

Grant recipients bring diverse art and culture offerings to Abbotsford

Eight art and culture creators and organizations will be treating Abbotsford residents to a diverse range of cultural experiences this year thanks to funding from the City of Abbotsford's new Arts and Culture Grant Program.

Thirty-nine local applicants applied for the grants, which support cultural activities, programs and events that establish community connections, highlight diversity and contribute to economic growth. The selected projects offer a diverse range of new and enhanced arts and culture experiences for community participation spanning a wide variety of artistic disciplines:

- Abbotsford Film Society will be presenting a series of community film screenings.
- Abby Arts Collective will host a free community art event.
- Free Little Art Gallery creators Anuki Karunajeewa and Jennifer Shepit will host pop-up exhibitions around the community.
- The Fraser Valley Artists Society will host a free community art event.
- Métis Spirit Dot Painting Workshop Series creator Michelle Bucholtz will hold intercultural workshops and interactive demonstrations.
- Intercultural Community Storytelling Project creator Nike Famojuro will host a series of spoken word and storytelling presentations.
- South Asian Folk Heritage Project creator Sadhik Preet Singh will present in-person and virtual exhibitions.
- Songs Strings and Steps will enhance their Symphony in the Park concert by increasing youth participation.

Congratulations to this year's grant recipients. We look forward to seeing their projects come to fruition and we hope the community enjoys this upcoming selection of cultural and artistic events, activities and programs.



The Fraser Valley Artists Society, seen here at their 2026 Spring Art Show artists' reception, is one of the local art organizations receiving funding from the City's new Arts and Culture Grant Program.

Council endorses residential tree planting program

At their May 26 meeting, City Council endorsed "Branch Out Abbotsford," a new residential tree planting program.

In their report to Council, staff explained that participants of the program would have trees delivered to their homes and professionals would help plant them. The property owner would then be provided with instructions on how to care for the tree.

Eight species of locally supplied trees are recommended for the project. This includes a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees in range of sizes to suit a variety of locations and conditions. Staff recommend focusing the program in the Peardonville and West Abbotsford neighbourhoods in its first year.

This program addresses three goals of the City's Urban Forest Strategy: (1) Prioritize tree planting in urban neighbourhoods with less than 20 per cent canopy cover. (2) Develop and implement a communications and stewardship plan that explores opportunities to share key messages about the urban forest, engage community members in stewardship and provide educational opportunities. (3) Explore programs that encourage people to regularly plant and maintain large trees on their properties.

Council approves Fishtrap Creek Integrated Stormwater Management Plan

At their May 12 meeting, City Council approved the Fishtrap Creek Integrated Stormwater Management Plan.

In their report to Council, staff stated that the purpose of the plan is to develop strategies to address watershed issues, minimize impacts of future development and climate change, and improve drainage infrastructure in the Fishtrap Creek watershed to support safe and sustainable growth of the watershed and protect the environment.

The plan makes recommendations in the areas of flood, erosion and sediment management, as well as environmental restoration and enhancements.

This program is expected to take more than 30 years to complete. Right now, sediment is being removed from the Fishtrap detention ponds as part of the program. The remaining identified projects will be prioritized and incorporated into the City's Drainage Master Plan to be completed later next year.

View the staff presentation at abbotsford.ca/fishtrapcreekplanfinal.

Council votes to amend Civic Awards Policy

At their May 12 meeting, City Council approved amendments to the Civic Awards and Recognition Policy to modernize the policy and improve clarity, transparency and administrative efficiency.

In their report to Council, staff noted that since being adopted in 2020, the current strategy has been reviewed to identify opportunities for improvement.

Staff propose:

- Updating the award structure
- Clarifying eligibility criteria
- Clarifying ineligibility of current City and Abbotsford Police Department employees
- Implementing a four-year waiting period for former employees and members of Council
- Simplifying the intake process
- Retaining nominations from prior years for future consideration
- Revising the review process
- Disbanding the Awards and Recognition Advisory Committee

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT



On May 9, Mayor Siemens and Councillors Driessen and Gibson attended the Fraser Valley Health Care Foundation's Walk for Cardiac Health at Mill Lake Park.



On May 9, Mayor Siemens attended the Abbotsford Sports Hall of Fame induction honouring builder Jim Gordon, referee Martin Reid and Chase Wouters representing the 2024-25 Abbotsford Canucks.



On May 13, Mayor Siemens and Councillors Ross, Chahal and Gibson joined AbbyPD Chief Watson at an open house event about AbbyPD's 2026+ Strategic Framework.



On May 15, Mayor Siemens and Councillors Chahal, Gibson, Loewen, Ross and Sidhu (not pictured) attended a groundbreaking for EggSolutions' new processing facility.



On May 21, Mayor Siemens met the Rotary Club of Abbotsford-Matsqui, including president-elect Gary Moore (pictured), to answer questions and discuss our community and Council's 2022-2026 term.



On May 23, Deputy Mayor Loewen helped kick off the 106th annual Bradner May Day with Councillors Barkman, Driessen, Gibson and Ross, MP Vis and MLA Neufeld.



On May 23, Deputy Mayor Loewen and ADBA executive director Ryan Leonhard officially opened West Railway Plaza flanked by Councillors Barkman, Driessen and Gibson.



On May 24, Mayor Siemens ran in the 10K at Run for Water, while Councillors Gibson and Loewen (not pictured) ran the 5K and cheered from the sidelines, respectively.