

# WHITE ROCK

*City by the Sea*



## White Rock Business Improvement Area Members Survey 2024

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August 14 2024

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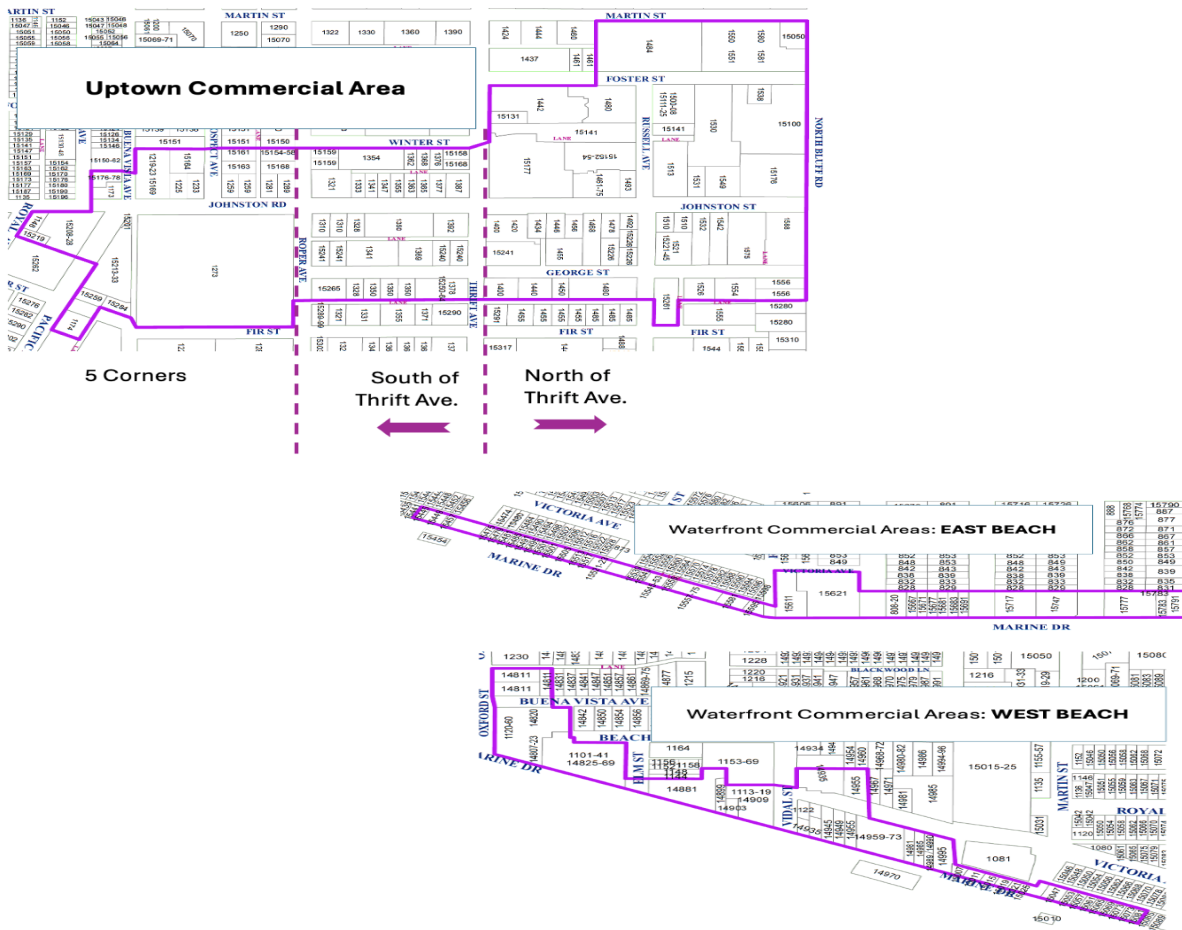
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# 1 Executive Summary

## 1.1 Survey Framework

In support of the renewal of the White Rock BIA Bylaw, the City of White surveyed BIA members on their experiences with the BIA and its mandate.

The results were collected anonymously and will be presented to the White Rock BIA and its membership. For this survey, the target respondents were business owners/operators OR commercial property owners located within one of the 5 Business Improvement Areas established by the City of White Rock.



Responses were collected by means of an online survey between May 30 - July 29, 2024. In total, 65 respondents participated in the survey.

Our final numbers were:

- Approximately, 536 were on the list provided.
- 86 were non-resident contacts - they were mailed invites.
- So, of the approximate 450 we visited (open, closed, possibly out of business) we collected 137 email addresses (there were approximately 50 businesses which didn't exist or were clearly out of business).
- We sent out four waves of invites to the 137 email addresses collected.

## 1.2 Survey Highlights

Some key highlights from the survey results are:

In terms of the BIA's specified mandated activities, respondents are most satisfied with their efforts to remove graffiti from buildings and other structures in the BIA area (66%) and their work to encourage and promote commercial business and encouraging entertainment, sports, and cultural activities within the BIA area (60%).

A notable theme emerging from respondents' open-ended comments is the perceived need for the BIA to create greater awareness and understanding of their role in White Rock.

The BIA could better support local businesses by improving their outreach and engagement efforts on a more consistent basis across the five key areas. General support including liaising with City Hall and more promotional and marketing support for the businesses and public events/ festivals would also be greatly appreciated.

**The Concerts at the Pier, Presented by TD Ready Commitment** and **The White Rock Jazz & Blues Festival** are rated most highly in terms of their overall effectiveness in helping businesses in the area, 57% and 42%, respectively.

