

September 30 2024

To: Mayor & Council,  
City of White Rock

c/o Guillermo Ferrero  
Chief Administrative Officer,

and

Tracey Arthur  
Director of Corporate Administration,  
City of White Rock

**Re: White Rock BIA 2024 Survey and Renewal**

Dear Mayor Knight and Councillors Chesney, Cheung, Klassen, Lawrence, Partridge, and Trevelyan:

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to the survey conducted by the W Group between May 30 and July 29 2024 and Councillor Partridge's presentation at the September 9 2024 Council Meeting.

The survey highlights successes and areas of improvement. We're excited to pursue new ways to support our members through new programming while retaining programs that our members rate as effective.

Primarily, we feel that the survey encourages us to focus on the following mandate areas- and the following potential programs- to allow us to build on the foundation of success from the past five years.

We look forward to including these programs as part of the annual budget that we present to our membership for their review, amendments, and approval at our Annual General Meeting:

**Supporting Existing and New Businesses:**

During the last term, we worked with the City of White Rock and the South Surrey and White Rock Chamber of Commerce to develop the "Business Resource Guide." We recognize that this needs to be updated, and we are ready to work with the City of White Rock to update the document and provide a printed copy to every business in our districts. We would also provide it electronically as a resource to potential new businesses.

It would be valuable to look at revamping the “Welcome to White Rock” brochure, which was developed by the City of White Rock and the White Rock BIA and provided to the residents of the new tower developments in White Rock. While this program wasn’t as successful as hoped due to low-developer uptake, we are ready to work with the City of White Rock (who holds the project files) to see how the brochure could be revised to make it more successful. This revamp and re-printing would require additional funding.

We also provide a New Business Package of resources for businesses, which includes leveraging the strength of our digital channels to introduce the business to the market. Additional funding would allow us to increase the offerings of this package.

We will be launching a monthly meeting of small business owners from our membership in Autumn/Winter 2024. This initiative- born from discussions with business owners during July and August 2024- will encourage collaboration and peer support between business owners, provide an opportunity for us to assist with any funding applications, and offer presentations on issues impacting businesses and best practices. The presentation topics will include marketing, social media, employee recruitment and retention, HR practices, business insurance, and more.

We have also had preliminary discussions with the White Rock-South Surrey Division of Family Practice and have identified easy ways for us to collaborate with them to recruit new family physicians and support existing family physician practices. This initiative will help us support existing businesses (as physician offices are businesses) and make our community more attractive to start a business (as ensuring there is effective health care in our community is more likely to attract to people looking to work and live here).

In the past, we have directly offered workshops for business owners- including workshops on social media, digital marketing, and commercial insurance. However, we found more success when partnering with the South Surrey & White Rock Chamber of Commerce by subsidizing our members to attend their workshops. This had the added benefit of ensuring we were positively impacting one of our members (as the South Surrey & White Rock Chamber of Commerce are members of the White Rock BIA, and they used workshops to generate revenue).

We are monitoring the situation with the South Surrey & White Rock Chamber of Commerce/Surrey Board of Trade merger very carefully and hope to continue to collaborate with them on training workshops. Should that opportunity not arise and if they choose to discontinue offering workshops on the peninsula, we will step in to ensure education and developmental opportunities are available to our members.

### **Carrying Out Studies and Preparing Reports to Encourage Business and Commerce in the Area:**

We were very glad that the survey confirmed that our members want more studies and reports on business in White Rock; we were also heartened to learn from Councillor Partridge's presentation that there is interest from Council for that as well.

We would be delighted to prepare an annual report on "Business in White Rock." Such a report could include information from the businesses, market analysis, and, where possible, quantitative and qualitative metrics. To maximize participation, we would hand deliver the survey to members.

This report could be tied to the April payment of our annual levy payment.

We would also be happy to share monthly information to Council and answer any questions Council may have through our Council Liaisons; any member of Council has an open invitation to attend any of our Board Meetings, and we are always happy to hear any ideas and answer any questions Councillors may have via phone, email, or by meeting in person.

### **Encouraging and Promoting Commercial Business and Encouraging Entertainment, Sports, and Cultural Activities with the Area:**

We are delighted that 60% of the members who responded to the survey are satisfied or very satisfied with our programs in this part of our mandate. That said, we also see ways to grow and improve our marketing and events programs.

