OTTAWA GARAGE DOOR REPAIRS

Permits & Openings

When a garage door job needs a City of Ottawa building permit: same-size versus wider openings, heritage properties and fees

6 Expert Answers from Garage Door IQ

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Q1

What does the City of Ottawa charge for a permit to enlarge a door opening?

The City of Ottawa's 2026 fee schedule sets the rate at $12.75 per $1,000 (or part thereof) of the assessed valuation of the work, with a minimum fee of $117.00. The City does not publish a flat fee for this type of project; the amount depends on what the City assesses the work to be worth, so the permit cost is not something a garage door company can give you in advance.

What triggers the permit

The City's permit list includes "enlarging or relocating a window or door" under interior and exterior structural alterations. Replacing a garage door in the same-size opening is on the exempt list ("replacing doors or windows, provided they are in the same size opening"), but widening or raising the opening is not exempt. The City's Building Code also comes into play: Ontario's Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24, Division B, clause 9.23.12.2.(1)) requires that openings in loadbearing walls larger than the required stud spacing be framed with lintels designed to carry the superimposed loads to adjacent studs. Lintel sizing comes from the span tables in clause 9.23.12.3.(1). A garage door company does the door; a contractor who handles the structural framing sizes and installs the lintel to Code.

If your home is designated heritage or sits within a Heritage Conservation District, the City's heritage page says all alterations require the City's approval, and the permit exemptions do not apply. Ask the City before proceeding.

The permit is filed before work starts. The 2026 fee schedule took effect January 1, 2026; the City confirms the assessed valuation and the exact fee when you submit the application.

When you have two written quotes in front of you, put the structural framing work, the door itself, the tracks and springs, and any new wiring side by side to make sure each quote covers the same scope before you compare the totals.

Q2

Making a garage door opening taller in Orleans: does the City treat that as structural?

Making a garage door opening taller is a structural alteration. The City of Ottawa's permit list includes "interior and exterior structural alterations, such as enlarging or relocating a window or door," so a building permit is required before work begins.

The City's exempt list covers only "replacing doors or windows provided they are in the same size opening." A taller opening is not the same size, so that exemption does not apply.

What the structural work involves under the Building Code

When a garage door opening is made taller in a loadbearing wall, Ontario's Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24, Division B, clause 9.23.12.2.(1)) requires the opening to be framed with a lintel designed to carry the superimposed loads to the adjacent studs. The lintel span and size come from the Code's span tables (clause 9.23.12.3.(1)). The permit process is how the City reviews that framing; a technician or contractor doing the work should be able to show how the lintel is sized before the wall is opened.

If your home is designated as a heritage property or sits within a Heritage Conservation District, the City's heritage page notes that all alterations to designated heritage properties and to properties within a Heritage Conservation District require City approval, and the City's permit exemptions do not apply. Ask the City's Building Client Service Centre before any work is planned.

The 2026 City of Ottawa fee schedule sets permit fees for construction at $12.75 per $1,000 or part thereof of the assessed valuation of the work, with a minimum fee of $117.00. The City calculates the fee based on the assessed value of the specific work, so ask for that figure when you apply.

A few things worth having in writing before anyone starts: the full scope of the structural work, the permit number once it is issued, the price broken down by the framing, the opening modification and the new door installation, and the date the work is expected to begin and be complete.

Q3

Same-size garage door swap in Kanata: is a building permit needed?

The City of Ottawa's list of projects not requiring a building permit includes "replacing doors or windows (provided they are in the same size opening)." A same-size garage door swap in Kanata falls under that exemption, so no building permit is required.

That exemption does have one condition attached to it: the work still has to meet the Ontario Building Code, even without a permit.

Two situations would change that answer. If the opening is being made wider or taller, the City treats that as a structural alteration, and a building permit is required. If your home is designated as a heritage property or sits within a Heritage Conservation District, the City's heritage rules remove the exemption entirely; the City's own

guidance says all alterations to designated heritage properties and properties within a Heritage Conservation District require City approval, so you would need to contact a Building Client Service Centre representative before any work starts.

On the electrical side, if the door swap comes with a new opener and the job needs a new outlet or circuit, that is electrical work requiring an ESA notification filed by a Licensed Electrical Contractor.

Published 2025–2026 estimates from Ottawa garage door companies put a single uninsulated door at about $800 to $1,500 and a single insulated door at about $1,400 to $2,500 or more, before tax; your quote will differ. For the quote itself, ask the company to list in writing: the door itself, all hardware, the disposal of the old door, any opener work, and whether any new wiring is included or excluded. That way there are no surprises once work begins.

