

Fact Sheet 6

Commercial and Mixed use

The information on this Fact Sheet comes from the Background Report and the What We Heard Report. To view these documents, [please click here.](#)

Community Input

The initial community input about commercial uses was typically positive and encouraging of economic growth while protecting the character of the community. Some in the business community advocated for the removal of parking requirements for commercial businesses altogether. ★

Growth and Promotion

Initial engagement participants provided numerous ideas regarding commercial uses:

1. Promote a variety of year-round shops and services.
2. Encourage green businesses, tech businesses, and home-based businesses.
3. Explore areas for commercial expansion in a thoughtful, transparent manner rather than resorting to "spot zoning" on a case-by-case basis.
4. Encourage mixed-use development.

What is Being Proposed

The Mahone Bay draft Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw aim to **encourage commercial** uses and development in appropriate locations and at an appropriate scale. The draft Bylaw also includes proposed revisions to the uses permitted in commercial zones to allow a wider range of commercial uses while still being mindful of the appropriateness of various commercial uses.

Zoning

The Mahone Bay draft Land Use Bylaw proposes to **reduce the number of commercial zones** compared to the existing Bylaw. The intent is to allow appropriate commercial uses up-front, rather than requiring a rezoning from one commercial zone to another.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Commercial Zone | } | 1. Commercial Zone |
| 2. Harbourfront Commercial Zone | | 2. Commercial General Zone |
| 3. Restricted Commercial Zone | | |
| 4. Commercial Shoreline Zone | | |

In response to feedback about "spot zoning" for commercial uses, the Generalized Future Land Use Map in the Municipal Planning Strategy expands the Commercial Designation to include the cluster of properties where Clearway Street meets Main Street. There is recognition that commercial activity in this area could continue to expand, but the current character remains largely residential. ★

Please note: This fact sheet was updated on November 17, 2023. The ★ symbol highlights any revisions made to the documents between the March draft and the current draft.

