

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: November 4, 2024

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: John Woolgar, Director of Recreation & Culture

SUBJECT: 2024 Events - Year in Review

RECOMMENDATION(S)

THAT Council receive for information the November 4, 2024 corporate report from the Director, Recreation and Culture, titled "2024 Events – Year in Review".

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Special events in White Rock support and enhance community connection, cultural development and foster civic pride. These events provide a wide variety of experiences and encourage community gathering opportunities for residents while attracting visitors that contribute to the local economy.

Over the past 12 months (November 2023 to November 2024), the City of White Rock hosted over 76 events with a combined attendance of 290,000 people.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The Cultural Strategic Plan, "Our Creative City by the Sea," adopted by Council in 2021, identified a goal to "Sustain Diverse Arts Programs and Festivals."

Events enrich the lives of residents, providing opportunity for the community to connect, learn and celebrate together. Events contribute to the social and economic wellbeing of the community, provide valuable volunteer opportunities, and build a sense of place and community. The city was able to deliver and/or support over 76 events that were attended by over 290,000 people. The events successfully built on the Cultural Strategic Plan's objectives to maintain and grow diverse special events, mobilize event partners and volunteers, and support a thriving uptown arts district, "Beyond the Beach."

A Category Events – City Produced

Bright Walk in White Rock (December 2, 2023)

The season kicked off with the ever-popular Bright Walk in White Rock. Visitors enjoyed the lights, music, and entertainment while children got the chance to visit Santa, Elsa and Olaf and create their own tree decorations. In 2023 an estimated 7,000 people attended the festival with the city securing \$4500 in sponsorship to support the event. The lights on the promenade glowed until January 7.

Volunteer Fair (April 23, 2024)

Seventeen local not-for-profit groups and service clubs were invited to White Rock's annual Volunteer Fair. The Fair attracted over 500 attendees who learned about meaningful volunteer opportunities in White Rock. This event contributed to Council's strategic priority, "Community-Formalize a City volunteer program".

This event served as a catalyst to support city events over the past year which saw 153 volunteers contribute over 950 hours of their time to ensure successful events across the city.

"Thank you for doing this City of White Rock! Our volunteers inspire us every day" – Semiahmoo Family Place – Social Media Post

Canada Day by the Bay (July 1, 2024)

Canada Day by the Bay is one of White Rock's most popular events in which the community comes together to celebrate what it means to be Canadian. This year's event included music, food, a vendor row, fireworks, and a kid's zone full of hands-on interactive activities. To reflect the city's diverse community music and dance representing many different nations, countries, and communities including, Cuban Afro, Philippines, Scotland, India, China and Venezuela was featured. An estimated 35,000 visitors attended, 43 volunteers contributed 187 hours of their time, and the city secured \$33,100 in sponsorship and grants to support this event.

Pride Flag Raising (July 19, 2024)

The Pride Flag was raised at the City to create a celebration that raised awareness and support for the LGBTQ+ community. Attendees were entertained by a special drag performance and were provided complimentary rainbow candy. This year 100 residents attended the flag raising.

"Thank you to all who attended and to the city for all of your support." White Rock Pride Society – Social Media Post

Sea Festival and Semiahmoo Days (August 3-4, 2024)

Sea Festival is a historic event that has been occurring for over 70 years, and in 2024, more than 50,000 people came to the beach to enjoy the three-day celebration. In partnership with Semiahmoo First Nation's (SFN) Semiahmoo Days, many activities were featured including the movie in the park, an environmental zone, an Indigenous market, roving performers, music through the eras, a kid's zone, two mainstage music performances, and fireworks.

One of the highlights this year was the long-awaited return of the Torchlight Parade. The parade featured 44 entrants, representing local businesses, musicians, dancers, service groups such as the Shriners, vintage car and motorcycle clubs, municipal floats from Burnaby, Steveston and

New Westminster, White Rock's own Fire Department and much more! The city's own float is centered on the pier and showcases everyday beach life in White Rock. Volunteers dressed in costume activated the float and engaged with the crowds. Marine Drive was animated with excitement and civic pride bringing the community together.

