



# COMMERCIAL TRUCK PARKING STRATEGY

Background Research Report - December 2023



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# 1.0 Introduction

Commercial trucking plays an important role in the economic prosperity of the Lower Mainland and within the City of Abbotsford. With approximately 3,000 acres of industrially zoned land, one United States border crossing, the Abbotsford International Airport, great access to the provincial highway network, and proximity to metro Vancouver, the City of Abbotsford has ideal conditions for a growing trucking industry.

Trucking is also integral to the supply chain, and this was made evident during the atmospheric river events of 2021, where portions of the City were submerged by flood waters, and regionally washouts obstructed highways and knocked out bridges. Typical trucking routes were blocked, but local trucking companies were able to find alternate routes and brave adverse driving conditions to help the flow of goods into the City and greater Lower Mainland.

In recognizing the important role trucking plays in the economy, the parking of commercial trucks continues to be a complex issue within the City due to a couple of key factors. The first factor is the scarcity and rising cost of industrial land, and the second factor is the growth in the trucking industry. Over the last dozen years since the creation of the City's initial Commercial Truck Parking Strategy, the number of unauthorized trucks parking within the municipality has grown significantly. With the growth in the industry, and a scarcity of land to legally park trucks, this has created a need for the City to revisit its strategy to sustainably park commercial trucks within the City.

The purpose of this Background Research Report is to provide an understanding of the current conditions affecting the commercial trucking industry, and its ability to park trucks legally within the City. This report will also establish the underpinning for future stages of work, and is an important initial piece of the strategy process.



## 1.1 Strategy Process

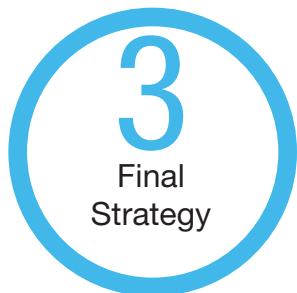
The Commercial Truck Parking Strategy will be completed through a three stage process, as follows:



Stage 1 will focus on providing information about current truck parking conditions within the City of Abbotsford, as well as factors affecting British Columbia's greater Lower Mainland to provide some context to the issue.



In Stage 2, staff will begin developing strategy options and preparing a draft strategy. These options will be developed by conducting research into best commercial truck parking practices across North America. Project staff will also meet with various stakeholders to help formulate strategies based on local knowledge of the situation. Strategy options will then be presented to the public for feedback.



Stage 3 will focus on creating the final strategy and having it endorsed by Council.

### STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

In order to provide guidance to the Commercial Truck Parking strategy over its 3 stage process, the following objectives have been created:

- Identify feasible actions to address the demand for overnight commercial truck parking within the City of Abbotsford
- Gain a clear understanding of the Mayor's Task Force on Commercial Truck Parking and learn from this previous initiative
- Conduct best practice research and examine other communities throughout North America for innovative truck parking solutions
- Undertake a targeted stakeholder engagement process
- Conduct a community engagement process

## 1.2 Past Initiatives & Key City Documents

### **Mayor’s Task Force on Commercial Truck Parking: Moving Forward**

In July of 2009 the Mayor’s Task Force on Commercial Truck Parking was established. This community based project was chaired by the Mayor and was conducted over a 2 year period. The Task Force had representation from the trucking industry, City Council, Abbotsford Police, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and the community at large. The group was tasked with developing a coordinated set of recommended strategies and initiatives to address sustainable truck parking within the City of Abbotsford.

The Task Force identified options through internal discussion, advice from other communities and from input from two public meetings. A total of four options were recommended to help address the truck parking issue within the City. This document is reviewed in the following figure:

Past Initiative	Findings
Fast Track Commercial Truck Parking applications	There were many initial inquiries, but competing industrial development projects and the Storm Water Source Control Bylaw provisions were a deterrent for applications.
Use select gravel pits for Commercial Truck Parking	Provincial mining permits do not cover liability insurance for non-company trucks, and this constrained truck parking opportunities.
Use and retain existing MOTI sites for Commercial Truck Parking	Whatcom Road interchange lands are still in use for truck parking for approximately 24-30 trucks. Lonzo Road was used for truck parking for a number of years, but will now be used for temporary shelter housing.
Commercial Truck Parking on select industrial area streets (Pilot project)	Staff have ascertained that a pilot project did not move forward. However, commercial trucks frequent and park in industrial area streets for a limited time for the purposes of refueling, repairs, accommodation or acquiring food at a commercial premises, collecting or delivering cargo, or supplying a service.

Figure 1: Mayor’s Task Force Strategy Recommendations

## **Review of Key City Plans and Bylaws**

The purpose of this section is to show how key City plans and bylaws address Commercial Truck Parking within the City of Abbotsford. This information provides a baseline for the city's regulatory framework under which Commercial Truck Parking is allowed to operate.

### **Official Community Plan (OCP)**

Within the OCP, Commercial Truck Parking is not specifically referenced. Trucking within this document is focused around the movement of goods throughout the City, and addresses how there needs to be a careful balance between moving goods into important commercial retail centres, while avoiding truck routes through residential areas.

### **Transportation Master Plan (TMP)**

The TMP has a similar approach to the OCP. Commercial Trucks are addressed through a Goods Movement perspective, but there is no mention of addressing parking for these commercial vehicles.

### **Zoning Bylaw**

The City's Zoning Bylaw addresses parking allowances and restrictions for Commercial Trucks. Section 140 stipulates which zones do not allow parking or storage. In Commercial and Institutional zones, parking of commercial vehicles is only permitted completely enclosed within a building unless it is accessory to a

principal use. The bylaw also details the conditions for parking a maximum of two Commercial vehicles per lot in Agricultural zones that are not associated with the normal farm operation of the site. In both the General Industrial (I2) and High Impact Industrial (I3) zones, Commercial Truck Parking is a permitted use and truck parking is authorized.

