

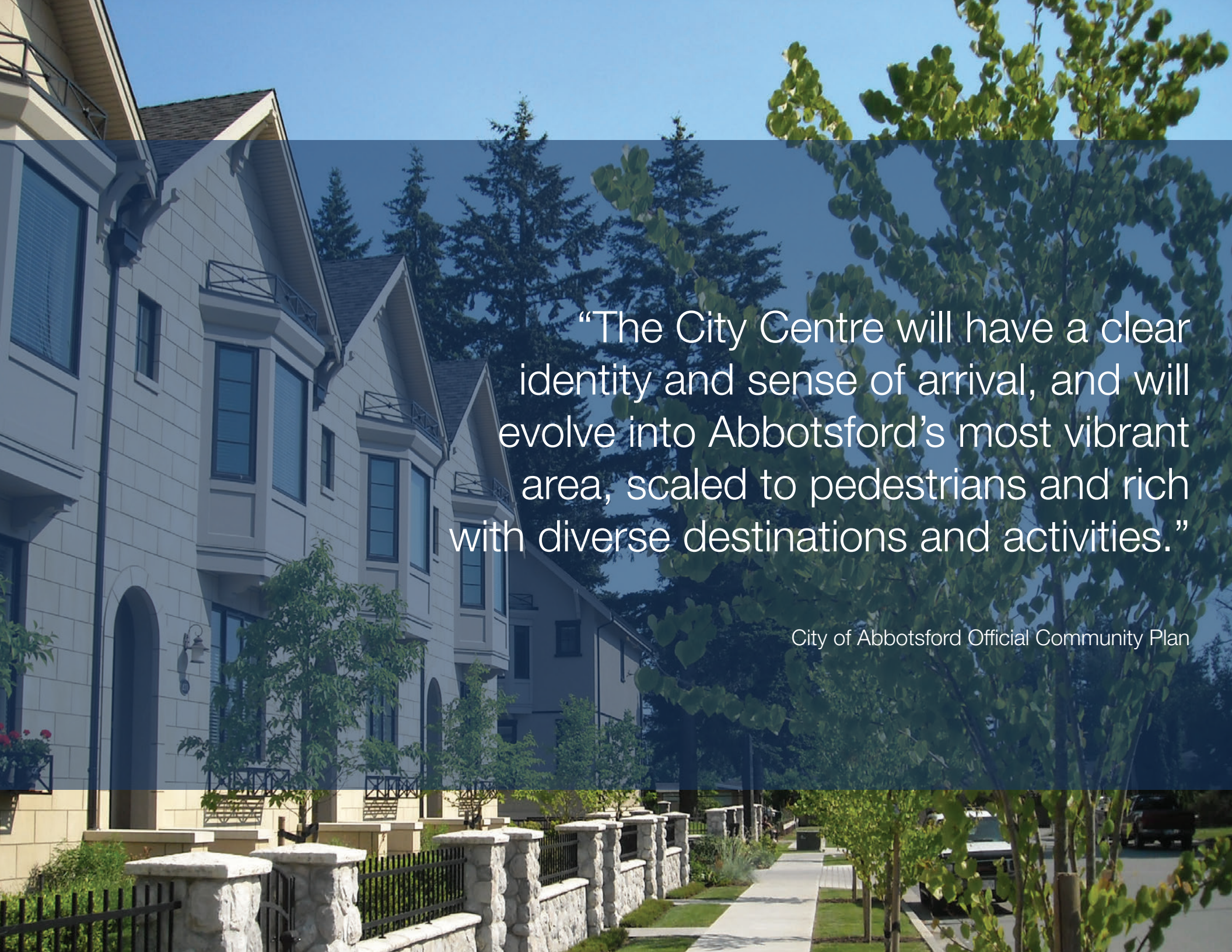


CITY CENTRE | NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Background Research Report - April 2017

plan FOR
200K

ABBOTSFORD



“The City Centre will have a clear identity and sense of arrival, and will evolve into Abbotsford’s most vibrant area, scaled to pedestrians and rich with diverse destinations and activities.”

City of Abbotsford Official Community Plan

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Executive Summary

The idea of a vibrant city centre for Abbotsford is not a new one. Over the last half a century, many plans have recognized the important role a 'Central Business District' or a 'City Centre' can play for the community as a whole.

Abbotsford's new OCP is the latest plan envisioning a City Centre with a clear identity where all types of people gather - to live, work, and play. While the geographic area of the City Centre has shrunk from the former 2005 OCP, there is another significant difference: the new OCP includes a minimum and maximum density. This detail provides more certainty and clarity around the kind of development the City supports and ensures the tallest, and most dense buildings are focused in strategic locations, close to transit, jobs and city services.

However, the OCP is a high level document that sets a city-wide vision. It's the City Centre Neighbourhood Plan (CCNP) that is the implementation tool. It will ensure these different pieces coordinate to ultimately create a complete neighbourhood.

This Background Research Report is the first step in creating the CCNP and examines how the City Centre area functions and looks today. It also sets a benchmark to work from as growth begins to transform the neighbourhood.

The City Centre's residents are older and have lower incomes than the average person in Abbotsford. Households have a tendency of being significantly smaller than usual as a result of the housing types available - mostly multifamily apartments. The overwhelming majority drive to get around the city.

There is a good foundation of retail jobs concentrated along South Fraser Way which is surrounded by high density housing. As a retail destination, the City Centre is very successful with a low vacancy rate,

but the area has a current oversupply of office space that will take time to fill in before more is needed.

Only approximately 450,000 square feet of additional commercial space is required to support the needs of the neighbourhood as it grows to 2040. This commercial space is vulnerable to retail developments outside of the City Centre that could dilute the competitive landscape citywide.

As the City Centre prepares itself for an additional 10,000 people, better coordination between land uses and transportation choices will be key to its success. High density housing forms should ensure a positive street presence and provide a variety of public and private amenity spaces.

Blocks in the neighbourhood should be broken into smaller, more human-scaled sizes that encourage walking, biking, and taking transit, but also work better for people driving. Streets should be designed to be safe, friendly, and delightful for all users. Finally, linking the various community places that exist with each other and future ones is essential to create a complete and connected neighbourhood with character.

With Stage 1 complete, the CCNP initiative will begin work on creating land use concepts and present them to the community in a stage of robust engagement. This will include conversations with residents, property owners and developers, road show events, an online survey, and a speaker event.



1.0 Introduction

The City of Abbotsford is growing, and at the centre of its urban area lies a young neighbourhood full of potential. Even before the amalgamation of the District of Matsqui and the District of Abbotsford, a strip of commercial development was built along South Fraser Way, connecting the communities and forming the City's primary retail destination.

Today, this corridor represents an opportunity. With a new Official Community Plan adopted in the summer of 2016 and a strong vision that foresees a vibrant City Centre, Abbotsford is ready to turn a corner in its evolution.

This Background Research Report will discuss the context in which the City Centre Neighbourhood Plan fits, the City Centre's existing conditions, and essential elements that have created great City Centres elsewhere.

1.1 A Young Neighbourhood

Long before Abbotsford existed as a community and Canada was established as a country, the Stó:lo (people of the river) occupied the land called S'ólh Temexw in the Fraser Valley. They lived in this large geographic area from Yale to Langley and spoke Halq'eméylem, also known as the upriver dialect. The Fraser River, its tributaries and fertile lands were essential to the Stó:lo way of life.

While Abbotsford may be a young city, and its City Centre even more so, the land on which it is built is steeped in history. A Background Research Report wouldn't be complete without acknowledging this past and the City Centre Neighbourhood Plan will aspire to celebrate it.

Abbotsford is a product of several amalgamations. The result is a single city with multiple historic centres, but no identifiable core. A string of past studies and plans have attempted to carve out a city centre from the urban area, but flexible land use designations and zones have enabled higher density development throughout the city. This has diluted the demand for high density housing and office space in one identifiable centre.

1.2 Planning Context

The idea of a vibrant city centre for Abbotsford is not a new one. As early as the mid 1900s, planners at the District of Matsqui created land use maps and wrote policy envisioning a walkable core anchored by South Fraser Way.

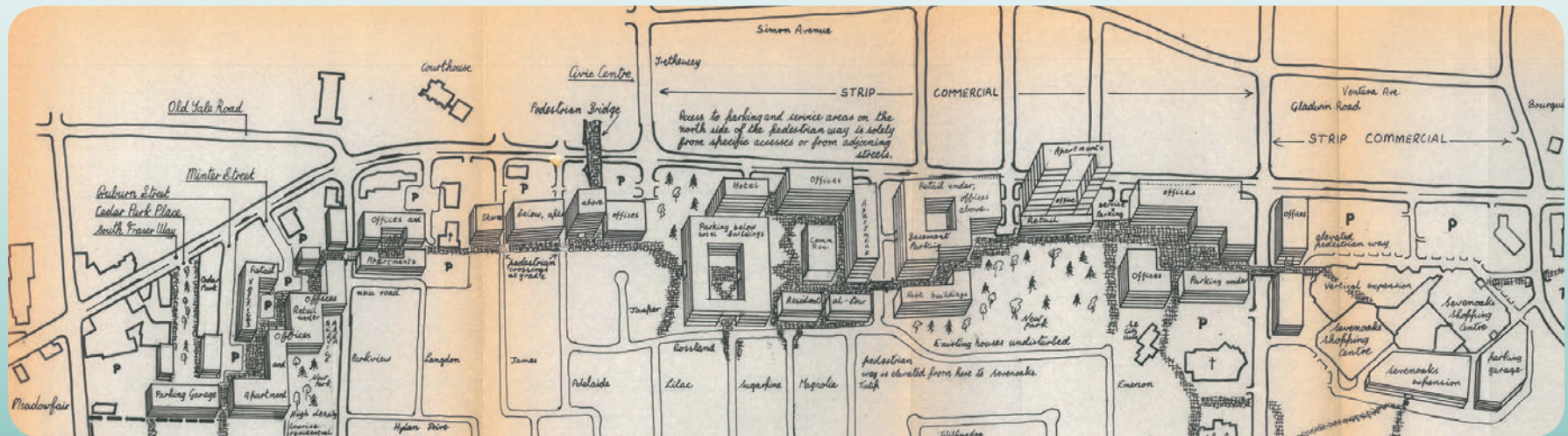
The 1978 District of Matsqui Community Plan circled the whole stretch from Clearbrook Road to Gladwin Road and designated it "Community Commercial - Pedestrian Oriented". It has been the intent of multiple past Councils and Planning Departments to see a densely populated and employed city centre emerge along this strip.

The region underwent a period of tremendous growth throughout the 70s and 80s and by 1995, the District of Matsqui and the District of Abbotsford amalgamated and work on a new OCP was completed to reflect the needs of the larger urban area.

1996 OCP

In 1996 a new OCP was adopted and included a "Central Business District" (CBD) land use designation. It was applied to an extensive area surrounding South Fraser Way from Center Street in Clearbrook to Park

Figure 1. South Fraser Way Concept - 1978 District of Matsqui OCP



Drive near the eastern edge of Abbotsford’s Historic Downtown. This area covered approximately 200 hectares of land. The policy associated with this land use envisioned it as the “primary focus and concentration of office and retail uses, institutional, social and cultural activities” and expressed a desire to accommodate mixed use developments.

Without density provisions (units per hectare or floor space ratio), nor mixed use requirements for new buildings in the CBD, it became difficult to implement the ultimate vision. Too much flexibility created risk in investment and too much area dedicated to this land use failed to produce a successful cluster of new development with a high enough population that could gain momentum.

2005 OCP

The following OCP update in 2005 sought to rein in the geographic area dedicated to the CBD land use. It created a “City Centre” designation and applied it to three clusters: Clearbrook, the central core, and Historic Downtown. Between these a new designation entitled “Choice of Use” was established to give the option of a purely commercial or purely residential building. While the land area was reduced, neither the City Centre or Choice of Use designations included any density provisions. In other words, the 2005 OCP supported projects as varied as a single storey fast food restaurant, to a 30 storey mixed use complex in the City Centre area. More importantly, the plan allowed similar high density developments in other parts of the City, reducing the demand for them to be built in the City Centre.

Figure 2. Seven Big Ideas - 2016 OCP



1.3 Abbotsforward

The Abbotsforward process identified these challenges and set out to find solutions. Firstly, it created a distinction between the City Centre and various “Urban Centres” (Clearbrook, Historic Downtown, UDistrict). Within these, one of the most impactful changes was the introduction of maximum and minimum densities. Today, a base floor space ratio (FSR) must be achieved and in certain cases, height limitations also exist. For example, while highrise towers were previously allowed throughout various land use designations, now they are only permitted in the City Centre.

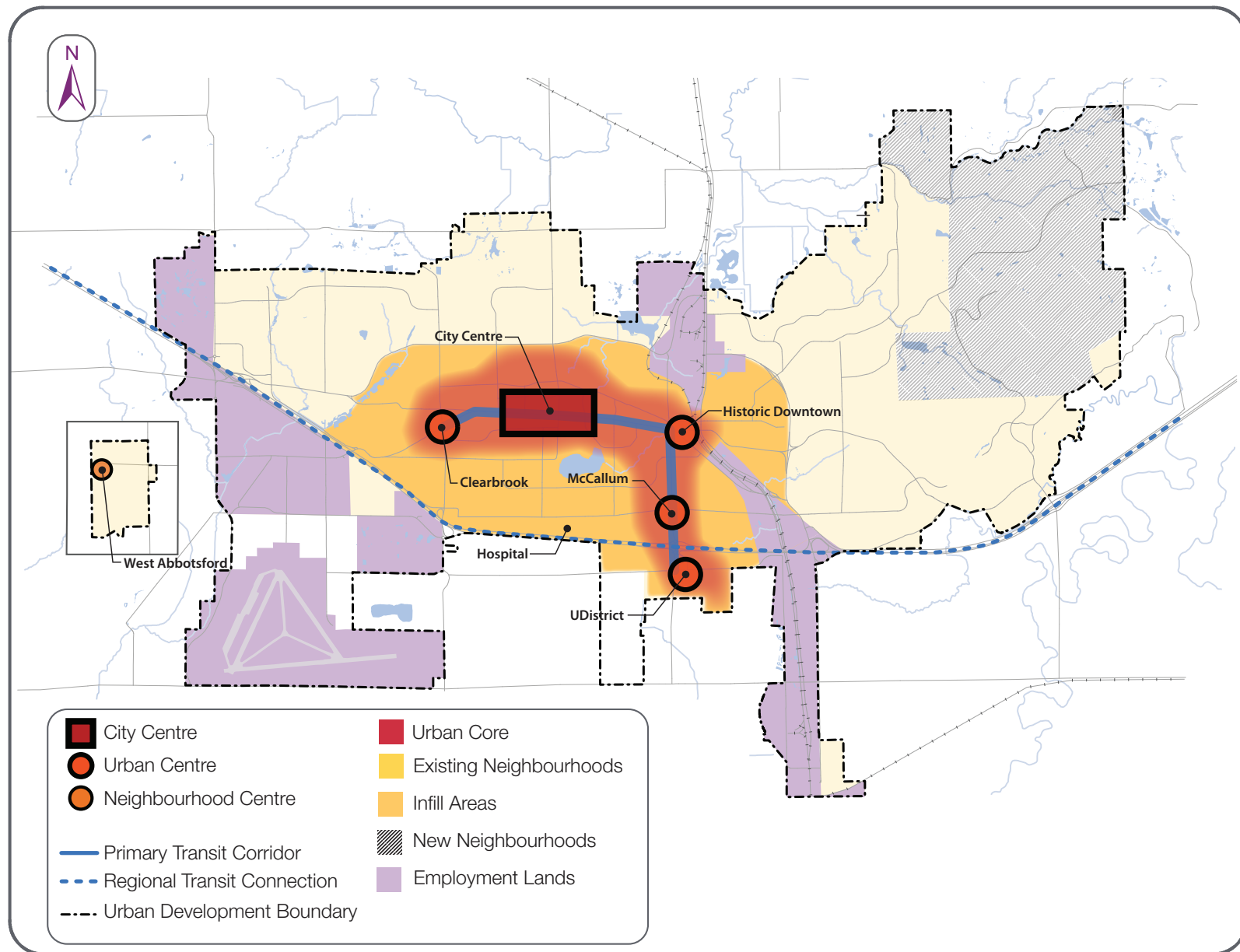
Along with updated land use regulations, the 2016 OCP also includes a policy section dedicated to the future success of Abbotsford’s City Centre. It includes a vision, several ‘big picture’ items and a comprehensive list of policies.

2016 OCP VISION

When asked where the heart of the city is located, all residents will point to the same recognizable place that is the centre of public, economic, and cultural life. This City Centre will have a clear identity and sense of arrival, and will evolve into Abbotsford’s most vibrant area, scaled to pedestrians and rich with diverse destinations and activities. It will also continue to be the employment hub in Abbotsford, with strong links to the civic precinct and Mill Lake.

The City Centre will become a neighbourhood unto itself, home to residents who can walk to work and other daily needs. It will remain lively and magnetic after office hours, a destination for visitors and residents across the city on evenings and weekends. A new and different South Fraser Way – as the primary urban corridor in the heart of the City Centre neighbourhood – will stitch the neighbourhood together.

Map 1. Urban Structure - 2016 OCP



BIG PICTURE

South Fraser Way as an Urban Boulevard

Transform South Fraser Way into an urban boulevard where walking, biking and transit become enjoyable ways to experience the City Centre. Vibrant street fronting buildings and diverse destinations make the boulevard a place people choose to visit and linger – it is a destination, not a thoroughfare.

10,000 more People

Bring into the City Centre residents who can walk to shop, play, and work. Reinforce the major employment hub with housing, diverse commercial amenities, and community attractions, drawing visitors from across the city and beyond.

