



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Planning & Development Services



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Cover image: 33832 South Fraser Way
Image by: Keystone Architecture

Source of all data: City of Abbotsford, Planning and Development Services unless otherwise stated. The City of Abbotsford has made an effort to summarize data in an easy to use format for the public’s benefit. While every effort has been made to do so accurately, there may be errors in the data portrayed.

Planning & Development Services

The Planning & Development Services Department consists of three main divisions: Community Planning, Development Planning, and Building Permits & Licences.

Community Planning manages the City’s Official Community Plan (OCP), bringing together land use, urban design and social planning policies, along with overall infrastructure needs into long range land use plans. The division is responsible for the development and implementation of strategies, policies and plans that guide the City’s future growth and development.

Development Planning is responsible for reviewing and processing development applications such as rezoning, subdivision and development permits. These applications are reviewed for compliance with the OCP, Zoning Bylaw and other municipal bylaws and policies.

Building Permits and Licences is responsible for ensuring all building construction in the City meets Building Code requirements for health, life safety and fire protection. Functions include plan checking, building permit issuance, on-site inspections and business licensing.

For more information: abbotsford.ca/business-development

Introduction

The 2023 Planning and Development Services (PDS) Annual Report provides a snapshot of how we've progressed over the past twelve months. The document outlines progress and accomplishments regarding development activity, trends and department initiatives.

Application Process

Inquiry

There is a lot of information to consider before making an application, including understanding the relevant City plans, procedures, and bylaws. Development Inquiry Meetings (DIMs) are an opportunity to meet with City staff, discuss ideas, and determine how the City's plans and policies affect a potential application.

Submission and Review

Once an application is submitted, staff review and refer the proposal to other agencies, if required. Development applications are first reviewed by the Development Application Review Team (DART) for general compliance and to identify requirements from each department. Once the application is reviewed and revisions are completed, the application can proceed to the next step.

Approval and Issuance

Depending on the type of application, it will either be reviewed by Council or City staff. If an application is supported, and is approved in principle, requirements for final approval must be met. A building permit application will be accepted once the development is approved in principle. The building permit will be issued once the requirements for final development approval and building permit issuance are met.

Construction

Once the building permit has been issued, construction can begin. Construction activity must meet the requirements of City bylaws and other government agencies. Applicable inspections are undertaken during the appropriate stages of construction and prior to occupancy of the building.

2023 Highlights



The 2023 PDS Annual Report shows where we are today with activity and trends.

PDS reports statistics on department activity twice a year.

For more information, please visit:

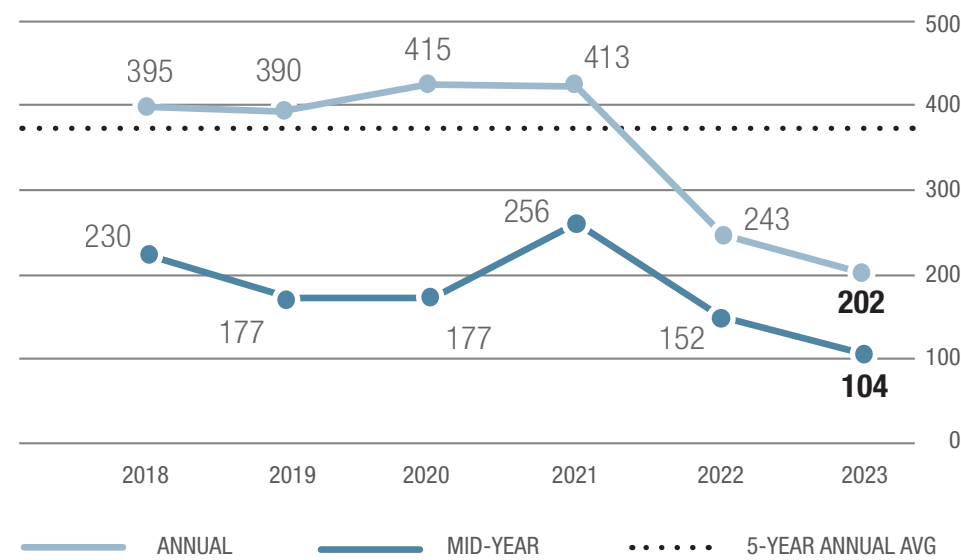
abbotsford.ca/business-development/statistics

Inquiry, Submission & Review

Development Inquiry Meetings

> Staff coordinated approximately 5 DIMs a week throughout 2023.

Total Number of DIMs

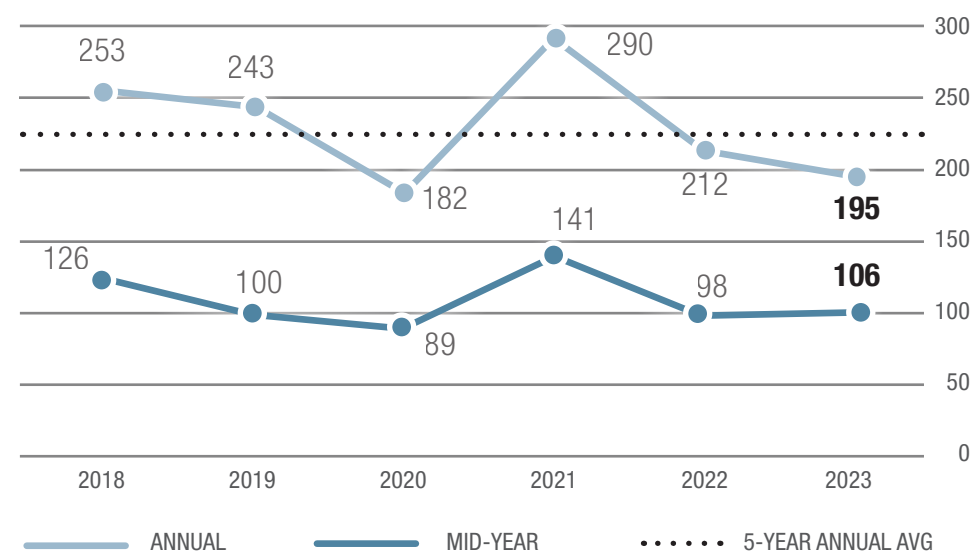


Development Inquiry Meetings (DIMs) are intended to provide preliminary comments to land owners and developers considering development in respect to the Official Community Plan, Development Permit Areas/Guidelines, zoning, and anticipated off-site upgrades.

Land Development Applications Received

> The total number of land development applications received in 2023 remained fairly consistent with the previous year.

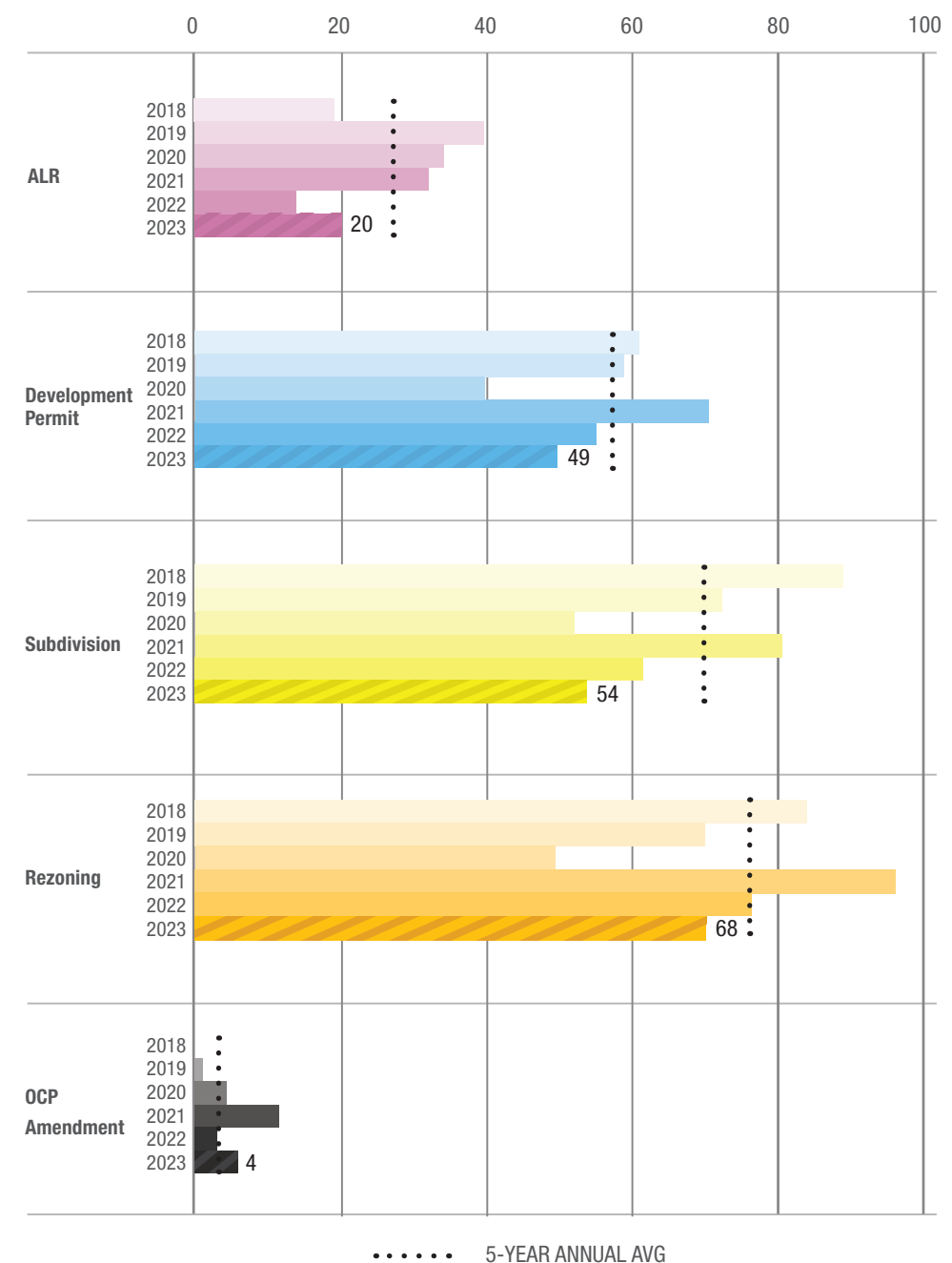
Total Land Development Applications Received



Land Development Applications Received (cont'd)

> The total number of land development applications received in 2023 (195) remained fairly consistent with the previous year (212).

