



2014 ANNUAL REPORT Planning & Development Services



www.abbotsford.ca



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Planning & Development Services

Community Planning manages the City's Official Community Plan (OCP), bringing together land use, urban design and social planning policies, along with overall infrastructure needs into long range land use plans. The division is responsible for the development and implementation of strategies, policies and plans that guide the City's future growth and development.

Development Planning is responsible for reviewing and processing development applications such as rezoning, subdivision and development permits. These applications are reviewed for compliance with the OCP, Zoning Bylaw and other municipal bylaws and policies.

Development Engineering is responsible for reviewing and processing engineering drawings for development applications, and for environmental services. The drawings are reviewed for compliance with the Development Bylaw and other municipal bylaws and policies.

Building Permits & Licences is responsible for ensuring all building construction in the City meets Building Code requirements for health, life safety and fire protection. Functions include plan checking, building permit issuance, on-site inspections and business licencing.

For more information: www.abbotsford.ca/planning

The Planning & Development Services Department

Department

consists of four main divisions: Community Planning, Development Planning, Development Engineering and Building Permits & Licences.



Introduction

The 2014 Planning & Development Services (PDS) Annual Report is the first of its kind from the Department. Using the quarterly reports as a basis, it is a snapshot of how we've progressed over the past year. The report outlines accomplishments regarding development activity and trends, and departmental initiatives.

This report begins with an overview of the major steps in processing development and building permit applications, from initial inquiries to final building occupancy. This is followed by annual data on Development Inquiry Meetings (DIMs), land development applications, business licences, building permits and inspections.

Departmental initiatives included in this report highlight some of the projects undertaken by PDS in 2014. Major initiatives include the launch of Abbotsford - the Official Community Plan update project, adoption of the new Zoning Bylaw, and preliminary planning for the U District Neighbourhood Plan. 2014 also included the creation of the Development Application Review Team (DART) and continued use of coordinated DIMs. Both were created to enhance customer service and streamline internal processes.

The past year saw continued growth and departmental activity. Staff coordinated 111 DIMs, received 153 land development applications, created 282 lots (the most since 2008), issued 1,374 building permits, and completed 10,303 building inspections.

We will continue to build on these achievements and look forward to another successful year in 2015!

For more information: www.abbotsford.ca/stats

Application Process

The City of Abbotsford welcomes new developments that benefit our growing community. Before the use of land in Abbotsford can be modified, developed or changed, requirements must be met and approvals must be obtained from the City. The following process describes the steps required in processing applications, from initial inquiries with the City to final building occupancy.

<p>1 INQUIRY</p> 	<p>There is a lot of information to consider before making an application, including understanding the relevant City plans, procedures, and bylaws. Development Inquiry Meetings (DIMs) are an opportunity to meet with City staff, discuss ideas, and determine how the City's plans and policies affect a potential application.</p>
<p>2 SUBMISSION & REVIEW</p> 	<p>Once an application is submitted, staff review and refer the proposal to other agencies, if required. Development applications are first reviewed by the Development Application Review Team (DART) for general compliance and to identify requirements from each department. Once the application is reviewed and revisions are completed, the application can proceed to the next step.</p>
<p>3 APPROVAL & ISSUANCE</p> 	<p>Depending on the type of application, it will either be reviewed by Council or City staff. If an application is supported, and is approved in principle, requirements for final approval must be met. A building permit application will be accepted once the development is approved in principle. The building permit will be issued once the requirements for final development approval and building permit issuance are met.</p>
<p>4 CONSTRUCTION</p> 	<p>Once the building permit has been issued, construction can begin. Construction activity must meet the requirements of City bylaws and other government agencies. Applicable inspections are undertaken during the appropriate stages of construction and prior to occupancy of the building.</p>



Inquiry, Submission & Review

Development Inquiry Meetings

During 2014 staff coordinated 111 Development Inquiry Meetings (DIM). DIM's are intended to provide preliminary comments to land owners and developers considering development in respect to the Official Community Plan, Development Permit Areas/Guidelines, zoning, and anticipated off-site upgrades.