Break Up Large Blocks and Build at a Human Scale

Create a fine grain street network to shorten large blocks and reduce walking distances, establishing more human scaled and connected streets that city centres require. Transition away from the current focus on vehicles towards a focus on people through measures such as the elimination of large surface parking lots and overly wide intersections with high speed turn lanes.

Connect Mill Lake

Establish Mill Lake as an integral part of the City Centre's sense of place and identity by connecting the City Centre to the lake through prominent visual and physical links.

POLICIES

Beyond the City Centre's own policy section in the OCP, the other Big Ideas touch on topics that are also relevant to the successful development of the neighbourhood. They will help guide land use decisions and policy direction in the City Centre Neighbourhood Plan.

Housing

Housing diversity and affordability will play an important role in the City Centre's ability to be a complete neighbourhood for all types of households. In particular, this plan will seek to support diverse household sizes, incomes, tenures, and preferences. (Policies 2.1-2.6)

Streets

While transforming South Fraser Way into an urban boulevard is highlighted as a major objective, other streets won't be forgotten. The OCP's transportation mode hierarchy prioritizes designing streets for people. As such, the City Centre Neighbourhood Plan will work to make walking, biking and transit delightful. (Policies 3.1-3.5)

Culture

A City Centre can gather, accommodate, and enhance the diverse cultural makeup of an entire city's residents. The Neighbourhood Plan will

explore where the City Centre can provide places for artistic expression, in public spaces and buildings alike. Celebrating Abbotsford's heritage is also a key theme as it grows into the future. (Policies 4.9-4.12)

Economy

The City Centre includes areas with the highest density of jobs in all of Abbotsford. Retaining its position as the core of Abbotsford's economic activity is vital to its future. The neighbourhood plan process will explore enhancing office space and supporting the development of creative and high tech industries. (Policies 4.21-4.25)

Nature

Strengthening nature in the City Centre isn't limited to connecting the area to Mill Lake. Opportunities exist to increase the tree canopy, conserve existing old growth trees, and to protect viewscapes to significant surrounding mountains and landscapes. (Policies 5.1-5.6)

Infrastructure

Building sustainable infrastructure and maintaining it is essential to city building. Comprehensive management and financing of water, stormwater and wastewater pipes will be key to the success of this neighbourhood plan. (Policies 5.13-5.18)

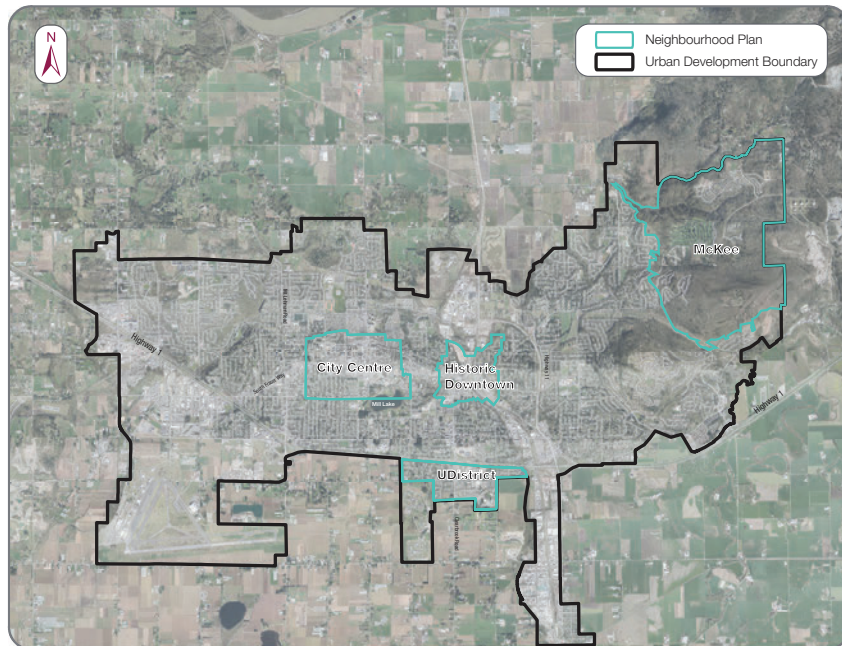
1.4 Implementing the OCP

Neighbourhood Plans are intended to be catalysts in the transformation of urban areas, spurring development in a way where each project helps achieve a common vision. They help coordinate the financing and servicing of important infrastructure pieces like pipes for water and sanitary, and streets for transportation. By establishing consistent and fair requirements for development, Neighbourhood Plans help remove risk from investments by connecting a vision with implementation.

Currently, planning processes for 4 different areas are ongoing within the City of Abbotsford: U District, City Centre, Historic Downtown, and McKee (Map 2).

In the City Centre's case, the purpose is to help transform Abbotsford's core neighbourhood into an identifiable, livable and complete community with an attractive and vibrant character.

Map 2. Neighbourhood Plan Study Areas



1.5 Plan 200K

The creation of these new Neighbourhood Plans is part of an umbrella project called Plan 200K. The initiative intends to coordinate the various City departments as they update master plans and strategies to reflect the vision and objectives the 2016 OCP.

In this sense, the CCNP and other Neighbourhood Plans have an opportunity to work alongside and contribute to the development of nearly 20 other plans. The alignment between departments will ensure implementation is focused, planned, and smooth.

Master plans and strategies that have a direct impact on the CCNP include:



1.6 Neighbourhood Plan Process

The Neighbourhood Plan will be completed through a four stage process, as follows:



STAGES

Stage 1 will analyze current conditions and better understand the necessary tools and priorities to make the City Centre a complete and vibrant neighbourhood.



Stage 2 will focus on exploring options and preparing a preferred concept that is the structure of the City Centre Neighbourhood Plan. This will be done through a broad engagement process framed by concept options created from the planning issues identified in Stage 1.



Stage 3 will focus on preparing the first draft of the new City Centre Neighbourhood Plan using the findings from Stage 1 and 2. It will also include a technical analysis of infrastructure needs and market viability of development.



Stage 4 will focus on refining the new City Centre Neighbourhood Plan and having it adopted as a bylaw by Council.

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives have been established to guide the City Centre Neighbourhood Plan over its 4 stage process:

- **Undertake a targeted & inclusive community engagement process**
- **Understand current housing, retail & office land use supply & future trends**
- **Integrate the Neighbourhood Plan with servicing capacity & strategies**
- **Add detail to the OCP's land uses to support at least 10,000 more residents in the City Centre**
- **Illustrate an exceptionally designed South Fraser Way that accommodates all users**
- **Develop design standards & guidelines that contribute to an attractive & unique character**
- **Provide a parking strategy that focuses on intensifying underused & vacant properties**

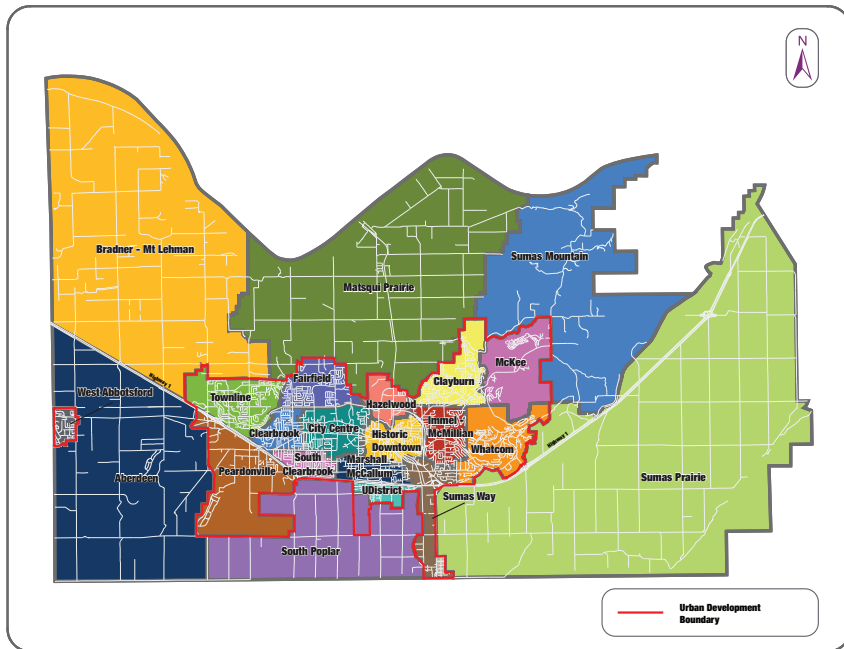
1.7 Defining a Plan Boundary

The City of Abbotsford is divided into 20 Communities (Map 3). Communities serve a primarily demographic function. They are used to estimate current and future demographics, including population, income, and retail expenditures. They help inform us in broader terms how certain parts of the city evolve over time.

Similarly to Historic Downtown, within the City Centre Community, is the the Neighbourhood Plan Area (Map 4). This boundary is the one most relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan regarding land uses, growth, and development applications.

Drawing the boundary for the CCNP Area is a complex task and takes into consideration multiple factors. Land use designations, natural features, buildings, and streets all help to define the area that will be included within the Plan.

Map 3. City of Abbotsford Communities



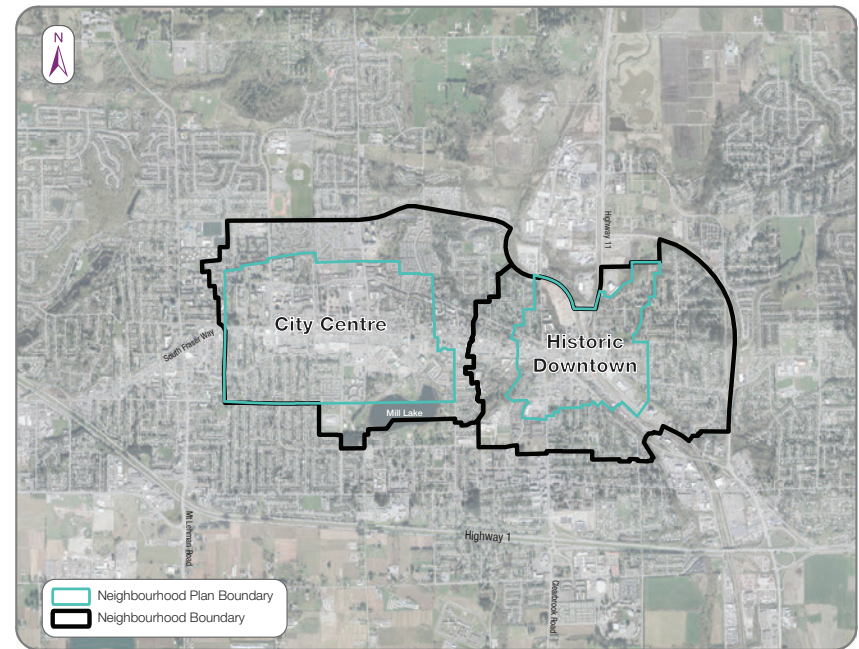
South Fraser Way is the City Centre’s transportation spine and the Civic Precinct on the western edge and the Sikh Gurdwaras on the eastern edge are natural gateways into the heart of the neighbourhood.

Finally, using Mill Lake and Peardonville Road for the southern boundary and properties with access onto George Ferguson for the northern boundary, will allow a greater overview of north-south street connections.

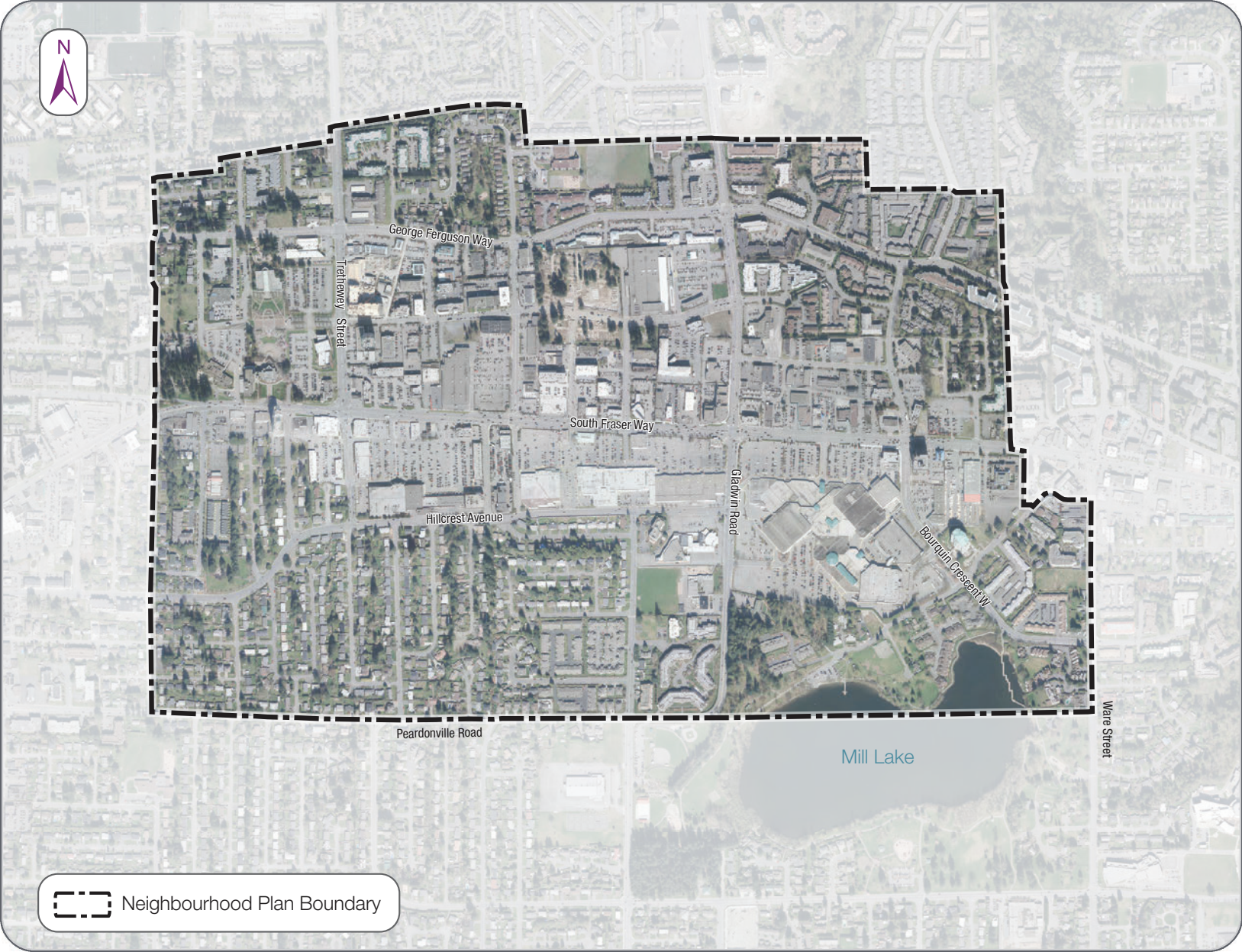
The study area’s length extends nearly 2.0 kilometres down South Fraser Way, and its width is approximately 1.2 kilometres along Gladwin Road. This makes for 238.8 hectares of land in the CCNP.

As a whole, the area deliberately covers a variety of housing types, land uses, amenities, and public spaces. This ensures the context of the neighbourhood is properly examined and will help provide current and future residents, employees, and visitors the vibrancy sought in typical city centres and complete neighbourhoods.

Map 4. City Centre & Historic Downtown NP areas within Communities



Map 5. City Centre Neighbourhood Plan Area





2.0 The City Centre Today

To know where Abbotsford's City Centre is going, it's important to know where it is today. This part of the report begins to build a baseline for the neighbourhood by focusing on key factors that illustrate existing conditions. These include the make up of residents, buildings, jobs, streets, infrastructure, parks, and amenities.

The majority of the information is taken from the 2011 Census and National Household Survey (unless otherwise noted). When this report was written much of the 2016 Census data was not yet made available.

2.1 People & Households

Abbotsford is a growing city and the OCP designates certain lands to accommodate more of that growth than others. The City Centre is one of the OCP's 'Mixed Use Centres' intended to welcome a significant increase in population over the next few decades. To envision how the Neighbourhood Plan can best prepare the City for this growth, it's important to better understand its current population, demographic, and household composition.

POPULATION ANALYSIS

The City Centre's population in 2016 was approximately 15,350. The large majority of these residents live on the periphery of the CCNP, behind the South Fraser Way commercial corridor. In contrast, the area located South of George Ferguson Way and North of Hillcrest Ave, has very little population. For decades single use commercial development

has been the main type of construction which has contributed to this population 'donut'. It is notable that recent large residential projects (La Galleria and Allwood Estates) are not captured in this map but have begun to fill some of these areas with residential populations.

In Map 6, the orange tones denote a level of population density required to support public transit services. Approximately 32 persons per hectare is the bare minimum needed to begin seeing minor shifts in transportation choices away from predominant vehicle use (Leslie, 2007; Frank and Pivo, 1995). In the CCNP's area, much of the residential development appears to be well positioned to support transit.

By 2041, the OCP targets a City Centre Neighbourhood population of approximately 27,250, or 11,900 more people. This figure is based on the OCP model using developable parcels, land use designation densities, and average population per housing unit estimates.

The CCNP will aim to accommodate at least 10,000 of that increase in the study area, whereas the rest will be allocated through the general redevelopment and gentle infill within the surrounding parts of the Neighbourhood.

