



STAFF REPORT

TO: Committee of the Whole

MEETING DATE: May 20, 2025

FROM: Planner I

FILE NO: 3220-GPR-287

SUBJECT: Zoning Amendment for a place of worship at 287 Gower Point Road.

REPORT FOR DECISION

PURPOSE

The Town has received an application for a Zoning Amendment for unit 219 located at 287 Gower Point Road to allow for the continued use of the unit as a church.

The purpose of this report is to obtain direction on rezoning the site to allow a site-specific permission for a “Place of Worship” in the Downtown Commercial 5 (C-5) zone for unit 219, 287 Gower Point Road.

BACKGROUND

The Town has received the following application:

Zoning Amendment (ZA-2025-03) – to allow a “Place of Worship” in the Downtown Commercial 5 (C-5) zone for unit 219, 287 Gower Point Road (Christ the King Community Church).

Site and Surrounding Uses

287 Gower Point Road, also known as the Quay building, is located in the center of Gibsons Landing, on the south side of the road, north of Molly’s Lane, west of the intersection of Gibsons Way and School Road as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Location of Quay building, where the Church is located, outlined in yellow, and the parking lot next door, outlined in blue

Christ the King Community Church has maintained continual use of unit 219 since early 2007. The space is used for public assembly for the purpose of worship services and church administrative offices.

The large property is approximately 1245.48 m² in size, with a building containing around 17 commercial units and 5 residential units within it, with no on-site parking. Adjacent to the property is a parking lot, which is intended to be used primarily for patrons of the Quay building, in accordance with a covenant registered to the property's title.

Previous Applications

There have been previous applications for this site through temporary Zoning Amendments, Temporary Use Permits and Development Variance Permits. It is unclear why the owner/Town pursued the Church use on a rolling temporary basis, rather than rezoning permanently.

2007

ZA-2007-01: A site-specific zoning amendment to the C5 zone allowed for church-related uses at 287 Gower Point Road for a temporary two-year term.

DVP-2007-01: Variances were granted to reduce the parking requirement from 92 to 73 spaces and to allow the outdoor parking area to remain gravel instead of being paved.

2010

ZA-2010-03: The church applied to extend its use of the Quay building for an additional two years, requesting a site-specific amendment to the C-5 zoning to permit church use for this

term. The Zoning Amendment was adopted, however two years later, the Town removed the Temporary Use Section from the C-5 zoning. This may have been because Temporary Use Permits were introduced to the Official Community Plan.

2012

TUP-2012-01: A Temporary Use Permit was issued to allow “Places of religious Worship, community and social centres, and accessory uses” for a three-year term, expiring in 2015.

2016

TUP-2016-01: The 2012 Temporary Use Permit was renewed for another three-year term, expiring in May 2019.

2025

The Church has continued to operate but is not permitted in zoning. This application is requesting to permanently allow the church to operate at this location through a zoning amendment.

DISCUSSION

Table 1 provides a summary of the existing uses, zoning designations and OCP land use designations for the surrounding properties.

Table 1: Surrounding uses

	Existing Land Use	Existing Zoning	Exiting OCP Designation
North	Commercial Building	Downtown Commercial 5 (C-5)	Mixed-Use Commercial
South	Vacant Lot	Downtown Commercial 5 (C-5)	Mixed-Use Commercial
East	Commercial Building	Downtown Commercial 5 (C-5)	Mixed-Use Commercial
West	Parking	Tourist Commercial 2 (C-2)	Mixed-Use Commercial

Application proposal

Christ the King Community Church has applied to continue its current use as a place of worship permanently. The church has been operating at unit 219 – 287 Gower Point Road since 2007. The church has 200 regular attendees and holds a weekly worship gathering on Sundays, as well as community-orientated activities throughout the week.