Q1: 20

Q2: 28

Q3: 27

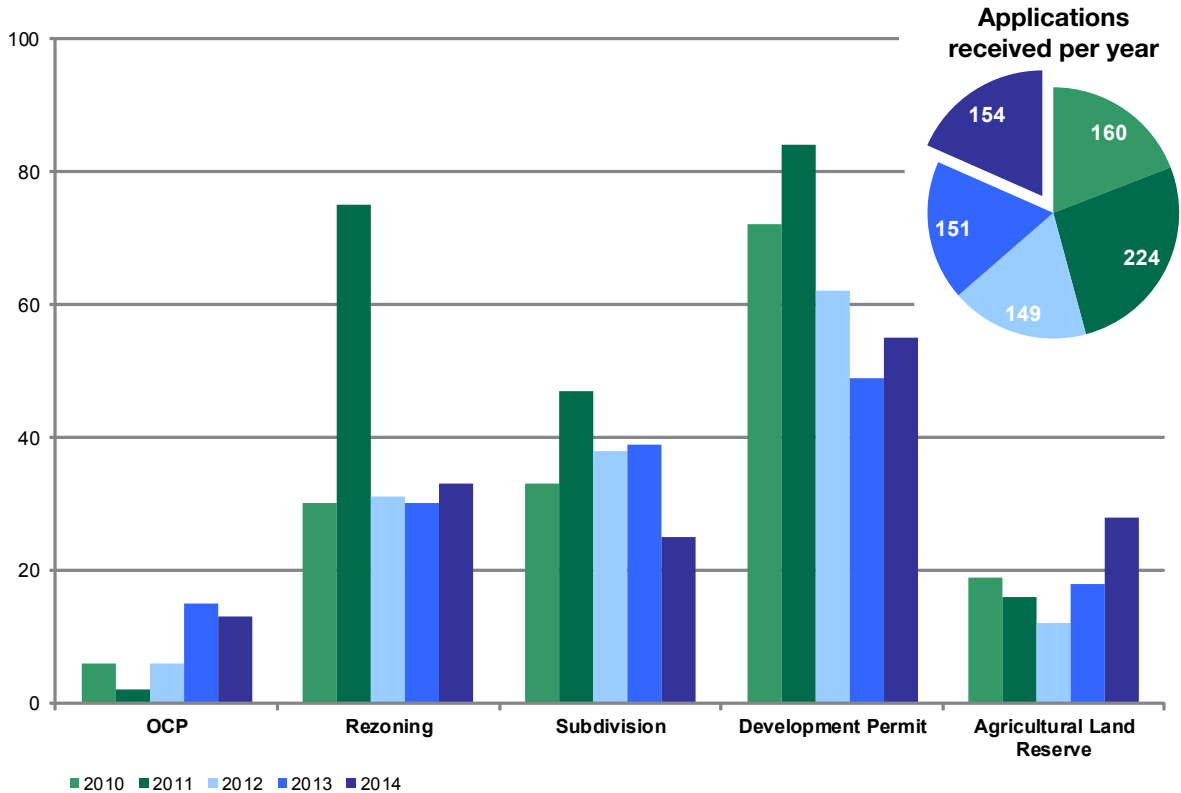
Q4: 36

DEVELOPMENT
INQUIRY
meetings

111



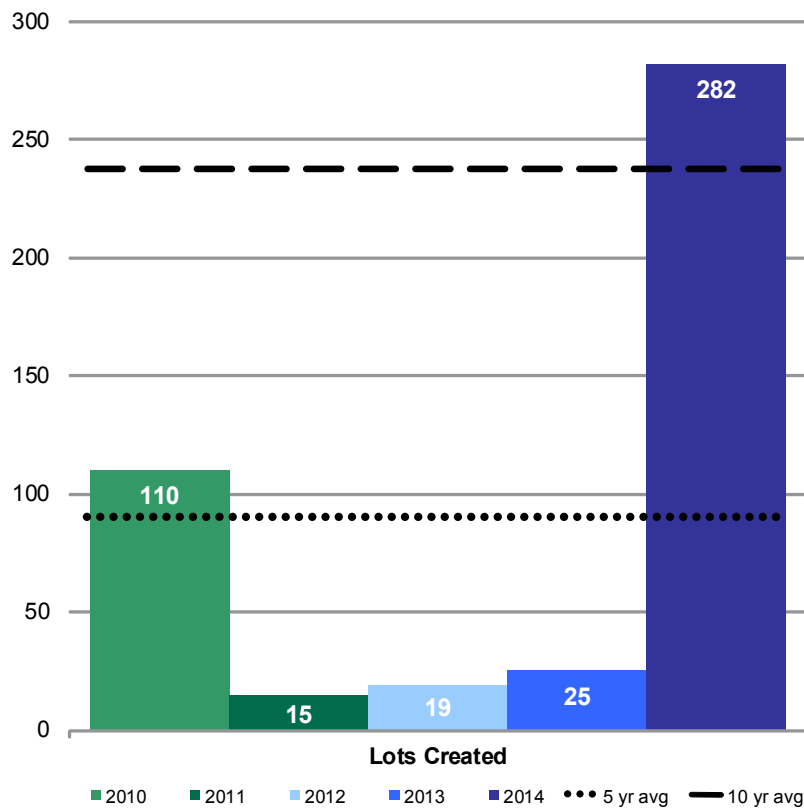
Land Development Applications Received



The total number of land development applications received in 2014 (154) is consistent with all years, except 2011 with 224 applications received. Official Community Plan amendment applications received in 2014 (13) were consistent with 2013. Rezoning applications received (33) were consistent with all years, except 2011 with 75 applications received. In 2014, there were 25 subdivision applications received, which is the lowest since 2010. Development permit applications received (55) have decreased overall since 2010, however slightly increased in 2014 from 2013. The number of Agricultural Land Reserve applications (28) were the highest since 2010.