Map 6. CCNP Population Density

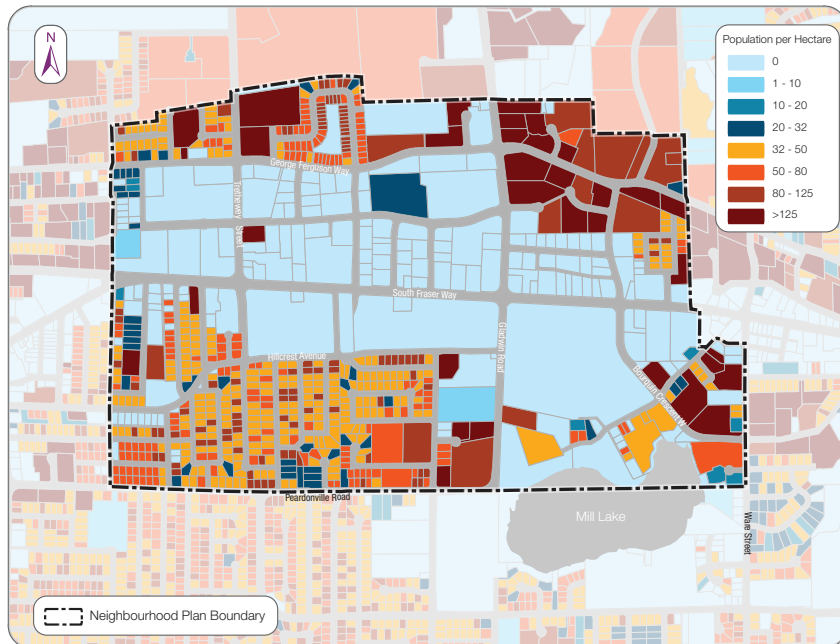
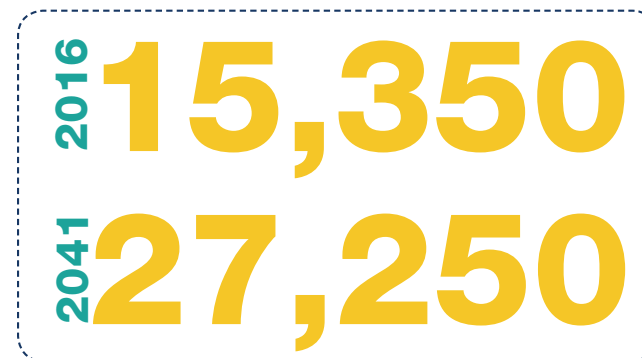


Figure 3. City Centre Population Growth Estimate



DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The City Centre is home to an older population compared to the City of Abbotsford as a whole. Where only 20% of Abbotsford’s residents are 60 years old or more, nearly double (37%) in the City Centre are of that age.

As Figure 4 shows, Abbotsford’s age pyramid tapers near the top with an equal distribution of residents in the age groups ranging from 0-59 years old. On the other hand the City Centre’s resembles more of a pyramid flipped upside down with its largest age groups being within the 60-69 and 70-79 year ranges. While the City Centre only composes approximately 10% of Abbotsford’s total population, it is home nearly a quarter of all residents who are 80 years old and over. This is likely due in part to the large amount of apartment buildings and condominiums built in the area, several of which are age restricted. It is common for elderly couples to down-size once their children move out and the City Centre boasts many commercial amenities, including several grocery stores, and a large park (Mill Lake Park) within walking distance. For the elderly, the City Centre may be a neighbourhood that is relatively accessible and where independence is possible.

The City Centre has an identical percentage of immigrants (27%) as Abbotsford overall. Similarly, immigrants from India form the largest group, though in the City Centre, Chinese immigrants have a larger presence than they do across the city.

Figure 4. Age Pyramid (City of Abbotsford vs City Centre)

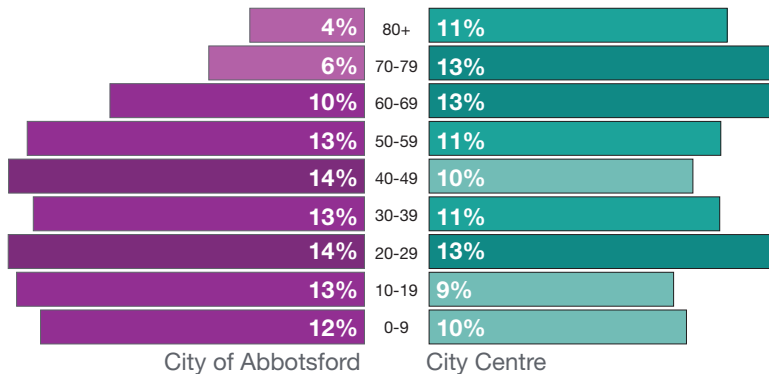


Figure 5. City Centre Immigrant Population

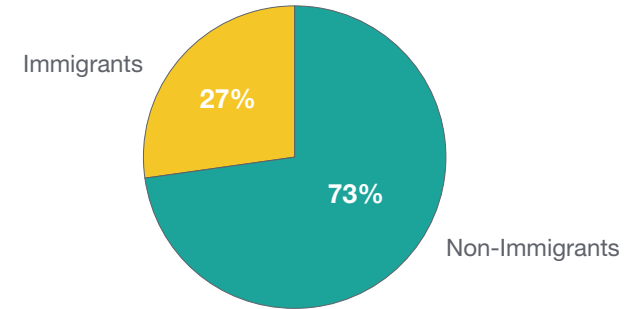


Figure 6. City Centre Immigrant Countries of Origin

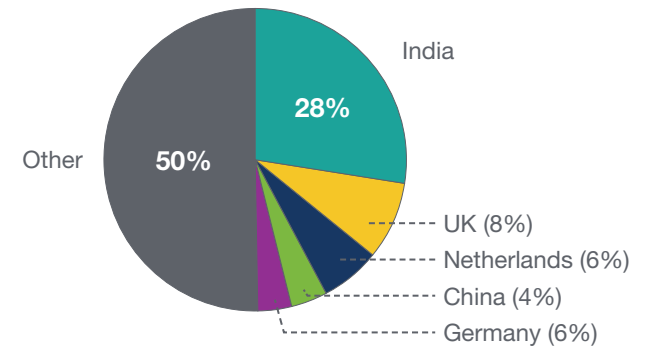
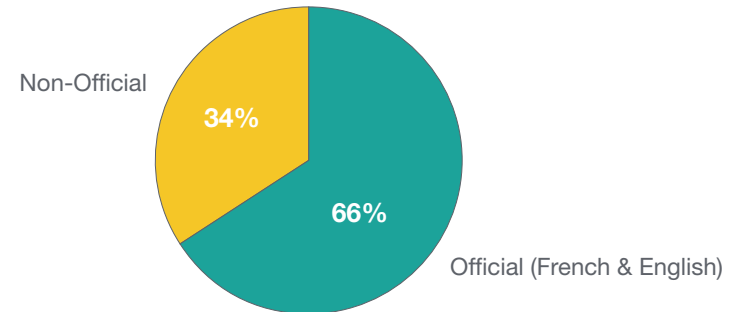


Figure 7. City Centre Language Spoken



Also, approximately 34% of the City Centre’s population speaks a non-official language (not French nor English). Panjabi (11%) and German (9%) are the most spoken non-official languages.

HOUSEHOLD ANALYSIS

Households in the City Centre tend to be smaller than those across the City with significantly fewer ones reaching 4 persons or more. While the average household size in Abbotsford is 2.8 persons per household, in the City Centre, it is only 2.25. In fact, over 75% of households in the City Centre consist of 1 or 2 people.

As couples have children and families grow, their desire for larger homes and more space steers them toward single detached homes further away from the core of the city. This also speaks to the lack of three bedroom apartments in the City Centre, a product that is often in low supply (as shown by city-wide vacancy rates in section 2.2 “Land & Buildings”).

Figure 8. City Centre Average Household Size

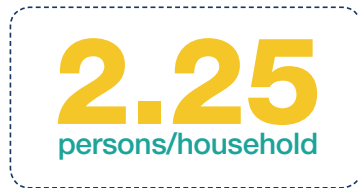
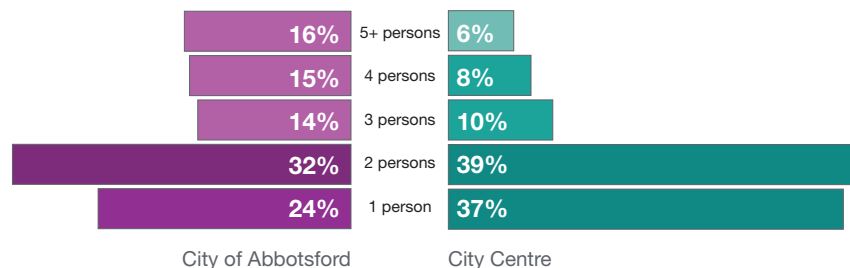


Figure 9. Household Size (City of Abbotsford vs City Centre)



2.2 Land & Buildings

The City Centre exists as a reflection of the land uses from past OCPs and the area’s zoning entitlements. This section will analyze the policies in today’s OCP and Zoning Bylaw, the housing inventory, and the architecture of buildings in the City Centre.

LAND USE

The OCP designates a land use for each property in the city. However, Neighbourhood Plans have the ability to provide a finer grain of detail to these designations. Within the City Centre Neighbourhood Plan area there are seven land uses (Map 7).

- **City Centre (1.0-2.5 FSR)**
 - Enables a mix of multifamily and commercial uses to strengthen the core of the city.
 - The primary hub of the city’s employment areas and tourist accommodations.
 - Serves a city wide area.
 - Buildings typically include a mix of retail and/or office space on lower floors and residential units on upper floors.
 - Multi storey buildings including low, mid, and high rises.
 - *Heights are variable but will be clarified through a Neighbourhood Plan.*
- **Urban 1 - Midrise (1.0-2.0 FSR)**
 - Enable multifamily housing to strengthen and support the Mixed Use Centres, and Primary Transit Corridor.
 - Multi storey buildings including low and mid rises. Heights are initially limited to 6 storeys.
 - *Taller and varied building heights, and ground floor commercial, may be possible through a Neighbourhood Plan.*
- **Urban 2 - Ground Oriented (0.5-1.5 FSR)**
 - Enable multifamily housing to support Mixed Use Centres and/or to serve as transition areas near single detached neighbourhoods.
 - Ground oriented duplex, row or townhouses.
 - Heights are limited to 3 storeys.
- **Urban 3 - Infill**
 - Enable infill residential with density increases near City and Urban Centres and the Primary Transit Corridor.
 - Single detached dwellings, with some ground oriented duplexes.

Institutional Complex (1.0-2.0 FSR)

- Enable a mixed use civic hub with major institutions, assembly, and related office, commercial, and residential uses.
- Serves a city wide area.
- Multi storey buildings including low and mid rises. Heights are initially limited to 6 storeys.
- *Taller and varied building heights may be possible through a Neighbourhood Plan.*

Institutional (up to 0.7 FSR)

- Buildings with institutional uses and open spaces.
- Heights are limited to 3 storeys.

Open Space

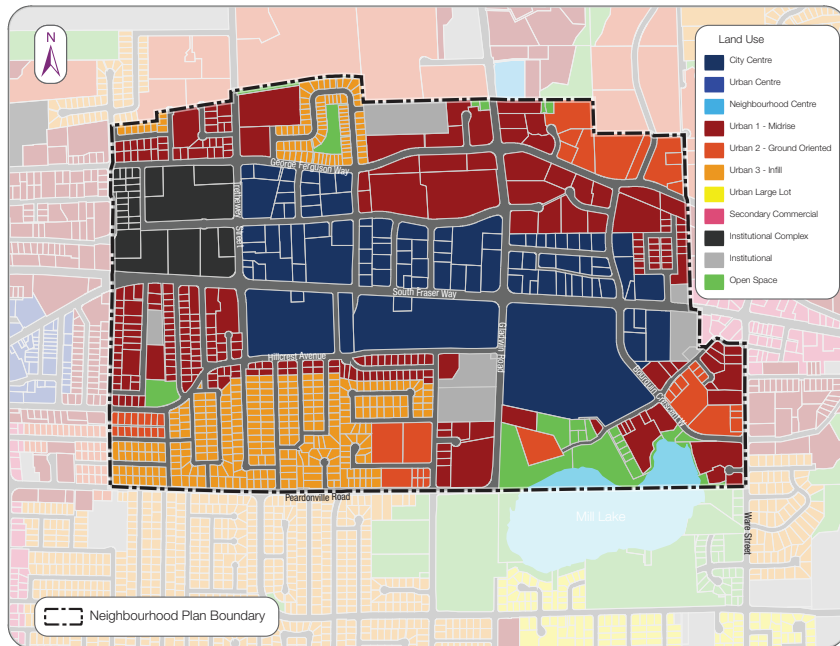
- Active and passive parks, trails, fields, recreation facilities.
- Preserved natural areas, steep slopes, sensitive habitat, streams (by land trust, covenant, or zoning).
- Recreation facilities and out buildings.

Three of these land uses (City Centre, Urban 1 - Midrise, and Institutional Complex) specifically cite Neighbourhood Plans as a tool to refine densities and uses. The CCNP process will be focusing on these areas as they will be subject to the most amount of change in the future. In many ways, the 'City Centre' land use is the main target, as it is the anchor of the neighbourhood. However, its surroundings, and more specifically the 'Urban 1 - Midrise' land use, will play a supporting role in the success of the neighbourhood's evolution.

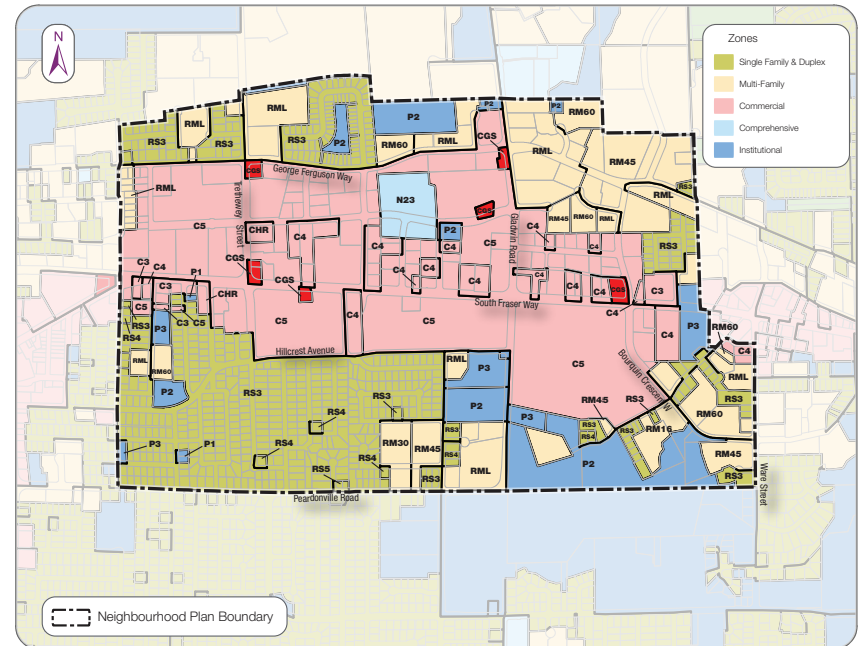
ZONING

While Land Use regulates what can be built in the future, zoning concerns itself with what can be built today. Zoning entitles a property owner to a certain amount of density and uses, and if there is a desire to change these, typically, a rezoning application is required and must conform to the OCP's land use designation. These Rezoning applications are one of the few opportunities the city has to ensure the proper works & services are applied when redevelopment occurs. Therefore, alignment

Map 7. CCNP OCP Land Use Designations



Map 8. CCNP Zoning Bylaw



between the OCP and Zoning Bylaw is instrumental to the success of building a community. If zoning is too vague and flexible, it can prevent the City from achieving its vision, especially in strategic areas like the City Centre.

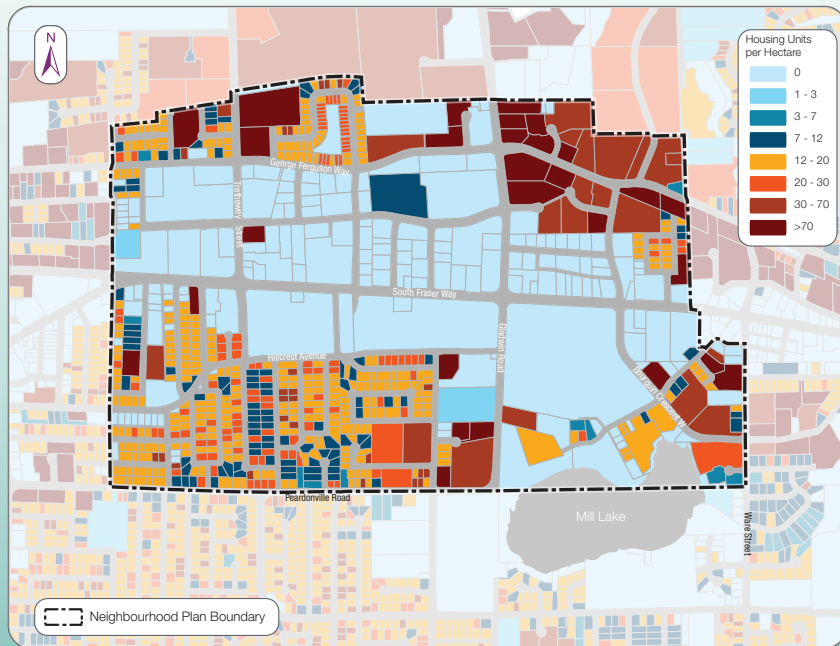
In this neighbourhood, the main zoning categories are:

- Residential: Single Family & Duplex, Multi-Family
- Commercial
- Institutional

Of particular note are the commercial zones. These are dominated by the C5 (City Centre Commercial) zone which allows up to 2.75 FSR and buildings up to 6 storeys, and includes a wide range of commercial and residential uses.