Planning Context

Official Community Plan

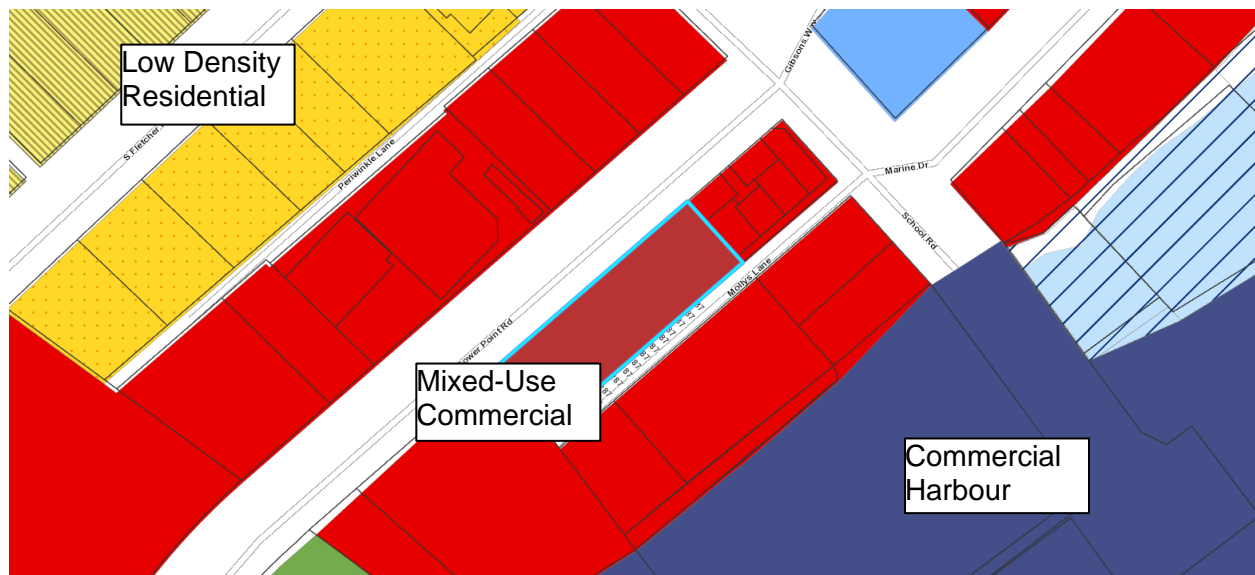


Figure 2: OCP Land Use Designations.

The property is designated as Mixed-Use Commercial, as shown in Figure 2. The intent of this designation is:

“to allow for a wide range of retail and office use, restaurant and visitor accommodations in a pedestrian orientated environment, and to allow residential uses as a secondary use, above, or under commercial use at ground level.”

The OCP’s intent for Gibson’s Landing is to be a bustling centre of small scale, local and tourism based commercial activity.

Staff have assessed the proposal with the goals and objectives in the Official Community Plan, and have pulled the following policies that are relevant to the proposal:

Part E Harbour Area Plan

The Harbour Area Plan provides key policies that support the zoning amendment.

Goal 4 – Support and enhance social and cultural activity in the Harbour Area.

4.2 Upgrade and add to existing cultural facilities in the Harbour Area and encourage an increase in the number of amenities and sites of interest.

Goal 5 – Ensure the economic viability of the Harbour Area, recognizing the unique role the Harbour plays in the local economy and the economic history of the area.

5.5 Support increased, year-round commercial and tourist activity in the Harbour Area.

- *The church is a community hub and brings residents to Lower Gibsons throughout the year.*

5.6.11 Encourage cultural and institutional uses to act as vital anchors to the day-to-day activities of the area and to establish the Landing as a “village centre”.

- *The church plays a role as a cultural and institutional anchor in the Landing Area. It is a focal point for social interaction and cultural exchange and may further support local economic activity.*

5.6.14 Provide for the day-to-day needs of residents of all ages in the Landing by encouraging a broad base of shops, restaurants and services (e.g. green grocers, meat/fish, canned goods and specialty foods, drugstores and convenience); specialty retailers (durable, semi-durable and apparel); and service commercial activities.

- *The Church congregation has expanded over the years. Although Christ the King Community Church owns the property at 599 Gower Point Rd, the current building at that location is unable to meet the needs of their growing church family and hosting their various community gathering events throughout the week.*

5.6.15 Retain a mix of uses serving both commercial and recreation activities in the harbour to guard against the harbour becoming dominated by uses catering to seasonal tourism

- *The church's role extends beyond weekly services, with additional community programs, social outreach, and gatherings, the church helps encourage a consistent flow of people into the area. This activity can help sustain a healthy mix of shops and services that cater to different needs at different times, contributing to the area's vibrancy and creating a dynamic space where people can live, work, and play.*

Based on the above policy, staff conclude that the proposal is consistent with the Official Community Plan.

Current Zoning

The property is designated as Downtown Commercial 5 (C-5), as shown in Figure 3, which permits a wide range of commercial uses, including retail, restaurant and service commercial.

The C-5 zone does not permit Public Assembly or Place of Worship, and therefore, a Zoning Amendment is required.