### **Street and Traffic Bylaw**

The Street and Traffic Bylaw addresses short term commercial truck parking largely through section 57 of this bylaw. This section of the bylaw addresses regulations for commercial trucks departing from truck routes. Commercial trucks frequent and park in industrial area streets for a limited time for certain services, and within this section of the bylaw, it regulates which activities are acceptable while trucks are not traveling on an acceptable truck route or parking in authorized locations.

Trucks with a Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) greater than 5500 kg are not allowed on residential lots. Street parking is only allowed when loading and unloading.

### **Storm Water Source Control Bylaw**

The Storm Water Source Control Bylaw prohibits Commercial Truck Parking not associated with on-site businesses, unless located on an area surfaced with asphalt or concrete including storm water detention. This bylaw also prohibits associated truck maintenance unless it is contained indoors where storm water can be connected to a detention system.

## 2.0 The Big Picture

Abbotsford is a part of the Lower Mainland / Southwest economic region and its trucking economy is closely connected with that of Metro Vancouver. Vancouver is home to the largest shipping port in Canada and the second busiest airport. The proximity of the international border and the American interstate highway system provides easy access to the American west coast and Mexico. Abbotsford also benefits from an international border crossing in the city and the rapidly growing Abbotsford International Airport. Commercial trucking has grown strongly because of these locational advantages that make the Lower Mainland a natural transportation hub, especially for trucking.

## 2.1 Importance of Trucking

Commercial trucking has significantly grown in importance to the economy of BC over the last 20 years, both in terms of employment and economic output. Provincial employment in the transportation and warehousing industry increased from 118,000 to 142,000 workers between 2000 and 2022 (Transport Canada, 2023). During the same period, the GDP of transportation and warehousing in BC grew from \$9 billion to \$13.4 billion, after adjusting for inflation (see Figure 2). Trucking as an industry has grown even faster, nearly doubling in size over the last 22 years. In 2022, the truck transportation industry generated \$2.3 billion in GDP in BC compared with \$1.2 billion in 2000, again after adjusting for inflation (Statistics Canada, 2023).

## 2.2 Agricultural Constraints

Abbotsford's urban area is surrounded by a large swath of agricultural land that is protected from urban development and prioritized for agriculture by the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). This protected land is designated as an Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), forming 72% of the City's total land area. Large scale truck parking facilities are not allowed in these protected agricultural areas.

The City has taken steps to expand the amount of industrial land available for truck parking. In 2017, the City initiated an ALR exclusion application to create new industrial districts in two separate parts of the City, for a total of 288 hectares. One area was on the north side of Highway 1, bordering the Township of Langley.

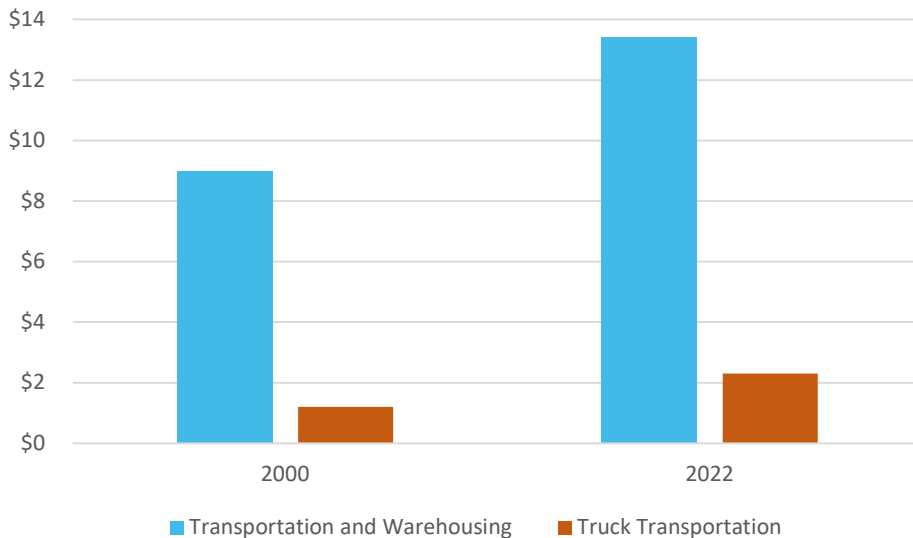


Figure 2: GDP by Sector in Billion \$, British Columbia (Adjusted for Inflation)

The other area was immediately north of Abbotsford International Airport. City Council approved the ALR exclusion but the ALC rejected the creation of these new industrial lands, concluding that they can support agriculture.

## 2.3 Shortage of Industrial Land

A 2023 study looking into the industrial land shortage in Metro Vancouver found that over the past decade demand for industrial space has grown substantially but that the supply of new land has not kept pace. The study showed that only 4% of Metro Vancouver’s land is dedicated to industrial land uses. The tremendous growth in demand has resulted from a growing population and the continued adoption of e-commerce creating the need for more warehouse

