



# 2015 ANNUAL REPORT



## Planning & Development Services



VIBRANT  
ECONOMY



COMPLETE  
COMMUNITY



FISCAL  
DISCIPLINE



ORGANIZATIONAL  
ALIGNMENT

HUB of the Fraser Valley



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Source of all data: City of Abbotsford, Planning and Development Services unless otherwise stated.

# 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 and 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](http://www.abbotsford.ca/planning)

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





# Introduction

The 2015 Planning and Development Services (PDS) Annual Report uses the quarterly reports as a basis, and is a snapshot of how we've progressed over the past year. The report outlines accomplishments regarding development activity and trends, and departmental initiatives.

The past year saw continued growth and departmental activity. Staff coordinated 226 DIMs, received 188 land development applications, created 184 lots, approved over 29,000 m<sup>2</sup> of industrial floor space, issued 1,575 building permits, and completed 11,355 building inspections.

Departmental initiatives included in this report highlight some of the projects undertaken by PDS in 2015. Major initiatives include Abbotsforward - Official Community Plan Update, the UDistrict Neighbourhood Plan, Zoning Bylaw Update (Phase 2 and Housekeeping), and an Amanda Update.

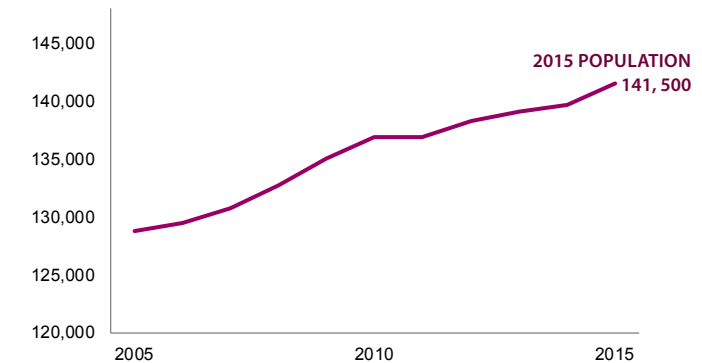
We will continue to build on these achievements and look forward to another successful year in 2016!

For more information: [www.abbotsford.ca/stats](http://www.abbotsford.ca/stats)

# Application Process

	<p><b>1. INQUIRY</b></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><b>2. SUBMISSION &amp; REVIEW</b></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><b>3. APPROVAL &amp; ISSUANCE</b></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><b>4. CONSTRUCTION</b></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>

# 2015 State of the City



**31,150 single detached units**  
(includes 4,740 accessory suites)

Source: City of Abbotsford



**6,100 single attached units**

Source: City of Abbotsford



**13,350 multi-family units**

Source: City of Abbotsford



**850,000 m<sup>2</sup> (9,130,000 ft<sup>2</sup>)**  
total commercial floor space

Source: BC Assessment



**695,000 m<sup>2</sup> (7,481,000 ft<sup>2</sup>)**  
total industrial floor space

Source: Colliers International

The 2015 State of the City shows where we are today with a snapshot of population and a total city-wide inventory of residential, commercial and industrial units and floor space.

Since the population has been steadily increasing over the past 10 years, we need to know what kind of housing, and the amount of commercial and industrial floor space is available to service the population and ensure there's room for places of employment.

This 2015 information will be used as a baseline to which future annual growth and development can be compared.