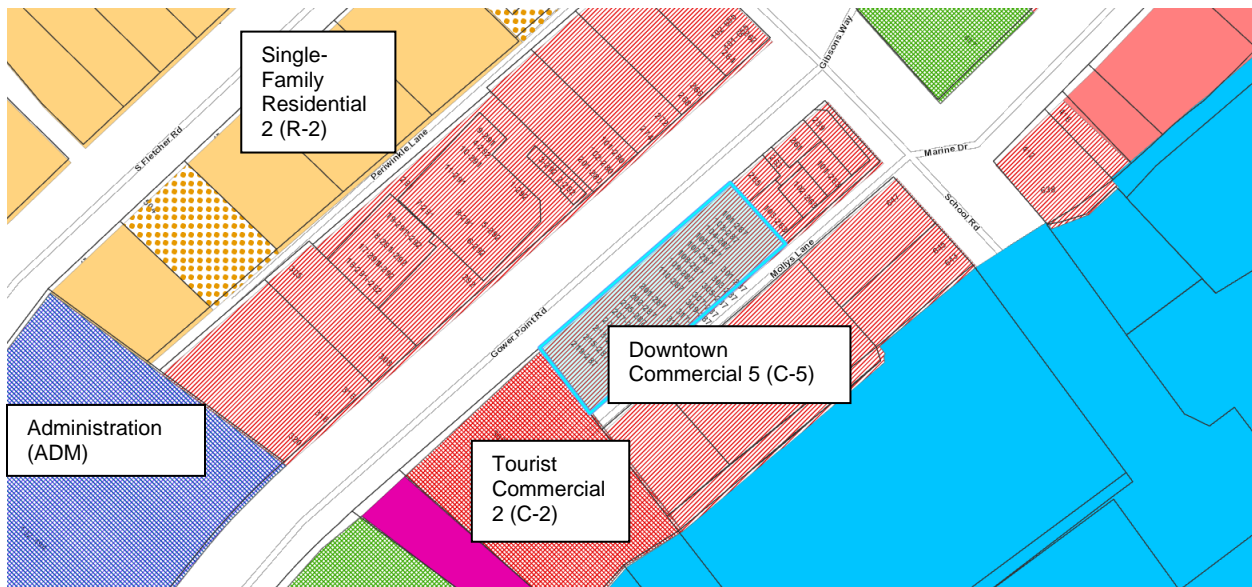


Figure 3: Current Zoning

Zoning Amendment Bylaw 1065-87

To permit the church use in the zoning bylaw, staff suggest adding a site-specific use for a “Place of Worship” to the Downtown Commercial 5 (C-5) zone for unit 219-287 Gower Point Road (Christ the King Community Church). This amendment would legitimize the currently non-conforming use that has been in place through temporary provisions since 2007. Draft Zoning Amendment Bylaw 1065-87 is enclosed as Attachment A.

The zoning amendment is proposed as written:

11.56 Site-Specific Uses

In addition to the uses permitted in Sections 11.46 and 11.47, place of worship is a permitted use on Lot 5 Block C District Lot 686 New Westminster District Plan VAP7731. (Civic Address: 287 Gower Point Road).

Parking

A covenant was registered in 2008 on the parking lot next to the Quay building to ensure that “the Land must not be used for any other purpose except to provide parking for the [Quay building], its successors and assigns, lessees and agents, servants, tenants, invitees and licences.”

The 2007 development variance permit reduced the parking requirements from 92 spaces to 73. The church, with 198 seats, requires 40 parking spaces.

In 1996, when the current church space was used as a cabaret, the Town granted a shared parking permission, since the operating hours for the cabaret were at night and the businesses in the Quay building were open during the day.

Similarly, the applicant is requesting to share the parking spaces for the church and the businesses and has confirmed that the hours of operation for the church are outside regular store hours at the Quay building. The applicant has stated:

Sunday Worship gathering is 9:30-11am. These are the current hours when we reach occupancy. The rest of the week at any event we are well below ever touching this level. We would be fine with the provision that should our hours change, we would work for a parking solution or amend the covenant.

For the sake of any further discussions or considerations... I will point out, if this helps, we have been operating with 200 seats for more than 10 years and parking has been sufficient, and we have not felt the pressure even in the summer. Come summer, during weekdays office hours I am often unable to find parking when I come to work and have to go down Molly's Lane to the lower lots. This has never been an issue on Sunday morning at anytime of year due to the majority of businesses outside of food service being closed on Sunday mornings at our times of operation. I understand the layers of your deliberations but in this amendment all we are doing is recognizing what already exists with our church presence and operations in the Landing. We understand future develop is a consideration. I will also for the sake of discussion point out that our church attendance spills out into the local businesses every Sunday adding healthy dynamic and life to the Landing community. I never visit a local restaurant in Lower Gibsons on Sundays without running into other members of our church. We love being apart of the Landing community.