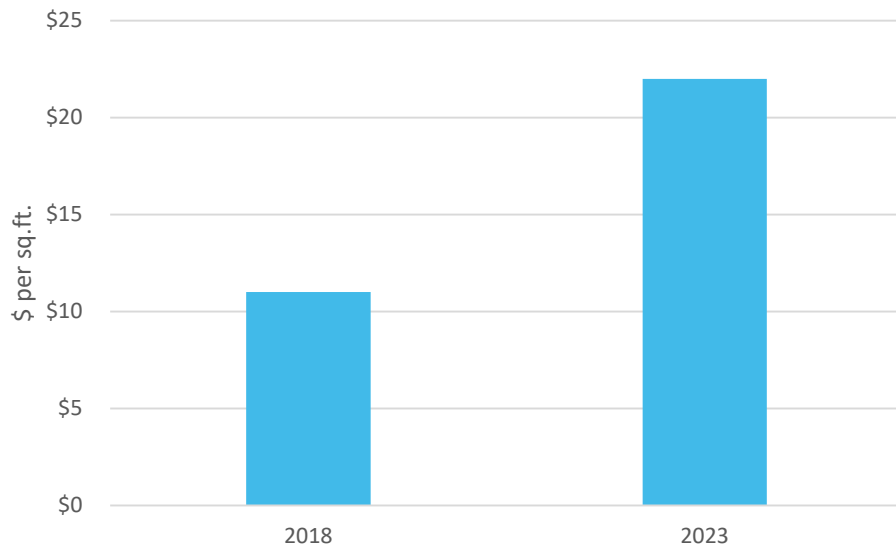


Figure 3: Asking Net Rent, by Year, Metro Vancouver including Abbotsford

space (NAIOP Vancouver Chapter, Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, 2023).

This acute shortage of industrial supply in the Lower Mainland has pushed industrial land rents to the highest levels in Canada at around \$21.80 per sq.ft. (CBRE, 2023). In the 5 year period between 2018 and 2023, average rents for industrial land doubled from around \$11 to \$22 per sq.ft. (see Figure 3), far outpacing inflation (Avison Young, 2023). By comparison, Toronto rents average \$18.35 while Calgary has rents of \$11.27 (see Figure 4), roughly half the levels of Vancouver (CBRE, 2023). This price differential has encouraged many trucking firms to locate to Alberta, especially those that do not require a presence in the Lower Mainland. Over the past 4.5 years, an estimated 5.1 million sq.ft. of space was built in Calgary rather than Metro Vancouver, representing a significant lost economic opportunity (Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, 2023).

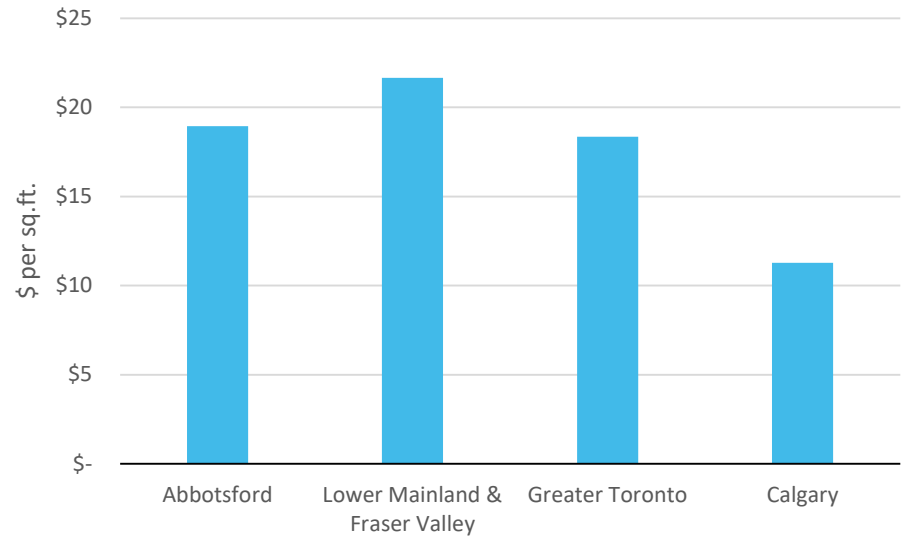


Figure 4: Asking Net Rent, Selected Regions, 2023

In Abbotsford the situation has worsened substantially very recently. Average rent for industrial space increased by roughly 20% from \$14.79 to \$18.30 in the last year alone. The average industrial land rents in the city are now between \$18.40 and \$19.93, according to three leading market research firms, while vacancy rates are between 0.7% and 2.8% (Avison-Young, Colliers, Cushman & Wakefield, 2023). A balanced market has a vacancy in the range of 4-6%.

## 2.4 Other Contributing Factors

Highway 1 is the primary highway that links Abbotsford together with the Lower Mainland and to points further east in Canada. The highway has two provincially maintained rest areas at Bradner and Cole Road, however overnight parking is not permitted in any BC rest area. Washrooms are provided at rest areas but food retailers are not available.