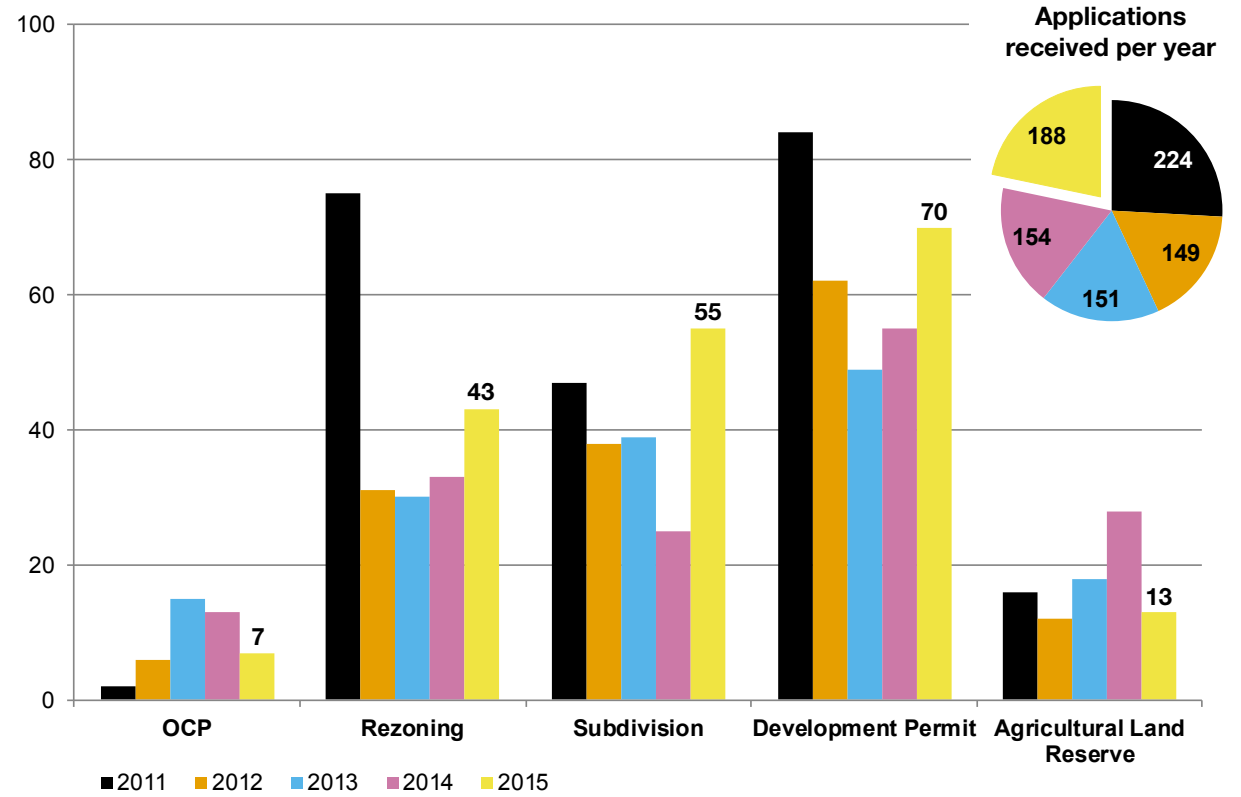
# Inquiry, Submission & Review

## Development Inquiry Meetings

During 2015 staff coordinated 226 Development Inquiry Meetings (DIM) an increase of 104% from 2014 (111). 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.



