

AGENDA ITEM NO: _____

MEETING DATE: _____

October 21, 2025

STAFF REPORT – COVER SHEET

SUBJECT: Chilliwack 2050 Official Community Plan Bylaw DATE: October 14, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Planning PREPARED BY: Reuben Koole / rk

RK

1. SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The City's review and update of the Official Community Plan (OCP) is nearing completion, and a final OCP bylaw has been prepared for Council's consideration. It is the result of significant input and participation from numerous stakeholders and the community over an intense 15-month period. A final, Phase 3 round of public engagement with the draft plan has been completed, which asked "are we headed in the right direction", and included open houses, an online questionnaire, presentations to Council Committees, and meetings with City departments, First Nations, and other stakeholders. This introduction of the OCP bylaw concludes the plan preparation process and begins the administrative plan adoption process outlined in the *Local Government Act*, including referrals to specific agencies and governments followed by a public hearing and bylaw adoption.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council considers the public consultation conducted during the Chilliwack 2050 Official Community Plan project to be appropriate consultation for the purposes of Section 475 of the *Local Government Act*, as outlined in the staff report dated October 14, 2025.

That Council direct staff to refer "Official Community Plan Bylaw 2025, No. 5500" to the following outside agencies for comment:

- First Nations, including Ch'iyáqtel (Tzeachten), Sq'ewqéyl (Skowkale), Yeqwyeqwí:ws (Yakweakwioose), Äthelets (Aitchelitz), Kwaw'Kwaw'Apilt (Kwaw-kwaw-a-pilt), Sxoyehálá (Squiala), Shxwhá:y Village (Skway), Sqwa (Skwah), Xwchíyò:m (Cheam), and Th'ewá:li (Soowahlie);
- S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance, through the People of the River Referrals;
- Ts'elxwéyeqw Tribe Management Ltd;
- City of Abbotsford;
- District of Kent; and,
- Fraser Valley Regional District.

That “Official Community Plan Bylaw 2025, No. 5500”, which proposes to establish a new Official Community Plan for Chilliwack, be given first reading.

That Council direct staff to refer “Official Community Plan Bylaw 2025, No. 5500” to the Agricultural Land Commission for comment.

That “Official Community Plan Bylaw 2025, No. 5500” be given second reading; and further, that a Public Hearing be called for December 2, 2025.



Gillian Villeneuve
Director of Planning

3. FINANCE COMMENTS:

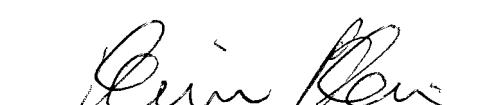
The Official Community Plan amendment bylaw has been considered in conjunction with the City's Financial Plan.



Glen Savard
Director of Finance

4. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION/COMMENTS:

Supports recommendation.



David Blain
Chief Administrative Officer

STAFF REPORT ON CHILLIWACK 2050 OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN BYLAW

PREPARED BY: Reuben Koole DATE: October 14, 2025
POSITION: Manager, Long Range Planning DEPARTMENT: Planning

1. BACKGROUND:

As part of legislative changes made in December, 2023, the Provincial Government required all local governments to update their Official Community Plan (OCP) by December 2025. In addition, there were numerous other recent Provincial legislation changes, including implementation of small-scale multi-unit housing and transit-oriented areas. Planning staff also noted the importance of reviewing the current OCP due to its age and the city surpassing a population of 100,000 people. Other key milestones in the project are as follows:

- March 8, 2024 – Request for Proposals issued to conduct the project
- June 4, 2024 – Contract awarded to Modus Planning Design & Engagement Inc.
- September 3, 2024 – Council received a report about the project introduction
- January 28, 2025 – Council received a report about the Phase 1 summary
- July 15, 2025 – Council received a report about the Phase 2 summary
- September 8, 2025 – A draft OCP was published for final, Phase 3 engagement

2. DISCUSSION:

2.1 Work Plan

The overall work plan for the OCP update occurred from Summer 2024 through the end of 2025, and was broken into three stages: Phase 1 – Listen and Learn, Phase 2 – Explore Concepts, and Phase 3 – Create the Plan. A general description of the work included in each phase is summarized below.

