

**Mitchell Comb:** Good evening, Honorable Mayor and Council. Today I'd like to start off this evening's presentation with a little bit of context and background in order to be able to help our audience understand the purpose of this city-initiated planning exercise that's taken place over the last four and a half years. The McKee Neighborhood Plan as seen up on the screen there in red, is predominantly privately owned land that has been planned for development since the incorporation of the city in the mid-1990s. In 2016, the official community plan update termed this area the new neighborhood's area, and it was slated to support 25% of the city's future growth located within the urban development boundary.

Now, the remaining 75% of growth would occur within our urban core centered on building a city center connected by a primary transit corridor that would connect to four urban centers. Examples would be the historic downtown and the U District. Then we would have modest or moderate growth within 14 neighborhood centers that are sprinkled throughout the city. Now, this city structure that you see before you is based on good planning principles and input from city residents over engagement sessions through the OCP.

The proposed plan area is located within the urban development boundary, and it is roughly about 769 hectares in size. If you think like me, it's roughly about 1,901 acres. This has been a four-stage planning process. For those of you that are not familiar with the city's four-stage planning process, I'm just going to unpack this a little bit. Stage one background research is where city staff take a look at existing conditions. We look at our environmental, archeological, geotechnical, those types of things. Stage two explores options is where we undertake conceptual infrastructure. We had a consultant help us with that, and I'll unpack that a bit later, but we also had a visioning exercise with the neighborhood.

We wanted to be key stakeholders to be able to understand the general land use and visioning for what people envisioned in this area. For stage three, here we modeled the engineering work that had taken place earlier in stage two to prove that out, to ensure that it worked, and then we drafted policies and development permit guidelines and brought that to council and once again, undertook some engagement. Today we are at stage four, undertaking the public hearing and then council was able to take a look at this for their consideration and make a decision hopefully on March 27th.

Now, I'm going to get into each individual stage with a little bit more detail so that we can understand what took place in the planning process. For stage one background research, our key goal is that we wanted to determine protected lands from developable lands. We based this on City Environmental Policy and Senior Government Legislation. That is our provincial and federal legislation. We examined geotechnical water courses and pioneer areas, species at risk, and also just general wildlife movement throughout the area and we all took a look at an archeological overview assessment. An archeological overview assessment is we had representatives from our local First Nations walk the land with us in order to be able to understand what some of the areas of archeological potential could be.

Then we also sat down with First Nation staff and reviewed not only the archeological order assessment, we reviewed all of the other environmental information with them during stage one. This stage culminated with this one background research report. We brought this to the council and shared with the council all of the findings from stage one and one of the key findings that we had is the map that you see on the right here, which is our net areas map. This delineates those protected from developable lands. One of the other key things that we did throughout this is we also mentioned to the council or established our key public engagement strategy and with that, we delineated who we would talk to during the process of that. One of that was that we would engage our local First Nations.

This next slide here helps us to understand the lay of the land. I have a few segments to this wheel, but first of all, we have our gross area of the plant. We have 1,901 acres. I'm going to start off with

our non-developable areas, which comprise 24% of the lay of the land. This is comprised of our stream site setbacks, our critical habitat for species at risk, and as well as our unstable areas. These were areas that we looked at from a geotechnical sense that had a high propensity to have a landslide occur. We wanted to deem those as non-developable.

Then we have our existing development, which comprises roughly 298 acres or 16% of the plan. These are where people live today in Auguston and the Highlands. Then we have our instream development. Now these are properties that have urban zoning in place prior to the 2016 OCP update. An example would be our Vicarro Ranch or parts of Highlands or Auguston.

Then we have our city parcels. This comprises 22% of the land area, or roughly about 420 acres and this is comprised of largely the Ledgeview Golf Course and also open space that was catered to the city through development processes that occurred earlier. Then we have our net area, which comprises 23% of the land area. Now if you look at that, there's three different colors in there. I'm just going to pick on the white color first of all. This is our unconstrained area. We know that 44% of that 23% or 435 acres can be developed. The orange and purple blue, sorry the color's a little bit different from down here, but these are areas that require further geotechnical assessment at the time of development if the plan was to move forward. We don't know if those areas can be completely developed, but if they were, then they would have the underlying land supply. I'll get into that a little bit later.

Stage two explores options. We started this off by undertaking conceptual engineering. We hired a consultant and they helped us understand and prove out that we could actually have development occur on the mountainous landscape. One of the other key technical pieces that we've looked at was our archeological impact assessment, and this is where we once again enlisted representatives from our local First Nations and we had to conform to the criteria that's established in the Heritage Conservation Act, which is stipulated by the province.

We took a look at these areas and undertook shovel testing. Once this was completed, this study was sent to local First Nations for review, and then it was sent to the province where it was accepted. They accepted the findings. The provincial archeology branch provided an acceptance to the city. Once we had those technical studies in place, we undertook our public engagement process. We relied heavily on our Let's Talk Abbotsford Platform as this was during the heart of the pandemic, but in the fall of 2021, we were able to hold small in-person design workshop sessions, as you can see on the right there. This is where we undertook that visioning exercise and was able to understand what folks wanted to see in the neighborhood in terms of development. The culmination of that, we took our stage two concept report to the council with the key finding being a land use concept.

Stage three, staff drafted policies, created development permit guidelines, and then with the help of our engineering consultants, we modeled the servicing and conducted a clear transportation impact assessment. Once we had that information, we reported to council with the stage three draft plan. Here we received permission to undertake public engagement and also move on to stage four of the plan. Once again, we relied on our Let's Talk Abbotsford Platform to be able to speak with the greater public, but we also were able to hold three in-person public open houses in May of last year. I'd also like to note that we also have some targeted engagement sessions with First Nation staff, trail user groups, and landowners. Speaking to the broader engagement that took place during this planning process, we had online methods and we also used in-person methods. For online, we had approximately 7,800 interactions with the plan. In-person, we had 200-plus interactions. I'd hesitate to say there probably had more if it wouldn't have been during the pandemic.

Now I'm going to jump into the plan itself. This is an artist's rendering of what the McKee Village could look like in the future if the plan was to be accepted. This is looking to the South, and this

would be the village at the intersection of McKee Road and Blauson Boulevard. As part of the plan, we've created a vision statement. Now, this vision statement, I'm not going to go through it, but the purpose of this vision statement is to council, development, community, staff, the general public, understand the purposes and vision of the plan.

The proposed land use concept as shown here on the right, is largely consistent with our official community plan. The largest or the greatest amount of space is taken up by our open space land use designation in green. Some of our urban development land uses of note would be our Urban Four Detached, which is our single-family homes, largely Urban Two Ground-oriented, which consists of a large Townhouse. We have our McKee Village which would be the primary area that would help out with providing commercial and recreational services to residents living in the area or wanting to recreate in this area.

Our commercial streets designation is found within the McKee Village by those two red strips, and those have been moved into the center of McKee Village, provide maximum exposure to future businesses within this area. The policies that are found within the plan are shaped around three different inputs. First of all, we have our community and stakeholder input. This is all the things that we heard from people in the planning process, and we heard a lot as I mentioned earlier. Then we have our existing policies and plans. This would entail policy from the official community plan as well as from our master plan. Things like our Transportation Master Plan, and then we have our chuckle and related constraints. Here we have all studies that we conducted, like our archeological, our geotechnical, and our environmental studies.

Then we move into our four key goals that were framed from our inputs. We have four key goals that inform the foundation of the McKee Neighborhood Plan. We have number one, enhanced outdoor recreation. Two we work with the land, three finding of balance, and four adaptive neighborhoods. We have a lot of policies within the time, but I'm just going to touch on a couple of key ones for the public hearing tonight.

First of all, I'm going to touch on our trail policies as you noticed from the correspondence we received, a lot of people are interested in trails. There are a large number of informal trails within the McKee Neighborhood Plan currently. Now, staff would be able to plan for trails within this area that would be acquired through the development process as this moves forward. We have a policy that we've put in place here, 3.55 in McKee Future Study.

What this would entail would be that PRC staff as this land would come in through the development process, that they would be able to undertake a planning study that would basically look at the details of future trails, their design, what they'd be used for, just all the details. We also have staff have added in the staff report a budget amendment request to the tune of \$75,000 to undertake this McKee Trail Future Study. On the graphic to the right, you can see that there's some orange lines there.

Those are not indicative of the number of trails within the plan area. This is just showing some trail corridors that could be used. Now, number one, you're going to have some trails that are going to be able to stay as is. Number two, we're going to have the opportunity to create some new trails. We've put in place policy 3.68, which is user group partnerships.

As we heard from our trail user group, that we want to be able to have the able to partner if they search in a formal matter with the city to be able to be involved in the design of this trail network so that it's usable and meets the needs of our user at a high level.

Last, of all, we've got two policies that I've put in here, 3.61 and 3.62. The buildout of this area, this is a large area, you got to remember this is 1,900 acres roughly. You're looking at probably 20 to 40 years worth of development. In the interim, we have policy 3.61, which will provide for interim

Trailheads. We know that folks want to be able to use this as this is building out, and we want this to be safe. There's interim parking areas for people to be able to access the trail network and to be able to continue on with their adventures. Then we have policy 3.62, which is ultimate Trailheads. Now, we've put this in place as this under a built-out condition. We wanted to be able to formally recognized areas, staging for people to go off on a bike or a hike and be able to be able to park safely.

The next policy area that I wanted to touch on is our environmental policies. Here, we wanted to ensure that we meet our senior government legislations that's established by the province and the federal government. We've put in place policy 3.29, which deals with our water courses in Riparian areas, as well as 3.32 for habitat hubs. We want to ensure that species can propagate within the plan area. We have policies 3.34 and 3.42. Those are indicative as the map to the right there that show that we have wildlife areas for them to be able or corridors for them to be able to move through the plan area safely up into the upper reaches of Sumas Mountain, but also when they hit road crossings. These will be fleshed out further through the planning process.

As Mayor mentioned earlier, this is just a framework for the puzzle and the individual pieces will come in as we build out over the years, but this just allows us for coordinated development. Also, within the plan, we've proposed three development permit areas. We have our McKee Village, which will help define the form and character of this key area. It will encourage the construction of a dynamic livable neighborhood that caters to daily commercial needs and outdoor recreational pursuits.

The second one is our Steep Slope development permit guideline. This will protect residents and property from the potential risk of natural hazards and preserve the natural hillside character. We heard from folks that wanted to see, look like a mountain. That was really important as well. Our last DP is new, our wildfire hazard, and we want to be able to adapt wildfire management and prevention best practices to minimize wildfire risk. We all know that climate change is upon us and we want to be able to adapt to that.

Another key element to the plan is infrastructure. In order to be able to build in a mountainous area to help development move forward, we had to really look at the infrastructure situation. For our transportation system, this continued on the same vein as our OCP, and that we wanted to have a multimodal system. We wanted to be able to have it with complete streets developed for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and vehicle operators to be able to move through the plan area and into the greater city network.

We also conducted a traffic impact assessment, which identified major road upgrades to Whatcom Road and McKee Roads. In fact, those would be twins to handle the population growth. We also provide for the signalization of future intersections. We've added Lands Beyond Access Point. This is for our development community so that they can collaboratively work and develop to build our collector road network in an equitable fashion. Then for our storm and wastewater infrastructure, we have a catchment-based system. We're featuring 12 new stormwater community detention facilities to help manage our stormwater and our drainage.

Finally, but not least, but our water distribution network proposing new reservoirs and an expense cell to an existing reservoir out in the plan area. We'll have pump stations connected to the water main trunk network. As this is an OCP amendment, we are required to refer the plan to a number of government entities. Those are listed there. We received comments back from a number of those that have included in the council public hearing package.

To conclude this planning process, if I was to wrap this up for council and for the public here is that a McKee NP presents a vision as an outdoor adventure hub. The plan takes into a diverse interest, and I mean diverse and integrates development while still protecting the environment. There's an

emphasis on trail retention and creation and the approach taken through policies enables the design and details of this future trail network to be worked out with trail user groups in partnerships. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you for your presentation. Before we start with the speakers, I just have to also mention that Council Warkentin has recused himself from tonight's hearings of the conflict that he had stated earlier. With that, I will ask the first speaker to come forward. Again, just a reminder that we do have five minutes and-

**Diane Davies:** He had half an hour. [chuckles] Okay, I'm going to do my best. Diane Davies, **[Redacted]**, Abbotsford resident long-term, and much in love with wildlife in the nature. I thank you very much for rejecting the We Town Council and Mayor, but I'm very disappointed you have accepted this watered-down version of the development. I admit Tech District caught me by surprise. My knowledge of the same is limited.

However, a few things jumped out at me. The company not named hired Gavin Dew, everything I'm saying here, I have documents to prove that what I'm saying, so I'm not necessarily saying it, I'm repeating it. He is a lobbyist and doing his job, but the only interest he has in Abbotsford is development and to make money for the company. He states in an interview with the newspaper that they are getting a ton of buy-ins from stakeholders in senior government. Who is government, is he talking about? Have any of these officials influenced the city council staff? Anybody? If so, they should be recusing themselves and I don't know. I'm only going by what he has said. I'd like to know who they are.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Excuse me. Just for point of order, we're actually not discussing the Abbotsford Tech District. This is the neighborhood plan. This is not Abbotsford Tech District.

**Diane Davies:** Sorry. Yes, you're right. My apologies.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** This is the McKee Neighborhood Plan. They have not invested any money with the city on this issue.

**Diane Davies:** Okay. Thank you. Also, I wanted to know if, being that this is the third reading, is this a done deal? It looks like you've put out \$75,000 so far. Is that correct? No. Okay. Mr. Dew also states that the key appeal of this whole land thing is livable to relatively affordable locations. Affordable to who? It's definitely not the average working system that can afford to live there.

[applause]

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Just again excuse me. I just want to be really clear that first of all, if you could just hold applause, we just don't want to intimidate anybody. At the same time, excuse me, this is not the Abbotsford Tech District that we're talking about. This is the neighborhood plan that staff presented is what we're discussing.

**Diane Davies:** It's still people that are going to be living there and houses built there, correct?

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Houses and townhouses, yes.

**Diane Davies:** That's what I'm saying. That is part of what I'm saying. The other thing that was quite disturbing, this is going to be built on Sumas Mountain. Is that correct?

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** I'm not here to debate with you. [crosstalk] This is the land that is McKee Peak, yes.



**Diane Davies:** Also, the reason I'm asking is because it appears there's a whole lot of land that's going to be developed on the base of Sumas Mountain. Am I in the right area there? I just don't want you to interrupt me if I keep going. I'm going to be out of time. I'm always-

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** McKee Peak is the land that is across the street from Ledgeview Golf Course, and across from Auguston.

**Diane Davies:** The reason I ask is the Vicarro Ranch and the little brown barn or red barn where it is also getting developed and it appears a lot of green space for Abbotsford is getting destroyed quietly bit by bit. The destruction of wildlife and habitat seems to have been overlooked. It wasn't until someone stated point-blank, "You intend to protect at-risk species, but say nothing of non-at-risk species or larger animals." The city replied, "Large mammals such as bear and deer don't have any formal senior government protection. However, the riparian areas and the wildlife linkage identified in the plan will provide habitat for all wildlife, including those at risk and those with healthy populations such as bear and deer. We all know there are several other species of animals living on the mountains, cougars, raccoons, et cetera. These are not considered at risk, but if we keep killing them, they will be at risk."

The city also indicated there's a 200-foot land by the riparian area that it's enough room for people and wildlife and that is simply not realistic, but again, not properly studied in my opinion. I'm one minute here. Please don't turn a blind eye. You are not just destroying the mountain for humans but are sentencing a large percentage of wildlife to death and that is a fact.

Lastly, Mr. Dew keeps saying, resolving those issues will require more talking. We have to make things workable. Those are technical and financial conversations. There is time to address those challenges. Why would you give them a third reading under such questionable circumstances? Please sit back and do some more research. Even your original consultant thought that some of the ceremonials were unrealistic. My last thing. I don't want one dime of my money spent on the destruction of Sumas Mountain. Out of respect for all of you, which I voted for five of years sitting up there, and I have phoned you before, please remember every one of you that reelected are responsible to us, not Mr. Dew or the company. Thank you very much for listening.

[applause]

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Just a reminder, if we just keep our applause. I know that people are passionate, but I just don't want anybody to feel intimidated if they have a contrary view. Again, just a reminder that this isn't about a company bringing this forward. This is the city initiating a neighborhood plan that will guide future development. There's no development application made by anybody in this process at this time. This is an overall concept plan that will guide future applications if they do come forward. Thank you.

**Sophie Kerrigan:** Excuse me. My name is Sophie Kerrigan and I live at **[Redacted]**. I'm here today to talk about the city's requirement in two discussing with the Francophone School District of BC as well as the Abbotsford School District. I understand there's been a lot of communication already with the Abbotsford School District as far as what would be needed and things like that.

However, I was the one who told the infrastructure direction of the Francophone School District of BC of the McKee development, which means that they did not receive any consultation from the city of Abbotsford, which is bylaw a requirement, not the only the Abbotsford School District is required to be communicated with the Francophone School District of BC is also required. That has been confirmed with the lawyer who was also involved with the BC Supreme Court for the Francophone School District, which they've won.

I just want to make sure that the city does get due diligence in ensuring that not only the Abbotsford School District is evaluated for their required sites, but the Francophone School District is giving full consideration since I've let the school district know only a couple months ago.

I would urge to not just accept, but like, "Oh, okay." Well, we don't really have the time to really fulfill your duty of disclosing the information and ensuring that a site may be kept for the Francophone School District if needed. I know the recent census of the government has now included Francophone communities, which Abbotsford has a small one. I am part of that minority here in Abbotsford. I just want to make sure that these are considered within development of the McKee Neighborhood. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. Yes, please proceed.

**Linda Burton:** My name is Linda Burton. My address in Abbotsford is **[Redacted]**, V3G 1H1 near the big red barn of the Cooper's Farm. I do not support the by-law in its present form. Why? I'm here to speak for the Peak. Actually, if the Peak, its geology, and its natural inhabitants were right here in this room, we would hear this. We need to be silent. We need to be still, we need to take deep breaths. Who, what is not being heard at this hearing? Can you hear the tree branches whispering? Can you hear the rain dripping down, percolating through? Can you hear your conscience? Can you hear as William Stafford writes in his poem, *Traveling through the Dark* around our group? I could hear the wilderness. Listen, council members, you will have to think hard for all of us. The peak is speaking harshly through the Semá:th, Sumas First Nation submission, through Phil Henderson with Strix Environmental Consulting, through the Fraser Valley Conservancy, through the Abbotsford Mission Nature Club.

This plan privileges the word balance. This is a time not for balance, but for coming down on the side of what is ethically right. This should be public land and I'd be willing to pay increased tax so this area becomes a concept park.

[applause]

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Again, I'm just asking respectfully that to respect everybody's opinion, I just request that you do not applaud. Again, I'm trying to be-- I know we live in a time where being gracious and following rules is not generally popular, but I'm just asking again to be reasonable. Thank you. It is democracy. Yes, and you can clap all you want at a later date. I'm asking for people just to be [applause] Thank you. Can you please proceed?

**Greg Kenny:** Good evening, Your Worship. My name is Greg Kenny, Managing Director of the Kenny Group, at **[Redacted]**. I've been advised that my public speaking is somewhat robotic, so I ask that you humor me while I share a few thoughts and a little history. Since 1950, the Kenny family has been involved in the Abbotsford business community through various retail, farming, land development, construction, and rental property interests. Beginning in March 1965, our family acquired four parcels on McKee Peak, comprising approximately 117 acres.

Given our family history as farmers, the lands on McKee Peak were purchased for that purpose until the time was appropriate for development. Further to this, in 1969, my parents purchased a 35-acre farm on Bateman Road where we established a beef operation. As our farm grew, we harvested hay from our fields on McKee Peak and hauled the hay to Bateman Road for cattle feed. Then in the mid-1970s, unauthorized users of our property on McKee Peak began to destroy our hay crops by starting bonfires and having wild parties, which resulted in a lot of broken glass garbage and debris being strewn among our crops.