## Land Development Applications Received

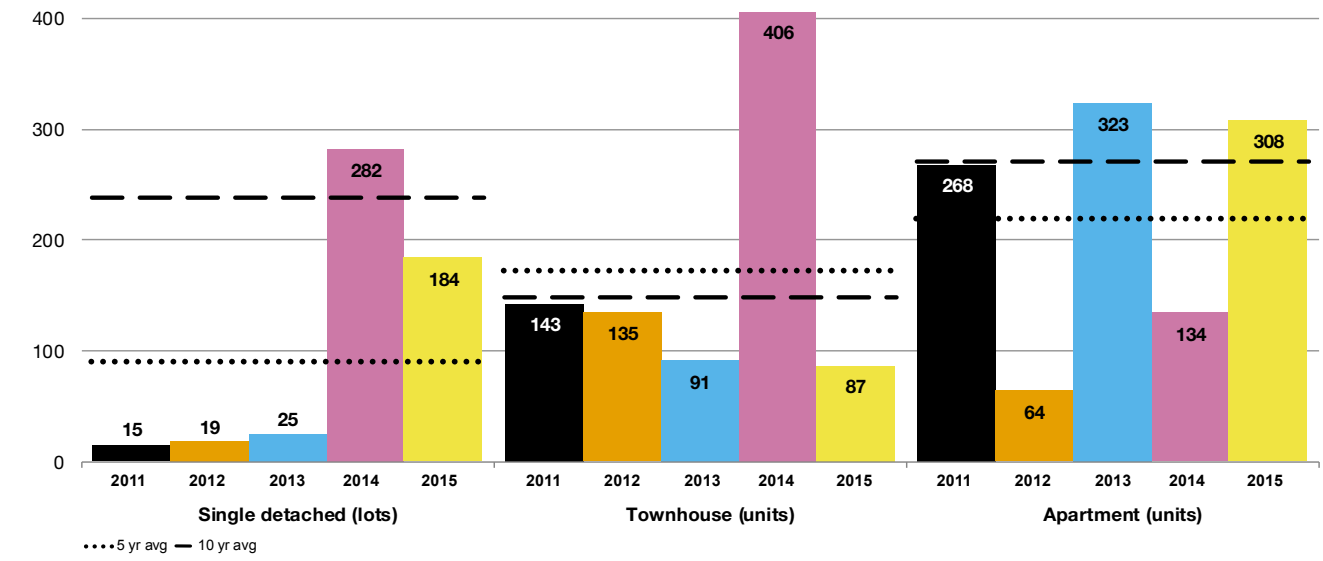


The total number of land development applications received in 2015 (188) increased 22% from 2014 (154). Official Community Plan amendment applications received in 2015 (7) decreased by 46% from 2014 (13). Rezoning applications received (43) increased by 30% from 2014 (33). In 2015, there were 55 subdivision applications received, which is an increase of 120% from 2014 (25). Development permit applications received (70) have increased by 27% from 2014 (55). The number of Agricultural Land Reserve applications (13) decreased by 54% from 2014 (28).



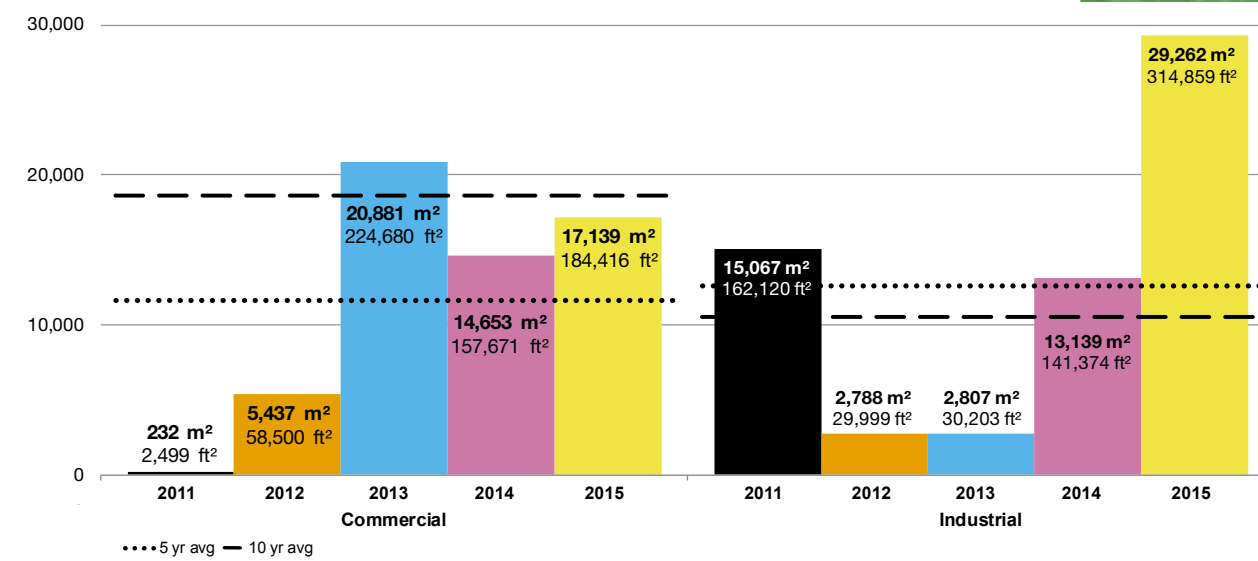
# Approval & Issuance

## Residential Lots & Units



In 2015 there was an increase in subdivision applications received from 2014 but a decrease in the number of lots created. This suggests there are smaller infill subdivisions being created, which will likely continue in 2016. In 2015 there were 87 townhouse units approved and 308 apartment units approved, with apartment approvals exceeding both the 5 year (219 units) and 10 year (271 units) averages.

