

NARRATIVE: Proposed Text Change to Amend the Definitions for Eating and Drinking Establishments and Personal Service Establishments, and to Amend the Parking Requirements for Eating and Drinking Establishments

5/16/2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this text change is to update the definitions for certain eating and drinking establishments and personal service establishments and to update the parking requirements for eating and drinking establishments. This would remove obsolete terminology, leave less room for interpretation and adjust parking requirements to more realistic levels.

2. Proposed Changes

a. Definitions for Eating and Drinking Establishments

The proposed changes would amend the following use definitions in Section 4, Use Definitions and Standards:

- Café, Standard
- Restaurant Fast Food, Standard
- Restaurant, Standard

The proposed text change would eliminate the definition for Restaurant, Carry Out, because since the pandemic, all restaurants are more or less carry-out restaurants. The Restaurant, Carry-Out definition also overlaps with the Restaurant, Fast Food, definition.

The following definitions would be added to the definitions:

- Café, with Entertainment
- Restaurant, Fast-Food, Drive through
- Restaurant, with Entertainment

While some of the terms are being used in the Zoning Regulations already, they were previously undefined. The definitions would also specify that no drive-throughs are permitted with any eating and drinking use, except for Restaurant, Fast-Food, Drive-Thru. The latter type of use would only be permitted in the M-L industrial C-I district districts.

The proposed text would also add a definition for Entertainment, clarifying that any adult uses do not constitute Entertainment.

An addition, a new definition for Food Truck Court would be added. A Food Truck Court is a privately owned property on which food trucks sell food to the public. This definition is necessary to clarify when the provisions of Stamford Code Ch. 179 apply (food trucks operating on public streets) and when the zoning regulations apply (food trucks on private properties).

Also proposed are a number of cross-references to clarify how certain subgroups of eating and drinking establishments would be treated – e.g., a Coffee Shop would be considered a Café, Standard.

b. Parking regulations for Eating and Drinking Establishments

The text would also update the parking requirements for eating and drinking establishments, based on the recommendations in the Stamford Parking Study. Parking requirements would vary based on the type of Eating and Drinking Establishment and Parking Category.

c. Definition for Personal Service Establishments

Lastly, the proposed text would create a new definition for Personal Service Establishments. This definition would be catch all for a number of uses that are currently not defined in the Zoning Regulations, such as Nail or Beauty Salons. Cross references would be added to make the regulations easier to understand.