When we tried to salvage our hay crops on McKee Peak, to our distress our cattle were injured by broken glass in the hay, and our tractor tires were punctured by broken glass in the fields. After

several confrontations with increasingly aggressive trespassers, my grandfather and father feared for their personal safety and felt there was little chance that fences or no trespassing signs would be respected. The subsequent defacement and destruction of no trespassing signs posted by our neighbors is testament to this. Consequently, we retreated to our farm on Bateman Road and reduced the size of our operation due to the lost crops on McKee Peak.

Since this time and for over 55 years, we have paid property taxes to the City of Abbotsford even though our land has been largely unusable for farming or development purposes. In 2021, the property taxes for our lands on McKee Peak were over \$34,000, and in 2022, the property taxes were over \$48,000. In the past, our family has provided the City of Abbotsford and neighboring landowners with access to our property and lands beyond when requested. Also, several members of our family are enthusiastic users of the trails on McKee Peak. However, there are presently no other authorized users of our property on McKee Peak.

We believe that our family has been incredibly generous and gracious and quietly shouldering the property tax burden for over 55 years, while a growing list of unauthorized users enjoys the use of our private property. While prudence dictates that we cannot allow this situation to continue indefinitely, our long-term view and community-minded nature suggest a more pragmatic approach to this matter. The McKee Neighborhood Plan will add 5,000 to 9,000 desperately needed new homes to our region while legalizing incredible trail networks by capturing them within nine new city-owned parks.

Importantly, none of these new homes will be located on a floodplain. For those who desire a more extensive trail network, nearby Sumas Mountain Regional Park comprises 14,171 hectares with recreational activities including hiking, trail running, and mountain biking. In conclusion, thanks to the unprecedented efforts of mayor, council, and staff at the City of Abbotsford, the McKee Neighborhood Plan serves to address Abbotsford's critical housing shortage while achieving balance with the needs of all community stakeholders. Accordingly, the Kenny Group strongly supports the McKee Neighborhood Plan as the way forward for our vibrant and flourishing community. Thank you, Your Worship. This concludes my comments.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. Yes, please proceed.

**Bert Kenny:** Good evening, you're worship. My name is Bert Kenny. My address is **[Redacted]**. I'm 91 years old and I'm a longtime resident, farmer, landowner, and business owner in Abbotsford. Our family has been residents of Abbotsford since 1949. At that time, Abbotsford was a very small farming community with a population of roughly 750 people. Everyone who lived here knew everyone else. Over the decades, I've seen the size, structure, and borders of our community change dramatically. We've now grown to 163,000 residents.

That's a 216 times increase since 1949, and the City of Abbotsford projects a population level of 200,000 so the growth will continue. This expansion has been due to migration, urban sprawl, and the appeal of the beautiful Fraser Valley with its farms, open space, and greenery. Our local environment appeals to many. I often hear from newcomers how blessed they feel to live here. Growth has been occurring for the 74 years since our family has lived here, and it will continue. To facilitate this, Abbotsford is in need of more homes for individuals and families.

The McKee Neighborhood Plan offers a thoughtful and balanced way forward for our community. Abbotsford can continue to grow in a manner that respects our pasts and makes way for the future with more residents who are just discovering its appeal. Growth is inevitable and we are fortunate to have a city that is planning proactively for this growth. I support the McKee Neighborhood plan. Thank you, Your Worship. This concludes my comments.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. We have the next speaker. Come forward, please.



**Quinn Kenny:** Good evening, Your Worship. I'm Quinn Kenny from **[Redacted]** Avenue. When I look around Abbotsford and imagine where I want to live, I see a place where I can explore nature, where houses and forests meet in a balance that brings harmony to a much needed new neighborhood. The McKee Peak Plan brings what I imagine to life. It has a place for everyone. My name is Quinn Kenny, and on behalf of my nine cousins and I, we support the McKee Neighborhood Plan. Thank you, Your Worship. This concludes my comments.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. If we could have the next speaker come forward, please.

**Nicole Kleinman:** Nicole Kleinman. **[Redacted]** Road, Abbotsford. Honorable Mayor, city council members, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens, I would like to thank you all first for being here and for giving your time, allowing us to speak about the McKee Peak. I am a 42-year-old mother, wife, farmer, and lifetime citizen of the city of Abbotsford. I grew up here. I went to school here. I got my first job here. I was crowned Miss Fraser Valley right here on this stage. I'm raising my family here. Our farm is on the Sumas Flats.

With respect to the McKee Peak, the City of Quesnel recently completed a large mountain bike park and trail system. Williams Lake is well known for its mountain biking trails. Sun Peaks offers mountain biking during the off-season. Vedder Mountain in Chilliwack has recently upgraded their parking lots, bike and hiking trails for outdoor enthusiasts. The mountain biking and hiking community Ledgeview, or McKee Peak, is the place to be. It is a true literal emerald within our city.

YouTube content creators and fellow local Abbotsford resident, Jordan Boostmaster has generated tens of thousands of views online over the magnificent trails at Ledgeview. Apps such as Trailforks promotes McKee Peak as the hiking and biking place to be in the valley. It would not be difficult to find on Instagram how many people like myself, my sons and their friends who are present here tonight, who love the mountain as it is.

With talks of climate change, I cannot wrap my mind around the idea that we're here tonight discussing the idea of removing an ecologically thriving area that's loved by trail users and nature enthusiasts. Our farm and animals were impacted in 2021 by the heat dome and during the floods in November 2021. How much more suffering can we cause environmentally before we heed nature's warnings to stop?

Abbotsford has a great opportunity to be a leader when it comes to preservation. I encourage this city to join other municipalities like Quesnel, Williams Lake, Squamish, Revelstoke, and Sun Peaks, to name a few. We all have a beautiful gift in front of us, and it would be a shame to dismantle it. I implore you to take into consideration what is right, not what has already been set in motion. Let's send a message that this city cares about protecting and preserving its existing green space. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. If we can have the next speaker, please.

**Don Strangway:** Don Strangway. **[Redacted]**, Abbotsford. Your Worship, Council, fellow Abbotsford residents, I speak on behalf of the Abbotsford Walking, Hiking and More Group and also on behalf of the United Church Earth Stewards. I'm a member of both of those groups. I also live right at Whatcom Road on the highway, so I'm impacted by what happens up on the higher levels.

With the walking, hiking group and I didn't realize it was illegal. I've been learning something tonight. We generally do a hike up the trails once a month and sometimes more frequently, so I do appreciate Mr. Kenny's remarks. Anyway, we regularly walk up the trails and I've enjoyed the forest views, changing seasons of the year. The caves and waterfalls are of great interest and it is especially heartwarming to see the frozen waterfalls in the winter.

From near the top, the views over the Fraser Valley are spectacular. The mountain bikers do an excellent job of maintaining the trails and have been generous in allowing us hikers to share the trails. There is lots of bird life. A few hours in the forest does a lot to restore the soul. As a member of the United Church Earth Stewards, we have had a special interest in maintaining and planting trees in conjunction with the city of Abbotsford.

Needless to say, trees have an extremely important function in absorbing carbon dioxide and exchange it for oxygen. Others will speak for the owls, other wildlife, and this has been alluded to already, and I know there have been many technical studies. McKee Peak is one of the few accessible forested areas in our community. One cannot overemphasize the importance of what's called forest bathing and the maintenance of health. It is so important that doctors are actually now writing prescriptions for forest walks.

It horrified me to think of 20,000 homes and a mall and so on in the area. If this development goes ahead, I would hope that it's moderated. My initial response was it should not be developed at all. There are obviously some other considerations, so please reconsider the plan and maybe it could be at least toned down to some degree. Thank you.

[applause]

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. Next speaker, please.

**Brook Keyer:** Hello. My name is Brook Keyer. I'm a physiotherapist at the Abbotsford Regional Hospital. My husband and I moved to East Abbotsford six years ago from Vancouver. We've come to love the Abbotsford community, but can't help but feel disappointed in the overall lack of recreation opportunities when compared to surrounding municipalities. I recently wrote a letter to the city regarding the lack of indoor recreation facilities in Abbotsford.

Langley has six rec centers for roughly the same population. North Vancouver has 11 for a smaller population, while Abbotsford has just two. The response I received was essentially acknowledging that there should be more services but stating that historically the demand just hasn't been there. The fact that the McKee Peak trails are used and estimated 55,000 times annually, this data comes from the Trailforks and Strava apps, makes it evident that Abbotsford residents prioritize recreation.

I think it is time the city development reflects that. As a family with young children, we have continually needed to access swimming lessons in Mission and Langley due to lack of availability in Abbotsford, and I know many other families do the same. It would be an absolute shame to have to access outdoor recreation opportunities outside of Abbotsford as well should the development of McKee Peak reduce the trail network substantially.

I acknowledge that we are by no means entitled to these trails, as the majority are privately owned, but the fact that they are so heavily used is further reason to try to protect this beautiful gift. Due to a lack of indoor recreation facilities in Abbotsford, outdoor recreation opportunities should be prioritized. It is crucial for not only the enjoyment and quality of life of residents, but also the long term health of the community.

According to the vital statistics report released by the Abbotsford Community Foundation last year, Abbotsford, which is included in the Fraser East data, has some of the highest incidence of chronic disease in the province. Our hospital is overrun with patients, many of whom face chronic health challenges which lead to frequent admissions. If we have minimal indoor recreation space and continue to reduce our outdoor recreation space, the incidence of chronic disease will only intensify, which will further put strain on our already overburdened healthcare system. The Draft Neighborhood Plan states that the McKee area will become an outdoor recreation hub. Yet the current proposed trail networks pale in comparison to what is presently available. The draft plan

also states that there will be a future study completed to determine the trail hierarchy and that they will encourage local trail users to be involved in discussion at that time. My question to you is, will that not be too late? The draft map outlining the proposed trail networks shows trails crossing roadways and running through neighborhoods. If these are multi-use trails for easy access between neighborhoods, that's wonderful.

Will there still be enough untouched single-track trails for both locals and tourists to continue to enjoy? Development is inevitable. We will need more housing for future residents, and if done correctly, it will be a very desirable place to live. The question therein lies, will it be done correctly? I believe it is time to have a clearly defined plan for which single-track trails will be retained and how they can be protected for future generations.

I am asking you today, honorable mayor and councilors to please implement a trail advisory committee to be involved in discussions moving forward regarding the trail development. This committee should include representatives from local organizations, not limited to, but specifically the Fraser Valley Mountain Bike Association and the Abbotsford Trail Running Group. It is time to ensure Abbotsford will be a desirable city to live for generations to come. We must do everything we can to preserve our beautiful and unique McKee Peak. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you.

**Kimberly Stein:** Good evening, Honorable Mayor and council. My name is Kimberly Stein Connolly and I reside at **[Redacted]**. I am a homeowner at that residence. To start off, I thank you very much for this platform to be able to speak, but I do propose that any attention to get this platform out has been undesirable. I basically found out about this because I got the pamphlet in the mail that I could usually throw away, so I've had to spend the last two weeks researching and putting information together to the best of my capability to come forth and talk to you. I do thank you for this platform.

The first thing I would like to bring forward is the referendum. In the BC government site it says, "Approval of electors is required for a variety of municipal and regional district actions, including disposition of certain utilities, parklands, municipal boundaries and extension. When approval of electors is required, it may be obtained by the local government, either directly through ascent voting referendum or by first testing the water suit alternative approval process." I can only assume this would be the let's go Abbotsford thing that was discussed earlier today, would that be correct? Where you did the survey online where 435 people had responded at a 68% a no, I'm asking this question because I need to be informed.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** That was an online through Let's Talk Abbotsford.

**Kimberly Stein:** Is this what we're talking about in this BC curriculum, testing the waters? Is this what was used to get our intake on this proposal of the bylaw?

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Actually, those are questions that we can ask of staff after. We're here to actually hear what your opinions are.

**Kimberly Stein:** This is, I believe is very relevant considering if I would've known about this earlier, and I believe everybody here considering we're the people and we represent the council up there that we would've had to say from the stage one. I was completely flabbergasted knowing that it was at stage four development. I can't speak for anybody else, but for myself, I don't believe there was enough notice that was put out.

The other thing that I would like to bring to your attention is something else that I brought up was, as a homeowner, there's a possibility that our property may depreciate that the size of our home,

our property land that it's on, may be subdivided. Age may be taken into a factor on being able to keep her home and that coach houses and in-law suites are a requirement. Is this truthful?

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Again, that's not on the agenda for tonight. On your property there, you're allowed secondary suites, but that's not part of the infill where you live on Sandringham. That's a separate district. No, you're not part of the--

**Kimberly Stein:** I'm not part of that, but there are houses part of that?

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** In other parts of the city. Yes, and you can actually ask staff later on and they can give you that information.

**Kimberly Stein:** The third thing I wanted to bring up that was on the proposal is everyone within this neighborhood plan is going to be subject to the bylaws. Do we have what those bylaws are? Have there been a discussion on what these bylaws are going to be?

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Again, I don't want to get into a debate. This is an overall concept plan at this point. There's no development application actually before us today.

**Kimberly Stein:** As I said, I only had a couple weeks to go through this. I printed everything off and I spent hours circling, highlighting, and going through stuff and I just wanted to bring up everything that was of concern to me, and I thank you for this time.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Great. I would just encourage you if you have those specific questions to please get ahold of our staff and you can do that through email and you can set up a meeting and you can actually have those questions answered. This has been a four-and-a-half-year process, so I apologize if you weren't aware of it, but staff will be able to give you that information if you want to set up a time to have a chat with them.

**Kimberly Stein:** Yes. That's why I'm bringing this up is because there wasn't enough effort to make us aware. Thank you.

**Sasha Tuttle:** Hello, my name is Sasha Tuttle, and I am presenting today on behalf of the Sto:lo Research and Resource Management Center. I do have some slides that I set in advance. First one on the very left. Lovely, thank you. As a member of the SRRMC, it is my job to offer my services as a biologist to the members of Sto:lo community, including Sumas First Nation. In my team's discussions with Sumas First Nation, we have determined there to be significant cultural, ecological and social concerns surrounding the development of the McKee neighborhood.

Sumas has been here since time and memorial. There are archeological remains dating the Sumas people back thousands of years and oral histories even further. This is their land far before modern-day Canada came to be. I will be sharing a series of maps to help illustrate concerns brought up by the Sumas community. The first being a map that illustrates just how close the Sumas community is to this proposed development. The dark red boundary in the center is the development plan that we were shown prior or the outline of it.

Just to the bottom right of it is the Sumas First Nation Reserve.

I'd just like to add during the presentation we all saw that there was mention of consultation with local First Nations community, which I would assume to be Sumas First Nation. In my conversations with Councilor Tuttle, I was informed that there was no consultation with Sumas First Nation. They were simply informed. I also saw that you listed the Sto:lo Nation and your list of nations and consulted with and there was no record of that consultation and there is no record of this proposal and the people of the River Referral's Office. Could we go to the next slide, please?

The Sumas First Nation are stewards of their home and practice a way of life that emphasizes multi-generational access to the environment. The community has expressed special interest in several federally listed species at risk located on Sumas Mountain. If you could click next, there's another map on this slide. Thank you, once more. Okay, thanks. Oh, sorry. Once more. This map illustrates the ecological concerns and the critical habitat for the Western painted turtle is seen up in the yellow and the critical habitat for the phantom orchid is seen in purple.

As you can see, the dotted lines that are the proposed roads bulldozed right through both critical habitats. These are just two of many species at risk listed on the mountain that are of concern to the community. We believe that there has not been enough consideration for how these species will be impacted. There is also concerns over the countless streams and waterways that will be disrupted by this development and how this will impact semi-aquatic, culturally significant species like red-legged frog.

There is significant overlap in the concerns previously brought forth by Fraser Valley Conservancy and Sumas First Nation. Oops. I am going to have to apologize in advance. My slides got a little bit messed up. Could we actually go back to the slide with the cultural concerns? Thank you. Having inhabited this area for thousands of years, this area is chock-full of cultural sites. Due to privacy issues, I cannot disclose the information for all of those sites, but in the black circle, I've highlighted the Thunderbird Caves, which Sumas First Nation identifies as a heritage site. The proposed roads will bring more attention to the Thunderbird Caves, which have already experienced vandalism and may lead to further irreversible damage. The existing development plan puts massive amounts of other sacred cultural and spiritual sites at risk of irreparable damage. We could move forward to the social concerns slide.

Lastly, concerns have been brought up about the proposed development, creating more impervious surfaces. What I mean by that is the addition of new houses and roads will reduce the amount of water that's able to penetrate the ground and indubitably lead to more water moving downhill towards the reserve and neighboring communities. Considering that, Sumas First Nation and the neighboring communities are still recovering from the major 2021 flood event, it seems incredibly unfair to put them at further risk of additional floods.

I have one last slide. To conclude, there are numerous social, ecological and cultural concerns, and we beseech you to proceed with the appropriate consultation with Stó:lō nation and Sumas First Nation. Thank you. Ey swayle

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you, yes, please proceed.

**Eva Janssen:** That is my PowerPoint right there. Awesome. Good evening, everybody. My name is Eva Janssen. My address is **[Redacted]**. I am a settler, and I am honored to have the opportunity to be up here today to represent the Sumas First Nation as a natural resource technician employed by the nation. I would like to acknowledge that we are currently situated on the unseated ancestral and traditional territory of the Stó:lō people who have an eccentric relationship with S'ólh Téméxw, the name for the shared asserted territory of the Stó:lō people.

Going forward, I would like to take a moment to consider this saying, "S'ólh Téméxw te ikw'elo. Xolhmet te mekw'stam it kwelat," which translates from halkomelem to English as, this is our land, and we must take care of everything that belongs to us. McKee Peak is located on Sumas' traditional territory. Therefore, the Sumas First Nation exercises the title and rights to the area of the proposed McKee Neighbourhood Plan. As a titleholder, Sumas has the inherent decision-making authority over development in their territory.

There are multiple, culturally significant sites on McKee Peak that would be impacted by the neighbourhood plan. One of these sites is Thunderbird Caves, which has already experienced



vandalism with more people in the area unless outdoor space for people to utilize, there will be a higher density of people using these areas, increasing the likelihood of more vandalism and damage to cultural sites. As well, there are also areas within the McKee Neighbourhood Plan that are both extremely sensitive and secret. On behalf of Sumas First Nation, I cannot disclose information on both their locations and their cultural meaning.

With increased human activity, negative impacts on these sacred cultural sites may occur. It is not a question of if, but when inappropriate interactions with cultural history and values may be incurred. There will be increased human activity in the area, residential and transportation. In particular, will undoubtedly result in polluted emissions into the environment, and this area is already known for poor air quality on a seasonal basis throughout the Fraser Valley.

Today, there has been no assessment data provided to indicate what new proposed development effect would have on the atmospheric air quality. Apart from the degradation of the natural environment, the increase of human activity and occupancy will result in the disruption of species at risk habitat that are already at a critical point. The proposed project impacts habitats, for species at risk, may trigger processes and authorizations under the species at-risk act and the wildlife act.

The construction of the proposed road network will negatively impact species migration routes and the transportation network will contribute to the landscape being waterproof, resulting in challenges related to water flow management. Both federal and provincial legislation provides guidance for protecting critical habitat required for species at risk, the committee on the status of endangered wildlife and the conservation data center. Some of the species of concern that utilize the McKee Peak neighborhood development plan are barn owls, mountain Beavers, Northern Red Legged Frogs, Oregon Forest snails, the Pacific Water Shrew, Phantom Orchid, Townsend's Mole, and the Western Painted Turtle.

Our collective society needs to consider developments using holistic approach and perspective. This requires each of us to make the right decisions for the right reasons. The spirit and the intent of UNDRIP need to be considered and followed. Sumas First Nation respectfully requests that meaningful engagement needs to occur and that true collaborative decision-making model is implemented. The spirit and intent of DRIPA needs to be considered and followed.

Sumas First Nation respectfully requests that meaningful engagement needs to occur and the true collaborative decision-making model is implemented. The McKee neighborhood is adjacent to the Sumas First Nation reserve lands, and is on their ancestral territory. It is essential that all of the concerns of the Sumas First Nation have been addressed and considered through both consultation and collaboration on a government-to-government relationship. Sumas First Nation sees this land as an integral to their spiritual beliefs and values and looping it back to the same quote that was at the beginning of the presentation, "S'ólh Téméxw te ikw'elo. Xolhmet te mekw'stam it kwelat," this is our land, and we must take care of everything that belongs to us.

