

Site Overview 2



Figure 1: Neighbourhoods Adjoining the Park

2 Site Overview

2.1 Site Context

The Park is located in the ‘heart’ of the City of Abbotsford and in some ways the community grew around the lake and what now constitutes the Park.

The Park is bound by Bevan Avenue and residential neighbourhoods to the south, Ware Street and residential neighbourhoods to the east, Emerson Street, Gladwin Road, recreational facilities and residential neighbourhoods to the west and commercial property, Bourquin Crescent, and residential neighbourhoods to the north.

Four schools are located immediately around the site: Centennial School to the north-west, Godson School to the south, and Abbotsford Middle and Senior Secondary Schools to the south-east. The MSA Arena is located directly west of Mill Lake Park across Emerson Street. In addition, there is the large Ravine Park not far east of the Park.

The Park is surrounded mostly by a grid street system that generally provides good connectivity from the neighbourhoods surrounding the Park, however, some large developments like the commercial property to the north are barriers to safe pedestrian access. There is also no obvious walking link through the MSA

Arena site to the adjoining streets to the west of the Park. Some access points to the park from adjacent intersections may need better delineation to make them safer.

There is opportunity to enhance a trail link between Mill Lake Park and Jubilee Park and the historic downtown via Ravine Park.



MILL LAKE
PARK

City of Abbotsford
Mill Lake Park Master Plan
2025





Post Settlement History

2.2 Park History

The lake in Mill Lake Park has been an important site for many people throughout history.

2.2.1 First Nations

Stó:lō (people of the river)

Long before Abbotsford existed as a community and Canada as a country, the Stó:lō (people of the river) occupied the land called S'ólh Temexw in the Fraser Valley.

S'ólh Temexw is the traditional, ancestral shared territory of the Semá:th First Nation and Mathekwi First Nation. These two First Nations are part of the Stó:lō Nation, the People of the River. They lived in the large geographic area from Yale to Vancouver and spoke Halq'emeylem, also known as the upriver dialect.

The Stó:lō people have occupied the territory including Mill Lake since time immemorial (Neighbourhood History Walk, The Reach Gallery Museum, Nd).

Lekw'óquem is the Halq'emeylem name by which Mill Lake was known to the area's original Stó:lō residents.

2.2.2 Post Settlement History

European settlers first named Mill Lake, Bais Lake, after a pioneer farmer. It then later became known as Abbotsford Lake due to its proximity to the Village of Abbotsford, even though the lake was technically located in the then District of Matsqui. It eventually adopted its current name of Mill Lake due to the prominence of logging in the area

and the mill adjoining the lake.

Mill Lake has contributed to the economy, health, and recreation of the settled Abbotsford community for over a century.

The first sawmill established on the lake was owned by Charles Hill-Tout and produced 50,000 railway ties for the Canadian Pacific Railway. Yet, it wasn't until the Trethewey brothers – (Joseph Ogle Trethewey, Richard Arthur Trethewey, and Samuel Dunn Trethewey), purchased the mill in 1903 and in 1912 established the Abbotsford Timber and Trading Company, that mill activity on the lake really took off. The Trethewey's owned timber rights to most of the District of Matsqui, the western section of what is now the City of Abbotsford. By the 1920's, their company was one of the largest employers in British Columbia. At its peak of operations, the Mill was the third largest employer in British Columbia, and the largest employer in the Abbotsford community making the mill important to Abbotsford's early economy.

Trethewey House was built in 1920 as a residence for Rita and Joseph Ogle Trethewey.

Mill Lake was central to the Mill as it was used to sort logs as they arrived by rail from the surrounding area. The Mill remained active until 1934 when the Trethewey brothers shut it down due to the Great Depression and a severe depletion of the forests in the area.

Summary of the History of the Park

DATE	RECENT MAJOR EVENTS RELATED TO THE PARK'S CREATION
1919-1920	Trethewey House constructed
1936	Abbotsford Lumber Company donates 8.23 acre park south of Mill Lake
1944	Park dedicated
1955	Lions Club donates 7.5 acre park on the Mill Lake foreshore
1958	Centennial Park & Centennial Pool opening
	David F. Gosling Memorial Square dedicated
1970	Lake closed to power boats
1979	John Mahoney Park established
1995	Lions Point Viewing Platform constructed
2006	Rotary Crossing Playground constructed
	John Mahoney Park added to Mill Lake Park

Establishment of the Park

As early as the 1930's, Mill Lake was recognized as a potential site for a community destination Park, and in 1936 the former District of Matsqui acquired 8.23 acres south of Mill Lake Road from the Abbotsford Lumber Company for the donation price of \$1.00. Then in the Late 1940's the Abbotsford Lions Club purchased the lakeshore mill site after the Mill's closure, and with the cooperation of local municipalities, undertook a cleanup of the site which resulted in the reclamation of Mill Lake as a community recreation area. The name "Mill Lake" seems to have become permanent when it was being rehabilitated. (Neighbourhood History Walk: Mill Lake Exploring Place Names in the Mill Lake Park Neighbourhood, The Reach Gallery Museum, Nd and Council Report No: 07-2004 March 17, 2004. Renaming of Centennial Park to "Mill Lake Park").

