



ABBOTSFORD

The Hub of the Fraser Valley.

FEATURING:

- Business Walk Updates
- Event Resources
- Official Community Plan



**INCLUSIVE & CONNECTED
COMMUNITY**



**SUSTAINABLE
& SAFE CITY**



**VIBRANT & GROWING
ECONOMY**



**ORGANIZATIONAL
EXCELLENCE & INTEGRITY**

STAY CONNECTED: abbotsford.ca | [/CityOfAbbotsford](https://www.facebook.com/CityOfAbbotsford) | [@thecityofabbotsford](https://www.instagram.com/thecityofabbotsford) | [@city_abbotsford](https://www.x.com/city_abbotsford)



LOOKING BACK ON 2023

A number of exciting initiatives took place in 2023 supporting Abbotsford's business and events community:



BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION STRATEGY

The City launched the development of an updated business retention and expansion development strategy focused on helping existing businesses to grow and expand in Abbotsford. The initial stages of this project have focused on consultations with local business partners, including the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce, Abbotsford Downtown Business Association, Community Futures, Stó:lō Community Futures, the Fraser Valley Indo-Canadian Business Association, Tourism Abbotsford and the University of the Fraser Valley. Broader consultations with businesses and the community are coming in early 2024.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TABLE

In 2023, the City brought together the Economic Development Table, a network of key economic development stakeholder organizations in Abbotsford. The Table includes the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce, Abbotsford Downtown Business Association, Community Futures, Abbotsford Innovation Network, Stó:lō Community Futures, the Fraser Valley Indo-Canadian Business Association, Tourism Abbotsford and the University of the Fraser Valley and works to develop strategies and actions to help grow the local economy. Four working groups bring forward projects supporting entrepreneurship, hotel and conference centre development, Indigenous businesses and food economy, and the Table Talk newsletter showcases economic opportunities for businesses in Abbotsford each month. Sign-up by visiting abbotsford.ca/economicdevelopment.

FRASER VALLEY ALLIANCE

The Fraser Valley Alliance (FVA), a collaboration between Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Mission and Maple Ridge, continues to attract foreign direct investment to the region. The FVA website, investfraservalley.ca features information on the Fraser Valley's economy, demographics, workforce and transportation networks. The website now includes a new investment attraction video featuring testimonials from foreign-owned companies on why they chose to locate in the Fraser Valley. Investment sector attraction priorities for the FVA include advanced manufacturing, aerospace, agri-technology, information and communications technology, and clean technologies.

STAY CONNECTED: CITY OF ABBOTSFORD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

 abbotsford.ca/economicdevelopment  econdev@abbotsford.ca  604-864-5586



HISTORIC DOWNTOWN ABBOTSFORD BUSINESS WALK

On September 28, 2023, the City of Abbotsford and the Abbotsford Downtown Business Association hosted a Business Walk in the Historic Downtown.

The Business Walk connected local businesses to support organizations and provided a space for meaningful conversation around the successes and opportunities in the downtown.

Thank you to all those who participated in strengthening the relationships with our local businesses!

Business Walk Statistics


over **230**
businesses
visited


50+
volunteers &
City staff


120
surveys
completed


75%
response
rate



abbotsford.ca/economicdevelopment
downtownabbotsford.ca



COLLABORATION WITH Community Futures South Fraser



In 2023, the City's Economic Development team was pleased to collaborate with Community Futures South Fraser for two activities benefiting local businesses.

The first event was a **Disaster Planning and Preparedness Workshop** designed to equip business owners with the knowledge and tools to effectively respond to and recover from potential disasters. The event included presentations from disaster management professionals from provincial, First Nations and local governments.

The second event gathered feedback from local businesses on changes to the existing **Local Authority Emergency Management Regulations** and the proposed post-emergency financial assistance program. This meeting was attended by businesses in both Abbotsford and Chilliwack and was further supported by Chilliwack Economic Partners Corporation (CEPCO), Stó:lō Community Futures, and both the Abbotsford and Chilliwack Chambers of Commerce.


GET INVOLVED

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

The City's Corporate Partnership Program continues to build valuable relationships with Abbotsford businesses, enhancing City programs by providing valuable resources and activities for the community. In 2023, this program brought in \$78,060 in cash and an additional \$60,835 from in-kind services, reducing costs for the residents of Abbotsford. With over 22,600 followers on Meta and our Canada Day web page, views have doubled since last year and the City is providing strong marketing benefits to our sponsors. We look forward to creating more partnerships this year that will enrich our community.


ABBYFRESH

AbbyFresh is a farmgate signage project that came out of the Economic Development Table and supports the local food economy. Branded farmgate signs and a website directory are available free of charge, helping connect local producers with local consumers by building relationships, nurturing traditions and foraging a path toward a sustainable and vibrant future for our agriculture industry.

 Get listed with AbbyFresh and receive your free, customizable sign. Visit abbyfresh.southfraser.com for details.

FILMING

Many Abbotsford businesses and homes already have starring roles as a film location in a movie or TV series. Would you like to join them? Registration is easy and free with Creative BC. Visit creativebc.com to register your property/business and create a digital photo file of your location. Creative BC will promote each registered property to the film industry through their online portal.

 Need inspiration? Check out our self-guided Abbywood "Walk of Fame Tour" online at tours.zoomprospector.com/ABBOTSFORD/tour/125.