## Commercial & Industrial Floor Space



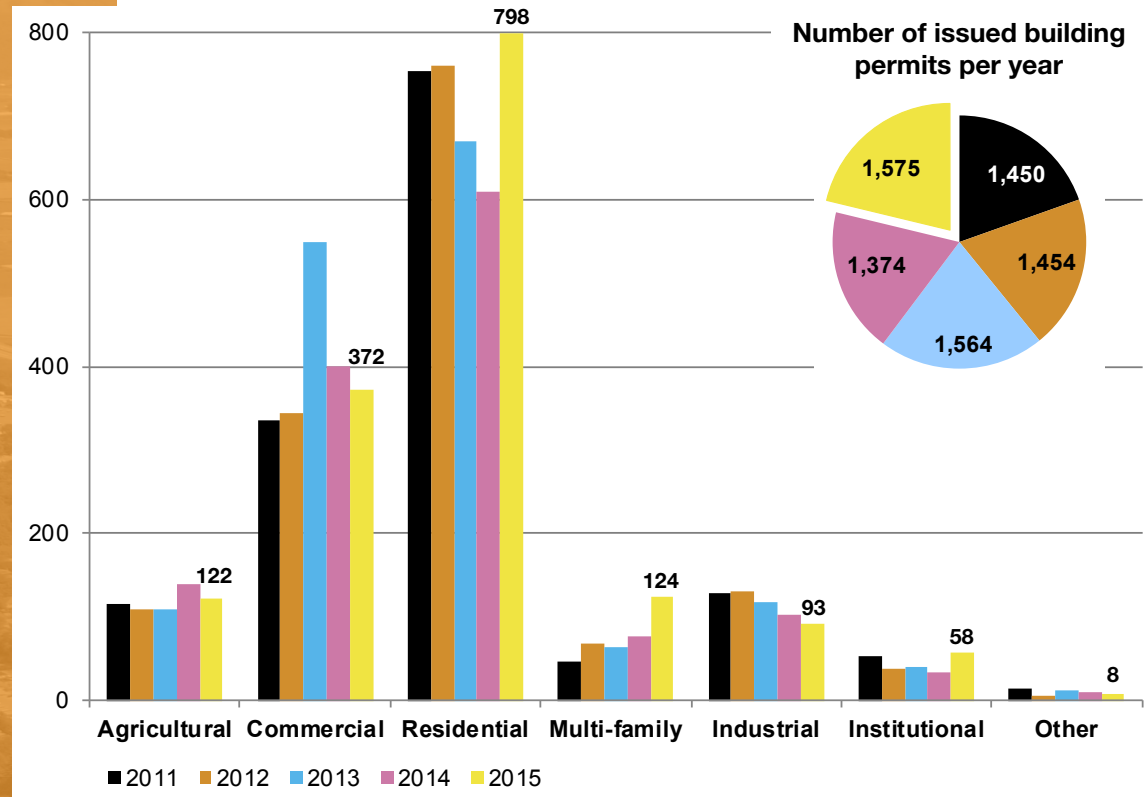
In 2015 approved commercial floor space totaled 17,139 m², which exceeds the 5 year (11,669 m²) average. Approved industrial floor space totaled 29,262 m² which substantially exceeds the 5 year (12,613 m²) and the 10 year (10,534 m²) averages. This is the highest amount of industrial floor space approved in the previous 10 years.





# Construction

## Number of Building Permits



The total number of issued building permits increased by 15% from 2014 to 2015 and was the highest number issued of the previous 5 years.

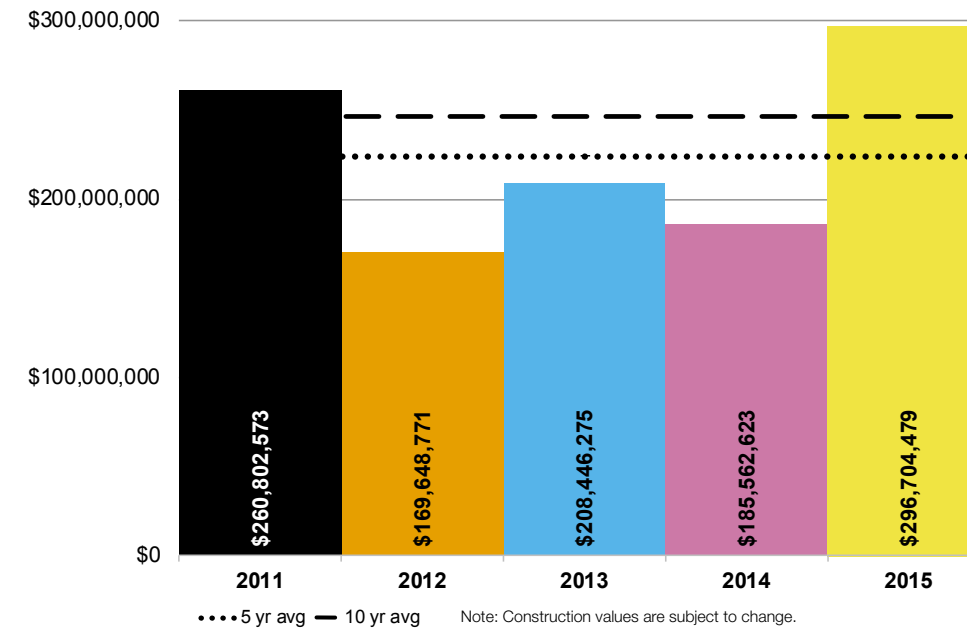
The greatest increases in the total number of issued building permits from 2014 to 2015 were in institutional (71%), multi-family (63%), and single detached residential (31%). Residential (single detached and multi-family) permits made up almost 60% of the total number of issued building permits in 2015.

