



Staff Report

To: City of Columbia – Community Development Department

From: Carrie Gartner, Business Loop CID

Date: March 5, 2021

Re: Small-Scale Manufacturing Square Footage Comps

In 2018, the Business Loop partnered with Regional Economic Development Inc and received a technical grant from Smart Growth America, the Economic Development Administration and Recast City to encourage local, small-scale manufacturing. The grant consisted of 6 months of outreach to the local maker community and an intensive site visit where our consultants took input from over 250 individuals on current activities and future needs.

The resulting report made several recommendations specific to Columbia including a 20,000 square feet per business, maximum on artisan industries with allowances for multiple businesses within the same facility. A survey of the Business Loop, existing activities, and planned future activities shows that 15,000 square feet is sufficient but 10,000 square feet would be too small and would prevent businesses from expanding in-place.

We have four primary concerns:

- Ensuring that existing buildings on the street can be adapted for Artisan Industry use
- Providing adequate space for formal shared spaces such as makerspaces or shared kitchens
- Allowing multiple artisans or manufacturers to gain economies of scale through joint use of a single building
- Retaining the ability of a small-scale manufacturer to remain in a location as they grow to save costs, maintain operations, and preserve a connection to the area and the local customers

In addition, building construction method, costs, and other requirements associated with a building over 15,000 square feet will naturally limit construction.

Square Footage Comparisons

Existing Business Loop Buildings

The Love Seat
Approx. 10,000 sf

This is a prime building for an artisan industry. The current tenants are moving to a larger space. If the building expanded into the existing empty space in the back currently used for employee parking, the building would be close to 15,000 sf but due to its low profile, it would not read as large or inappropriate for the street.

Flooring America
20,000 sf with 7500 dedicated to a retail showroom

This size and layout is typical of many buildings along the Business Loop, either historic or new construction. There is retail space facing the street and warehouse or workroom space at the back (think auto parts stores, auto service centers, flooring/tile/paint stores, and even grocery stores). The customer-oriented space at the front makes the building seem less like a huge warehouse.

The current use is somewhat similar to artisan industry and our concern would be adapting this building (and others like it) if the current tenant left. New construction similar in size and configuration (warehouse in the back, retail showroom facing the street) would feel appropriate for the street.

Similar Artisan Industries

MakeITC – Wichita, KA
<https://makeict.org/>

A makerspace that recently expanded into a new 22,000 sf location—a former school building they are renovating. The old space was about 9,000 sf. Activities include sewing, electronics, metal working, wood working, and pottery and the larger space is needed to keep these activities separate to ensure safety and cleanliness.

MADE STL – St. Louis, MO
<https://madestl.com/>

This is a 32,000 sf makerspace in a renovated car dealership. Notably, it is located on Delmar Blvd. which is abutted by residential neighborhoods so care is taken to reduce impact (noise, parking) and include local residents in their activities. This is part of the new Delmar Maker District.

Third Degree Glass Studio – St. Louis, MO
<https://thirddegreeglassfactory.com/>

This shared space is also part of the Delmar Maker District. It contains studio space, furnaces for glass blowing, kilns, storage space, gallery space, and event space. The original building was 8,000 sf but they added 7,000 more sf to allow for an expanded gallery and larger events.

St. Louis Craft Alliance – St. Louis, MO

<https://craftalliance.org/>

This non-profit providing studio, workshop, and gallery space will move from an 8,000 sf building to a 14,000 sf space in the Delmar Maker District. The increased footprint will allow for larger studios (including dedicated facilities for ceramics, metals, wood, fiber, glass, and other craft media), an expanded exhibition gallery, retail space, and administrative offices

The Delmar Maker District is a perfect model for what we are trying to accomplish on the Business Loop. Not only are artisan industries moving to the street (due to their support and promotion of artisans) but they have the space to expand over time to meet the needs of their users. Again, growing in place is the best way local artisan industries can save costs, maintain operations, and build a like-minded community of other artisans in one geographical area.

Our goal is to make the Business Loop a hub for small-scale manufacturers, artisan industries, and other makers. It would be counterproductive and unnecessarily expensive if all our artisans and makers had to leave and rebuild once they became successful enough to expand. Likewise, a 10,000 square foot limit may cause small-scale manufacturers to look elsewhere for space, undermining the Loop's comprehensive economic development efforts to support and encourage makers and small manufacturers.