Fact Sheet 2

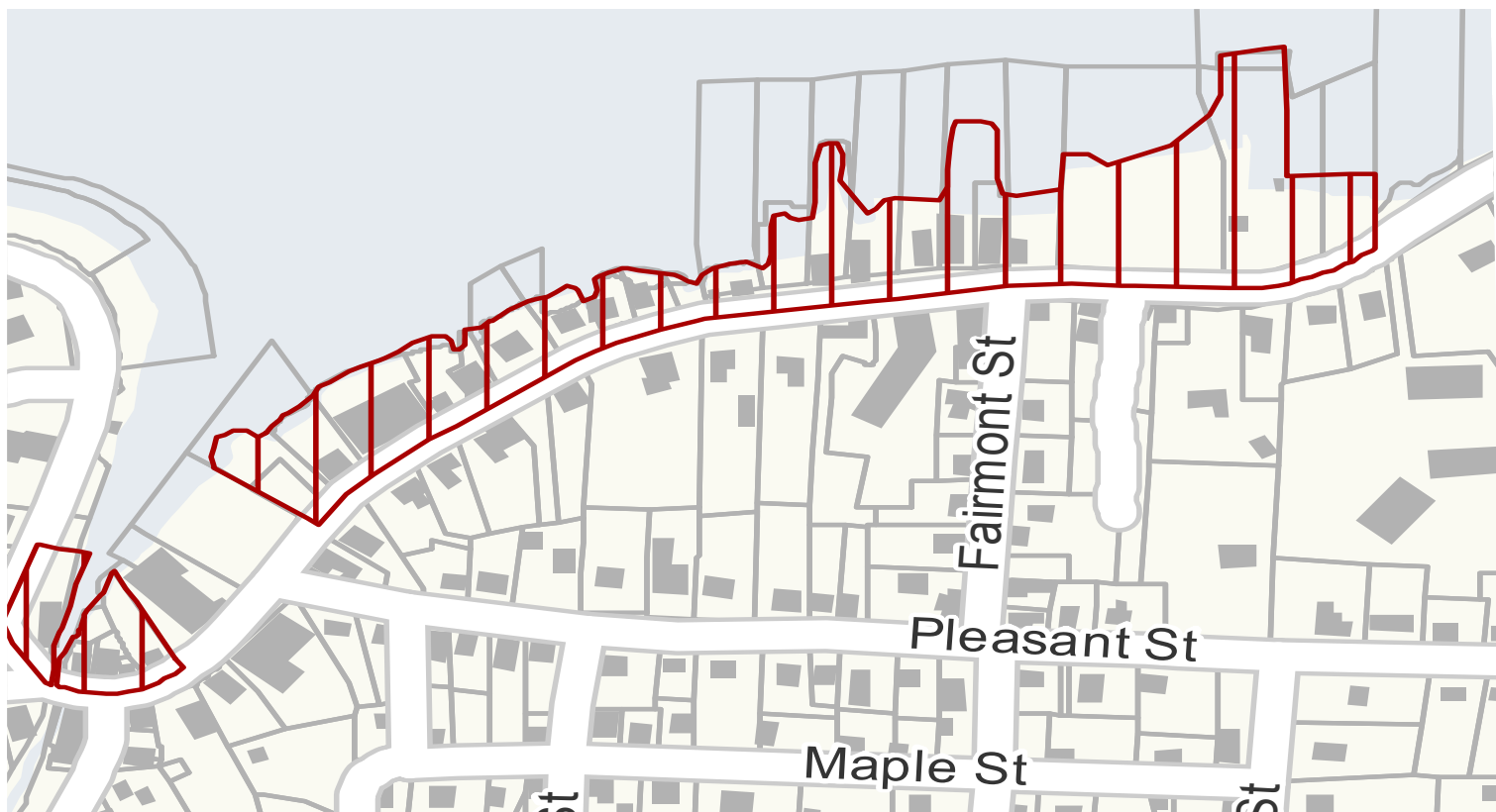
Commercial and Mixed Use

Parking Exemptions

Most non-residential uses along the water side of **Main Street** would be exempt from the parking requirements set out in the draft Bylaw.

The purpose of the exemption would be to **incentivize** businesses to locate on Main Street, where commercial uses are desired, but where the size and location of existing buildings makes it difficult to provide the number of parking spaces the Bylaw would typically require.

The parking exemption overlay remains unchanged from the previous draft, as there is a strong rationale due to site-specific hardships for water-side properties to meet parking requirements. ★



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Home-Based Business

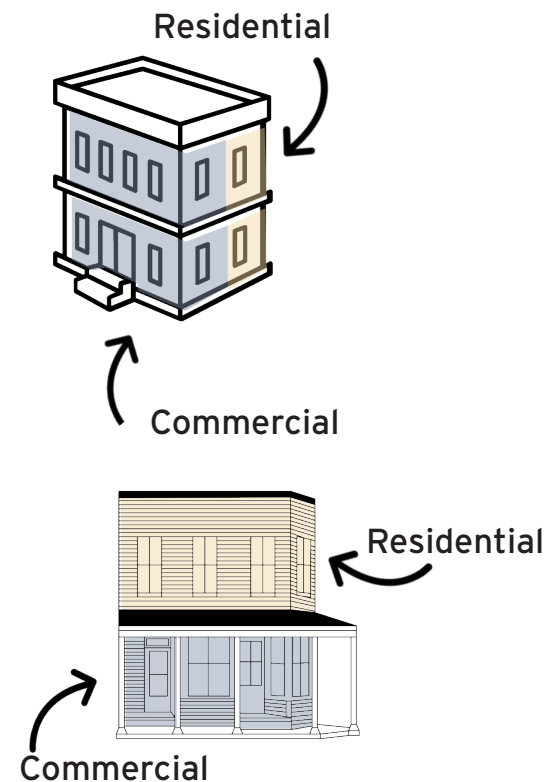
The draft Plan and Bylaw propose to encourage a diversity of business activities and scales by continuing to permit home-based businesses, including those in outbuildings.

These would continue to have size limits, but the maximum floor area is proposed to increase from 25% of the home area or 46 square metres to 25% of the home area or 50 square metres to better align with the *Building Code*.

Mixed-use Development

The draft Plan and Bylaw include provisions that are proposed to **make it easier to achieve mixed-use development** in Mahone Bay. Mixed-use is often characterized by businesses or commercial space on the main floor, and residential units on the upper floor. Some such developments currently exist in the Town, such as the Mahone Bay Trading Company building.

The existing Bylaw limits the number of dwelling units in a mixed-use building to four in the Commercial Zone, which applies to much of downtown. The current Harbourfront Commercial Zone (on the water side of Main Street) is also limited to four, but more can be considered by Council by development agreement. The proposed Bylaw would **eliminate the cap on the number of dwelling units in mixed-use buildings**. However, such buildings would still be **required to have non-residential uses on the ground floor frontage** to promote a lively streetscape in the town's commercial areas.



The documents are now going through the formal adoption process. **A Public Hearing will be held on December 5, 2023 at 7:00pm at the Mahone Bay Legion**, located at 21 Pond Street, to receive written and verbal submissions from the public on the proposed Bylaw and Strategy.

Any questions or written submissions should be directed to Kelly Munroe, Town Clerk, by email: clerk@townofmahonebay.ca or by calling (902) 624-8327.