



FLOOD UPDATE

2024

CITY OF ABBOTSFORD



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Though the November 2021 flood was more than two and a half years ago, flood recovery and long-term mitigation remains a topic of daily

conversation for many of us here in Abbotsford. City crews continue working toward completing repairs for the remaining larger infrastructure projects, farmers are still rebuilding their homes and barns while trying to get their operations back to pre-flooding levels, and at the City, we are still aggressively advocating for the funding support required to implement our long-term flood mitigation plan.

Despite the disappointing news we received in May that we were denied critical Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Fund (DMAF) federal funding, we aren't giving up our advocacy efforts to senior levels of government to provide us with this critical support.

In the interim, we are continuing to bolster our existing infrastructure, and are making forward progress where we can. In February of this year, the Province of BC committed \$76.6 million for resiliency upgrades for Barrowtown Pump Station, which enables us to complete improvements to the pump station, to make it more efficient and resistant to floods. We have started the design for the new flood wall and anticipate to start construction in the fall.

In December of 2023, the Government of Canada and the Province of BC announced they were giving a combined \$18 million to combat the erosion on the Fraser River Bank and increase the resilience of the Matsqui dike which

provides flood mitigation for Matsqui Prairie and Matsqui First Nation. Once complete, the project will reduce the likelihood of bank erosion creating a dike breach, due to climate change.

Additionally, we are nearing completion on Sumas River bank stabilization and repairs between Atkinson Road and Lakemount Road bridge and at several locations south of Highway 1. We have also completed repairs to eight damaged bridges, debris and sediment removal in McKay Creek, Saar Creek, Arnold Slough and the Sumas River sediment traps, and are awaiting government approvals for repairs for three landslide sites.

While we are in a better position than we were prior to November 2021, our community remains at risk of another disastrous flood, which is why it was utterly devastating to learn the federal government wasn't going to come through with the funding we desperately need to move forward with the urgent components of our long-term flood mitigation plan. As a City, along with the City of Merritt and the Town of Princeton who were also denied DMAF funding, we are urging the Government of Canada to reconsider their decision and to open a new revenue source so our communities get the protection they need.

This news came at the same time a report from UBC was released, claiming it would be more cost-effective to not try and mitigate flooding on Sumas Prairie, but instead to let the lake return. As a municipality, our responsibility is to ensure that our community infrastructure protects our community and residents, which is why we are focused on flood protection measures and opposed to reflooding options.

Following receipt of the report, the City approached the engineering firm whose work was the foundation

behind our long-term flood mitigation plan, Kerr Wood Leidal (KWL) Associates Ltd., to review and assess some of the recommendations in the research paper. Their review of the report found the assessment of the costs were "grossly underrepresented", and really didn't capture the full picture of what a return to the lake would require. Additionally, reflooding Sumas Lake would mean losing premium agriculture land and significantly impact our provincial food supply. As Mayor, I want Sumas Prairie residents and farmers to rest assured that returning the lake is something we simply will not consider.

Our community has also received strong support for the City's flood mitigation plan from local First Nations and many local, regional and provincial organizations and groups that are advocating on our behalf to senior government for the critical flood-mitigation funding we need. We are truly grateful for their partnership and the support they are providing us in these ongoing efforts, and are optimistic the federal government will respond to this added pressure.

I know the news in May was hard for many in Sumas Prairie to hear, but I promise as Mayor that we won't stop advocating for Abbotsford residents, farms and businesses until we get the help and flood mitigation we need. We aren't returning the lake, we aren't letting senior government forget about us, and we aren't giving up hope.

Ross Siemens
Mayor



RECOVERY UPDATES

DIKES

All the dike breaches from the 2021 flood event have been repaired and have been reinforced in key areas.

- **COLE ROAD DIKE**
Geotechnical investigations and designs for a permanent solution are now complete and we are currently working through Dike Maintenance Act approvals.
- **SUMAS RIVER BANK/DIKE STABILIZATION SITES**
We are nearing completion on sites between Atkinson Road and Lakemount Road bridge and at several locations south of Highway 1.
- **ATKINSON BRIDGE AND HIGHWAY 1 AND ON NORTH PARALLEL ROAD BREACH** (near Barrowtown)
Subsurface investigations (drilling) took place in Fall/Winter 2023 to assess the adequacy of emergency dike repairs for permanent operations for the breach. We are still waiting for the final Geotechnical reports.

LANDSLIDES

Repairs are complete on the Cranberry Court and Sumas Mountain Road landslide sites, and repairs for the other sites are in the works.

- **OLD YALE ROAD (MAJUBA HILL) LANDSLIDE**
Designs are complete and we are awaiting Disaster Funding Assistance funding approval
- **AUGUSTON SEWER ACCESS ROAD LANDSLIDE**
Designs are complete for the landslides on this segment of road (off Straiton Road). Water Sustainability Act permits were submitted in Winter 2023 and we are now awaiting permit approvals.
- **IVY COURT, CARIBOO COURT, ASH STREET, MCKEE ROAD AND LATIMER ROAD LANDSLIDES**
Designs are complete and Water Sustainability Act permits have been submitted. We are now awaiting permit approvals.

WATERWAYS

The City completed sediment and debris removal in several waterways and additional sediment removal work is expected to be completed this fall and winter.

- **CLAYBURN CREEK**
The Ministry of Environment is leading the work for Clayburn Creek bank repairs. The Province has issued a request for proposal to proceed with construction pending Budget, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Water Sustainability Act permit approvals.
- **SUMAS LAKE BOTTOM CANAL SEDIMENT REMOVAL**
A survey of the Canal has been completed and we are waiting for the engineer memo to determine next steps.

BRIDGES

Repairs have been completed to eight damaged bridges.

- Bateman Road Bridge over Willband Creek
- Angus Campbell Road Bridge over Marshall Creek
- Wells Line Road Bridge over Saar Creek
- Bowman Road Bridge over Arnold Slough
- No. 4 Road over Sumas Canal
- No. 5 Road Bridge over Sumas Canal
- South Parallel Road Bridge over Marshall Creek
- South Parallel Road Bridge over Sumas River

BARROWTOWN PUMP STATION

BARROWTOWN PUMP STATION RESILIENCY UPGRADE

- Design is currently underway for a new flood wall at Barrowtown.
- Planning work is underway to move forward with the other components (removing the pumps and replacing seals, bearings and re-coat impellers). Estimated project completion is December 2027.

BACKUP POWER GENERATOR PROJECT

- Due to supply chain issues, there was a delay in delivery of the generator; however, it is now anticipated to be delivered to site before the end of this year. Estimated project completion is 2024.

KWL TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Following the UBC journal article published in Frontiers in Conservation Science titled “Reclaiming the Xhotsa: climate adaptation and ecosystem Q1 restoration via the return of Sumas Lake”, the City engaged engineering firm, Kerr Wood Leidal (KWL) Associates Ltd., to review the article and provide some substantiation of the claims and direction proposed along with some technical commentary on the information in the article.

The City is making the KWL commentary (in the form of a technical memorandum) available to help the public understand some the complexities involved in addressing the serious flooding concerns and extreme climate impacts related to the rivers, waterways and flood infrastructure of Sumas Prairie.



Scan the QR Code to read the full Technical Memorandum or visit www.abbotsford.ca/floodresponse for more information.