While some respondents praised the BIA for their work and the positive impact the public events have on the area and their businesses, a significant proportion reported that the events are either not applicable to them, due to their location (28%-36%) or have not resulted in any increase in visitor numbers to their businesses (36%-49%).

There is strong support for White Rock to host more diverse events (e.g. a sidewalk sale, family-friendly or sports-related events) – that involve the local businesses, direct attendees/ visitors to their location and subsequently positively impact these businesses.

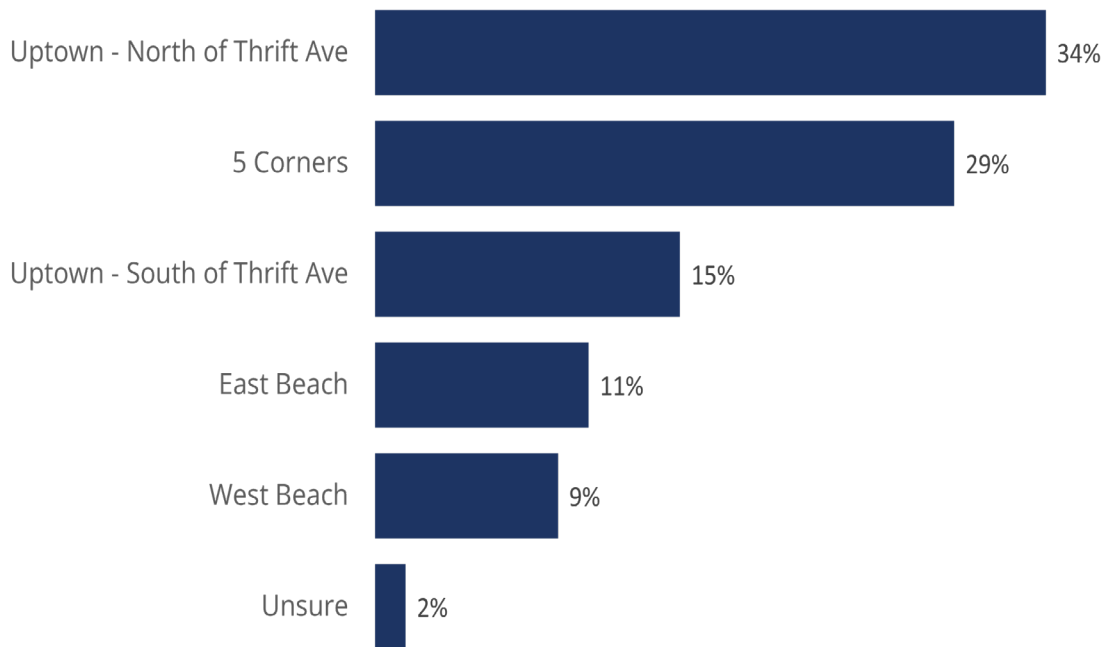
## 2 Survey Results

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### 2.1 Respondent Profile

#### Business/ commercial property location

Almost 4 out of 5 survey respondents are located in the Uptown Commercial Area, the remainder having waterfront (East Beach & West Beach) locations or are unsure of their location (2%).

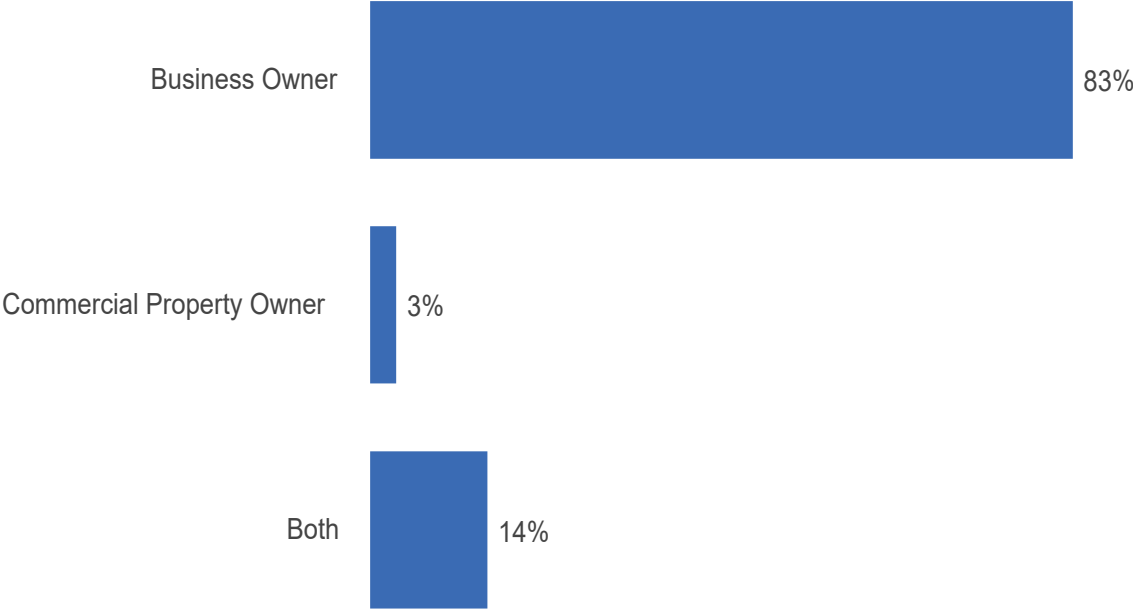


*Q: Which one of the following areas is your business and/or commercial property located?*

*Total Respondents: 65*

# Represent business/ commercial property within the White Rock BIA boundaries

The majority of respondents (83%) identified as business owners and only 3% as solely commercial property owners – the remainder reported that they have both business and commercial property interests in the area.