Our website urgently needs to be replaced; it is five years old, and five years of software updates are starting to conflict with each other, negatively impacting functionality. A good example of such issues is on our business listings page ([whiterockbia.com/explore](http://whiterockbia.com/explore)), which has recently developed serious functionality issues.

We have refrained from creating a new website because we did not want to invest significant resources required should we not be renewed; if we are renewed for a five-year term, we will immediately launch a Request for Proposal process for a new website. This new website will integrate with our digital and social media channels and allow us to build on the very strong foundation of success we've developed over the past five years.

Over the last three years, we have piloted several public events through deficit spending to see what would be successful. Renewal provides a natural opportunity to review our events program.

Upon review, we will likely only present three major public festivals to our members as part of the budgetary process at the Annual General Meeting: The Concerts at the Pier (our most highly rated event in the City of White Rock's survey), the White Rock Jazz & Blues Festival (our second most highly rated event in the City of White Rock's survey),

and the White Rock Craft Beer Festival (which has a high level of involvement from several local businesses and is our only revenue-neutral event).

Cutting over 55% of our events will allow us to balance our budget, focus on the most successful events, direct resources to new programs, and free up capacity to consider other diverse activities to support our members throughout our districts. We see the Festive Holiday Shopping Crawl- with its direct engagement of businesses throughout Uptown and Five Corners- as a potential roadmap for future programs.

### **Removing Graffiti from Buildings and Other Structures in the Area:**

We are thrilled that 66% of the members who responded to the survey are satisfied or very satisfied with our graffiti removal program and look forward to continuing to offer this service to our members at no additional cost to them.

### **Creating A Pleasant Physical Environment and Improving, Beautifying or Maintaining Streets, Sidewalks or Municipally Owned Land, Buildings or Other Structures in the Area:**

We were unsurprised that we received lower satisfaction scores for these two parts of our current mandate (44% and 53% satisfied or very satisfied, respectively). Beautification projects require significant resources and in-house expertise that BIAs of our levy size do not have; they also require alignment with municipal priorities, which understandably may be different from businesses' priorities.

We believe that Councillor Partridge's ideas of continuing our Planters program and identifying with businesses placemaking and beautification opportunities and sharing them with the City of White Rock maximizes our value in this area. These ideas could be shared through the annual Business in White Rock report that we propose to provide to the City of White Rock.

We will also continue updating the wayfinders in East Beach, West Beach, Uptown, and Five Corners, and, depending on success of the pilot project launching this winter, provide festive decorations to businesses during the winter holiday season.

### **Final Thoughts:**

As with all Business Improvement Associations, our Board of Directors is elected and our Annual Budget is reviewed and approved by our membership at our Annual General Meeting. The membership also has the opportunity to amend our annual budget.

This gives our members the opportunity every year to have us shift our strategic direction by allocating resources into programs they feel best serves them and, by

electing the direct managers of the Executive Director, change the operations of the organization.

In short, the Annual General Meeting is where the White Rock BIA members- commercial property owners and businesses in commercial properties in our districts- dictate our activities. This is why we hand deliver AGM notices to every business in our district and provide multiple reminders via email.

This chain of governance and direct control by our members- along with a mandate that reflects our members' roles, responsibilities, and rights- is one of the greatest strengths of any BIAs: the ability to quickly pivot to best respond to business needs. It is also appropriate, given the money is levied from them for their benefit.

A great example of this is in 2020-2021, when the COVID-19 Pandemic required the temporary cessation of in-person events. We quickly shifted to greatly expanding our marketing program to inform the public of businesses' services changes, helping businesses navigate and apply for the short-term funding opportunities, and offering placemaking and street activation programs (including the very successful expansion of picnic tables).

Our members' directing our activities, our organizational flexibility, and our ability to rapidly respond to meet to member needs are unique strengths of Business Improvement Associations, and one that needs to be protected- otherwise, we will be unable to fulfill our mission to support businesses in our districts.

Thank you again for allowing us the opportunity to respond to your survey. We look forward to continuing to serve our members.

Sincerely,



Leah Chandler  
Board Chair,  
White Rock BIA



Alex Nixon  
Executive Director,  
White Rock BIA