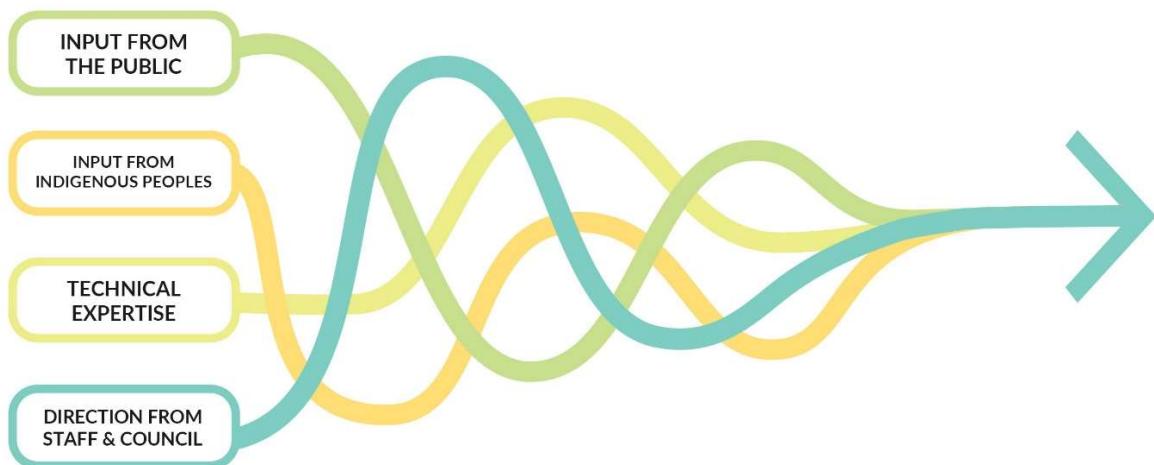
Phases 1 & 2 – Listen and Learn, and Explore Concepts

Phase 1 focused on gathering baseline information about the city, including demographics, population data, a commercial and industrial inventory, and broad community input. Phase 2 focused on using the background research results to create concepts for the future on a variety of topics, issues, and themes, and gather input about preferences for how Chilliwack should evolve and grow.

Phase 3 – Create the Plan

Phase 3 focused on creating a new OCP, building on what was learned in Phase 1 and what was heard in Phase 2.

The “engagement weave” illustrates how the project team approached integrating engagement input as one stream of information towards creating the final plan, along with technical planning work and input from staff and Council. These streams interact during the process, leading to insights and new ideas, without one single input or activity determining the outcome. At the end of the process, Council has the authority as elected decision makers to approve the final plan based on these streams and processes.



The Engagement Weave

2.2 Phase 3 work summary

How we engaged

The main emphasis of the final phase of engagement was to gather broad input about the draft plan. An Engage Chilliwack webpage was used as the primary online method to gather input through a questionnaire that asked “are we headed in the right direction” with the draft plan. Similar to previous phases, newspaper ads, postcards, as well as passive and promoted social media posts, were used to generate project awareness and interest.

In addition, the project team held two open houses that provided residents an opportunity to view the draft plan, ask questions, and interact with staff. The open houses were at the Sardis Library and District 1881 Courtyard, and approximately 300 people interacted with the draft plan material.

Staff also presented to numerous Council Committees, attended the Ch'iyáqtel (Tzeachten) community open house, had staff-to-staff discussions with First Nations, ALC, and School District 33, and met with other City departments and stakeholders throughout Phase 3.

Open House photos

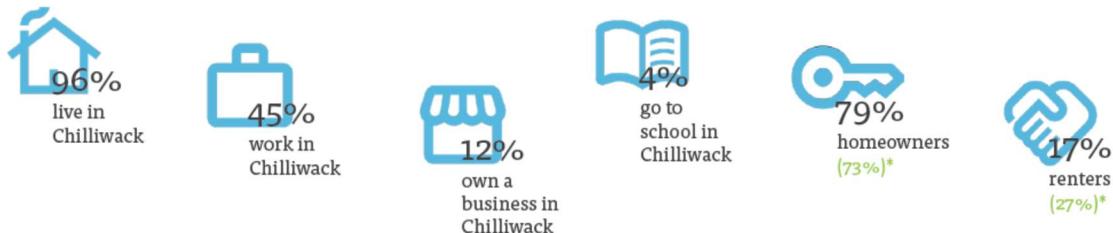


Throughout the entire OCP process, all engagement activities resulted in the following interactions:

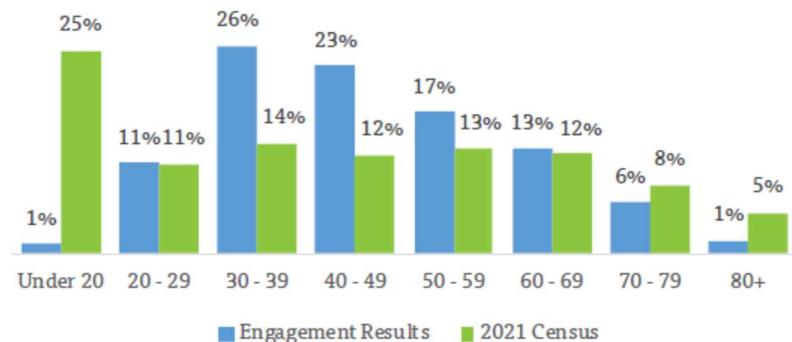


Who we heard from

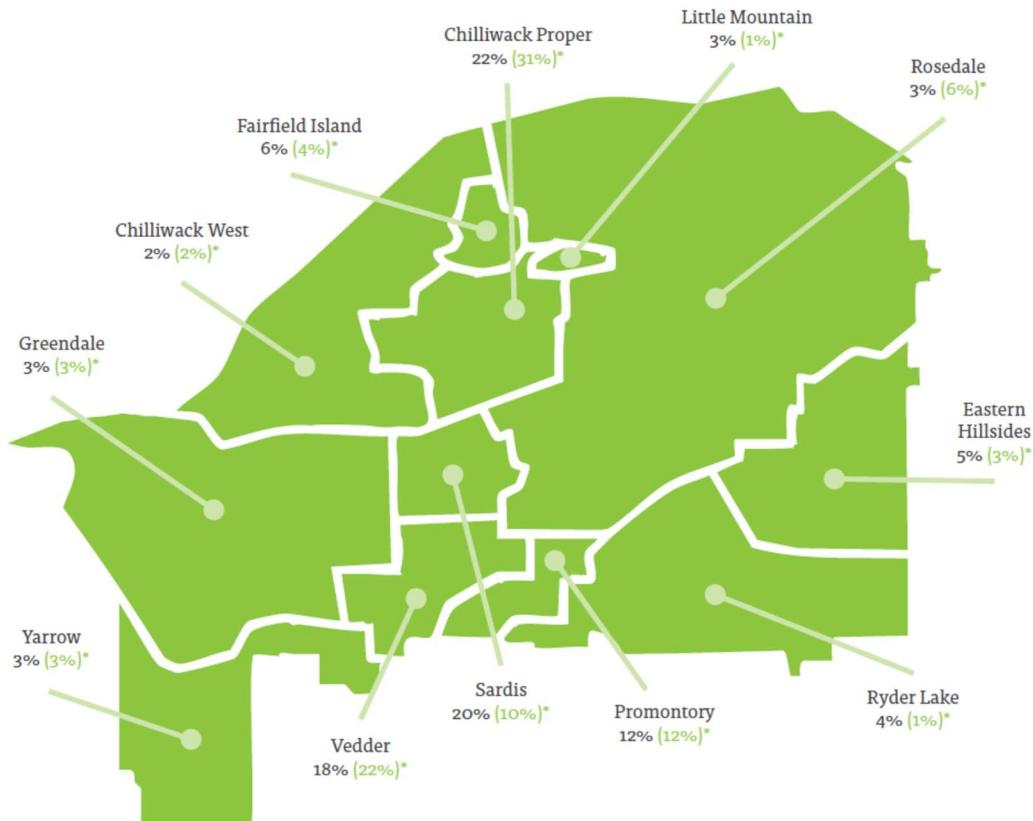
Over the complete OCP process, demographic information was collected from willing participants and the highlighted information below provides a summary of who participated (green* indicates 2021 Census comparison).