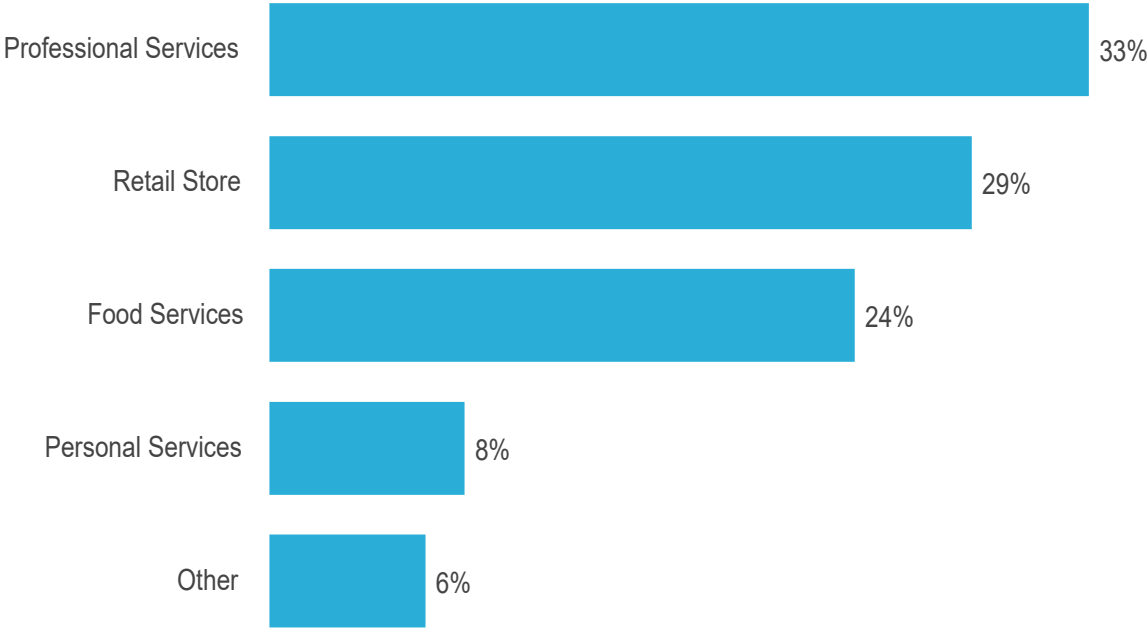


*Q: Do you represent a business or commercial property located within the noted White Rock BIA boundaries?*

*Total Respondents: 65*

# Business category

Over half (53%) of the respondents operate as a retail outlet or in food services while 41% provide professional or personal services.

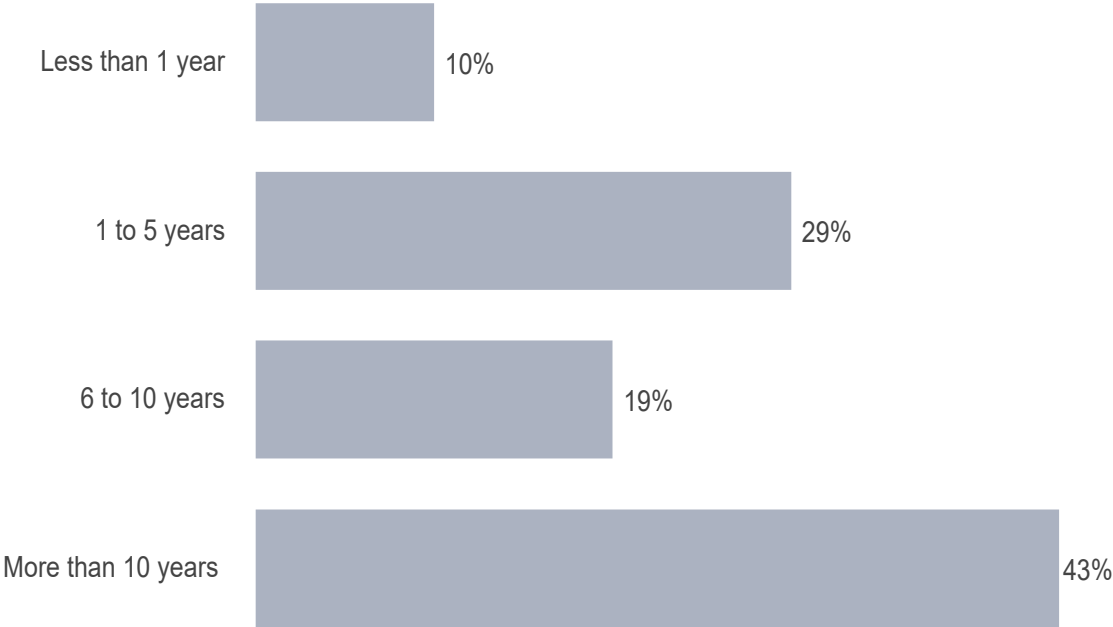


*Q: Which of the following business categories best describes your business?*  
*Total Respondents: 63*



## Years operated business in the White Rock BIA

62% of respondents have been operating their business in the White Rock BIA for more than 6 years.

