

Home Based Work

CityPlan

Riley Park/South Cambie **RPSC**

CityPlan Directions - Jobs and the Economy

The CityPlan direction is to increase the number and choice of jobs in the City, and to concentrate major job growth in the downtown. Other job growth is to be focussed within neighbourhood centres, where jobs can be served by transit and reached easily by surrounding residents. Home based work is recognized as a vital and positive part of job-growth in neighbourhoods. The challenge will be to ensure that new home based work fits well with its residential neighbours and impacts are minimized.

Current Situation

The City of Vancouver currently permits home-based work in the form of homecraft, general office live-work, artist live-work studios and industrial live-work studios.

Homecraft provides for a wide range of work activities within any dwelling unit, including single-family homes, suites, apartments and condominiums. The restrictions are that:

- there are no employees or product sales on-site;
- if located in a residential district, nothing shall indicate the homecraft use from the exterior of the building; and,
- the homecraft use does not generate objectionable impacts, such as offensive noise, odour or vibration.

With respect to artist live-work studios, there are currently two types: Class A which provides for low impact art activities and processes, and Class B which provides for higher impact uses. Dwellings are permitted in conjunction with both Class A and B artist studio uses, but are limited to two residents, at least one of which is

an artist. Like homecraft, no employees or retail sales are permitted.

General office live-work is permitted at ground level on some downtown streets, as well as in some large scale downtown developments. It permits the use of a unit as a dwelling, as an office or as a combination of the two. Sales are not permitted, however, a business in a general live-work unit can have employees.

Recent site specific rezonings have introduced live-work in combination with a number of industrial activities. As with artist live-work, industrial live-work limits the number of residents in the unit to two.

The Building By-law regulations also affect some forms of home based work, generally the higher impact activities.

What Is Home Based Work and Who Is Doing it?

In 2001, about 8.0% of Vancouver's labour force worked at home, up from 7.2% in 1996. For RPSC, the percentage of the workforce working at home was nearly 10% in 2001. Home based work involving office and service uses predominates, and includes professional and business services, social/health/recreational, finance/insurance and personal services.

In addition to artist live-work, other home based work is industrial in nature, and involves goods production, services to equipment, transportation and communication uses. Examples include caterers, garment workers, jewellers and software disk producers.

Based on recent growth trends, the number of home-based workers in Vancouver could increase from 22,400

workers in 2001 to over 30,000 by 2011. Since homecraft is permitted in any dwelling and does not require any special space or facilities, existing and future dwelling units are all potentially available.

In the Future.....

There is a question about whether or not opportunities for home based work should be expanded, where and in what ways.

Issues around parking, deliveries and security, for example, need to be considered. If home based work increases in the future, additional questions arise around what kind of support services are needed in the community (like office support, communal work centres) and where they should be located.

Source:

City of Vancouver publication "Live/Work and Work/Live: Vancouver Overview", 1996.

Downtown Official Development Plan, 1975 with 2003 amendments.

Statistics Canada, 2001 Census.