2015	2014
<b>1,575</b> total issued building permits	1,374
<b>122</b> agricultural	140
<b>372</b> commercial	401
<b>798</b> residential (single detached)	609
<b>124</b> multi-family	76
<b>93</b> industrial	103
<b>58</b> institutional	34
<b>8</b> other	11

Note: Other includes blasting, antenna, communication tower, and noise variance permits.

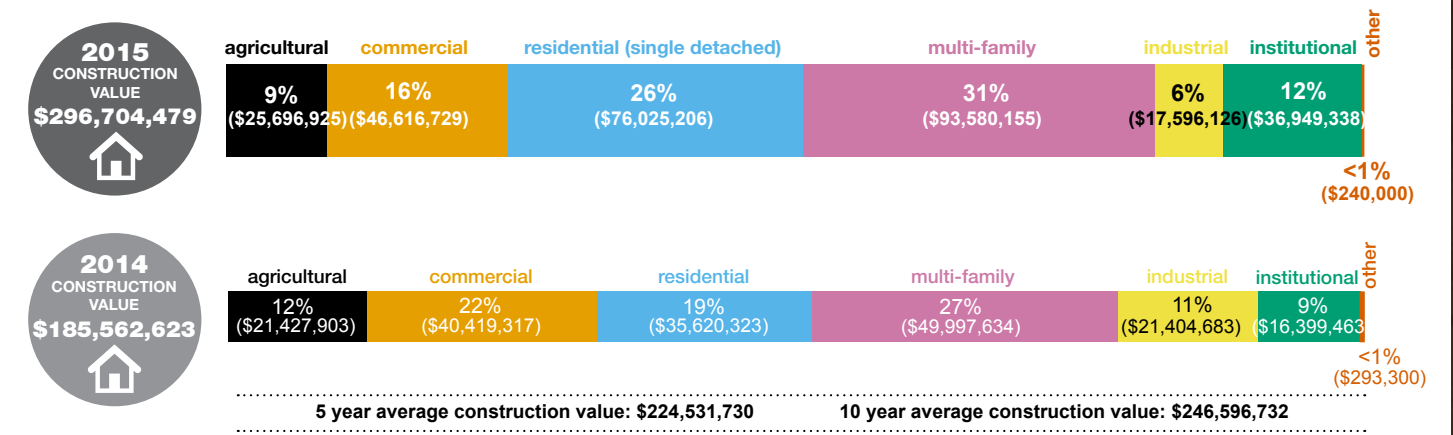
# Construction

## Value of Building Permits



Total construction value of issued building permits in 2015 (\$297 million) exceeded both the 5 year (\$225 million) and 10 year (\$247 million) averages, and was the highest construction value of the previous 5 years.

The total construction value in 2015 was \$297 million compared to \$186 million in 2014, which is a 60% increase from 2014 to 2015. The greatest increases in value from 2014 to 2015 were in institutional (125%), single detached residential (113%), and multi-family (87%).

