



Region of Queens Land Use Planning Update

Commercial Uses in Residential Zones

Background Report (2/7)

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Update

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INTRODUCTION

Topic Overview

Most commercial activity in Queens is concentrated in established commercial areas, such as downtown Liverpool and Caledonia. However, small-scale commercial activities within residential areas play an important role in supporting both urban and rural neighbourhoods. Uses such as corner stores, medical clinics, and repair shops can contribute to more complete communities by improving access to goods and services, helping residents reach their daily needs close to home.

Home-based businesses, also referred to as home occupations, support local entrepreneurship by providing flexible and affordable opportunities for residents to start and operate a business. They can benefit individuals who may face challenges leaving home, or who live in areas where dedicated commercial properties may not be available or permitted. At the same time, commercial uses in residential areas can lead to unwanted neighbourhood impacts, including concerns related to traffic, and competition with established commercial areas.

As communities and local economies continue to evolve, municipalities are increasingly reviewing how planning policies and land use regulations can balance these benefits and impacts. This background report examines how commercial uses in residential zones are currently addressed in Queens and explores potential approaches for the future.

Why is this a Topic of Focus?

Commercial uses in residential zones has become a prominent discussion topic within the community, with residents expressing a range of perspectives on how home occupations should be managed.

In more urban areas, residents have raised concerns about nearby businesses leading to increased traffic, noise, parking issues, and other nuisances that may affect the character and livability of their neighbourhood. On the other hand, residents living in more rural areas have expressed an interest in greater regulatory flexibility

to expand commercial uses on their properties. Given that rural areas are more spread-out and have greater distances between properties, some feel there is less potential for land use conflicts and that as a result, existing regulations may be more restrictive than necessary.

This project provides an opportunity to take a closer look at how the current framework is functioning and consider whether any adjustments are needed to better reflect the needs of the community. This could include considering changes to the types of home occupations that are permitted, where they are allowed, and the regulations used to manage potential impacts on surrounding properties.

Existing Policies and Regulations

To both support local businesses while also mitigating potential impacts, the current planning documents take a tiered approach to regulating home occupations: **Level 1 and Level 2**. This recognizes that some businesses are smaller in scale and generally more compatible with residential neighbourhoods, while others may have greater operational impacts and require additional oversight or more appropriate locations. The table on the following page highlights the permitted zones, uses, and requirements of Level 1 and Level 2 home occupations.

In addition to home occupations, the Land Use Bylaw establishes a Residential Commercial Zone, which permits convenience stores, on top of the permitted uses that come along with Level 1 Home Occupations.



CURRENT STATE

	Level 1 Home Occupations			Level 2 Home Occupations		
Permitted Zones	Residential Zones	+ Lower Density Residential (RL) + General Residential (RG) + Multiple Unit Residential (RM) + Residential Commercial (RC)	-			
	Hamlet Zones	+ Hamlet Residential (HR) + Hamlet Core (HC)	+ Hamlet Core (HC), by site plan approval			
	Rural Zones	+ Inland Rural (R5) + Coastal Rural (R6) + Lakeshore Limited Development (SL) + Lakeshore Residential (SR) + Resort (Re) + Rural Commercial (CR)	+ Inland Rural (R5) + Coastal Rural (R6) + Rural Commercial (CR)			
Permitted Uses	+ Animal Care + Art Gallery / Studio + Business or Professional Office + Commercial School - 6 or fewer students + Craft Product Workshop + Medical Clinic + Personal Service Shop + Service and Repair Shop, excluding Small Engine Repair			+ Animal Care + Art Gallery / Studio + Automobile Repair Shop + Automobile Sales - 6 or fewer vehicles at one time + Building and Construction Contractors + Business or Professional Office + Commercial School - 12 or fewer students + Craft Product Workshop + Forestry Uses + Medical Clinic + Personal Service Shop + Service and Repair Shop + Take Out Restaurant		
Maximum Number of On-site, Non-resident Employees	2			3		
Maximum Floor Area of Home-based Business	25% of the gross floor area (GFA) of the dwelling unit or 50 m ² , whichever is less.			On lots under 5,000 m ² in area: + 100 m ² GFA	On lots from 5,000 m ² to 10,000 m ² in area: + 150 m ² GFA	On lots greater than 10,000 m ² in area: + 200 m ² GFA
				When located in a dwelling, the home-based business shall not occupy more than 40% of the GFA of the dwelling unit.		
Outdoor Storage and Display	+ Outdoor storage is not permitted. + Outdoor display shall not exceed an area of 10 m ² .			+ The total area of the outdoor storage and outdoor display (combined) shall not exceed the maximum permitted floor area of the home-based business. + Outdoor storage shall not be located in the front or flankage yard or in minimum required side and rear setbacks.		
Retail Sales	+ Retail sales shall be related to and incidental to the primary service being provided by the home-based business.			+ Retail sales shall be related to and incidental to the primary service being provided by the home-based business.		

Strengthen Regulations for Level 1 Home Occupations

One approach that could be taken as part of this review would be to maintain the broad permissions of Level 1 Home Occupations across all residential, hamlet, and rural zones while introducing additional regulations to minimize potential impacts on neighbouring properties.

Examples could include placing stricter limits on outdoor activities, parking, or signage. The list of permitted uses could also be reviewed to ensure that only businesses with minimal impacts are allowed.

This would respond to concerns raised by residents who feel their neighbourhood is being negatively affected by home occupations by placing a greater emphasis on compatibility with residential areas.

Increase Flexibility for Level 2 Home Occupations

Another approach could be to reduce some of the restrictions currently applied to Level 2 Home Occupations, particularly in rural areas.

Potential changes could include increasing the maximum gross floor area (GFA) permitted for a home occupation, or expanding the range of permitted uses. For example, the current allowance for automobile sales (6 or fewer vehicles at a time) could be reviewed to determine whether a greater number of vehicles could be permitted.

This recognizes that rural properties may be better suited to accommodate larger-scale home-based businesses while still maintaining compatibility with surrounding land uses.

Adjust where Home Occupations are Permitted

We could also review the zones in which Level 1 and Level 2 Home Occupations are permitted.

For example, Level 1 Home Occupations could be limited in some lower-density residential areas where residents may place a higher priority on maintaining a strictly residential character. Conversely, Level 2 Home Occupations could be permitted in additional rural zones.

As such, this approach would place a greater emphasis on location when determining what types of home-based businesses are appropriate, recognizing that the suitability of a particular use may vary depending on the surrounding context.



KEY QUESTIONS

Questions to Consider

As the Municipality considers potential changes to how commercial uses are regulated in residential areas, community input will help identify an appropriate balance. The following questions are intended to guide discussion and gather feedback during the engagement period:

- + Have you experienced positive or negative impacts from a home-based business operating in your neighbourhood? If so, what were they?
- + Are there additional types of home occupations that should be permitted in Queens? Are there any existing permitted uses that should be reconsidered?
- + Are the current zones where Level 1 and Level 2 Home Occupations are permitted appropriate, or should they be expanded or reduced?
- + How can the municipality support entrepreneurship while ensuring that residential areas remain desirable places to live?

