

DRAFT - Attachment 4 - Commercial Stakeholder Insight

Administration conducted surveys and interviews with 4 small business owners, 3 developers, 4 BIA representatives, and 1 arts organization to inquire about business space needs.

Stakeholder Criteria

Stakeholder	Criteria	Number Contacted	Number Responded
Small Business Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business type must be a permitted use in the RS Zone• Business must be less than 300 m2	10	4
Commercial Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience developing small-scale commercial retail units	3	3
Business Improvement Area Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BIAs that have a high concentration of small commercial businesses in proximity to residential development.	6	6
Arts and Culture Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience supporting spaces for the arts	1	1

A majority of respondents stated that 100 m2 would be too small for some of the business types allowed under the RS, RSF, and RSM Zones, and that 300 m2 may be too large for a small-scale residential zone. 5 respondents felt that a maximum floor area of 200 m2 would meet the needs of most small-scale businesses. 1 respondent felt that a maximum of 125 m2 would be appropriate. 1 respondent felt that the existing 300 m2 maximum is appropriate. The other respondents either did not state what an appropriate maximum would be or stated that it would depend on the business.

Interviews highlighted that some business types need more space than others. For example, the owner of an ice cream shop and the owner of a coffee shop both indicated that 100-120 m2 of space is adequate for their needs. However, interviews with a small home builder's office and a psychology office indicated that at least 170 - 230 m2 of space is needed for their business. Multiple private offices for counselling and large boardrooms were some of the reasons why more space was needed. Similarly, an arts and culture

organization stated that 100 m² would be sufficient for one artist, but that more space would be needed to allow for a creative hub space with multiple artists and opportunities for public involvement.

Interviews also revealed that restaurants tend to need more space. A Business Improvement Area representative noted that one of the restaurants in their area compensates for a lack of indoor seating by providing outdoor seating. In the RS, RSF, and RSM Zones, outdoor seating is an option but is limited to a maximum area of 20 m² in the front or flanking side yard.

One of the ways commercial development opportunities may be used in the small scale residential zones is through the conversion of single detached housing into a business. The average size of a single detached house in the former (RF1) Single Detached Residential Zone is 140 m² (1,510 ft²). This average does not include basements or garages. If a basement or garage is used for a business this is counted towards the maximum commercial floor area. Reducing the maximum floor area to 100 m² would make conversion of an average-sized home to a commercial use more difficult, requiring either a rezoning, variance or partnering with other small business establishments to use up the existing space.

One of the small business owners interviewed operates out of a converted single detached house. The building is approximately 230 m² and they stated that they use “every inch of the space.” The interviewee mentioned that not being able to use the whole house would make purchasing the home for a business a less desirable option. Further examples of small businesses that operate out of repurposed homes larger than 100 m² include The Little Brick in Riverdale and Red Leaf Wellness in Westmount. See Attachment 3 for images.

Information gathered from the surveys and interviews suggests that lowering the maximum floor area of commercial uses to 100 m² per individual establishment in the RS, RSF, and RSM Zones would reduce the business types that could make use of this commercial opportunity and reduce the overall flexibility of the space. It would also complicate the conversion of existing houses which are typically larger than 100 m².