

Zoning By-Law Consolidation & Update

Backgrounder #4:

Home-Based Businesses

Background

Home-based businesses refer to an occupation that is based out of a residence. The three existing Zoning By-law (ZBLs) generally permit home-based businesses in dwellings so long as they are secondary to the main use, do not alter the character or external appearance of the dwelling, do not cause any negative impacts to the surrounding area (noise, traffic or parking). The ZBLs include restrictions on the percentage of the dwelling's gross floor area and also on whether employees can be located on the premises. Further conditions of this use are that there should be no indication of a business operation occurring at the residence, such as signs, advertising, parking or outdoor storage within public view. While the general considerations for home-based business are similar across the three existing ZBLs, there is a significant amount of variation around the type of dwellings in which they are permitted. For example, the Thurlow ZBL only permits home-based occupations in a single detached dwelling, or a unit within a permitted accessory building. This is quite restrictive when compared to the Belleville ZBL, which permits home-based businesses more broadly across a range of dwelling types. The update and consolidation of the ZBL will look to review the areas where home-based businesses can be supported more broadly.

Consistent and Current Zoning Provisions for Home-Based Business

- The nature of home-based businesses has changed over the years since the ZBLs were originally adopted. Many contemporary home-based businesses require different considerations than a more traditional home-based businesses. For example businesses that never have clients visiting such as a landscape photographer, or someone who sells crafts on an online marketplace, could be operated in any dwelling unit without impacting neighbouring units or land uses. To better accommodate these types of uses, the updated ZBL should expand permissions for home-based uses to a greater variety of housing types and zones throughout the City.
- The draft Official Plan will identify a range of limitations that should be considered for home-based businesses. Some of these have been dealt with in the existing by-laws (e.g., gross floor area limitations, number of employees), while others have not. This includes determining the range of uses that should qualify as home-based businesses so as to minimize potentially significant traffic volumes or noise issues, and also determine the number and size of commercial vehicles allowed associated with a home-based business that are permitted on a property. These details should be carried through to the updated and consolidated Zoning By-law.
- There are areas of overlap among existing City by-laws, which can be resolved through this ZBL update. For example, the Thurlow ZBL indicates a maximum size for signage indicating the business. As the City also addresses signage for home-based businesses in the Sign By-Law (2006-55), it is recommended that these provisions be removed from the updated ZBL to streamline enforcement.



Let us know how you think zoning can better support home-based businesses in Belleville!

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