GRANTS FOR EVENTS

The City of Abbotsford partners with the Vancouver Community Foundation and the Abbotsford Community Foundation to provide the **Neighbourhood Small Grants** (NSG) program, funding small-scale projects and activities led by Abbotsford residents. Successful applicants will be awarded a grant of up to \$1,000 to help bring their community projects to life. The grant applications will go live in February until April 15, visit abbotsford.ca/grants to apply. The City of Abbotsford awards in-kind **Grants for Significant Events** to Abbotsford-based non-profit groups who can demonstrate that their community event can provide significant economic benefits and/or community pride to Abbotsford. Organizations may receive a maximum grant of \$4,000 and funds must be used to offset direct City costs including facility rentals, field rentals, staffing, equipment, and supplies. Applications are open online until April 30 and are awarded on a first come, first served basis until funding is exhausted for 2024.


MORE EVENT RESOURCES


Abbotsford is home to a variety of arts and cultural events, festivals, sporting tournaments and celebrations that are an important contributor to economic impact and a vibrant community. An event requires a **Special Event Permit** if it is open to the public, held outdoors and likely to be attended by 200 or more people (or any number of people if there is a beverage garden). The City's Special Event Team helps with the safety and success of events, and in 2024, they are offering "idea" conversations to event organizers to support successful permit applications. Please email events@abbotsford.ca or call **604-864-5586** to set up your meeting with our Special Events team.

The City offers a **Community Event Toolkit** free of charge to assist local organizers with their events. Some supplies include:

 **TENTS**
(10'x10', 10'x15', and 10'x20')

 **WASTE SORTING STATIONS**

 **FOLDING CHAIRS & TABLES**
(6' folding tables)

 **REQUEST A COMMUNITY EVENT TOOLKIT**
(Scan QR code)

Email events@abbotsford.ca for more information.

2023 YEAR-END STATISTICS

Filming

Abbotsford hosted 59 film productions with 197 days of filming at 125 locations with over \$2.49M of economic impact to our community. This included 4 feature films, 10 series, 32 movies of the week and 9 commercials. Notable productions included *Wild Cards*, *Murdaugh Mysteries*, *Animal Control*, *Heretic*, and *Bearded Girl*.

Special Events

Abbotsford has been home to a large variety of community special events bringing in people from all over the world. A few of the major events in 2023 included Berry Fest, Canada Day, BC 55+ Senior Games, Agrifair, Abbotsford International Airshow and Nagar Kirtan. In 2023, the City issued 82 Outdoor Special Event Permits with an economic impact of \$17,584,743 (based on attendees). The Special Events Toolkit, contributed a value of \$18,000 in-kind value to local events.

Building Permits and Business Licences Division

- The City implemented an updated, streamlined building permit approval process; improved customer centric building permit resources and mobile inspections technology;
- The median building permit review wait times from end 2022 to end 2023 were reduced by approximately 65% for new homes and 60% for tenant improvement building permit applications;
- The City issued building permits totalling \$488M in estimated construction value (the annual five-year average is \$474M);
- The City issued building permits to create 1,179 new dwelling units in the City (in 2022, it was 621 and the annual five year average is 1,070);
- The Building and Plumbing Inspections teams conducted over 11,700 inspections; nearly 300 more than 2022 (the annual 5-year average is 11,350); and
- The City issued or renewed 8,656 Business Licences in 2023 (in 2022 it was 8,027 and the annual 5-year average is 7,928).

Canada Day

Over 60,000 people joined in the 2023 Canada Day celebrations in Abbotsford, including the parade, festival and the light show finale sponsored by the Fraser Valley Auto Mall.



abbotsford 2050



letstalkabbotsford.ca/ocp

WE ARE UPDATING OUR

Official Community Plan

To accommodate and plan for the growth of our community over the next several decades, the City of Abbotsford will be updating its key community planning document, the **Official Community Plan (OCP)**.

Updating the OCP was identified as one of Council's priority actions in their 2022-2026 Strategic Plan and is a multi-stage, 18-month process.

WHAT WILL THE OCP UPDATE INCLUDE?

The project, branded as Abbotsforward 2050, will build on the successes of the existing OCP, while addressing the challenges and needs of today and tomorrow. Updating the plan provides the perfect opportunity to affirm the City vision and strengthen Abbotsford's growth and development plan for the future. As part of the update, the City will be seeking community input as the process moves forward.

Following recent changes to provincial housing legislation, increasing the housing supply and broadening housing options will be a big part of the OCP update, making it important to explore changes in the context of the City's infrastructure, parks, amenities, and other supports for Abbotsford's growing population.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Residents will have a variety of ways to get involved and provide input over the course of the project, with engagement opportunities beginning in the spring. Residents and business owners are encouraged to visit the **Abbotsforward 2050 Let's Talk page** at letstalkabbotsford.ca/ocp to learn more about the process, read the background research report and subscribe for notifications for future engagement opportunities.

WHAT IS AN OCP?

An OCP sets out and describes the long-term vision of a community. It is a statement of objectives and policies that guide decisions on municipal planning and land use management, and these decisions impact a communities' sustainability and resilience. As the City's key municipal planning tool, the OCP, which was last updated in 2016, will be used to address the needs of current and future residents and business, as well as guide change and new development in Abbotsford for the next 25 years.

HOUSING IN ABBOTSFORD

Approximately 38% of all homes in Abbotsford are single detached dwellings, 33% are attached homes (semi-detached, rowhouse, duplex, detached with suites, etc.), and 29% are apartments.

As Abbotsford grows, the proportion of multi-unit housing is increasing while the proportion of single detached dwellings is decreasing.



38%



33%



29%

stay tuned

FOR ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES (IN-PERSON AND ONLINE) SPRING 2024



ABBOTSFORD