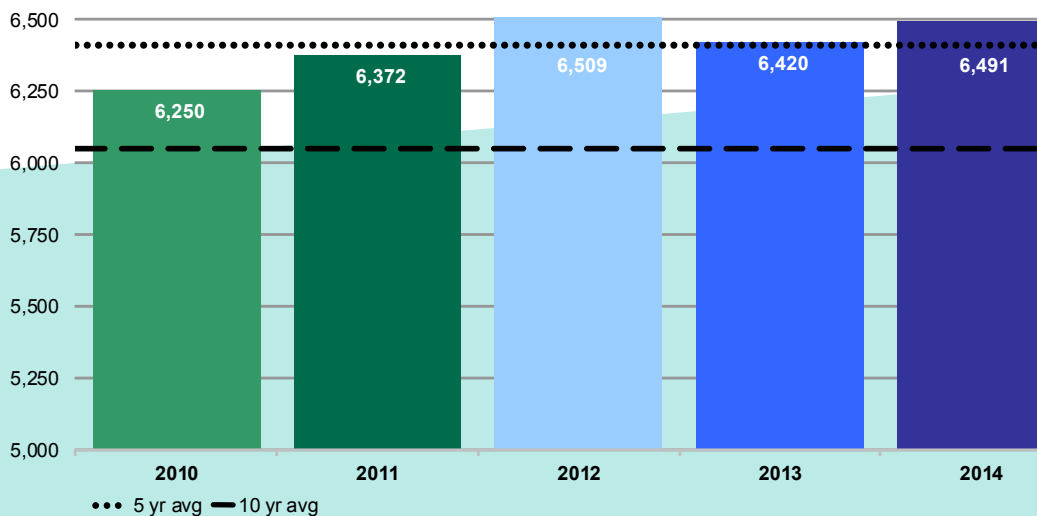
Approval & Issuance

Single Family Lots



Source: City of Abbotsford, Planning & Development Services

Business Licences



Source: City of Abbotsford, Planning & Development Services



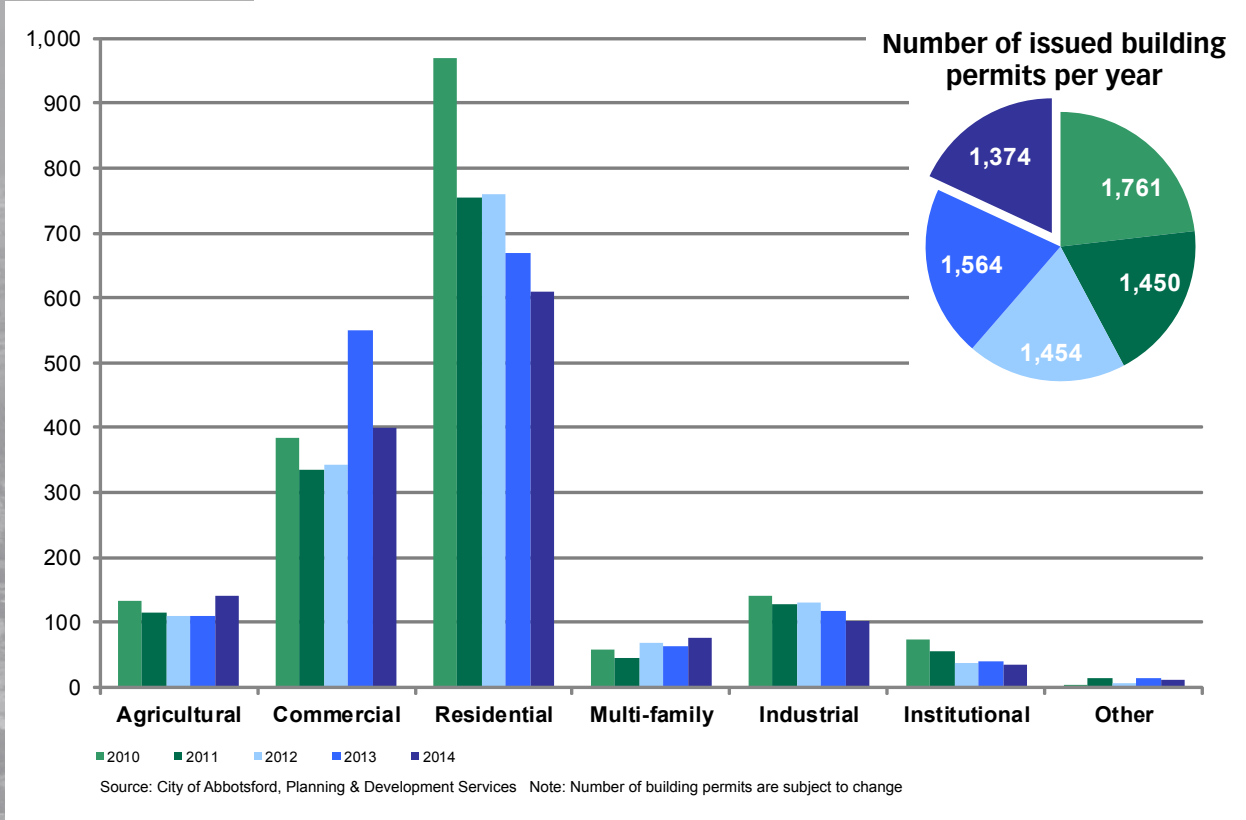
Although the number of subdivision applications is the lowest in the past five years, the number of single family lots in 2014 exceeded the five year average (90 lots) and the 10 year average (238 lots), with 282 lots created. This suggests there are fewer, but larger subdivision applications in 2014. This trend is expected to continue in 2015.