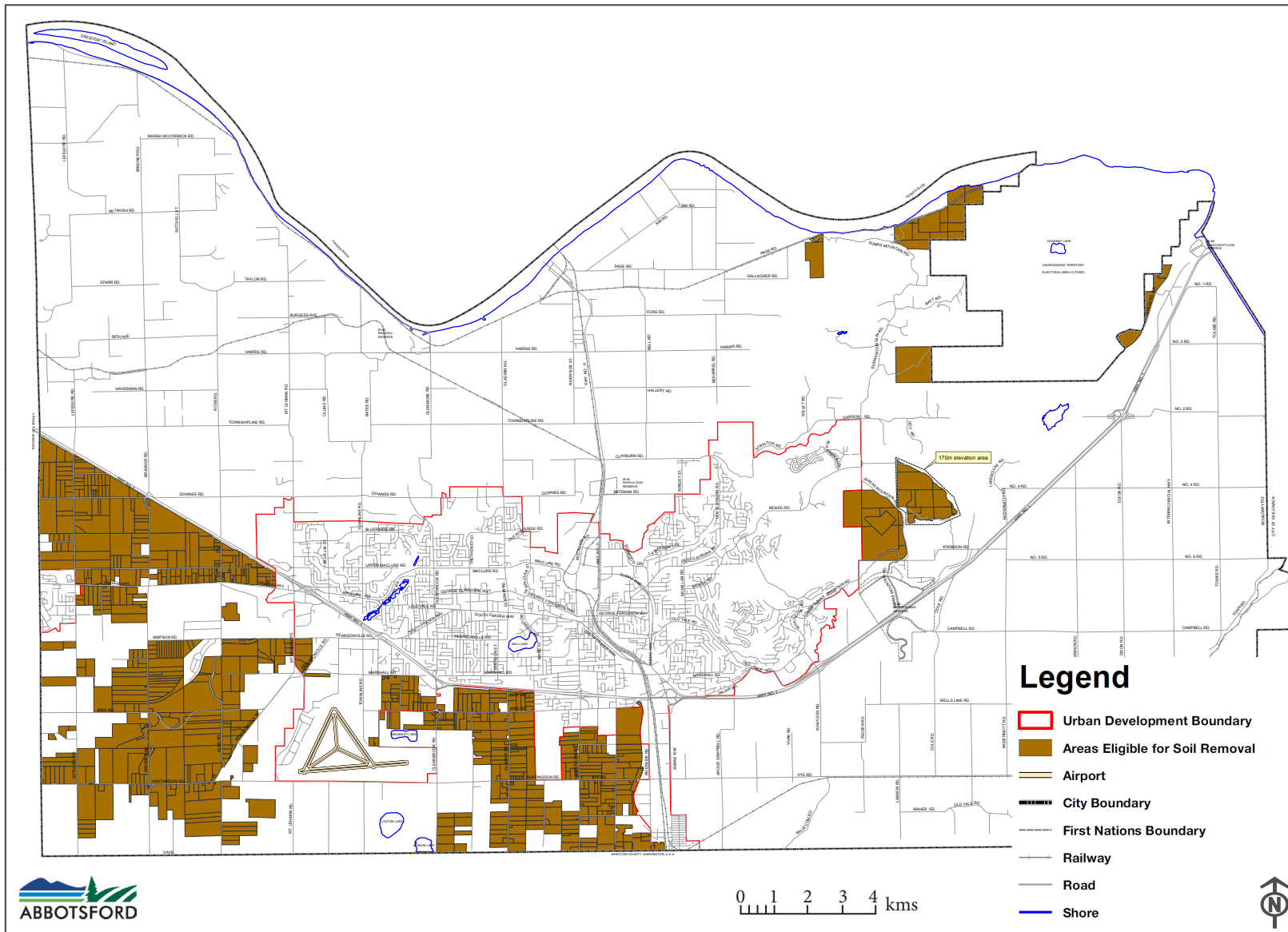
Another component related to truck parking are designated truck routes, which include provincial highways and municipal truck routes (Transportation & Transit Master Plan). These roads have been chosen to minimize the impact of goods movement on residential areas while promoting the economic health of the city. Gravel trucks form a large proportion of the commercial trucks using Abbotsford roads. Gravel extraction and mining activities fall under the jurisdiction of the Provincial government. Eligible areas for gravel extraction are identified in Map 1.





Bylaw 2600-2016, being  
"Official Community Plan  
Bylaw, 2016" Schedule "A"

# City of Abbotsford Map 15 - Soil Removal Eligible Areas



Map 1: Soil Removal and Eligible Areas (OCP Map 15)

## 3.0 Abbotsford Context

Within Abbotsford, commercial vehicles are defined as vehicles for commercial use that have a Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) of over 5,500 kg. In 2010 the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia reported that there were roughly 4,250 actively insured commercial vehicles registered within the City. Twelve years later in 2022, the number of commercial trucks grew by 2,740 trucks, and approximately 6,990 commercial trucks were registered (see Figure 5). This equates to a 64% growth rate in the total number of commercial vehicles.

