

Council approves moving solid waste fees from property tax notice to utility bill

At their June 16 meeting, City Council approved transitioning solid waste fees from the annual property tax notice to the utility billing system, effective Jan. 1, 2027.

In their report to Council, staff explained that the City issues water and sewer utility fees on a bi-monthly and quarterly basis, while solid waste service fees are charged annually. Moving solid waste fees into the utilities billing system will:

- consolidate utility fees into the existing billing system
- simplify the annual property tax notice
- improve transparency by clearly distinguishing taxes from user fees
- align the City's billing practices with those of comparable municipalities

Benefits to residents include:

- spreading utility costs evenly throughout the year, improving affordability, cash flow and payment predictability
- enabling automatic adjustment of charges to reflect changes to solid waste cart sizes
- incorporating cart exchange fees directly into utility bills, eliminating the need for separate invoices and simplifying payment
- improving clarity regarding the Provincial Property Tax Deferment Program by removing non-deferrable solid waste fees from the property tax notice
- integrating solid waste charges into the Utility Auto Debit Plan, enabling convenient and automatic on-time payments

View the staff presentation at

abbotsford.ca/solidwasteutilitybilling.

Council adopts Density Bonus Program update

At their June 23 meeting, City Council adopted bylaw amendments updating the City's Density Bonus Program to align with Provincial legislation.

A Density Bonus Program allows property developers to build additional floor space or housing units beyond what the base zoning regulations ordinarily permit. In exchange, the developer must provide community amenities or affordable housing, either by building them on-site or paying a cash-in-lieu.

Key elements of the updated bylaws include:

- retaining the existing density bonus cash-in-lieu rate (\$15.40 per square metre)
- introducing an in-kind contribution option (0.3 per cent of bonus floor or one unit, whichever is greater)
- establishing a minimum unit size of 86 square metres and three bedrooms for in-kind housing contributions
- requiring in-kind housing contributions to be:
 - owned and operated by a government agency or non-profit housing provider
 - rented for less than the median market rent for Abbotsford to a household earning less than the median household income for Abbotsford
 - kept affordable for 60 years or the life of the building, whichever is greater

View the staff presentation at abbotsford.ca/densitybonusprogramupdate.

Council adopts amended Street and Traffic Bylaw

At their June 16 meeting, Council adopted amendments to its Street and Traffic Bylaw relating to parking and the obligations of those who own property next to highways.

The following changes are now included in the Bylaw:

- Reducing the width of pavement required for on-street parking from 6.1 metres to 5.8 metres to allow for additional parking on some roadways that are typically without curbs and gutters
- Clarifying and consolidating property owner responsibilities when there is a highway next to their property, for example by making clear the owners' and occupiers' responsibility to keep a safe driveway entrance and requiring owners to clean any material (like sand or gravel) tracked onto the road

Additionally, the speed limit on Cardinal Avenue from Blue Jay Street to Highstreet Access Road will be temporarily reduced to 40 km/h due to the construction of the Highstreet Transit Exchange. The limit will return to 50 km/h once construction is complete.

Council approves Fraser Valley Zero Emissions Mobility Strategy

At their June 23 meeting, City Council approved and directed staff to implement the Fraser Valley Zero Emissions Mobility Strategy (FVZEMS) developed in partnership with the City of Chilliwack and the Fraser Valley Regional District, with funding support from BC Hydro.

In their report to Council, staff described the FVZEMS as a coordinated framework that aims to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions across the Fraser Valley and identifies the City's role in supporting the transition to zero-emissions mobility.

The FVZEMS is informed by a review of current conditions, Federal and Provincial policies, and expected growth in the region. It uses modelling to explore how zero-emissions mobility is anticipated to grow, associated infrastructure needs, and estimated costs. It also incorporates input from the public and interest holders, and outlines funding opportunities to support implementation. The FVZEMS has the following goals:

- Expand publicly available EV charging
- Accelerate light-duty EV adoption
- Expand home and workplace charging
- Lead by example
- Enhance financial sustainability of zero-emissions mobility
- Support the decarbonization of medium- and heavy-duty vehicles
- Support and promote active transportation and transition to e-micromobility
- Monitor and evaluate progress

Thirty actions have been identified to advance these goals, providing a practical and phased approach that balances ambition with feasibility and supports coordinated implementation across jurisdictions.