The number of issued business licences has exceeded both the five year (6,408) and 10 year (6,048) averages. Issued business licences have increased 4% between 2010 (6,250) and 2014 (6,491). The number of issued business licences has been exceeding the five year average since 2012, and the 10 year average since 2009.

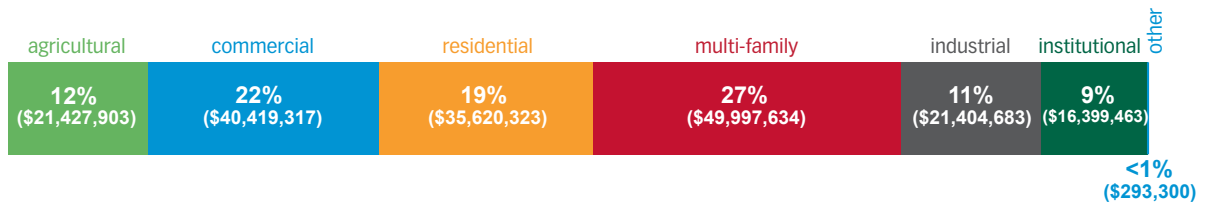


Approval & Issuance

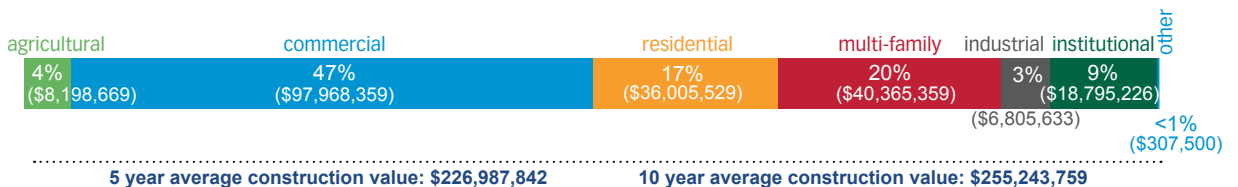
Type of Building Permits



2014
CONSTRUCTION VALUE
\$185,562,623



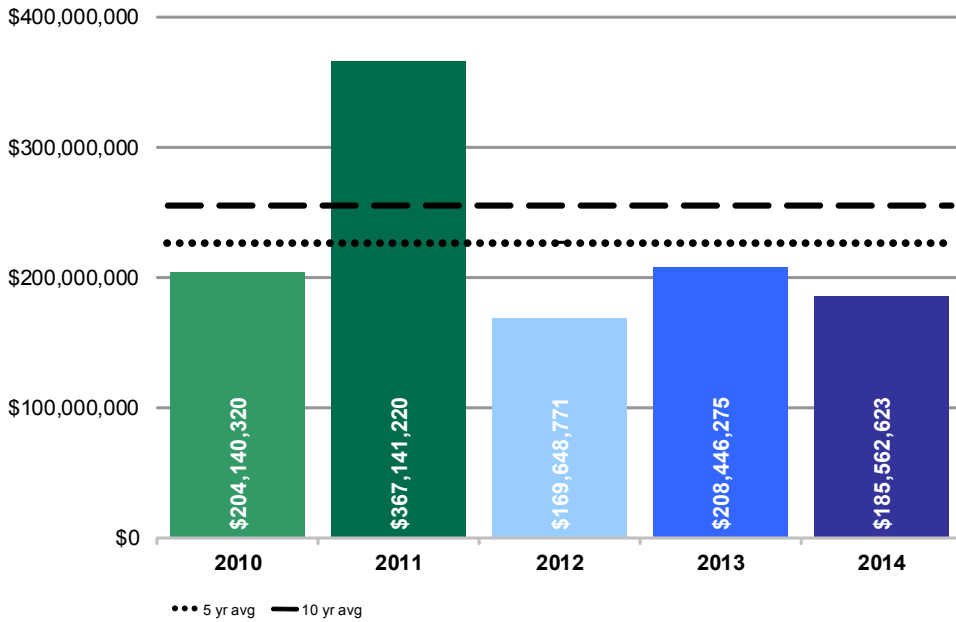
2013
CONSTRUCTION VALUE
\$208,446,275



There were a total of 1,374 building permits issued in 2014 with a total construction value of \$186 million, compared to 1,564 permits issued in 2013 with a total construction value of \$208 million. This resulted in an 11% decrease in construction value between 2013 and 2014. This decrease can be attributed in part by the construction value for tenant improvements at Highstreet in 2013 (\$28 million) compared to 2014 (\$3 million).