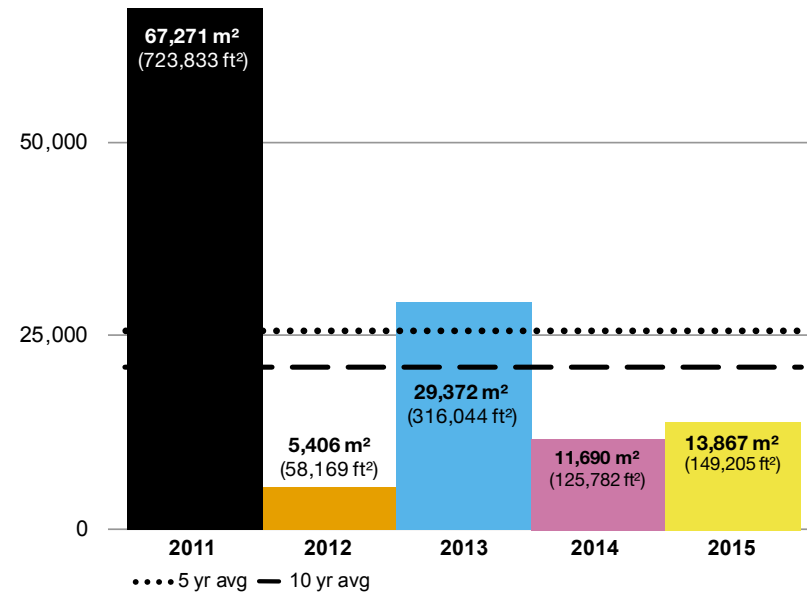




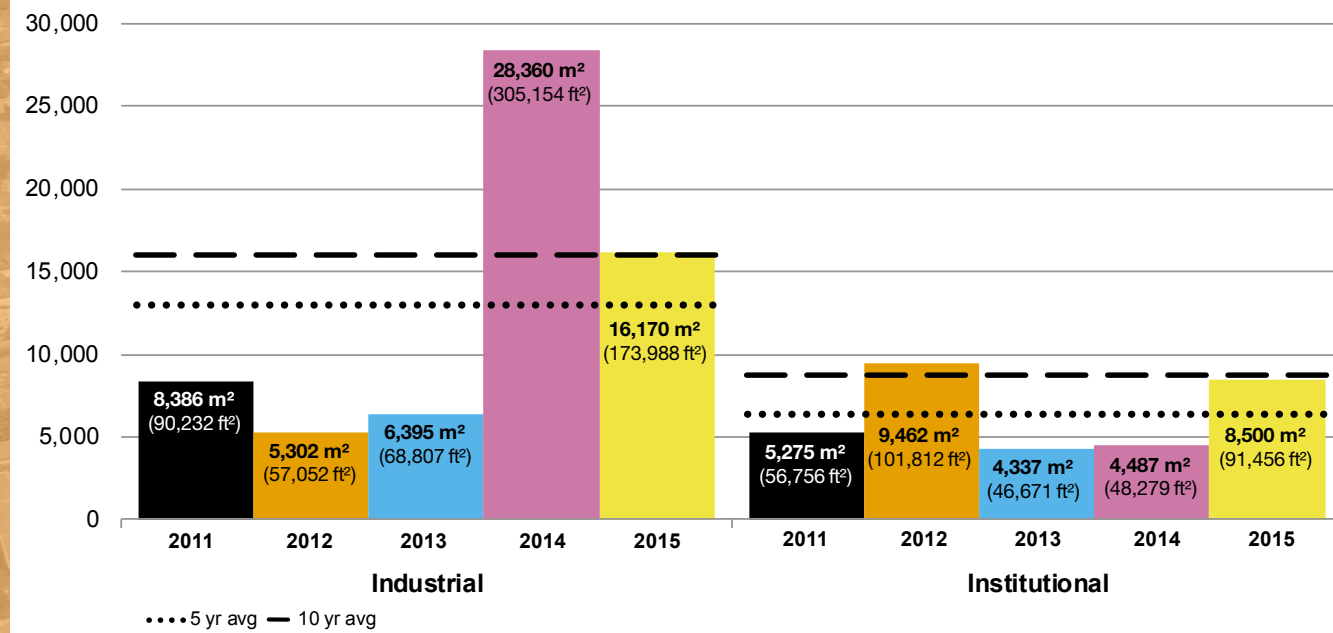


# Construction

## New Commercial Floor Space



## New Industrial & Institutional Floor Space

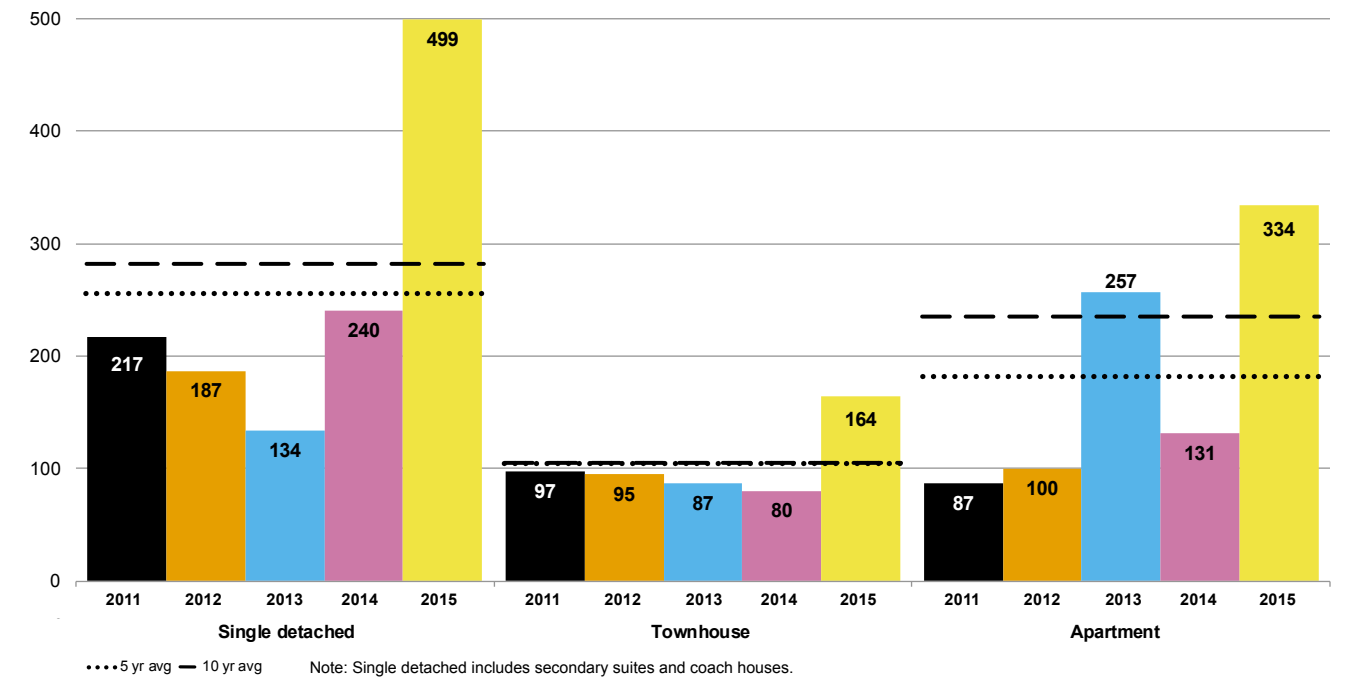


New industrial floor space in 2015 exceeded both the 5 year (12,923 m<sup>2</sup>) and the 10 year (15,994 m<sup>2</sup>) averages, but decreased from 2014 by 43%. While construction activity decreased, 2016 is expected to be a strong year for industrial construction activity as 29,262 m<sup>2</sup> was approved in 2015. New institutional floor space in 2015 exceeded the 5 year average (6,412 m<sup>2</sup>) and almost reached the 10 year average (8,794 m<sup>2</sup>), increasing 89% from 2014.



# Construction

## Residential Units



Residential activity in 2015 for single detached, townhouse and apartment units was greater than in all of the previous 5 years. Both the 5 and 10 year averages were exceeded for single detached (5 year: 255, 10 year: 282), townhouse (5 year: 105, 10 year: 105) and apartment (5 year: 182, 10 year: 235) units.