A wharf and boardwalk were built, sectioning off part of Mill Lake to protect bathers from powerboats. Hundreds of local children took their swimming lessons at the Mill Lake swimming area under the instruction of Mrs. Jessie Carson. The shoreline was leveled, and sand added to create a beach. The Lions Club constructed bathhouses, public washrooms and a concession stand. Overnight camping was permitted and popular with visitors from Vancouver. By the early 1950s, Mill Lake was established as a very popular community recreation facility.

John Mahoney Park was located on the southeast side of the lake and became part of Mill Lake Park in 2006. This Park was originally named for John "Jock" Mahoney who came to B.C. in the early 1900s and found work with the Abbotsford Lumber Company as a logger. Logging paid well, allowing Jock to buy 40

acres where he tried his hand at farming. Later in life, Jock bought three acres of land by the lake and built a house there in 1920.

The legacy of the Mill is still visible around Mill Lake today. Aside from the remains of the trestle on the western end of Mill Lake, peaty, boggy soils on the lakeshore bear testament to decades of mill tailings. Invisible to lakeshore strollers is the tangle of sunken logs in the lake's depths. Another reminder of the lake's history is the former home of Joseph Ogle Trethewey, on the east side of the Park, now a designated local heritage property and operated as a heritage house museum by the Heritage Abbotsford Society.(Kris Foulds, Local Historian, Nd).



Image: Margaret's brother, Norman Hutchison, diving into Mill Lake. Sawmill in the background. Catalogue no. P6816, The Reach Gallery Museum, circa 1918



Source: Trethewey House, Parks Canada, nd.



Source: The Reach Gallery Museum p892; C1918

Heritage Structures/Places on the Site

The following sites are identified in the City's Community Heritage Register.

DATE BUILT	NAME/LOCATION OF STRUCTURE	COMMENTS
1919/1920	Trethewey House construction	Added to register in 1983.
1907	Log dump/Trestle Bridge	Added to register in 2014.



Source: Government of British Columbia, circa 1940

Land Assembly/Acquisition to Create the Park

In 1955, as options for a community Centennial project were being considered, the Abbotsford Lions Club offered to donate its 7.5-acre Park on the Mill Lake foreshore if a commission would be created to oversee management of the Park; the commission over time has morphed into what could now be considered the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department of the City of Abbotsford.

In 1958, a farm on the 20-acre bench land property west of Mill Lake was purchased and a new concrete swimming pool, two smaller wading pools and playground were built to mark the Centenary of British Columbia.

The newly expanded Park was named “Centennial Park” to mark the occasion.

In August 1958, David F. Gosling Memorial Square was dedicated with a plaque on a raised concrete base. Gosling was a Sumas Councilor, and a Lion’s club member, who dedicated considerable time and energy to the Centennial Park and Pool project but passed away before it was unveiled.

In 1979, the District of Matsqui purchased the former John Mahoney property adjoining Ware Road on the east side of the current park and converted the 3-acre property into parkland.

Improvements to the Park have continued over the years, many supported by local service clubs, including the Lions Point viewing platform added in 1995 and Rotary Crossing playground at John Mahoney Park added in 2006.



2.3 Policy Context

The following outlines City, provincial, and national strategies and policies that provide a framework for the Mill Lake Master Plan.

2.3.1 City Policies

Strategic Plan (2022-2026)

The City of Abbotsford is the Hub of the Fraser Valley. As the cultural and economic centre of the region, Abbotsford will be home to centralized services and agencies including health care, courts, transportation, university, airport, provincial, and federal government, entertainment and cultural facilities, and commerce. We are a vibrant, prosperous and generous community.

The Strategic Plan has four cornerstones:

- Inclusive & Connected Community
- Sustainable and Safe City
- Vibrant and Growing Economy
- Organizational Excellence and Integrity

The cornerstone that is most relevant to the Mill Lake Park Master Plan is Inclusive and Connected Community:

The City of Abbotsford is a community of inclusive, diverse, and green neighbourhoods, connected to convenient and affordable transportation and vibrant commercial centres. Our community is built on the foundation of our cultural heritage and natural beauty and we provide active living opportunities for all residents which contributes to the vitality and social cohesion of our City.