Approval & Issuance

Value of Building Permits

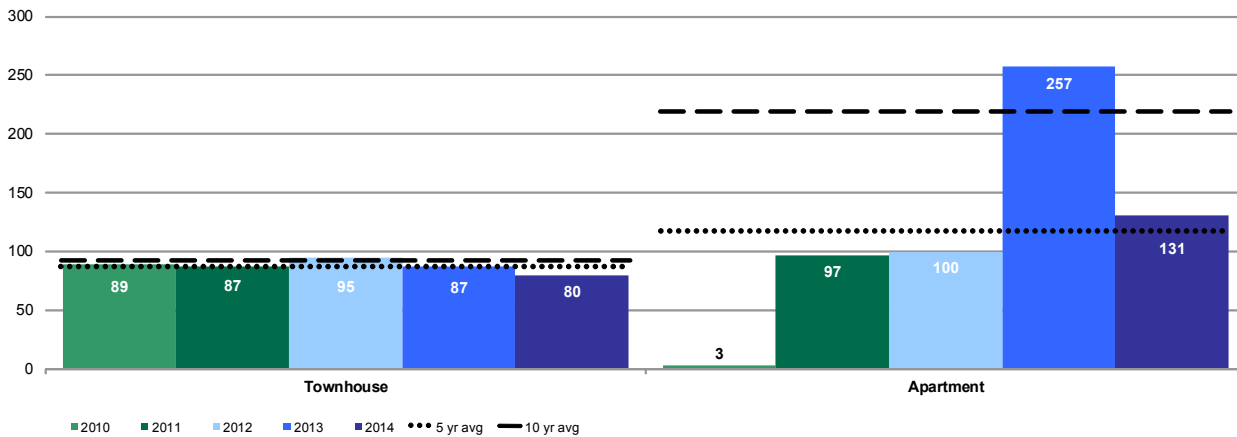


Source: City of Abbotsford, Planning & Development Services Note: Construction values are subject to change



Total construction value of issued building permits over the past five years has been relatively stable, with the exception of 2011, with the highest construction value (\$367 million). The increase in value in 2011 can be attributed in part by the construction of Highstreet with a value of \$106 million (30% of the annual total).

Multi-Family Units (Townhouses & Apartments)



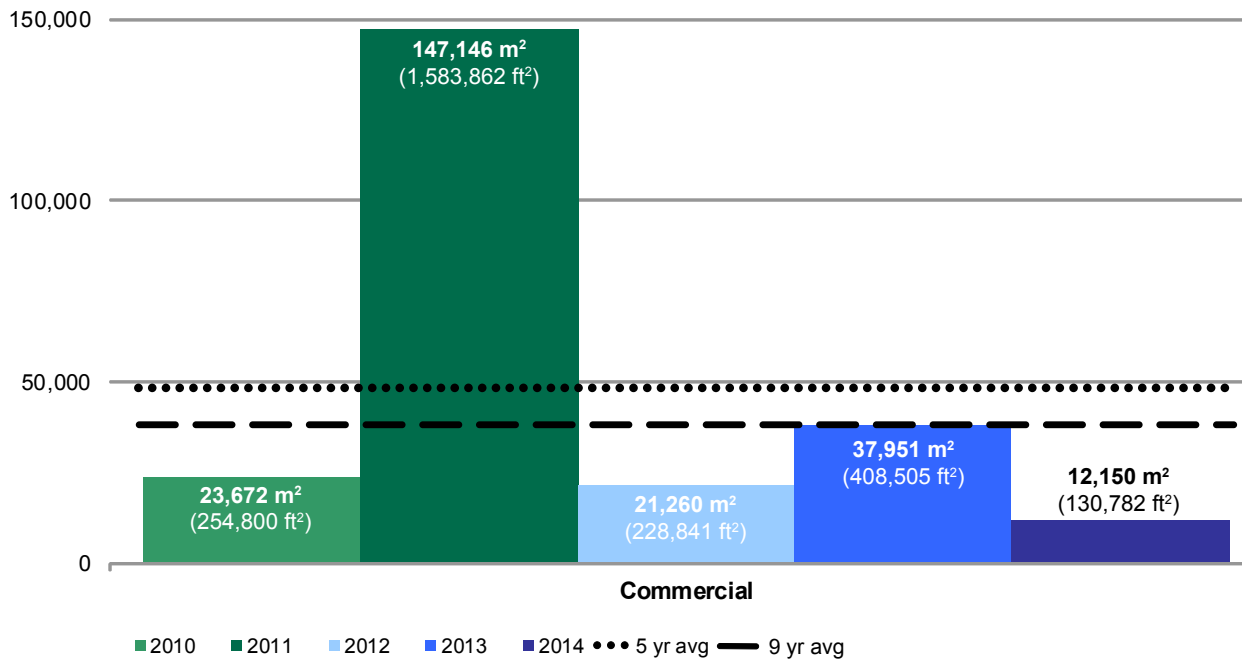
Source: City of Abbotsford, Planning & Development Services