Land Development Applications Received by Type

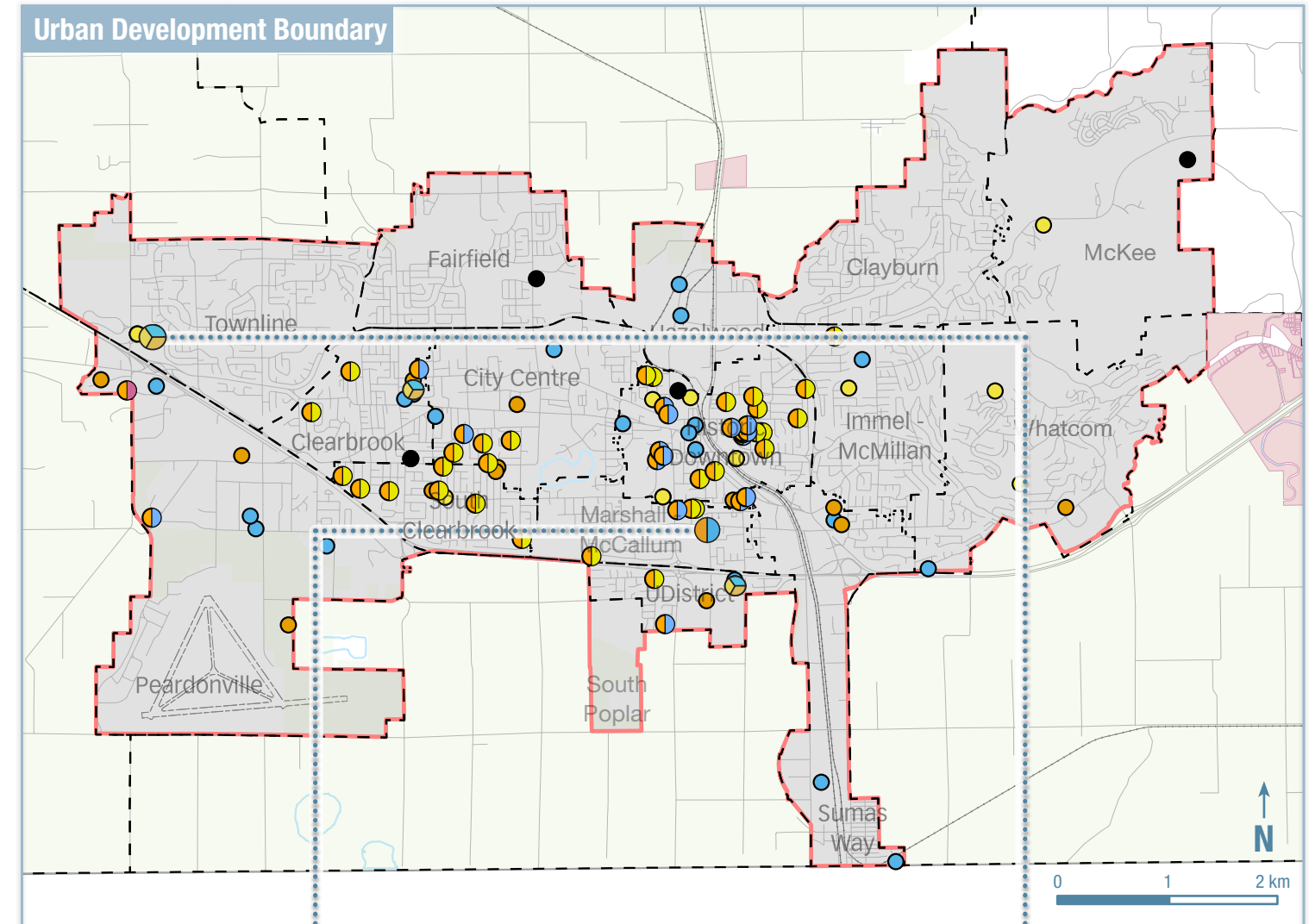
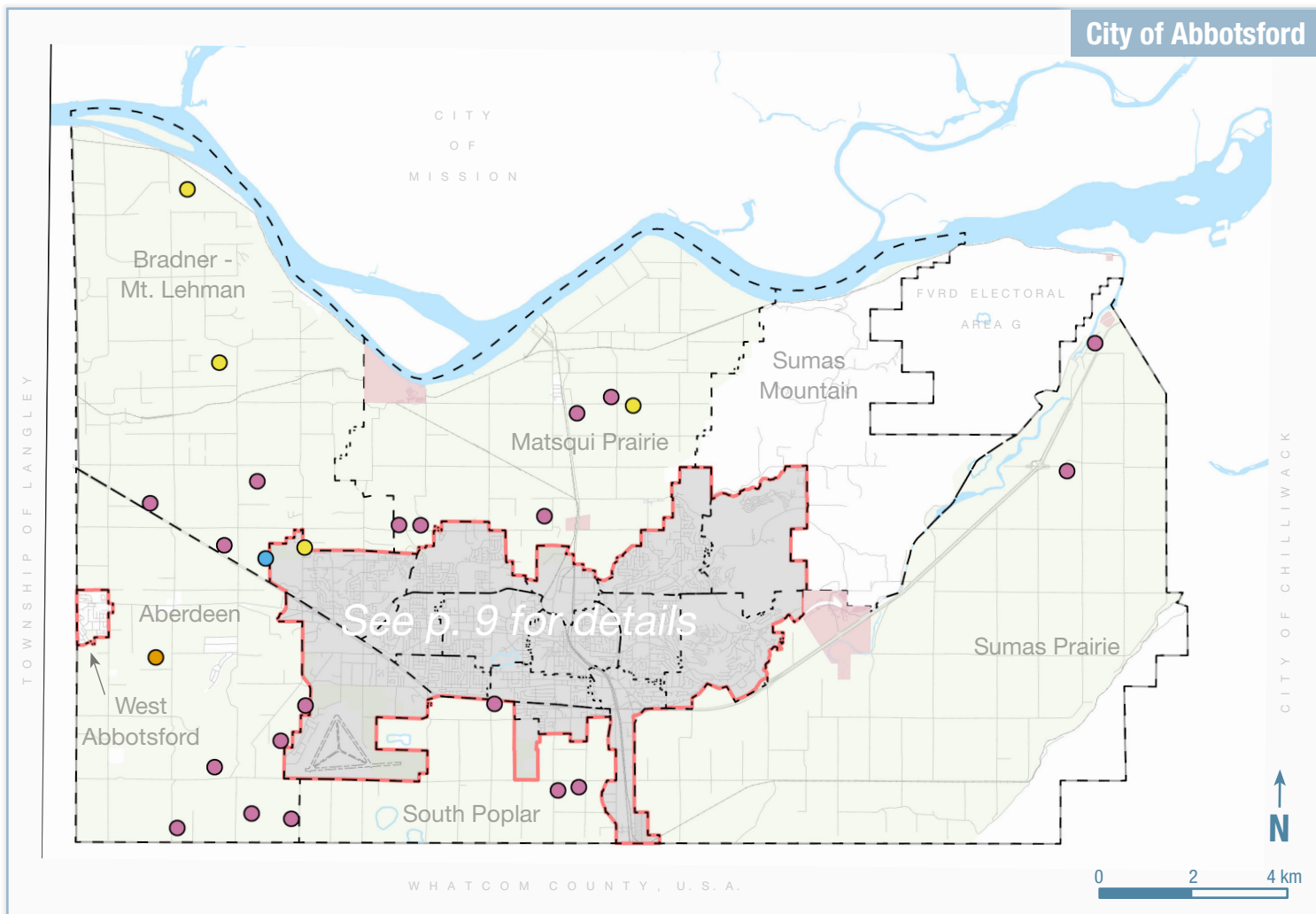


Rezoning applications have been the most common type of development application since 2021.

Land Development Applications Received

Application Type

- Agricultural Land Reserve
- Development Permits
- OCP Amendments
- Rezoning
- Subdivisions
- Urban Development Boundary
- Community Boundaries
- Agricultural Land Reserve
- First Nations
- Rezoning + Subdivision
- Rezoning + Development Permit
- Rezoning + Agricultural Land Reserve
- Rezoning + Subdivision + Development Permit



33774 Marshall Rd
103 Units

RZ DP



30530 Cardinal Ave
65 Units

RZ SD DP

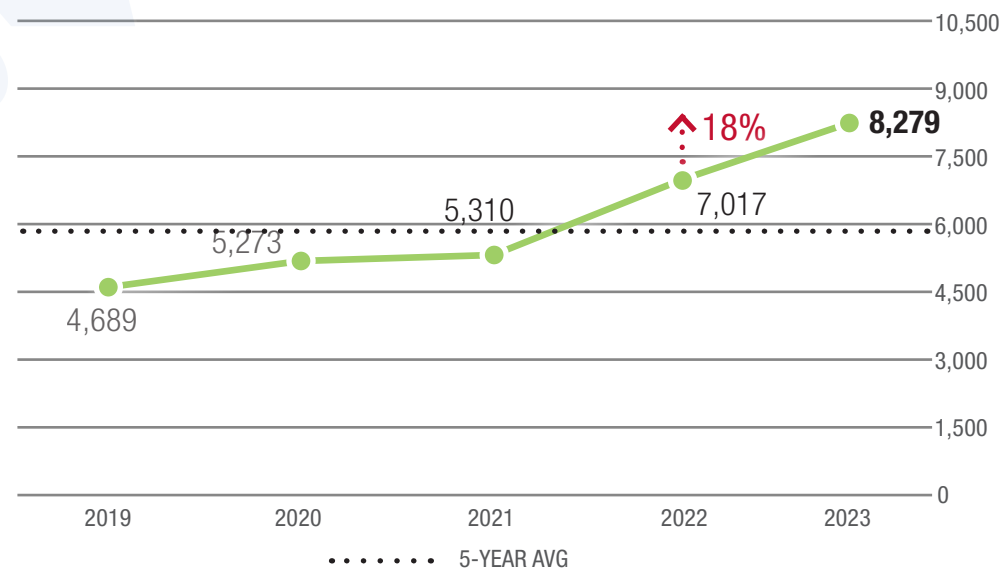


In-Stream Residential Applications

Single Family (Lots), Townhouse & Apartment (Units)

> The total number of lots/units in-stream in 2023 increased by 18% from 2022.

Total Lots/Units In-Stream

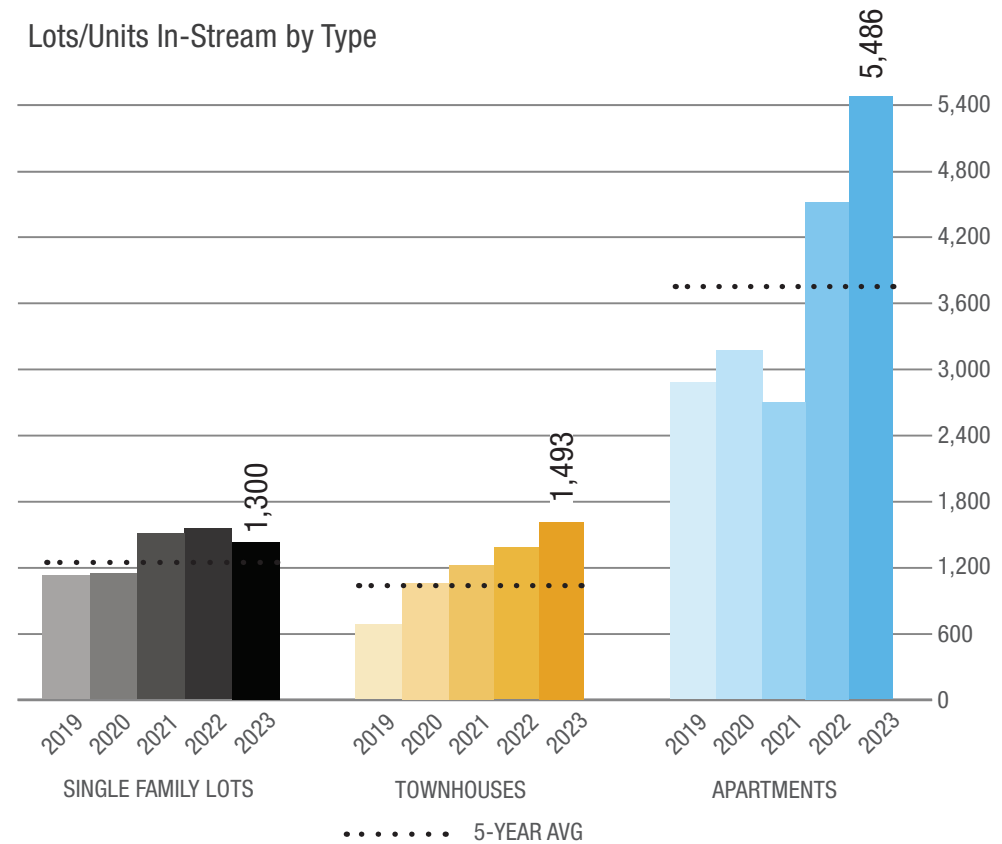


In-stream applications refer to applications currently under staff review.

Over 85% of all in-stream lots or units at mid-year were multi-family units.

All residential unit types remained above the 5-year average.