Q4

Adding a second garage door opening in Stittsville: what does the City require?

Adding a second garage door opening means cutting a new hole in the garage wall, which the City of Ottawa treats as a structural alteration. That triggers a building permit requirement before work begins.

The City's permit list includes "interior and exterior structural alterations, such as enlarging or relocating a window or door." A brand-new opening goes further than enlarging an existing one, so it falls squarely in permit territory. The City's exempt list covers only "replacing doors or windows provided they are in the same size opening," which does not apply here.

What the permit process involves for this job

The permit is issued by the City of Ottawa. The 2026 fee schedule sets the rate at $12.75 per $1,000 or part thereof of the assessed valuation of the work, with a minimum fee of $117.00. The City calculates the fee from the assessed value of the work, so ask the City for that figure once you have a contractor's quote in hand.

Cutting a new opening in a loadbearing wall also brings the Ontario Building Code into play. The Code requires that openings in loadbearing walls greater than the required stud spacing be framed with lintels designed to carry the superimposed loads to adjacent studs (Division B, 9.23.12.2.(1)), with lintel spans and sizes drawn from the Code's span tables (9.23.12.3.(1)). Ask your contractor who prepares the framing details for the permit.

If the new opening needs a new electrical outlet or circuit for an opener, that is separate electrical work. A Licensed Electrical Contractor files the notification of work with the Electrical Safety Authority before that work starts.

One more thing to check before any work is quoted: if your home is designated as a heritage property or sits within a Heritage Conservation District, the City of Ottawa's heritage page says all alterations to designated heritage properties and to properties within a Heritage Conservation District require City approval, and the City's permit exemptions do not apply. Contact a Building Client Service Centre representative for the specific requirements for your address.

Before agreeing to anything, ask the contractor whether their quote includes pulling the building permit and who is responsible for filing it.

Q5

Heritage district home in the Glebe: can I replace the garage door freely?

It depends on the property's heritage status, and the City decides it. If your Glebe home is designated, or sits in a Heritage Conservation District or a Heritage District Overlay, the same-size exemption does not apply: the City says designated heritage buildings and buildings in a Heritage District Overlay "are not subject to exemptions and require that you contact a Building Client Service Centre representative for specific information."

The City's heritage page adds that "all alterations to designated heritage properties and to properties located within a Heritage Conservation District require the approval of the City of Ottawa". That page names window replacement, porch work and additions among the alterations; it does not name garage doors, so ask the City how it treats yours. Have your address ready when you ask.

For a property that is neither designated nor in a district, the City's exempt list includes "Replacing doors or windows (provided they are in the same size opening)". Enlarging the opening is on the permit list either way.

Published 2025–2026 estimates from Ottawa garage door companies put a single insulated door at about $1,400 to $2,500 or more, before tax; your quote will differ. If the City asks for product details, a written quote naming the door's size, style and finish gives you something concrete to show.

Before you sign with a garage door company, ask for that written description of the door so it can go with any heritage request.

Q6

Is installing a garage door opener on either City of Ottawa permit list?

The City of Ottawa's permit lists do not name opener installation. The exempt list covers "replacing doors or windows (provided they are in the same size opening)"; the permit list includes "Interior and exterior structural alterations, such as: … enlarging or relocating a window or door" and "Structural repairs or alterations". Neither list mentions an opener as a standalone item.

Two things on those lists can still touch an opener job. If the opener goes in as part of a new door in a wider or taller opening, the opening itself is permit work, and the City's 2026 fee is $12.75 per $1,000 of construction value, with a minimum fee of $117. And designated heritage buildings, or buildings in a Heritage District Overlay, "are not subject to exemptions", so on a heritage property ask the City before any garage door work.

Because opener installation does not appear on either list, ask the City of Ottawa before the work starts. We did not find a ruling either way.

One related point worth separating out: if the job needs a new outlet or circuit to power the opener, that is electrical work: the Electrical Safety Authority says almost all electrical work is reported with a notification of work, and a Licensed Electrical Contractor files the ESA notification for that part of the job.

The practical question to put to the garage door company before you agree: ask them whether they have confirmed with the City of Ottawa that no building permit is needed for the opener installation, and whether any new wiring is included in the quote and who will be filing the ESA notification for it.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Garage Door Repairs. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified contractors and your local building authority (the City of Ottawa) before changing a garage door opening. A wider or new opening needs a City building permit, and new electrical work is filed with the Electrical Safety Authority. Information is current as of November 15, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawagaragedoorrepairs.ca** for the latest answers.