Activity for townhouses has been very stable in recent years, and activity in 2014 was just below the five (88 units) and 10 year (93 units) averages. Activity for apartments in 2014 exceeded the five year average (118 units), though the 10 year average (219 units) was not met. However, in-stream multi-family applications as of the end of 2014 will likely result in increased activity in 2015.



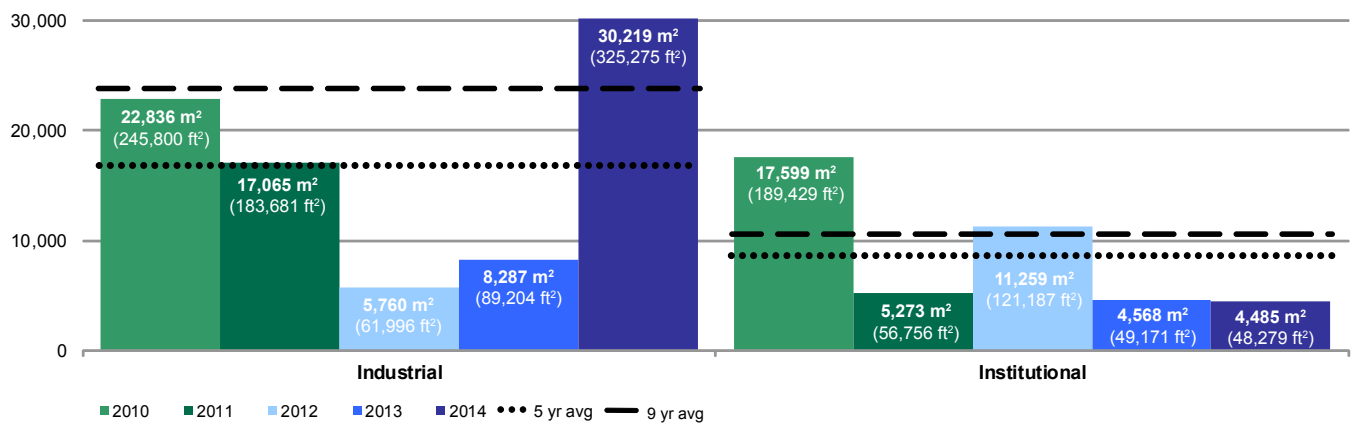
Construction

New Commercial Floor Space



Source: City of Abbotsford, Planning & Development Services

New Industrial & Institutional Floor Space

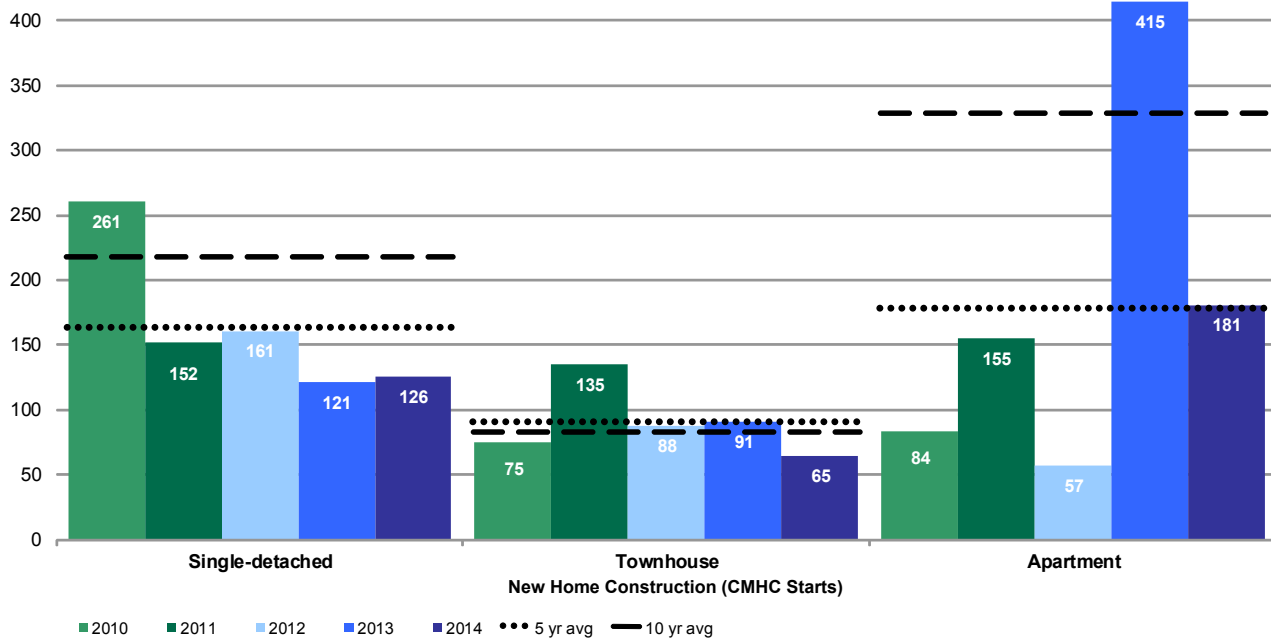


Source: City of Abbotsford, Planning & Development Services

New commercial floor space construction has been relatively stable over the past five years, with the exception of 2011 when Highstreet was being constructed. New industrial floor space in 2014 exceeded both the five (16,833 m²) and nine year (23,751 m²) averages. This increase can be attributed, in part, to two large warehouse facilities on Queen Street and McConnell Road. New institutional floor space has also been relatively stable over the past few years, with no change from 2013 to 2014. In-stream commercial and industrial applications as of the end of 2014 will likely result in increased activity in 2015.

Construction

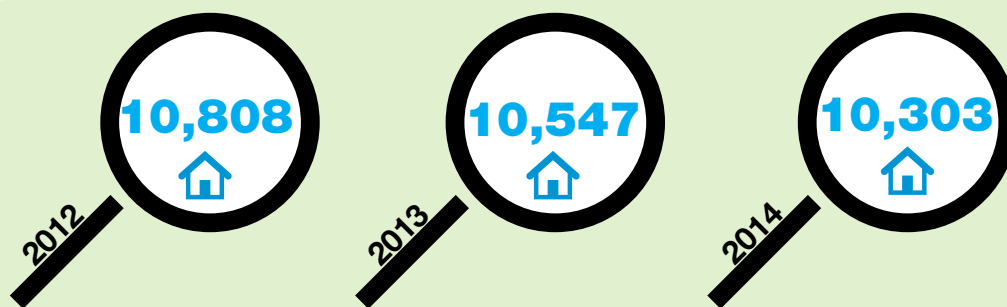
Housing Starts



Source: Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC)

According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, there were 126 new single family homes constructed in 2014, which is consistent with 2013 (121 starts). Townhouse construction in 2014 was lower (65 starts) compared to previous years, but has been relatively stable over the past five years. Apartment construction in 2014 (181 starts) was significantly lower than in 2013 (415 starts); however, it exceeded the five year average (178 starts). The number of in-stream single family and multi-family applications as of the end of 2014 will likely result in increased construction activity in 2015.

Building Inspections



The number of building inspections have remained consistent over the past three years.

Departmental Initiatives


