



# FLOOD RECOVERY UPDATE

# 2024

CITY OF ABBOTSFORD

## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Though it's been three full years since the devastating flood of November 2021, the impacts and efforts for recovery and long-term mitigation remain top of mind and part of our daily work here at the City of Abbotsford.

While a large majority of our recovery works and repairs have been completed, crews continue to work on the few remaining larger-scale infrastructure projects throughout the community, and at City Hall, our focus on advocating for critical funding support for our long-term flood mitigation needs is as steadfast as ever.

While we have intensified our efforts to secure crucial support from senior levels of government, we continue to make headway where we can with improvements to our existing infrastructure. The majority of our recovery works and repairs have been completed, and crews continue to work on the remaining larger-scale infrastructure projects still underway throughout the community. Project planning has begun for the Barrowtown Pump Station enhancements following the \$76.6 million investment from the Province of BC for completion in 2027. One of the components is a floodwall to protect the Pump Station, and this work starts in early 2025. A backup power generator is also being installed before the year's end at the Barrowtown Pump Station, which will maintain pumping operations and increase flood resiliency in the event of a power failure. We have also completed Sumas River bank stabilization and dike erosion repairs between Atkinson Road and McDermott Road, as well between Cole Road and Wellsline Road and have completed bridge repairs at a number of locations and installed a new bridge on Stoney Creek. We also expect construction and repairs to start soon on the Straiton

Road and Old Yale Road at Majuba Hill landslide sites. While these and the previous advancements put us in a better position than we were in prior to the 2021 flood, there are still a couple more years of repair work ahead of us. And even with all these repairs, our community remains vulnerable to another significant flood event. This makes the federal government's decision not to fund our Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF) application all the more devastating.

The 2021 flood caused significant damage to our regional and provincial transportation infrastructure, property and businesses, and severely impacted agricultural production in the most productive area of Canada. For the first time in our history, we witnessed a 9-day closure of the key transportation corridor (the Trans-Canada Highway) through the Fraser Valley, which links Canada's largest port with the interior and Alberta, and yet through this competitive granting program, we did not make it on the list of federal priorities. The competitive DMAF requirements mean that municipalities have to compete for the funding with all other communities across Canada. With limited financial means and expertise, this means smaller municipalities and communities do not always have the resources needed to undertake the lengthy and sometimes costly process of preparing an application that stacks up against other applicants competing for the funding. As extreme weather events continue to devastate communities across the country, a reliable funding mechanism from senior levels for municipalities is needed.

For this reason, we continue to aggressively advocate to senior levels of government for the funding support our community desperately needs. Conversations are ongoing with our American counterparts through the Transboundary Flood Initiative and together we are urging the federal government to come to the table. We have strong support from local First Nations, neighbouring

governments, agriculture and industry organizations, and the provincial government as we work together through the Sumas River Watershed Flood Mitigation Planning Initiative to move forward on a solution together.

Ahead of the forecasted heavy rains in October this year, the City of Abbotsford was monitoring the weather forecasts closely and crews carried out our standard preparations including inspecting storm water structure inlets to ensure they are all clear of debris, drawing down water levels in existing storm water storage facilities to make extra capacity, inspecting key storm water ditches and culverts for debris, and ensuring after-hours staff are prepared and available should they be needed. Fortunately, the rivers in our area (both the Fraser and the Nooksack) didn't hit concerning water levels and the City of Abbotsford did not experience the same impacts other communities like Coquitlam, North and West Vancouver did.

As I reflect on the recovery progress we've made, and look into the future, my commitment to securing the flood mitigation funding we need remains as strong as ever. And as a Council, and as a community, we will continue working and building a resilient future for Abbotsford - one that will protect our families, our infrastructure, and our provincial food supply for generations to come.

Ross Siemens  
Mayor, City of Abbotsford