



# 2015 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

## Our Mission

We strive to continually improve the quality of life within our community by delivering key services for current and future generations.

# HUB of the Fraser Valley

## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

On behalf of Abbotsford City Council, I'm pleased to present you with this report, which provides a snapshot of some of our key accomplishments at the City of Abbotsford for 2015.

Guiding all of the work you see reflected here is Council's vision for the community – that Abbotsford is the Hub of the Fraser Valley. This vision sees Abbotsford as a preferred destination for residents and businesses alike, and provides the foundation for our service delivery to the community.

As the Hub City, Abbotsford will become the regional centre of the communities of the Fraser Valley. The City of Abbotsford will be home to regionally centralized services and agencies including health care, courts, transportation, the university, the airport, provincial and federal government services, entertainment and cultural facilities, and commerce.

To achieve this vision, Council created four Cornerstones to support and focus the work of Council and the City:

1. Vibrant Economy
2. Complete Community
3. Fiscal Discipline
4. Organizational Alignment

You'll see the principles behind these four Cornerstones reflected in every decision we make, from municipal planning decisions for the growth of our community through to departmental business planning and budgeting efforts. Council's 2015-2018 Strategic Plan provides the details supporting the realization of this vision through our goals for the next three years and I encourage you to read through this Plan.

Every day I am humbled and proud to be serving this wonderful community and the amazing people who work and call Abbotsford home. Thank you for allowing me to represent you and put our best foot forward in one of the best places to be in BC!



MAYOR HENRY BRAUN

## ABBOTSFORD AT A GLANCE



**Population:** 141,500

**Location:** Fraser Valley, BC

**Area:** 39,043 Hectares  
Largest municipality in BC by land area and **6th** largest by population

**Building Permit Value 2014:**

\$186 Million

**Building Permit Value 2015:**

\$296 Million

**Average House Price:** \$452,876

**Key Economic Drivers:**

Education, aerospace, healthcare, manufacturing, agriculture, technology, construction

See more stats at

[caed.abbotsford.ca](http://caed.abbotsford.ca)

## 2015 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Made further headway on the goals of our **Homelessness Action Plan** by hiring a Homelessness Coordinator, approving the development of a **30 bed** low-barrier shelter and opening a **40 bed** temporary response shelter with local partnerships.
- Won an **Open for Business Award** from the BC Small Business Roundtable.
- Launched a new program and website for the City **Economic Development** department.
- Became the **first community in BC** to introduce a GIS site selector online that offers property search, demographic analysis and interactive mapping.
- Introduced **e-Billing** for tax and utility bills.
- Initiated the **U-District** Neighbourhood Plan.
- Undertook the construction on the new Matsqui Recreation Centre **Turf Fields**, which will add **64 hours per week** of community field time.
- Maintained high quality **water service** to the community throughout the **drought** conditions in summer 2015.
- Reduced the number of **Council Committees** by half.

### YOUR ABBOTSFORD CITY COUNCIL



COUNCILLOR  
LES BARKMAN



COUNCILLOR  
SANDY BLUE



COUNCILLOR  
KELLY CHAHAL



COUNCILLOR  
BRENDA FALK



COUNCILLOR  
MOE GILL



COUNCILLOR  
DAVE LOEWEN



COUNCILLOR  
PATRICIA ROSS



COUNCILLOR  
ROSS SIEMENS

# BUILDING A COMPLETE COMMUNITY



The City of Abbotsford is a community of inclusive, safe and green neighbourhoods, connected to convenient and affordable transportation and vibrant commercial centres, built on the foundation of our cultural heritage and natural beauty.

In 2015, the City of Abbotsford made great strides in continuing to build a complete community for our residents. In focusing all we do with this cornerstone as a key priority, the City is conscious of:

- Our community's connection with the environment.
- Supporting a multi-disciplinary approach to public safety.
- Capitalizing on opportunities around transportation in and through the city.
- Embracing our cultural diversity as one of our greatest strengths.
- Valuing recreation and support facilities, amenities and activities that connect us.
- Facilitating action to mitigate social issues that impact our community.