Abbotsforward

Official Community Plan (OCP) Update

Abbotsforward is the most significant city shaping process ever undertaken by the City of Abbotsford.

The successful launch of Abbotsforward on Canada Day was followed by several community engagement activities including a road show booth at local festivals and events, a picture your city photo activity and the creation of a Citizen Advisory Commission (CAC) and a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). Since its formation and by the end of the year, the CAC met three times and provided comments to staff on the contents of the Stage 1 Background Research Report that was completed and received by Council on November 3, 2014.

Workshops with Council, Senior Management Team and TAG were also hosted to inform the process as it progressed on to Stage 2 in 2015. Throughout, communication about the project with the public has been provided by social media and news releases to local news sources. Planning staff were also selected to present Abbotsforward at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Institute of Planners to be held in Saskatoon in 2015.

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 [@abbotsforward](https://twitter.com/abbotsforward)

 www.abbotsforward.ca

Shape your city



Departmental Initiatives

U District Neighbourhood Plan

In 2012, the City of Abbotsford, residents, students and faculty came together to imagine what the University of the Fraser Valley and the surrounding neighbourhood could become in the next 30 years. This was captured in the U District Vision document, adopted by Council in 2012. The next step is to build on the Vision document and create a U District Neighbourhood Plan.

As of the end of 2014, City staff, in collaboration with UFV, were in the process of reviewing submitted proposals from a competition to select a consultant to undertake a U District Neighbourhood Plan and an Abbotsford Campus Master Plan. The intent of this planning exercise is to continue to support and enable UFV to grow and thrive, and to develop a land use plan for the surrounding neighbourhood that is mixed-use, walkable and transit-oriented.