I just have one more slide. Sumas First Nation opposes the current proposal of the McKee neighborhood development. Detailed cultural, environmental, social and spiritual assessments are required in order to properly consider this proposed project. Respectfully, the Sumas First Nation requests that the March 27th, 2023 proposed meeting is postponed in order to engage in a government-to-government relationship. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. Next speaker, please.

**Kelly Churchill:** Good evening, Your Worship and counsel. My name is Kelly Churchill. I'm the manager of Capital Planning at the Abbotsford School District, where I work on enrollment projections and on assisting with the Capital Planning process. I've been asked to say a few words

about the work the district is doing to prepare for the increasing enrollment demands in the eastern region of the city.

Each June, the Board of Education submits an annual major capital plan to the Capital Planning Branch of the Ministry of Education and Child Care. The plan outlines the district's expected capital needs within the five-year planning horizon and includes additions to existing schools, side acquisitions, and new schools. To properly plan for the district's facility needs, actual and future enrollment must be seen in the context of the city's land use policies. A key component of projecting future enrollment is to work closely with the city's planning department as they develop neighbourhood plans and other development areas.

This joint planning provides the data necessary to understand how the community will evolve and how it will be best served by the local school in the short, medium and the long-term. Indicators have been enrollment growth include the number and type of new residential units, the rate that the development occurs, and the percentage of students that will attend their local catchment school. There are currently two elementary schools operating in the McKee area.

Auguston Traditional Elementary is a small elementary school in the northeastern part, which is currently over capacity. Prince Charles Elementary is on McKee Road, just west of Whatcom Road. Much of its catchment is in the neighbourhood plan area. This school is slightly under capacity. The McKee Neighbourhood Plan area is also served by Clayburn Middle School and Robert Bateman Secondary in the grades 6 through 12. Clayburn is slightly over capacity, and Robert Bateman has some surplus space at this time. The district also owns two vacant properties near Auguston.

It is estimated that two new elementary schools, a new middle school, and a new secondary school will be required in the longer term. The McKee Peak Neighbourhood Plan includes a process that will assist the district with further site acquisitions. Since 2019, the district has been successful in receiving capital funding for three expansion projects to increase elementary capacity in the eastern region. This past September, a new 419 capacity elementary school, Irene Keller, opened on Eagle Mountain located immediately southwest of the neighbourhood plan area. The new school has surplus space and will be able to accommodate expected growth on Eagle Mountain, the Viccaro Ranchlands, and the surrounding areas. It has alleviated overcrowding and created space at Mountain Elementary as residential growth continues along the new part of Marshall Road and Old Yalel Road.

An eight-classroom addition to Auguston traditional elementary will open in 2024. This will increase the school's capacity to just over 400 and will provide room for enrollment growth and it will restore converted areas of the school back to their intended use. An eight-classroom addition to Margaret Stenersen Elementary will also open in 2024 to address infill in the Clayburn area, including the development of the Cooper Farm.

This year's capital plan submission includes 11 projects in the central and eastern region. Additions to Abbotsford Middle and William A. Fraser Middle are the top two priorities as there is currently an overall shortage of middle school capacity. The plan also includes site acquisitions and a new middle school for McKee. They are currently prioritized for the medium to longer-term pending the McKee neighborhood outcome and the associated enrollment increases.

The list of projects are reviewed annually and can be revised and reprioritized as conditions change. This concludes my comments tonight, Your Worship, and I thank you for your time.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you for your presentation. Next speaker, please.

**Andrew King:** My name is Andrew King. My partner and I recently relocated to *[Redacted]*. All the way from Newfoundland, actually. As avid trail runners and mountain bikers, one of the main reasons for wanting to live in Abbotsford is the proximity to local trails and natural areas. This proximity, along with the variety number, and density of trails in the McKee area is unique to Abbotsford making the city more attractive to trail users compared to its neighbors to the west.

As a relatively newcomer to the city, I'm largely unaware of the level of consultation that has happened between the city and the trail user groups up to this point. However, based on some quick reading in the McKee Neighbourhood Plan and the Associated Council report number PDS 017-2023, it seems that more work should be done to ensure that the McKee neighborhood will retain the outdoor recreational character, which is explicitly referred to in the neighbourhood plan and vision statement.

I feel that giving the plan final reading and passing it into adoption is not conducive to a smooth development process in the future and will not achieve the vision and desired character of the neighborhood. As it stands, the majority of public responses seem to be in disagreement with the plan, with the majority of those dissenting voices being concerned with disruptions to the trail network.

Again, that information is available in the previously mentioned council report, this could lead to further public opposition of individual development applications which come forward in the future. These applications, which will already be encumbered with the hefty geotechnical requirements outlined in the plan, creating a climate which could be chaotic and lead to poor outcomes for both development and for the trail network in the neighborhood.

By addressing these concerns. Now, I believe that a better balance can be struck between the needs of trail users and the needs of the city, which ultimately lead to a more conducive environment for developers and trail users. It does not appear to me that the current informal trail network has been given adequate examination, which likely has led to this overwhelming descent of the current neighbourhood plan.

The McKee Neighbourhood Plan does not reference the economic impact that the trail network currently provides to the local economy. I'm curious as to whether the impact to Abbotsford economy from losing critical trail infrastructure has been studied. What measures are being put in place to mitigate this and what are the future costs and benefits of this? I would suggest that, number one, council should direct staff to proceed with the aforementioned trail study in the McKee Neighbourhood Plan.

Two, any plan amendments resulting from that study should be brought to council for consideration prior to the final reading and adoption of the plan. This study should consider the economic impact of the trail network in its current form, quantifying tourism benefits, physical and mental health benefits, recreation benefits, and supporting business benefits. Should also set the precedent for partnership with trail user groups.

This partnership should be open, transparent, and cooperative, setting the stage for the future co-management of these areas and the long-term protection of these trails and sites. There are no targets in the plan regarding the retention of existing trails or trail densities post-development. These targets should be put in place and agreed upon so that the trail user communities can accurately understand the impact to their activities and their trail network.

In order to create a neighborhood which retains the natural and outdoor recreational character of this area, we need to listen to and uplift the voices of those who have done so much to establish this character in the first place. I believe that by doing this, council work will create not only an

environment that's more conducive to the development of the neighborhood in the future but also ensures the desired vision of the McKee neighborhood is actually achieved. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you.

**Emma Bryce:** Good evening, honorable Mayor Siemens and council members. My name is Emma Bryce. I reside at **[Redacted]** in Lindell Beach, which is in Chilliwack. I'm speaking tonight as the vice president of the Fraser Valley Conservative, which is a not-for-profit local land trust and a property owner in the McKee Peak Neighbourhood Plan area.

The McKee Peak area is one of the last ecological gems within Abbotsford, and it's often described as a biodiversity hotspot and acting as an area of refuge for an amazing number of wildlife species with the highest remaining percentage of tree canopy cover in all of Abbotsford, McKee Peak has a diverse mixture of mature trees, forested areas, and riparian habitats and sensitive ecosystems that provide habitat for multiple species at risk among a lot of other flora and fauna.

The current iteration of the neighbourhood plan has identified seven habitat hubs connected by wildlife linkages to allow for species movement between them. In the plan, many of these current wildlife linkages are incomplete and the identified areas for wildlife corridors are cut off or restricted by either neighboring development or steep slopes and ravines that are actually incompatible with effective wildlife movement.

A number of these linkages even have arterial roads that are running across them. I appreciate the initial presentation that was given by city staff earlier today mentioning that these are still conceptual ideas, but I'm having a hard time imagining how a road running across the space designated as a wildlife linkage corridor is going to be effective in actually moving those species.

This also makes me extremely concerned about the potential for collisions with wildlife on these roads, given the fact that wildlife has nowhere else to go. It should be noted that one of the areas set aside as a habitat hub is also the proposed location for the McKee Village, which is intended as a mix of multi-family and daily commercial uses that function as a community gathering place and destination.

Trying to see how locating the main hub of this potential community development in a habitat hub that is designated as a wildlife protection area is going to actually provide a refuge for species of risk and the various wildlife that inhabit this current area. It's commendable, and I appreciate that the neighbourhood plan has put some time into designing the area with recreational activities such as mountain biking and hiking in mind.

It's important to consider that with the limited space proposed for wildlife habitat, there will likely be a major increase of human-wildlife interactions and conflicts within these trail-use areas. McKee Peak is home to an amazing amount of small wildlife species, which were already mentioned, such as our mountain beavers, our Pacific water shrews, but the area is also home to a number of large mammals such as bears, cougars, coyotes, and deer.

I feel that interactions with these types of wildlife would have a very different type of experience than an encounter with a mountain beaver or a shrew. Not only does the current plan inadequately address the needs of local wildlife, it also feels to consider the important ecosystem services provided by the mature forests and permeable lands on which the proposed plan is located.

These forest floors act like sponges during high rain events storing water, and then they release it slowly. This area is packed with headwater streams, wetlands, and groundwater seeps, and it regulates much of the water flow, not only in this direct area but also downstream. The addition of

numerous impermeable surfaces such as housing and roadways increases the likelihood of landslides and ground instability and will also likely to contribute to instances of localized flooding in the areas below.

As an area with such incredible natural assets, the development of the McKee Peak Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to be designed with the protection and inclusion of the natural world in mind. This neighbourhood plan can provide both community amenities as well as enhanced ecosystem services, and both of those are important economic assets when building a long-term vision for a livable future.

I feel that the city of Abbotsford has a chance to create a neighborhood that truly considers the needs of all of its residents, humans, wildlife, and the overall ecosystems. One that is used as an example for nature-based design principles and shows consideration for the many benefits that the inclusion of nature in inner cities can bring rather than doing the bare minimum when incorporating allowances and space wildlife.

Why do we not exceed them? If this development proposal is to go forward, I respectfully ask that council to send this plan back to staff in order to ensure that it is not prioritizing shortsighted financial motivations about the long-term vision for our area and its many inhabitants. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. We'll have one more speaker and then we'll just take a five minute break, so please proceed.

**Marilyn Ingram:** My name is Marilyn Ingram, and I live on **[Redacted]** in Abbotsford. Good evening and thank you for hearing our concerns and our suggestions on the OAP for McKee Peak. I'm speaking on behalf of the Abbotsford Canadian Federation of University Women. We have an advocacy and issues group and we've actually been nattering of Council and Mayor since 2006 about the unique recreation and nature existing on the mountain, which I know is the last forested within the city boundaries.

Personally I'm part of a small hiking group who meet most Mondays for a one to two hour hike. When we're up the mountain, we meet many other groups joggers, dog, walkers, families, student groups, mountain bikers and usually Roy Miller who's out there clearing trail. Roy Miller's a member of the mountain bikers and he literally goes out there on his bike every day and clears trail.

Invariably we exclaim to one another how blessed we are to have access to this peaceful healthy beautiful place so close to home. I can wax on about trillions and trout lilies and peregrine falcons in the spring and icicles in the sandstones autumn color and the view I keep telling people you can stand and look at the Olympic Peninsula. You can look at the water and the streets of Georgia. You can see for the Fraser Valley it is all in one vista.

I don't think you can do that anywhere else in the valley. Tonight we've got a problem to solve and how to save what we've got before it's gone, as Joni Mitchell used to say. The OCP on McKee Peak is a symbol for the future. Jane Jacobs'- who was a famous futurist long ago- prediction is now taking place before our eyes. Increased densification, row houses, condos, infield housing, townhouses are a response to a shrinking land base and increased housing costs. The challenge to you our municipal government is to balance this increasing human congestion with increased healthy outdoor opportunities. Our children especially require this balance for mental and physical health. Green time not screen time but I think seniors appreciate it too. I have four suggestions for your leadership at this important juncture on behalf of the public good.

Number one resolve that the OCP retain and enhance the connected loop trail system on the mountain. We don't want some gravel path behind private houses. I'm afraid the devil isn't in the details and that's why you have to keep on the details for us and this is my revolutionary suggestion.



I want you to redirect the considerable monies earmarked for eight passive parks and put that money into a trail system.

Unlike passive parks, trails are used all year round and they contribute so much more to your well-being and there's no grass to cut. Forget the grassy little patches up there. The people that can afford homes probably have a backyard and let people recreate themselves in a healthy manner. The third suggestion is of course use the one time developer cost and provincial funds. I cut this piece out of the globe in mail. It talks about how our provincial government is coming up with a \$1 billion growth fund and they suggest that the monies be used amongst other things to improve recreational options for families.

Wouldn't that be a great thing to do? Make this the Abbotsford Trail that people come from all over BC to use. Deep into our own budget to make the McKee piece a special place. My fourth suggestion is use the experience and the passion of volunteer mountain bike clubs as has been done in Chilliwack, and Whistler, and other speakers mentioned other places too to help support this vision.

I'd just like to say as a hiker up there that I'm really sad to hear about the glass disturbing the farm. My friend Diana goes up there with pinchers and a plastic bag and she picks up cigarette butts. Literally today we found three cans and that's all on that huge mountain for an hour and a half hike. People really respect this area. They love it and they show it by keeping it clean. It's amazing.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** I will just let her finish her thoughts here quickly and then we will take a--  
Yes.

**Marilyn Ingram:** One more thing I have to say. In the 1940s and '50s, the Lions Club and the District of Matsqui turned Mill Lake from a dangerous logging site into a public recreational preserve. Aren't we glad that they did? Now we're 2023, and we're faced with a similar challenge and opportunities. Let's meet it with new thinking and active leadership for the public good. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you and we'll just take a five minute break and we'll be right back.

[pause 01:35:40]

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** One minute warning and we'll reconvene.

[pause 01:41:29]

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** If we could have the next speaker, please. Thank you. Excuse me; we have a speaker at the podium. You can proceed.

**Rita Green:** Mayor Siemens, members of council, I appreciate this opportunity to voice my perspective regarding the McKee Neighbourhood Plan. My name is Rita Green. I live at **[Redacted]** and have lived in Abbotsford for 49 years. Although I support development, which preserves the ALR, I believe that the development proposed on McKee encroaches unnecessarily on the only forested area, on part of the only forested area that exists in this city. Allowing a development of this scale will open the door for further development on Sumas Mountain, which is a natural treasure that needs to be protected. We all want what is best for our descendants, and that involves prioritizing our natural world, because once we have paved and built, we will not be able to restore the habitats that are lost. A few speakers back, she spoke about other things that were in my speech, but I will just leave that, because she has covered that very well.

Cities all over the world now are striving to add green spaces in order to make their cities more livable. This council has the opportunity now to protect green space that we already have. I know that we have Sumas Mountain Park, and I'm not sure that that is enough space if we squeeze it all to that little area that that would be enough. I urge you to take a serious stewardship approach to this plan by limiting urban intrusion into existing forested spaces and prioritizing conservation of an area that is rich in biodiversity. This will benefit wildlife and will have healthy outcomes for future generations. I respectfully ask Mayor and Council to revise this plan to include a firm designated area, which will be protected from development. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. Next speaker, please.

**Kate Jordan:** Mr. Mayor, members of council, thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Kate Jordan. I live at **[Redacted]**, and I am a member of the Canadian Federation of University Women. You have tough choices to make that will have a major impact on the future of our city. I don't envy you. Tonight I will explain my reasons for opposition to the plans from McKee Peak, knowing that others share my perspective as trees fall in our neighborhoods due to development and as more are threatened on the key peak. All I see is loss. Tonight my focus is on our financial losses, as taxpayers, because of the continual devastation to our trees. Inventoried trees and Oxford are worth \$6 million. That's inventoried. This is exclusive of areas such as McKee Peak. 72% of the peak is covered with forest, along with other benefits. These trees prevent flooding and landslides.

For evidence of what happens when development and deforestation occur, we only need to look at Sumas and Matsqui Prairies. Since development and deforestation in those areas, flooding and erosion have increased. The last flood cost us \$1 billion. Atmospheric rivers arrive more often. Engineering standards have failed to keep pace, but the demands of our fast changing climate. Page 40 of the proposal says that the project will expand and protect a healthy and diverse tree canopy. Given that a projected 19,000 to 28,000 people will move on to the peak. How is that possible when 72% of the tree of the peak has trees? Our OCP states that new residents in new neighborhoods would be a maximum of 15,000. Even that is too many to protect and expand the canopy. This promise cannot be kept. High density living increases use of asphalt and concrete. We've all seen how water flows down streets, sidewalks, and parking lots during heavy rain.

Please don't imagine that storm detention tanks will completely solve the problem. I'm glad to hear that there will be some in place, but please know that they have expensive filters in them that do the work that the soil once did before we decided to pave it over. It costs the city to change those filters whose cartridges are deemed hazardous waste. Where there are trees and soil, the rain is absorbed into the ground. Dense foliage prevents much of the rain from reaching the ground, keeping established forest but, mature trees is nothing but good planting. We will all be responsible for the cost of flood cleanup and landslides. For how long will other governments sympathize with us if we knowingly build unwisely? The plan says that when trees are necessarily removed, they will be replaced. This will be with smaller, less-valuable trees. Who loses? We do.

My grandchildren will be dead and buried before these replacements truly restore what we will lose. 40% of newly planted trees die in the first year. You Mayor and council have the power to set zoning restrictions. You could help to save a significant number of trees. For example, zone for less density, which saves trees less density means higher home value and healthier living. Learn the true value of these trees the way it is calculated on the-- Let's talk Abbotsford Urban Forestry Plan. I encourage you to look not to the immediate future, but for the future we are preparing for the generations that will follow us. When Paradise is paved and parking lots abound, we lose invaluable resources. With respect, I ask the mayor and council to send the plan back to the city staff for revision. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. Next speaker, please.

**Speaker 1:** Greetings. My name is Asia Mc Conkey. I live in Abbotsford on *[Redacted]*. I'm a fourth year student at the University of the Fraser Valley, currently working as an undergrad research student at Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada, a Research Center in Agassiz. McKee Peak, as too many, is one of the most unique gems of nature in Abbotsford, with an extensive and very popular trail network that's enjoyed by many hikers, mountain bikers, nature enthusiasts, including myself. I grew up in Abbotsford and McKee Peak has always been my favorite destination close to home to escape into nature. The trail networks through McKee was my first learning experience on a mountain bike, going hiking, and running through trails when I was just 16. I still enjoy riding on McKee to this day.

Being able to explore the mountain, I was able to grow up around the numerous streams, wetlands, waterfalls, and caves that provided habitat for wildlife, both common and rare. Some of the species that are listed under endangered that were listed previously are the mountain beaver and the Oregon Forest Snail. McKee was one of the many special places that sparked my passion for conservation and environmental science. By looking over the neighbourhood plan for McKee Peak, it does not balance the needs of nature, and it is not sustainable. Many mature trees and the soil will be negatively impacted by this development, which will remove the beneficial services that the forest provides. Large sections of habitat will also be destroyed, which can create habitat fragmentation and meta populations. The plan proposes to connect fragments of habitat by corridors, but these are very narrow and not fully planned out, with roads crossing in between.

This will have negative impacts for many species' survival, having to be forced to survive in restricted spaces. McKee is also known as a biodiversity hotspot, and the destruction of important habitat will increase this loss of biodiversity, contributing to the global extinction crisis we are currently facing today in my generation. McKee is home to many species and many people also enjoy this beauty it holds. It's estimated, like I said previously, that 55,000 people use the McKee network annually. This plan will destroy many of my loved trails that have been enjoyed for many years, and I hope that one day I can still go back to McKee to show my children how to go around the forest and teach them how to bike. I oppose this proposed bylaw and respectfully ask Mayor and Council to send the plan back for staff revision. Thank you.

[applause]

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you, and next speaker, please.

**Speaker 2:** Hi, there. Bonjour. My name is Lindor Merryman. I live at *[Redacted]*. I don't have what I'm going to say written down, so just allow my spontaneity, please. I didn't come here to say much, but what I did come here to say was that a fact that a lot of people don't pay much attention to is this isn't land that belongs to the counselors in the city here. Though the claimant fact is often repeated, this is indigenous land. It always has been, and it's very difficult to argue. I would've liked to have seen more indigenous people here to discuss with this plan. Just give me a second. What I say is perhaps foolish and unpopular, but again, this land does not belong to us. If we could keep from expanding into the trees. As I walk through this city, I'm a pedestrian most of the time, I notice very empty and unused parking lots. I notice most of Abbotsford is single story development. If you wish to build, why not build up? Rhetorical question.

