



STAFF REPORT

TO: Committee of the Whole **MEETING DATE:** May 20, 2025
FROM: Planner I **FILE NO:** 3900-1065-88
SUBJECT: Zoning Amendment to allow arcades

REPORT FOR DECISION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to obtain direction to amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow arcades in Gibsons.

BACKGROUND

Recently, Planning staff received a public inquiry from a businessperson wishing to open an arcade in Gibsons. However, the zoning bylaw limits this permission. Currently, an arcade is essentially prohibited in Gibsons, as businesses in the commercial zones are only allowed a maximum of three game machines for every 55 m² of floor area.

The zoning bylaw currently allows “game machines” in eight commercial zones (C1, C1-A, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, and C8) and allows one game machine per 55 m², up to a maximum of three per business.

Feedback received from high school students through the initial round of public engagement on the Official Community Plan suggested the need for more diverse activities for youth, and some recommended the need for an arcade.

This report outlines how the zoning bylaw can be updated to allow arcades in commercial zones.

DISCUSSION

An arcade is the use of premises on which game machines are played for amusement or entertainment. Staff have reviewed the zoning bylaw provisions and identified the following:

- Arcades are omitted from the Zoning Bylaw.
- The restrictions on game machines may have been intended to restrict gambling; however, as a result, restricts arcades.

- Zoning bylaw could be updated to allow arcades in commercial zones.
- Zoning bylaw could be updated while maintaining consistent language and intent in regulating the use of game machines intended for gambling.

Current Zoning Regulations

The zoning bylaw has the following definitions:

“SERVICE COMMERCIAL USE” means the use of land or buildings for the sale or rental to the public of personal, household or business services; includes barber, beauty, sun tanning and massage salons, fitness centres; repair of household appliances, electronic goods, furniture, bicycles and locks; commercial schools or studios for instruction in trades, business, languages, martial arts, dance, music or driving; laundromats and dry-cleaning services; tailoring and repair of apparel or shoes; printing and copying services; restaurants including cafes and coffee shops; studios and administrative offices of cable, radio and television broadcasters, and telephone services; excludes services stations, car washes and industrial repair services.”

"GAME MACHINE" means a machine on which mechanical, electrical, automatic or computerized games are played for amusement or entertainment and for which a coin or token must be inserted or a fee charged for use.

The Town’s zoning bylaw allows “service commercial use” in 11 zones: Commercial 1, General Commercial 1, Commercial 2, Commercial 5, Commercial 6, Marine Zone 1 (however it is limited to the repair, servicing and rental of boats), Live Work 1, Live Work 2, Mixed Use Gateway Zone 1, Comprehensive Development Area Zone 2 and Comprehensive Development Area Zone 4.

The bylaw allows game machines in most commercial zones, as listed above, but only up to a maximum of 3 for every 55 m² of floor area.

Proposed Zoning Regulation Update

Three amendments are proposed to allow arcades in Gibsons:

1. Update definition of “Service Commercial Use” to include arcades;
2. Remove limitation of “game machines” in all zones
3. Include new prohibition on more than three game machines intended for gambling

Definition Update:

To simply add arcades as a permitted use in commercial zones, staff recommend amending the definition of “service commercial use” to include arcades. The updated definition change would read as follows (change underlined):

“SERVICE COMMERCIAL USE” means the use of land or buildings for the sale or rental to the public of personal, household or business services; includes barber, beauty, sun tanning and massage salons, fitness centres; repair of household appliances, electronic goods, furniture, bicycles and locks; commercial schools or studios for instruction in trades, business, languages, martial arts, dance, arcades, music or driving; laundromats

and dry-cleaning services; tailoring and repair of apparel or shoes; printing and copying services; restaurants including cafes and coffee shops; studios and administrative offices of cable, radio and television broadcasters, and telephone services; excludes services stations, car washes and industrial repair services.