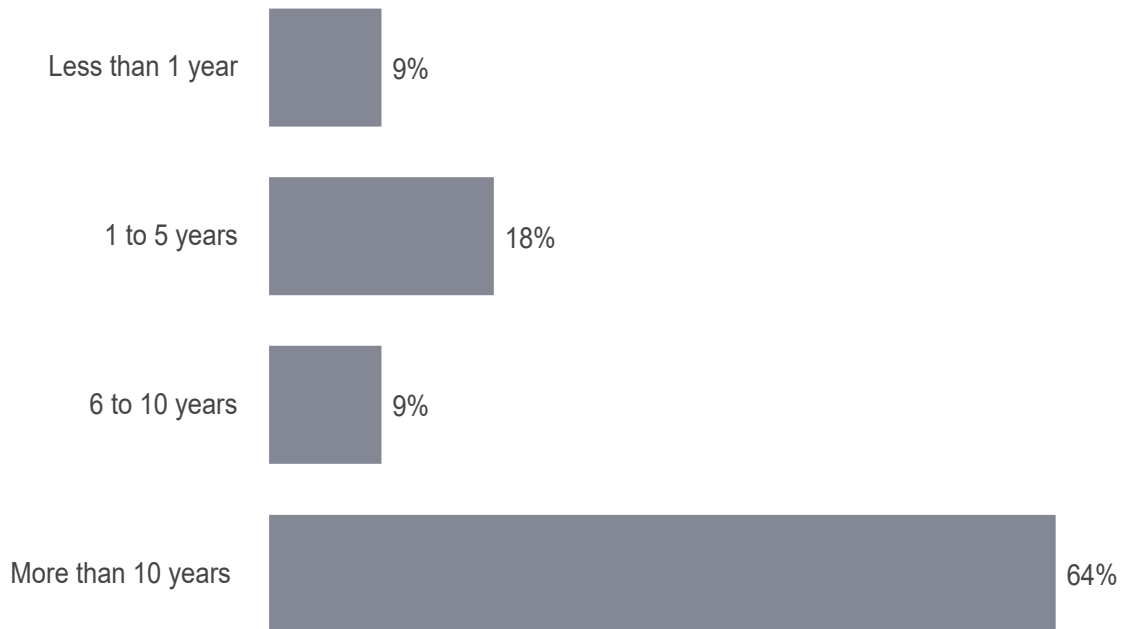


*Q: How many years have you operated this business in the White Rock BIA?*

*Total Respondents: 63*

## Years owned commercial property in the White Rock BIA

Although based on a smaller number of respondents, 73% of commercial property owners have been in the White Rock BIA for more than 6 years.



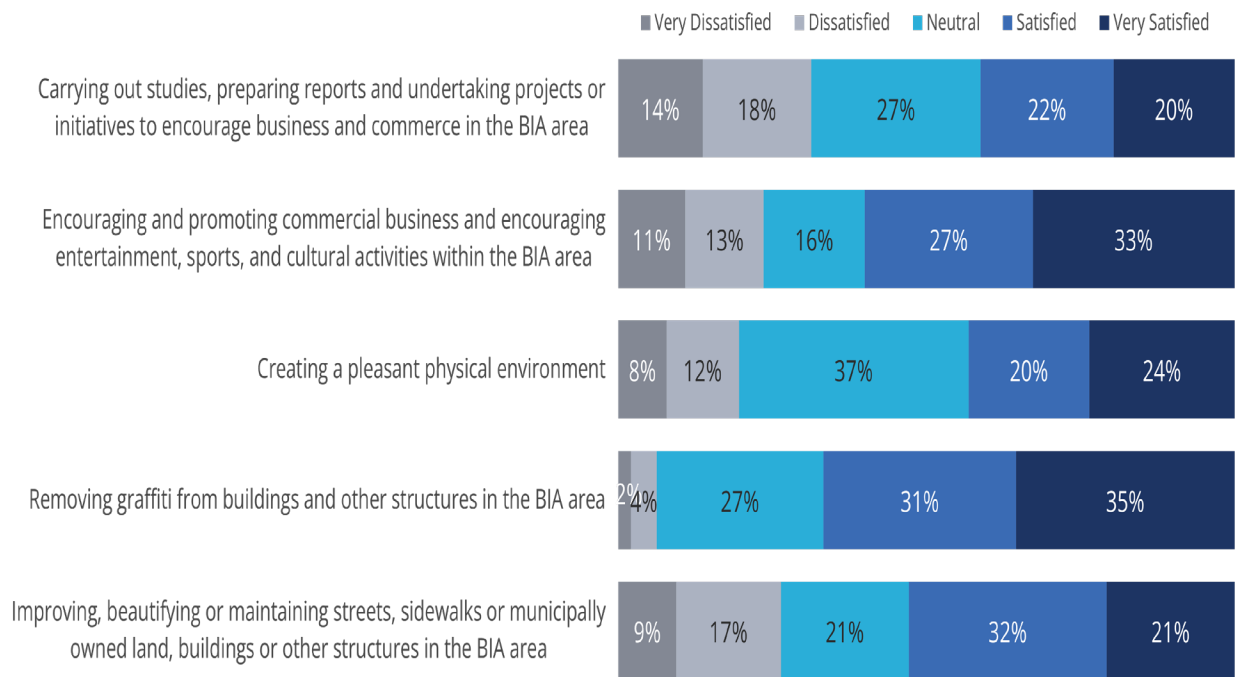
*Q: How many years have you owned this commercial property in the White Rock BIA?*

*Total Respondents: 11*

## 2.2 Satisfaction with BIA delivery of specified mandated activities

The BIA has specified mandated activities with the City bylaw. These activities are:

- Carrying out studies, preparing reports and undertaking projects or initiatives to encourage business and commerce in the BIA area;
- Encouraging and promoting commercial business and encouraging entertainment, sports, and cultural activities within the BIA area;
- Creating a pleasant physical environment;
- Removing graffiti from buildings and other structures in the BIA area;
- Improving, beautifying or maintaining streets, sidewalks or municipally owned land, buildings or other structures in the BIA area.