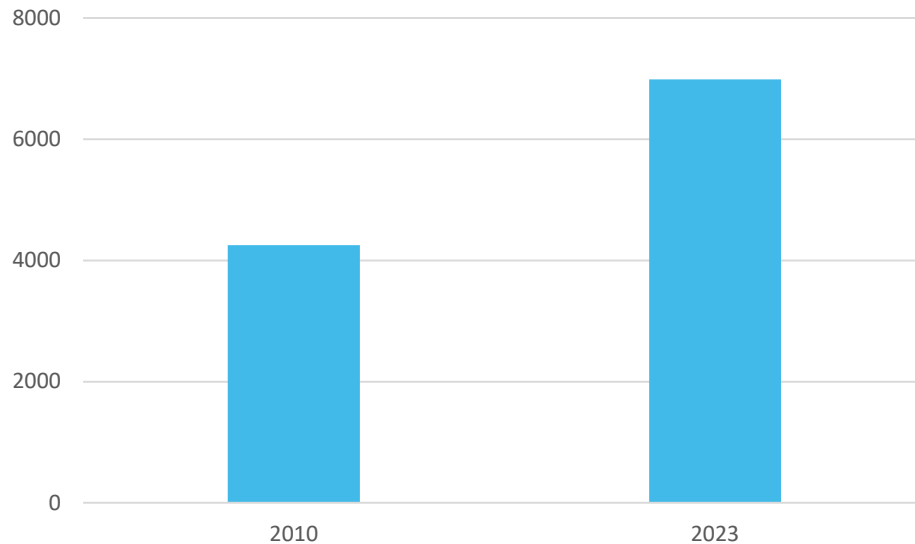
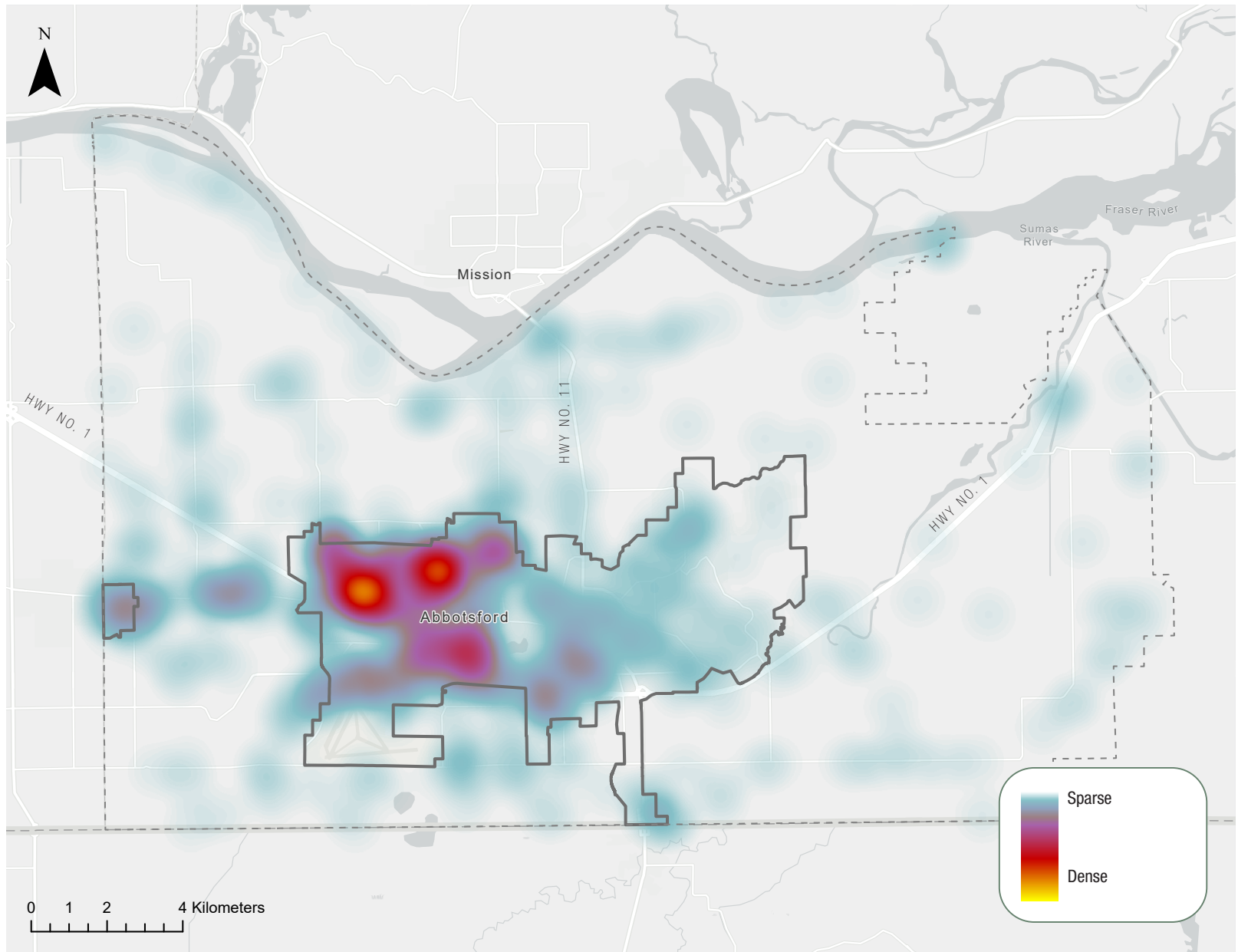