Identified principles that relate to this cornerstone include:

- Implement Culture Connect Strategy
- Capitalize on transportation opportunities in and through the City
- Value recreation and support facilities, amenities and activities that connect us; and
- Ensure development decisions are based on our long-term strategies and are not swayed from our community vision by short-term goals

2016 Official Community Plan (OCP)



Source: 2016 Official Community Plan, City of Abbotsford, 2016

OCP 7 Big Ideas

In 2016, Abbotsford City Council adopted “Abbotsforward”, its new Official Community Plan (OCP). Abbotsforward sets out policy directions organized around “7 Big Ideas” to support quality of life and social and economic vitality.

The subsequent 2018 Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) Master Plan supports achieving each of these “7 Big Ideas”. As part of ‘Create a City Centre’, parks, recreation, and culture facilities are fundamental to creating a sense of place and community identity and key to developing the City Centre as a community and cultural hub and destination.

In particular, Mill Lake Park and the civic precinct are defining components of the City Centre.

The OCP identifies land within and adjoining the Park that is planned for open space which will affect future land acquisition related to extending the park boundary.

City Centre Neighbourhood Plan (CCNP)

The study area for this Plan is focused on South Fraser Way and includes Mill Lake Park.

Mobility

The plan focuses on breaking up existing large blocks and providing a fine-grained street network with redundancies to improve connections for all users. The new street grid serves as the foundation for increasing connectivity and creating vibrant, human-scaled environments.

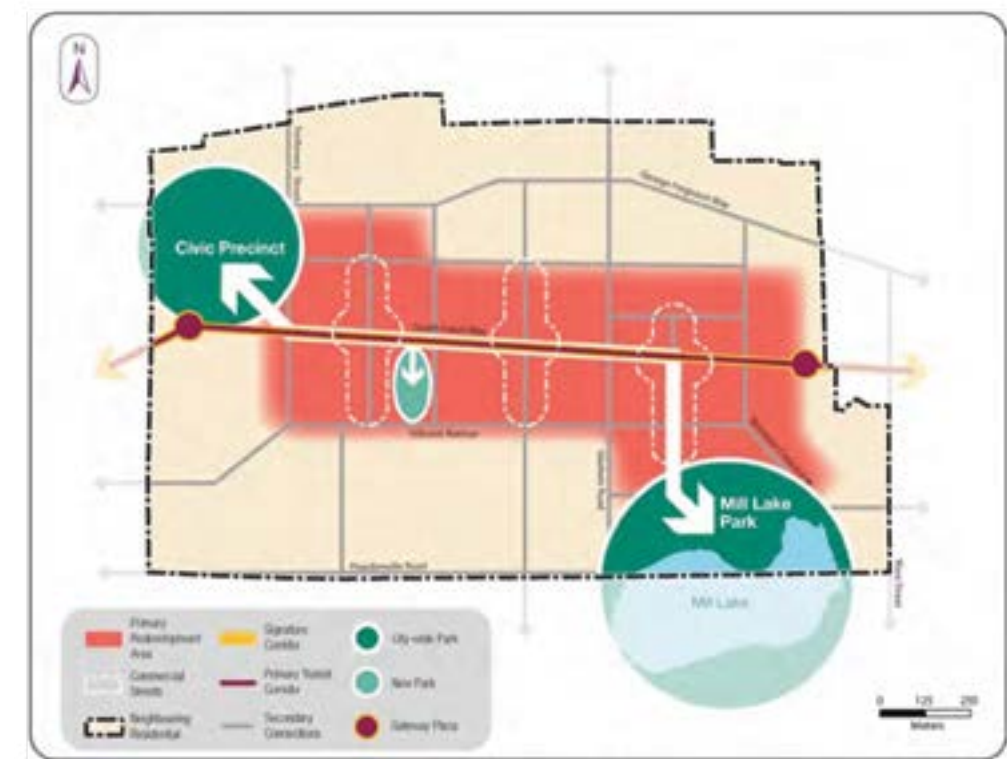
A new street extending from Ventura Avenue to Mill Lake Road is proposed through the current commercial property. This will increase the connectivity between the Park and the City Centre.

Culture

The plan is to establish two distinct cultural hubs within the City Centre: Civic Precinct and Mill Lake.

The Mill Lake Cultural Hub will encourage public art and cultural facilities that highlight and make space for stories related to the area, and align with existing nearby institutions including, but not limited to the Gur Sikh Temple, Trethewey House, and Kariton Art Gallery and Boutique.

The plan also proposes to elevate cultural stories and art that reflect the area’s Stó:lō people and way of life.



Source: City Centre Neighbourhood Plan, City of Abbotsford, p. 29, 2019

It advises us to continue engaging with the Sumas, Matsqui, and Leq’a:mel peoples and ensure the City Centre becomes a space that welcomes dialogue and makes progress toward reconciliation.