## Building Inspections



The number of building inspections increased by 10% between 2014 and 2015.



**Council's 2015-2018 Strategic Plan** includes 4 cornerstones to support the overall vision for the City: Abbotsford is the Hub of the Fraser Valley.



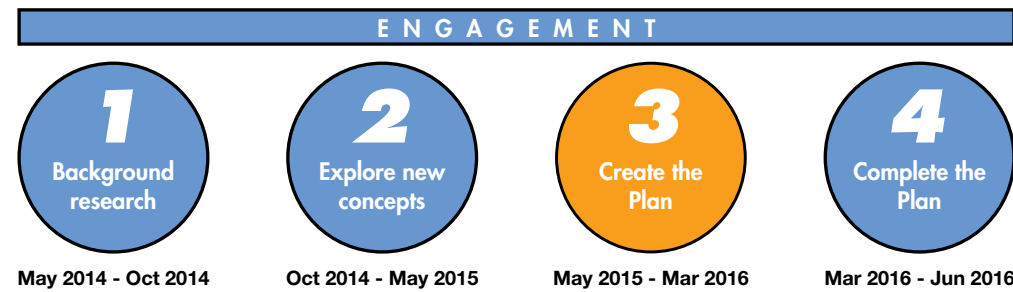
## Departmental Initiatives



### Abbotsford - Official Community Plan (OCP) Update

Following a successful launch in 2014, Abbotsford continued to progress with broad community engagement activities including an online survey, road show booths, neighbourhood walks, stakeholder and committee workshops, a speaker event, and Citizen Advisory Commission meetings. Through all of these activities, almost 7,000 interactions have been had with residents and stakeholders about the future of Abbotsford and resulted in 7 Big Ideas for the future and 3 ways to grow as a city.