Figure 5: Number of Commercial Trucks > 5500 kg GVW

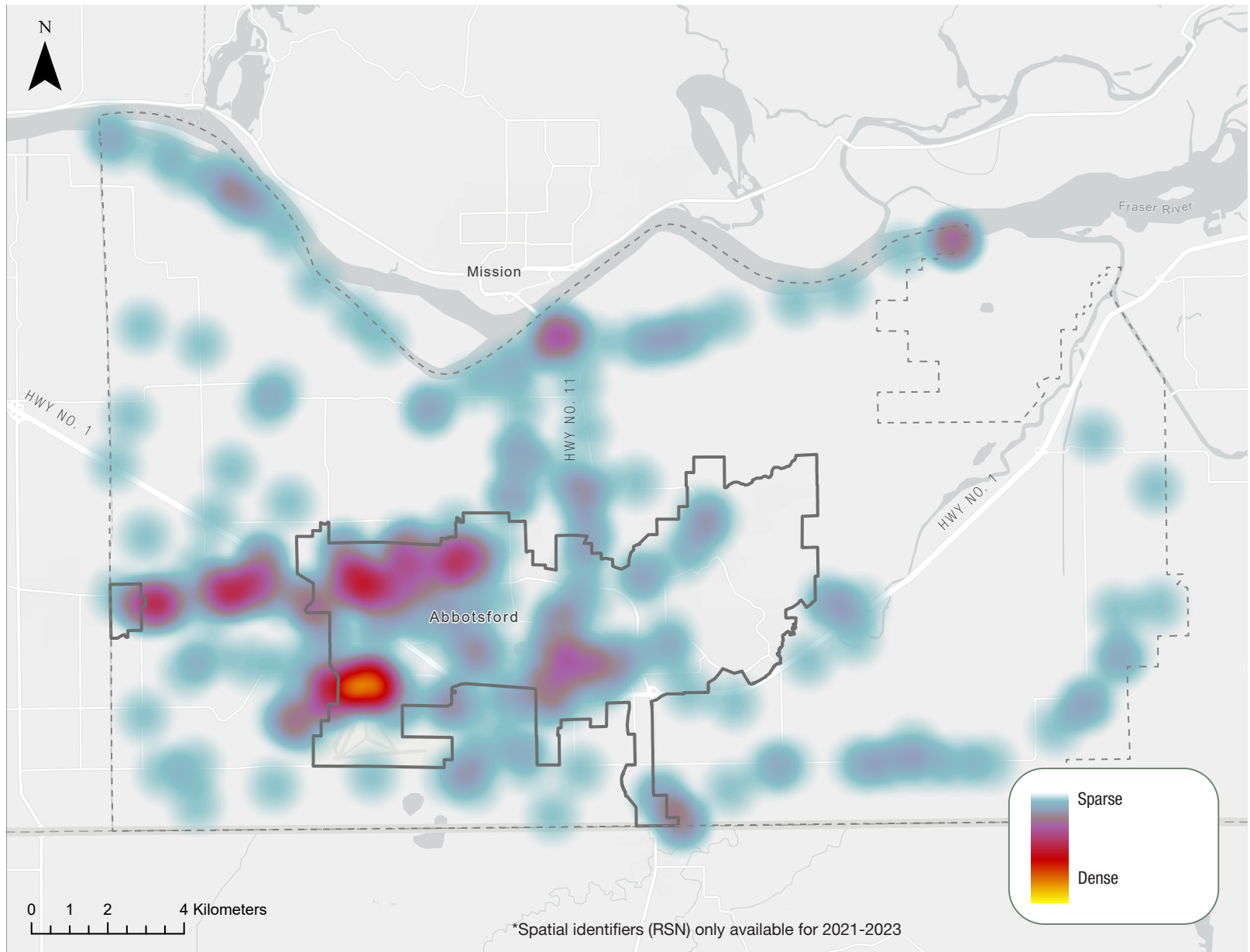
## 3.1 Commercial Truck Parking Issues

With the growth in the trucking industry and limited industrial land to park commercial trucks, Abbotsford has seen a general increasing trend in the number of non-compliance files and truck parking fines issued since the completion of the 2011 Mayor's Task Force on Commercial Truck Parking. Maps showing geographical concentrations of non-compliance files and fines are shown in Maps 2 and 3. Potential reasons for these areas of geographical concentrations could be:

- A significant amount of industrial land is located in western Abbotsford, and there is proximity to important truck routes such as Highway 1
- There is a high concentration of aggregate operations in western Abbotsford, and specifically in the Aberdeen-South Poplar area, and being close to these operations is important for trucking companies and owner operators
- A sizeable majority of the Official Community Plan (OCP) Soil Removal Eligible Areas (e.g., gravel extraction) are in the Aberdeen-South Poplar area
- A desire to supplement farm income
- Cheaper land costs for agricultural land as compared to general industrial areas



Map 2: Commercial Truck Parking Non-Compliance Files, 2015-2023



Map 3: Commercial Truck Parking Fines Issued, 2021-2023

## 3.2 Unauthorized Truck Parking

### Non-Compliance Files

Non-compliance files for Commercial Truck Parking has fluctuated over the years since the completion of the Mayor’s Task Force. The data shown in Figure 6 illustrates a dynamic pattern, revealing 153 cases in 2016, escalating to 180 in 2017. Notably, 2018 recorded a decrease to 105 cases, an occurrence possibly influenced by the dynamics of an election year. This trend persisted in 2019, maintaining the same count. The year 2020 marked a decline to 99 cases, as discretion was exercised in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, 2021 saw an increase to 136 cases, aligning with another election year. Moving forward to 2022, there was a substantial rise to 184 cases, attributed to proactive measures implemented as a result of the AgRefresh project related to unauthorized trucks on Agricultural lands, safeguarding our municipality’s food security. In the current year, 2023, to date 139 cases have been recorded. This fluctuation in reporting non-compliance with commercial truck parking is a complex interplay of factors, including election cycles, the global pandemic, and strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing regulatory enforcement.

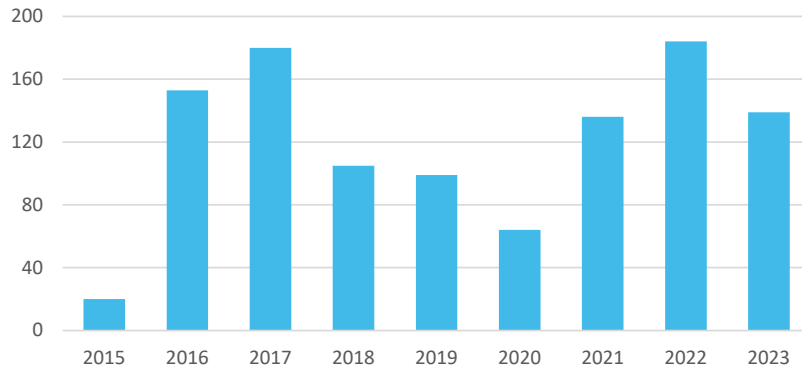


Figure 6: Non-Compliance Files Issued for Commercial Truck Parking



## Truck Parking Fines

In 2022, the issuance of fines reached a notable peak with a total of 1,108 fines upheld in response to the AgRefresh project initiative. However, in the subsequent year, 2023, a significant downturn in the number of fines became evident, as only 300 tickets were upheld (see Figure 7). This shift can be attributed to a strategic emphasis on fostering compliance through bylaw compliance agreements. During the same period, the bylaw services team successfully negotiated over 700 compliance agreements with stakeholders, reflecting a proactive approach to address regulatory concerns. This shift from punitive measures to collaborative compliance efforts demonstrates a commitment to achieving a balance between enforcing regulations and working collaboratively with community members to ensure adherence to City bylaws.