Open Space

Open space within the City Centre will take advantage of the two existing ‘City- Wide’ parks: Mill Lake Park and the Civic Precinct. The neighbourhood structure seeks to reveal them both to the greater area by establishing more direct links between the two but especially to South Fraser Way.

A larger urban plaza, located where the commercial property to the north meets Mill Lake Park, will act as a transition space from a very urban condition into a quieter, natural park setting. It will highlight the large glacial erratic rock that today sits at the back of the mall in its southern parking lot.

Land Use

The plan identified land uses, including open space, for some of the privately-owned lots adjoining the Park. This will affect future land acquisition related to the Park.

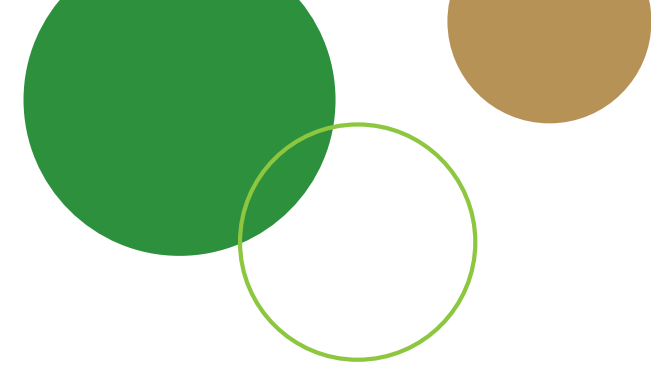
On-Lot Stormwater Management

While the soils in the CCNP area consist of rapidly

to well-drained soil groups, the aquifers below are classified by the Province as being highly vulnerable to surface contamination. As such, while infiltration should be promoted from a hydrologic perspective, the siting and design of infiltration facilities should consider water quality. Specifically, infiltration systems should be prohibited in high pollutant risk sites and runoff treatment should involve media filtration.

Low impact development (LID) measures, or source controls, that promote the infiltration of water are encouraged and include rain gardens, grass swales, porous paving and absorbent soils for lawns and gardens.

In particular, the current tree canopy in the CCNP is very low in coverage and increasing it will likely offer significant rainwater retention through rainfall interception and evapotranspiration. LID measures could be implemented in the park to reduce and filter run-off into Mill Lake. Applying these measures to Mill Lake’s catchment could decrease flooding.



Downtown Market Plans Concept Plan - 2011

The series of Concept Plans developed as part of this investigation identified trail linkage opportunities between the Downtown and portals or activity nodes, like Mill Lake Park, in adjoining areas.

Historic Downtown Neighbourhood Plan 2019

The Historic Downtown was the original town site for the Village of Abbotsford, subdivided in 1891 and incorporated in 1924. Mill Lake Park is within the context of the Historic Downtown.

Public Spaces & Amenities

Just outside of the Historic Downtown to the west are Jubilee Park and Ravine Park, with trails that connect to Mill Lake Park through Farrant Crescent.

Trails & Paths

The Plan proposes to build trails and paths to, and through, the neighbourhood, connecting it to destinations such as Jubilee Park, Ravine Park, Mill Lake, the railway corridor and the Discovery Trail. This could improve connectivity between Mill Lake Park and the Historic Downtown.

Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan - 2018

The vision identified in this document is: City Parks such as Mill Lake Park, Abbotsford Exhibition Park, and Albert Dyck Memorial Park attract many recreation and sport users and spectators, contributing to tourism, economic development, and quality-of-life experiences.

The plan outlined the many health, social, environmental and economic benefits of parks and recreation.

This plan should be a guide to the recreational and cultural activities to be considered in Mill Lake Park.



Culture Strategy – Culture Connect

The Vision identified for the City strategy is: Rich Cultural Experiences for All:

Abbotsford will be a place of rich and diverse cultural experiences and resources that are the essential ingredients of a vibrant community of connected people and neighbourhoods.

The following recommendations from the Strategy are specifically relevant to Mill Lake Park.

- 1.2.4 - Identify and protect important built, natural and intangible heritage assets throughout the City (re the natural heritage gardens and trees near Trethewey House and the historical log pilings in Mill Lake)
- 1.2.7 - Develop educational heritage opportunities to learn from the past and ensure Abbotsford is a welcoming and inclusive community
- 2.1.4 - Strategically invest in current facilities and public spaces to ensure continued use and community enjoyment
- 2.2.1 - Plan and provide for amenities in Parks and open spaces that allow for spontaneous creativity and organic cultural gatherings
- 2.2.3 - Align and provide for space needs with neighbourhood and Park development plans
- 2.2.5 - Plan a central cultural district in Abbotsford in alignment with the Official Community Plan
- 2.2.6 - Leverage new technology and expand Wi-Fi in the key public Parks and plazas to support digital placemaking and greater connectivity and accessibility
- 4.1.1 - Improve wayfinding for local cultural assets and facilities

Age-Friendly Assessment Report (2017)

The populations in British Columbia and Canada are aging and living longer. In response to these trends, Abbotsford completed an age-friendly strategy to help meet the needs of its older residents, while providing a physical and social environment that is inclusive of all people.