*Q: The BIA has specified mandated activities with the City bylaw. These activities are presented below. Based on your perspective, please rate your level of satisfaction with how well the BIA delivered on these activities:*

*Total Respondents: 48-55 (Excludes No Opinion responses)*

Among those who indicated their level of satisfaction with the BIA's delivery of specified mandated activities, they are most satisfied (*Satisfied* or *Very Satisfied*) with the organization's efforts to:

- Remove graffiti from buildings and other structures in the BIA area (66%)
- Encourage and promote commercial business and encouraging entertainment, sports, and cultural activities within the BIA area (60%).

Conversely, respondents are less satisfied (*Dissatisfied* or *Very Dissatisfied*) with the BIA's efforts to:

- Carry out studies, prepare reports and undertake projects or initiatives to encourage business and commerce in the BIA area (32%).
- Improve, beautify or maintain streets, sidewalks or municipally owned land, buildings or other structures in the BIA area (26%).

## 2.3 Comments regarding any of the BIA specified mandated activities

*Q: Please provide any comments you have regarding any of the activities above, and please note the activity to which you are referring.*

*Total Respondents: 24*

Respondent comments related to suggested areas and actions to deliver improvements and the need to address specific issues and challenges faced by local businesses and the BIA.

Unfortunately, a number of respondents have negative perceptions of the benefits of BIA membership (e.g., membership is a waste of money, irrelevant to business etc.)

The BIA needs to create greater awareness and understanding of their role and foster more engagement with local businesses. The organization also needs to offer more consistent and equitable support for businesses. Street maintenance and beautification efforts should be more consistent across the City.

A number of respondents mentioned challenges with the ongoing construction, as well as accessibility and parking challenges in the BIA areas.

While some respondents recognize the positive public event and engagement efforts of the BIA, others are calling for more advertising and marketing of public events and activities and more diverse events and activities in different locations throughout the City.

## 2.4 Ways the BIA can better support local businesses

*Q: Within its existing mandate, what specific ways can the BIA better support local businesses like yours?*

*Total Respondents: 30*

The most frequently mentioned suggestion for the BIA to better support local businesses is to improve outreach efforts and general support for businesses including liaison with City Hall.

As mentioned earlier, the BIA needs to create greater awareness and understanding of their role. Respondents are also requesting that the BIA produce more and better promotional and marketing support for businesses in the area as well as organizing more public engagement events and activities that directly support these businesses and property owners.

Other suggestions and comments for this question related to addressing parking concerns (availability, cost, complimentary parking for business owners), improving street maintenance and beautification and working with the City to address homelessness and public safety issues.

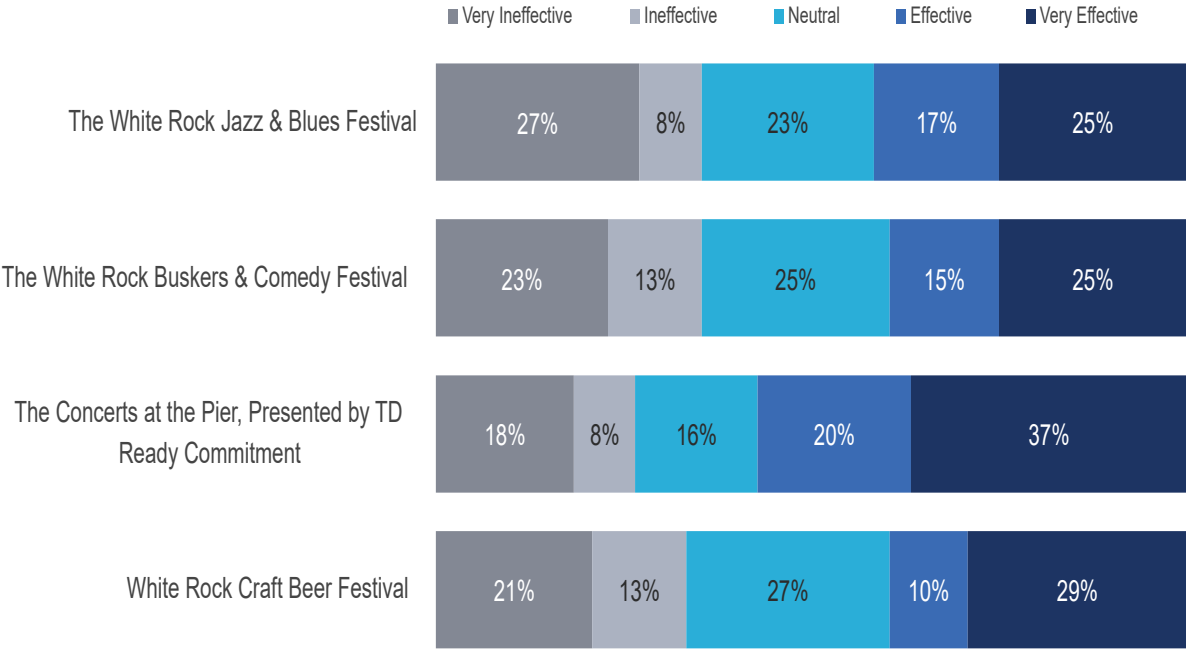
A small group of respondents did not make specific suggestions for the BIA but conveyed their appreciation of the organization's work and positive impact on the area.

