

Council adopts new Tree Management Bylaw

At their Jan. 13 meeting, City Council updated the Tree Management Bylaw to align it with the goals of the Urban Forest Strategy.

The updated bylaw includes more flexible options for tree replacement ratios and sizes, makes updates to several definitions such as “protected tree” and “tree retention area,” creates new tree density targets and new permissions for tree removal outside the Urban Development Boundary, clarified parameters for removal of certain trees, a new application fee and site re-inspection fee and updated fees for tree planting and tree securities.

The bylaw also requires the documentation of all new trees planted on private land to identify and protect trees, streamlined security deposits for trees retained on construction sites, and that additional reports from qualified professionals may be needed when tree removals take place in sensitive areas or may harm people, property or the environment. Clear enforcement and mitigation mechanisms will also be put in place to ensure tree protection requirements are met.

The bylaw includes a strengthened “Prohibitions” section that more clearly defines common offences, improving enforceability. Enhanced mitigation measures include stronger requirements for the protection of retained trees during development, the use and potential forfeiture of security deposits, and the application of retroactive permit and fee requirements when unauthorized tree removal or damage occurs to protected trees.

These changes were made in consultation with City committees and departments, industry representatives, and the general public.

Council receives Climate Resilience Strategy update

At their Jan. 27 meeting, City Council received a Stage 1 progress report on the development of the City’s Climate Resilience Strategy (CRS). This document will guide the City’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to climate impacts, and enhance community resilience.

Stage 1 focused on understanding successes and opportunities in City climate policies; preparing a citywide Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (HRVA); and developing an engagement plan. So far, Stage 1 found:

- Abbotsford has a strong foundation of plans supporting climate resilience, and more work in this area will help the City to better understand vulnerability among people, infrastructure and ecosystems.
- According to climate trends and data, Abbotsford is increasingly exposed to multiple climate hazards, intensifying the need for proactive planning.
- Climate data provide insights on how climate hazards may affect the community, which will guide prioritization for the HRVA and inform the CRS’s direction.

Staff are currently conducting the first round of community engagement to help the City understand how climate change and other hazards are affecting the community, and what the City can do to be more resilient to climate change. This includes an online survey, pop-up events, “Climate Conversation” focus groups and First Nations outreach.

View the staff presentation at abbotsford.ca/climatestrategystage1.

Council directs staff to begin community engagement for AbbyPD HQ public art proposal

At their Jan. 27 meeting, City Council directed staff to proceed with community engagement for a proposed public art installation at the new Abbotsford Police Department headquarters. This is the first public art project implemented under the City's new Public Art Policy (abbotsford.ca/publicartpolicy).

More than 175 local and regional arts, heritage and culture practitioners were invited to submit proposals, which were evaluated based on the following criteria:

- High quality and innovative concept with a clear vision of the final artwork
- Demonstrated understanding of project themes as well as AbbyPD's mission, vision and values
- Understanding of the project architecture, the site and its contexts
- Availability and ability to meet the project timeline and budget

The chosen proposal, called "Form in Motion, Strength in Unity," is made up of two integrated artworks: a mosaic-like kinetic facade, and a sculptural text-based installation. Both the design of the facade and the words and phrases of the text-based work will be determined through engagement with the public and AbbyPD.

Funding for the artwork is covered in the budget for the Abbotsford Police Department Headquarters Expansion Project. This funding was allocated as part of the 1 per cent capital project funding model under the City's previous Public Art Policy.

View the staff presentation at abbotsford.ca/abbypdhqpublicart.

Council moves Cemetery Strategy to public engagement phase

At their Jan. 27 meeting, City Council received an overview of the draft Cemetery Strategy and directed staff to proceed with community engagement.

The Cemetery Strategy aims to assess public needs and wants for interment options, provide projections on cemetery capacity, and maximize reasonable capacity for interment in the City's four cemeteries.

The development opportunities discovered at this stage of the Strategy include:

- **Infill and densification:** Repurposing underutilized space (driveways, paths)
- **Expansion:** Developing adjacent or undeveloped land still contained on the cemetery site
- **Reclamation:** Investigating unclaimed pre-purchased lots
- **New services:** Green burial, memorial boulder walks, enhanced scattering gardens

Staff then developed concept plans for each cemetery based on key findings from earlier community engagement, as well as a "demand needs analysis" that looked at community demographics and preferences, interment and disposition trends, and cemetery demand and inventory.

Staff will now seek public feedback on their draft cemetery concept plans through in-person open houses and an online survey through Let's Talk Abbotsford.

View the staff presentation at abbotsford.ca/cemeterystrategystage2.