Lots/Units In-Stream by Type

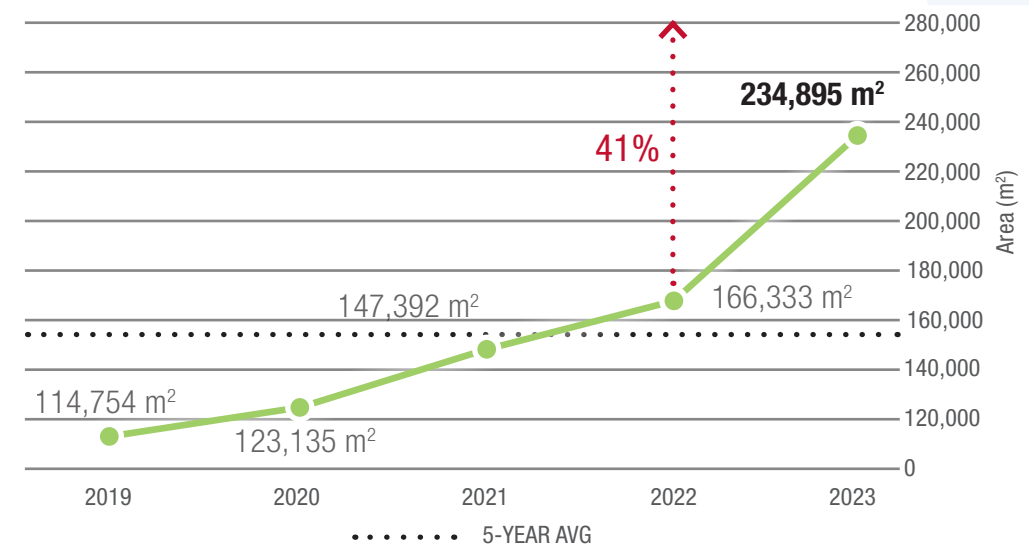


In-Stream ICI Applications

Institutional, Commercial, & Industrial Floor Space

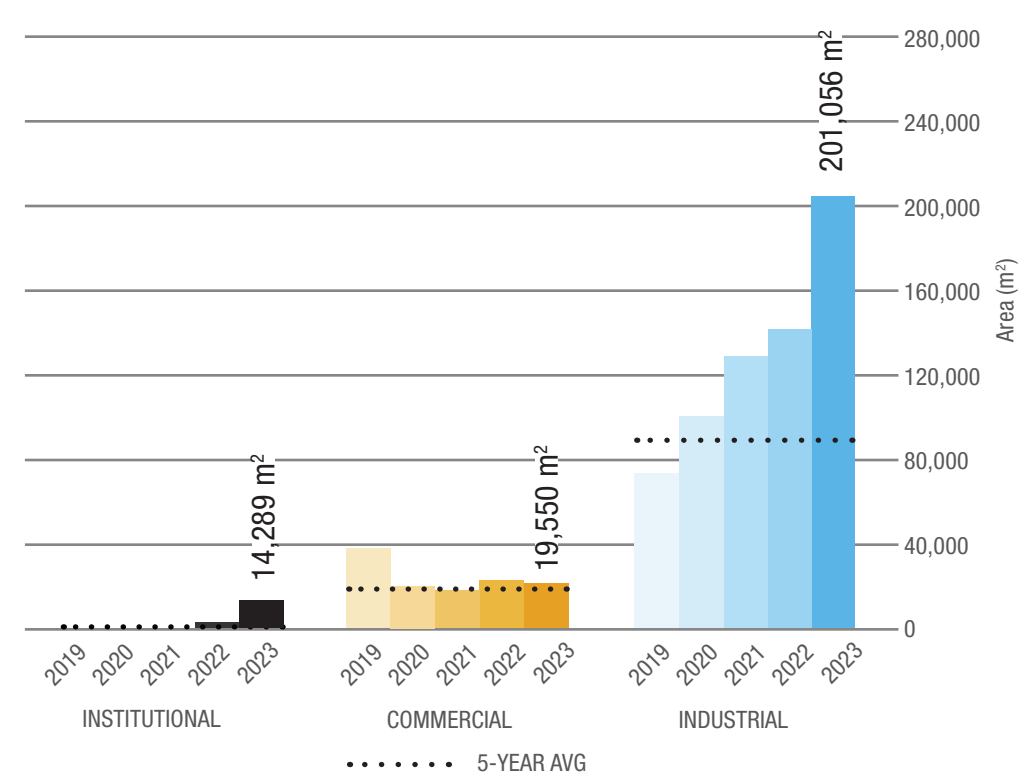
> The total number of new ICI (Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional) in-stream floor area increased by over 41% in 2023 and reached a record high of 234,895m².

Total Floor Space In-Stream



Total in-stream ICI floor area increased due to a consistent surge of Industrial applications.

Floor Space In-Stream by Type



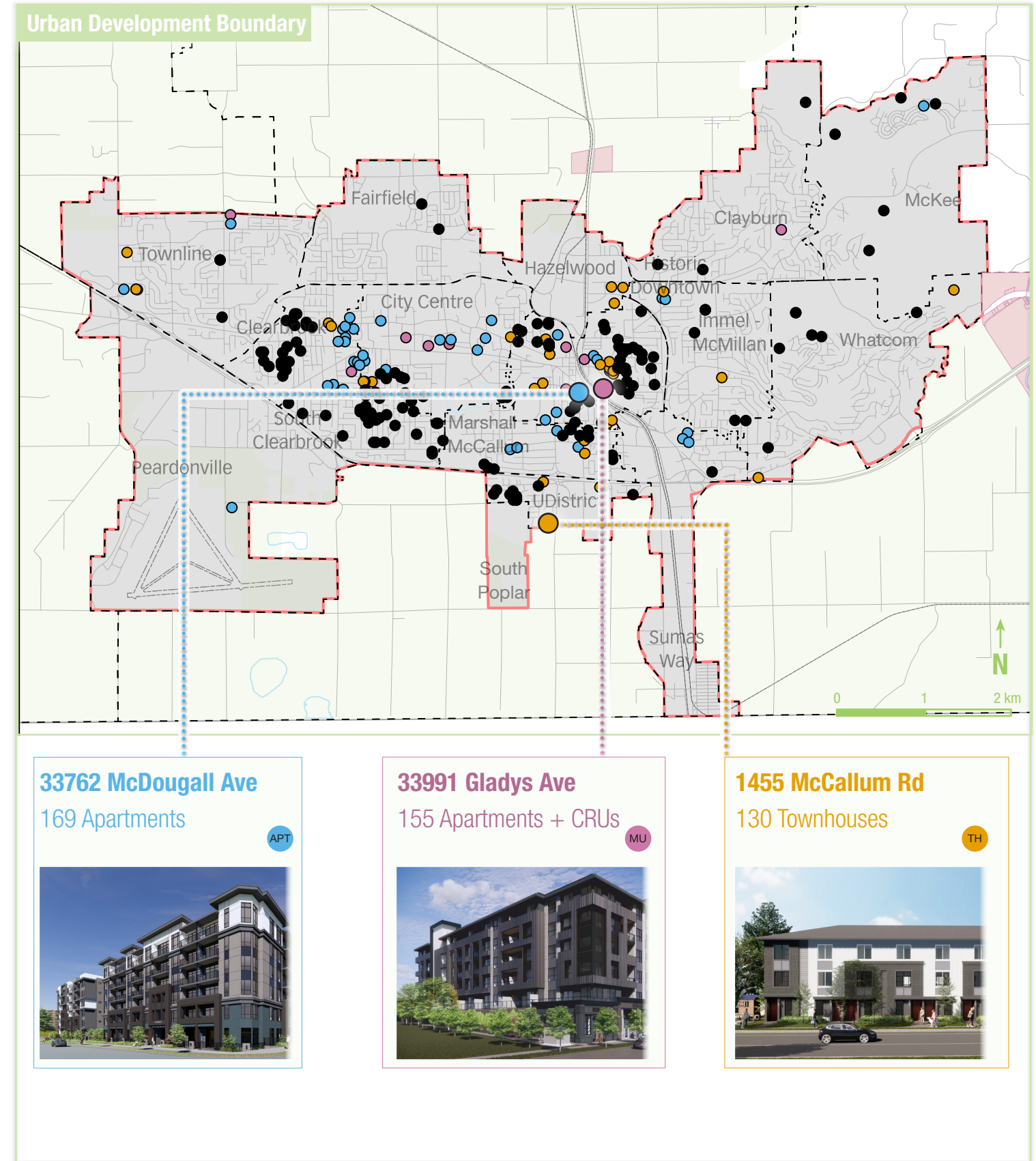
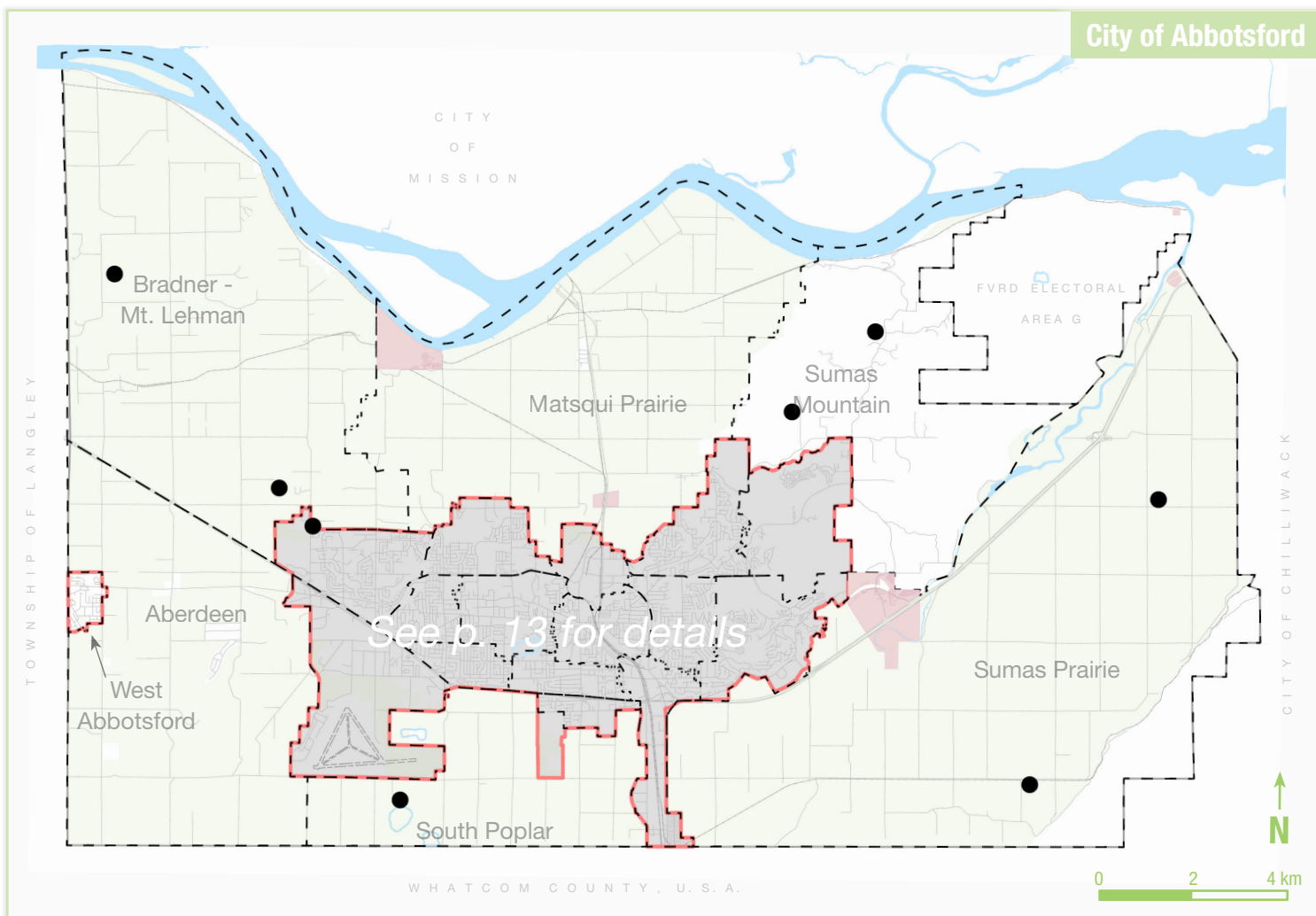
In-stream Industrial floor area and Industrial floor area reached record highs of 201,056 m² and 14,289 m² respectively.

