



# City of Vancouver *Land Use and Development Policies and Guidelines*

## Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability Department

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# CHURCH GUIDELINES

*Adopted by City Council on March 5, 1992  
Amended September 12, 2006 and July 20, 2022*

## **1 Application and Intent**

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with a district schedule of the Zoning and Development By-law, an official development plan for conditionally-approvable development applications for church use or expansion of existing churches. These guidelines will also be used in assessing rezoning applications which involve churches, including rezoning applications for this use, in accordance with applicable Council-approved policies and guidelines for the Grandview Boundary and Marine Drive Industrial Areas.

The objective of these guidelines is to provide location and design criteria that will ensure a reasonable compatibility with adjacent and nearby land uses and will enhance the quality of the development.

## **2 Locational Considerations**

Regional churches should be limited to arterial streets, and corner sites are preferred. Regional churches are generally those capable of accommodating an assembly of 400 or more people. Local churches would also minimize impacts on residential districts by locating on arterials, but it may be possible to demonstrate that non-arterial locations (usually on corners) would be acceptable, where unique site characteristics assist in reducing impacts. In any case, buildings should be sited to limit visual and noise impacts and intrusion on existing adjacent (particularly residential) uses.

Churches in pedestrian-oriented commercial areas should be limited to upper floors or possibly basement levels, reserving the ground floor for retail use.

Church sites should be dispersed from others by several blocks if adjacent to residential uses, unless an applicant demonstrates that there would be an advantage to the neighbourhood resulting from greater proximity.

## **3 Building Height**

In districts where the Director of Planning may allow an increase in the building height of a church, the design must warrant extra building height by minimizing negative impacts on views, proportion, intrusion and shadowing.

#### **4 Circulation and Access**

Circulation within the site should relate clearly to use. For example, access to ancillary uses, such as a daycare facility if provided, should lead directly to that use.

Access to the parking area should be from a street rather than from a lane, except in pedestrian-oriented commercial areas.

Sites should have a minimum depth of 120 feet (36.5 m), although preferably greater, to provide for adequate access and circulation.

#### **5 Parking**

Parking requirements should be established on a case by case basis until the Engineering Department reports to Council recommending new parking standards for churches.

Landscaping should be used to buffer negative impacts of parking lots and soften access points.

#### **6 Acoustics**

**6.1** Churches require soundproofing to ensure minimum impacts on adjacent uses. The applicant should provide a report from an acoustical consultant indicating the soundproofing measures that will be taken to ensure that noise does not emanate from the premises.

The building should be air conditioned so that it is not necessary to open exit doors or windows during assemblies, thus negating the soundproofing.

**6.2** Sites located in commercial or industrial zones are affected by more traffic and noise than those located in residential zones. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure, through the design of the church development, that noise and traffic impacts associated with existing and permitted industry or commercial uses would not have a detrimental impact on the church use

#### **7 Religious Symbols**

Any proposed symbols, sculptures or monuments of a religious nature should be in keeping with the scale of the principal building and its neighbouring structures. In, or adjacent to residential districts, such features should be located in a fashion which respects the ambiance of any surrounding residential district.