Arcades can meet the need for more indoor entertainment and respond to the evolving needs of the community. This change recognizes arcades as a legitimate form of entertainment that can offer accessible and positive recreational opportunities, especially for youth and young adults.

With limited non-sport, indoor recreational options available in our community, arcades can serve as a social and inclusive environment that supports social wellbeing and leisure. By formally recognizing arcades in the Zoning Bylaw, the Town encourages a broader range of activity-based businesses that can enhance local vibrancy, attract families, and contribute to a more youth-friendly community.

Clause Removal:

Remove references to limit the number of game machines in zones where listed. This includes sections 11.03(4), 11.90(4), 11.14 (5), 11.25 (3), 11.36 (4), 11.47 (2), 11.59 (2) and 11.70 (2).

The use of “game machines” is currently limited in the zoning bylaw by floor area, which prohibits amusement-based arcade games and gambling-related machines such as slot machines. To allow game machines while also limiting gambling machines, staff recommend deleting references to game machines in the individual zones. This will help ensure that recreational uses such as arcades are not inadvertently restricted or misinterpreted under the current wording.

Uses Prohibited in All Zones Amendment:

To maintain the intent of limiting gambling, Section 3.07, “Uses Prohibited in All Zones” can be amended to include a new provision, with consistent language previously used:

“The use of land, buildings, or structures containing more than 3 gaming machines intended for gambling is prohibited in all zones.”

This amendment clarifies the municipality’s regulatory intent to prohibit gambling-related activities while distinguishing them from permitted entertainment uses like arcades. By specifying a threshold and clearly targeting machines intended for gambling, the amendment provides more clarity, supporting land use compatibility and community standards.

POLICY / PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan Implications

This vision of the Strategic Plan is

“Gibsons will strive for a *balanced and inclusive community* that offers equitable access to affordability, housing, nature, public assets, culture, and a sense of place for all our residents”

This zoning bylaw amendment supports the Town's broader goals of social equity by encouraging inclusive, accessible, and diverse recreational opportunities within the community. By formally recognizing arcades as a permitted use, the Town is supporting non-sport-based activities that are welcoming to a wide range of residents, particularly youth and people with physical disabilities, who may face barriers to participation in more structured or costly recreation programs.

Arcades can offer accessible indoor spaces where individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds can socialize and engage in leisure activities without the need for expensive memberships or equipment. This is especially important for young people who may not have access to other forms of entertainment or safe gathering places after school hours or during inclement weather.

By supporting entertainment uses that appeal to a wide demographic and carefully limiting the number and type of gambling-related machines, this amendment also ensures that the Town is fostering a balanced and equitable approach to recreation that prioritizes community wellbeing and inclusion.

Financial Plan Implications

No Financial Plan implications.

Other Policy or Plan Implications

Official Community Plan

The Following OCP policies support this zoning update:

Social Sustainability

Be an accessible, inclusive and welcoming community that provides citizens with high-quality recreational, cultural, educational, and public participation opportunities.

Foster an active, engaged and healthy community with opportunities for residents of all ages, abilities and income levels.

- *Amending the Zoning Bylaw to include arcades under "service commercial use" supports accessible, inclusive, and welcoming spaces that appeal to a wide range of ages, abilities, and income levels. It encourages social engagement and mental stimulation while ensuring responsible regulation of gambling machines to protect community health. This change reflects evolving recreational needs and promotes vibrant, community-oriented entertainment options.*

Economic Sustainability

Support a diverse, flexible and vibrant economy that supports entrepreneurship and the growth of local jobs.

Community and Social Issues

Objective: Provide park, recreational, cultural facilities and services for the use and enjoyment of citizens of all age groups appropriate for the size of the Town and within its funding means.

Important to attract and retain young people and to better connect youth and seniors.