In-Stream Residential Applications

Application Type

- Single Family
- Townhouse
- Apartment
- Mixed-Use

- Urban Development Boundary
- Community Boundaries
- Agricultural Land Reserve
- First Nations

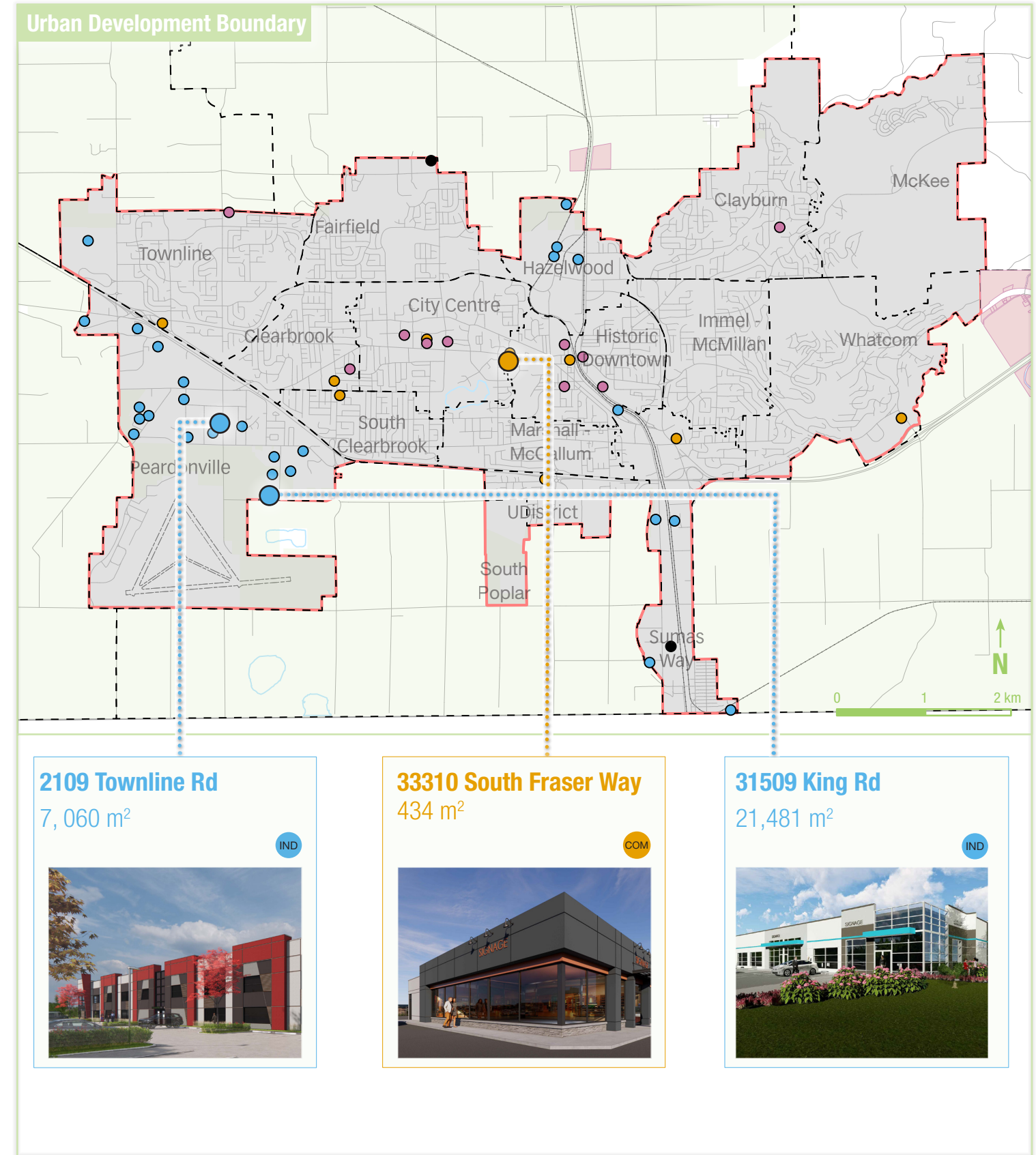
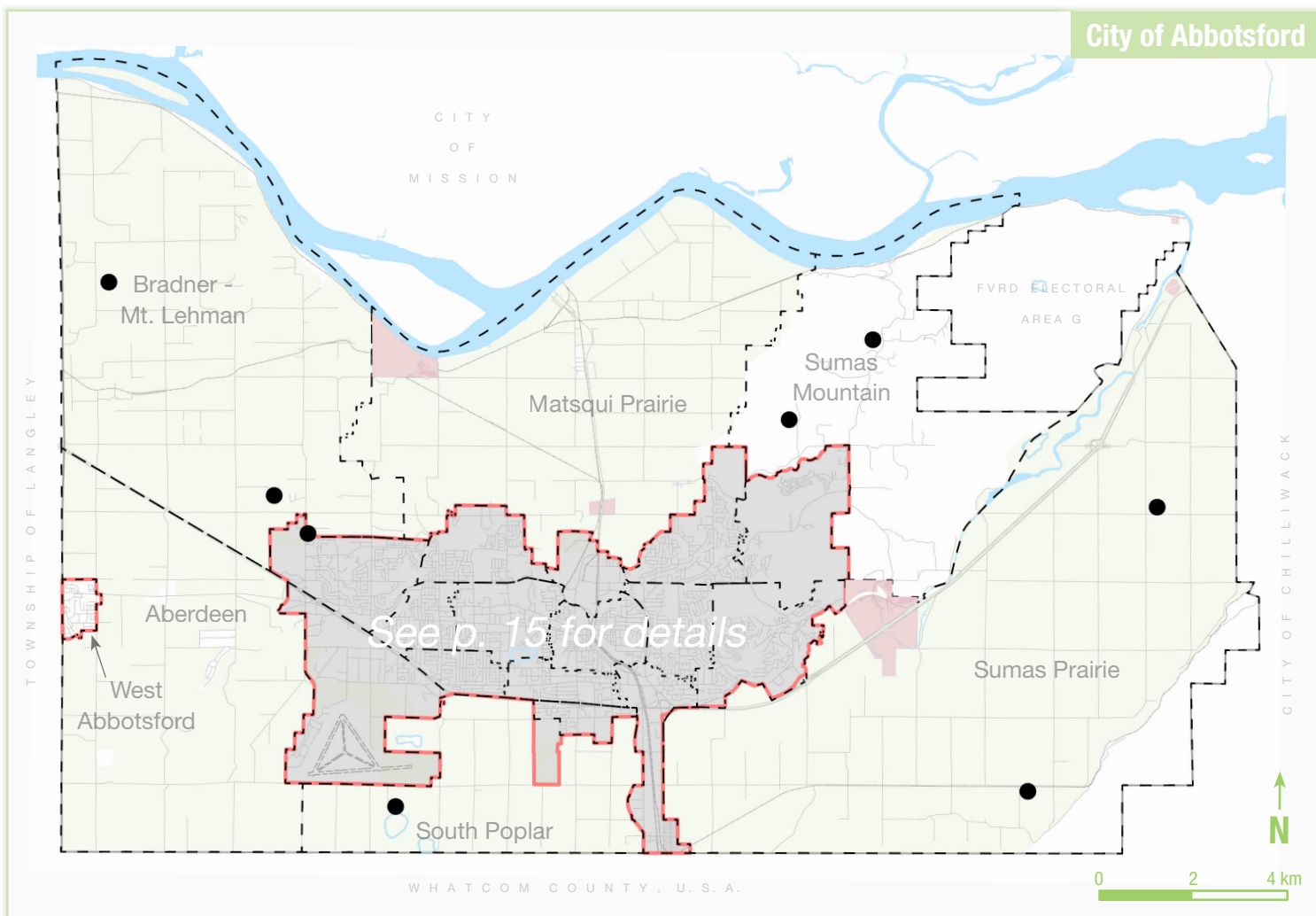


In-Stream ICI Applications

Application Type

- Institutional
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Mixed-Use

- Urban Development Boundary
- Community Boundaries
- Agricultural Land Reserve
- First Nations

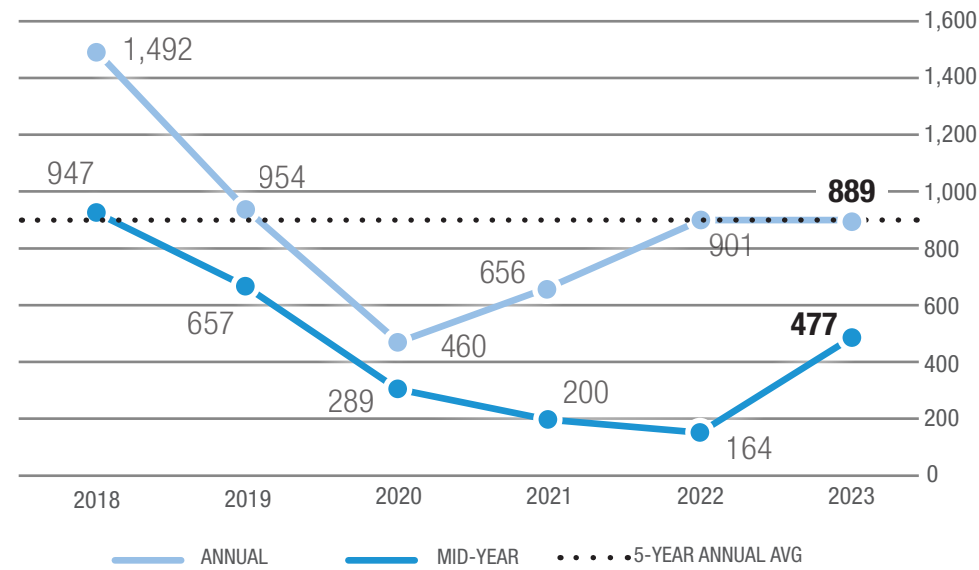


Approval & Issuance

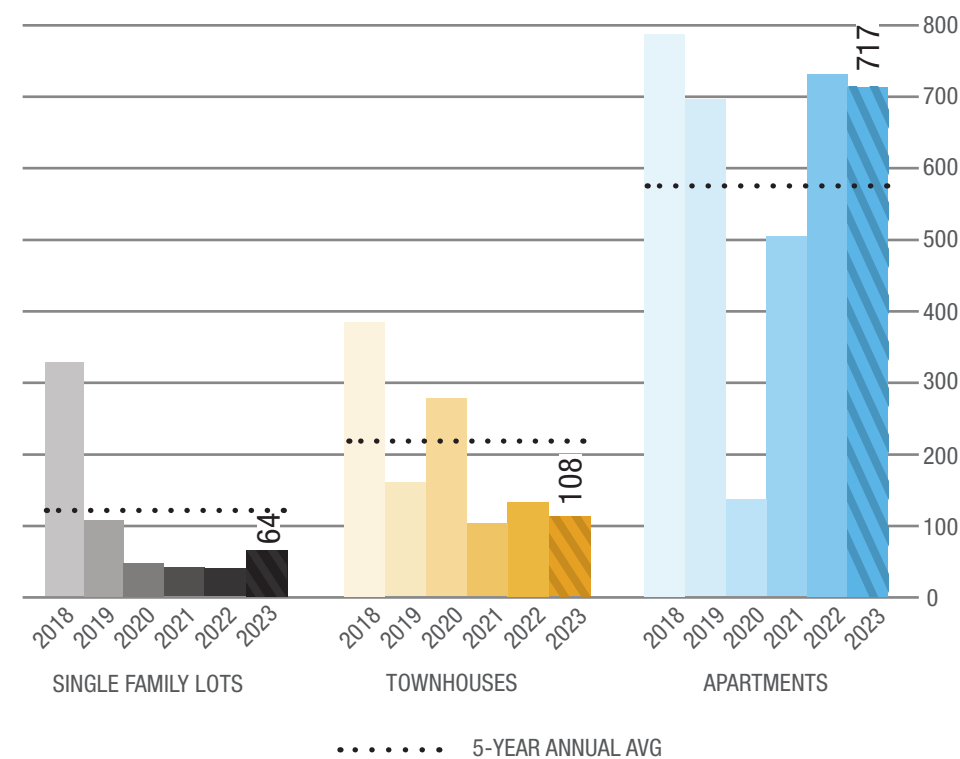
Number of Residential Lots/Units Approved

> The total number of units approved in 2023 remained similar to 2022.

