From: "White, Josh" <Josh.White@vancouver.ca>
To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
Date: 6/11/2026 1:05:08 PM
Subject: Memo to Mayor & Council - Monitoring the Impact of Home-Based Business Regulation Updates and Emerging Considerations on the Option to Permit in Accessory Buildings
Attachments: Council Memo to Mayor & Council - Monitoring the Impact of Home - Based Business Regulation Updates and Emerging Considerations on the Option to Permit in Accessory Buildings (RTS #16382).pdf

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Dear Mayor and Council,

Attached is a memo from Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability. Key takeaways include:

- In October 2024, Council adopted the modernized home-based business regulations and directed staff to monitor and report back on allowing this use to operate in accessory buildings
- This memo shares results of this monitoring and observation following the home-based business modernization since implementation
- Staff are recommending that monitoring continue and that this monitoring be used to inform any future changes to regulations

Should you have any questions, please contact Josh White (josh.white@vancouver.ca) or Chris Robertson, chris.robertson@vancouver.ca.

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PLANNING, URBAN DESIGN & SUSTAINABILITY
General Manager's Office

MEMORANDUM

June 10, 2026

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: City Leadership Team
Donny van Dyk, City Manager
Jason Twa, City Clerk
Mellisa Morphy, Deputy Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Corrie Okell, General Manager, Development, Buildings and Licencing

FROM: Josh White
General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Monitoring the Impact of Home-Based Business Regulation Updates and Emerging Considerations on the Option to Permit in Accessory Buildings

RTS #: 16382

Purpose

On October 8, 2024, Council adopted modernized home-based business regulations. As part of approval, Council directed staff to report back on considerations for allowing home-based businesses to operate in accessory buildings, including residential garages. This memo summarizes monitoring outcomes observed during the first year of implementation and outlines key considerations related to the potential use of accessory buildings for home-based business activity.

Background

The modernization of home-based business regulations was informed by the *Employment Lands and Economy Review Phase 2 Report: Emerging Directions for Consideration through the Vancouver Plan* (adopted October 22, 2020) and subsequently included in the Vancouver Plan (adopted July 22, 2022) as an economic policy direction. While home-based businesses were already permitted in Vancouver, restrictions on employees and customers limited opportunities for entrepreneurship and business growth.

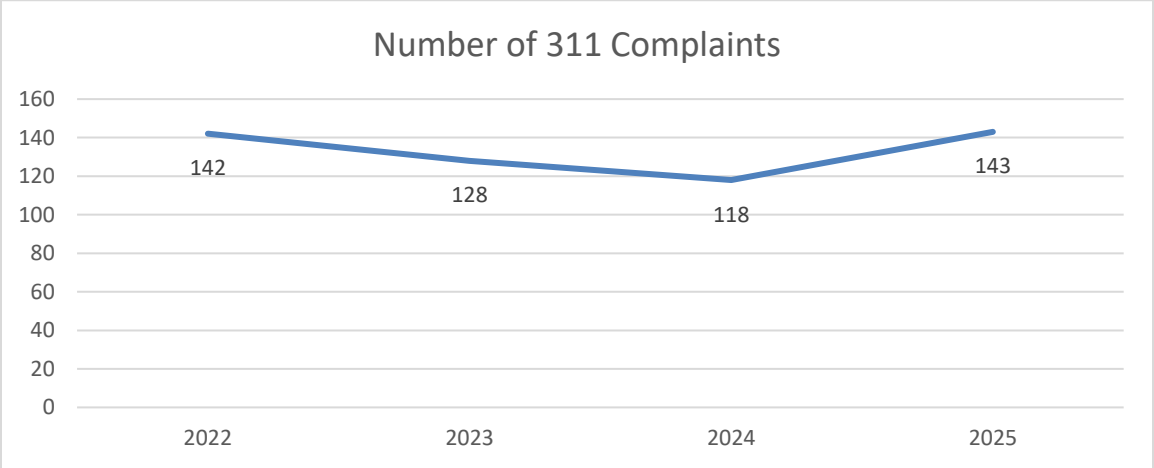
To address these limitations, Council adopted updated home-based business regulations to improve flexibility while limiting impacts on residential neighbourhoods. Key changes included permitting a limited number of non-resident employees and customers by appointment and expanding the range of permitted business activities. These new regulations balanced

increased flexibility with neighbourhood fit. Finally, the home-based business regulations were developed based on input from other organizations, such as Vancouver Costal Health, and included special provisions for tobacco and electronic cigarettes as well as advocacy to the provincial government to allow more flexibility for at-home food preparation.