As you develop into the soil, that incurs asphalt, pavement, foundations that, yes, interact with beautiful pathways that people wish to continue walking on, but secondly, again, those lands aren't ours, we can seek to have a beautiful pathway to walk down with animals that we seek to protect while turning a blind eye to the peoples that we have culturally and physically genocided to have those lands in our grasps. I know I'm beating the horse and saying over and over this land isn't ours, but as we enjoy the beautiful lands, we must remember that there have been families such as yourselves that have been stolen and killed, if that's appropriate to say. I wish that as the developments continue, if they do, the families who live in these new developments, in their very

beautiful trails live nice lives, and that they aren't stolen by forms of government or genocide, as the past people have. These people are still alive, by the way, just parts of their family have been killed.

I don't know, it's like I'm kicking a horse. Build up if you wish to build. As counselors, you have accountability to the world around you and responsibility to improve the state of things, and oftentimes that comes with accountability and truly paying attention to the facts. The governing bodies of the Stó:lō peoples, Sumas people, why are they not part of the leading of this event? They're not here.

Thank you. If you need to build and make money for people, totally fair, and make homes, which is very valid, build up please. Vancouver does, Burnaby does. It's a way up, whatever. We need trees, we need beautiful paths, as people discussed, we also need to stop killing native people. It's important. Bottom line, it's not even your land to discuss. That's something that's really unpopular and you don't really want to hear it potentially, but this is somewhat farcical. That's my opinion. This isn't your land. Where are the treaties, by the way? Where are the treaties? Thank you. That is my contribution. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** I would encourage you to take a look at our Official Community Plan, because we are attempting to build up and densify from the core out, and that is very much part of that. I would encourage you to take a look at that and offer your feedback by all means. Thank you.

**Speaker 2:** I appreciate it. Please bring native people into the circumstances here and don't just talk [inaudible 01:57:35]

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Speaker 3:** Hello, Mayor, councilors, and fellow residents. Excuse my emotion, because this is a tough one. I live at [Redacted] in Abbotsford, out in Sumas Prairie, where the flood recently took my father's life indirectly from cleaning oil out of his tractors and he got a bacterial infection that took his life. Excuse me while I just put myself back together here. I speak for the people down in Sumas Prairie. I don't see a lot of them here, and it's probably because they're still trying to rebuild from the flood. A lot of them are trying to farm along the side of rebuilding. Building this infrastructure up on the mountain, a whole water goes down. We weren't born yesterday. The water that comes from the sky, it's the mountain. The mountain filters it from coming down, and it comes down fast already. It doesn't just come down in Sumas Prairie, it doesn't just come down into the rivers, it comes down in Sumas Prairie, it comes down in Matsqui Prairie, and you're building in the middle of the two.

This is not a place to decide to build a mini city or a mini residential area. It's a neighboring area where people are enjoying the wildlife, they're enjoying the trails. I think that Abbotsford should be ashamed that we are actually allowing pathways to go through private properties. We should be working with those people that have those properties, we should be saying, "Hey, I hear you." "I hear that people are using your property as public trails." How do you think we feel when I walk to a dyke and I see that it's a recreational site. That bicycles can go on dykes and ride it, as a recreational area. Does the money that the Sumas Prairie and Matsqui Prairie people pay for their dyking taxes go just to recreation, because it really hasn't gone to rebuild those dykes. Before you start building facilities that are going to retain water from coming to the mountain, maybe we should think about how we're going to stop waters from flooding from other countries like the US.

We've been dealing with this so long. My family has resided in the same property for over a hundred years. My father's not here but he saw three floods. Don't tell me it's a centenarian thing that it only happens in a hundred years. If it is every a hundred years, what are we saying to the people a hundred years from now? That we don't care? We need to care today to protect tomorrow. I'm

sorry for my emotions. It's still very raw to me, because I'm still rebuilding from a flood that went through our property three feet high and everything. Not to mention my neighbors who lost cattle, right? They're losing their life, they're living.

I grew up next to Sumas First Nations. They're my neighbors. They're my friends. This is their land. I've enjoyed walking with them. We are not thinking clearly if we allow an infrastructure like that to go up there. I do apologize for homeowners up there that want to sell their property. I live in an agricultural land reserve and I lived there, because my father chose to farm and he chose to provide food for others, not just for ourselves. Today, before I came here, I happened to find a poem and it said, "Once we cut the last tree and we pollute the last river and we catch the last fish, only then we will learn that we cannot live and eat money." Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. Next speaker, please.

[silence]

**Emily Buff:** Mayor and council members. My name is Emily Buff. **[Redacted]**, Abbotsford. My husband and I have been property owners at McKee Peak, for the past 52 years. We were newly married when we purchased the property by agreement for sale, faithfully making monthly payments through some very lean years, eventually paying it off to reduce our property taxes on the land. My husband John applied for farm status and diligently worked the land planting trees through blood, sweat and tears, only to have four-wheel drives destroy the road and the plants. He put up a couple of concrete gates to keep them from going up there.

However, the bikers and hikers and their dogs continue to go up trespassing and build bike ramps for their enjoyment. We didn't give them permission as we were never asked for it but we always allowed them, knowing how exhilarating walking and arriving through nature is, then enjoying the magnificent views up top overlooking our city of Abbotsford and the mountains. We have spent thousands of dollars on numerous environmental studies only to be questioned with, "Why would we trust developers?" City Hall has also done numerous studies; I might ask the question back. Why would we trust those who are trespassing our property to do their studies?

It would be nice when they do their studies if they would ask us to accommodate them, then we could compare our studies. In conclusion and as I've stated, how many studies and years this has taken and being in the middle of and surrounded by its subdivisions on all sides of this property. I think it's time to take a reasonable evaluation citing that this property is in a prime area and next in line for development. Thank you kindly, and you're welcome to all of you who have enjoyed the property.

[laughter]

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. Next speaker, please.

**Mark Sawatzky:** Good evening. My name is Mark Sawatzky, and we have a slide presentation that was being put up for the, on the FVMBA, Fraser Valley Mountain Bikes Association. Yes. Then if you can go to the next slide. Just to start, there's going to be three people. One, myself, the Fraser Valley Mountain Bikers Association. I'm living here in Abbotsford on 36480 Epworth Court, just on McKee Peak. Then there'll be two other people after me speaking to the other topics here. Then the next slide, please. Those are the three people. Then the next slide. I'm going to begin at the beginning with the end.

This is our conclusion for all of what were saying our two groups, is that we agree with the spirit of the McKee Neighbourhood Plan to "Enhance outdoor recreation" and to "Be an outdoor adventure hub." What we are asking for that to actually happen is, one, to work together with the trail users,



with the developers, the city plan, the First Nations, and with us, to work together. Second, is to actually save all these existing track trails that are in the open space in the green network. That will be on McKee Peak. Third, we will be losing some, so we'd also like to then add more single-track dirt trails in McKee. I'm always saying "Single-track dirt." as opposed to just gravel paths or concrete.

Fourth, is to actually build more single track dirt trails throughout Abbotsford, because there's other regions in Abbotsford where we can actually add more trails for more outdoor recreation. Then fifth, to establish a \$2 million Abbotsford trail endowment fund that we can use for the future, for designing, building, and maintain all these trails throughout Abbotsford for the future. To the next slide, please. In this slide here, you'll see on the right, these are all the trails that exist currently in the McKee Peak neighborhood area. There is different colors. There's green as the easy blue as next, and the black and red is the harder ones. Lots of different trails. There's 120 trails in that mountain at this time.

63 kilometers trail, lots of varieties. All hand built by volunteers and as discussed as has been mentioned numerous this evening. Yes, the trails are on private land, on city land, on indigenous land, and we understand that. For us, we have to thank the people who do own this land who have allowed us. I know there have been some bad experiences but I know-- well at least for the people who are there now, we're treating it well, we're trying to work with the people there, also cooperating with all the different trade users who are there and with the owners as well as much as we can. We thank you that we have been able to use trails.

The next slide please. Here, this is a slide that shows in the phrase area. There's 10 different mountains, Maple Ridge, Abbotsford, Mission, Chilliwack-Hope, where there are mountains that have trails. Ledgeview again from 2022 and also in 2021, has been the most used out of all the trails, out of all this region of Fraser Valley, 23% of all of them. This is using an app called Trailforks, it tells how many people have been riding on these areas. Again, it just very popular. Then the next slide. "Why is it so amazing?" The volunteers doing work on the trails. You can see them working the trails, maintaining the trails, building the bridges, maintaining the bridges.

Then to the next slide. Here what we have as, "Why are they so important?" Well, A, B, C, D, they're simple, they're so convenient, they're right here in town, we don't have to go very far, and they're free. They're just so beautiful. We can actually get physical enjoyment from exercise and being, mental benefits from being outside, having pride in from McKee Peak that is here locally. The community, we can actually build community together with all the families and friends and people who go there and so that they are dirt single-track trails versus, gravel paths. That is a big part attraction of those trails.

Then the next slide. Then, "Why are they important for us as well?" Well, you know that all the people that are here, there's so many people are interested, lots of feedback as well. There's a financial benefit which we'll get into. There's a financial as these assets are worth at least formulas and all built by volunteers as a financial trust. As some mentioned, they have moved to this area, because of these trails, that concludes mine. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker please.

**Mike:** My name is Mike Thomas. I live in Bromont, QC, Next slide. In 2019 the FVRD created a study on what people do for outdoor recreation and how often they get outside. According to this outdoor recreational study. McKee neighborhood offers 4 of the top 10 recreational activities. Two of those activities were in the top three position. In first place, we have hiking and trail running. Third on the list is walking and dog walking, followed by mountain biking, nature interpretation, wildlife viewing, and lastly photography. Next slide.

With that data, they calculated the economic benefits, how much money is going back into the Fraser Valley economy. The McKee area's top three outdoor recreation activities that broaden the most amount of money was hiking and trail riding with 137 million, dog walking, 51 million, and mountain king, 29 million. In total, these recreational activities brought in 217 million of economic benefits in the Fraser Valley Regional District. Next slide.

This study highlighted that outdoor recreation provides communities with diverse benefits, including its economic benefits for recreation related businesses, suppliers, and employees. These benefits extended to government serene view at all three levels, which could then part be used to further enhance recreational infrastructure. Next slide.

McKee Peak may not be internationally recognized as a world-class destination, at least not at the level of the North Shore or the Cedar Sky highway, but it has the potential if planned appropriately. With over 7 million recreation days registered in the region by the FVRD in the region in 2019 and over 217 million in direct spent on outdoor record written by residents and tourists. As it is, McKee Peak must be considered a bona fide outdoor creation destination. Next slide.

What does this mean for the future of McKee Peak? There's been an overwhelming explosion in outdoor recreation since onset of COVID. Our parks are simply overcrowded and underfunded. On any given day, our local mountain parking lots are packed with cars lined up and down the road. Areas such as Buntzen Lake, Golden Ears and Cypress all require day passes with some even needing parking passes.

Cities are trying to fix the overcrowding, and in turn, the recreations being denied passes ahead of the Fraser Valley. In 2019, there was an article in the Vancouver Sun written by Glenda Luymes, which highlighted this growing problem. Unhappy trails, packed parks, crowded campgrounds, lower mainland parks are being overrun. This was written before the outdoor recreation boom in 2020 and has severely gotten worse.

John McGee, when chair of the Metro Vancouver Park said, "Green space creation is not keeping up with housing construction in some cities where there's no more land for parks." He went on to say, "If people want to continue to take their family to a park on the weekend, land acquisition is going to be key." Let me ask you, the council and developers, according to the McKee Neighborhood Plan, there are currently 4,600 people living on McKee, and you're projecting another 25,000 people. Where will they go for outdoor recreation? Next slide.

We understand staff have put a lot of work in this future neighborhood, and with each day we commend them involving different user groups. We agree on vision, which was mentioned numerous times in proposal to enhance outdoor recreation. To be the adventure hub in Abbotsford, highlighting open base networks. The key importance is creating a green network. Next slide.

In the bylaw, we noted several times certain words were mentioned. With trails being mentioned 136 times, it shows trails are important. Let's make the trails important. Next slide. City of Abbotsford mentions the purchase of lands for wildlife and trail orders, shows they understand the importance of single tractor dirt trails.

In section 3.34 for wildlife linkages, they say, "The city may acquire developable land to accommodate wildlife linkages." Furthermore, in section 3.56 under trail acquisition, they mentioned successful trail network acquisition of developer land to connect trail cores will be discussed at time of development. Then in January 2023, the city added a proposal to spend \$75,000 on a trail step. Will the city and the developers work together with the community to do what it takes to create the vision of a world-class outdoor venture hub?

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. Next speaker please.

**Yoshi Burton:** Hi my name is Yoshi Burton. I'm the acting president of the Fraser Valley Mountain Bike Association and the founder of the Abbotsford Trail Development Society, and I live on **[Redacted]** Avenue in Eastern Abbotsford. Before I jump into my next slide, can you guys go to your placeholder slide, the one that shows the map of the McKee climb?

I just want to highlight one thing. The vast majority of that green space shown is a golf course which is maintained by diesel tractors. I'm a golfer, I love the golf course, but it's paid for and used by people with money. The main large green section on the other side there is cliff face. Go back to our slide, please. Go down multiple slides.

I think the golf course is a valuable aspect in our community and I'm not suggesting that we should have it, but I think it needs to be juxtaposed with the true open green space. Go to the next slide, please. Our goal is we need to work together. We need experts designing these trails. We need to be saving our existing trails as many of the dirt trails on McKee as we can, in the open spaces, in the cliff face, in the hatch areas. The plan currently says that there's a lot of it that's going to be evaluated for future development.

As we know, no matter how steep the slope, if the value is high enough, it will be developed. We'd like to be protected more of our trails. We also want to have support to add more single tractor trails on McKee. We have spent 10,000 hours this year maintaining trails in the Fraser Valley. That's not an exaggeration. We also have identified several regions that we've support to build more single-track trails in our region.

Yes, there is a need for recreational facilities. Yes, there's probably a need for more rec centers, but the amount of money that the city has actually spent on dirt trails to my knowledge is almost none. We also want to establish a trail endowment. This trail endowment is not a pie in the sky, hope and dream. We have many meetings with province and hopefully with the municipality of Abbotsford to establish at least a \$2 million trail endowment fund that will help support developing trails in our region because now it's 100% grass roots. Next, please.

In the Fraser Valley Mountain Bike Association specifically has a lot of variance at this. We have contracts and agreements with rec sites and trails BC and Maple Ridge, Mission and Abbotsford and Chilliwack, the city of mission to maintain single track trails at Heritage Park, the Mission Forestry and City of Mission for single track trails on Bayer and Red Mountains.

City of Chilliwack community forest and on Vedder Mountain. We have built 63 kilometers of trails on Ledgeview. Yes, it is private land and we understand that it's private land. Nobody in our organization is planning to chain ourselves trees, but I can't say that if I had to billion dollars, I would buy it all and it would become a park.

The estimated trail work for 2022, about 10,000 hours is what we put into trails. It doesn't happen by accident. Anybody can tell you that they go to McKee, a tree goes down across the trail, it's gone the next day. That's from volunteers, many of the people in this room. The other thought is quality of trail building and experience. When we're building trails, we don't want more discovery trail, we want real natural dirt single track trails. The FDBA manages 1,200 kilometers of single track in the Fraser Valley. Next slide please.

We would like to retain all current single track dirt trails in the open space and green network. That's from the green area and then also in the geotechnical areas. Next slide please. I'm being mindful of my time. We want to be able to realign existing trails due to development. We want to design and build new single track dirt trails in the area and enhance the outdoor recreation and make McKee Peak a true outdoor adventure hub, which is why I support the spirit of the plan. Not many of the finer details. Next slide please.

This is the regions that we have for trails in our area and the darker-shaded areas are existing trail networks, and the lighter green areas are areas that we've identified that can support future development on land that is not privately owned. We understand that the McKee peak plan is going to go ahead in some form. We understand this.

We're not all together happy about it, but we get it. What we want is support from the city, real support from the city to properly develop trails in that region, in that area, as well as other areas in our municipality, because a lot of people right now are going to be driving past Abbotsford to go to Chilliwack to go into their outdoor spaces instead of us recouping that value. Next slide please.

The City of Abbotsford is going to receive a lot of funds from developers for trail development, and has already received funds. The FVMBA wants to partner with the city to establish a 2 million trail endowment fund. This fund would fence single track dirt trail consumption and maintenance in our Abbotsford region.

We support the spirit of the plan but not many of the details. As many people here have said, we love McKee Peak, and we love that we've been able to use it and we'll continue to use it. This is not for us, this is for our children and their children and their children. This is, as you said, a 20 to 40-year development. Likely I won't be riding mountain bikes by then. It's important that we understand that this is a long-term and we only get one shot.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker please.

**John Voth:** Mayor Siemens and Council, this is round four for me. We did a study in 1990, 2010 and we just keep going and going and going. My name is John Voth. I live at **[Redacted]** in Abbotsford. We purchased this property 52 years ago. I was working in West Vancouver overlooking the water and thinking, "Man, if I could do something somewhere else because it's very expensive over there." I bought the land thinking that something could be done, so I paid a big dollar for it.

My five grandchildren live here in Abbotsford. Now, however, trespassers, in my opinion, virtually everybody in this room have been using it, burning some of my equipment, draining gas and fuel lines and everything else that I try to ignore. I'm not too happy about what's going on, but I am in favor of a plan to go ahead because I think it'll take care of a lot of the problems that have been up there. Thank you, and I'm in favor of it.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**John Vissers:** Good evening, honorable Mayor and Council and thanks for this opportunity to speak. I'm John Vissers, **[Redacted]**. I'm speaking here opposing this draft plan. Before I start, I'd like to honor people like Mr. Voth and the Kenny family who have been in this area for many decades and who have suffered, most certainly, from our pleasure and our enjoyment of this area.

I don't disagree with them on their concerns, but I can't agree with this bylaw as proposed. I've attended information meetings and stakeholder events expressing concerns with little evidence that any have been considered in the draft plan last July. This public hearing was delayed after consensus that counsel needed more information.

I was hoping the delay meant we would see some improvements to the plan regarding our concerns, but this does not appear to be the case, nothing has changed. As a McKee landowner, our Fraser Valley Conservancy is very concerned. This draft plan seriously neglects many fundamental issues that will over time negatively impact the sensitive ecosystems we protect on our land trust property, and undermines the commitments Abbotsford has made to its sustainability charter.

Specifically, wildlife corridors and linked natural areas identified in this plan do not adhere to the science-based minimal requirements for sustainable biodiversity. Not only are they inadequately narrow, they also will be fragmented by many proposed road crossings as you've heard earlier and degraded with heavily used multipurpose recreational trails.

These corridors and sensitive areas will also be degraded by inevitable damage that new edge of forest trees experience when an intact forest is cleared. The trees have not been exposed to wind and drainage changes, and they will either fall over or will become designated as unsafe and cut down. Our Land Trust Properties have already been impacted in this way.

These corridors and sensitive areas are very sensitive to the climate crisis we are now experiencing. We know that changes to groundwater retention, drought and exposure will make the entire area more prone to fire hazards. The urban interface distances to proposed residential housing has not included these new risks, and will very likely require increases that will also likely eliminate the remnants that the draft plan includes.

Essentially, this draft plan in its present form attempts to achieve the impossible, be all things to all people, providing low density housing and recreation opportunities, all while protecting sensitive habitat in sustainable ways. We can't have our cake and eat it too. Given that the McKee area will be developed, and I agree with the Mountain Biking Association, we know this area will be developed and it needs to be developed. A City of Abbotsford needs housing of some kind. We really only have two options here today.

One, we abandon the pretense of supporting Abbotsford's commitments to sustainable biodiversity, and acknowledge that the McKee Neighborhood Plan will decimate our natural environment and the very qualities that draw people to our city, or we reconsider this plan introducing a science-based and climate change proof planning that places value on the finite irreplaceable ecological goods and services and natural capital already provided by the McKee Peak area to trail use, tourism, carbon capture with mature forests, and water retention and many more things.

I've been told by Semá:th people that they had a common name for us when we first colonized this place. Excuse me if anyone here notices that mispronunciation, we were called "Holee Tongue", and roughly translated, that means the hungry ones. We came and consumed everything in our path.