Age:



Neighbourhood of residence:



What we heard in Phase 3

During the final engagement the online questionnaire received just over 250 responses. Overall, the final input was mixed in terms of how people felt about the direction of the new OCP, as summarized in the table below highlighting the “yes” topics in green and the “no” topics in blue.

After reviewing the written comments provided with the corresponding votes, all of the concerns have been addressed in the final OCP. Some respondents gave comments about the current state of the community, rather than about the OCP’s future vision and actions to address the current state. In addition, there were examples of respondents with opposite perspectives both voting “no” (e.g. too much growth vs too little; add commercial to neighbourhoods vs too much neighbourhood change; and too vague and high-level vs too complex and detailed). The OCP is a future oriented plan that sets a framework for working towards the community vision, recognizing the overlapping responsibilities of different levels of government that respond to community input.

| Topic | Are we headed in the right direction? | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|
| | Yes | Neutral | No | Unsure |
| Growth Management | 43% | 10% | 44% | 3% |
| Land use | 44% | 15% | 38% | 4% |
| Housing | 45% | 11% | 42% | 2% |
| Transportation | 32% | 18% | 46% | 4% |
| Infrastructure | 38% | 15% | 43% | 3% |
| Agriculture | 53% | 20% | 23% | 4% |
| Environment | 46% | 25% | 25% | 4% |
| Parks & Recreation | 53% | 18% | 27% | 2% |
| Economy | 36% | 26% | 33% | 6% |
| Community | 45% | 21% | 31% | 3% |
| Plan is easy to use | 45% | 27% | 25% | 3% |
| Plan is easy to understand | 54% | 19% | 25% | 2% |

3. FINAL OCP:

Official Community Plans guide the physical development of cities, and this OCP is based on Chilliwack in the year 2050, having grown to an estimated population of 160,000 people (using an approximate annual growth rate of 1.5%). The OCP is a decision-making framework used by City Council, staff, the development industry and residents, which guides investment decisions, infrastructure phasing, and neighbourhood change. The OCP helps reduce ambiguity and provide clarity about the future of Chilliwack.

The OCP is organized into 6 primary chapters, which are summarized below.

| Chapter | Summary |
|--------------------|---|
| Introduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes sections that describe the Chilliwack context and history, along with the OCP update process and relationship to other plans Sets the vision and goals, plan structure, and climate change targets related to greenhouse gas emissions reductions |
| Land Use Framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes sections that describe the growth management and land use designations Sets the growth objectives and details for the future of Chilliwack |
| Policy Framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes sections that describe 8 policy topics, covering a range of subjects from housing, to infrastructure, to economic development Sets the introduction and objectives for each topic, followed by specific policy statements |
| Implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes sections that describe the OCP's core implementation tools, from neighbourhood planning, to temporary use and development permits, to financial strategies |
| Maps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes maps that supplement the land use and policy chapters |
| Schedules | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes schedules that incorporate specific “stand alone” documents such as neighbourhood plans and development permit areas |

3.1 Differences from 2040 OCP

Land uses

The land uses of the new OCP introduce a city-wide approach, with a consolidation of numerous similar uses among different neighbourhood plans to create consistency across the city. This improves the clarity for industry, residents, and staff for implementation, with a reduction from over 80 land uses to 18 that streamlines development processes.

Policy

The policy statements of the new OCP are a consolidation of over 700 statements from across all neighbourhood plans and the 2040 OCP. In many cases, policies were duplicated in several places and this updated organization fits city-wide policies in the OCP and neighbourhood specific policies in neighbourhood plans. In addition, policies are organized by topic underneath the vision and goals in order to help readers find information more easily.

Growth boundaries

The growth boundaries of the new OCP have been updated to reduce the urban growth boundary and introduce a new development area. The urban growth boundary was reduced to remove two agricultural areas and align with Agricultural Land Commission regulations (with related growth statements and policies to reinforce support for the Agricultural Land Reserve while limiting non-agricultural uses), and remove one hillside area (Little Mountain) to align with all other hillside areas. The new development area is more broad to include all developed areas including the urban growth boundary, hillsides, and First Nations areas.