The Report identified what can be done towards achieving an Age-Friendly Future, including.

- A. Identify locations to improve physical connections between neighbourhood parks and other local destinations through sidewalks, bike routes, and off-street trail connections.
- B. Review and or create trail guidelines for accessibility provisions such as width, grade, surface materials, way finding – and consider adopting an accessible trail standard for some trails.
- C. Review Park washrooms and ensure a standard amount of Park washrooms are wheelchair friendly.
- D. Explore grant funding to retrofit identified locations to make them more age-friendly.

Fees and Charges Bylaw and Policy Framework (2021)

This framework included a series of recommendations intended to help the City of Abbotsford meet its objective of providing a practical, transparent, and fair approach to setting fees and charges. A feature of this process was the “Benefits Based Approach”.

Benefits that are particularly relevant to Mill Lake Park, as a destination City level park, include the following:

Community Benefits

- Special events
- Protecting community natural resources
- Beautify the community

Individual Benefits

- Opportunities for seniors
- Interpreting the environment
- Reflection/escape

Urban Forest Strategy 2022

The strategy is built around five goals:

1. PLAN for a connected Green Network of trees and natural assets
2. PRESERVE trees strategically on public and private land
3. MANAGE public trees so they are healthy and safe
4. GROW the urban forest equitably
5. PARTNER broadly to foster urban forest stewardship

Sections of the strategy which are particularly relevant to Mill Lake Park include the following:

Native Forests

Abbotsford is home to a variety of native forest ecosystems, most of which have been distributed by historic logging, agriculture or urbanization at some point. As a result, most of the forest is young second growth or riparian stands.

Urban Forest Character

SIGNIFICANT STANDS

Significant stands indicate the presence of protected species, sensitive ecosystems or tall stands of trees found across the landscape. They occur throughout the city in ravines, riparian areas and parks. Natural area character should be enhanced and extended by planting native species adjacent to these areas whenever possible.



Acquisition Strategy (Mill Lake Action Plan Update - Property Acquisition Plan 2003)

The creation of Mill Lake Park started in 1944. A Mill Lake Park acquisition strategy was identified in the 1987 development plan for the park and updated in the 2013 Mill Lake Master Plan with properties and functions identified for future development. Privately owned properties designated as open space, were also identified in the OCP and CCNP.

These documents will be a guide to future acquisition to expand the Park.

In 1986, Council approved the first stage of land acquisition adjoining Mill Lake to expand the Park. There were a number of objectives which guided the preparation of the acquisition plan. These were:

- To acquire sufficient space around Mill Lake to allow for appropriate Park development and to minimize the sense of crowding;
- To acquire a significant amount of frontage on surrounding roads so the Park will establish a strong presence in the community;
- To acquire land to allow for development of new areas in the Park;
- To retain some blocks of residential property adjacent to the Park to allow for overseeing of the site;
- To retain relatively new homes until they have reached their typical lifespan, except where there may be only one or two such properties in a key Park location; and
- To provide a better link between Trethewey House and the Park.

Since 1986, the Park has grown in area from 14.9 ha (36.85 acres) to 44.95 ha (111.07 acres). The majority of the properties identified in the Acquisition Plan have been acquired by the City with the exception of lots north of Mill Lake Road.

Engineering & Regional Utilities, Drainage Master Plan

The most relevant chapter of this Plan is related to runoff volume and run off quality control.

Issues & Opportunities
There is very little runoff volume and quality control in some of the older neighbourhoods of the City. The Drainage Master Plan reviewed and made recommendations to the current drainage policies and design criteria to mitigate impacts of past practices and guide future developments.

Strategies & Improvements
About 75% of the urban development area, of which Mill Lake Park is a part of, is on well draining soils, which provides opportunities to infiltrate runoff back into the ground to replenish the aquifer and provide base flow for creeks and streams. It will also reduce runoff volume downstream to slow down the erosion process and reduce the chance of flooding, including flooding around Mill Lake.

Willband Creek Integrated Stormwater Management Plan (ISMP)

The Willband Creek watershed, which Mill Lake Park is located in, has a catchment estimated at 1,800 ha. It is located within the heart of Abbotsford with a tremendous diversity of land uses. Major land uses within the catchment include residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, institutional, and park and school use.

Mill Lake and its creek through Ravine Park are some of the significant water bodies within the catchment.

Before the development of the City, the terrestrial portion of the study area was dominated by coniferous forests with western hemlock and western red cedar being the most common tree species. Much of the coniferous forest within the study area has been removed and replaced with non-native species.