This is a challenging situation since much of what is currently built within that zone is at a very low density (averaging less than 0.5 FSR),

Map 9. CCNP Housing Units per Hectare



single use, commercial/retail type development. Because there is a large disconnect between what zoning permits and what's built, the City could face challenges in obtaining the right works and services, and upgrades when a property redevelops because a rezoning application would not necessarily be required. This topic will be an important part of the CCNP process as it has tremendous impact on the successful transformation of the City Centre.

Zoning also plays a big role in the look and feel of neighbourhoods since it regulates important parts of a development like building setbacks, site landscaping, and parking requirements. As the CCNP prepares a set of design guidelines for the area it will be crucial to consider zoning to create a seamless and attractive urban environment.

HOUSING INVENTORY

Over the past few years, Abbotsford has experienced tremendous growth in its housing market. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), in 2016, average house prices (\$699,746) and rental costs (\$829/month) continued to climb steadily as vacancy rates crept lower (0.5%). All the while housing completions grew by 51.4% compared to 2015.

The CCNP will take note of this unprecedented pressure on affordability and rental vacancy when writing policies. A successful City Centre is one that can accommodate for a wide range of household types and demographic makeup.

Figure 10. Abbotsford Housing Costs (CMHC)

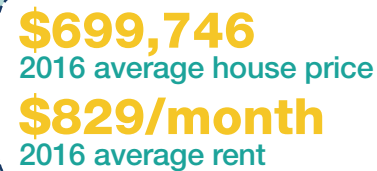


Figure 11. Abbotsford Rental Vacancy (CMHC)

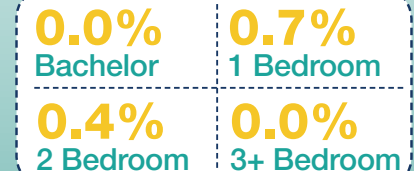


Figure 12. City Centre Housing Tenure

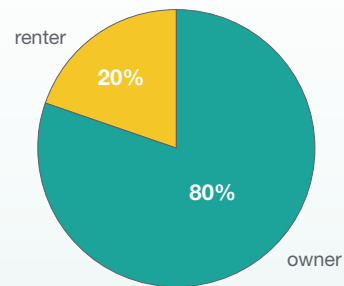
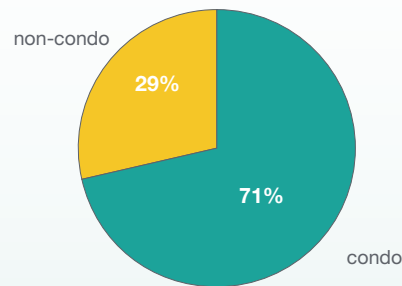


Figure 13. City Centre Condo vs Non-Condo



The housing types that are available in the City Centre will also play a role in this discussion. Currently, 13% of units are singled detached homes, 24% townhouses and duplexes, and 63% apartments. This is not surprising in the core of the city where higher density apartment buildings tend to cluster and help support the major commercial uses found along the South Fraser Way corridor. If anything, as the City Centre evolves, it is likely that the proportion of townhouse and duplex, and apartment housing units increase even further.

However, what is perhaps surprising is the housing tenure of the neighbourhood. Where one would expect a larger share of rental apartments, it appears condominiums and owners are the overwhelming majority in the City Centre. In fact, 80% of households own their property (Figure 12). It’s also clear that condominiums form a large part of the housing units with 71% of households living in a condominium structure (Figure 13). To clarify the distinction between the two pie charts above, a household that rents could be living in either a condominium structure.

Finally, the age of buildings in the City Centre is significant because it can indicate the readiness for redevelopment to occur. While a large

Figure 14. City Centre Housing Types

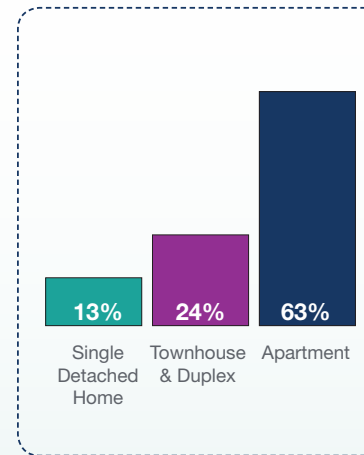
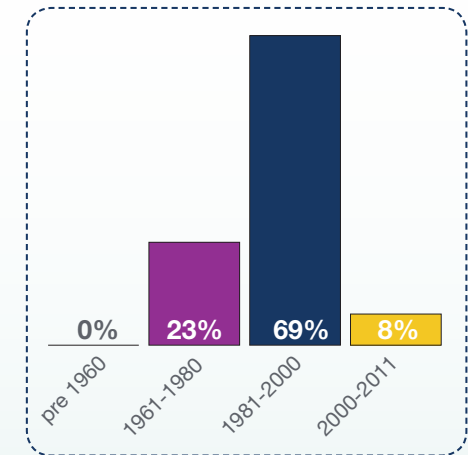


Figure 15. City Centre Housing Vintage



majority of housing in the neighbourhood was built from 1981-2000 (69%), the 23% that was built prior to that period is of interest. These are the homes most likely to be purchased by developers in an effort to consolidate and build a multifamily apartment building within the Urban 1 and Urban 2 land use, or subdivide and build new single detached homes in the Urban 3 land use.

Beyond just homes, commercial properties that were built prior to the 1970s are the ones most likely to be targeted for changes in the near future. The three large malls on the southern side of South Fraser Way were built later and may take more time to see large scale redevelopment. The CCNP should prepare itself with a phasing plan, but more importantly, it will ensure that when redevelopment happens, it does so with the whole neighbourhood in mind.

BUILDING ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

The CCNP can be divided into three different types of built areas: bungalow neighbourhoods, commercial strips, and apartment clusters. Each one is identifiable by its size and form as shown on Map 10.

The **bungalow neighbourhoods** are characterized by relatively small homes on relatively large lots. These were primarily built prior to the 1980s and most of them are designated 'Urban 3 - Infill' in the OCP (though a smaller portion are designated 'Urban 1 - Midrise' and 'Urban 2 - Ground Oriented'). In many cases these suburban style neighbourhoods have a street standard that would be more typical of a rural subdivision. Streets can be quite narrow and often lack sidewalks. These areas may experience a significant amount of redevelopment, in the form of gentle infill, or consolidation and densification, depending on their land use designation.

The **commercial strips** are what most people see when they think of the City Centre. Here, everything is bigger with sprawling surface parking lots, wide roads, and large shopping centres. This is an area heavily dependent on cars, and is not designed to be friendly for any other mode of transportation. The long blocks paired with uninterrupted building faces contribute to this state. While the larger malls may not change drastically in the near future, the smaller clusters of independently owned properties on the north side of South Fraser Way may begin to change sooner.

The **apartment clusters** are characterized by 3 and 4 storey multifamily residential buildings. They provide housing for many residents in the neighbourhood and work as a buffer between the commercial strips and bungalow neighbourhoods. Many of these buildings were built in the 1980s and 1990s, are stratified, and tend to be inward facing developments without much of a street presence. Often, main entrances are in the back of buildings into a parking lot rather than onto the fronting street. These areas are likely to stay broadly intact over the life of this plan as the buildings are relatively young.

Within the CCNP area one building has the honour of being a national historic site: The Gur Sikh Temple. Located on South Fraser Way at the far east edge of the CCNP boundary, it is the oldest Sikh Gurdwara in North America. It was built in 1913 with lumber from the old Mill at Mill Lake. An additional building worth noting is The Reach Gallery Museum in the Civic Precinct, which is a LEED certified building.



Map 10. CCNP Building Footprints



2.3 Jobs & Businesses

The resiliency and vibrancy of a neighbourhood depends on ensuring its residents have jobs and that its businesses are thriving. The City Centre is no different, and this section of the report will explore the local labour force and highlight the most salient points of a Commercial Market Study conducted by G.P. Rollo & Associates. This study catalogued the retail and office inventory in the CCNP and Historic Downtown Neighbourhood Plan (HDNP), then projected demand using the OCP population model. It gives an idea of how much commercial land will be needed in the future to accommodate the expected growth the two neighbourhoods will experience.

LABOUR FORCE

In 2011, approximately 5,515 residents comprised the City Centre labour force. Of these, a plurality work in retail, which is similar to Abbotsford as a whole. Although in the City Centre, 20% work in retail whereas across the city only 11% do. The proximity City Centre residents have

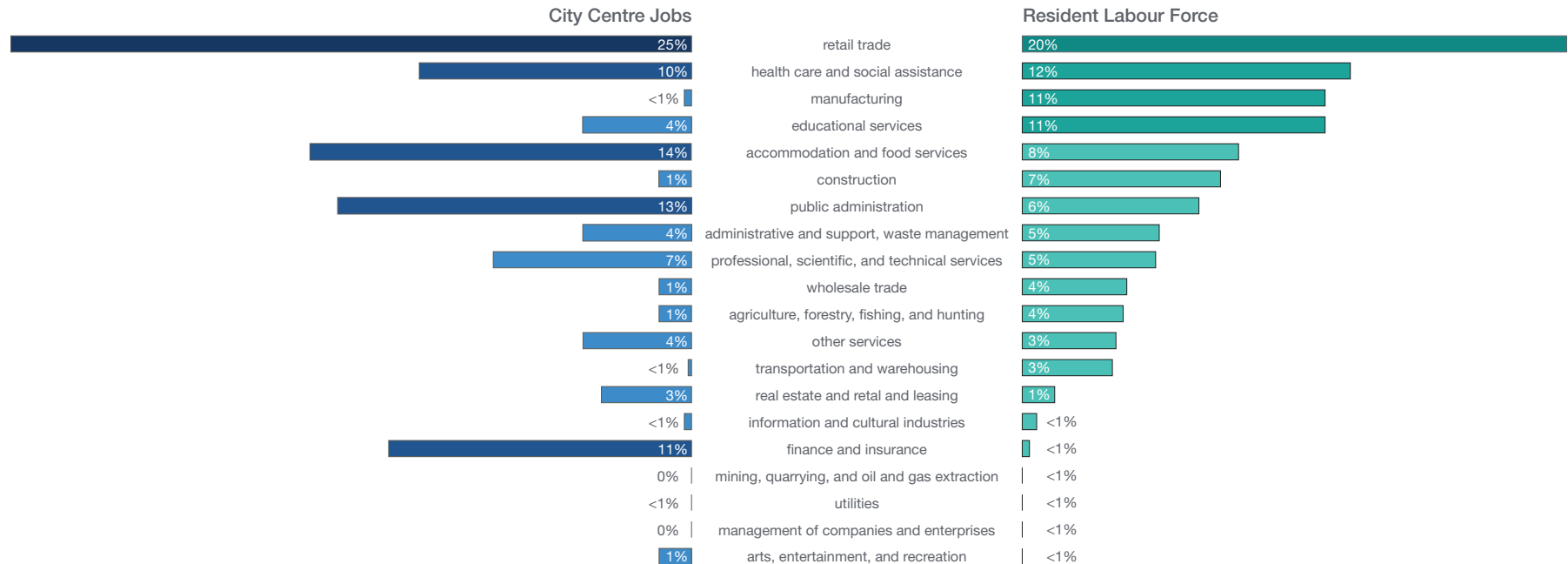
to the City's largest retail shopping centres is likely contributing to this significant difference. Overall, the City Centre's labour force is less diverse than Abbotsford's. Its population is more dependent on the retail industry and if retail jobs were to suffer a decline, it could affect the neighbourhood quite strongly.

Another key point is that while many jobs in the City Centre are based in the public administration, and finance and insurance sectors, few residents work in these types of jobs. Inversely, many City Centre residents have jobs in manufacturing and educational services that are located outside the City Centre (Figure 16).

EDUCATION LEVEL & INCOME

A majority of residents in the City Centre either have a high school diploma or lower education level. This is also the case for all of Abbotsford and the percentages of education levels achieved in the City Centre are nearly identical to the Abbotsford averages.

Figure 16. City Centre Jobs vs City Centre Resident Labour Force



With that in mind, it is interesting that while education levels are similar, income levels are not. While the average income in the City Centre is \$32,291, city wide the figure rises to \$35,671. This may be attributable to City Centre residents being older, and more likely to work in lower-paying retail jobs. It is also important to note that 62% of City Centre residents are in the bottom half of the Canadian income distribution.

COMMERCIAL MARKET STUDY

G.P. Rollo and Associates (GPRA) was hired by the City to identify the trends and factors that govern the market for commercial space in Abbotsford's CCNP and HDNP. The inventory gives a snapshot of today's makeup of businesses operating in both neighbourhoods and the projection provides the necessary commercial space required to support growth in the future. The following is a summary taken directly from the study.

Figure 17. City Centre vs Canada Income Distribution

- Canada Income Distribution
- City Centre Income Distribution

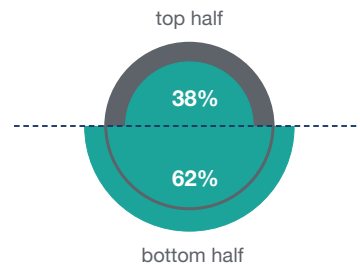


Figure 18. City Centre Education Level

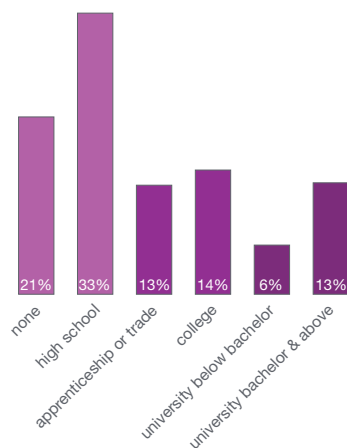
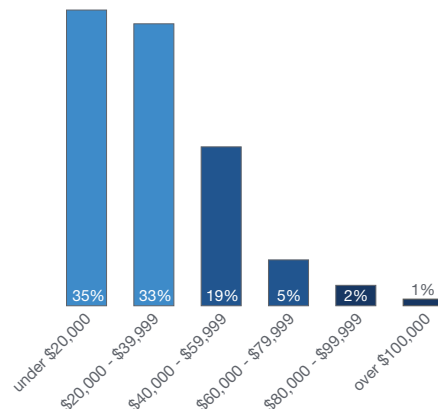


Figure 19. City Centre Income Level



The study identifies the City Centre as the City's main commercial hub. The three large malls and several standalone anchors allow it to draw spending from across the City. Its retail market is strong, although its office market is overbuilt and in low demand today. Its retail sector is thriving, but it is highly generic and unspecialized, which leaves it vulnerable to competition from new space throughout the City. GPRA observes that the City Centre's urban design is not conducive to walking, which may stunt its growth in the long run, unless the overall design approach shifts as the city grows.

Current Inventory

The CCNP contains almost one third of Abbotsford retail, while the HDNP contains just under 10%. Also, the CCNP accounts for over half of city wide inventory levels in many comparison categories (such as cosmetics, electronics, multimedia, and footwear and accessories). Overall, it holds over 1.9 million square feet of retail space.

Figure 20. CCNP Retail Inventory

Predominant Retail Category (SF)	City Centre	%	Historic Downtown	%	Non Study Area	Abbotsford Total	%
Convenience Retail	632,200	35%	181,800	10%	1,018,300	56%	1,832,300 100%
Grocery & Supermarkets	316,400	39%	35,800	4%	461,000	57%	813,200 100%
Pharmacy	30,700	36%	3,200	4%	51,100	60%	85,000 100%
Alcohol	16,400	27%	11,700	19%	33,100	54%	61,200 100%
Services	110,000	24%	91,000	20%	253,400	56%	454,400 100%
Financial Services	99,500	39%	14,800	6%	139,200	55%	253,500 100%
Healthcare Services	59,200	36%	25,300	15%	80,400	49%	164,900 100%
Comparison Retail	873,300	39%	153,900	7%	1,221,800	54%	2,249,000 100%
Apparel	241,000	47%	34,600	7%	233,000	46%	508,600 100%
Cosmetics, Health, Bath & Beauty	69,400	59%	3,000	3%	44,600	38%	117,000 100%
Electronics & Appliances	156,600	59%	6,900	3%	101,200	38%	264,700 100%
Footwear & Accessories	29,800	50%	2,700	4%	27,500	46%	60,000 100%
Home Furnishings	168,500	37%	42,300	9%	244,500	54%	455,300 100%
Home Improvement	50,000	13%	2,600	1%	325,800	86%	378,400 100%
Jewellery & Watches	9,000	80%	2,200	20%	-	0%	11,200 100%
Multimedia, Books & Music	29,800	68%	7,800	18%	5,900	14%	43,500 100%
Sports & Recreational Goods	41,500	22%	14,600	8%	133,700	70%	189,800 100%
Pet Goods, Toys, Hobbies	77,700	35%	37,200	17%	105,700	48%	220,600 100%
Restaurants & Entertainment	241,000	22%	134,000	12%	707,800	65%	1,082,800 100%
F&B	138,100	22%	95,400	15%	401,400	63%	634,900 100%
Entertainment	-	0%	21,500	10%	197,600	90%	219,100 100%
Leisure	102,900	45%	17,100	7%	108,800	48%	228,800 100%
Auto Related	140,800	18%	24,600	3%	619,700	79%	785,100 100%
Motor Vehicles and Parts Dealers	56,900	16%	2,200	1%	305,300	84%	364,400 100%
Auto Service	77,300	28%	21,400	8%	175,100	64%	273,800 100%
Gas Station	6,500	4%	1,000	1%	139,200	95%	146,700 100%
Vacant	104,900	24%	101,300	23%	232,300	53%	438,500 100%
Total Retail	1,992,200	31%	595,600	9%	3,799,800	59%	6,387,600 100%

Projected Demand

Within this overall context, GPRA projects demand for commercial uses in the CCNP according to the following timeline:

Figure 21. CCNP Commercial Projection

	2017 – 2020	2021 – 2025	2026 – 2030	2031 – 2035	2036 – 2040
Retail Total	17,800 ft ²	47,900 ft ²	79,500 ft ²	135,800 ft ²	171,600 ft ²
Convenience Retail	17,800 ft ²	40,400 ft ²	61,800 ft ²	72,300 ft ²	85,600 ft ²
Comparison Retail	0 ft ²	0 ft ²	0 ft ²	42,600 ft ²	56,600 ft ²
Restaurants & Entertainment	0 ft ²	7,500 ft ²	17,700 ft ²	20,900 ft ²	25,100 ft ²
Auto-Related	0 ft ²	0 ft ²	0 ft ²	0 ft ²	4,300 ft ²
Office Total¹	0 ft ²	1,951 – 16,700 ft ²		101,857 – 105,200 ft ²	
Accommodation Total	0 rooms	0 rooms	0 rooms	0 rooms	100 rooms

The CCNP could support 18,000ft² of additional convenience retail in the next four years while GPRA projects new comparison retail uses will not be needed until the early 2030s, as the neighbourhood’s three large malls more than accommodate this type of vendor. No additional demand for auto-related commercial space is anticipated in the CCNP.