Abbotsford hosted over **160 community events in 2015** including runs, walks, festivals, fundraisers, park concerts, and cycling.

Talked to **6,700** residents in 2015 about **Abbotsforward**, the update of the Official Community Plan that outlines how our community will grow to 200,000 people.



Installed **3 new playgrounds**, and upgraded 9 park washroom facilities.

Installed **Four Little FREE Libraries** in our parks in partnership with the Rotary Club of Abbotsford-Sumas. Last year, over **40,000 books** were distributed in the community through the "Take a Book Read a Book Boxes."



Partnered with the Abbotsford Food Bank to support the Christmas in July collection at Fire Hall 7 and the annual Food Bank Parade with Save-On-Foods and the Fraser Valley Automall in December.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In 2015, nearly **20,000** people took swimming lessons and **750,000** people visited our **2** recreation centres.

Abbotsford has **157 parks** consisting of over **2,584 acres of parkland** and **98 kilometers of trails**.



**84%** of residents live within **500m** of a park. Fostering natural beauty was an idea that many people wanted to see in future city plans.



# BUILDING A VIBRANT ECONOMY



The City of Abbotsford is a regional hub of creativity and innovation where talent, investment and business thrive.

In 2015, The City of Abbotsford refocused our efforts toward building an environment where business, industry and investment thrive. As we continue to progress toward this goal we:

- Understand the impact we have on others and invest in building relationships that facilitate alignment.
- Focus on developing a vibrant and diverse economy.
- Recognize the value of innovation in our local economy, especially agriculture.



In 2015, the Abbotsford Centre ranked in the **top 200** of entertainment venues worldwide and was the **2nd busiest in BC**.

With the Open for Business Award from the **BC Small Business Roundtable** the City received **\$10,000** to support the growth of local small businesses.

The City launched a new Economic Development brand and strategy to help spread the word that Abbotsford is "open for business."

The new Business Walks Program uncovered that **93%** of Abbotsford businesses indicated 'steady' or 'increasing' business growth.



In 2015 the Abbotsford International Airport welcomed **475,000** passengers, a new WestJet service to **Las Vegas**, and Air Canada "rouge" service to **Toronto**.



The City of Abbotsford is transparent and accountable to citizens, information is easily accessible and residents are well informed on Council's priorities.

## ACHIEVING FISCAL DISCIPLINE



The City received **\$57,000** of funding for innovative forestry initiatives and restoration, and **\$18,000** for improving walkability in the Clearbrook area for seniors.