An updated parking calculation requires 91 parking spaces; however, only 73 parking spaces are available. Staff considers that sharing the parking is reasonable, since it has operated in that way in the past, and there are no bylaw complaints related to the church's use as a result.

To secure parking for the Quay building, Covenants should be registered on the Title of both the Quay building property and the parking lot.

- Quay building Covenant: should require the use of the Church to remain at different operating hours than the other uses at 287 Gower Point Road. As well as add to the Covenant that if future hours of the Church are expanded, then adequate parking for the uses would need to be provided as per the bylaw requirements at that time.
- Parking lot Covenant: should require no building on the site without accommodating the parking needs for the Quay building at 287 Gower Point Road.

The covenants would need to be registered on title before the Adoption of the zoning amendment.

POLICY / PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan Implications

This vision of the Strategic Plan speaks to

“a Gibsons that preserves liveability, character and the natural environment while welcoming newcomers, visitors and economic opportunity”

Allowing places of worship in the Landing helps to meet the Plan’s mission of “preserving and enhancing liveability” and preserving the character in the community.

Financial Plan Implications

This zoning amendment has no negative implications on the Financial Plan.

Other Policy or Plan Implications

OCP implications are discussed above.

REFERRAL

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

Referrals sent	Comments Received
Gibsons and District Volunteer Fire Department (GDVFD)	<i>Please make sure to keep all fire safety equipment inspected and serviced. All exit signs are to be illuminated at all times. Also please provide an updated fire safety plan.</i>
Infrastructure Services Department	<i>No comments or concerns.</i>
Finance Department	<i>No comments or concerns.</i>
Building Department	<i>There is evidence in the files that reflect the Church as being previously approved, with sprinklers verified in that unit. The approved occupant loads in the files vary over the years, however the proposed new occupant load of 198 is less than some of the previous approvals. Regarding washroom provisions, the code requires at least one water closet (toilet) for each 150 persons of each sex. The existing floor plans on file show 4 women’s water closets, 1 men’s water closet, 3 men’s urinals, and an additional staff water closet. Since no alterations are proposed and previous approval of the unit has been granted, there are no concerns from Building in regard to the site-specific places of worship zoning amendment.</i>

COMMUNICATION

As the use is consistent with the OCP, a Public Hearing can be waived. The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) 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 the “notice of rezoning” advertisement in the newspaper and may include a public information meeting with no feedback being received, whereas consulting may be through a public information meeting or 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 mailed to properties within 100-metres of the subject property and two newspaper adverts placed in the Coast Reporter.

Alternatively, Council may decide to “consult” with the public on the application, by way of requesting a public information session, and/or holding a public hearing. A public information session would be hosted by the applicant, and a public hearing would be hosted by Council. All comments received would be shared with Council for consideration in the decision.