After that present need is met, demand for new space will rise to about 48,000ft² in the 2021 – 2025 period (made up of convenience retail and



restaurant and entertainment space) before accelerating continuously over the next 15 years as a consequence of population and spending growth.

In terms of office space, the CCNP is quite overbuilt, and will only require up to 17,000ft² before 2030, but in the following 15 years will require more than 100,000ft², demand having caught up with the present surplus.

Finally, GPRA projects demand for one new hotel of about 100 rooms in the CCNP sometime within the 2036 – 2040 period.

COMMERCIAL GROWTH OUTSIDE THE STUDY AREAS (excerpt from the report’s Executive Summary)

“Although addressing future supportable retail outside of the Historic Downtown and the City Centre is outside of the report’s scope, it is important to acknowledge that development outside of the Study Areas can profoundly affect the vitality of retail in the City Centre and the Historic Downtown.

While Abbotsford has limited influence on many internal and external growth factors, the City does have the power to restrict major new retail projects outside of the Study Areas and concentrate future development around existing retail nodes.

This report acknowledges that a number of convenience-oriented retail nodes will likely be necessary as Abbotsford’s population grows over the next 25 years, but if the City wishes to strengthen existing retail centres such as the Historic Downtown and the City Centre it is important not to dilute the competitive landscape with power centres and shopping centres that draw consumer spending.

Decisions to limit comparison big box & shopping centre development may be fiscally painful in the short-term but will promote long term vitality of the Study Areas.”

2.4 Streets & Movement

The streets of a neighbourhood are some of the most important assets a city has. They help move people, but they can also provide a significant amount of public space for people to gather, shop, and recreate.

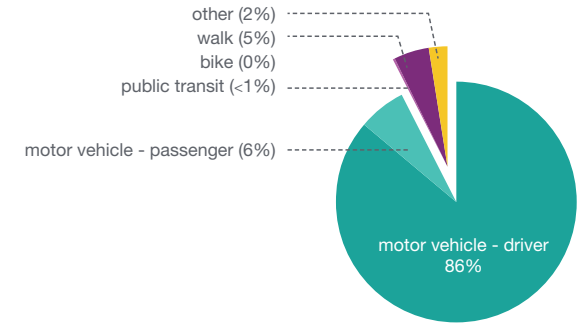
The way streets are designed influence how people get around and often form people’s first impressions of a city and neighbourhood. The following section will explore the City Centre’s travel mode share, street design, pedestrian activity, biking and transit facilities, and vehicle network.

TRAVEL MODE SHARE

The Abbotsford-Mission Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) is the most car-dependent CMA in Canada with approximately 93% of commuters choosing a motor vehicle to get to work. The City Centre also has a high rate of vehicle use with 92% of residents driving or being driven to work.

The 8% of commuters who don’t use a motor vehicle mostly walk (5%). Very few take transit (<1%), and 0% bike. These low numbers of active transportation rates are likely in part the result of street designs that prioritize vehicular movement.

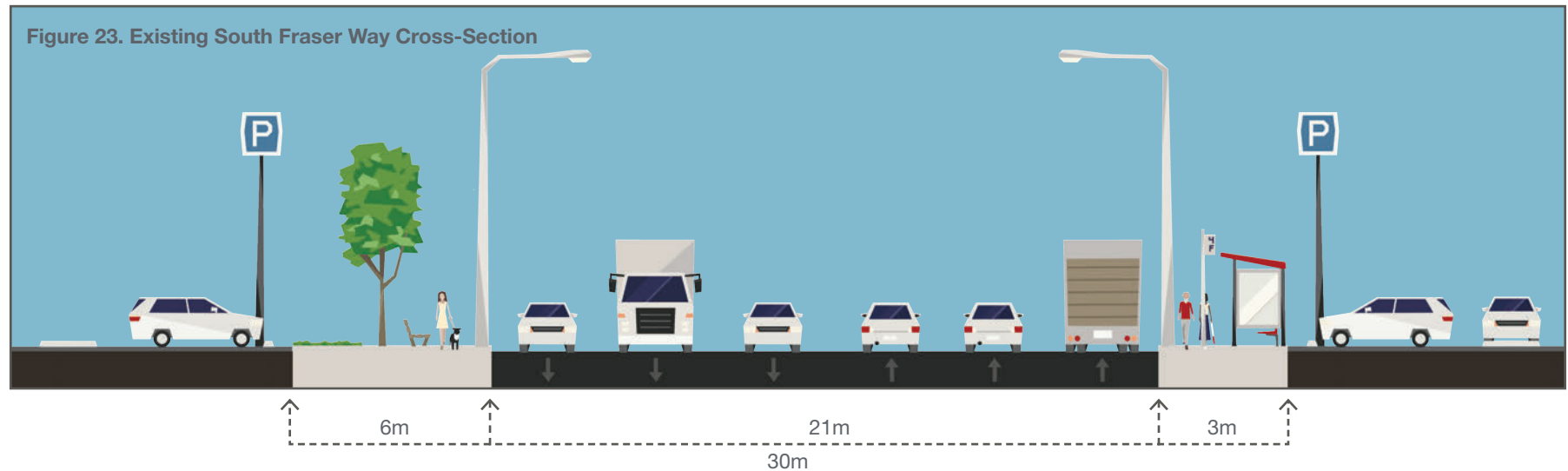
Figure 22. City Centre Travel Mode to Work

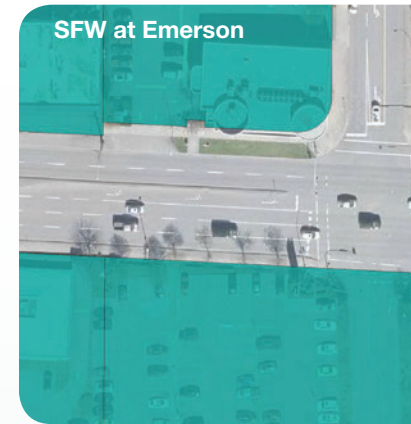
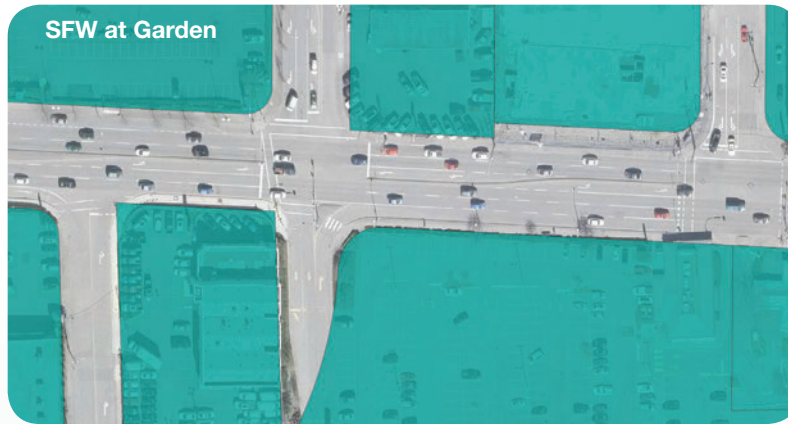
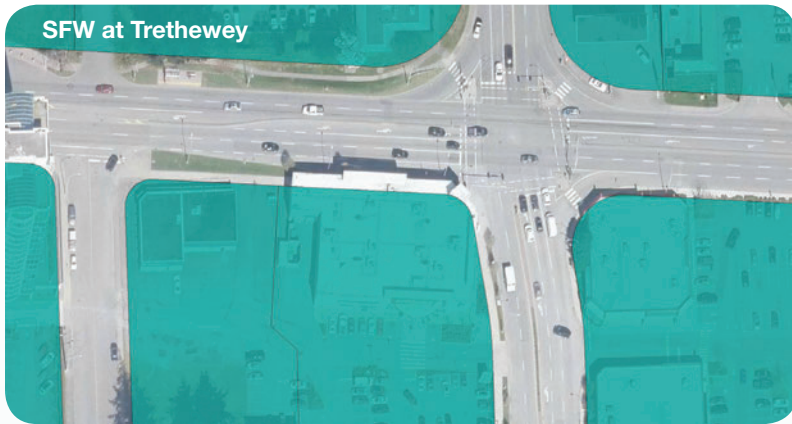


STREET DESIGN

Many streets in Abbotsford and the CCNP were built or designed when cars were projected to leapfrog other transportation modes in popularity. This influenced a street network characterized by long blocks, wide lanes, and large intersections, all features contributing to faster moving traffic and more people driving (Litman and Coleman, 2001).

South Fraser Way is an example of this design approach. It once was the highway that connected Matsqui and Abbotsford. As both grew outward, shopping centres and strip malls were built one by one, eventually joining the two communities.





Today, much of the right-of-way is dedicated to vehicular movement (70%). A typical cross-section of South Fraser Way shows 6 lanes of traffic, though depending on the location it can vary from 5-7 lanes.

As the central spine that runs through the core of the City, it has seen incremental change, resulting in an inconsistent design. Some parts include a shared median lane, others have a median concrete curb. Some intersections include slip lanes and merge lanes, others don't. Sidewalks line both sides of the street, but some of them are 2m or 3m wide, while others are only 1.5m. Some include a double line of trees, others have a single line or none at all. There are a few bus pullouts along the corridor, but not at every stop. In places, hydro lines have been put underground, elsewhere hydro poles are in the middle of sidewalks. Along much of the northern edge of South Fraser Way, an extra width of dedication exists to widen the street to 7 lanes.

Several streets in the CCNP have a similar patchwork design, the result of street upgrades occurring incrementally as fronting properties develop. Unfortunately, the design isn't particularly conducive to a delightful experience for any mode of travel, including vehicles, and can present safety challenges.

Using Pedestrian-Motor Vehicle Incident data from 2009-2013 (ICBC, 2016), 4 intersections on South Fraser Way place in the top 5 for crashes:

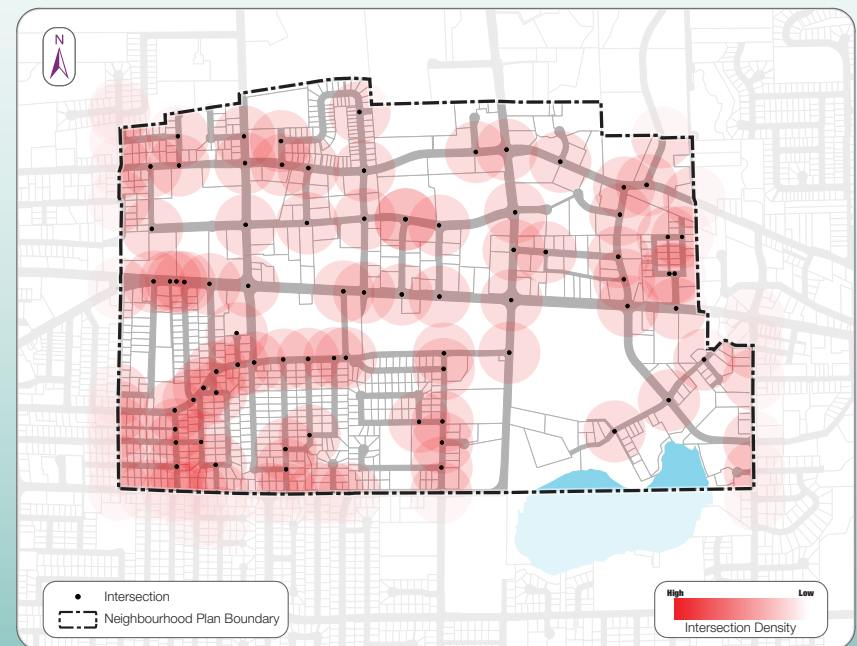
- South Fraser Way at Trethewey
- South Fraser Way at Ware (outside the study area)
- South Fraser Way at Clearbrook (outside the study area)
- South Fraser Way at Gladwin

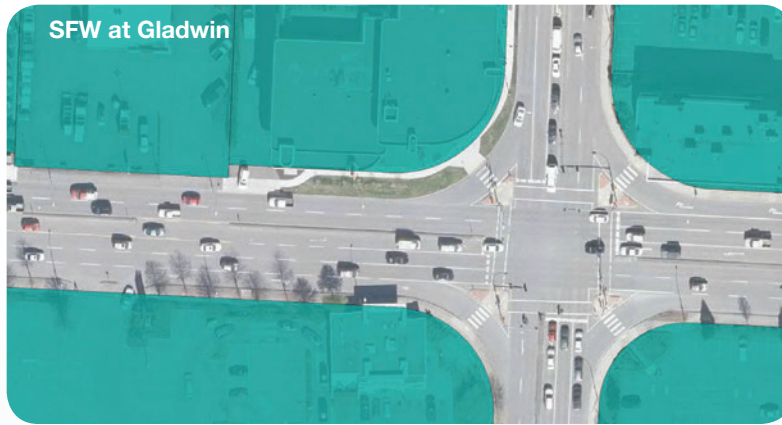
Design for more multi-modal streets can address some of these issues and is explored in Part 3 of the Background Research Report.

CONNECTIVITY

Block length and intersection density can play a key role in street networks and their connectivity. In the CCNP there is no standard block

Map 11. CCNP Intersection Density





size. Typically, when more intersections are located near one another, a user has more choice in routes and smaller distances to travel. Map 11 identifies each intersection and places a 100m buffer around each to create a heat map that shows where the highest degree of connectivity is located. The darker reds indicate intersections clustering closer to one another, creating an environment in which it is easier to get around by any mode of transportation.

The Southwest part of the CCNP has a higher degree of connectivity which is attributable to smaller block sizes. These are as short as 170m by 80m which is rare in Abbotsford. Similar or smaller block sizes only exist in Historic Downtown. At the other end of the scale, the block fronting Sevenoaks Shopping Centre is nearly 350m in length and uninterrupted by any intersection.

PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY

Over the winter months from January 2016-March 2017, pedestrian counts were conducted at four major intersections in the City Centre:

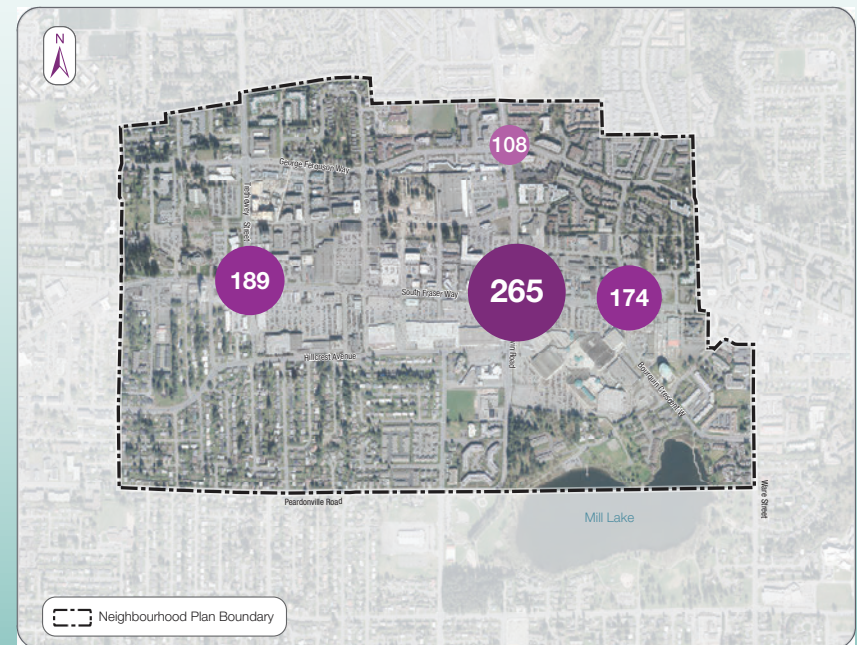
- South Fraser Way at Trethewey
- South Fraser Way at Gladwin
- South Fraser Way at Bourquin
- George Ferguson Way at Gladwin

At each location a count was performed twice for a period of 30 minutes. Quantifying pedestrian activity is a powerful way of understanding how the street network is used, including: where people prefer walking, whether design improvements have resulted in higher counts, and what

amenities appear to be the biggest draw for pedestrians. The initial counts in this report could be repeated in the future to further study pedestrian activity.

The results are shown on Map 12 and identify South Fraser Way at Gladwin as the most heavily used intersection for pedestrians. Main

Map 12. City Centre Daytime Pedestrian Activity (average people/hour)



reasons likely include the draw Sevenoaks Shopping Centre and Mill Lake present to residents, and the street facing buildings and their corner entrances located adjacent to the intersection.