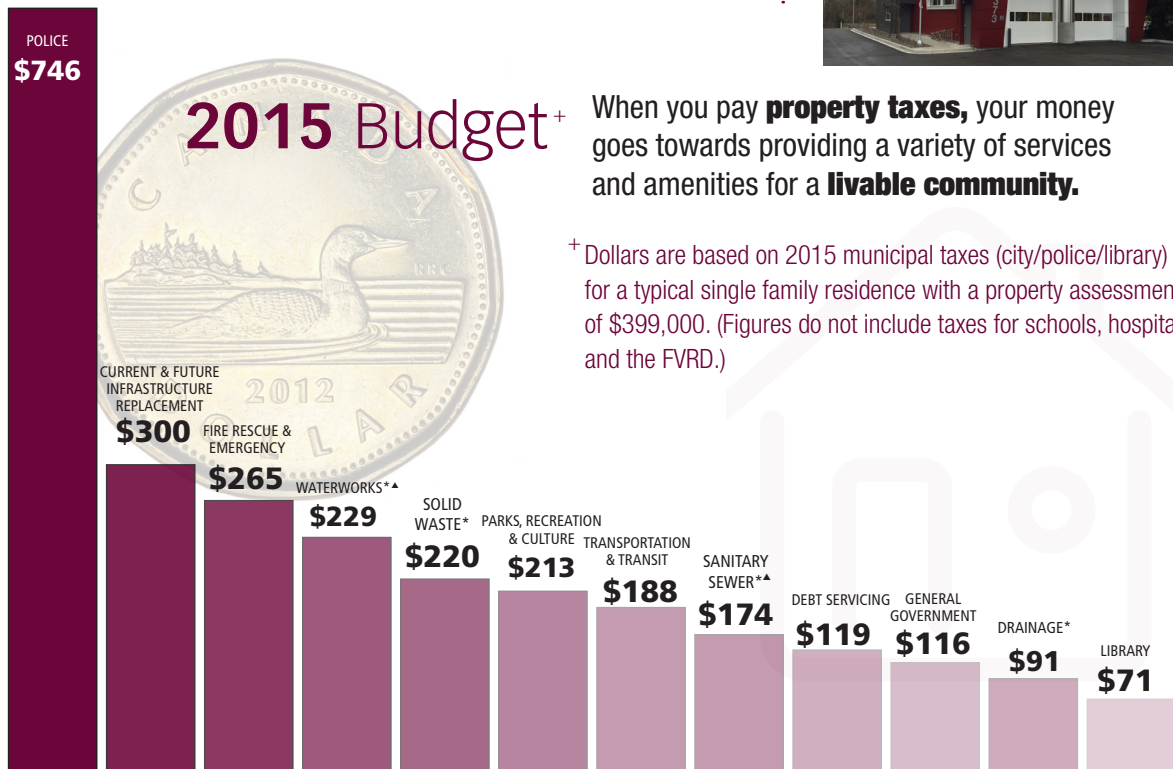


Fire Rescue Service replaced Fire Hall 4 (Matsqui) and Fire Hall 5 (Mt. Lehman) and saved a total of **\$600,000** by building two identical fire halls at the same time with one contractor.



In 2015, the City of Abbotsford strived to achieve fiscal discipline in our day-to-day operations in addition to planning for our future fiscal resources. What does that look like?

- We understand how important it is to take a long-term view on maintaining and upgrading our city assets.
- We make financial decisions by looking not just at the long term costs but also the value to our community.
- We understand the critical role of community education and engagement.
- We actively manage our city finances with exceptional care.



\* Utility user fees includes operations and maintenance, current and future infrastructure replacement and debt servicing.  
 ▲ Waterworks & sanitary sewer based on the 2014 median single family water usage (210 m³).  
 ■ Includes bylaw enforcement, corporate and administrative services and municipal buildings

The roads crew paved **30 km of local roads**, filled **1,261 potholes**, patched **13,392 m² of road surface**, sealed **125,049 metres of cracks**, graded **88 km of gravel roads** and repaired **150 m² of sidewalk** as part of our infrastructure maintenance program.



"Abbotsford-Mission is one of the fastest growing economies in Canada this year."

Conference Board of Canada Report, 2015

Development activity saw an increase of **60%** in total construction value over 2014; an increase of **22%** in land development applications received; and an increase of **27%** in new commercial floor space from 2014.



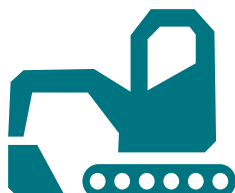
The City continues to welcome film crews for tv and movie productions and issued **25** film permits in 2015 for 105 days of filming.

The Building Department issued **6,462** business licences - which includes intermunicipal business licences, where businesses can get one license to operate in **11 different** local communities, including Abbotsford.

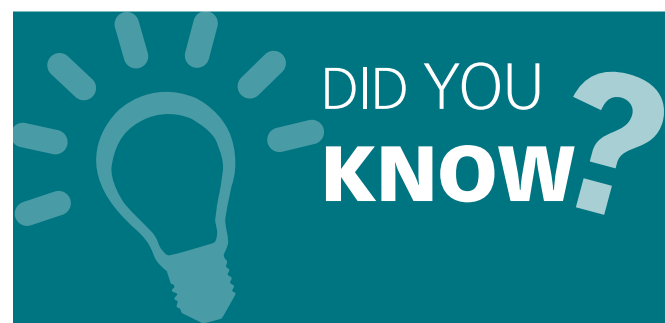
Abbotsford is also the preferred local location for Christmas movies; 5 Christmas Movies were shot here in 2015!



The total value of building permits in 2015 was **\$296,704,729**, up **14%** from 2014.