I have in the past 35 years living on Sumas Mountain seen our steady sprawl up the mountain sides leaving nothing for countless other species dependent on natural undisturbed places, many of them endangered. When will our hunger be satisfied? When will we finally understand that growth for its own sake is impossible to sustain? For these reasons and many others being submitted, I oppose the proposed bylaw and respectfully ask Mayor and Council to send this back to staff for review to include science based planning for a more sustainable community plan. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Christina Tauf:** Dear Mayor and Council, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I'm Christina Tauf, I live on **[Redacted]** Crescent in Abbotsford. I'm here to speak about my deep concerns regarding the proposed McKee Peak Neighborhood Plan. My concerns relate to protecting enough lands for wildlife and having enough undisturbed permeable lands to protect Matsqui and Sumas Prairies from increased flooding in the future.

There are many ecological surveys of Sumas Mountain that show there is diverse natural life. Another work by professional biologists show the significant biodiversity found on the mountain. It



is one of the few remaining critical areas for wildlife in the Fraser Valley. Given the number of streams, ponds, wetlands, and soils soaking up the water on these wetlands, a significant volume of water is currently retained in these wilderness areas.

These landscapes buffer us in the lowlands against flooding during extreme weather events. Having wetlands and natural forested areas with intact soils and waterways on hillsides is well-known to be the most cost effective and sustainable way to protect homes, farms, businesses, and lower lands from flooding, and to reduce the severity of flooding on the neighboring prairie landscapes.

As for habitat corridors in which wildlife can safely travel, there must be mechanisms to ensure such corridors and areas are designated to protect the wildlife and their habitats and their movement through those habitats. We must incorporate the many values of the goods and services of the natural environment. In any future planning in the city, it is our responsibility as stewards of the land to do so for future generations.

For example, our wilderness lands considered in the development plans and how will these lands be acquired? How will adequate wildlife corridors function on the ground with roads intersecting sometimes multiple times? Are you planning to build tunnels or bridges to provide safe passage for wildlife species?

These wildlife considerations must be included in a sustainable modern Neighborhood Plan as a standard practice. As a resident of Abbotsford and frequent visitor to Sumas Mountain, I've seen the biodiversity of this special place. The creatures such as bears, owls, bobcats, deer, mountain beaver, the reptiles, birds, and many unique plants make their home here on Sumas Mountain.

As an ecological island and a sea of development across the Fraser Valley, Sumas Mountain is indeed a last refuge for many species, including federally threatened species. A well-designed complete plan that incorporates ecological values will balance our need for housing and protect ourselves against weather events that will certainly continue into the future. I kindly ask you to send this plan back to the staff for further review so that the aforementioned missing key pieces in the plan can be incorporated. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Craig Nichols:** Thank you, Mayor and Council for providing this opportunity tonight to come forward and voice concerns and comments. My name is Craig Nichols. I live at **[Redacted]** in Port Coquitlam. I am here representing Tourism Abbotsford, as well as the Fraser Valley Destination Development Council. The Development Council meets regularly to move initiatives forward identified in our 10-year Fraser Valley Destination Development Plan, including items specifically related to outdoor recreation.

For example, theme three of our strategy relates to mountain-based experiences and includes goals of diversifying the Fraser Valley experience and improving and developing outdoor recreation product. Specific actions in support of these goals include protecting mountain biking trail systems in Abbotsford and developing Sumas Mountain for recreational purposes.

Foundational to our destination development work is the need, of course, to work collaboratively to ensure the Fraser Valley grows responsibly and does not suffer from overcrowding in certain areas at certain times of the year, like we see happening in Chilliwack and in Mission. Developing McKee Peak and Sumas Mountain into a viable destination for outdoor enthusiast will help ensure that people are not forced into already crowded spaces in the Fraser Valley in future years. With limited resources, collaboration has never been more important.

With this in mind, we encourage the city to take the lead on fostering the collaboration required for sustainable outdoor recreation development on McKee Peak and Sumas Mountain. This collaboration could come to life through implementing a trail Advisory Committee, as has been previously mentioned tonight, and/or establishing a funding mechanism to help offset ongoing costs associated with trail development and maintenance.

Through establishment of a trails Advisory Committee and an ongoing funding mechanism, the city can leverage the expertise, passion, and care that residents, user groups, and volunteers have for our natural environment, helping to ensure we have a functional trail system for generations. We are stronger and smarter when we work together. Tourism Abbotsford would be happy to discuss further what we could do to support the city's efforts as we work towards ensuring outdoor recreation is a viable tourism activity in Abbotsford for years to come. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. Next speaker, please.

**Wendy Dedalt:** Good evening. My name is Wendy Dedalt. I live at **[Redacted]** in Abbotsford. Thank you Mayor and Council for this opportunity to speak to the Neighborhood Plan for McKee Peak, the draft plan and I'm speaking as a co-chair of Abbotsford Mission Nature club. Our organization has actively supported conservation, public education, and stewardship for 30 years in Abbotsford. We have about 60 to 100 members, and we're one of 56 nature clubs in the province of British Columbia under BC Naturalist. We have a motto which is to know nature and keep it worth knowing, and we've advocated for protection of Sumas Mountain and McKee Peak for many, many decades back into the '40s and '50s.

Nature is really powerful here, and we really need to acknowledge the First Nations and the landowner's patience in tolerating all of us who have ventured onto these properties, and we appreciate that, because it's really no ordinary space. We have other green spaces and protected areas nearby, but the geology, views, the trees, there are many characteristics of McKee Peak that are distinct. We've heard about its biodiversity and what a biodiversity hotspot it is, and this is significant within the province of BC.

The geography of McKee Peak enhances and chances, no matter where we are, if we're traveling alone along Highway One and we look up to the cliffs, we see that and appreciate it or if we're looking through the maidenhair ferns with dripping water in the grottos along the trails. We have phantom markets here, we have chocolate lilies, we have a lot of other species that are rare and beautiful and those that are common but very important. Supporters of Nature McKee are not against sustainable housing projects. We have a wealth of professional knowledge, we have citizen science, we have lifetimes of observation, to foresee the likely changes to the McKee Peak environment from the proposed Neighborhood Plan.

The Neighborhood Plan has many attractive concepts. We've heard about some of those tonight, and it touches on key environmental considerations. However, in the end, the development footprint threatens the sustainability of the plan in its scale and its configuration. Further, there's policy ambiguity, and there's wiggle room that leaves too much to be decided piecemeal throughout the development process. We've heard a few of those from the Fraser Valley Conservancy, for example, habitat hubs and wildlife linkages.

You mentioned in the plan in page 38, and 40, those things that are to be protected, and then the words come along possible if necessary. A whole bunch of wiggle room has been attached to the same sentence. Small detached house designations that you can see on this map, overlap with open space on your other maps on page 3 and page 10. They disagree with each other. Additionally, isolated small residential development is surrounded by open space, people still require access and servicing across natural areas and ongoing vegetation and wildlife management.

Isolated detached homes surrounded by open space fragment habitat connectivity, and has significant negative edge effect and John spoke a little bit about what happens to their property that the conservancy owns with clearing. These needs to be removed from the plan. The trail plan virtually mirrors the wildlife corridor routes, and hearing more about the ambitions, we really like to support trail users and mountain bikers, but a lot of these things would devastate the environment on McKee Peak.

We have these corridors, these multi-use corridors that would be degraded. We have hazard tree management which is required, wildlife risk mitigation, invasive species, side trails made by humans and dogs, dog waste, erosion and residential encroachment. We just have to look around. We've all seen it. Walk Stoney Creek. I mean, this is what has happened there. Nature needs more dedicated space in his plan protected in perpetuity from human disturbance. Not all of it can be accessed or used as much as I love single trail bikes.

McKee Peak is not the place for wishful planning, loopholes, and irreversible loss of external quality habitat and forest covers. It can't happen here. We respectfully ask council to not approve the proposed Neighborhood Plan. Rather send it back to staff to address these issues for detailed review that will include the conservation community and with a much stronger mandate to ensure viable long-term environmental protection for McKee Peak. I very much also like what the last gentleman said about working together. I think this is a really good forum tonight, and I've learned a lot, and I think that if we could work together, we could make a much better plan. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Carden Spence:** Hello, my name is Carden Spence, I live at **[Redacted]**, Abbotsford. I have not written anything down, so I'll just speak off of my mind. In thinking about tonight about the amendment for the McKee Neighborhood Plan, I couldn't help but notice that there aren't many young people like myself here that approve of the amendment, and I'm in the minority there. I'm not expecting any snaps or claps at the end of this, but what I do hope to show is that this is an issue that my generation desperately needs an answer to.

That issue is that the average home in Abbotsford is \$924,000. That is the average home. The average salary in BC is \$54,000. What am I supposed to do? What is my wife supposed to do? What are my friends, my loved ones supposed to do? I was born in Abbotsford. My wife was born in Abbotsford. My parents were born in Abbotsford as well. I love Abbotsford, we all do, and I think that the demonstration tonight is that we all care about its future, and its future is the next generation.

We're stewards. We're here for short time, and I really, really hope that more and more people in my generation choose to stay in Abbotsford, because right now that isn't the case. Time and time again, my wife and I lose great friends. Not because they've died or anything drastic, but they've moved away. They can't afford it here. They want to have a family. They want to have a yard. They want a garage. They want to live in a home that's not at 200 square feet, \$250,000.

Maybe I'm being unreasonable, but this is a glaring issue that needs a response. It needs a quite drastic response. Honestly, it seems late the response that we've seen here today. I know that it's taken a while, and you guys and ladies have clearly gone through the process and tried to dot the I's, cross the T's. I respect that. I wish that our council members do that.

You do that, and you show that. That's wisdom that you have, but you also have power. I believe that we need to do something for the next generation. We need to provide affordable housing for the next generation. When I see up here, I see council members. I see council members who love Abbotsford. I see council members who were probably born in Abbotsford. I see council members who raised families in Abbotsford and who bought homes in Abbotsford.

Don't deny my generation these things. We care deeply about Abbotsford. I care deeply about Abbotsford. I want to live in Abbotsford. I don't want to leave my friends. I don't want my friends to leave me, and more, and more. It's not because there's not enough parks, there's not enough recreational activities, there's not enough hobbies. I hear constantly, and I agree with people, beauty's an important thing, beauty and nature.

I also want to stress beauty in people like our neighbors. Like my fellow 24 year old Abbotsfordians.

I care about them and I know that I want them to stay here, and I want more of them to come here. What attracts people to Abbotsford is Abbotsfordians. I love it. If our recreational facilities are great, hey, the wave pool at Matsqui Recreation Centre is pretty cool to me, but it's the people. It's the people that make this place. It's the people that run this place. I care desperately that projects like these, plans like these get approved so that affordable housing can trickle down.

I don't need the house on the McKee Neighborhood Plan, but I want the house that, hopefully, people who move into those houses will leave. I know that this is just how it works. As much as I'd love for us to be able to work around all the green spots better, it's all good. People love this place and that's why they want to preserve it, but I want to preserve the people.

I know that people want to be here. I know that people, they would not move had they had the choice to stay. That's what I care about. I know that's what you care about. I plead with you, I plead with the people in here to address the iceberg that's staring right at us. That might be already too late to handle, but I think that's worth our best effort, our best care, and our best time to--

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Ryan Lucy:** Good evening Mayor and Council. I'm Ryan Lucy, the president of Morningstar Homes. Our address is **[Redacted]** in Langley. I'm here tonight to express my support for the McKee Neighborhood Plan. I support this plan for the good quality development I believe it will result from it. It's an innovative plan that will yield many benefits for the city of Abbotsford and our entire region. I'd actually like to highlight two of those benefits that are near and dear to my heart. The first, housing, the second, trails housing.

As the previous speaker so eloquently said, we're in a housing crisis. It affects people from all walks of life, including young families who cannot afford to stay in their home communities. This plan will add much needed housing to Abbotsford with most of this in the form of ground orientated housing that will help young families stay in this community. I, for one, I'm a big fan of developments that help people stay in their home community.

To trails, the hot topic of tonight. I believe this plan will positively contribute to sustainability, and it will transfer hundreds of acres of land from private ownership to public ownership. As stated earlier, it'll add between 30 and 50 acres of formal park space, but more importantly, it'll transfer hundreds of acres of lands in environmentally sensitive areas from public property to private property.

Based on staff's earlier comments, only 400 of the 1,900 acres of land will be used for new development. The rest will be used for open space. Sorry, I lost my track. I lost track there. I truly believe that the best place for public amenities, such as trails and environmentally sensitive areas, is in the hand of public stewardship, not private ownership.

I'd just like to finish by saying I spend a lot of time on trails, two or three days a week. I mountain bike with many members of the Fraser Valley Mountain Bike Association. I personally look forward to working with local organizations such as the Fraser Valley Mountain Bike Association to help create these newly publicly owned amenities for all the residents of Abbotsford. Again, I'd like to

thank Mayor and Council for their time tonight. I'd also like to thank staff for all the great work they've done on this plan. Thank you.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Hank Reus:** Good evening, Mayor and Council. Thank you for this-- Pardon me. Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Hank Reus. I live at **[Redacted]**. I'm the past president of Abbotsford Mission Nature Club, which a position I held for 16 years. As an Abbotsford resident of 52 years, and I'm a long time-- I'm keenly interested in nature. I'm opposed to this plan for all the reasons that have already been previously stated by Wendy, by John Vissers, by the First Nation's representatives.

I also want to say that in all the time that I've lived in Abbotsford, I've grown increasingly disappointed in the lack of a real vision and environmentally sensitive vision for Abbotsford growth. As an example of that is the fact that we've been in the process of developing an effective meaningful tree bylaw in this city for over 10 years. What we have today is a simple matter of plunking down some money at the counter City Hall and getting out your chainsaw. I'm disappointed in that there is no vision other than growth, growth at the expense of the natural world.

I'm obviously opposed to this plan, and I desperately want to see it go back to staff and to get some really good expert advice as to what needs to be done on this mountain. It has been stated by many previously, once it is gone, it is gone. It is in your power to do either one. I would suggest to you the wise and proper decision would be to go back to the drawing board and revisit this plan, because as John indicated, this is an attempt to cover all the requirements, and in effect, doing a poor job on all levels. Thank you for the opportunity.

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Aleesha Switzer:** Good evening, honorable Mayor and Council. Thank you for being awake at 8:48 PM. My name is Aleesha Switzer. I'm a registered professional biologist. I live at **[Redacted]** here in Abbotsford, and tonight, I'm speaking on behalf of the Fraser Valley Conservancy. The Fraser Valley Conservancy is the landowner of one of the important habitat hubs identified in your Neighborhood Plan called Three Creeks. I want to talk about two things tonight. Habitat hubs and wildlife linkages. We've heard about this before, but stay with me.

We're going to focus on our Three Creek's property. This eight-acre property contains three headwater tributaries to Clayburn Creek, and is dominated by mature cedars, big leaf maples and sword ferns. This combination of moisture and forest provides important habitat for the Oregon Forest Snail. Now, Mayor and Council, imagine if you would, you were an Oregon forest snail. Let it sink in.

You would like your body to be moist as you are a slimy being. You'd need soft soil with lots of vegetation to hide in. After years of monitoring the snails on our property, we know what they like and what they need, and how they respond to changes. We've seen with our own eyes and through the eyes of the snails that impacts of development do not stop at a property boundary.

When the forest on neighboring properties is clear, the canopy is opened up and invasive plant species creep in, changing the forest habitat makeup. When roads and homes are placed in upstream reaches of creeks, the flow is changed, altering moisture in the soil. When housing backs up against important habitats, we end up seeing garbage and yard waste dumped onto our property. The result of all this, we call the buffer effect. Well, our eight-acre property could be seen as a large sanctuary for this endangered species, we only ever find them in 25% of the property, in spaces where the tree canopy, water availability, and vegetation are just right.



After eight years of capturing and recapturing these snails, we found they move, on average, 25 meters a year or less because that spot is that important. These habitat hubs, in function, are smaller than they appear on the map. The buffer effect degrades the habitat quality for several meters around the perimeter of the property, and upstream watercourse alteration can completely change the hydrology of the site forever. Turn over page.

Now, for the wildlife linkages. Most of these areas proposed in McKee Neighborhood Plan are riparian buffers mandated by your streamside protection bylaw. Imagine, again, you are a snail. Your habitat hub has been severely degraded by the buffer effect. Your streams have dried up due to development above and you need to move or die. Your only option is a wildlife linkage connecting you to another hub several kilometers away. The buffer effect in these small corridors is extreme, at 15 meters wide often including a walking trail or biking trail inside the corridor. The conditions are hardly ideal for movement, let alone living.

Not only that, I'd like to bring your attention that several areas in the plan contain wildlife linkages that are severed by roads, sometimes up to three times. Not only that, but some part was necessary to join these linkages are not owned by the city and there is no plan for how you're going to acquire them. A single property with a gravel yard and a solid fence could completely stop your snail selves from reaching the next habitat hub. That's all it takes, one property you don't have.

Honorable Mayor and Council, this plan is not meeting the needs of the environment. Wildlife linkages are too small to absorb the impacts of the buffer effect. Areas set aside to sustain wildlife might not even contain the necessary habitat features to keep them alive, and the development continues and the climate crisis worsens, these areas may become death traps.

We recognize the development will occur as outlined with OCP, but this Neighborhood Plan has the power to ensure we're making the most of this development. We need the plan to demonstrate that wildlife linkages are secured, hydrology has been tamed, habitat hubs are effectively protected. Your staff have the tools they need to guide development well, and they have to be addressed at the Neighborhood Plan level, at the Neighborhood Plan level. Other municipalities are making bold innovative plans. Is this what you're going to accept? The Fraser Valley Conservancy opposes this bylaw and we asked you to send it back to staff for review.

[applause]

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. Next speaker, please.

**McKee Peak resident:** Hi, guys, I wasn't going to talk tonight, but I have to. I've lived on McKee Peak or at the foot of it since I was six. As a neurodivergent person, I took a big interest in the forest and the animals and it's been my life. I think I could say that out of any settler alive today, I know the place better than anyone. There are a lot of things that are not covered. The habitat hubs are not right. There is a numerous archaeological sites that are not taken into account. I'm not going to disclose where they are because it's not up to me, but there are physical features that can identify them as such.

Glenn Ryder, I believe in the '80s, was hiking Thunderbird Cave and he went into one of the caves where an animal had scraped some of the dirt on the bottom, and he found two artifacts. I think that they are in the collection, Glenn Ryder's collect collection. I believe it's in Vancouver Museum or something. A lot of this land, this is Sumas' land, and it could go back to them. You guys are talking about land that's not even yours.

The animals. I have hiked, I'm a hiker, avid hiker, I've been all over BC, spending the night hour at backpack multiple days, I've never seen anything, anything like McKee Peak. It is the most biodiverse area I've ever seen. There's so many animals there, it's unreal. There is the sisterhood

of bears there, female bears and their cubs, many of them who tolerate each other and humans. Every year, they're there, they're there again. I know where their bear dens are, I can show you where the old ones are. They've been there for a very long time. It's their place, too.

There are many owls. The saw-whet owl in the offseason, either than summer, there are multitudes of saw-wet owls everywhere. These are tiny owls, adorable, the size of robins. There are great horned owls, and these owls, they all have been there forever, not the exact owls, but their families, and there are spots that are going to be developed where owls have been raising their young for decades.

There's peregrine falcon nesting, and right at the Thunderbird Caves and you guys are going to develop right by it. They need a kilometer buffer or else they become very stressed. They're very high-strung animals, and their numbers have been depleted. They're a protected species, I think. You guys have already destroyed one of their nests. I mean, this month-- It's just wrong. There hasn't been enough thought put into the wildlife, the environment, the archaeological zones, and the geotechnical risk areas. There are a lot of them.

It is clear that there have not been enough research done into them. There are some that occur where there's significant development planned. There are mines. There are old mines dating back to the 1800s. There was a single-track railroad from Clayburn to Kilgard, and along that stretch, along that rail line, there are multiple old mine shafts, and nobody knows where they all are anymore. In the '60s, a car was driving down Sumas Mountain Road and fell right into a mineshaft, 40 feet down.

There are a lot of places there. In particular, I know of a few where-- I don't even know how deep it is. Also, there's landslides. It's a dynamic area. It's changing all the time. Every year there's landslides alterations. It's made out of silt, mud, really soft shale, sandstone, conglomerates. This is all affected by water runoff. In fact, at the end of Sumas Mountain Road where it's blocked off, there's a significant geotechnical risk area there that it-- There's a huge crack that's open up in the earth that's growing. I think a lot more thought needs to be put into this and the Sumas First Nation needs to be consulted. Thank you.