## 2.5 Overall Effectiveness of Events in terms of helping businesses

One of the key activities the BIA uses to support/promote its local businesses is hosting community events. Of course, the impact of these events can be felt by the area businesses immediately, within a few months or over a longer period. Details of the events are presented below:

Event	Month	Location
The White Rock Jazz & Blues Festival	May	Uptown and Five Corners
The White Rock Buskers & Comedy Festival	June	Uptown and Five Corners
The Concerts at the Pier, Presented by TD Ready Commitment	July & August	East and West Beach
White Rock Craft Beer Festival	September	West Beach

The following chart shows how respondents rated the effectiveness of each event:

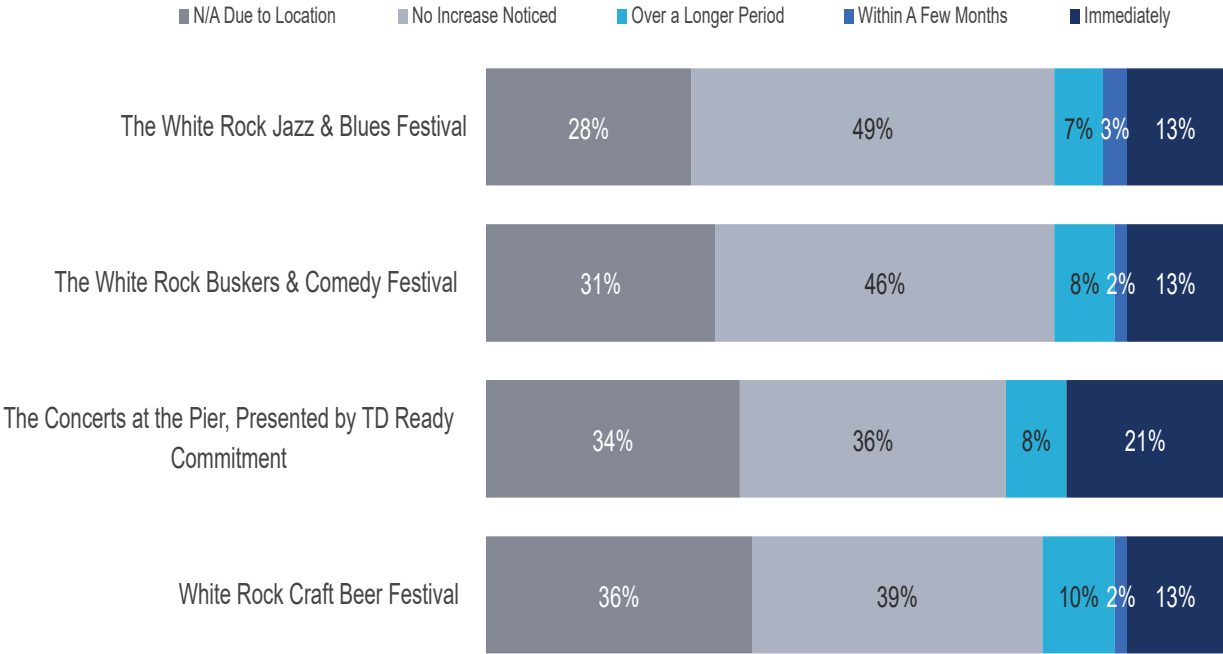


*Q: How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the following events in terms of help to your business?*

*Total Respondents: 48-49 (Excludes N/A responses)*

Respondents' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of these events are mixed. **The Concerts at the Pier, Presented by TD Ready Commitment** (held in July and August at East and West Beach) and **The White Rock Jazz & Blues Festival** (held in May in the Uptown and Five Corners areas) are rated as being *effective* or *very effective* – 57% and 42%, respectively.

## 2.6 Visitor Impact on Businesses



*Q: Did your business notice an increase in visitors? Keep in mind that due to location you may not experience an increase in visitors.*

**Total Respondents: 61**

As illustrated in the chart above, the visitor impact of **The Concerts at the Pier, Presented by TD Ready Commitment** is most immediate for 21% of respondents, compared to only 13% for the other three events.

Of more concern are the findings that between 70%-77% of respondents reported that these events are either not applicable to them (due to their location) or have not resulted in increased visitor numbers to their business.



## 2.7 Comments/ concerns regarding the events and how they specifically impacted businesses

*Q: Do you have any additional comments or concerns regarding the events and how they specifically impacted your business?*

*Total Respondents: 29*

When asked for any additional comments or concerns regarding the events and how they specifically impacted their business, a number of respondents commented that the events are not relevant to their business and/or the BIA has had no impact on their business. Conversely, some respondents praised the BIA for their work and the positive impact these events have on the area and their businesses.

Others noted that they have traffic, accessibility and public safety concerns related to these events.

A significant number of respondents would like to see a broader variety of events held in the area that involve the local businesses, direct attendees to their location and subsequently positively impact these businesses.

Hosting events throughout the area, instead of in the same named locations and closing different streets would be positively perceived.

## 2.8 Thoughts/suggestions on what more the BIA could do for its members

Whenever an organization such as the City of White Rock BIA is being renewed, it is always important to revisit its entire mandate. To see what's working well and what could be working better. As well as, what new actions/activities the organization could take to support the success of its member businesses and property owners.