**caed.abbotsford.ca** is the new Economic Development website with a live chat function!



Abbotsford produces the largest farmgate receipts in the province at **\$639 million** and supplies approximately **40%** of all milk produced in the Lower Mainland.

Abbotsford took home **two Marketing Canada Awards** from the Economic Development Association of Canada for our new promotional video. View it here: <https://vimeo.com/131911606>



<< see the future >>  
 CLICK TO PLAY VIDEO



The City of Abbotsford has strong, consistent governance and aligned operations.

# MAINTAINING ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT



## DID YOU KNOW?

In 2015, the city website had over **1,196,110** visits, with **22,542** of those visits from mobile devices, which is an increase of 13% in mobile activity over 2014!

The City issued **51** news bulletins, has **6,129** followers on Twitter, and received **1,887** likes on our Facebook page.



The operations yard processed **7,200** service requests from residents.

The City Clerk's Office processed **469** Freedom of Information requests.

Parks crews planted **42,000 bulbs**, **17,250 flowers** and **100 shrubs**.



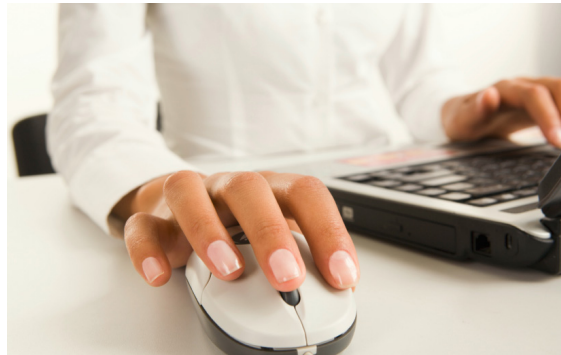
Sewer crews flushed **114 km** of sewer main to ensure the system operated efficiently without backups.



Our engineering team talked water conservation with **5,000** households, processed **500** toilet rebates and **200** high-efficiency washing machine rebates.



The City implemented an **e-Billing** program which allows residents to receive tax and utility bills via email.



During the dry months of May and June of 2015, Fire Rescue Service responded to **92 grass, brush and bark mulch fires** compared to 80 fires in all of May, June, July, August and September of 2014.



Our 1,831 community volunteers spent over **16,262 work hours** doing everything from event assistance to community clean up for the City and 25 other community groups.

Each week, the City picked up garbage, recycling and compostable waste from **25,000** households and diverted nearly **70%** of our waste from garbage to composting and recycling!



The City improved fire fighter safety and training opportunities by constructing a live-fire burn building with fire hydrants at the AFRS Training Centre.



In 2015, the City of Abbotsford made a renewed commitment to work efficiently and effectively to deliver services. Guiding all of our operations are the principles that we:

- Make development decisions based on our long-term strategies and are not swayed from our community vision by short-term gains.
- Recognize the importance of certainty in community building and that our rules and bylaws are critical to protecting the livability of our city.
- Support the efficient and effective delivery of our city services and programs.
- Pursue excellence in customer service and strive to provide a positive customer experience.
- Believe in an involved, safe and engaged workforce.



In 2015, Council endorsed the new **2015-2018 Strategic Plan**, establishing an exciting vision for the City and providing direction and guidance as our City develops. At the core of the Strategic Plan is Council's overall vision for the City: **Abbotsford is the Hub of the Fraser Valley.**

## STAY CONNECTED

### COUNCIL MEETINGS

Information from the latest City Council meetings is available every week on the City's website at [www.abbotsford.ca/citypage](http://www.abbotsford.ca/citypage) and in the Friday edition of the Abbotsford News. City Council meetings are broadcast live on the website every second Monday and can be viewed online at [www.abbotsford.ca/livecouncil](http://www.abbotsford.ca/livecouncil).

### E-NEWS

Stay in touch with what's new at the City by signing up for our online updates: [www.abbotsford.ca/enews](http://www.abbotsford.ca/enews)

### FEEDBACK

Concerns, comments or questions? We're listening! [www.abbotsford.ca/feedback](http://www.abbotsford.ca/feedback)  
[communications-info@abbotsford.ca](mailto:communications-info@abbotsford.ca)  
604-864-5564

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