20 years of housing need

The new OCP was required in Provincial legislation to plan for and allocate land to meet a projected 20 year supply of new housing units. Through the planning process a model was developed to assess land use supply and confirm the growth approach could meet this requirement. The land use supply in the OCP meets the 20 year need of 28,143 housing units on combined City and First Nations lands.

Density benefit areas

The density benefit area of the new OCP creates the foundation for supporting additional housing density in exchange for amenities. There are three areas identified, including Downtown and the core areas of the Sardis and Vedder neighbourhoods. The amount of density and what amenities are included will be established in the Zoning Bylaw as a forthcoming amendment.

First Nations

The Chilliwack 2050 OCP process included numerous conversations and meetings with local First Nations. Through these discussions many expressed interest in sharing information about their land use plans through the OCP. While reserve lands are not part of municipal jurisdiction, and therefore their land use plans are not included in the OCP bylaw, staff are working with First Nations to add their land use information to the City's online mapping tool. This will provide a holistic perspective on the land use changes that have already happened, and are planned for the future. In addition, the OCP sets a path for working together with neighbouring First Nations to collectively plan for and manage growth across Chilliwack.

3.2 Supporting changes

Following first readings of the new OCP bylaw, staff will bring forward additional changes to supporting bylaws and policies that help align them with the new OCP, including the following:

- Adding density benefits to the Zoning Bylaw, along with creating a new reserve to collect any cash-in-lieu contributions collected as part of the program
- Abandoning several policies that have been incorporated into the OCP, including Infill and Industrial
- Abandoning several development concepts or neighbourhood plans that have been incorporated into the OCP, including Chilliwack Mountain, Promontory, and Alder

In addition, staff will request a minor update to the Fraser Valley Regional District's (FVRD) Regional Growth Strategy to align with the update Urban Growth Boundary of the OCP following its adoption. FVRD staff are receptive to this request, and the process would begin in early 2026.

4. ADOPTION PROCEDURES:

This OCP update bylaw process is being used to revise the adoption procedures for OCP bylaw amendments to align with prescribed *Local Government Act* processes. The procedures include references to public consultation, referrals to agencies, bylaw readings, and Agricultural Land Commission involvement.

In addition, staff have reviewed this Official Community Plan amendment and it may move forward within the scope of the City's Financial Plan, applicable Waste Management Plans, and Housing Needs Report.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS & SUBSTANTIATION:**Recommendations:**

That Council considers the public consultation conducted during the Chilliwack 2050 Official Community Plan project to be appropriate consultation for the purposes of Section 475 of the *Local Government Act*, as outlined in the staff report dated October 14, 2025.

That Council direct staff to refer “Official Community Plan Bylaw 2025, No. 5500” to the following outside agencies for comment:

- First Nations, including Ch’iyáqtel (Tzeachten), Sq’ewqéyl (Skowkale), Yeqwyeqwí:ws (Yakweakwioose), Äthelets (Aitchelitz), Kwaw’Kwaw’Apilt (Kwaw-kwaw-a-pilt), Sxoyehálá (Squiala), Shxwhá:y Village (Skway), Sqwa (Skwah), Xwchíyò:m (Cheam), and Th’ewá:li (Soowahlie);
- S’ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance, through the People of the River Referrals;
- Ts’elxwéyeqw Tribe Management Ltd;
- City of Abbotsford;
- District of Kent; and,
- Fraser Valley Regional District.

That “Official Community Plan Bylaw 2025, No. 5500”, which proposes to establish a new Official Community Plan for Chilliwack, be given first reading.

That Council direct staff to refer “Official Community Plan Bylaw 2025, No. 5500” to the Agricultural Land Commission for comment.

That “Official Community Plan Bylaw 2025, No. 5500” be given second reading; and further, that a Public Hearing be called for December 2, 2025.

Substantiation:

The City's review and update of the Official Community Plan (OCP) is nearing completion. As part of legislative changes made in December, 2023, the Provincial Government required all local governments to update their OCP by December, 2025. The new OCP plans for 20 years of housing need, refines and clarifies land uses and supporting policy, and sets a framework to guide development into the future.

6. Sources of information

- Staff report “OCP Update Introduction” dated August 28, 2024
- Staff report “OCP Phase 1 Summary” dated January 21, 2025
- Staff report “OCP Phase 2 Summary” dated July 8, 2025