By the end of 2015, staff had begun the final work in Stage 3 (out of four stages) preparing a new draft Official Community Plan based on the work completed to date. In 2016, the draft OCP will be presented to Council and presented to stakeholders and residents, before being prepared as a bylaw for Council's consideration and adoption.



Big Ideas Fair, June 2015

## Departmental Initiatives



### UDistrict Neighbourhood Plan

The City has partnered with the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) to develop two separate but fully integrated plans to guide the future growth and development of the UDistrict.

The Neighbourhood Plan will provide land use, servicing and transportation direction and policies required to implement the vision for the neighbourhood. The Campus Master Plan will direct future university growth and expansion. The project is currently in Stage 2 – Choices and Direction of a four-stage joint planning process between the City and UFV.

Stage 2 kicked off in third quarter of 2015 with the development of several growth concepts for the neighbourhood and campus. These ideas for the future development of the UDistrict were presented to the public and various stakeholders for feedback in October 2015 through an open house, on-line questionnaire, and meetings. The ideas were organized around major themes such as land uses, mobility, and open space, which allowed the community to express their opinions about key elements that will inform the design of the community as it grows. The following key themes emerged directly from the engagement sessions and survey:

- Integrate the community and the campus
- Provide more housing and shopping options
- Improve opportunities for safe and easy walking and cycling
- Create neighbourhood gathering places

The input received is currently being used to develop a preferred concept for the UDistrict. The final concept will be used as a base for further analysis, including the completion of a Servicing Strategy, a multi-modal Traffic Impact Assessment, a Parking Study, and an economic feasibility analysis. A summary of these studies and the preferred concept will be presented to Council in 2016.



UDistrict Neighbourhood

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

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



## Departmental Initiatives



### Zoning Bylaw Phase 2 (Urban)

Phase 1 of the Zoning Bylaw update was completed in 2014, which resulted in the replacement of the 1996 Zoning Bylaw with a greatly simplified and streamlined document. In Q3 2015, staff began the next major update to improve and enhance the Zoning Bylaw, called Phase 2. The primary topics that will be included in Phase 2 are as follows:

- Home Occupation regulations
- Boarding House/Rooming House regulations
- Truck Parking (paving vs. gravel regulations)
- Commercial Vehicle mobile repair regulations
- Accessory Office/Retail Use provisions in Industrial Zones
- Adult Entertainment use regulations
- Previous text amendments

Staff are completing background research and will be introducing the preliminary findings to Council in 2016 for their input, and to authorize staff to proceed with stakeholder and public consultation.



### Zoning Bylaw Housekeeping Update

In July 2015, City staff presented 76 Housekeeping Amendments to the Zoning Bylaw for Council consideration. The purpose of this housekeeping update was to clarify and improve the Zoning Bylaw, and to provide a legally resilient document that is understandable to all residents. The Housekeeping Amendment was summarized into the following three categories:

- Definition changes/additions (19 in total) - included within this category were changes to the text of definitions, or addition of new definitions. Largely, the changes provide greater clarity for uses already identified within the Zoning Bylaw.
- Map changes (19 in total) - generally map changes were where the existing zoning does not match the existing use. In many situations the adoption of the new Zoning Bylaw created non-conforming situations. The proposed map changes resolve many land use issues brought to the attention of staff since the adoption of the new Zoning Bylaw (No. 2400-2014) in September 2014.
- Minor revisions (38 in total) - the minor revisions include clerical errors, typos and inconsistencies that were noted between different sections of the bylaw or with other established City regulations. The intent of these minor revisions was to bring consistency to the bylaw.

Phase 2 of the **Zoning Bylaw Update** will further improve and enhance the document.

Improvements to the **Zoning Bylaw** provide a legally resilient document that is understandable to all residents.

## Departmental Initiatives



### Amanda Update

In 2015 the Planning and Development Services Department (PDS) with their partners from Business and Technology Solutions began an initiative to re-fresh and modernize the software (AMANDA) that supports the everyday work being completed by Development Planning staff.



Called the “AMANDA Makeover”, the update not only reflects the process improvement initiatives that have been completed over the last couple of years by PDS, but will introduce a user friendly dashboard and allow additional online features that will provide greater access to information for applicants, customers, and residents. In the long term, staff expects this project will also provide a more reliable data set for capturing and reporting on development trends in the City and improve overall operational efficiency. The “AMANDA Makeover” project will continue throughout 2016.

The **Amanda Update** is an initiative to refresh and modernize the software that supports City staff.







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