



NEWS RELEASE

Abbotsford part of B.C. Urban Mayors Caucus seeking Provincial support for local infrastructure.

ABBOTSFORD – Oct 15, 2020: The B.C. Urban Mayors' Caucus once again [called on all provincial parties](#) today to commit the next government to allocating at least \$1-billion annually from a share of B.C.'s economic growth directly to local governments so that they can build much-needed infrastructure projects required for 21st century cities.

As one of the fastest growing communities in Canada, Abbotsford will continue to require infrastructure support from senior levels of government in order to support community needs. Currently the City of Abbotsford has 5 major infrastructure projects totaling over \$1.9 billion in infrastructure funding needs over the next 25 years.

Most municipal infrastructure funding is currently allocated on a grant basis where local governments apply for funding for priority projects.

Municipalities currently only receive eight cents of every tax dollar, yet are responsible for roughly 60 percent of the infrastructure in the Province.

Quotes:

“The way in which senior levels of government provide support for municipal infrastructure through grant programs is not a viable method of funding local governments. We need stable, predictable and sustainable funding each year so that we can directly invest in our communities' infrastructure needs and address the provincial infrastructure deficit. Without this, municipalities are left playing the lottery on receiving grant funding to assist us in meeting community needs.

*Henry Braun
Mayor, City of Abbotsford*

Background:

The [BC Urban Mayors' Caucus 2020 Blueprint for British Columbia's Urban Future](#) outlines four key priorities for urban communities across the province:

- 1) Mental Health, Substance Use and Addictions
- 2) Affordable Housing
- 3) Public Transit
- 4) A New Fiscal Framework

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BACKGROUND

City of Abbotsford's immediate capital projects:

1. Collector Well Project – Phase 1 (\$73M)

The City of Abbotsford oversees the operations of the Abbotsford Mission Water & Sewer Commission, which supplies municipal water to Abbotsford, Mission, as well as a small part of the Fraser Valley Regional District. Approximately 160,000 residents are serviced by this system.

As the populations of Abbotsford and Mission continue to grow (1.5% and 2.0% each year respectively), it is vital to ensure our regional water supply and water infrastructure are able to meet the needs of these growing communities. The existing water supply system is nearing its capacity and it is estimated that additional water will be needed within the next 5-10 years.

The addition of a collector well system will increase system capacity by 25ML/day by 2025 (Phase 1) and an additional 25ML/day by 2040. By 2051, this is expected to allow the system to service 117,000 more people based on current consumption habits, thereby ensuring residents of both the District of Mission and the City of Abbotsford will have access to clean drinking water as these communities continue to grow. This system will also build in resiliency to the water supply and mitigate against the future impacts of climate change.

A collector well is made up of horizontal pipes, designed to capture groundwater flows from the underground aquifer near the river. Groundwater undergoes a natural filtering process through the soil, followed by water quality improvements to create high quality potable water for customers in both communities.

The estimated cost for the collector well project is \$73M.

2. TransCanada Highway 1 Improvements/HOV through the Fraser Valley – City's contribution to Interchange Improvements (\$37M)

The South Fraser region of the Lower Mainland in BC is projected to absorb 70% of the entire region's population growth over the next 25 years. The impact of this growth on the transportation networks in this region has reached a crucial point & cannot be overlooked. As urbanization increases across the South Fraser region, bottlenecks in urban centres will only continue to grow.

As the gateway to Asia and the Pacific, as well as the rest of Canada, the congestion crunch in Southwestern B.C. directly impacts businesses & investment across the province as well as Canada. For the communities centrally located in the South Fraser region, the ability for their businesses to transport goods to market is a key factor in the continued success of the region and of the Province.

Residents and businesses in BC rely on local transportation networks every day to support strong, inclusive and sustainable communities. Investing in transportation infrastructure is critical to connecting communities, helping our businesses compete, and creating a strong economy.

The estimated cost of \$37M is the City's portion of the contribution to the Highway #1 improvements through the City of Abbotsford. This includes the City's portion of the Peardonville Overpass (\$15M) and Whatcom Interchange (\$22M)

3. Abbotsford Police Station Headquarters (\$58.5M)

The Abbotsford Police Headquarter Building was originally built in 1988 for the Matsqui Police Department, which was comprised of 74 officers along with a complement of support staff. At that time the District of Matsqui was approximately 58,000 residents. In 1995 the Districts of Abbotsford and Matsqui amalgamated into the City of Abbotsford and the Abbotsford Police Department has since grown to an estimated 226 officers serving a population of approximately 158,000 residents.

Currently the Abbotsford Police Department's operations are working out of six separate sites. The current Headquarters building located within Abbotsford's Civic Precinct off of Justice Way is beyond the ability to accommodate both the current and future needs of the department due to the limited space. Other challenges include, but not limited to, include; lack of sufficient change rooms, and a holding cell facility that is completed outdated.

The estimated cost of renovation/addition for this facility is \$58.5M

4. Fire Hall #6/Social Housing Replacement Project (est. \$24-30M)

Abbotsford's Fire Hall #6 is in need of replacement due to the need for additional station capacity in the Urban Core, specifically in the Historic Downtown / McCallum and UDistrict areas.

In considering the opportunities that might be available in building an updated replacement Fire Hall, the City has adopted a creative approach. The City will utilize City-owned land and transform it into not only a much needed new Fire Hall, but also include safe new homes for dozens of women and children. While the City continues to approve and open new affordable homes to respond to the housing crisis and homelessness, additional community needs remain. As part of ensuring the City is supporting an increase in its affordable housing stock, the rebuild of Fire Hall #6 will incorporate a Social Housing Project as part of the rebuild.

This supports a multi-disciplinary approach to utilizing public space and prioritizing safety.

The estimated cost for this project is \$24M-30M.

5. Expanding the Abbotsford Transit Service and new Exchange (\$3.8M)

The South Fraser region of the Lower Mainland in BC is projected to absorb 70% of the entire region's population growth over the next 25 years. As the community of Abbotsford continues to grow, and with our Official Community Plan anticipating community growth projections to 200,000 people, a new transit exchange will be needed to support the transit system. This improvement would allow the city to add 10,000 service hours to the system each year.

The estimated cost for the service improvement is \$3.8M.

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