The city's new float also attended three (3) external parades, winning "Best Humour" in Fort Langley's parade and "Best Float" in Richmond's Steveston Salmon Festival parade. The float is scheduled to go to the Santa Claus Parade in Surrey in December.

The city secured \$57,500 in sponsorship and grants to support Sea Festival and Semiahmoo Days in 2024 and saw 100 volunteers contribute 690 hours of their time.

"I am so pleased to be part of the White Rock events team as a volunteer and work with a great team of event leaders, Looking forward to helping out at the next event." -Art Beaulieu, City Event Volunteer-

"Over the past year, Semiahmoo Arts Society, through our Arts Outreach Art Hive program, has had the opportunity to work with the Special Events team with the City of White Rock, at events including Canada Day, Sea Festival, the Culture Crawl and the Whale Wall event. This has been an incredibly valuable partnership for us as a BC Community Arts Council, with a mandate to nurture arts and culture in our neighbourhood and a belief that arts and culture are fundamental to developing vibrant and resilient communities. At each of these events, we benefited from the clear organization and expertise of the City and felt respected as true partners in our community." -Laurel Tien, Executive Director, Semiahmoo Arts Society-

40th Anniversary Whaling Wall Celebration (September 28, 2024)

The city celebrated the 40th anniversary of the "The Grey Whale Family," otherwise known as *The Whaling Wall*. 500 community members gathered to share memories of the artist Robert Wyland and watching the mural painted in 1984. The event featured music, whale crafts and storytelling, educational booths, 40th anniversary buttons distributed to attendees and the unveiling of a new interpretive sign telling the history of the mural. In addition, Robert Wyland sent a special video message which was featured across the city's social media platforms.

White Rock & South Surrey Culture Crawl (October 5- 6, 2024)

In 2024, the city partnered with the City of Surrey to celebrate arts, culture and heritage over two (2) days on the Peninsula. This event brings cultural creators together to showcase their work, talent and knowledge. Visitors were encouraged to pick up a map and plan their journey, exploring 28 partner sites and over 35 activities. The event featured over 80 cultural creators who offered theatre, dance, live music, poetry, art classes, history lectures, home studio tours, art exhibitions and markets. The city also supported the Culture Crawl opening celebration hosted by International Artist Day at Nomad Gallery. In total, an estimated 5000 people attended the Culture Crawl Weekend.

B Category Events - Co-Produced Events

Remembrance Day (2023)

The city worked closely with the Royal Canadian Legion #8 – White Rock to create an event that honoured those who have given their lives in service of their country.

Concerts at the Pier

The City continues to co-produce the Concerts at the Pier with the White Rock BIA. The five (5) concerts were well attended this year, drawing the community and visitors to the beach to listen, dance and sing along to musical performances. Featured performers in 2024 included 54/40, Abba tribute band Arrival, Barney Bentall and Crystal Shawanda. An estimated 34,000 attended these performances and a road closure was implemented for the 54/40 and Barney Bentall concert.

“The City of White Rock’s team does an amazing job supporting events in our City by the Sea – and play a big part in ensuring that there are so many fun activities year-round. Events are a crucial way of making our community more vibrant and supporting the fantastic local businesses. We are grateful to work with the City of White Rock to make our community a great place to work, live and play.” -Leah Chandler, Board Chair, White Rock BIA-

National Truth and Reconciliation Day

The City partnered with SFN for this important event that saw 1200 people walk from Grand Chief Bernard Robert Charles Plaza to Semiahmoo Park in recognition of truth and reconciliation. Grand Chief Steven Point delivered a keynote message around the theme, “*Why Reconciliation Now*”. Those who participated in the walk gathered after to reflect on reconciliation, listen to music, visit the indigenous market and were treated to a complimentary meal.

C Category Events - Community Led Events, Support by the City

The City supported 57 community-led events which spanned 87 days throughout the year. This included providing equipment such as tents, tables and chairs, as well as logistical advice and support. These events create a vibrant city where locals have a sense of ownership and appreciation. Some highlights from the past year include Family Pride Day, Dancing at the Pier, Coldest Night of the Year, Night Market by the Pier, Uptown Music Festival and the White Rock Craft Beer Festival. For a full list of C category events see Appendix A.