Total Lots/Units Approved



Lots/Units Approved by Type

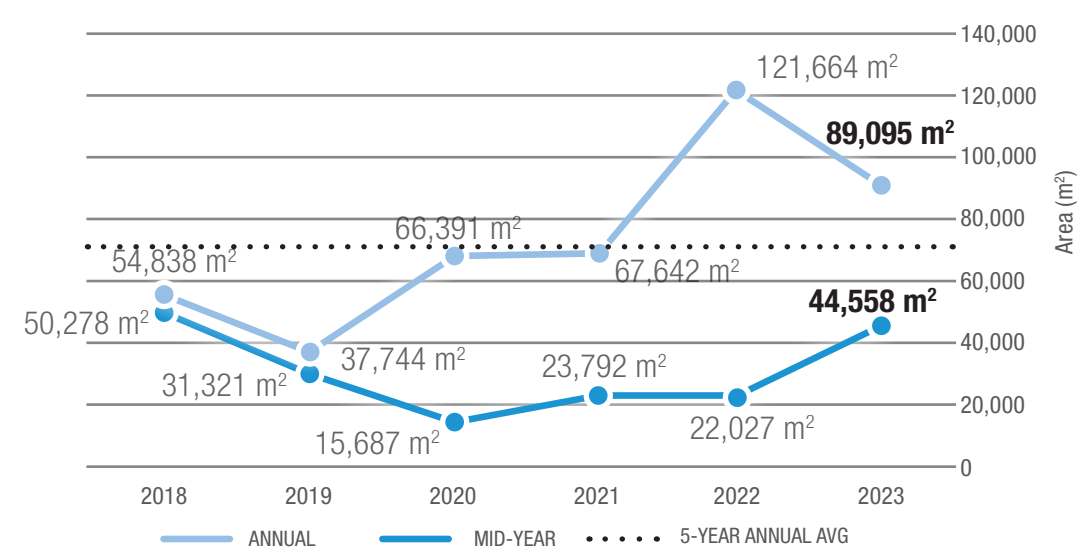


Approval & Issuance

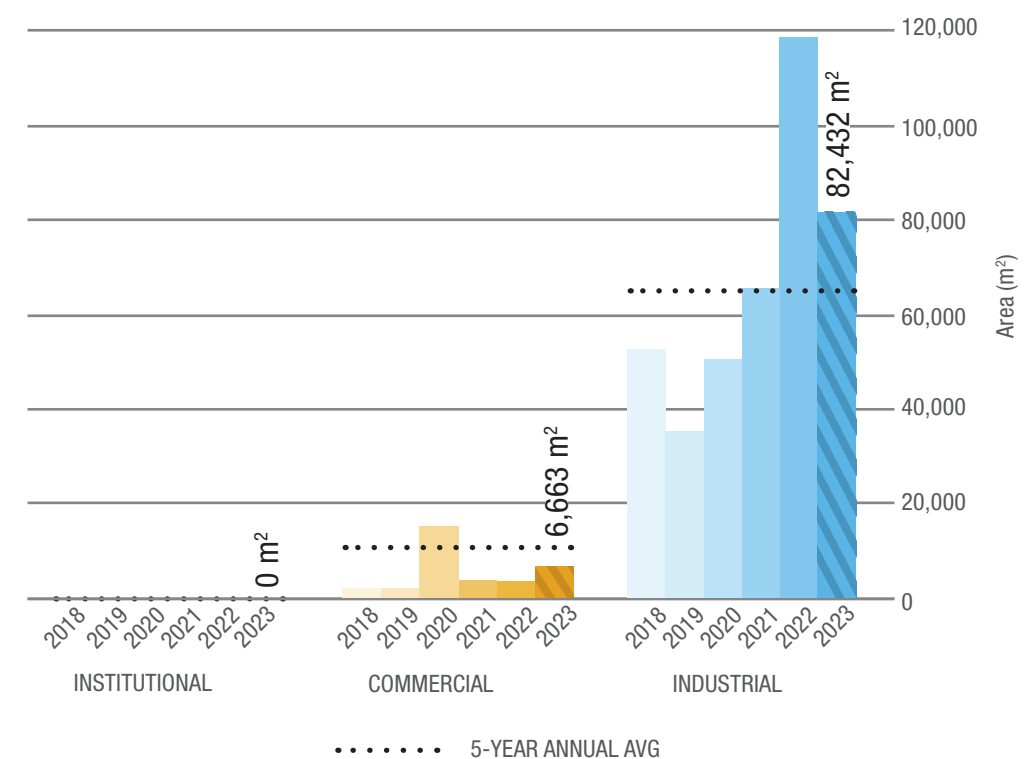
New ICI Floor Area Approved

> The total number of approved ICI (Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional) floor area decreased by 27%.

Total Floor Area Approved



Floor Area Approved by Type



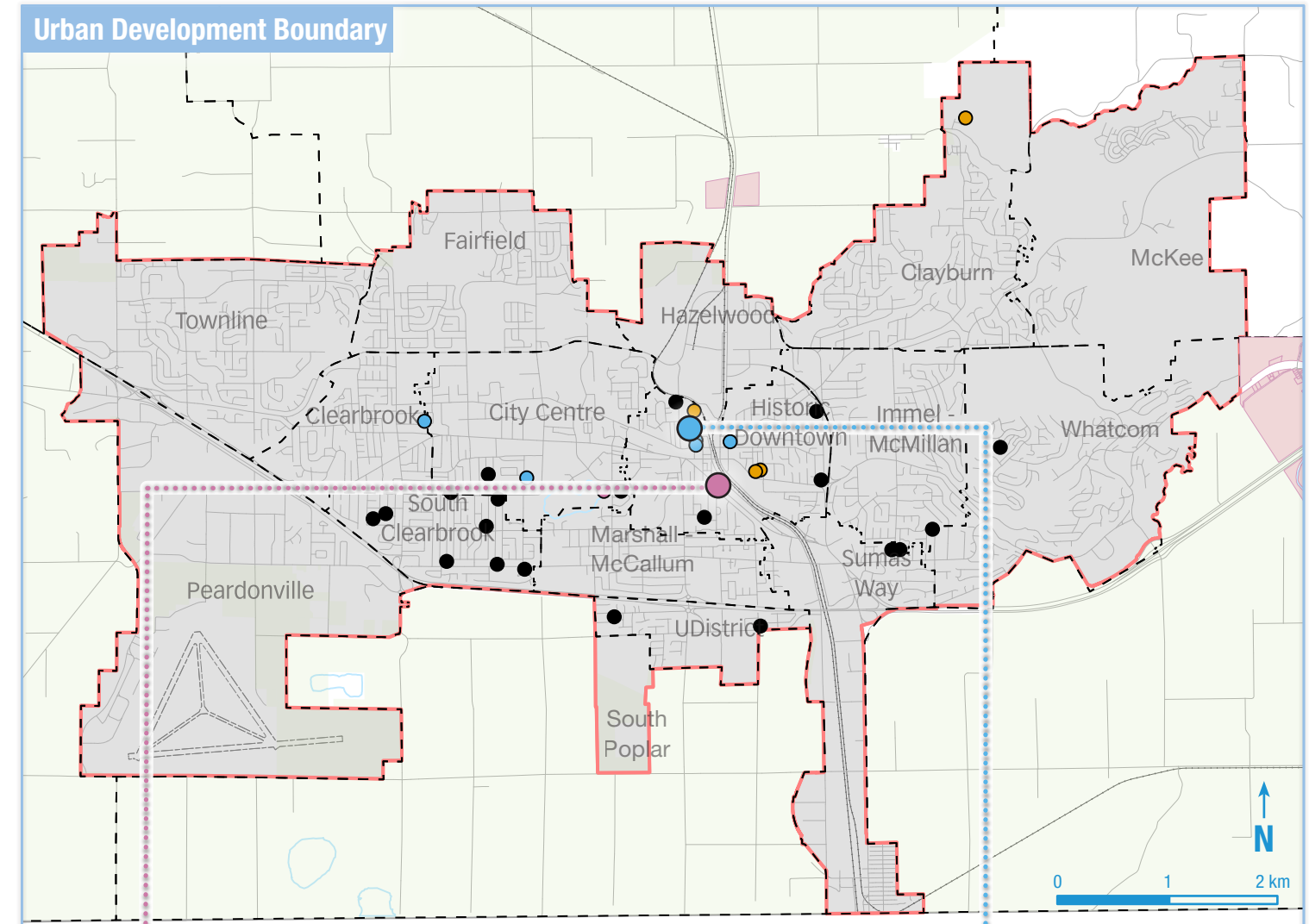
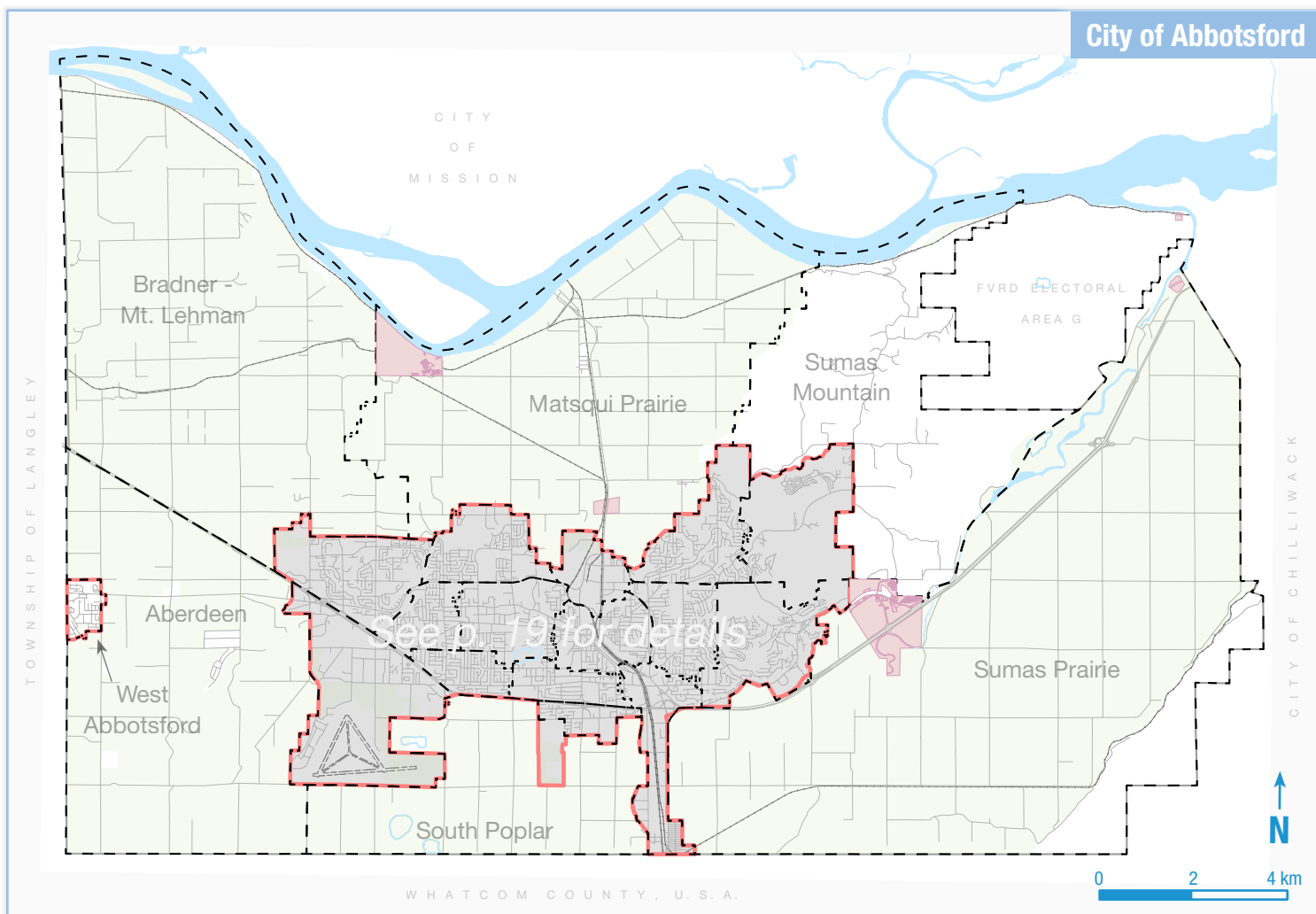
Industrial floor space approvals surpassed the five-year average by year end.