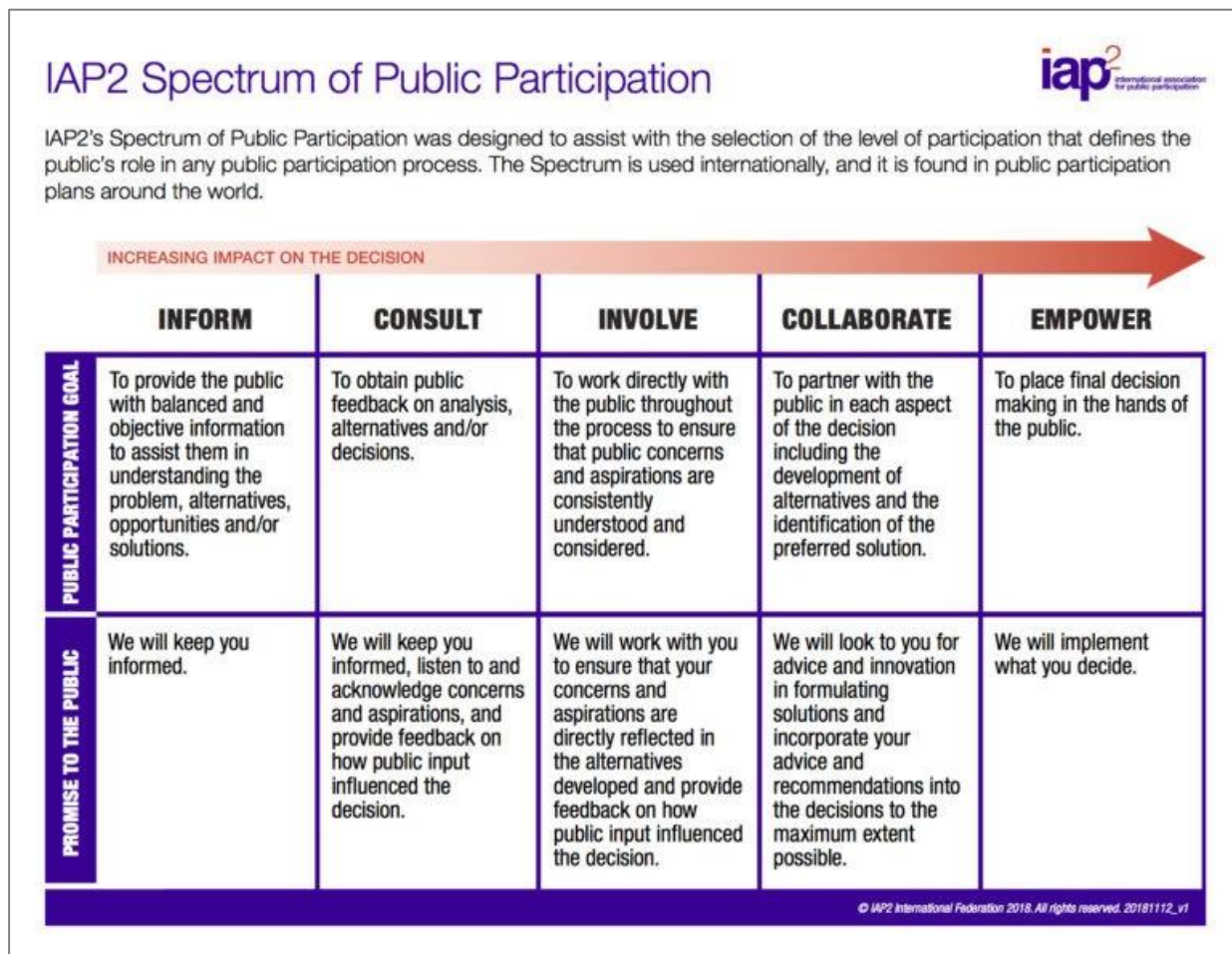


Figure 4: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

Should Council decide to inform or consult with the public before deciding on these applications, an option is listed under Option 1 below for the applicant to hold a Public Information Meeting.

Public Hearing

Council also has the option of holding a Public Hearing. Whilst the *Local Government Act* prohibits Public Hearings for residential developments that are consistent with the OCP, the *Local Government Act* allows Local Governments to choose to waive the Public Hearing for a commercial development that is consistent with the OCP and providing Notice of First Reading. Option 2 waives the Public Hearing, while Option 3 schedules a Public Hearing.

A Public Hearing was held for each previous Zoning Amendment and the Temporary Use Permits offer an opportunity to be heard prior to Council consideration.

OPTIONS

Four options are proposed below for Council's consideration. Staff recommend proceeding with Option 2.

Option 1 Consult with the public through a Public Information Meeting

Council may direct the applicant to hold a Public Information Meeting prior to a specific reading.

THAT the applicant be directed to hold an Open House to [inform/consult with] the public before [first/second/third] reading of Zoning Amendment Bylaw 1065-87

Option 2 Waive the Public Hearing and inform the public of First Reading, and then proceed to First (and possibly Second and Third) reading(s)

THAT Council directs staff to waive the public hearing and send notifications of First Reading of Zoning Bylaw Amendment 1065-87.

Option 3 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 1065-87, 2025 be given first and second readings

AND THAT Council directs staff to schedule a public hearing.

Option 4 Deny the proposal

This option rejects the proposal. The applicant would not be able to re-apply for 6 months if the proposal is denied by Council.

THAT the application ZA-2025-03 be denied, and the file closed.

CONCLUSION

Staff are of the opinion that the proposed Church use in the Quay building fits the goals and objectives of the Official Community Plan as a community use that will draw people down to Gibsons Landing and enable other community groups to use the space as well.

The Church use and community orientation of the applicants meets the sustainability goals of the Town as the Church is making good use of an existing facility rather than building a new one; they are providing much needed community activities and support; and church patrons can provide a boost to the surrounding businesses in Gibsons Landing.

Attachments

- Attachment A – Draft Zoning Bylaw Amendment 1065-87

Respectfully Submitted,

Megan Uglem
Planner I

Report reviewed by:

X	Chief Administrative Officer
	Director of Corporate Services
	Director of Finance
	Director of Infrastructure Services
X	Director of Planning and Development