28
<b>Burlington</b>	A minimum and maximum of one (1) parking space for every three (3) seats in customer food service areas.	24
<b>Westford</b>	1 for each three seats	24
<b>Wilmington</b>	1 space/3 seats or 36" of counter	24
<b>Westborough</b>	Restaurant, place of assembly: one space per four (4) seats	18
<b>North Reading</b>	One (1) for each four (4) seats of seating capacity [restaurant]	18



# Current Parking Requirement/Proposed Change

**Section 8 (Parking and Loading Regulations); C**  
**(Parking requirements); 3**

## Current Zoning:

Restaurant: One (1) space per **2 ½ seats**, including all outdoor sitting areas and deck areas used for seating, plus one (1) space per employee.

## Proposed Change

Restaurant: One (1) space per **4 seats**, including all outdoor sitting areas and deck areas used for seating, plus one (1) space per employee.

*This means that for a 70 seat restaurant with a working shift of 10 people, current zoning calls for a minimum of **38** parking spaces, while the proposed change would call for a minimum of **28** spaces.*



## Why do this now?

- There are retail developments in the pipeline that can utilize this change as a tool to attract tenants;
- Restaurants will have the opportunity to **redevelop** smaller parcels within Billerica's business districts;
- There will be a reduction of cost for restaurant developers that can make Billerica more attractive;
- Billerica is aiming to align more closely with the standards of our competitors;
- There are environmental and aesthetic benefits to reducing the amount of pavement on site;
- This is a clear sign to the development community that we have identified a zoning limitation; and
- Having this tool early, as opposed to waiting for the Zoning Bylaw Committee, means we are much further along in recruiting new businesses.