Approved Residential Applications

Application Type

- Single Family
- Townhouse
- Apartment
- Mixed-Use

- Urban Development Boundary
- Community Boundaries
- Agricultural Land Reserve
- First Nations



33816 South Fraser Way
64 Apartment Units + CRUs

MU



2751 Montrose Ave
188 Apartment Units

APT

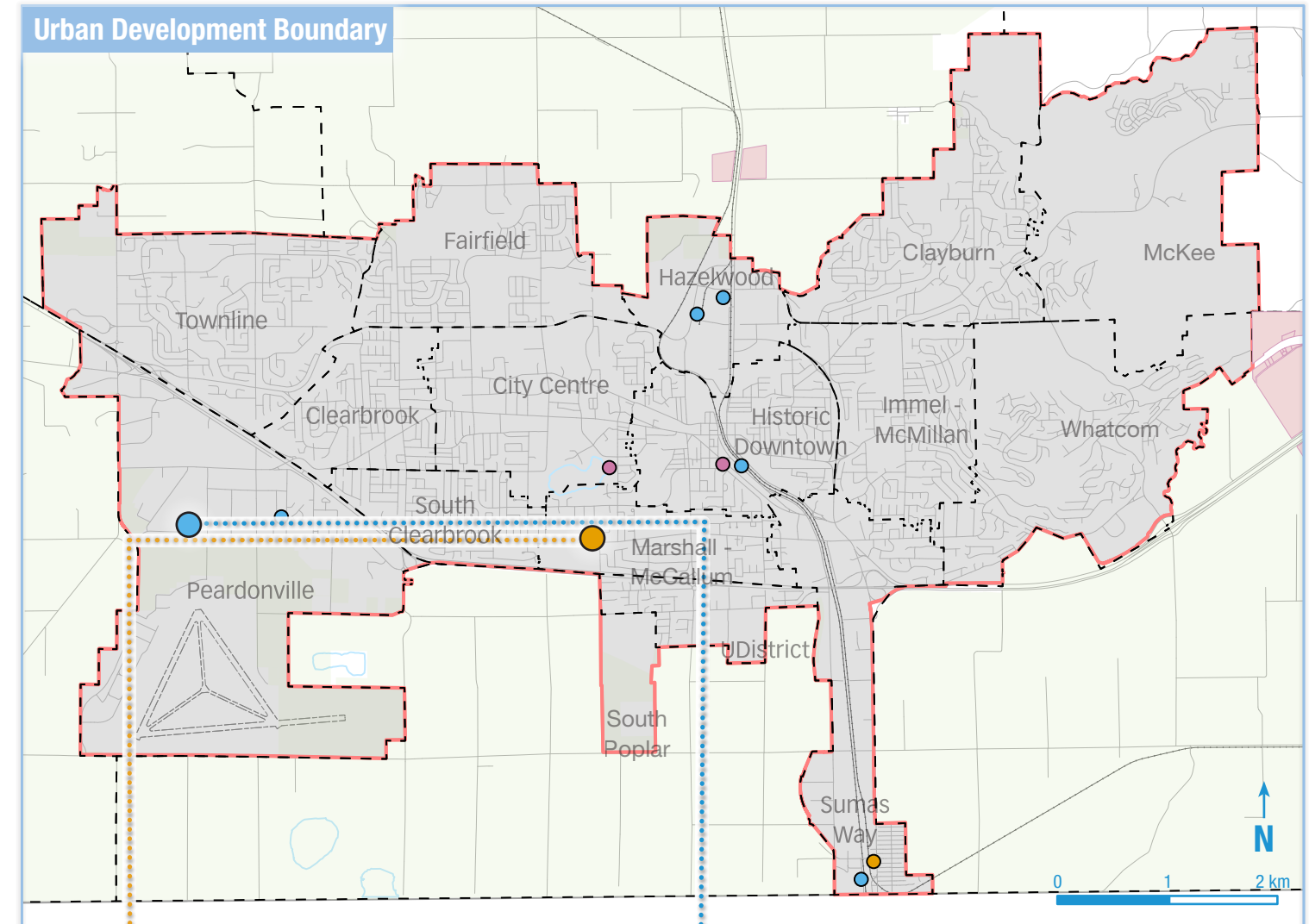
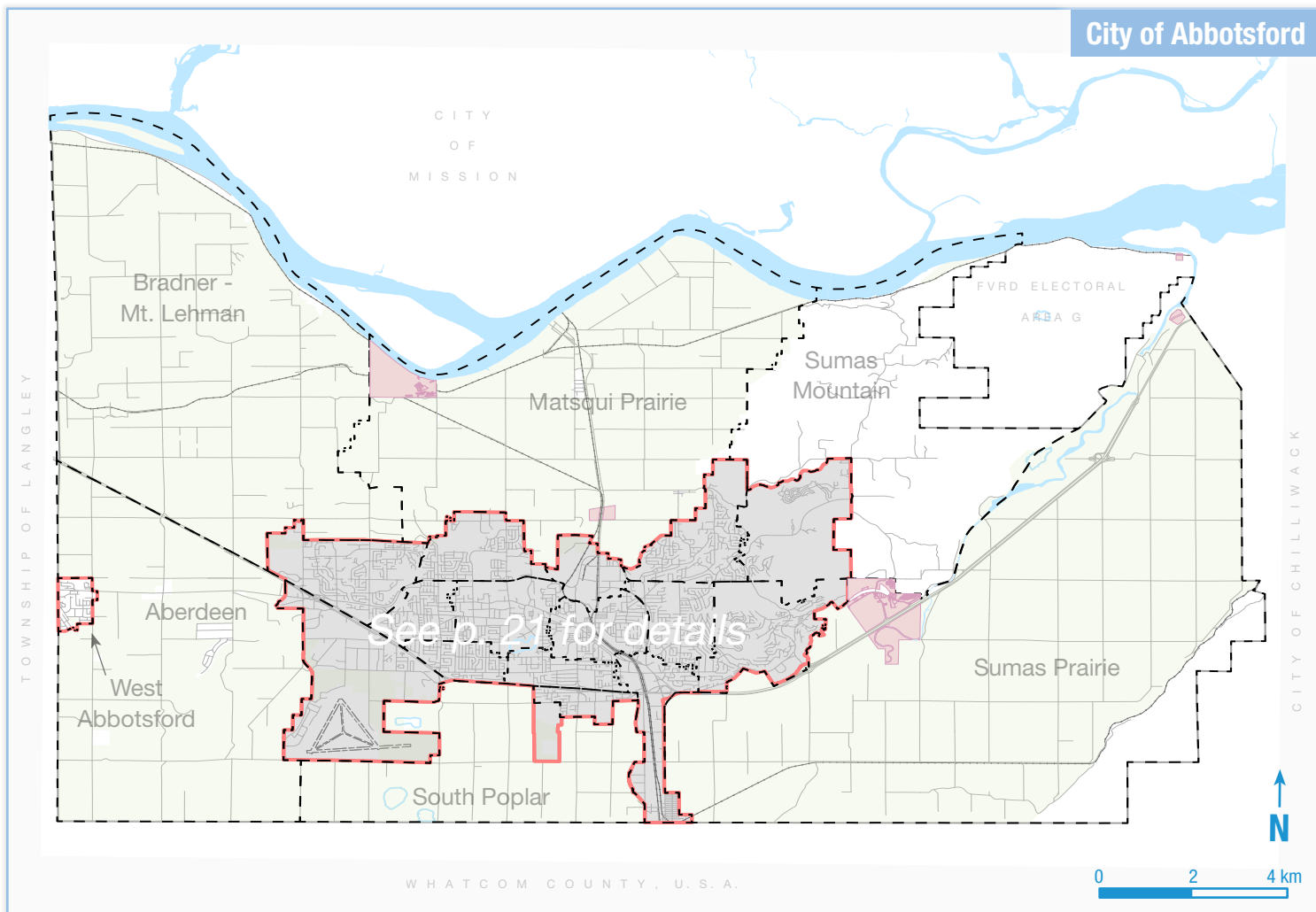


Approved ICI Applications

Application Type

- Institutional
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Mixed-Use

- Urban Development Boundary
- Community Boundaries
- Agricultural Land Reserve
- First Nations



33069 Marshall Rd
6,144 m²

COM

30787 Marshall Rd
654 m²

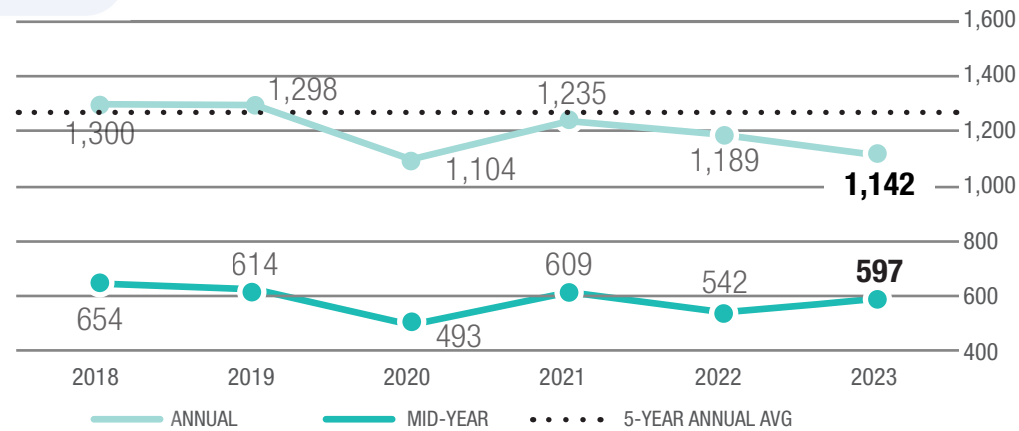
IND

Construction

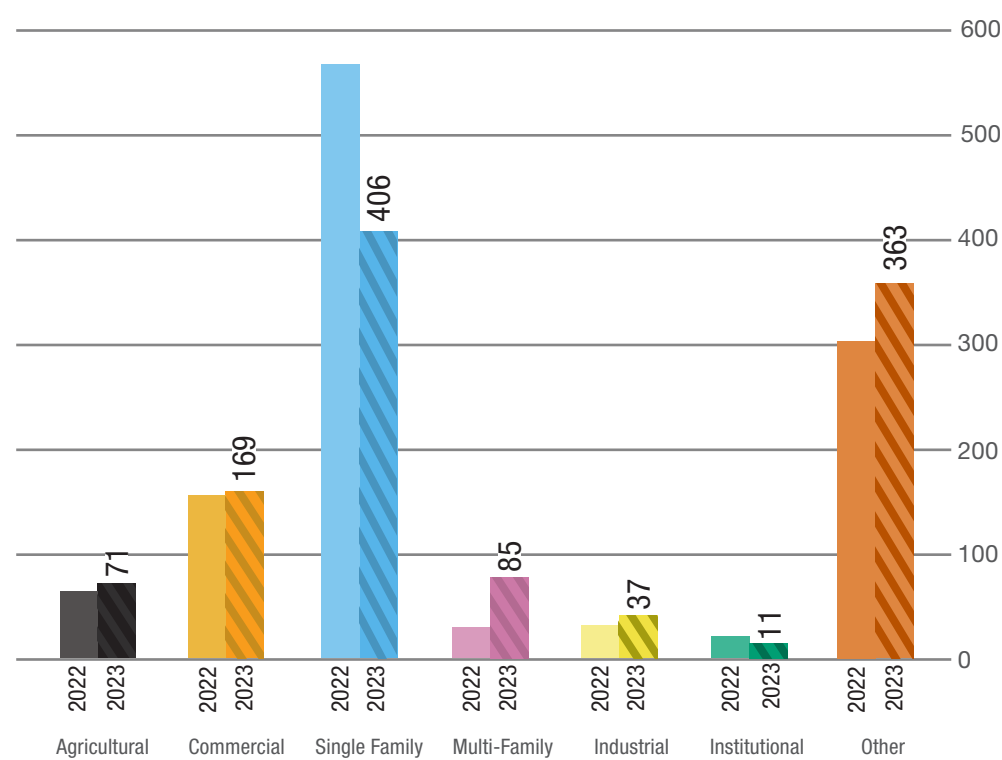
Building Permits (Number)

> The number of building permits issued in 2023 decreased by 47.

Total Building Permits Issued



Total Number of Building Permits Issued by Type



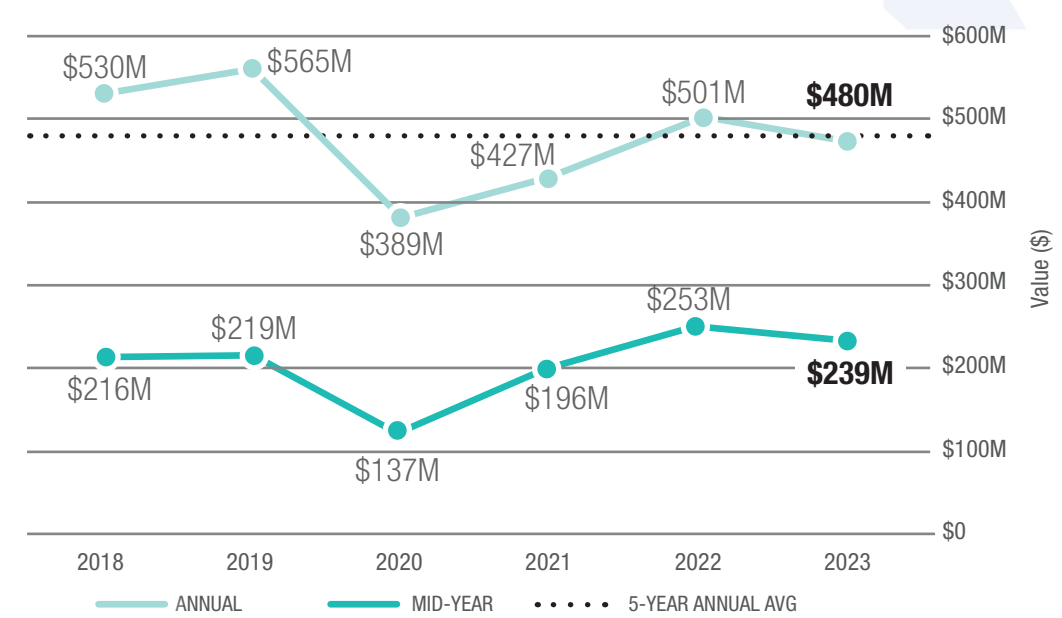
The number of annual building permits remained generally on par with the previous annual totals, with a significant decrease in single family permits and an increase in multi-family building permits.