CYCLING AND TRANSIT FACILITIES

The cycling network in the CCNP is still very much in its infancy. Only a short portion of Gladwin Road has painted bike lanes which continue onto Peardonville Road following the southern boundary of the study area. There exist many opportunities to work off this small part of the network and expand further into the core of the neighbourhood.

Of the 18 bus routes in Abbotsford, 13 pass through the CCNP and South Fraser Way in particular functions as a busy bus corridor. On Bourquin Crescent, the Bourquin Exchange is the node where all lines arrive and depart. The ‘pulse’ system of transit in Abbotsford is very much centered around this exchange and the one in Historic Downtown.

Abbotsford’s Transit Future Plan (2013) identified the need for an exchange that is more conveniently located along the frequent transit

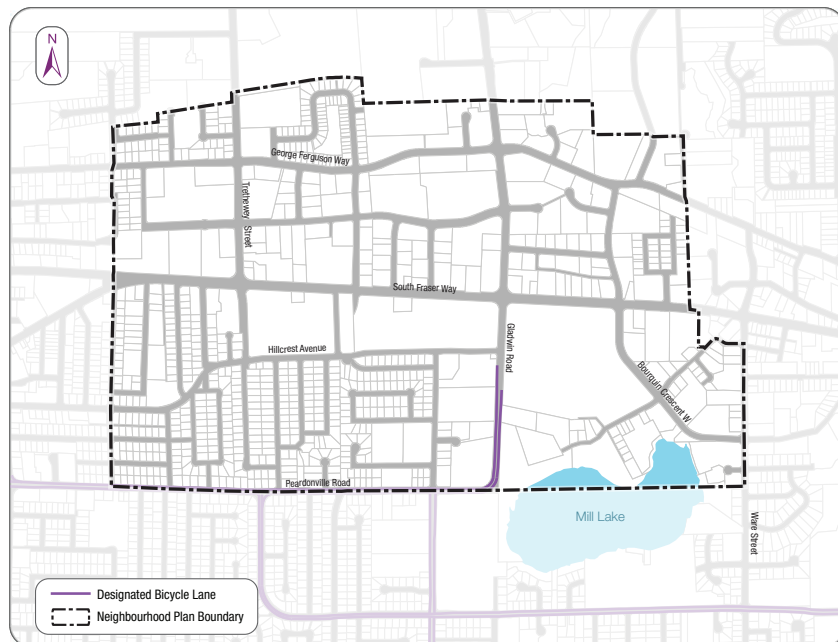
corridor for efficiency and expansion. Other bus stops are generally located mid block along transit routes and amenities like benches, shelters, are few and far between, though past improvements have been made along South Fraser Way.

VEHICLES AND PARKING

The vehicular network in the CCNP is composed of Arterials, Collectors, and Local roads. The Transportation Master Plan will be reviewing the status of roads across the city, and what implications it may have for their ultimate design standard.

According to traffic counts, vehicular traffic along South Fraser Way has mostly been in decline since 2006. This is notable for a neighbourhood and city that have grown in population over the same period. However, Engineering staff have identified issues with the system used to count vehicles on multi-lane roadways like South Fraser Way, which may affect the accuracy of the data shown. Information on this topic will be further analyzed in later stages of the CCNP project.

Map 13. CCNP Cycling Infrastructure



Map 14. CCNP Transit Network

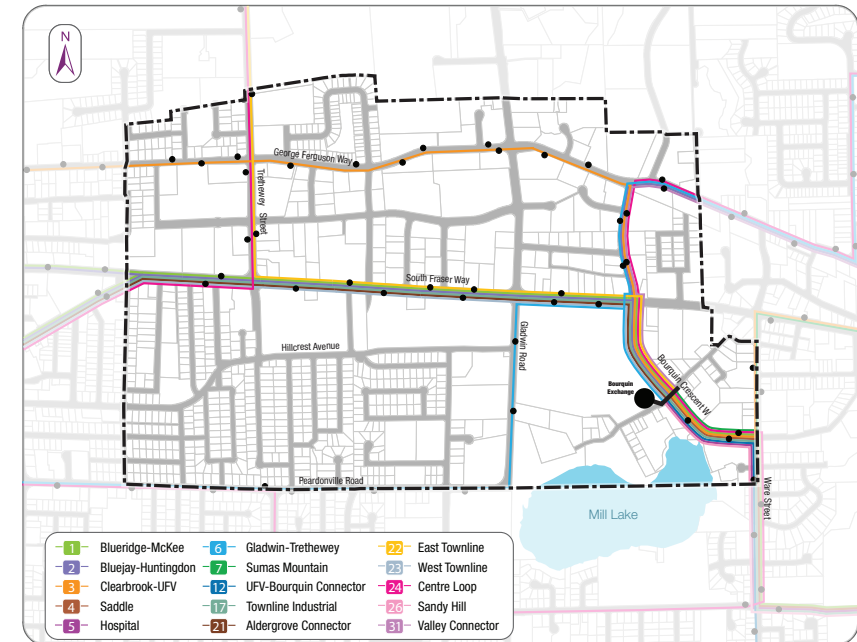
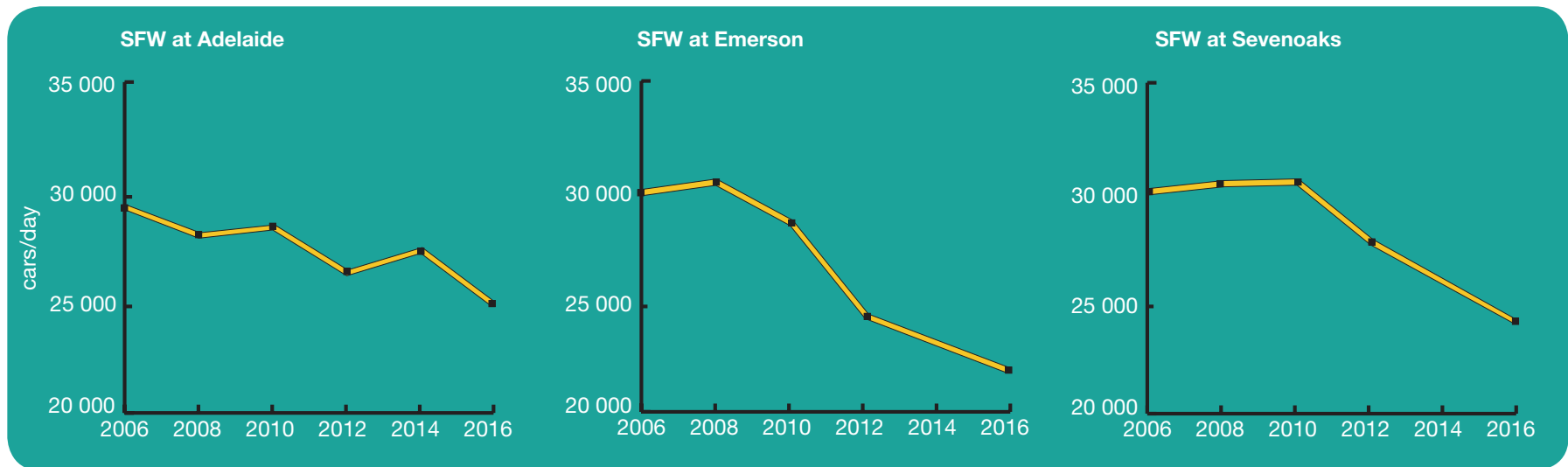


Figure 24. South Fraser Way Vehicular Traffic Counts

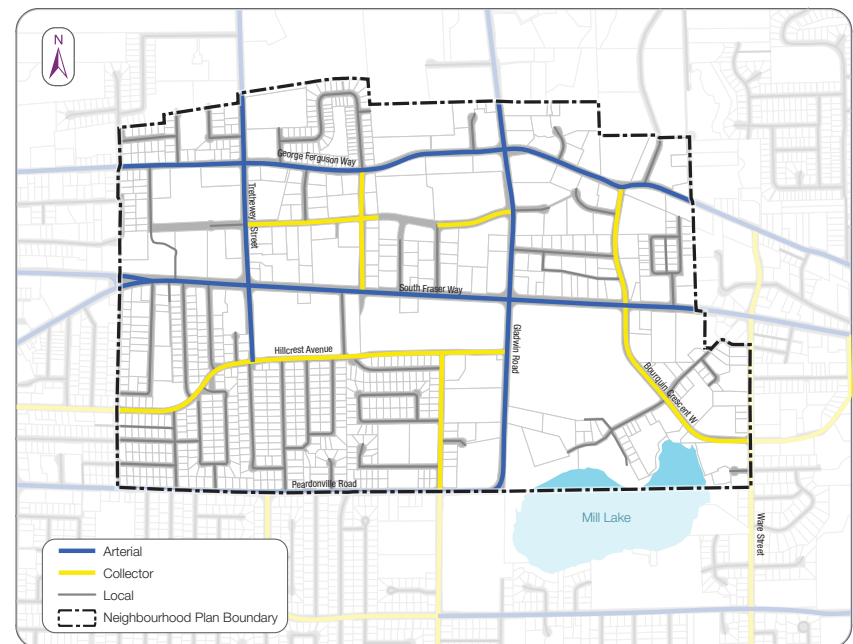


Assuming the numbers are correct, they could be the result of improvements to other East-West roads like Marshall Road and Maclure Road that have seen increases in traffic. It may also be possible that with its incremental redesigns, South Fraser Way is becoming less attractive as a thoroughfare. People could be accessing it to shop at the malls, but avoiding it for longer cross-city travel, signaling a shift from South Fraser Way’s original purpose as a highway connecting two communities into a destination street for shopping.

Despite this decline in overall traffic, there can be moderate delays at peak periods and certain design elements impact the flow of traffic like the number of business accesses along the length of South Fraser Way and the lack of bus pull outs. The CCNP will consider corridor travel times along South Fraser Way and George Ferguson Way in the development of design concepts.

Today, on-street parking in the City Centre is permitted on some local streets in the residential areas. Elsewhere, parking spaces are supplied with surface lots. Nearly 50% of the City Centre land use designation is currently used for parking vehicles. This is a reflection of zoning practices that require a number of stalls per square footage of commercial floor space. Current zoning policy relaxes parking requirements for developments near a frequent transit corridor (ie. South Fraser Way).

Map 15. CCNP Road Classifications



2.5 Physical Features, Pipes, & Services

Understanding the state of infrastructure in the CCNP is crucial to creating a well-informed Neighbourhood Plan. This section is intended to highlight the current conditions of water, sanitary, and drainage systems in the neighbourhood. Work throughout the CCNP process will align with the development of the respective master plans of these systems.

WATER

The majority of the CCNP lies within the 123m HGL pressure zone sourced from the Maclure Reservoir located at Upper Maclure Road and Ponderosa Street.

Depending on the location, the age of water pipes in the CCNP range from 0-50 years old. A part of the system in the Southwest corner is comprised of undersized 150mm asbestos concrete that are gradually

being replaced under the City’s asset renewal program with appropriately sized, 200mm pipes.

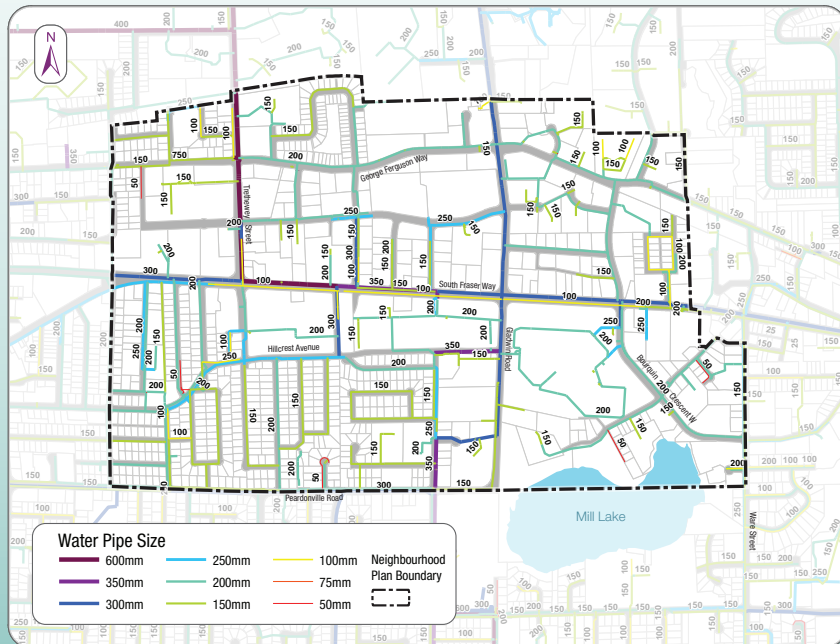
Several other lengths of water main pipes are below bylaw standards at 200mm when they should be at 250mm. These will likely be replaced and updated gradually as development occurs.

More importantly, the CCNP will have to address the extension of the Urban Core Transmission/Distribution water main from George Ferguson Way at Cruickshank Street to South Fraser Way and Bourquin Crescent, and continuation to George Ferguson Way and Pauline Street.

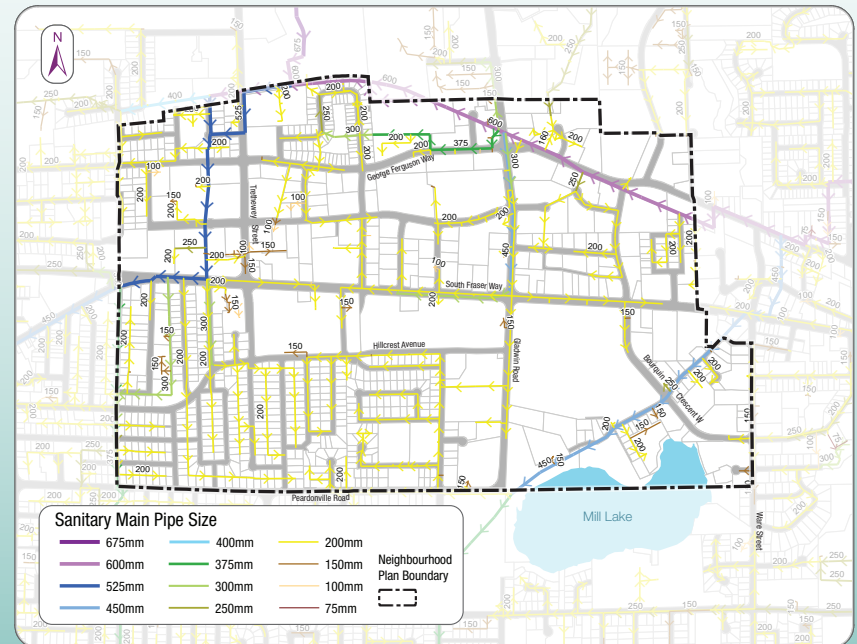
SANITARY

Generally, the sewer mains in the CCNP are in good condition. Deteriorating ones are addressed through yearly capital programs for rehabilitation and replacement.

Map 16. CCNP Water System



Map 17. CCNP Sanitary System



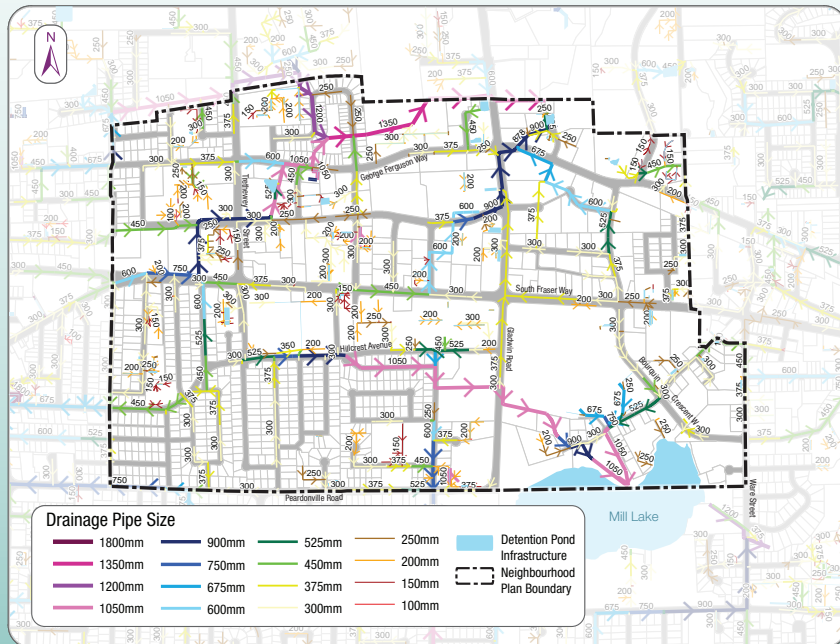
The CCNP has three large trunk mains (600mm, 525mm, and 450mm) and these should hold sufficient capacity to service the planned OCP growth. However, several smaller mains in the Southwest corner that are 200mm are located in right of ways at the rear of residential properties. These will be difficult to upgrade in the future.

DRAINAGE

The storm-sewer system was mainly built in the early 1970s, and is now approximately 40-50 years old. A number of detention facilities have been built as part of new developments after the late 1990s but most properties do not include them.

Though old, the system is still working and the underlying soil (gravel and sand) permits infiltration into the ground (part of the solution to delay the replacement of old pipes). There are a few undersized sections including a section on Veteran Way (900mm), and some sections along both sides of Gladwin Road (1350mm).

