

Council approves Sikh Khalsa school campus

On June 18, City Council approved an Official Community Plan (OCP) bylaw amendment, a zoning bylaw amendment and a development variance permit to allow for the construction of a new independent Khalsa elementary school, post-secondary institution and daycare at the northwest corner of Downes and Gladwin roads. As part of the application process, studies and plans have been done to help minimize the traffic impact to the area.

Council's decision to approve the application came after a four-hour Public Hearing that attracted a full house, with members of the public filling both floors of the Matsqui Centennial Auditorium as well as the foyer. City Council also received 115 pieces of correspondence related to the application, which is much higher than usual.

At the Public Hearing, residents who spoke were generally supportive of the school itself, with those in opposition voicing concerns about the location and potential traffic issues.

Overall, Council was impressed by the number of engaged community members, including some children who participated and showed an interest in the democratic process!

Council approves 2023 Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements

On June 18, City Council approved the City of Abbotsford's 2023 Annual Report, including the 2023 Audited Financial Statements. Council approved the Draft Audited Financial Statements on May 7.

In their presentation to Council, staff noted the financial results for 2023 were favorable for our overall City operations. On a consolidated basis, the City experienced an annual surplus of \$83.1 million in 2023, an increase from the \$54.9 million surplus in 2022. The City's net financial assets, a key indicator in assessing the financial health of a local government, increased by \$20.5 million to \$380 million at the end of 2023.

The City also reduced its debt by \$4.2 million, and total capital reserves increased by \$18.3 million to \$309.7 million. Tangible capital assets increased from \$1.49 billion to \$1.55 billion.

The total 2023 consolidated revenue was up by \$41.3 million due in part to the \$27.4 million provincial

Growing Communities Fund grant, and under budget by \$34 million due to the timing of capital projects. The City also received another \$6.4 million in contributed tangible capital assets including parks, roads and infrastructure constructed by developers and deeded to the City, compared to \$3 million in 2022.

Finally, the City received \$300,000 more in general tax revenue than was budgeted due to taxes from new development. For 2023, the City budgeted \$1.5 million in general tax revenue from new development.

The 2023 Annual Report also contains information on the progress made towards Council's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan in 2023 as well as information on City Council, how the City is structured as well as messages from the Mayor and the City Manager.



You can find the full City of Abbotsford 2023 Annual Report on our website at abbotsford.ca/finance.

Council adopts Transit-Oriented Area Designation Bylaw

On June 25, City Council adopted a bylaw that classifies all land 400 metres from Bourquin bus exchange as a Transit-Oriented Area (TOA).

The new TOA designation, which is mandated for all municipalities by the Province as part of the new provincial Homes for People strategy and plan, requires the City to allow residential properties within 200 metres of the bus exchange to be 10 storeys tall, and those between 200 and 400 metres from the bus exchange to be six storeys tall. Most of these properties are already zoned under the City Centre Neighbourhood Plan, and the land use designations are generally consistent with the height and density required by the Province. However, a rezoning application will still be needed to build higher or denser than permitted by existing zoning, which means the City can still secure conditions of approval through a typical rezoning process.

As part of the new TOA, the City cannot require off-street parking for residential uses within a TOA, except for people with disabilities. The City can continue to require parking for non-residential uses and, where parking is provided, continue to regulate design standards, in addition to applying minimum off-street bicycle parking requirements.

Council directs staff to consider changes to McKee Village plan as part of OCP update

On June 25, City Council directed staff to consider density and land use changes to the McKee Village land use designation through the ongoing Abbotsforward 2050 OCP update following the defeat of the Abbotsford Tech District OCP amendment application.

Staff's review of the application noted that due to the size and scale of the development, the Abbotsford Tech District was inconsistent with the OCP's aspirations, policies, growth strategies and Urban Structure, and deviated in its land use from the McKee and City Centre neighbourhood plans.

Despite these issues, staff found that the applicant's vision of a "live, work, learn, play" community generally aligned with the intent of the McKee Village land use designation and sound planning practice. As such, Council authorized staff to consider expanding the permitted uses and a minor density increase to further enable a complete mixed-use neighborhood centre.

Council approves 2023 SOFI report

On June 18, City Council approved the 2023 Statement of Financial Information (SOFI) report.

In their presentation to Council, staff explained the SOFI report is a Public Accounts report prepared in compliance with the Financial Information Act, Statutes of British Columbia (Canada), Chapter 140. It contains a statement of assets and liabilities, operational statement, schedule of debts, schedule of guarantee and indemnity agreements, schedule showing remuneration and expenses paid to or on behalf of employees and schedule showing payments for suppliers of goods or services.

The SOFI report includes a summary of payments made to outside organizations which total more than \$25,000 for the year. Overall, total payments made to the suppliers and outside organizations for the year is approximately \$241 million.