Home-Based Business Monitoring

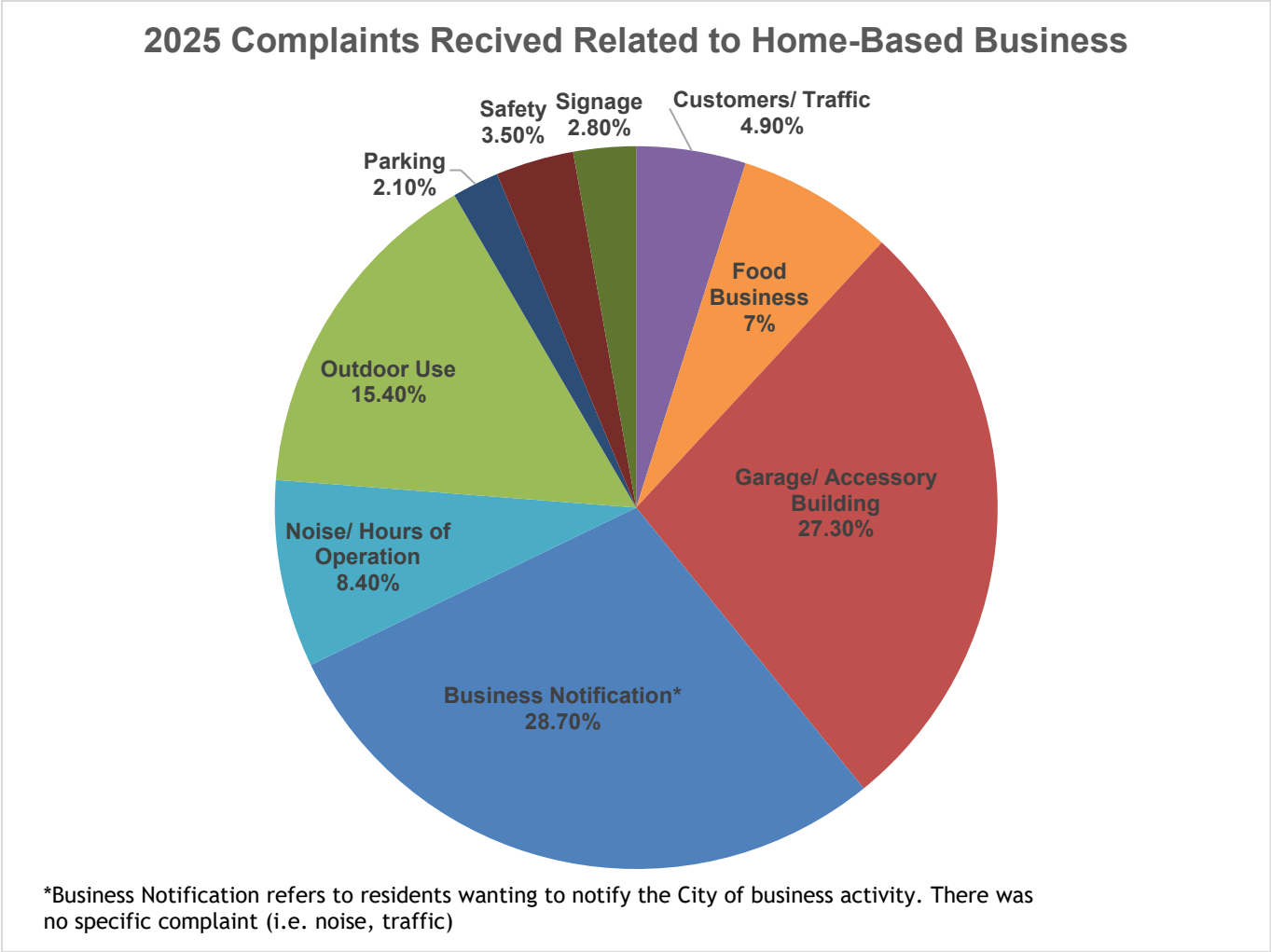
Staff are monitoring the impact of the updated regulations:

- The number of 311 complaints related to home-based business has not changed significantly since the implementation of the updated regulations in October 2024. The below graph outlines the number of 311 complaints submitted to the City between 2022 and 2025.



- The majority of 311 calls related to home-based business are to notify the City that:
    - There is business activity occurring at a residential address (28.7% of calls)
    - Business activities are occurring in a residential garage or accessory building (27.3% of calls)
    - Business activities are occurring outdoors, including on roads outside a residential address (15.4% of calls)

The below table outlines the types of 311 calls received in relation to a home-based business in 2025. Like previous years, general business activity, garage/ accessory building use, and outdoor use are the most common types of 311 complaints submitted.



*Business Notification refers to residents wanting to notify the City of business activity. There was no specific complaint (i.e. noise, traffic)

Emerging Considerations Related to Accessory Buildings

Homebased Businesses are not permitted in accessory buildings. As part of approval of the updated regulations in October 2024, Council directed staff to report back on considerations for allowing home-based businesses to operate in accessory buildings, including residential garages.

To better understand this issue, staff conducted a detailed review of 311 complaint data for 2025, 2024, 2023, and 2022 specific to garage use and accessory structures and identified the following key themes:

- **Noise Impacts and Extended Hours of Operation**
  - Loud mechanical sounds such as hammering, sawing, grinding, and welding occurring within residential garages. Often related to automotive repair.
  - Engine revving, test driving, and racing of vehicles through laneways.

    - Many of these activities took place during late evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays.

- **Traffic, Parking, and Lane Obstruction Issues**
    - Constant traffic from customers and staff associated with garage-based businesses, especially in laneways.
    - Vehicles often parked illegally or left for extended periods in laneways and on the street.
    - Frequent blocked access for garbage collection, emergency vehicles, and neighbouring residents.

- **Unpermitted Building Alterations**
    - Conversion of accessory buildings for business purposes often included structural renovations (conversion to studios, workshops, or gyms) resulting in blocked windows or egress routes.
    - Conversion of a garage into a business was often obvious, resulting in a loss of residential character.

After analyzing the 311 complaints and consulting with front-line enforcement staff, staff found that business use of an accessory building results in a noticeable impact on the residential neighbourhood compared to businesses located entirely within the principal dwelling. This is partly due to the types of businesses that commonly occur in an accessory building or garage, such as automotive repair, which generates high volumes of vehicle traffic and noise/odour. Staff also found that businesses operating from an accessory building or garage were often accessed from the laneway, which are typically narrower than the fronting street and traffic impacts from the business are more noticeable.

Staff did consider permitting home-based businesses in accessory buildings, including garages, as an option. However, to adequately mitigate potential impacts on neighbouring residents, particularly related to noise and traffic, the regulations to permit businesses in accessory buildings and garages would require stricter restrictions when compared to home-based businesses operating within a dwelling unit. Staff are concerned that administrating a more restrictive set of rules would be difficult to enforce.

Given the volume and consistency of 311 complaints related to businesses operating from residential accessory buildings and garages, and the administration and enforcement challenges, staff at this time are not recommending amending the home-based business regulations to allow business activities within accessory buildings or garages.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to monitor home-based businesses and the possibility to permit them in garages or accessory buildings, and will update Council as needed.

For additional information, please contact me josh.white@vancouver.ca or chris.robertson@vancouver.ca, Director, Citywide and Regional Planning.

Thank you.



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