Prior to the adoption of the City's Bylaw Compliance Policy C006-08 on February 4, 2019, it was the City's practice to place files in abeyance (suspend enforcement action) for non-compliant uses for which applications were submitted in order to reconcile the use with the City's Zoning Bylaw and/or during the AgRefresh project. The old approach/practice was problematic as there was no fixed time limit for coming into compliance and it did not take into account relative impacts on safety, protection of the environment and agricultural lands. The new Policy provides reasonable standard guidelines with regard to fairness and consistency in the application of discretion considering the same factors.

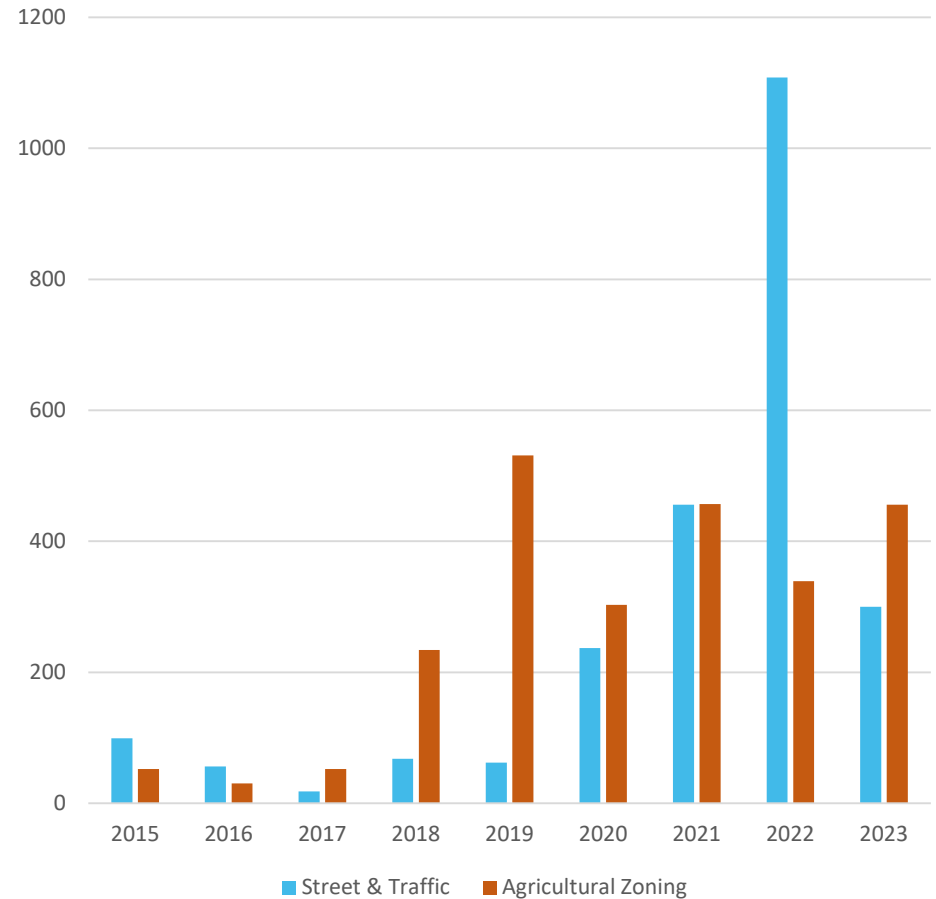
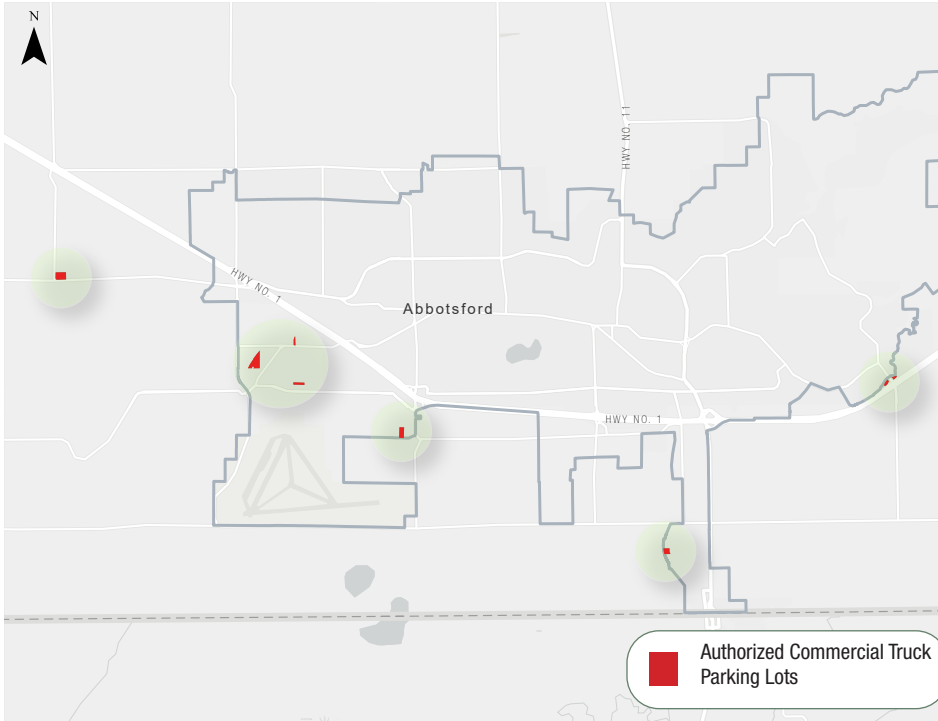


Figure 7: Number of Fines Issued for Commercial Truck Parking Violations

### 3.3 Authorized Truck Parking

Within the City of Abbotsford there are currently seven authorized commercial truck parking facilities for the trucking industry to rent spaces for parking. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure also operates one short term (24 hour and no cost) truck parking facility on the northwest side of the Whatcom Road Highway 1 interchange.

