



INFORMATION BULLETIN

Sumas Prairie flood mitigation preferred option to be presented to Council following community feedback

ABBOTSFORD – June 10, 2022 – Following public engagement with Abbotsford residents, farmers and business owners, City of Abbotsford staff will be presenting a preferred flood risk reduction and mitigation option to Abbotsford City Council for their consideration on June 13, 2022. Once Council has approved the recommendation to support a flood mitigation option, the City will seek funding from senior governments.

On April 4, 2022, City of Abbotsford staff presented four draft options to Council that ranged in protection level, cost, and infrastructure options. In April and May, Abbotsford residents, businesses, and neighbouring governments had the opportunity to learn more about each option and share their feedback on what matters most to them through information sessions and surveys. Through this feedback, City staff learned that top three priorities for Abbotsford participants were:

1. Avoiding damage to buildings, barns and other infrastructure
2. Preserving existing land for agriculture and food security
3. Maximizing opportunities for agriculture.

In total, over half of Sumas Prairie respondents preferred Option 4, followed by Option 2, Option 3 and Option 1. Common key themes from community feedback included the desire to meet provincial standards for flood mitigation, plan for the long-term and prepare for more regular flooding events, address the issues to avoid repeating past events, protect future generations and future investments and reduce potential impacts on homes, farms, businesses and transportation routes. More information can be found on [Let's Talk Abbotsford](#).

Preferred Option:

Based on community feedback and additional technical analysis, a new Preferred Option has been developed and is a hybrid of some of the key infrastructure enhancements and flood-mitigation concepts originally identified in Options 2, 3 and 4.

Implementing this new hybrid option would enhance the City's existing flood protection system while maximizing agricultural land and food security, and minimizing the number of impacted properties. New dykes would be constructed through Sumas Prairie West, extending along the border, with Marshall Creek being separated from Nooksack overflow and Arnold area being protected. In a future Nooksack overflow event, if this option is implemented, water is anticipated to be spread out through Sumas Prairie West, which would then flow through a narrow designated floodway to the Sumas and Fraser Rivers via a new Sumas River Pump Station. Additional water storage and a new environmental area will be created by relocating the dyke along the north side of Highway 1. In addition to a new Sumas River Pump Station, this option will also include the construction of three

pump stations in Sumas Prairie West, resiliency improvements to Barrowtown Pump Station, and replacing temporary works with permanent works along Sumas Dyke. An estimated cost for this Preferred Option is expected to be available in the coming weeks.

The intent of this option is to preserve agricultural land and minimize impacts on properties by spreading out water. This option would meet minimum flood protection guidelines in B.C. and incorporate enhancements such as dyke setbacks and floodway creation and provides a high level of overall protection. The level of protection offered by this option to Sumas Prairie Lake Bottom is up to a one in 200-year event (with climate change considerations). More information can be found on [Let's Talk Abbotsford](#).

The plan for this new preferred option will be used to inform funding discussions with senior levels of government. Throughout this process, City of Abbotsford staff met with Provincial government, City of Chilliwack, Fraser Valley Regional District, and Whatcom County, Cities of Everson and Sumas in Washington State in United States. The City of Abbotsford started intergovernmental conversations with Semá:th, Mâthexwi and Leq'á:mel First Nations leadership. More in-depth engagement involving First Nations and seniors levels of government is expected as we work together on implementing a long-term flood mitigation plan that protects Sumas Prairie so that we don't experience the same impact as the disastrous flood in November 2021.

Interested residents can watch the Council presentation on June 13th live online at www.abbotsford.ca/watchcouncil; or attend the meeting in person to view the proceedings at 3 p.m. at the Matsqui Centennial Auditorium at 32315 South Fraser Way, Abbotsford, BC V2T 1W7.

Links:

To learn more about the options and engagement on Abbotsford flood mitigation, visit: www.letstalkabbotsford.ca/abbotsfordfloodresponse

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For more information contact:

Aletta Vanderheyden
Communications and Public Relations Manager
City of Abbotsford
E: avanderheyden@abbotsford.ca