*Note: historical building permit values have been revised from previous reports to remove plumbing permits. Plumbing permit construction value is captured in the building permit construction value in accordance with Building Bylaw, 2018.

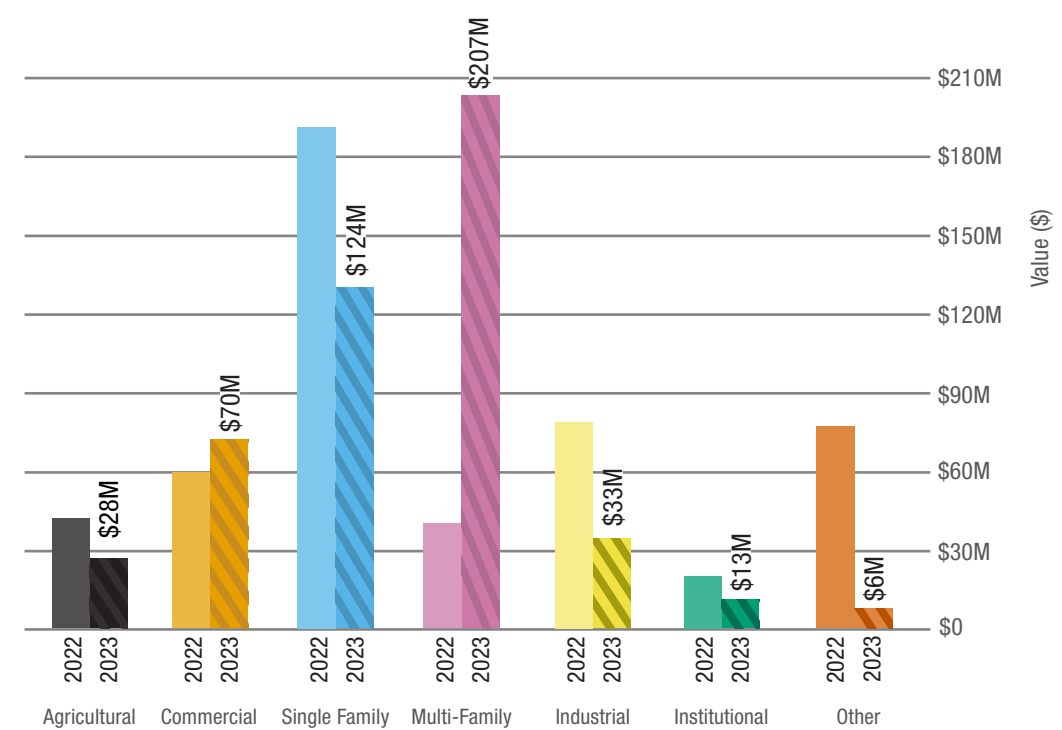
Building Permits (Value)

> Annual total construction value decreased by \$21M in 2023.

Total Value of Building Permits Issued



Total Construction Value of Building Permits Issued by Type



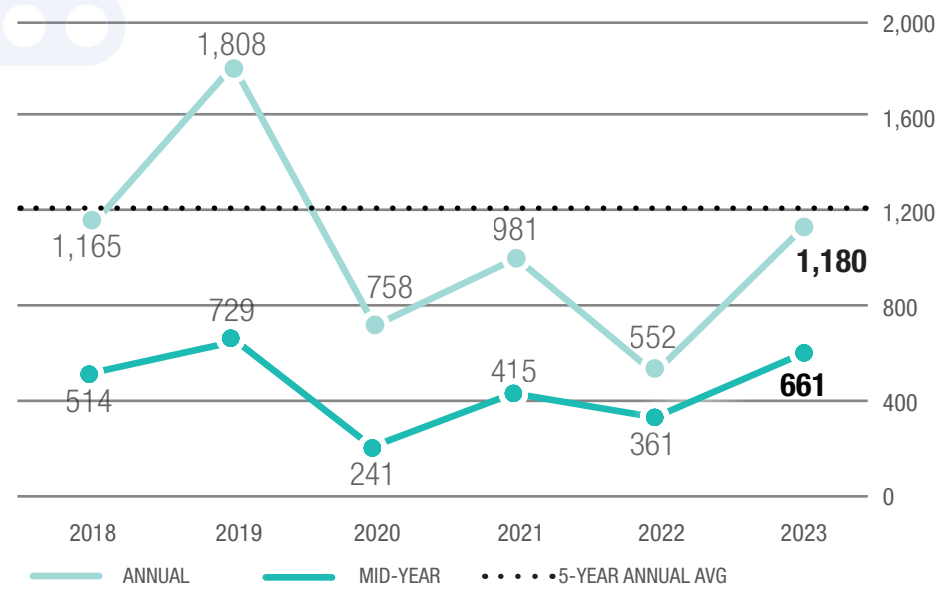
Multi-family permit values have seen a dramatic increase compared to 2022, while single family permit values have decreased in comparison.

*Note: total construction values have been rounded to the nearest million.

Construction

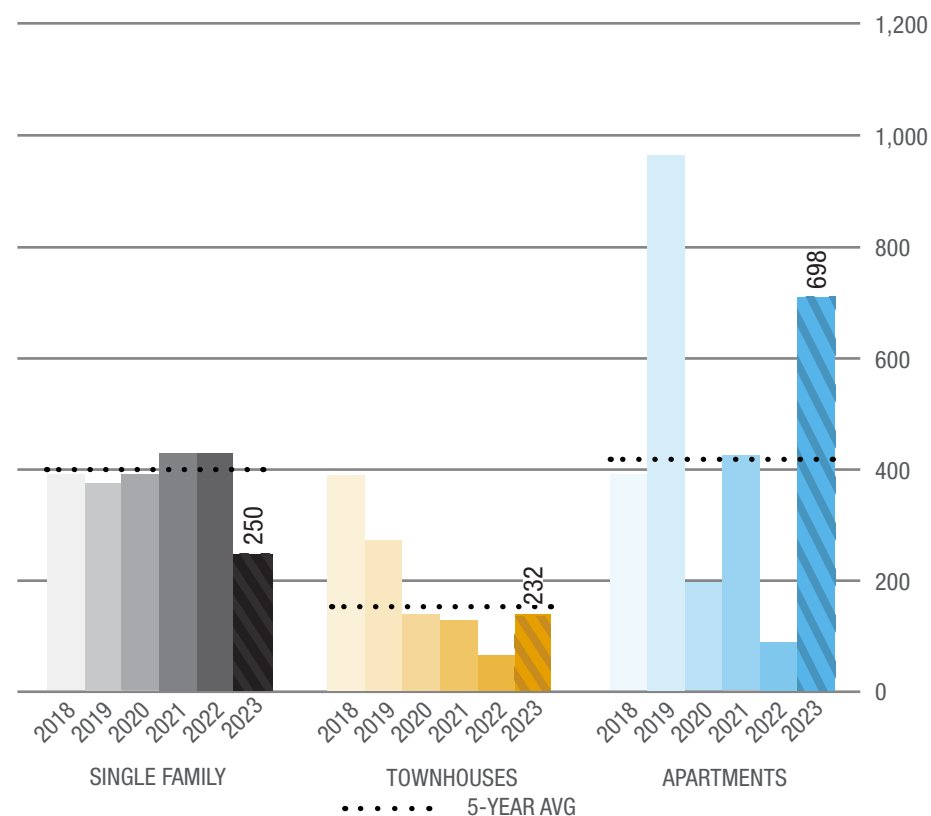
Single Family, Townhouse & Apartment Units (New Construction & Improvements)

Total Number of New Units



New residential unit construction almost doubled in comparison to mid-year 2023.

New Units by Type

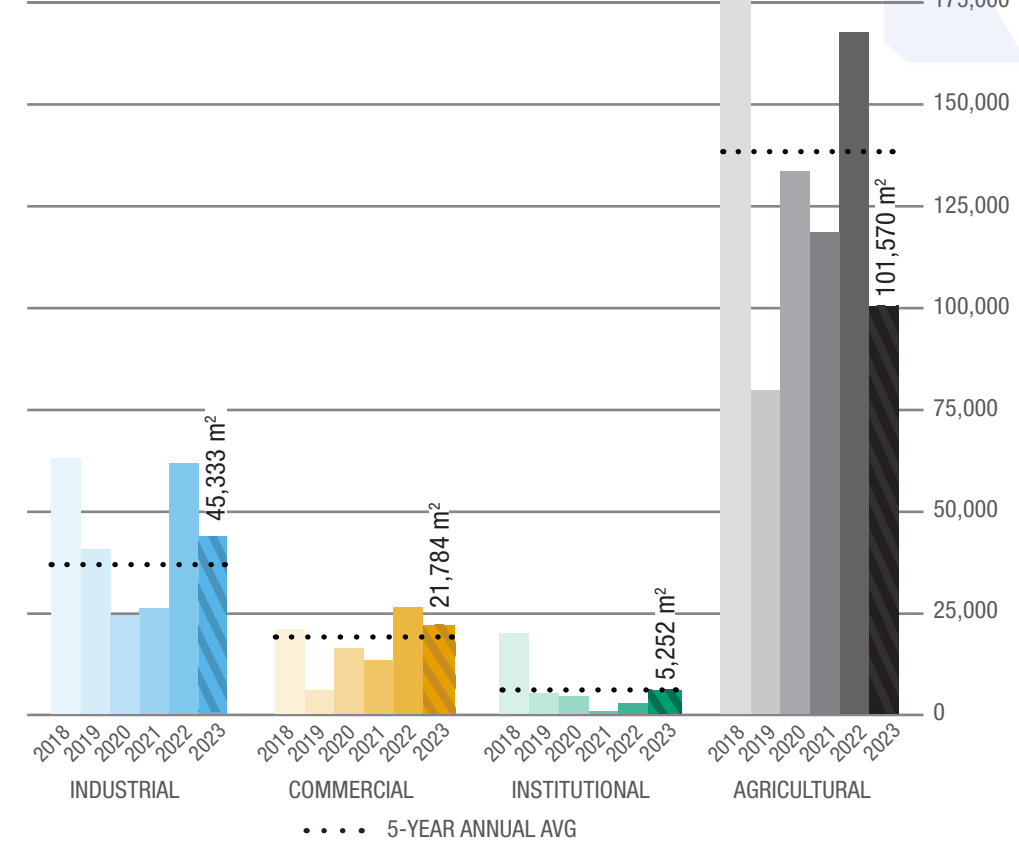


New single family units are not on pace to meet the 5-year average. New townhouse units were closed to exceeding the 5-year average at year end. New apartment units drastically surpassed the 5-year average.

Construction

Institutional, Commercial, Industrial & Agricultural Floor Area (New Construction & Improvements)

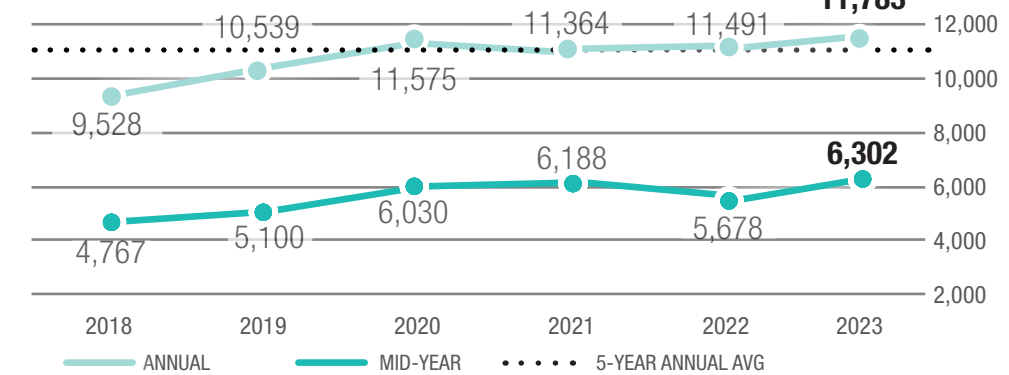
New Floor Area by Type



Agricultural floor area accounted for 58% of new non-residential construction and improvements. Industrial, institutional and commercial floor area are higher than the 5-year average.