Mill Lake & Mill Lake Outlet Channel
Mill Lake is fed by ground water and the storm sewer system. It is approximately 16.35 hectares (ha) in area, with approximately 73% of the surface area less than 2.0 m in depth (CH2M Hill, 2003). It has a maximum depth of 10.5 m. It is anticipated that substrates would consist almost entirely of silt and decaying organic matter.

There are a number of factors that impact water quality in Mill Lake, the primary factor being a high faecal coliform count from the waterfowl that frequent Mill Lake.

There is also a lack of oil/water separators for the storm sewer system. As a result, hydrocarbons are known to discharge directly to Mill Lake (personal communication). Finally, the lack of depth through the majority of Mill Lake would likely result in high summer water temperatures, which would significantly affect dissolved oxygen levels.

Fish species in Mill Lake include Largemouth Bass and Rainbow Trout, both of which have previously been stocked. The bass is an aggressive, introduced species that can have a significant impact to native fish species as a result of predation.

There is limited indication of fish presence within the outlet channel, with one record of a Rainbow Trout from June 2010. As such, the channel provides Class Red (A)-P habitat. Red (A)’ refers to fish presence while ‘-P’ refers to water permanence. Fish habitat quality is fair in the channel due to the comparatively low depth and complexity.

This plan provides a guide to the management of water quantity and quality in Mill Park Lake.

Streamside Protection

Riparian areas are the areas bordering on streams, lakes, and wetlands that link water to land. The blend of streambed, water, trees, shrubs and grasses directly influences and provides fish habitat.

The City’s Streamside Protection Bylaw (SPB) and Natural Environment Development Permit (NEDP) guidelines inform the protection of the riparian areas around Mill

Lake and the determination of the 30 m Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area (SPEA).

The Province’s Riparian Areas Protection Act (RAPR) legislation calls on local governments to protect riparian areas during development activities by ensuring that their bylaws, regulations, and/or permit approval process complies with or exceeds provincial directives on streamside protection. The City currently addresses this requirement through the SPB and NEDP guidelines.

The SPB does not apply specifically to municipal parks, however utilizing it is relevant to Park planning and management as it ensures compliance with senior government legislation and it aligns with the policies contained in the NEDP guidelines.

Development should be restricted within the 30 m SPEA as it has the potential to damage vegetation and/or interfere with the ability of the riparian area to provide fish habitat.

Infrastructure design within the 30 m SPEA would need to follow the NEDP guidelines, including the Mitigation Hierarchy (1st avoid, 2nd mitigate, 3rd compensate), and should also consider guidance in ‘Access Near Aquatic Areas: A Guide to Sensitive Planning, Design and Management’ (Fraser River Action Plan and Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks 2012). Some amenities may require senior government approvals, particularly those below the high-water mark.

As private properties are developing and redeveloping, the SPEA will be protected and lands transferred to the City as parkland.





2.3.2 Relevant Federal & Provincial Policies

Government of Canada

Federal policies that are relevant to the management of the Park include:

- Parks for All, 2017
- A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 – Pathways to Wellbeing
- Canadian Sport for Life – Long-Term Athlete Development
- Canadian Sport Policy 2012 (CSP 2012) – Sport for Life
- Fisheries Act (related to fish and fish habitat protection and water quality)
- Species at Risk Act (Western Painted Turtle - protection of critical habitat)

Government of British Columbia (BC)

The most relevant BC Provincial policy related to recreation is Active People, Active Places – Action Plan 2.0.

Riparian Areas Protection Regulation (2019)

The Riparian Areas Protection Act is Provincial legislation that requires local governments to enact bylaws that protect riparian areas.

The RAPR provides the legal requirement to local governments to implement riparian protection, which the City achieves through the Streamside Protection Bylaw and Natural Environment Development Permit Guidelines.

Other Provincial Environmental Legislation

Other provincial environmental legislation includes:

- Wildlife Act (protection of nests, salvage permits),
- Weed control regulation (requires removal of noxious weeds),
- Water Sustainability Act (related to fish and fish habitat protection as well as water quality and quantity), and Groundwater Protection Regulation.

2.4 Site Assets & Inventory

The following provides a summary of the existing features of the site.

2.4.1 Mill Lake & Lake Edge

There are three primary Mill lake edge conditions. The natural edge consists of native wetland vegetation in the shallow water. Along some of the well-used shoreline of the Park a rock wall has been constructed. In places this is at the water's edge but along the north shore, from the Mill Lake Road parking lot to the east this is set back, and compacted shoreline is exposed. The third edge condition is turfgrass.

2.4.2 Materials Used in the Park

Stone has been used effectively throughout the Park for edging to Mill lake, retaining walls and free-standing walls. The use of stone reinforces the natural character of the Park.

Although the shelters and washroom buildings in the Park have a relatively consistent character, the quality of the materials used for these structures is quite ordinary.