Zoning Bylaw Update

The previous 1996 Zoning Bylaw posed many challenges for City staff, property owners, and developers proposing to undertake improvements to their property or change locations. These issues made staff less efficient, impeded them from providing a high level of customer service, and created the need for an inordinate number of “work around” solutions, including but not limited to increased number of variance on development applications and an increased number of customized Comprehensive Development Zones.

The new and improved Zoning Bylaw No. 2400-2014 was adopted by Council on September 15, 2014, which focused primarily on the urban zones within the City. Staff are currently working on reviewing further minor improvements to the zoning regulations within the urban areas and anticipate bringing those forward to Council in Q1 2015. In addition, staff anticipate conducting a comprehensive review of the Agricultural Zones in 2015.

U District Neighbourhood Plan will provide a unique opportunity for the City and the University of the Fraser Valley to work together for a future vision.

Zoning Bylaw Update was adopted by Council in September and celebrated by staff, enabling them to provide a higher, more efficient level of customer service.

DART facilitates a greater understanding of projects and improves communication between all departments.

The CSPI identifies initiatives and supports sustainability by enabling the community to build on successes and identify opportunities.

Departmental Initiatives

Development Application Review Team (DART)

In Q2 2014, Planning & Development Services established an interdisciplinary team responsible for the review of development applications called Development Application Review Team (DART). The purpose of the DART team was to facilitate a greater understanding of projects at the onset, to improve communication between departments and to create a transparent, predictable, repeatable, accountable and defensible process to discuss and track development requirements and the decision making process.

Between inception and the end of the calendar year, the team reviewed 69 development proposals and an additional 65 items related to development. In Q4 2014, an audit of the early successes and shortcomings was initiated and preliminary findings suggest that not only did the implementation of DART result in a reduction of the wait time between receipt of the application by the City and the issuance of first review comments to the applicant, but that the quality and amount of information provided was enhanced. It is anticipated that further review will be undertaken in 2015.

Civic Precinct & Provincial Courts

Subsequent to the completion of the Civic Precinct Vision in Q1 2014, the Provincial Government announced a recommendation for Abbotsford to receive a new 14-courtroom integrated courthouse with five Supreme and nine Provincial courtrooms by 2018. By the end of 2014, discussions have been held with the Provincial Government, Council and staff on provisional plans regarding the new courthouse building.

CSPI Implementation Plan

The Community Sustainability Planning Initiative (CSPI) was completed to identify initiatives that support sustainability by enabling the community to build on existing successes and identify future opportunities. As one of Council's key objectives for 2014, staff completed the CSPI Implementation Plan which strategically focuses on initiatives that align with major projects Council has authorized to proceed, are in-progress or have already been completed.

Agri-Industrial Study

In June 2014 staff presented a report to Council detailing servicing costs and market analysis for an Agri-industrial corridor along the Fraser Highway. Due to the high cost to service (approximately \$32 million), Council decided not to support this location and directed staff to study potential locations within the context of the OCP update.

Departmental Initiatives

Harm Reduction Zoning Bylaw Amendment

Completed in Q1 2014, the Zoning Bylaw amendment removed the definition of 'harm reduction use' that prohibited the provision of harm reduction health care services. A Memorandum of Understanding between the City, Fraser Health Authority and the Abbotsford Police Department, was executed and Good Neighbour Agreement Policy was adopted by Council to replace the zoning regulation and guide harm reduction service provision in Abbotsford.

Streamline Rezoning Reports to Council

Completed in Q1 2014, this staff initiated improvement has reduced the time an applicant waits between application submission and 3rd reading of the rezoning bylaw, resulting in a time saving for applicants of four to six weeks.

Administrative & Procedural Bylaws

Following the last 12 months of various development process improvements, staff are currently working on amending several administrative and procedural bylaws to reflect these streamlined development/approval processes, to simplify fee structures, and to eliminate redundancies between various bylaws.

Secondary Suites Guide

Completed and published in Q4 2014, and a Punjabi version will be published in Q1 2015, Development Planning and Building Permits & Licences staff undertook a process improvement initiative regarding secondary suites, including a review of our existing web pages, brochures, and internal departmental procedures with respect to secondary suites proposed in conjunction with a Land Use Contract or rezoning application. Two separate department web pages were merged, creating a single landing page for all information related to secondary suites, found at www.abbotsford.ca/suites.

Development Statistics Reporting Improvements

Completed in Q1 2014, PDS staff, in collaboration with the City's Information Technology team, updated development application tracking to include residential unit and industrial, commercial, institutional floor space information. This update facilitates more efficient collection and reporting of development activity in the City on a quarterly basis and will assist with future quarterly reports.

Streamlined Rezoning Reports to Council has reduced the time an applicant waits between submission and implementation of the Zoning Bylaw.

Streamlined information on Secondary Suites in the City provides a one-stop multilingual reference for all residents.



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