*Q: With this in mind please provide your thoughts/suggestions on what more the BIA could be doing for its members.*

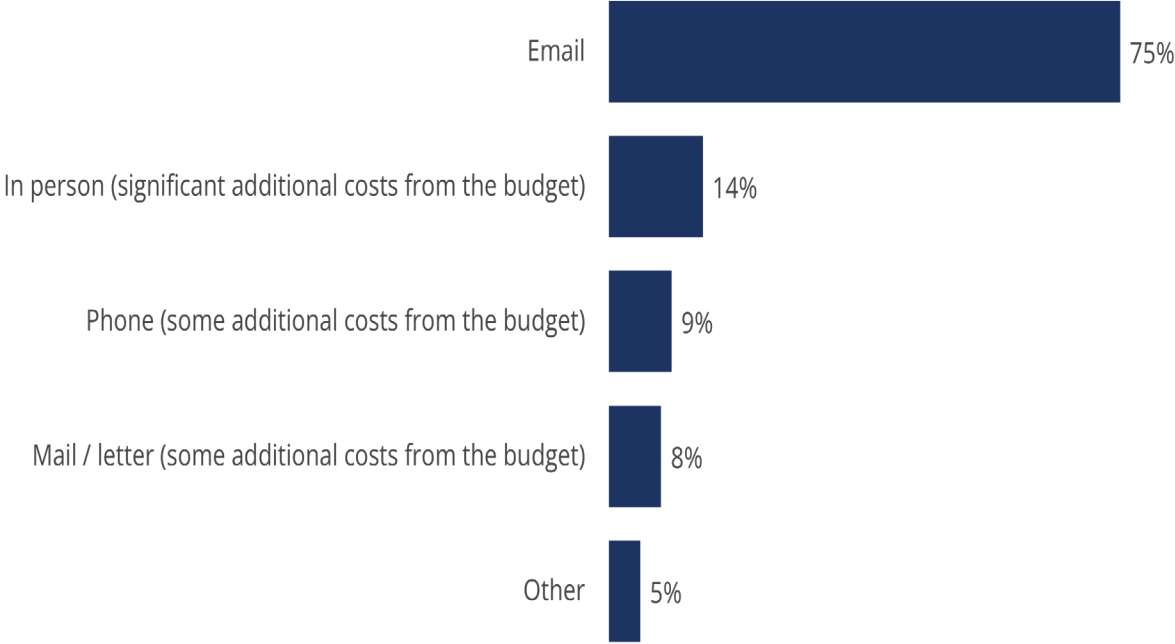
**Total Respondents: 22**

Respondents believe the following actions from the BIA would support their success in White Rock:

- More outreach, communication and support related to business development and marketing.
- Organize events/ activities that are business-related that will directly benefit businesses and property owners.
- Organize events/ activities that have broader appeal e.g. family-friendly, sports-related.
- More effective promotion and marketing of events and leveraging of local businesses to support advertising and promotional efforts.
- Acting as a liaison with City Hall.
- Arranging more public art, street landscaping and beautification.
- A small number of respondents suggested making changes to BIA funding and membership e.g., membership is no longer mandatory, membership is by donation.

## 2.9 Preferred Communication with BIA

Email is the most preferred channel for communicating with the BIA for 75% of respondents. Other includes social media, hosting more information sessions and host meetings with business owners in specific areas of town.



*Q: What is the best way for the BIA to communicate with you? (Select all that apply)*

*Total Respondents: 65*

## 2.10 Final comments about the White Rock BIA and the services it provides

*Q: Do you have any other comments about the White Rock BIA or the services it provides?*

*Total Respondents: 15*

Final comments about the White Rock BIA or the services it provides focused on the need for greater support for and promotion of local businesses. Respondents also highlighted a need for better communication and information sharing between the BIA and these businesses.

For some respondents, the current events and festivals have limited impact on their businesses, instead, they would like the BIA to organize different types of events (e.g., a sidewalk sale) to directly benefit their businesses.

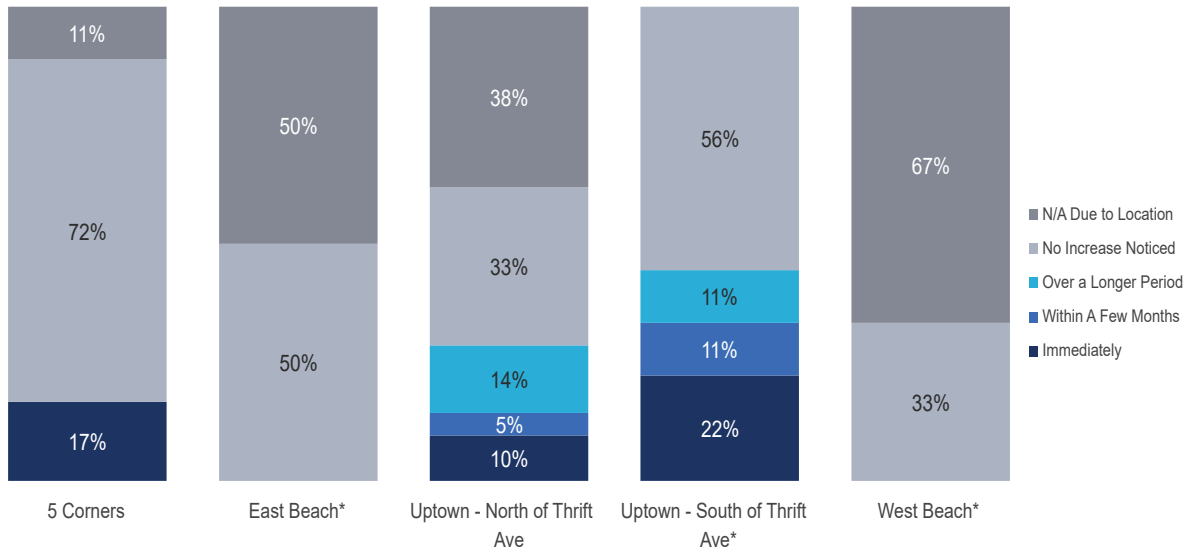
Others are calling for the BIA to enable the businesses to better support and promote local events, festivals etc. by generating more awareness and providing promotional materials that they can display and distribute to their customers.