Trucking companies operating within the city, generally provide parking spaces for their own fleets within General Industrial (I2) and High Impact Industrial (I3) zoned properties.



Map 4: Authorized Commercial Truck Parking

Business Name	Address	Status November 9, 2023
Bills Trucking Ltd	30921 Peardonville Road	Valid licence
Tire King & Trailer Repair	2076 Queen Street	Valid licence
Pannu Bros Trucking Ltd	3046 Bradner Road	Valid licence
Evon Shergill Holdings Ltd	31869 King Road	Valid licence
Armaan Productions	2200 Iron Mills Court	Valid licence
International Machine Transport Inc	34251 Manufacturers Way	Valid licence
Sumas Transport Inc	5887 Bradner Road	Valid licence
Whatcom Road / Highway #1	Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure	Exempt

Figure 8: Licensed Truck Parking Facilities

## 4.0 Engagement Strategy

The purpose of this section is to outline the communication strategies, tasks, and activities that the City of Abbotsford will undertake to engage key stakeholders and others. It is the City's intent to enable meaningful and timely conversations that will help update the City's Commercial Truck Parking Strategy. The engagement activities will be targeted, innovative, and will incorporate methods to reach out to identified stakeholders and the broader community. Particular attention will be paid to using different types of engagement in Stage 2 where the bulk of activity will take place. A more detailed engagement plan will be included in each stage's staff report for the ensuing stage.

### 4.1 Who We Will Engage

The following is an initial list of stakeholders who may have an interest in the development of the City's Commercial Truck Parking Strategy. This list will serve as a starting point to help inform the creation and delivery of engagement activities. This will be reviewed and updated throughout the process.

#### **City of Abbotsford**

- City Council
- Senior Leadership Team
- Internal technical experts from various departments
- Development, Transportation and Infrastructure Advisory Committee (DTIAC)
- Business, Innovation and Public Affairs Advisory Committee (BIPAAC)

#### **First Nations**

- Matsqui
- Sumas

#### **General Public**

- City of Abbotsford residents

#### **Government Agencies**

- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI)

#### **Key Organizations**

- Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
- BC Trucking Association
- Commercial Truck Parking Association – BC
- Indo-Canadian Business Association
- Gravel Extraction Industry
- NAIOP (Vancouver Chapter)
- Urban Development Institute (Fraser Valley Chapter)



## 4.2 How and When We Will Engage

The kind of engagement activities used within this process will depend on where the project is within the 3 stages. Stage 1 engagement will be focused on informing a broader audience about the extent and scope of the issue. Stage 2 is intended to engage key stakeholders to help formulate strategies, and to then test these ideas with the community. Stage 3 will focus on refining the strategy, prior to presenting it to Council for endorsement.

The City website, Let's Talk Abbotsford, and the social media accounts will be used to inform and engage the public throughout the duration of the project.

### **Stage 1 – Background Research**

In this stage, engagement will be geared towards informing the public and stakeholders about the Commercial Truck Parking Strategy update and its process.

Activities may include:

- Background Research Report presentation to Council
- Informing through Let's Talk Abbotsford

### **Stage 2 – Draft Strategy**

Project engagement activities will begin during this stage of the project. Activities will start off by targeting external stakeholders to get an industry perspective and to help formulate strategies in order to help resolve the issue. Staff will also target a broader public perspective and will reach out through open houses and Let's Talk Abbotsford.

Activities may include:

- News release
- Facilitated stakeholder World Café sessions
- Open house(s)
- Online open house through Let's Talk Abbotsford
- Draft Strategy presentation to Council

### **Stage 3 – Final Strategy**

The Draft Strategy will be shared with key stakeholders for collection of final comments and feedback to ensure the Final Strategy will reflect the broader input received through the process.

Activities may include:

- News release
- Final Strategy presentation to Council
- Council endorsement of the Final Strategy

## 5.0 Next Steps

Stage 2 of this project will involve staff developing strategy options. These options will be developed by conducting research into best practices for commercial truck parking across North America. Staff will also meet with internal stakeholders from various departments as well as external stakeholders to help formulate strategies based on local knowledge of the situation. Engagement will be a part of this stage and it will emphasize inclusive and innovative methods to reach out to a targeted section of key stakeholders. Staff will also present the information on Let's Talk Abbotsford and hold an open house for the community. The Draft strategies will be presented to Business, Innovation and Public Affairs Advisory Committee (BIPAAC) and Development, Transportation and Infrastructure Advisory Committee (DTIAC) for committee members to review and provide feedback.

Staff will prepare a report that summarizes Stage 2. The report will review stakeholder input, and how the input informed the development of draft strategies. Council's endorsement of the report will authorize staff to proceed with community engagement prior to conducting Stage 3 of the process. Stage 3 will focus on creating the final strategy and having it endorsed by Council.

### **Implementation**

The Commercial Truck Parking Strategy will provide a clear understanding of the issue and propose strategies which will work towards alleviating the problem of overnight commercial truck parking within the City of Abbotsford. At the conclusion of the strategy process, staff will then undertake completing an implementation component to the project, to ensure that the identified strategies are executed. As part of this implementation work, staff may be required to amend key City plans or bylaws such as the OCP, Zoning Bylaw and changes to Engineering standards and policies.