Map 18. CCNP Drainage System



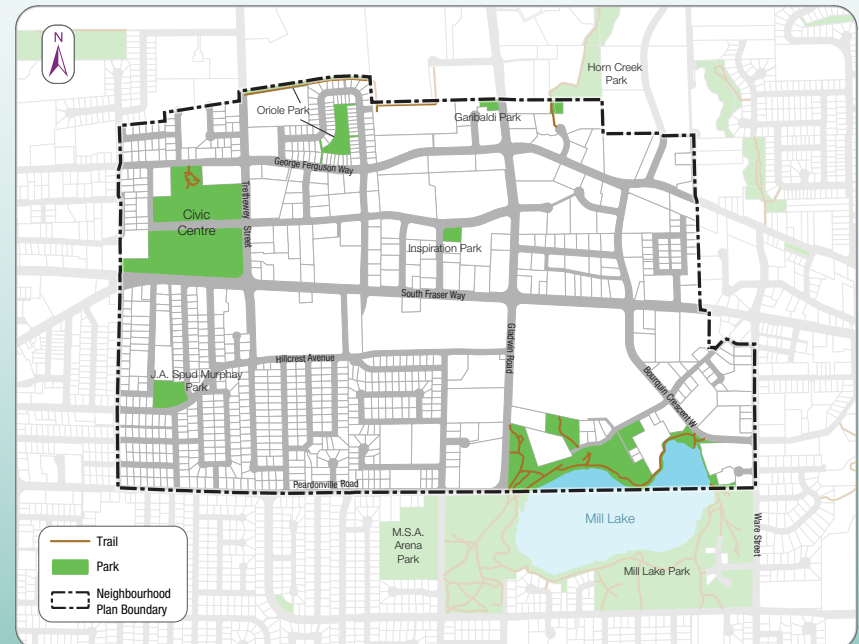
2.6 Community Places & Public Spaces

Certain amenities are required in cities to keep residents safe, smart, happy, and whole. Community places and public spaces contribute to residents' quality of life and provide opportunities for a wide range of intellectual, cultural, physical, and social activities. They come in the form of parks and trails that serve a multitude of demographics and give users an escape from the intensity of urban life. Cities also provide community amenities essential to neighbourhoods like police stations, fire halls, libraries, and schools. Additionally, places of worship, museums, galleries, and performance spaces are the gathering places that help shape our communities.

PARKS & TRAILS

There are three different categories of parks in the CCNP, that help distinguish the various functions they serve: City-Wide Parks, Community Parks, and Neighbourhood Parks. The CCNP is unique in that it has two

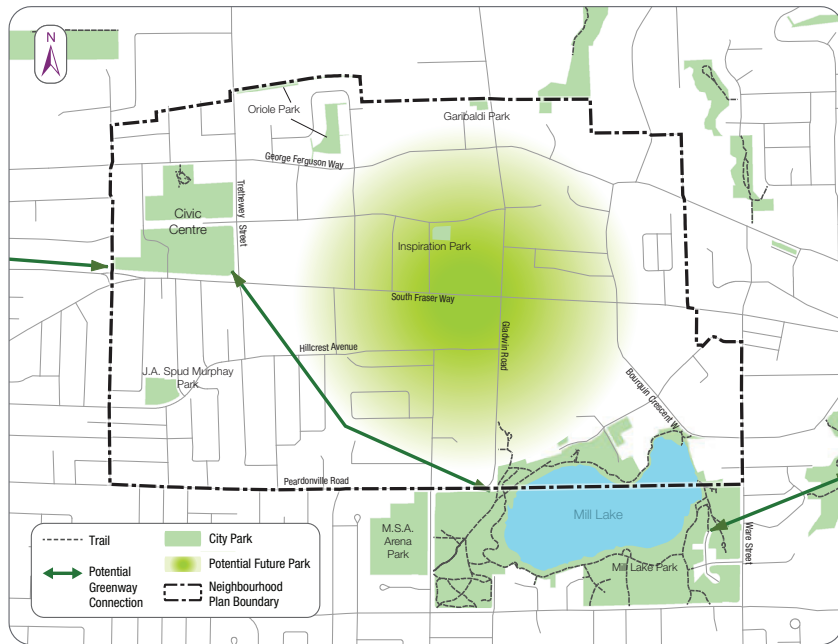
Map 19. CCNP Parks System



‘City-Wide Parks’ within its boundary. Mill Lake Park and the Civic Centre draw visitors from across Abbotsford and both have a wide variety of facilities and programmatic elements that help make them destinations for visitors. Another significant green space in the CCNP is Spud Murphy Park. It is designated a ‘Community Park’, and contains a spray pad which also makes it attractive to a population radiating beyond the boundaries of this Neighbourhood Plan. Other parks, like Oriole Park, Garibaldi Park, and Inspiration Park are considered ‘Neighbourhood Parks’ and serve a more local population of nearby residents.

On the northern edge of the CCNP, several linkages exist connecting Horn Creek Park to the Civic Centre with only a few gaps. These trails form the base of a system that could eventually connect to the Discovery Trail. To the South there is less connection between the various parks and cultural amenities. Here, the OCP conceptually identifies the potential for a future park and green link with an eye on connecting Historic Downtown to the Civic Centre through Ravine Park and Mill Lake Park (Map 20).

Map 20. OCP Parks & Trails



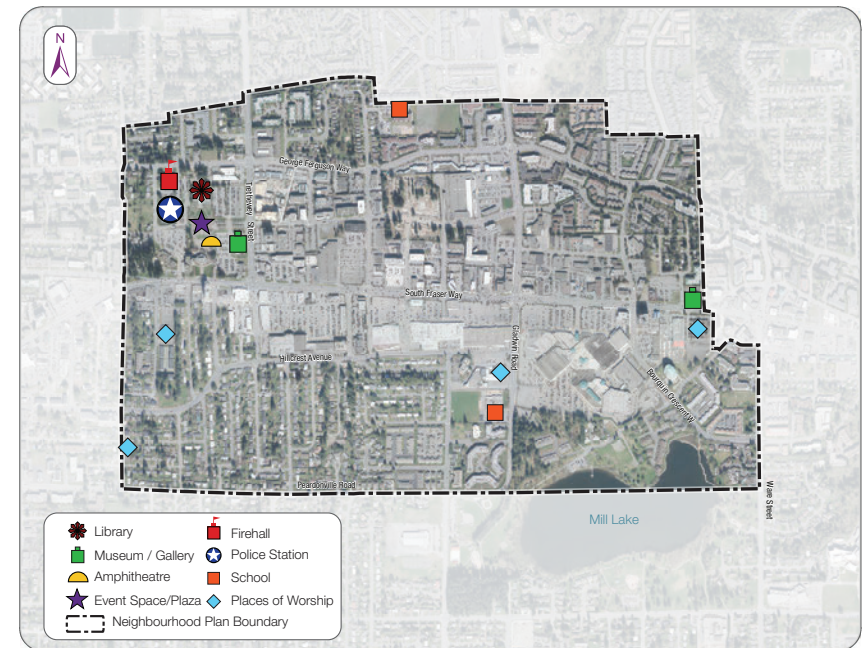
There are few opportunities for civic recreation programming in the CCNP, but this is also the area with the most amount of competition from private businesses.

It’s notable that new park space, unlike in greenfield development, will have to be obtained through redevelopment and/or acquisition when properties are up for sale. The CCNP can identify future park locations and provide the mechanisms to ensure park space continues to grow, evolve, and thrive in the CCNP.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The CCNP, which includes the Civic Precinct, is home to the City of Abbotsford’s Police and Fire Department’s main offices. In the same location, the Clearbrook Library serves much of the western part of Abbotsford’s urban area and is a major destination for families, students, and others who use its services. It is a part of the Fraser Valley Regional Library system.

Map 21. CCNP Community Amenities



There are two schools in the area, each with their own preschool:

- John Maclure Community School (K-5)
- École Centennial Park Elementary (K-5, Immersion)

These schools, along with Mill Lake Park provide sports fields for use by the broader community. Of particular note are the baseball diamonds on the North side of Mill Lake Park.

The University of the Fraser Valley also offers classes in the basement of the Clearbrook Library.

CULTURAL AMENITIES

The CCNP has a great foundation of cultural amenities upon which the Neighbourhood Plan can build. The Civic Precinct includes The Reach Gallery Museum and Abbotsford's only National Historic Site, the Gur Sikh Temple. Both hold a gallery with rotating exhibits. The Reach covers a wide range of art forms and topics from inside and outside the community, while the Gur Sikh Temple caters specifically to Sikh Heritage.

Art doesn't always need a formal space like a gallery or a museum to be shown. Several pieces of public art exist in the CCNP for everyone to enjoy:

- Antique Farm Equipment (Old Yale Road and South Fraser Way)
- Growth Statue (South Fraser Way and Bourquin Crescent)
- Golden Tree (Friendship Garden, Civic Precinct)
- Rainforest (The Reach Gallery Museum)
- Thunderbird Square (Civic Precinct)
- Unity (Clearbrook Library)

There are four Places of Worship in the CCNP:

- Khalsa Diwan Gurdwara
- Sevenoaks Alliance Church
- Olivet Church
- Parkview Gospel Hall

As for performance spaces, the Mastqui Centennial Auditorium (MCA) is the only formal space available in the CCNP. It is often used for plays, concerts, and other celebrations. The MCA is also the heart of municipal and democratic functions at the City of Abbotsford, with public City

Council meetings held every second Monday. Just outside the MCA the outdoor amphitheatre is a less formal performance space that doubles as a beautiful water feature.

Many special events, ceremonies, and festivals take place in the CCNP, both in the Civic Centre (and more specifically in Thunderbird Plaza) and at Mill Lake Park. One event to consider is the Canada Day parade that occurs every July 1st when South Fraser Way is closed to traffic and groups from across Abbotsford have a chance to showcase their patriotism with floats and other types of decorations.





3.0 Elements of Great City Centres

What makes a neighbourhood the centre of a community's public, economic, and cultural life? While this is a subjective question, certain key elements certainly help frame the answer.

Typically, vibrant and desirable city centres include the highest concentration of people, who live and work in high density building forms. They are also well-connected places, where people can choose to get around by foot, bike, transit, or car. Great city centres also provide a generous amount of public amenities that compensate for the smaller living quarters. Most of all, they are dynamic, engaging, and attractive places in which people want to gather and spend time.

3.1 People, People, People

Successful city centres around the world are ones bustling with people and energy. The clustering of residents, employees, and visitors is key to creating this vibrant environment. Adding more people doesn't just enliven a city, it also works to improve transit ridership, safety, business and retail success, and municipal finances.

RESIDENTS

There are a number of reasons to increase a neighbourhood's resident population, especially in the core of an urban area. They range from economic, to environmental, and even health and wellness reasons. The OCP, through its land use policy, envisions a CCNP with an additional 10,000 residents.

Ideas:

- Apply more detailed land uses to support over 10,000 more residents in the CCNP
- Distribute these land uses in places where they align with transportation, jobs, and community spaces
- Support the supply of rental housing and encourage adding low vacancy housing types



Projects like La Galleria, are near many commercial, recreational, and cultural amenities. They have a positive impact on the neighbourhood by adding more residents, making it safer and more attractive.

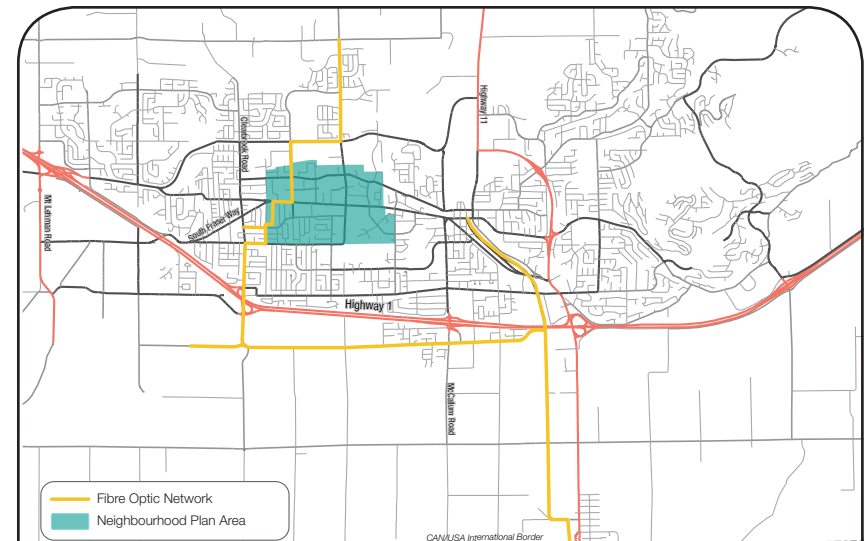
EMPLOYEES

While the CCNP is one of Abbotsford's most densely employed areas, it is mostly characterized by retail jobs in shopping centres that have a distinctly suburban form. For the neighbourhood to truly become the central hub of employment in the city and region, a more diverse workforce should exist.

The flight of office buildings to more suburban parts of cities is a well-documented trend that has only just begun reversing itself as employees, and in turn, employers are increasingly attracted to the vibrancy and proximity to services only urban centres provide. Abbotsford hasn't been immune to these trends and has seen a significant amount of office space built near the outskirts of the city.

Ideas:

- Encourage office development to locate in the CCNP, once oversupply is filled up.
- Attract creative and high tech jobs near the fibre optic network



Map 22. The new fibre optic network that passes by the Civic Precinct and down Trethewey Street can help spur office development in the CCNP.

VISITORS

Today, the CCNP isn't a strong draw for visitors, unless they're out shopping. The lack of a particular identity or character found in other places (ie. Historic Downtown) contributes to this state. However, with the Gur Sikh Temple National Historic Site, Mill Lake Park, Sevenoaks Shopping Centre, and The Reach Gallery Museum, the individual ingredients are there to make the CCNP a stop for visitors from throughout the Lower Mainland and beyond.

In its draft 5 year strategic plan, Tourism Abbotsford has identified cycling as a growing trend, especially as more and more visitors look for authentic "local" experiences. With an expanded network of strategic routes, cycling could support long-term destination and itinerary planning development in the tourism industry.

Ideas:

- **Link significant landmarks for easy navigation**
- **Plan for new landmarks (ie. convention centre)**
- **Ensure accommodation supply grows with increased demand**

Indianapolis' Cultural Trail is an interesting precedent. As a beautiful, well-used multi-use pathway that circles the downtown and branches out into surrounding neighbourhoods, it links various cultural destinations and parks. Its 13 kilometre length has become the spine of cultural, touristic and community activities in the city, with public art installations, festivals, and events like a massive Easter Egg Hunt in springtime.

Indianapolis Cultural Trail (photo credit: Indianapolis Cultural Trail)

3.2 High Density Housing Forms

As seen in Abbotsford's housing inventory, vacancy rates in apartment buildings are at historical lows. Specifically, Bachelor and 3+ Bedroom apartments are difficult to come by. This is a common challenge throughout the Lower Mainland. Housing an additional 10,000 people in the CCNP will require building high density housing forms that suit the needs of residents and respond to the local market. To do this, the CCNP will have to craft policies that encourage certain unit types and building forms, with the ultimate goal of creating a vibrant neighbourhood that is both livable and affordable for the young, the elderly, and families.

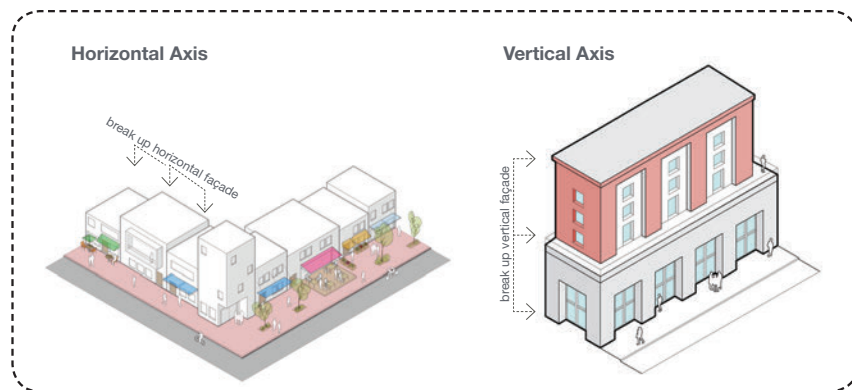
HUMAN SCALE

Building at a human scale means ensuring people feel comfortable and safe in their surroundings. People should also be able to orient themselves easily without being overwhelmed or dominated by the size of blocks or buildings. A person walking moves at a much slower speed than a person driving and as such requires a more richly textured environment to stay engaged and comfortable. This is why the most important part of a high density building is how it lands at the ground-level.