View the staff presentation at abbotsford.ca/FVZEMSfinalstrategy.

Council advances McKee Trail Strategy to next phase

At their June 23 meeting, City Council received the McKee Trail Strategy Stage 1 Background Research Report and Community Engagement Summary and directed staff to proceed to Stage 2.

In their report to Council, staff explained that the purpose of the strategy is to establish a well-connected trail network in the McKee area supporting a range of recreation opportunities. It also prioritizes engaging with the community and trail users to support trail design and maintenance.

In-person engagement, including landowner meetings, were held in November 2025, and an online survey ran from January to February of this year. The five key findings were:

1. The existing informal trail system on private properties hosts trails for a variety of recreation activities that are frequently used and highly valued by the community.
2. Visitors are very satisfied with the quality and quantity of recreation experiences on the existing trail system, but there are opportunities to improve.

3. Visitor management concerns are emerging and should be addressed as future visitation grows.
4. The trail system needs to be carefully planned, designed, and managed to provide high-quality visitor experiences while avoiding or mitigating impacts to environmental and cultural values.
5. Trail access, management, and governance should be enhanced during development and for the future trail network.

The existing informal trail network is on private property, but over time, open space lands will transfer to the City through development, enabling a formal public trail network aligned with the McKee Trail Strategy.

Once the City-Wide and Off-Road Trails Strategy is completed in the fall, Stage 2 of the McKee Trail Strategy will begin to ensure both strategies are in alignment.

View the staff presentation at abbotsford.ca/mckee-trail-stage1.

Council approves 2025 Annual Report

At their June 23 meeting, City Council approved the City of Abbotsford's 2025 Annual Report, including the 2025 Audited Financial Statements.

Some key highlights from the Annual Report this year include:

- The City of Abbotsford reported an accumulated surplus of \$66.2 million, which primarily represents the City's investment in infrastructure assets, including buildings, roads, water and wastewater systems, and parks. It also includes an operating surplus of \$6.7 million to support ongoing asset maintenance and improvements.
- Net financial assets were up by \$10.6 million to \$393 million
- The City's long-term debt was paid down by \$4.5 million, ending the year at \$26.9 million
- The City's investment return was \$37.2 million for the year
- Tangible capital assets grew by \$55.2 million to \$1.7 billion

View the staff presentation at abbotsford.ca/2025annualreport.

Council approves 2025 SOFI report

At their June 23 meeting, City Council approved the 2025 Statement of Financial Information (SOFI) report.

The purpose of the SOFI report is to disclose financial statements and disbursements for employee remuneration greater than \$75,000, as well as vendor expenses greater than \$25,000.

The Provincially-mandated threshold of \$75,000 for the SOFI employee report has not changed since 2002. If this figure were tied to inflation, today it would be approximately \$124,000, a threshold far fewer employees would reach or exceed.

Last year the number of staff earning more than \$75,000 increased by 45 to 548, mainly due to active annual cost-of-living adjustments, recruitment efforts and filling vacancies.

Council progresses Climate Resilience Strategy to final stage

At their June 23 meeting, City Council directed staff to proceed with the final stage of the City's Climate Resilience Strategy.

In their report to Council, staff presented the draft Strategy that will guide the City's climate mitigation and adaptation efforts over the next 25 years. Staff summarized the latest engagement outcomes and key refinements integrated into the draft, including the updated vision, "Big Moves" and actions.

The Climate Resilience Strategy is structured around nine "Big Moves" based on community feedback, climate risk analysis, greenhouse gas emissions data and modelling, and staff input:

1. Centre equity, health and community resilience
2. Build a low-carbon, climate-ready economy
3. Strengthen climate-resilient infrastructure
4. Support lower-carbon transportation
5. Enable low-carbon, high-performance buildings
6. Foster climate-resilient agriculture and food systems
7. Protect and enhance natural systems
8. Strengthen emergency management for a changing climate
9. Enable implementation through City leadership

Key components of the Strategy's implementation will include:

- Cost-benefit analysis to prioritize actions and assess the cost of inaction
- Key performance indicators to track progress and measure outcomes
- Financing strategy to identify funding sources and align with capital planning
- Progress tracking for monitoring and reporting

The final Strategy will be presented to Council in July 2026.

View the staff presentation at abbotsford.ca/climatestrategystage3.