- *Including arcades in the definition of “service commercial use” expands the range of recreational options available in a cost-effective manner that aligns with the Town’s growing size. Arcades provide an engaging and accessible space for residents of all ages, particularly youth, helping to attract and retain younger populations by offering modern, interactive entertainment. Additionally, arcades can serve as intergenerational gathering places where all ages can connect through shared recreational experiences, supporting stronger community bonds and inclusive social interaction.*

Commercial Areas

10.1.1 - Continue to focus new commercial development in Upper Gibsons and Gibsons Landing areas. Commercial development outside of these areas will be discouraged with the exception of very small scale, local serving uses, and live / work uses.

- *By clarifying that arcades fall under “service commercial use,” the amendment ensures these types of businesses are appropriately zoned and concentrated in designated commercial areas.*

10.2.1 - Create an Upper Gibsons “town centre” focused on the area between School / North Roads and Payne / Pratt Roads with the following guidelines: Emphasis on commercial uses including retail stores, banks, restaurants, office uses, visitor accommodation, entertainment facilities and personal services.

- *By including arcades as permitted commercial uses, the amendment supports a vibrant, mixed-use town centre in Upper Gibsons that appeals to a range of ages and encourages foot traffic. Limiting gambling machines ensures a balanced, family-friendly environment that aligns with the community-focused vision for the area.*

Economic development and working lands

Support the development of new businesses by local residents.

Support the expansion of local businesses and creation of additional employment.

- *Including arcades in the zoning bylaw supports local entrepreneurship by opening up opportunities for residents to start small-scale entertainment businesses. It also encourages business growth and job creation by expanding the types of permitted uses in commercial areas, allowing existing businesses to diversify their offerings and hire additional staff.*

REFERRAL

Referral comments have been received and presented in the Table below.

| Referrals sent | Comments Received |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Gibsons and District Volunteer Fire Department (GDVFD) | <i>No comments or concerns.</i> |
| Infrastructure Services Department | <i>No comments or concerns.</i> |
| Finance Department | <i>No comments or concerns.</i> |
| Bylaw Department | <i>No comments or concerns.</i> |
| Building Department | <i>No comments or concerns.</i> |

COMMUNICATION

As the use is consistent with the OCP, a Public Hearing can be waived. The International Association of Public Participation has prepared a spectrum of public participation, shown on Figure 4. This rezoning application falls under “inform” or “consult” on the spectrum.

Informing the public would be through an advertisement in the newspaper, whereas consulting may be through a public hearing and public notice where comments are received and considered in Council’s decision.

Council may decide to move forward and “inform” the public by way of the “Notice of First Reading”, which would be in two consecutive newspaper adverts placed in the Coast Reporter.

Alternatively, Council may decide to “consult” with the public on the zoning amendment, by way of holding a public hearing. A public hearing would be hosted by Council. All comments received would be shared with Council for consideration in the decision.