[applause]

**Mayor Ross Siemens:** Thank you. We're going to have one more speaker and then we will do a short recess to just deal with our regular council agenda, because we do have some items on there that do need to be moved forward before the break-ins for spring break. One more speaker and then we'll recess and then reconvene shortly after.

**Tamsin Baker:** Hello, Honorable Mayor and Council. My name is Tamsin Baker. I live at **[Redacted]** in the City of Vancouver. I have worked professionally in the field of nature conservation and stewardship with a focus on species at risk for over 20 years. I'm also a board member of the Fraser Valley Conservancy, who as I think you've heard tonight, is a landowner in the McKee Neighbourhood. Overall, the plan does not strike a sustainable balance between the proposed housing trails and having enough habitat for wildlife to survive.

McKee Peak supports at least five species at risk listed under this Federal Species at Risk Act, some of which are not having their needs adequately considered through the proposed habitat hubs and the wildlife linkages. For example, the plan has seven vaguely defined habitat hubs, where to protect species at risk, it mentions locating development away from these identified hubs where possible.

However, hub number seven overlaps directly with the location of the future village likely impacting two endangered species, the Pacific Water Shrew and the snail you just heard about, the Oregon

Forest Snail. The plan also has lines representing corridors referred to as wildlife linkages, where it says development should be limited to allow species at risk the ability to migrate safely through the neighborhoods into the greater Sumas Mountain area. This has not recognized that many of these species, like the snail, are not known migrators. They just need enough space to live.

This is not to say that having corridors linking habitat hubs are not needed, they are, but they need to be better planned and there needs to be enough defined, protected larger areas of habitat where disturbances will be limited. The fragmented habitat network being proposed will open up the remaining natural areas to further degradation through the adjacent development, including the addition of roads and utilities, as well as providing lots of interface areas, which was referred to as buffer areas, allowing invasive plants to take hold.

Essentially, the natural areas remaining will be at significant risk of being further degraded without there being considerable efforts to prevent this. My next point is about the loss of forest habitat that will result. Currently, the neighborhood has the highest canopy cover of all the city neighborhoods at 72% as outlined in the city's draft urban forest strategy that the previous council approved. This strategy extensively outlines the many services that forests provide, including the removal of air pollution, reducing stormwater runoff, and preventing erosion.

The forests in McKee Peak are a municipal natural asset, and keeping as much as possible should ultimately lower costs and reduce risks, especially considering that we are in a climate crisis. An improved plan that better balances development larger forest spaces with a well-managed trail system would be appreciated for generations to come, and you'd be providing municipal leadership across the region.

I know this process has been going on for years and I understand the frustration everyone's had with this. We ask you to take a bit longer to look at it and put together a plan that will make everyone, including the wildlife, happier. For these reasons and many others being submitted, obviously, I oppose the proposed bylaw. Respectfully, ask Mayor and Council to send this back to staff for review. Thank you.

**[03:02:23] – Recess to Regular Council**

**Amy Van Bergen:** I've never been to one of these. This is the popular, I guess. My phone is at 3%. Give me one second. All right. I'm Amy Van Bergen, and I thank you for giving me the time today past my bedtime to speak about McKee Peak. I'm not a landowner or a biologist or a mountain biker, any of that. I'm not even a resident of Abbotsford anymore.

I recently moved to Mission, but I did read the plan. As an immigration community developer working to increase community capacity to house and integrate newcomers in the Fraser Valley, I was shocked to see that I feel like this plan doesn't address the main key issues of affordable housing and climate; the two crises that we're now living in as a country. I was surprised because I expected Abbotsford to be more innovative about this space, knowing that it is our last green space.

The development is inevitable, but the plan does seem to have room to be more collaborative and innovative to address the growing concerns of the Fraser Valley that are only expected to grow in years to come. These being climate change impacting our communities at an increasing frequency and intensity. I've only lived here five years but have experienced the deadly heat domes, floods, and wildfire smoke impacts that development strategies that preceded us have brought upon us.

I'm noticing that more of the same is going to bring more of the same, and we need something new. A shortage of affordable housing options for the majority workforce and aging population on fixed income are also what we've heard another speaker talk more about. I moved here when I

graduated from high school in 2017, and I don't expect to be able to live here for very long, but I'm going to do my part as a citizen while I can because I just won't be able to afford to live here.

Increasing commuter traffic and the lack of reliable and practical public transit options is something I noticed was lacking in this plan as the only option for what will likely be commuters living in this area is the Whatcom Exit that is already inundated by traffic with the only projected solutions being another band-aid lane on the Highway #1, which again is just not as innovative as I expected Abbotsford to offer.

The costs that we can expect to incur through the loss of irreplaceable ecosystem services that people more educated than me can explain more better today. These costs are too high, a price to pay for a development plan that does not address the highest priorities of the projected majority population. Some of these irreplaceable ecosystem services that will be eliminated when the last significant tree canopy is cut down include urban cooling, erosion protection, natural watershed purification, stormwater absorption, environmental tourism, and the biodiversity and ecological resilience that McKee Peak has offered us loyally, expecting only our respect and admiration in return.

The concrete versions of these services are very costly to taxpayers. While trees demand no payment from us, they give and give, asking only that we give them some space. Any neighborhood development plan that does not bring innovative solutions to address these two pressing concerns of climate and affordable housing are not worth the loss of these ecosystem services that benefit the entire city. Every forest is an old-growth forest and waiting if we act wisely. Only one of the nature hubs are permanently protected.

That is the one that's been spoken of, owned by the Fraser Valley Conservancy, while the others will surely be developed if not proper protections and permanent status are placed on them. Erasing the words, if necessary, and where possible, would be a great start. The same goes for mature trees. I noticed that they will be protected where possible, and that's not safe enough for trees. They have nowhere else to go. Due to this imbalance of priorities, I respectfully oppose this bylaw and ask that you would review it more with the concerns that have been stated prior to me. Thank you so much.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Merrick Beckman:** Hi, there. My name is Merrick Beckman. I live at **[Redacted]**. I feel I should start off also with a land acknowledgment. It's been said before, but I think it's important to say it again that we are on Stó:lō territory, stolen land, where we are here, and where we're talking about building. It's land theft to this day. There's no treaty. We heard earlier that there wasn't actually consultation when that was said that that would be happening in the plan.

I know we're not talking Abby Tech District 2, but they said it in their indigenous consultation, and yet we heard tonight, none of that. That's important. It might not be if you want to just continue in the economic close your eyes and try not to think about it, which you might have to do. I don't know what once you become Councillors and Mayors. I think it's important to mention that because this moment where we're at right now with the decisions that you're making with this land is reaching not only into the future but far into the past.

They're coming together at this point, as with every decision that we make, but this one in particular. You've heard from a lot of really smart people tonight who can tell you the facts about which animals and which plants and how the water flows. Please listen to them because this is just more city in the forest. It's not going to be healthy places to live. We should be maximizing-- We were talking earlier about the wildfire management that was taken into account because climate change is upon us.

Where is a natural place for us to go to cool down? It's in the forest, it's by the streams. We need to keep this protected and the affordable housing, too. Oh, yes, I wanted to talk about this. This word trespassing. We've heard that from the private landowners a few times tonight under the landowner regime that was put here by Britain that we're all working under today. Who's really trespassing here?

Take all of this into account, please, when you're making this decision because a lot of us are looking today at are our voices really being heard by our democratic system? This is where we're supposed to come to have our voices heard, to be able to make our intentions-- not our intentions, but what do we want and what we need known. Yes, there's that back and forth. I also am trying to figure out affordable housing.

Where could I actually raise a family if I decide that we're actually going to have a climate plan that is ethical to have a family anymore? Is it ethical to bring kids into this world when we're burning it up? If we're going to be building more housing, it needs to be denser. I think if we're going to build anything at all, you got to throw this back. Things that I think about for bare minimum of what would make sense if we want to be innovative because I think it could be developed in a good way, but you got to start with that consultation.

Not just consultation like checkbox, but going in and listening and respecting traditional governance, traditional Sto:Lo of governance, and having that guide where we're at. We need to be smart listening to all the things that the smart biology people talked about in terms of keeping the canopy, but let's look into the permeable paving, too, because we could just go concrete everywhere like we do with our current roads, but there's alternative options, permeable paving that allows water to come and go through the road and keeps the mycelium connections between the trees that makes a really healthy forest. Let's look into stuff like temcrete that's actually carbon sequestering. Just some cool ideas. Thank you.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Natasha Cox:** For having me. My name is Natasha Cox, and I work with the Fraser Valley Watersheds Coalition. I am also a biologist. What I want to impart is that there's some identified watershed level challenges in the concept as proposed. I recognize the concept as a roadmap. It's setting a goal. It's signaling what do we want to see for a future area? How do we want to develop it for the future? I recognize that you are making trade-offs with the decisions that you're making in your concept plan. As was shared by many people before me, housing population, you guys really have to balance how do we create those places and spaces for people in a growing community, in a growing region.

I'm going to echo a lot of what was shared in brief, but I think the plan as a concept has opportunity to really integrate the values that you're really looking and stating in your vision statements. I think some key missing pieces are really working with the other governments, your nations. Try to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge, the two ways of seeing. This is something that we're really starting to impart on students and our younger generations. We're learning.

The scientists, we have one column of information, but it's the citizens and the ecological knowledge and the centuries, the decades where that observation is really key. I do want to impart a couple watershed level concerns that I think is really important. I want to preface that with I actually mapped all the streams and wetlands on Sumas Mountain and McKee as part of the City of Abbotsford, way back when I was much younger and far more fit.

What I think is really important when we think like a watershed is that, again, when we're changing our landscapes from permeable surfaces to hardscapes, we really are changing the hydrology of a region. What does that mean? It means that we are having less water being able to permeate



into our soils. This changes our forests' ability to hold water and absorb water. When I think about risks, I'm going to take my biologist hat off for just a second and put people first.

I'm a little concerned that we're going to increase the risk of forest fires in a time where we are dealing a lot with climate-related challenges. I know Abbotsford has faced many, and I know some landowner have shared their concerns today with the prairies: Sumas Prairie, Matsqui Prairie. Clayburn Creek is also a stream on the Sumas Mountain. There are some headwater wetlands that do flow down off the mountain.

When you change the landscape to more hard spaces like concrete and buildings and roads, and I recognize that you've identified that with your 12 reservoirs for holding water, reservoirs are acting like wetlands and sponges. Now, when you shift that into your lower watersheds, your water is going to move quicker and spike faster, and then it's going to come down and impact your lower watersheds. These are really important areas for Abbotsford as well.

These are your agricultural lands, the bread basket of BC. I recognize that you're balancing and making those trade-offs. I think when you think about this plan, create space for the water to go, really understand when you lose the water holding capacity, what does that mean for your upper watersheds, the risks to people? Really thinking about your emergency preparedness plans and the lower watershed that's already been exposed to some risk.

I also just want to bring everybody's eyes up just a little bit, if we can. Your decision here in Abbotsford on Sumas Mountain and McKee Peak, this concept plan, it's not just your municipal place. You have a space in the region and you have a space globally. What you do here is also going to recognize and move disparities, economic disparities. We know that with housing, global disparities, the decisions we make here in this single space affect everybody.

I really, really want you to consider looking at this plan a little bit more deeply, working with community organizations, your local stewards, and of course with other nations because I think it's time to apply the two-eyed way of seeing. Thank you for your time.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Hillary:** Hello, my name is Hillary. Right now, I live at **[Redacted]**. I haven't always been able to live there right now. I can just walk up the Discovery Trail to get to McKee or ride my bike. There's been so many educated individuals here tonight that have shared a lot. I feel like I've learned a lot. I've never been to something like this before, and honestly, I thought it was going to be like that scene in *Parks and Recreation* where they have to tell other people not to eat the sandwich that's been left in the park.

I've been really impressed. I've also been thinking a little bit about how I have a couple friends who were lifeguards and they tell me about how they get tunnel vision and start to zone out. I can only empathize with you here at 9:26 listening to me talk about something that I feel so strongly about. I moved to Abbotsford in 2012 to go to university at University of the Fraser Valley. I didn't have a lot of pride in living here. I grew up in Langley and parts of Surrey, and a lot of my friends talked about Abbotsford as the place that smelled bad on the way to Hope.

I didn't really think there was much to do here. This was before that downtown center by the old Centennial Library. The Jubilee Park was redeveloped, downtown has been totally revitalized. None of that had happened yet. I had an opportunity when I was studying to go up and live in Whistler for a summer. I absolutely love it. I met so many friends from lots of different countries in the world, and I fell in love with mountain biking and different types of recreation.

My partner is here tonight. We met in Whistler. He's from Sweden, and he's still living here today. I remember the first time he came down to visit me and I took him to Aldergrove Park to see the big boulder because that's what I thought was a fun outdoor place that we could go. Then I started learning more about Abbotsford and its natural spaces.

While I was at UFE, I did a stream studies course. I went out to Fish Trap Creek in my lab coat and a pirate hat because I thought it was funny to take pictures and be like eco pirates in the wild. I decided I wanted to learn more about ecology in our natural spaces. I ended up working a little bit with the Fraser Valley Conservancy, and I learned about the snails that were living up on McKee. Who knew we had endangered snails and that we should care so much about them?

I recreate here. I've done so many walks across Abbotsford. I remember just in 2021, I think, my friend wanted to do a 30 before 30 checklist. We decided to start up at McKee Peak and walk the entirety of Abbotsford in a day, walking through all of the connected spaces, a part of the Discovery Trail. It was just really eye-opening to me to do that entire walk. I realized that there is nothing like McKee Peak. It's not flat. It's not paved. You can't hear cars. You can't stop at a restaurant on your way through.

There's something about that immersion in nature that seeps into your bones and makes you feel like everything's going to be okay. I was living in an apartment in 2020 when the pandemic hit, and I could feel my neighbors and my partner at the kitchen table that became our ad hoc desk pressing in on me. I'm 32 years old. People my age and people younger are struggling with depression and anxiety and fear about our future.

I struggled with depression and anxiety during the pandemic. Hiking and biking up on McKee Peak was the only place in the world at that time that was healing and available. I think that everybody deserves an opportunity to have places where they feel that their mental health can be restored. That just doesn't happen walking down the street when you can hear the cars and see the highway. Access to green space is a privilege.

Living in an apartment, I didn't have a backyard where I could spend time. To take green spaces that have the potential to be available for everybody and turn them into backyards with fences around them or paved trails from what exists now, those dirt single track, it takes away an experience that I think is really important.

I just really hope that you consider what it feels like to be in that space. I had one question that I wanted to ask. Can I just see a show of hands from the folks sitting at the desks in front of me, who's walked up McKee Peak from the bottom to the top? Has anyone done that walk? Anyone sitting on the stage?

**Mayor Siemens:** I think all of us here have been up to McKee Peak on numerous occasions, so--

**Hillary:** That's excellent. I think it's really, really important to get to know that space. There's a quote that I love, and I forget exactly where I heard it, but I think of it all the time. You can't protect what you don't love and you can't love what you don't know. I want everybody to know McKee Peak.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. Next speaker, please.

**Jennifer Martel:** Hi, there. Whoop. Sorry, I dropped my phone. My name is Jennifer Martel. I live on **[Redacted]** Drive, and I have for most of my life, and I've been very fortunate to be able to move back there as an adult. I would like to thank the owners of the land who have, as I said tonight, allowed us to use this land. However, I think it's important to note that every settler is a trespasser on stolen native land.

I think that's important to note in this particular public hearing because it was started with a marked absence of a land or a territory acknowledgement. We are on Stó:lō land, and we are on, specifically in this area, Semá:th land. Having grown up there and as another neurodivergent in the room, I got to learn to love the area and be in nature and have a safe haven to go to when the rest of the world was too chaotic for my little brain to handle. There were some ponds at the entrance of Sandringham that were teeming with life.

There were beautiful frogs, snakes, and lizards that I loved to catch because I was one of those weird little kids, and lots of birds and bunnies to watch and admire. Those ponds helped inspire my career and go on to use my voice to protect them. I now have a career in sustainability management, and I'm also a university instructor in geography. Those ponds are now desolate and silent. Those frogs no longer sing us into the spring, and the birds are tweeting less than Elon Musk these days.

The change happened when Whatcom Road was pushed all the way through. It used to stop one street above mine, just above those town homes. The year the road was pushed through, we started noticing less and less happening at the ponds.

It was also the first year that we had a bear in our yard, and it was very exciting, but that thrill was juxtaposed by a sad realization that the bear's presence was because of absence; absence of food, absence of safety, and absence of a home to go back to. I had never seen a bear before that despite living in that area for nearly 20 years. I got to see it because we took so much from it.

I went and did my master's in Sweden. Within Canada, Abbotsford is the only city I've actually lived in. When I moved back from Sweden, I chose to come back to Abbotsford. It's a place I'm privileged to call home, and it's a place that has so much potential and so much to do.

One thing I also noticed is during COVID, there was an intense increase in the amount of people parked at the entrance of Sandringham Drive and that's because it's one of the many trails that lead into the mountain. I was really grateful to be able to share that space with people who might not have a yard of their own in these very trying times.

There's also a playground across the street. At the time, it was a little bit more decrepit. It has since been replaced. I very rarely see people there. No matter how many cars are parked at the entrance of Sandringham Drive, very few people go to the actual playground, and they choose to go into nature. We hope that we can continue to see that going forward. As we've heard tonight, growth may be inevitable, but that doesn't mean that the destruction in the area has to be. I will ask that council recreate an order that all species can recreate in this area going forward. Thank you.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Natalie Virginia Lang:** Good evening. My name is Natalie Virginia Lang. I live at **[Redacted]**, Sumas Mountain in Abbotsford. I was born on Sumas Mountain in 1988. I've lived there for 35 years. The last five years even the amount of growth up there has been insatiable. The number of plants and animals, trails, everything, it's changing really, really, really fast. When you make this plan, I want you to think about those changes and I really, really, really desperately hope that you think not just about today and what we need now, but what we are going to need 100 years from now.

I acknowledge that I am a descendant of settlers living, working, and playing on the traditional territory of the Sumas First Nation. I also acknowledge that, as a settler, my family and I are part of the growth of the Sumas Mountain area. I cannot go back. I cannot change the colonial history of my family or of this place, but I do have a voice today, and I get to speak today so that tomorrow could be better.

Right now, this plan does not look like a better tomorrow. It looks terrible. As many people here tonight have already stated, Sumas Mountain is an incredibly diverse and important ecosystem. It's home to a huge variety of plants and wildlife that need more consideration than this plan provides. I've followed this plan through the years that I've seen it grow, and this is extremely disappointing. Today, with climate change closing in around us, we need to preserve this land as much as we possibly can.

Abbotsford can do better. These so-called habitat hubs aren't good enough in my opinion. When natural spaces like Sumas Mountain are slowly chipped away, over time, we start to forget what was there. We start from a new perspective and eliminate everything that came before us. Over time, we forget what we had and we wonder what happened. We wonder why we didn't make choices earlier when we had a chance.

There is absolutely no reason why the much-needed homes in our community that our community does need, we need housing, there's no reason it has to be built in this way on Sumas Mountain. I'm sorry. Please forgive me, but I think it's a joke to believe that this is going to provide affordable housing. This plan in its current form, with absolute respect for the work that everybody has put into it and the care and consideration, I think it's a fantasy. I strongly oppose this plan. Please help us create a place that we can actually be proud of. Thank you.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Nick Bergman:** I wish I make this nice, short, and sweet and to the point. Former mayor, I'm bad here. Name is Nick Bergman, I currently live on **[Redacted]** Avenue in West Abbotsford. Former mayor, George Perry, said, and I quote, "80% of the mountains in Abbotsford will be developed." 80%. I look at this plan here, and everybody here knows that this will eventually be approved.

Everybody knows that it will be developed. Everybody knows that. Quite frankly, all the speakers before me, and I've been here since seven o'clock, they're right. How can I put this? Once this is all developed, whether it takes 10 years, 20 years, 30 years, or 40 years, doesn't matter what a timeline is, a lot is going to be sacrificed: wildlife, plants, whatever. We've all heard it, but once these things are gone, they're gone. They will never come back. Never.