### 3 Appendix

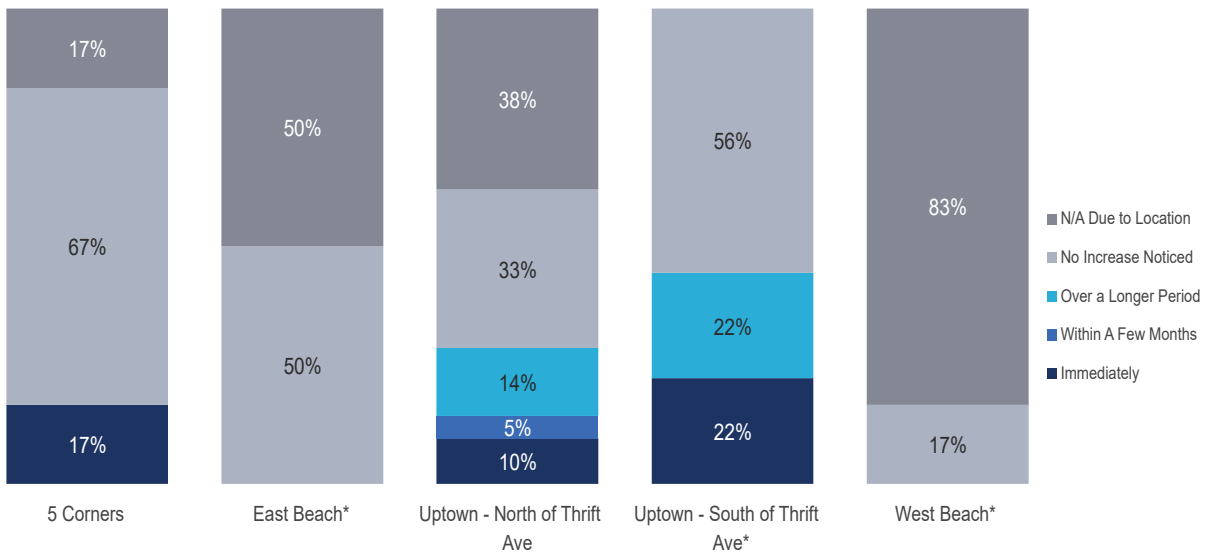
The following charts illustrate the visitor impact of the four events/ festivals on each of the five BIA areas.

*Q: Did your business notice an increase in visitors? Keep in mind that due to location you may not experience an increase in visitors. Total Respondents: 61 \*Caution: Low base (n<10)*

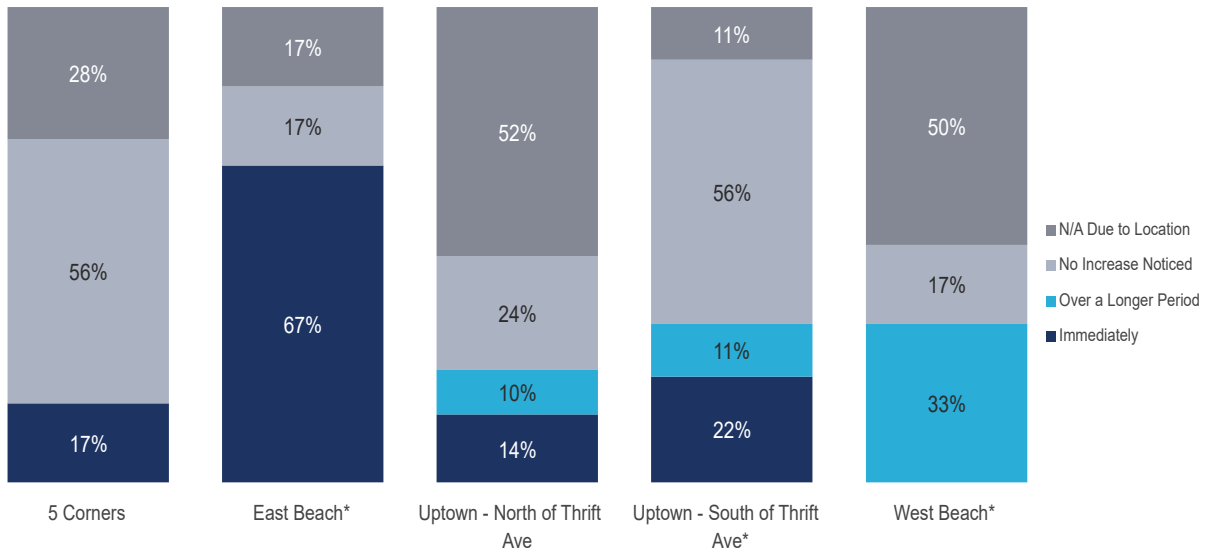
#### Visitor Impact of The White Rock Jazz & Blues Festival on Business by Business Location



#### Visitor Impact of The White Rock Buskers & Comedy Festival on Business by Business Location



## Visitor Impact of The Concerts at the Pier, Presented by TD Ready Commitment on Business by Business Location



## Visitor Impact of The White Rock Craft Beer Festival on Business by Business Location