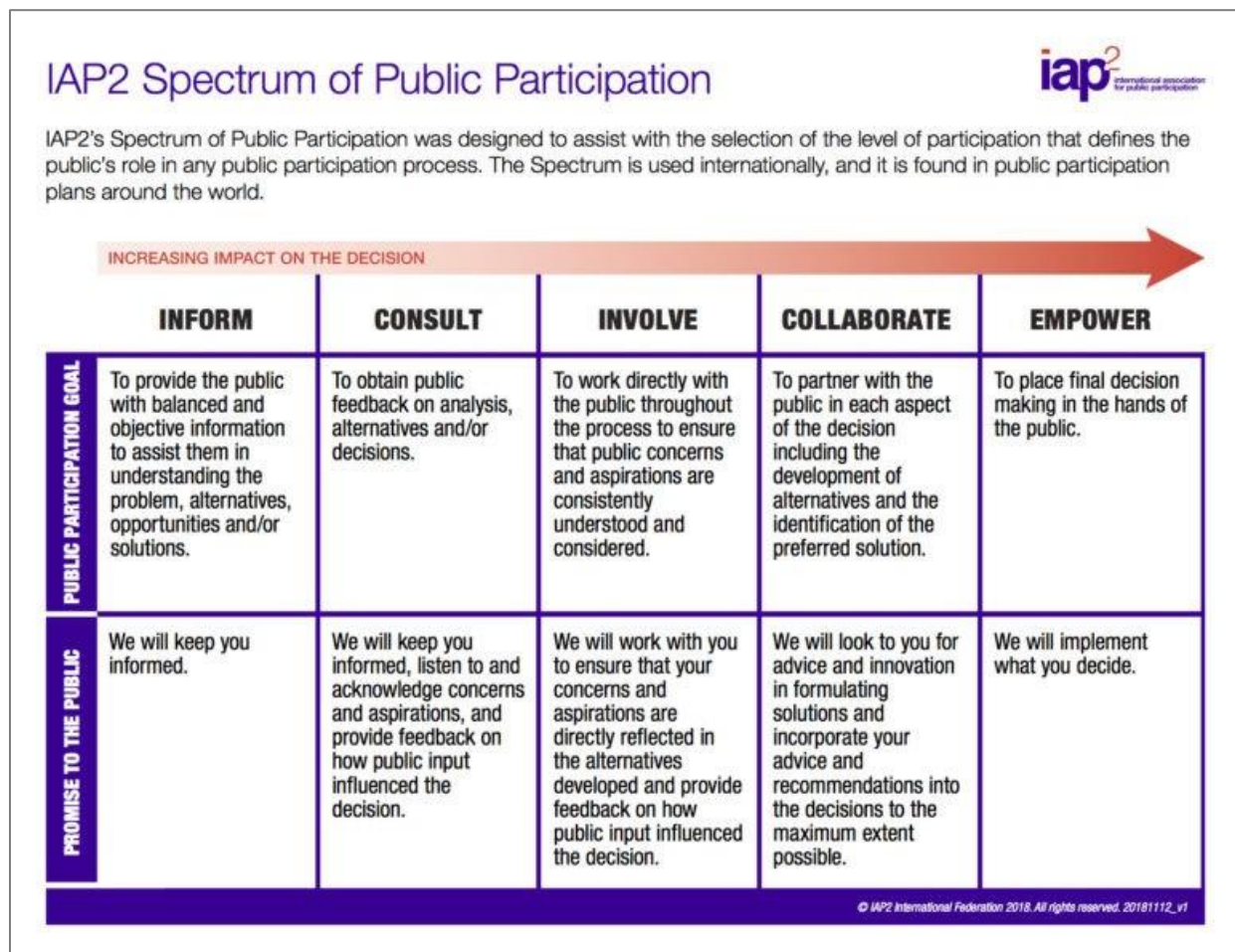


Figure 1: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

NEXT STEPS

Should the Committee of the Whole endorse the recommendations in this report, a zoning amendment bylaw will be forwarded to Council for consideration at a future meeting.

OPTIONS

Three options are proposed below:

Option 1 **Publish First Reading notice, and then proceed to First (and possibly Second and Third) reading(s)**

THAT Council directs staff to send notifications of First Reading of Zoning Bylaw Amendment 1065-88.

Option 2 **Give the Bylaw 1st and 2nd Reading and schedule a Public Hearing**

This option puts the bylaw on the table for consideration and directs staff to schedule a public hearing.

THAT Bylaw 1065-88, 2025 be forwarded to Council for first and second readings

AND THAT Council directs staff to schedule a public hearing.

Option 3 Maintain Status Quo

This option is to do nothing, rejects the proposal to revise the rules regarding arcade use. No resolution is required to do nothing to change these rules. There would be an opportunity to revisit this with the zoning bylaw update work.

Attachments

- Attachment A – Draft Zoning Bylaw Amendment 1065-88

Respectfully Submitted,

Megan Uglem
Planner I

Report reviewed by:

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|---|--|
| X | Chief Administrative Officer |
| | Director of Corporate & Legislative Services |
| | Director of Finance |
| | Director of Infrastructure Services |
| X | Director of Planning and Development |