Building Inspections*

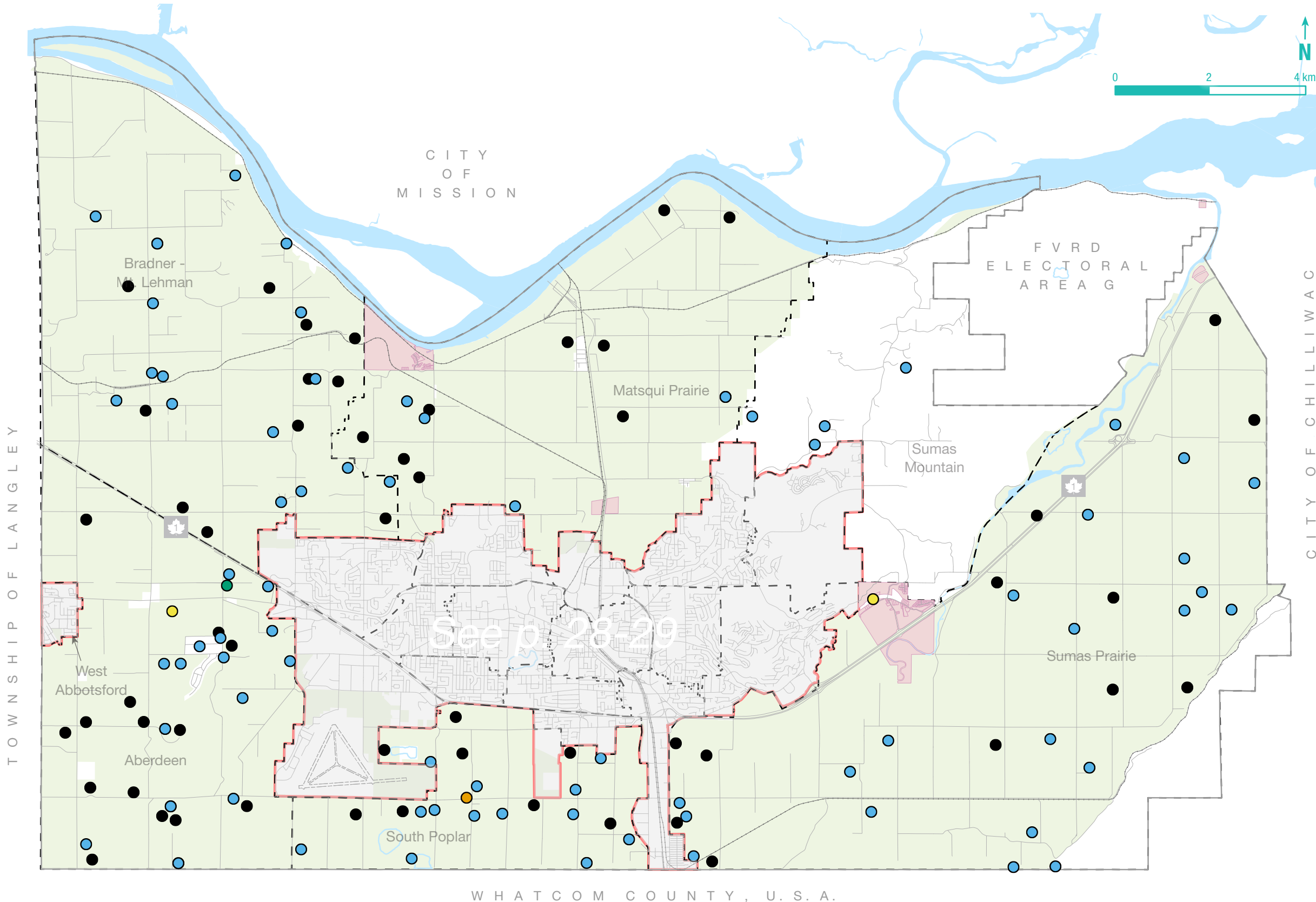
Total Number of Building Inspections



The number of building inspections in 2023 are the highest recorded levels in the past 5 years.

Issued Building Permits

New Construction & Improvements



Construction Type

- Agricultural
- Single Family
- Commercial
- Industrial

- ▭ Urban Development Boundary
- ▭ Community Boundaries
- ▭ Agricultural Land Reserve
- ▭ First Nations

Building permit applications for new construction and improvements (with a construction value of \$50,000 and greater) approved in 2023. Includes new single family dwellings (including secondary suites and coach houses), multi-family, mixed use developments, agricultural, commercial, industrial, and institutional construction/floor space.

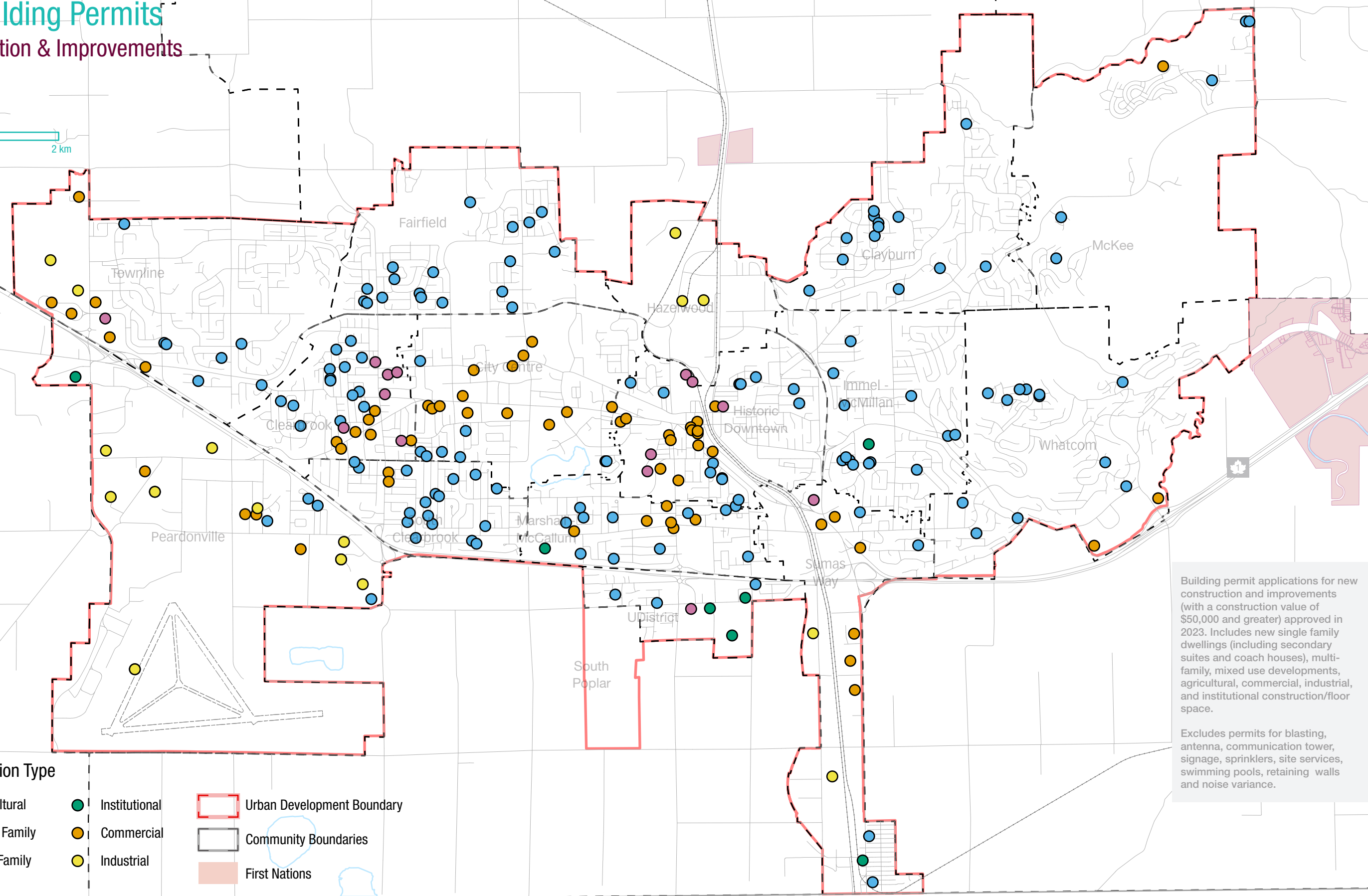
Excludes permits for blasting, antenna, communication tower, signage, sprinklers, site services, swimming pools, retaining walls and noise variance.

See p. 28-29

WHATCOM COUNTY, U.S.A.

Issued Building Permits

New Construction & Improvements



Construction Type

- Agricultural
- Single Family
- Multi-Family
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Industrial
- ▭ Urban Development Boundary
- ▭ Community Boundaries
- ▭ First Nations

Building permit applications for new construction and improvements (with a construction value of \$50,000 and greater) approved in 2023. Includes new single family dwellings (including secondary suites and coach houses), multi-family, mixed use developments, agricultural, commercial, industrial, and institutional construction/floor space.

Excludes permits for blasting, antenna, communication tower, signage, sprinklers, site services, swimming pools, retaining walls and noise variance.

2023 Current Initiatives



The **OCP Update** is a comprehensive planning process to review and update Abbotsford's Official Community Plan land use and growth policies.



The **Sign Bylaw Update** is a comprehensive process to make the City's Sign Bylaw more contemporary, user-friendly, and aligned with the Official Community Plan, streamlining the sign permit application process and encouraging a high standard of quality and design.



The **McKee Neighbourhood Plan** will develop a vision for new residential neighbourhoods anchored by a neighbourhood centre and connected with trails, parks and open spaces.

- JAN OCP Update**
Council identified an update to the Official Community Plan as a goal and priority action in the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.
- FEB Sign Bylaw**
Staff introduced the Sign Bylaw Update to Council on February 6, 2023, with the goal of streamlining the sign permit application process, increasing the options for business identification and encouraging a high standard of design, quality and safety.
- MAR OCP Update**
Council approved the project budget for the OCP Update.

- APR OCP Update**
Staff initiated background research for the OCP update and began preparing a project engagement strategy. The project team closely monitored Provincial work on housing legislation projected for Fall 2023.
- D3 Project - Phase 1**
Staff implemented an update to the building permit approval processes through the D3 project. This included a new customer centric webpage which provides each building permit customer with their own unique resources to support successful permit applications. Staff continue to enhance online building permit tracking for customers.

- MAY Development Application Process Review**
PDS began an examination of current procedures for receiving, evaluating and approving various development applications. The goal of this review is to simplify development application procedures to enhance customer experiences.

- JUN McKee Neighbourhood Plan**
Council adopted the McKee Neighbourhood Plan on June 26, 2023, after giving first and second reading on April 24, 2023, and holding a public hearing on June 12, 2023.

- JUL Sign Bylaw**
Council adopted the Sign Bylaw on July 24, 2023, after giving first, second and third reading on July 10, 2023.
- AUG Multi Family Waste Collection Design Manual**
Staff initiated the design manual to clarify the City's expectations for multi family site plans and garbage enclosure locations, ensuring safe and practical waste collection without traffic conflicts on City streets. This manual is anticipated to be completed mid-2024.
- SEP Housing**
Staff monitored the Province in anticipation of new housing legislation. By conducting preliminary research and analysis, staff developed a better understanding of the impact of enabling additional housing units on traditional single detached properties.

- OCT OCP Update**
Background research continued, including detailed review of Provincial housing legislation (Bills 44, 46, and 47, 2023) introduced in early November. The project team conducted early engagement with local First Nations to discuss the planning process.
- D3 Project - Phase 2**
Mobile inspection services were implemented for building and plumbing permits. This transitioned the inspection services from paper based inspection slips to emailed PDF reports. Enabling easier and quicker access of inspection results to permit holders, while improving staff efficiency.

- DEC Commercial Truck Parking**
Staff introduced the Stage 1 Background Research Report to Council on December 11, 2023, which discusses the current state of Commercial Truck Parking within the City. Staff identified growth in the local trucking industry and a shortage of industrial land that has led to unauthorized truck parking issues. Council authorized to proceed to Stage 2 of the process.

- Development Application Bylaw Amendments**
Council adopted bylaw amendments to eliminate public hearings for rezoning applications that are consistent with the OCP, in accordance with provincial legislation.



The **Development Application Process Review** project builds on the Building Division's D3 project by examining the processes in place to receive, assess and approve a broad range of development applications. This review is to streamline processes, and is driven by a strong desire to enhance customer service and reduce timelines.



The **D3 project** will update building permit approval processes. Phase 1 included a new customer centric webpage which provides each building permit customer with their own unique resources to support successful permit applications. Staff continue to enhance online building permit tracking for customers.

For updated information on our planning initiatives, please visit:

abbotsford.ca/business-development/community-planning

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