Ideas:

- **Break building façades along horizontal and vertical axes**
- **Encourage a fine grain of street fronting units**
- **Place main entrances adjacent to the street**
- **Consider parking strategies that reduce surface parking lots**

Figure 25. Breaking Up Building Façades

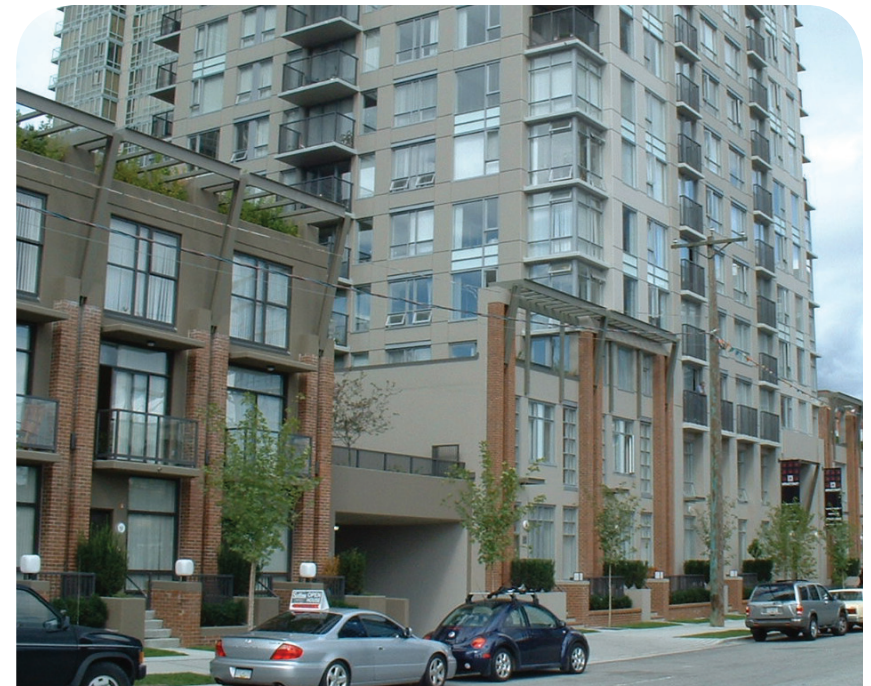


ACTIVATE GROUND FLOORS

Another important aspect of design is how buildings meet the street. Active ground floors allow the building façade to be permeable, visually and physically. Buildings that are permeable, accessible, and engaging at the street level help add activity on the street by encouraging people to walk.

Ideas:

- **Incorporate individual units on the bottom floor, accessible from the street**
- **Individualize architectural details for each unit**
- **Add patios and outdoor displays to engage people walking by**
- **Establish a hierarchy of spaces to define public from private**



A tower and podium configuration is preferable to minimize the bulk of buildings and create a coherent streetwall with neighbouring buildings. A great way to achieve this building form is to integrate townhouses along the streetfront, creating the podium upon which a highrise tower can rest.

AMENITY SPACES

A common criticism of high density housing is the lack of green space, common areas, and places for children to play and run free. It's the combination of both private and public amenity spaces that truly make a neighbourhood livable. They serve different purposes, and much like suburban neighbourhoods, future residents will want both. Finding a good balance between the two will help ensure the long term vitality of the CCNP

Ideas:

- **Identify community amenity space requirements**
- **Locate them near high density residential areas**
- **Ensure developments provide generous amenity spaces catering to different household types**
- **Encourage tower and podium design that provides semi-private gardens on podium**
- **Encourage courtyard housing that provide semi-private gardens in central space**

In Port Moody, Newport Village is an excellent example of high density housing forms that are comfortable to experience at the street level and provide a diversity of public and private amenity spaces.

Newport Village - Port Moody (photo credit: Bosa Development)

3.3 Rich Mobility Choices

The OCP sets a city wide 25% mode share target for all trips being made without a vehicle. This ambitious goal cannot be achieved if the City Centre doesn't transform itself into a neighbourhood where residents feel inclined to walk, bike, and take transit. Today, very few do - approximately 8%. And while this reflects a similar proportion across Abbotsford, the CCNP can help shift this mode share target. Mobility choice is also a key element for the existing population of seniors who may not want to drive anymore, but fear the loss of their independence. The CCNP should aim for age-friendly and accessible design.

BREAK UP LARGE BLOCKS

The biggest challenge to mobility choice in the City Centre is linked to big blocks. They are a relic of old land surveying practices that parceled land into 1 mile² (2.6km²) pieces, and occasionally into smaller quarters. These long distances, while once convenient for separating

big portions of rural land, are not ideal for urban environments. They prevent people from taking short and direct routes to their destinations.

The effect block sizes have on the connectivity of a neighbourhood is clear when comparing different street networks in various places. Portland and Vancouver are good examples with uninterrupted grids that make getting around simple and intuitive. Historic Downtown Abbotsford has an excellent base with block sizes that are even smaller than Vancouver's. Efforts have been made in the City Centre to punch through a few streets and increase connectivity in the area. Simon Avenue is a good example. But even the smallest of blocks in the CCNP can be double the size of what is considered walkable elsewhere.

Ideas:

- Identify appropriate block sizes
- Map out where future street connections should be made

SOUTH FRASER WAY

A tremendous amount of focus will be placed on the redesign of South Fraser Way. The OCP calls for it to be transformed into an urban boulevard "where walking, biking and transit become enjoyable ways to experience the City Centre." It also speaks to making the envisioned boulevard "a place people choose to visit and linger - a destination, not a thoroughfare."

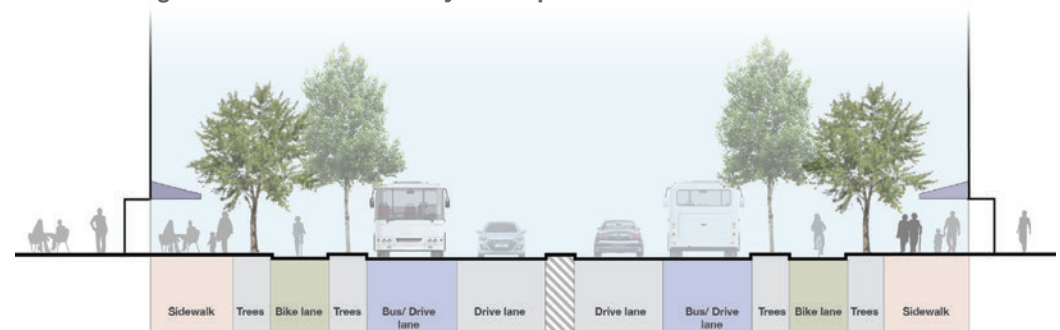
Ideas:

- Keep the same 30m width
- Reallocate the space more equitably to other methods of travel
- Include multi modal elements (wide sidewalks, bike lanes, trees)

Figure 26. City Grid Comparison



Figure 27. South Fraser Way Concept Cross-Section



TRANSIT

The OCP envisions a major transformation of the city's public transportation, starting with the streamlining of a frequent transit route that runs along the entirety of McCallum Road and South Fraser Way, from the U District to the Clearbrook Urban Centre.

The directness of routes plays a big role in a system's efficiency and reliability, and thus in people's willingness to use it. But the frequency of service does even more. As service becomes more frequent, users don't need to think as much about planning their trips around a particular schedule. This is transit freedom - the knowledge that no matter when you may be stepping out to grab a bus, one will be coming soon. (Walker, 2017)

It's also important to consider the 'first and last mile' of transit users' trips. The journey for those riding a bus doesn't start from the moment they enter the bus, but rather the moment they leave their house. This means sidewalks and bus stop locations are all integral to that journey.

Ideas:

- **Encourage a transit system that is frequent, direct, and reliable**
- **Connect building entrances to bus stops**
- **Place bus stops as close to interections as possible**
- **Provide amenities like benches and shelters**
- **Rethink Bourquin Exchange**

These processes can look to the Queensway Transit Exchange in downtown Kelowna. It is a new facility that integrates beautiful structural wood in a contemporary design that is inviting and well-lit at night. Ample seating and space make it a comfortable place to wait for your bus.

Queensway Exchange - Kelowna (photo credit: VIA Architecture, photo by: Ed White)

3.4 Beautiful Community Places

Much like new buildings in the CCNP should incorporate amenity spaces, at a larger scale, the neighbourhood should have community spaces that act as gathering places for a broader population. There are a range of different types and scales of community places, and for them to be well attended, lively, and beautiful there are key components that can contribute to their success.

PARKS

Parks have become some of the most sought after amenities in cities. In many cases they can act as major catalysts in the redevelopment of entire neighbourhoods. While the CCNP has a beautiful jewel in Mill Lake Park, it's possible more neighbourhood focused parks become necessary in the future.

Ideas:

- **Open up Mill Lake Park to its surroundings, especially on the northern edge adjacent to Sevenoaks Shopping Centre**
- **Examine ways to enhance local parks (ie. Oriole, Inspiration)**
- **Identify locations for new parks and trails**
- **Connect existing parks and trails**



Opening up Mill Lake Park to its surroundings can be done by including direct connections that draw people in with treed corridors, signs, and preserved views from South Fraser Way and other nearby streets.

PLAZAS

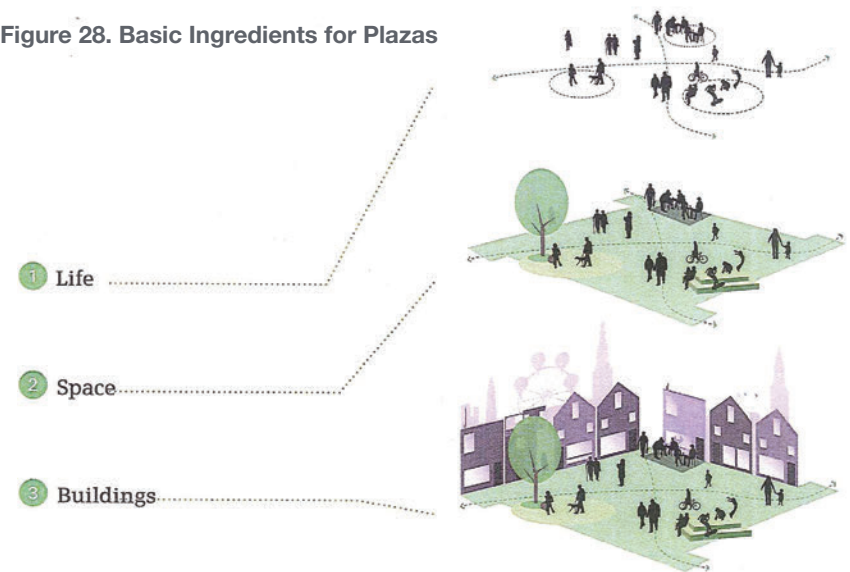
Abbotsford is known more for its parks than its outdoor plazas. But as the CCNP grows, plazas can become an excellent supplement to the city's park system. They can be just as enticing, relaxing, and enjoyable as parks. The main difference is related to size and make up. Plazas tend to be smaller and are built primarily with man-made materials like brick, concrete, and stone. Parks tend to be bigger and use more natural elements like lawns, trees, and lakes.

What helps make Plazas especially successful is ensuring they have eyes on them from people in surrounding buildings and active ground floors, keeping them safe and vibrant. They can also be used for a wide range of cultural events and activities.

Ideas:

- **Refresh the Civic Plaza to encourage more community use**
- **Identify locations for new public plazas**
- **Ensure plazas are framed by buildings with active uses (restaurants, retail, entertainment)**
- **Provide appropriate seating**

Figure 28. Basic Ingredients for Plazas



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

For neighbourhoods to be complete, they must have community facilities within relative proximity to where people live. These often become the heart of community gathering, social events and civic pride.

Ideas:

- **Plan for future community facilities**
- **Identify appropriate locations for community facilities**
- **Consider Community Amenity Contributions or Density Bonusing policies to help fund community facilities**

The splash pad and Water Garden Pavillion at Prince Arthur's Landing in Thunder Bay is an example of how great public space with beautiful community facilities can work together to create attractive and memorable urban environments.



Prince Arthur's Landing - Thunder Bay (photo credit: Brook McIlroy Architects/Landscape Architects, photo by David Whittaker)

3.5 Sticky Streets

Together the elements discussed in the last sections help create public environments that are attractive and efficient. But to make them engaging for users, incorporating bustling retail streets with placemaking initiatives into the neighbourhood is the final step. These can be called ‘sticky streets’. While it’s possible to count commercial square footage, bus frequency, traffic, and population, a sticky street is more about the quality of a place. It’s a street people stop to enjoy, and don’t want to leave (Toderian, 2014).

RETAIL STREETS

As concluded in the Commercial Market Study, the projected growth for new retail development up to 2041 is relatively small. Only 170,000 additional square feet is required to support the influx of people as predicted by the OCP’s population model. This means retail streets will have to emerge primarily through the redevelopment and redistribution of what exists in the CCNP.

Ideas:

- **Explore ways to spread new commercial square footage**
- **Identify retail streets**
- **Design retail streets with on-street parking, ample pedestrian space, and street-fronting buildings.**



Retail Streets should provide ample space for pedestrians, on-street parking, patio space, and a continuous façade of ground level retail for window shopping.

PLACEMAKING

It’s one thing to have a street full of successful shops, but another entirely when that street tells a story about the community it’s in. Placemaking is the art of turning regular spaces into cultural places that involve the neighbourhood, tell a story, and engage visitors. The grassroots nature of these initiatives translates into neighbourhood ownership and assures success.

This report speaks to the missing identity of the CCNP. Unlike the Historic Downtown, it lacks those interesting placemaking projects that enliven and add character. For the CCNP to find its footing, provide memorable sticky streets, and become an attractive place for investment, placemaking can play a big role.

Ideas:

- **Involve local residents and businesses with the arts community in small, tactical placemaking projects**
- **Incorporate public art in highly frequented spaces**



Placemaking can be done for temporary events and installations. Here, a parking spot is transformed into a small park and helps people imagine how a space can be used differently. (photo credit: Paul Krueger)

The single most important thing to achieve sticky streets in the CCNP revolves around transforming it from a neighbourhood people drive through, into a destination in its own right.

The transformation of Argyle Street in Halifax is an excellent example. A colourful argyle pattern was painted on the asphalt, planters and benches were added, pedestrian-scaled lighting was installed and a sleepy street became a stunning sensation. Its success not only lies in the number of people walking down the street, but also in the number of them smiling.



Argyle Street - Halifax (photo credit: Meghan Groff)



4.0 Engagement Strategy

Pursuant to Section 475 of the Local Government Act, any amendment or update to an Official Community Plan must include consideration of consultation with specific groups.

The purpose of this section is to outline the communication strategies, tasks, and activities that the City of Abbotsford will undertake to consult and engage these groups and others. It is the City's intent to enable meaningful and timely discussions that will help create the CCNP. The engagement activities will be targeted, inclusive and innovative, and incorporate various methods to reach out to identified groups and the community. Particular attention will be paid to using different types of engagement tailored to each Stage of the process. A more detailed engagement plan will be included in each stage's staff report for the subsequent stage.

The CCNP forms a part of a broader city wide initiative entitled 'Plan 200K' and engagement activities will be coordinated to complement other ongoing projects within the Plan 200K umbrella.

4.1 Who Will We Engage

The following is a preliminary list of stakeholders who may have an interest in the development of the CCNP. The list will serve as a starting point to help inform the creation and delivery of engagement activities. This will be reviewed and supplemented throughout the process.

General Public

- City of Abbotsford residents (targeting those living within the CCNP)
- City Centre businesses and property owners
- Individuals who work, shop, or recreate in the City Centre area

Governments and Government Agencies

- First Nations (Matsqui, Sumas, Leq'á:mel)
- School District 34
- University of the Fraser Valley
- BC Transit
- Fraser Health

City of Abbotsford

- City Council
- Senior Management Team
- Technical Advisory Group
- Development Advisory Committee (DAC)
- Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Parks, Recreation, and Culture Advisory Committee (PRCAC)

Key Organizations

- Abbotsford Youth Commission
- Transit and Cycling Advocacy groups
- Arts & Culture Groups
- Abbotsford Community Services
- Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
- Indo-Canadian Business Association
- Urban Development Institute (Fraser Valley Chapter)



4.2 How & When Will We Engage

The type engagement activities will largely depend on where the project is within the 4 Stage process. Earlier, in Stages 1 and 2, a broader public conversation about goals and vision is intended to help shape the more detailed and policy-driven discussions that will take place in Stage 3. Stage 4 will focus on refining the draft CCNP and will involve a public hearing in the adoption of the final plan.

Throughout the project the Plan 200K website and the social media accounts will be used to inform and engage the public.

STAGE 1 - BACKGROUND RESEARCH

In this stage, the engagement will focus on informing stakeholders about the CCNP project and its process. It will be an opportunity to introduce neighbourhood planning to the community and ask for preliminary comments and questions to ensure objectives are clear.

Activities may include:

- News Release
- Update to DAC & TAC
- Background Research Report presentation to Council

STAGE 2 - EXPLORING OPTIONS

Engagement activities will begin in earnest in Stage 2. It will emphasize targeted, inclusive, innovative methods to reach out to a diverse cross section of the community. Staff will make an effort in reaching out to people where they are already gathering such as at Mill Lake Park, Sevenoaks Shopping Centre, and Clearbrook Library.

Activities may include:

- News Release
- Mailout to owners and owner-occupiers of the entire CCNP area
- MetroQuest online survey
- Road show events
- Speaker event
- City Committee Workshop
- Exploring Options Report presentation to Council

STAGE 3 - DRAFT PLAN

The engagement in Stage 3 will seek to confirm the preferred plan developed through Stage 2 is reflective of community desires. It will also provide an opportunity to set a direction for policies that support the preferred plan.

Activities may include:

- News Release
- Road show events
- Design Charrette
- Property Owner & Developer Workshop
- City Committee Workshop
- Draft Plan presentation to Council

STAGE 4 - FINAL PLAN

The draft CCNP will be shared with stakeholders to gather final comments and feedback, and ensure it reflects the broader input received throughout the process.

Activities may include:

- News Release
- Popup event
- Final Plan presentation to Council
- Adoption as a Bylaw with Public Hearing

A more detailed engagement plan will be included in each stage's staff report for the subsequent stage.



5.0 Next Steps

The receipt of the Background Research Report by the City of Abbotsford's Council marks the end of Stage 1 of the CCNP process. With a preliminary vision set out by the OCP and a better understanding of what the CCNP looks like today, Stage 2 can begin.

This next stage will focus on exploring options regarding land uses, streets, and amenities with the help of community input through broad and far-reaching engagement activities. The feedback staff receive will influence a preferred concept which will then form the foundation of the City Centre Neighbourhood Plan. Staff will present a Preferred Concept Report, including detailed engagement results, to Council at the end of Stage 2.

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CITY CENTRE | NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Background Research Report - April 2017