We all know that. People are only looking at this plan as it is today, but look at it once this is developed in 20 years, 30, 40 years, look at all that traffic, the congestion, the street parking, and everything else that's going to come with it. We all know that. Everybody knows that. Where is that traffic going to come? It's got to come down the hill. Where is it going to go? On Clayburn Road. It's going to get a bulk of it. Whatcom Road, North Parallel Road, Highway 1, maybe.

This doesn't affect this little parcel of land. It affects everybody and that entire neighborhood. Everybody's going to be affected directly or indirectly. Look at all those people when they come out of this community, all the neighborhoods that they have to drive through coming down McKee, you really honestly think that all those folks that are living there right now in 20, 30, 40 years down the road want all that additional traffic? Of course, they don't, but we're not looking at it.

We're only looking at it as of today. Nobody here is looking at the future 20, 30, 40 years on the road. Nobody is looking at all the traffic issues that are going to come off from it. Nobody is looking at all that, maybe we should. Until we fix the infrastructure of the roads today, do not put this in. This is a bad idea. It's going to create just a really big mess, and who's going to win? The developers, the city. We've heard stories that the more housing we build, the more affordable it's going to become. That's a myth.

If that is so true, why have we never ever seen the database, the data to back that up? We heard that with eight years with the former mayor, Mayor Braun. I don't know if you have said it yet, Mr.

Mayor. I don't know. Just because you build more housing does not mean it's more affordable. Just to make a correction to one of the former gentlemen, the average house price right now in Abbotsford is over \$1 million right now.

I've lived here for, I don't know, for 53 years. In my 53 years of life, I have never been able to afford a place in Abbotsford. I'm currently living with family. If you really think that this is somehow going to make things affordable and really great and fantastic and wonderful, very frankly, folks, you're living in a fantasy land. You truly are. No disrespect. Thank you.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Gavin Dew:** Good evening, mayor and council and everyone gathered here tonight. My name is Gavin Dew with Auguston and Abbotsford Tech District. We are very proud to be a caring, committed, and contributing member of the Abbotsford community. What I have to say tonight might surprise some people. We actually had three speakers lined up to speak tonight, and we are going to say a lot more, but instead, I'm going to keep it to some brief comments on the issue that is clearly front of mind in the neighborhood plan and that clearly requires collaborative solutions. That is, very obviously, saving the trails.

Let me make it very clear tonight, Auguston and Abbotsford Tech District support preserving, maintaining, and enhancing trails. We have seen time and again in our research and consultation that the people who live, learn, work, and play in the future Abbotsford Tech District will strongly welcome a focus on sustainability and outdoor recreation. We all need to work together to strike the balance and to get this right.

Yes, as you have heard tonight, there are legal complexities to informal trails crossing different kinds of land ownership, but those trails are also a labor of love for builders, a gem for the community, and a draw for tourism. That's why we are working with stakeholders like the Fraser Valley Mountain Bike Association to save the trails. That's why we're committing to more bike trails and amenities on our lands after development, not less. We've put our money where our mouth is by sponsoring bike trails and by building pedestrian trails to the tune of \$150,000 in the last 5 years. Our mid '90s development agreement included a \$1.17 million contribution exclusively for the city to build trails on our lands.

That requirement was visionary, it was forward-looking, but for reasons neither party is entirely sure of, the city's obligation has not yet been met. No trails have been built with that money. What does that mean for you? \$1 million is sitting on the city's books, earmarked to be used to build trails, when a huge network of trails has already been built in the area by volunteers at virtually no cost to the city.

That's a massive opportunity as far as we're concerned, and it's a tool that the city can put to use. We would be very happy to see some of that money become the cornerstone capital for a trail preservation trust, as was proposed earlier tonight by the Fraser Valley Mountain Bike Association. We see that as a creative way for the city to both meet its contractual obligation and address community demand to preserve, enhance, and maintain these wonderful trails.

It seems eminently likely that this neighborhood plan is going back to the drawing board and it is clear that we all need to work together if it is going to move forward in some form. Assuming that is the case, we think it's important that staff, council, and stakeholders have this information that I provided tonight on record so that it can hopefully be a tool and be part of a collaborative solution. Councillors, thank you very much for your time tonight and for your service. Goodnight.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.



**Edward L:** Hello. My name is Edward L from *[Redacted]*. I represent all the ones that aren't part of an organization that use the trails, that walk up there, that enjoy the nature and everything else that's out there. As a senior now, I don't ride trails anymore, I walk them, and I don't even run them anymore as I used to. What I wanted to say was a couple things. A lot has been covered already by other people. We've noticed over the last three, four years that the trail use has tripled at least by walkers, by hikers, by people out there, but also that there's wildlife out there that is being impacted.

Right now, you can walk right past a bear den right off one of the trails, and they come down right into the housing by Sandringham and all over those places. If you build up in there, you're not going to only have the bears on the trails, but you're going to have all the bears and deer and all the rest of those animals, larger animals, in those developments. They'll either get shot or chased out of there and so forth. You're wrecking a lot of great habitat.

The other thing I wanted to say was the carbon footprint that the carbon sink that the trees are and the water and everything else that is up there is incredible. I'm a carpenter by trade, so I've built and so forth. I know we need to build, and we need to develop, but if you guys get together with the conservancy and other groups that are interested, the landowners, I'm sure things can work out better than what you've got drawn up.

The other thing is that if you take those trails away, we will have to go further afield to other municipalities to walk trails and therefore more fuel, more carbon into the air. It's so convenient just to walk out of the door or go three, five blocks away and go on a trail and find nature right beside you.

The last thing I was going to say is I would encourage you before you make a decision on and revamp this, go for a walk on that side of the-- under the cliffs on the trails there up from Sandringham. I've done a lot of hiking, but the beauty in there is absolutely amazing. Right now, there's waterfalls, they've been freezing into ice cold, and wildlife, and the trees, and the flowers, it's just absolutely amazing. To destroy it by development and so forth with poor development, I should say, it's a criminal to do that.

I'd encourage you to go for a hike, go for a walk, get all this stuff here and go see actually what is out there if you haven't already. Work together with other people in the community that understand the mountain a little bit more and change the plans. Thank you.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Ken Summers:** Honorable mayor and councilors, thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Ken Summers and my address is *[Redacted]*. I'm a retired wildlife biologist with 55 years experience in the field. I've already submitted a letter some months ago, which states my assessment, so I won't go into that again. I just want to simply say that if the objective of the green areas, the corridors, and the hubs, and so on is to conserve the natural and wildlife values of McKee Peak, if that's the objective that once the entire area is built out, it will fail.

[applause]

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Ariel Alderking:** Hello, mayor and council. My name is Ariel Alderking. I live at *[Redacted]*. I'm the former chair of the Fraser Valley Conservancy, but I didn't come to speak to you on that particular issue, although there's been wonderful speakers tonight. I came to speak to you more as a parent because when Auguston Traditional School opened, I was on the Arbor Day Committee with Simon Gibson, when it first opened, and my daughter went to Auguston Traditional School.

One of the things that we dealt with was cougar sightings. There were times when the children led out from school had to stay very close to the school because they were in danger. The same thing with Prince Charles Elementary. There were cougar sightings there. My friend's son just saw a cougar this last week from his yard in Townline & Southern.

Cougars are already coming down into the community. It's not just that. When I first moved to Abbotsford, I lived in **[Redacted]**, and there was bears coming down because at that time there was a drought and there wasn't enough food where they were. This is something that's happening on my aunt and uncle's property in Princeton. They had a bear break into their garage for the first time ever, and they've been living there for years.

There are pressures already on wildlife, without putting more pressure on them through development because they will disperse, and they're going to come down into the community. I lived on McCallum close to the wildlife corridor that goes through behind Abby Senior. We would warn everybody moving into our complex to keep their small animals in because it was well known that they were eaten. They disappeared during the night. Your animals are going to come down, and they're going to hunt something because that's what animals do.

We are very fortunate that we haven't had any serious issues as yet, but I'd like to remind you of the Princeton mother that was on a horse and a cougar came to attack her sons and she defended them and gave her life for that effort. We're fortunate that we haven't had anything happen yet, but bears are coming down because there hasn't been food.

There's also the problem with erosion. A number of years ago, they were already complaining about erosion coming down into Clayburn Village, and then look what happens when we get an atmospheric river. My son went to Capilano College. I'm sure that the engineers did a good job over there, and they had a landslide during heavy rains and that college was closed because there were houses sliding down that mountain. This does not make sense.

Who are you going to attract into these developments? If you want to develop something where you're going to actually preserve wildlife, and you need much larger wildlife corridors, and they must not overlap with bike trails because people and wild animals don't go well together, then what you need to do is attract people who would want to encourage that kind of lifestyle, and for that, you need echo villages. You need people who are already environmentally sensitive and willing to invest their time and energy into that.

When Auguston was first developed, they talked about Auguston was going to keep all the wildlife habitat. At the time, actually, the city was saying that Auguston was one of the places that people were going to go if there was an earthquake. Well, it's so congested now with development that there's no possible way that people could drive up there and park a car. At the time, they said, "Well, if we get a major earthquake and Mount Baker blows, we're going to have a cement river coming at us. We're going to have a tsunami coming up the Fraser River, and then everybody's supposed to somehow get up into some higher place."

That's not realistic today. I don't know what earthquake plans you have in place at this point, but you better rethink them because Auguston is not going to work. If you keep developing everything the way you have, the wildlife is going to come down, and we are going to have issues. Coquitlam has had those issues. Coyotes have attacked children. I think that you need to think about that as well and who will bear the liability for that.

[applause]

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Participant 1:** Good evening, mayor and council and fellow citizens. I'm probably the last speaker, so that's a good thing for you guys, and it's past my bad time. I wanted to say that I've admired so many other speakers here and agree with what they said, but one thing that I didn't think was adequately addressed was the fact that we rely on trees to keep our air quality good.

As anyone who lives in Abbotsford knows, come August, maybe even July, when we get the heat, there's so much pollution in the air that you can't even see the mountains, and it's not going to get better. We want our airport to grow, and an airport is quite a source of pollution. Also, it's a misnomer to call the highway a freeway anymore because during the summer the cars go through Abbotsford or through that section at about 30, 40 miles an hour.

I would like to see the city buy a huge area on McKee and keep it green so it can continue to function as the lungs of the Fraser Valley. It's going to be very shortsighted if our citizens start getting a lot of respiratory illnesses and everything because of the air quality. Trees are the only thing that can do something about it because you can't put in air purifiers all over the valley. They are the air purifiers. All the green things, living things are. That was just what I wanted to say. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

[applause]

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for sharing your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Chad Margoles:** Good evening, mayor and council. My name is Chad Margoles. I'm the director of acquisitions for Polygon Homes out of our Langley office at **[Redacted]**. I understand from listening through all the speakers tonight, this plan in a lot of ways isn't perfect, and that's something that I think is impossible for staff to achieve, but it's clear there's a lot of really passionate people that care about the mountainside.

I've been engaged in the McKee Peak planning process and talking to staff and other stakeholders for the last four and a half years. Despite the immense challenge, I really do think staff has done a great job in trying their best to strike a balance and considering these really difficult issues. As a builder, I can't speak to a lot of them, but I do think that creating new housing is very important.

We are, obviously, in a major housing crisis. I don't think anyone will agree. The majority of the growth in Abbotsford is going to be in its city core, but this is sort of the one area in 2016 that was identified for lower-density development, which I think is important to supplement that denser growth. Also, just wanted to make a point as a trail user, as a mountain biker, companies like mine do recognize their importance and are committed to ensuring that areas like this remain recreational hubs, and the interests of the mountain bikers and trail users are respected as well. I do support the plan going forward. I appreciate staff for all their time and effort. Thank you for your time.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Yes, next speaker, please.

**Shannon McDougal:** I'll be really quick. I'm Shannon McDougal. I live at **[Redacted]** in Sandy Hill area. I'm a mom, a taxpayer, and a resident of Abbotsford since 2012. There's been so much, and it's so past all of our bedtimes, I'm sure, of value tonight with the biodiversity, the ecological, the housing crisis, so much of value has been spoken to.

I think one thing that's been a little bit under voice is the next generation's, our children, our children's children, our children's childrens, children. The children now that run these trails, that bike these trails, the mental health benefits that it gives these children in this time, this 2023, when mental health for our youth and our children is at an all-time low when parents have to be working two income jobs in order to barely pay their mortgage at this rate.

These green spaces for kids, for youth, for our next generations are what we need from mental health for a strong future. I just implore you to keep that at the front of your minds because while housing is so important, while financials and all of this is so much bigger than I can even begin to touch on right now, what we really need to preserve is human spirit and green spaces do that. Thank you.

[applause]

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comment. Next speaker, please.

**Tanis McQueen:** Hi. I'm not very good at giving speeches and I don't have anything prepared because I wasn't going to speak, but I was just going to come here and listen. Having heard everyone and what people have said, I just wanted to put in my two cents and just give you my experience of my husband and I moving into South Surrey quite a long time ago. When we moved in there was cattle and horses and sheep at the end of our street and a lot of green space, a lot of forests around there.

16 years later, when Foxridge Homes came in there, there was about another 50 or 60,000 units put up and there was hardly a tree left in South Surrey that was natural. I'm afraid I live on **[Redacted]**. My name is Tanis McQueen. The reason that we left South Surrey was because it was getting so overpopulated. We decided to move out to Abbotsford where there was a lot of green space and a lot of animals.

You can't see it, but right outside my house, I have deer coming by my house twice a day. They come from the forest in the morning, they crossed McKee Road, they jumped the fence onto Ledgeview Golf Course. At nighttime they do the opposite. I see these deer at least once a day, sometimes even twice a day. I just want to implore you, keep the green space. I would hate to see this peak look like South Surrey did after 16 years of living there. There's hardly a tree left.

It's, actually, so sad. I just implore you, please keep the green space. You might need a little bit of development in there, but, honestly, think of what our forefathers did in Vancouver. They could have developed Stanley Park, but they had the foresight to keep their vision and to see the vision and to keep it green. Please, do the same with McKee Peak. It really needs it and our future populations needed as well. Thank you very much.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. Next speaker, please.

**Richard Hall:** Good evening, Mayor and Council. My name is Richard Hall. I'm the Director of Governance and Natural resources for Sumas First Nation. Many of your staff know me. I'm a lawyer by profession and my responsibility is for the ancestral and traditional territory of the nation. Chief Silver reminded me in a telephone conversation I had just for attending the meeting this evening that for the last 30 years in his role as both a Chief and a Councilor, he's opposed any development at McKee Creek and the neighborhood.

To correct the record earlier in the hearing, I did have two meetings with the Planning Department very early last year, probably I would say in April and May of last year, but nothing since then. If I can, I'd like to maybe educate Mayor and Council a little bit in terms of what the expectations are of First Nations peoples in BC. There's 630 nations in the country of which almost 204 are in BC. Many of the nations have not seated any of their traditional territory.

I think you've heard earlier comments from a number of speakers that this is the traditional territory of the Semá:th Peoples. Their territory runs from Chilliwack right through to Abbotsford down to the US border and the south of the Fraser River to Mission. We're in a new environment with

respect to both UNDRIP, which is the federal legislation, but also DRIPA, which is the provincial legislation.

If none of you are aware, you're creatures of the province in terms of how municipalities are created, and it's a responsibility of each municipality in the province to respect both UNDRIP and DRIPA. From Sumas perspective that has not happened in this case in any way, shape and form. For traditional to territory developments to take place, First Nations need to have a collaborative decision-making role going forward, and that's not what is happening here.

I would, respectfully, suggest a number of things, other than you looking at the letter that I sent to the Chief City's Clerk and also the City Manager, Peter, and I also copied Mitchell on a separate document. You need to very carefully look at that letter before you make, make any further deliberations. I would, respectfully, suggest that this is referred back to staff.

I would also suggest that your March 27th hearing should be deferred. I think that you need to be looking at a government-to-government model as we move forward into the future. Chief and Council at Sumas First Nation are more than happy to develop collaborative and consultative discussions and decision making with the City of Abbotsford. We've demonstrated that with the Bank Stabilization Program.

I've worked very closely with Rob Isaac, Tony Seabird, Stella is sitting here, with respect to how the Fraser River diking is going to take place to respect both the gray infrastructure that Abbotsford needs and the green approach that the nation needs from a cultural, environmental, spiritual, and social perspective. Same thing is now happening, Mayor and Council, as you know, with respect to the development of the flood mitigation measures that are taking place both North of the 49th, but also in relation to what's going on within Transboundary Task Force.

I would, respectfully, suggest that that's the framework that we need to take going forward. I apologize, I'm just recovering from ankle surgery, so my ankle is quite sore. I'm more than happy to spend time with Mayor and Council to give you a bit of an education from a cultural perspective. I, certainly, would recommend that at the very beginning of any public hearing that you do a land acknowledgement.

I did notice from the very beginning that that did not take place. Most municipalities in the province do that now. I would, respectfully, suggest that you consider that. My last comment, Mr. Mayor, is that, I could have solved your problem with respect to applause from the very beginning because First Nations resolved that many, many generations ago. When we applaud, we put our hands up in silence. Thank you very much.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. I thank you for those comments. Next speaker, please.

**Bruce:** Hi, I am Bruce. I live in Mount Lehman. That sounded like an AA intro, but that wasn't [laughs] the intention. The fact is that this is not in my backyard, understandably. However, it is in my city. It's in our city, all of our city. We decided as a city decades ago to develop, to grow. This appears to be, as many have pointed out, the next significant phase of development.

Obviously we need to do so wisely with thought, with process. This is a good process. I also know that a lot of work, I had someone tell me, I think it was about a month ago that "this is a no-brainer". I, actually, don't love that phrase. I think all things deserve good thought somehow looking above it and 360. "What are the complications?" We've heard a bunch tonight. I would be surprised that the city and staff were not aware of these complications.

I know that a lot of work went into the OCP. We heard a representative from one of the developers saying they've been working on this for four-and-a-half years with the city. I'm thankful for the staff



in general, for the work on the OCP. It's not perfect as nothing is. I'm thankful specifically for the work on this plan, for much needed housing in our city, growth is coming. I read, I think it was a CMHC, Frazer Valley, I think it was the Frazer Valley chapter that talked about to approach. I understand the comments earlier. What is housing affordability? That's a challenge. However, I read in that report that we need, that can be debated, I suppose, but 500,000 housing units in BC even to approach affordability. I'm guessing 300,000 or so of those must be between Vancouver and Hope.

How do we get there is a challenge, very much a challenge. Every time we develop an area, there's a challenge. We all live in houses where trees once stood and animals roamed. I do support this proposal. I trust that the city are fine staff. I've done a little bit of work in my own place that required some environmental work. I will say that it was rigorous. It was rigorous. The city certainly wasn't let off the hook easy. I'm thankful for that.

We cooperated completely and we came up with really good solutions that, obviously, there's impact. Whenever you do work in an environment, there's impact. However, I think we came up with a good solution that the city was happy with what I did. The independent environmentalists were happy with what we did. I know that process will take place in a development like this. Any developer that wants to work on this project, there's going to be a lot of environmental work, a lot of environmental study ahead.

I trust and I support this proposal and I trust that our city and potential developers will work together to achieve the best possible outcome and balance of even a lot of the wishes expressed tonight. I believe that balance can be achieved. I trust they're going to do that. I support this proposal. I feel we should go ahead and go ahead understanding all the many different wishes of the people involved. Thank you.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for your comments. In a moment, I will make a second call for speakers. Please note that Council has heard all of the comments made during the first round of speakers. Council would also ask that you only come forward now to make any comments on new information and not repeat comments that you've already been made during the public hearing. With that in mind, I'll just call for a second call for speakers. I'm not seeing anybody. I'll call a third and final time. Not seeing any further speakers, I will now entertain Council to ask questions of staff for clarification on any points that you have heard here this evening. Councilor Chahal?

**Councilor Kelly Chahal:** Thank you, Mayor Siemens, I just need a couple of seconds here to

**Mayor Siemens:** Just while you're getting your thoughts together, I'm just going to just one other. We will be asking questions of staff for them to give us information, and then it is our, as it'll be our practice, our anticipation that on the 27th of March will be when we will have our discussion as a Council as to what our opinions are, or if there's any referrals or anything at that, that would be when that happens. Tonight will be just for us to be asking questions of staff for clarification, and then we will not be able to receive any new information after tonight. This is our opportunity now to ask staff those technical questions and for clarification.