Walkway pavements are generally simple asphalt or concrete with some gravel in forested areas. Detailed pavement has been used in the west Park entry adjoining Emerson Street.

2.4.3 Buildings & Associated Structures

Trethewey House

Trethewey House was built in 1919 and is located on the east side of the lake at 2313 Ware Street (Trethewey House Heritage Site, Heritage Abbotsford Society, Nd). The House is built in the "Craftsman" style and is constructed using primarily local materials, making it distinct from other buildings of similar age within the

City of Abbotsford. Constructed using locally sourced fir (processed at the Trethewey's mill on Mill Lake), along with bricks and tiles crafted from clay mined on Sumas Mountain (processed by the Clayburn Company at Clayburn, B.C.'s first company town), Trethewey House represents two of Abbotsford's most important early industries (Trethewey House Heritage Site, Heritage Abbotsford Society, Nd).

The house used to have a landmark stand of Douglas Fir trees at the front of the property formerly known as the Cinq Arbres and is now the home of the Heritage Abbotsford Society (Trethewey House, Parks Canada, Nd). Both the interior and exterior of the house have been restored, and it is now used for interpretive purposes (Trethewey House, Parks Canada, Nd).

Heritage Value

Trethewey House is significant as the most substantial historic house in the Mill Lake area, and for its sophisticated Craftsman style architecture, which retains a high degree of original integrity. The interior is notable for its intact character, which reflect the status of the original owners in this rural community (Trethewey House, Parks Canada, Nd).

Added to the City's Heritage Register in 1983, the house has been restored to its circa 1925 interior and exterior appearance and is an important cultural site for the interpretation of Abbotsford's history to the public (Trethewey House, Parks Canada, Nd).

The gardens (2) directly to the north and northeast of Trethewey House are managed by the Heritage Abbotsford Society and maintained by the City of Abbotsford.

Kariton House

Kariton House is located on the east side of Mill Lake at 2387 Ware Street. Kariton House is named for Werner Kariton who lived in it until he passed away in 1983. Today, Kariton House is home to the Abbotsford Arts Council. The Abbotsford Arts Council promotes the vision, creativity, and energy of Abbotsford's communities. The organization provides artist development for local artists and builds community and connections within the local cultural sector. One of the ways they support artists is by showing local artwork at the Kariton Art Gallery located inside Kariton House (Abbotsford Arts Council, Nd).



Source: Neighbourhood History Walk: Mill Lake Exploring Place Names in the Mill Lake Park Neighbourhood, The Reach Gallery Museum, pg. 1, circa 1953.



Source: 13 Top-Rated Things to Do in Abbotsford, BC, Planet Ware, pg. 1, 2020



Washrooms



Park Shelters

Centennial Pool

The first Mill Lake swimming area was a portion of Mill Lake sectioned off to keep swimmers out of the path of speedboats. In 1958, this natural swimming area was replaced by Centennial Pool. Centennial Pool is a 25 metre, 8 lane outdoor swimming pool offering public swims as well as lessons seasonally.

Park Shelters

Three picnic shelters in the park can be used spontaneously or rented out for special occasions:

- North side of Mill Lake, just east of the playground;
- Campbell Picnic Shelter, playground;
- South side of Mill Lake, just east of the playground

Washrooms

Seven permanent washroom buildings (seasonal or year-round) are located throughout the Park:

- Trethewey House (access when house open - managed by Heritage Abbotsford Society);
- Mill Lake Road parking lot (main) (year-round); Mill Lake Road west of parking lot (Fishermans) (seasonal);
- Centennial Ball Diamond (Kiwanis) (seasonal);
- Children's Park/Centennial Pool area (seasonal);
- Bevan Road parking lot (year-round); and
- Mill Lake Adanac (year-round).

These washrooms require further assessment to ensure accessibility.



Parking



Mill Lake Loop Pathway



Centennial Outdoor Pool

2.4.4 Park Infrastructure

Roads & Parking Areas

There are four paved parking areas in the Park. Mill Lake Road is the only portion of public road in the Park. It separates the main portion of the Park from the northern forest area.

The parking area adjoining Kariton House is small, and its access is partially screened at Ware Street.

The parking area adjoining the ball diamonds off Emerson Street is compact but services both the ball diamonds and the activity areas in the west side of the Park.

The parking area off Bevan Avenue in the south area of the Park services the adjoining play area and is a trail head.

The parking area in the north area of the Park services the dock and the trail system. It is too close to Mill Lake and restricts pedestrian movement along the lake edge. Run-off from the parking area also goes directly into Mill Lake. Considering the type and quantity of watercraft that are used on Mill Lake, the parking area does not need to be this close to the water. There is no "on street parking" along the roads bordering the Park.