**Councillor Chahal:** Thank you for that clarification. My understanding is that I will be raising some questions for more feedback, but I'm not to comment on them until later?

**Mayor Siemens:** Yes. Because we are going to go away now and this is where we digest everything that we've heard tonight.

**Councillor Chahal:** Okay. I have several, but I'll just start with a couple. The first thought that's coming to my mind is hearing back from Semá:th and some other groups about consultation or the lack of consultation. I'm hoping staff can speak to that.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thanks. I'll have Mr. Combs come forward.

**Mitch Combs:** Sure. If I can, through the Chair. As staff, we were able to have staff-to-staff engagement through the planning process. As mentioned, we were able to meet with Sumas First Nation this last spring. Previous to that, we also met with previous staff employed through Sumas First Nation, early and ongoing at the beginning of the planning process. Those employees are no longer with, obviously, Sumas First Nation. As well as we met with Matsqui and Leq'á:mel First Nations as well. We were able to have engagement with all of our local First Nations from the beginning of the planning process.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. Do you have a follow-up question?

**Councillor Chahal:** Yes, I do. I think I will need to think about this a little bit more too because from what I'm hearing is, I'm going to try to pose it into a question, is that I might have to come back to it, but in the meantime, I'll ask another question about, many of the people here tonight mentioned flooding as a result of building up at McKee Peak. If you can maybe speak to that please, and then maybe I'll come back later, mayor.

**Mayor Siemens:** Sure.

**Rob Issac, General Manager, Engineering and Regional Utilities:** Through the Mayor to Councillor Chahal. Just to put in perspective, much of the McKee Peaks area here is part of the Clayburn Creek watershed. Many years ago, the city prepared a integrated stormwater management plan for the Clayburn Creek watershed that showed the complexity of that watershed. It's quite a bit different than most of the watersheds within Abbotsford. As part of this process, qualified professionals reviewed and developed a plan to detain stormwater detention.

In fact, it's less of a release rate than pre-development flows. It also provides base flow to creeks and streams. It takes into account infiltration where possible because recognizing the forest floor absorbs water, we want to try and replicate that in many areas as possible to try and not just detain the water, but infiltrate that water. The newest development bylaw incorporates that into its standards. That's been taken into account as part of the McKee Peaks project.

**Mayor Siemens:** Councillor Gibson?

**Councillor Simon Gibson:** Thank you, Mayor. I was a little unclear. I was a little unclear on the wildlife corridors, whether they're distinct from the trails themselves. I got the impression that there was some obfuscation there a little, but I couldn't figure out whether the wildlife corridors which we value were also going to be used interchangeably with the trails. Are they completely separate? That would be my first question. Thank you.

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** If I can through the Mayor to the Chair, our wildlife corridors and the trailer areas are found within corridors on either side of our, usually our streamside protection enhancement areas. Now, on either side of the creek, in most of these stream areas, you're looking at about a 30-meter buffer. You've got roughly about 100 feet on either side. Within that area, you're able to have room for wildlife along the riparian corridor as well as have trails that can be situated, not necessarily right beside them, but will be able to fit within that corridor as well.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. Follow-up question?

**Councillor Gibson:** It was related to a question that was asked earlier. Given the gravel base that's in a lot of the areas on McKee Peak, as my understanding is, I'm wondering about whether the velocity of the water rushing off McKee Peak entering some of the water courses below, whether it's something that we're going to have to be particularly concerned about. We got a bit of

an answer earlier, but that was the concern I had, the movement of water, and, of course, all the pavement below on the periphery, on the west side there's a lot of pavement already, and the water is moving at quite a velocity into some of those watercourses. I've seen that they get sediment and, of course, the fish habitat is problematic. That's my other question.

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** If I can just take a quick stab at that quickly through the Chair. We have 12 community detention pond facilities located within the Neighborhood Plan area and these areas are to take catchment areas and control that flow and then release at-- Sorry, the post-development flow will, actually, be better than the pre-development flow so that we can manage the water on the mountain. We realize it is a challenge, but the work that we've entertained through our consultant engineers has been very proficient and we feel comfortable that we can handle that volume, and make sure that it is not flooding in the lowlands.

**Councillor Gibson:** Thank you.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. Then we have Councilor Loewen and then Councilor Sidhu.

**Councillor Dave Loewen:** Thank you, Mayor. I will just ask two questions now and then reserve the privilege of coming back later after other Councilors have asked questions. I'd like to staff to speak to the question of the level of consultation that we had on this neighbourhood plan. There were many qualified-- I have no reason to doubt them, but they suggest that they were very qualified in certain areas that they could speak to, whether it's wildlife issues or environment, et cetera. To make it short, I'd like to know to what level of confidence do you have in the consultation that we received on this neighbourhood plan from environmentalists, biologists, et cetera, et cetera

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** Sure. If I can, through the Chair, our process talk to our various stakeholder groups from the outset of the planning process. We had targeted conversations with stakeholder groups such as environmental groups that have spoken today, where we took into account their input and worked towards looking at an environmental strategy that meets the legislation that's established through our senior levels of government.

I feel confident in the work that's been completed. We use qualified environmental professionals. I have with us here are Ryan Preston, who is one of our qualified environmental professionals that undertook a lot of our work. I believe that we met the specifications required by both the Provincial and Federal Governments with regards to species at risk. They're both on the floor and fine side, as well as movement through corridors.

**Councillor Loewen:** Thank you.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. Follow-up question?

**Councillor Loewen:** Another question, yes. Thank you. At the end of the day that is looking forward to a full buildout should this be approved, what percentage, roughly, of that total area will fall to the cities ownership as a result of this plan?

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** If I can, through the Chair, I'm just going to flip to this slide here quickly. To answer your question, if we look here, as I mentioned earlier in the presentation, we're looking at probably about 50% or so of the land within the plan area will remain in an open space or natural state. That takes into account your non-developer area, which is roughly about 24%. That will come through the development process.

As development occurs, those lands will be acquired through the development process. It will be dedicated to the city. That includes our streamside protection setbacks, as well as areas for critical habitat, and as well as some of our steep slopes. If I go back into some more stage one work,

some of the geotechnical work that we did there, we looked at some of the red-coated slopes, and we realized that these needed to be protected, and so that those will form non-developable areas.

We also have our city-owned parcels already, which is roughly about 22%. That does include the Ledgeview Golf Course, but it also has previous dedications from development that's occurred over time, such as through Auguston, the Highlands, and some of these areas as well as we have our Instream Development. Although it shows that these lands had, let's say previous zoning and they continued before they have to go through a rigorous environmental process has been mentioned as development moves forward.

There's going to be lands within that, I'll call, portion of the wheel that will be dedicated as open space as well. Not to mention if we look at our net area, there will be portions of the potentially unstable areas and geotechnical risk areas that may not be proven out to be developable. Yes, you have a geotechnical engineer that has to review that, but it has to be acceptable to the city. There will be some further work done through that process as well. There's a decent amount of land that will remain in a natural state that can be used for environmental protection and recreational enjoyment.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. Then we have Councilor Sidhu and then Councilor Ross and then Councilor Barkman.

**Councillor Dave Sidhu:** Thank you, Mayor. Of the four goals, would you please explain this in a little bit more detail, the enhance outdoor recreation and working with the land please? Page 22

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** Enhance outdoor recreation is a key focus of the plan area. Looking at the parks that would be able to be dedicated, these are areas where people can get out and enjoy those spaces. Through the development process, we're able to take 5% for parks. That is an area that would enhance outdoor recreation as well as through the *Policy 3.55* in the McKee Trail Future Study. This is going to be a key element to this plan.

The details will come as we move forward. I don't have the specifications on the types of trails that have been spoken about through the hearing, but those components will be flushed out if the plan moves forward through that McKee Trail Future study, so we'll be able to look at that. As well as, a lot of the McKee Village is geared towards enhancing out recreation and the fact that a lot of the uses would enable businesses to be there to help with the mountain biking industry as well as the hiking industry to support folks to use this area.

Your second question was with regards to number two, work with the land. Working with the land is really important that we understand that it's challenging to work on a mountainside. Everywhere you go, there are slopes. We need to be recognized of that and we need to not only work with the slopes, but we also have to work with some of the other terrain there as well where the water goes and directing that.

With our development permit guidelines, we've added a section within that that deals specifically with erosion and drainage, and handling the water on the mountain. As in, we spoke about, it's very, very critical, especially during climate change that will happen in the future, that we address how water flows in the mountain. We've added in specific guidelines within that section to address that.

We've also added in the guidelines that deal with, the look and feel of the mountain. We heard from many people throughout the planning process that they wanted to be able to see the ridge line, and so that it looks and feels like a mountain. We've added policies there as well. That development needs to be cited below ridge lines and below the height of trees, roughly so that we're working

with the landscape so that when you view it from below, that you can still see McKee Peak in its grandeur.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. Councilor Ross and then Councilor Barkman.

**Councillor Patricia Ross:** Thank you. I have a couple of questions. Some have been answered. One was similar to Councilor Gibson's in terms of the walking trails in the wildlife quarters. You've answered that as to where they will be in proximity to each other. One lady put up a slide which showed a road network looked pretty extensive, completely overlapping some sensitive wildlife habitat. I don't know if you recall that one. Could you comment on that?

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** Sure. If I can, through the Chair. Let me just flip to our environmental policy. One of the key policies that we have here's 3.42, so crossing through environmentally sensitive areas. As we move through the development process we'll be able to further flush out the details with regards to development, putting in culverts or box culverts allowing mammals to move through the area. Whether they be species at risk or large ungulates such as deer, or critters such as bear or cougars, to be able to move through these areas. A lot of that process will happen through the development process if the plan moves forward so that we can move these animals through this area. This policy, 3.42, speaks to that.

**Councillor Patricia Ross:** Thank you. Another question was, there was criticism that the language wasn't specific enough or definitive enough. There was language like, "Where possible" and "if necessary". Could you just really briefly outline the process as to when that language gets like more definite and specific? For example, when a development proposal is, actually, submitted and why the language is not specific at this point?

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** Sure. If I can, through the Chair. This is a question, I'll start with, if this is, the Neighborhood Plan would be the framework of a puzzle. It sets the parameters for development and then the development applications of the puzzle pieces that kind of fit in. As that puzzle starts coming together, it becomes more refined and the language, as you'd say, would tighten up. There will be staff reviews from our environmental coordinators, QEPs to be able to review a lot of this information as it comes in through the development process over the years as McKee Neighborhood Plan develops out.

**Councillor Ross:** Thank you. Sorry, I have two questions that's going over here. We talked about doing a proposed \$75,000 trail network study. When do we expect that to be complete? Because this build out is planning to occur, I forget how many years? 20 to 40 years. Am I getting that right? Or was it 10 to 20? Sorry. 20--

**Councillor Barkman:** 20 to 40 years.

**Councillor Ross:** 20 to 40 years. I'm hoping that the answer would be that this study could be done within the next perhaps year or two, so that it could be in advance of significant development proposals being submitted to the city?

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** If I can, through the Chair, I believe that would be up to Council's discretion. Staff have submitted a budget amendment request for that, but maybe if Mr. Stewardson could maybe provide a little bit more detail on that.

**Todd Stewardson, General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture:** Sure. Thank you. Through Mayor Siemens. I think the response on that would be dependent on the stakeholder engagement and the feedback that we're getting there, knowing there's a variety of trail needs, surfaces and purpose that we'd need to develop there. We would, of course, follow the typical planning process we have, but it's very told to put a timeline on that, just knowing the diversity in stakeholders.



**Councillor Ross:** We've submitted it for this budget, so we could at least start it this year.

**Todd Stewardson, General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture:** Yes, for clarity, through Mayor Siemens. If the McKee Neighborhood Plan is approved, we would bring forward a budget amendment request for Council's consideration for that funding. If approved, that would be initiated shortly after Council's endorsement of that funding. In short, I guess is the brief answer, in short order if the approval will approve if the Neighborhood Plan was granted.

**Councillor Ross:** Great. Thank you. One final quick question. It was suggested that we use nature-based design principles. Have we considered that as part of this plan? Is that that possible for us to do or?

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** Yes, if I can through Mayor Siemens. With the inception of this planning process one of the keys to it and one of the key principles is that we did consider environmental conditions. During stage one, it was all about just understanding our existing conditions and what could be protected and what could be developed according to senior government legislation and our environmental policies in place. It was very much top of mind. We didn't start with the development, we started with in our environment.

**Councillor Ross:** Thank you.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. Councilor Barkman?

**Councillor Les Barkman:** Can you just comment, it was brought up a few times, on the stability of either to the developable part or the proposed part?

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** If I can just ask for clarity, you're speaking with regards to the geotechnical situation?

**Councillor Barkman:** Yes.

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** Yes. If I can through the Mayor. When we undertook our overview geotechnical assessment, I'm just going to flip back to the land use plan here. Bear with me. You can see these hatched areas, this is a geotechnical risk overlay. What we did from the beginning, is our consultant recommended that red-coated slopes are areas that had a high propensity for earth movements to be delineated as part of our open space network, or sorry, open space network as non-developable.

Then areas that had moderate chance of that, we have this geotechnical risk overlay. Given the analysis that we undertook over 1,900 acres, we couldn't get to the very specific detail that you would need to understand soil bearing. That is the why we would need at the time of development further geotechnical studies to take place to ensure that property is safe.

**Councilor Barkman:** Thank you.

**Mayor Siemens:** Follow-up question?

**Councillor Barkman:** Yes. I understand 1,900 acres is there, could be developed out of that 400. Does that number change when we get right down to the meat and potatoes of stuff that maybe we're down to 280? Is that 400, and I think I wrote it down, correct, is that like the number, or is that going to go down?

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** Through the Chair. It's difficult to provide you with an answer at this point until those technical studies would be completed. If I was to take a guess, obviously, the

areas that we've delineated as being straight developable or that white area on that wheel-- Let me just flip to that. Wrong way. Within the unconstrained areas, these are areas that would still, obviously, need geotechnical assessment being on the mountain side, but the areas that you're referencing under the orange or purple, they need further studies done by experts to ascertain what could be developed and what might not be developable. At this point, I can't answer that question.

**Councillor Barkman:** Thank you. One more.

**Mayor Siemens:** One question?

**Councillor Barkman:** Yes. We heard a lot about the trails, the developing of biking, hiking. We heard it's on private property. We still have people using it. What I'm having trouble with, we're using and we're developing something that we don't have a plan yet or a something that's come from that area. We're still using it, we're developing it.

**Mayor Siemens:** Excuse me, we just want to make sure that you are not giving an opinion. I need you to just focus the question and make sure that we don't give too much editorial comment on either side of the question. We just want to be very careful.

**Councillor Barkman:** How am I going to put this?

**Mayor Siemens:** I can come back to you in just a moment. Councilor Driessen has a question to ask.

**Councillor Barkman:** Yes, I'll write something down here.

**Councillor Patricia Driessen:** Thank you, Mayor. There was one speaker who was speaking to the views and the viewpoints on McKee Peak. I'm wondering if you can speak a little bit to that. I know there was a section in the package on that, if you can unpack that a little.

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** Yes. If I can, through the Chair, within the plan we have a section that details some of the incredible views and protecting those views within future development. We, definitely, have that. That's found on, actually, on page 51, so it'll map 13 views. We, definitely, have recognized that within the plan and want to ensure that as future development occurs, that we're still able to see some of these amazing views of the surrounding area.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. Follow-up question?

**Councilor Driessen:** I'm just curious and for the public and for someone who's new, how does that process work, or how do we protect that as development applications come in?

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** As development applications come in, staff would be able to view that and look at this map here on Map 13 of the Neighborhood Plan. That would go to our DART, which is our Development Applications Review Team. There would be comments, obviously, with regards to how we would ensure that the developer isn't making sure that there are still views.

How they're following things such as our development permit guidelines, such that I mentioned earlier. About making sure that ridge lines are still seen so that there's views from them and to them, as well as that development is cited roughly about the height of a tree. That you still have some of these views possible. That would occur during our development process.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. I'll go back to Councillor -- You're okay? Okay. I believe Councillor Chahal had a question.

**Councillor Chahal:** Just two quick questions. One is about, somebody had mentioned passive parks as opposed to trails. I really haven't really heard about passive parks today before. Does staff have a comment on that?

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** Sure. If I can through Mayor Siemens. Within the plan, we detail an acquisition strategy for park development. We have a number of neighborhood parks, citywide parks, and community parks. These all could be designated as active or passive. At the time that these parks are acquired, our PRC staff would start the programming process in determining what types of park amenities would be located within these areas. Typically, I might be speaking incorrectly here, but I believe that our PRC staff does consult with the neighborhood to ensure that the proper amenities are located within these parks.

**Councillor Chahal:** Just one last--

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. One final question.

**Councillor Chahal:** Yes. I can barely read my own notes, it's so hard to decipher what I wrote. I believe that you said at the beginning that we're in this fourth phase and that an archaeological assessment was completed.

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** If I can, through the Chair, yes. Our archaeological process was two parts. We completed our archaeological overview assessment, and this is where we walked the land. We included representatives from our local First Nations, as well as Stó:lō from the SRRMC. They had a couple of archaeologists from their team join the walk. Then through that, we identified areas of archaeological potential.

Then we undertook the archaeological impact assessment, where those areas coincided with infrastructure that we need to test to ensure that the plan could be proven out. When we undertook the archaeological impact assessment, following stipulations set forth in the *Heritage Conservation Act*, this was submitted to the province for acceptance, and they accepted that. It was also submitted for First Nations for comment as well.

**Councillor Chahal:** Thank you.

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** You're Welcome.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. Councilor Gibson?

**Councilor Gibson:** Thank you, Mayor, for allowing me to ask a further question. I do appreciate it. I guess a pivotal question in some ways is related to advocates who have cited legitimately, I might say legitimately, that we need more housing in Abbotsford. I look at the map of the land use that you had up here a moment ago. If you could put that up, I'd appreciate it. It's the one that shows the uses of the properties.

I noticed that the vast majority are single-family and the balance be condos and townhouses, I presume. The latter would be considered to be affordable depending on the iteration. My question to staff is, given that advocates are pointing out that the advantage of this development is more housing, I suppose the question is what percentage of that would be affordable, or at least available for those who are trying to move into the housing market, given that advocates are citing that as an argument to approve the development.

**Mitchell Comb, Senior Planner:** If I can, through the Chair, we have a number of policies that speak to different lot types and mixtures so that you can have a range of various single-family homes. Obviously, it's a little bit challenging on a mountainside, but through the work that we've asked undertaken, we believe that you can't have a range of lot types. We've also brought in, as you mentioned, our urban two-ground-oriented. This is largely for townhouses. In terms of market affordability, obviously, this type of tenure allows for some more market affordability.

We've tried to keep this so it's in line with the direction of the official community plan for the housing type in this area. As well, one of the other considerations is that we consulted through the planning process, and this is what we heard from our key stakeholders in the public, that they wanted to see this type of housing that was compatible with the existing neighborhood. We also have the ability to have apartments within the McKee Village up to six storeys, so that that would provide a multifamily housing typology within the plan area as well.

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you. I'm not seeing any further questions. In closing for today's public hearing, I've written a few things down here. I want to thank all the residents who joined us tonight to share your feedback on McKee Peak Neighborhood Plan and for those who have submitted written correspondence. Your comments are an important part of the public hearing process.

As a Council, we consider all feedback provided, and that to assist us in making an informed decision for the community on a plan that is four and a half years in the making. Once this public hearing is closed, Council cannot receive any new information on this topic until the completion of this process. If you write us an email about this topic, please know that you are not being ignored, but we simply cannot take in new information.

After we have had time to thoughtfully consider and deliberate resident feedback and staff information, Council expects to vote on this OCP amendment at the March 27th Council meeting. At that Council meeting, there's a number of different options that we will consider. We have until the 27th to have those deliberations and to digest all the feedback that we've had. Again, thank you for your time. It's been a late night. We've had good discussion. With that, I will call this meeting closed. Thank you very much.

[applause]

**Mayor Siemens:** Thank you for the applause. I didn't think I was going to get any.



**March 6, 2023 Public Hearing  
(Unofficial Transcript)**