Locations for larger vehicles (buses, etc.) to stop and drop-off or pick up park visitors should be considered for the parking areas in the Park and in the streets adjoining the Park.

2.4.5 Park Amenities

Pathways & Trails

The Park includes a 2.2 km circuitous asphalt path with connecting trails and a boardwalk along the east edge of Mill Lake. Pedestrian and cyclist circulation around Mill Lake is constrained by a number of pinch points where private development is close to Mill Lake.

Many users have requested a divided, two way or usage segregated path system around the lake to improve safety.

Sink holes and depressions form regularly along the asphalt trail near Alta and Adanac St. Rebuilding of the subgrade seems to be needed.

In the Bevan conifer stand, poorly delineated trails lead to excessive soil compaction from foot traffic. Digging for the creation of bike jumps and trails, litter and dumping all have negative impacts on this area of the Park.

Black cottonwood trees adjacent to the trail, in several areas, and the north parking lot, cause root related heaves and cracking of the pavement. For most of these trees, root pruning is not an option. Tree removal, species conversion, or installation of structural soil or soil cells under pathways are options.

The boardwalk at the northeast corner of the Park has vegetation growing up through it which is difficult to manage. Options for preventing this should be investigated.

The sidewalks at the edges of the Park could be made more appealing to pedestrians by providing separation between the road and pedestrians – most of the sidewalks are currently mono-walks. A treed and landscaped boulevard or a railing could be used to provide separation.



Playground



Interpretive Signage



Regulatory Signage

Sport & Recreation Facilities

The existing sport and recreation facilities in the Park include:

- 2 ball diamonds on the corner of Emerson Street and Peardonville Road
- 1 ball diamond on Mill Lake Road
- An 8 lane, 25 metre outdoor swimming pool (Centennial Pool)
- 24 horseshoe pits (Abbotsford Horseshoe Club)
- A Seniors' Fitness Park
- 2 table tennis tables
- 1 sand volleyball court
- Lawn Bowling green with a temporary clubhouse
- Outdoor chess board with chess pieces

Children's Play

Play opportunities in the Park include:

- Spray park and playground on the west side of the park near Centennial Pool;
- Playground near the Bevan Road parking lot; and
- Playground (John Mahoney) near the Ware Street parking lot.

Signage

Identification & Wayfinding Signage

The Park has limited identification/ wayfinding signage at the entry points along its edges. The Park contains little in the way of directional/wayfinding signage within.

The best developed Park entry is from Emerson Street north of Centennial Pool. This includes ramps for accessibility.

Interpretive Signage

There are a limited number of interpretive and dedication plaques in the Park, including locations on the west and north ends of the Park which will be updated when the Plan is completed.

Regulatory Signage

The Park contains standard City signage outlining the rules and regulations.

Other Park Amenities

Other recreation amenities and features in the Park include:

- A single width boat launch off Mill Lake Road;
- A fisherman's wharf;
- A Waterwise Demonstration Garden;
- An air quality monitoring station (Fraser Valley Regional District);
- Mill Lake viewing areas; and
- General Park site furniture and memorial benches.



Other Park Amenities



Gardens

2.4.6 Culture Zone

Kariton House is a City owned building and home to the Abbotsford Arts Council. The Abbotsford Arts Council promotes the vision, creativity and energy of Abbotsford's communities. The organization provides artist development for local artists and builds community and connections within the local cultural sector. One of the ways they support artists is by showing local artwork at the Kariton Art Gallery located inside the Kariton House (Abbotsford Arts Council, Nd). Kariton House is operated through a Fee-for-Service agreement between the Abbotsford Arts Council and the City.

Trethewey House is a designated heritage site and is operated as a museum through a Fee-for-Service agreement between the Heritage Abbotsford Society (HAS) and the City.

2.4.7 Feature Gardens in the Park

Labyrinth

A planted labyrinth was initiated in the southern area of the Park by the Labyrinths of Hope Society. Portions of the labyrinth have been replaced.

Gardens Associated with Trethewey House including Sylvia Pincott Gardens.

HAS operates Trethewey House Heritage Site and interprets the gardens on site. A rose garden is located east of the house, other gardens exist on all four sides of Trethewey House and on the west side of the Carriage House. The Sylvia Pincott Heritage Habitat Garden is located in the northeast corner of the Heritage Site behind the contemplation garden on the north side of the front porch. The Sylvia Pincott Heritage Habitat Garden is a provincially recognized heritage habitat garden which contains plants sympathetic to the era of Trethewey House's construction (1920s) and is designed to show the interconnectedness of flora and fauna.

2.4.8 Site Uses & Recreational Activities

Current uses of the Park are heavily focused on walking, enjoying nature, children's play, social gathering and connecting, picnicking on the grass, and cycling.

A number of community groups have operating and/or license agreements with the City and these agreements may need to be updated.