“The Canadian Walk for Veterans’ White Rock team would like to thank the City of White Rock for its continued support. We deeply appreciate the partnership we’ve formed with the City of White Rock. Staff have been diligent ensuring our event wish list is taken care of, and post-event follow-ups show that the city cares about how its services are delivered.”
- Canadian Walk for Veterans-

“The City of White Rock is always a pleasure to work with. I appreciate the knowledge and support they offer to help make Coldest Night of the Year a successful event. Their collaborative and friendly approach alleviates some of the pressures of planning CNOY.”
-Abby Gemino, Event Planner, Sources-

“White Rock Dancing At the Pier (DAP) events strive to promote inclusivity, community spirit, through fun, free dance events. The events would not be possible without the support of City of White Rock, its Council, staff, the local RCMP detachment and Community Policing, and other local organizations, businesses and individuals. Through graciously allowing DAP to use the Memorial Park space, providing in-kind services on event days, and staff support throughout the year, the City of White Rock has helped make the events what they are; fun, inclusive, community building experiences where people of all ages and backgrounds can engage and enjoy a night of music and movement in a beautiful location.”

-Nora Hutt, Dancing at the Pier Organizer-

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Event organizers can take advantage of the city’s events calendar and events are promoted on the City’s social media platforms. Staff request approved event organizers complete a marketing intake form to optimize promotions. Staff work closely with the City’s Communications Department to create promotional plans for A category events.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT/IMPLICATIONS

Recreation and Culture staff use a production plan circulated to all impacted departments to host these events safely and efficiently. Staff work collaboratively with these departments to ensure the success of events and mitigate potential adverse impacts. These departments include Planning and Development Services (Bylaws, Parking), Human Resources, Engineering & Municipal Operations, Parks, Library, Museum, Finance, Information Technology, Communications, Bylaws, RCMP, Fire Rescue and Corporate Administration.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

The Recreation and Cultural department prioritize green initiatives when planning and celebrating events. Staff will continue to work closely with other departments and event organizers to identify and execute environmentally sustainable practices.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Events support the corporate vision to provide a high quality of life where arts and culture flourish and heritage is celebrated, where we can all live, work and play in an enjoyable atmosphere where the community feels safe and secure.

Events support Council Strategic Goals:

Community

2. Encourage positive community gathering by designing and implementing inviting public spaces and beautification projects.

Organization and Governance

4. Sustain and nurture the established partnership between the City of White Rock and Semiahmoo First Nation.

Local Economy

2. Increase patronship of our commercial districts.

The White Rock Cultural Strategic Plan, My Creative City by the Sea, (adopted 2021), emphasizes as goal three (3) that the City will sustain diverse arts programs and festivals.

- 3.1 Objective: Maintain and grow diverse special events
- 3.2 Objective: Mobilize event partners and volunteers
- 3.3 Objective: Support a thriving Uptown arts district “Beyond the Beach”

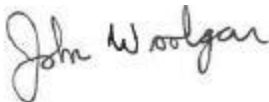
CONCLUSION

Special events in White Rock support and build community connections, community pride and cultural development. They provide a wide variety of entertainment choices and encourage gathering opportunities for residents and visitors to meet and become better connected to their community.

Respectfully submitted,



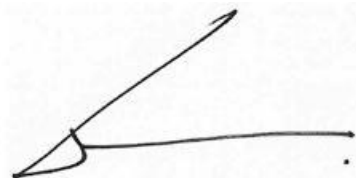
Rebecca Forrest
Manager Cultural Development



John Woolgar
Director, Recreation & Culture

Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer

This corporate report is provided for information purposes.



Guillermo Ferrero
Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A: Category C Events

2023 (November 2023 to December 2023)

- March for Myeloma
- Christmas on the Peninsula
- Children's Clothing Drive
- Chanukah by the Sea

2024 (January 2024 to November 2024)

- White Rock Polar Bear Swim
- Coldest Night of the Year
- Bunny Hop
- Free Pantry Celebration
- Shred-A-Thon
- White Rock Farmer's Market
- Punch Out of Parkinsons
- Peace Arch Hospital Foundation Gala
- Mermaid Zelda for Leukemia and Lymphoma
- Youth Hunger Mission Foundation Bakesale
- IG Walk for Alzheimer's
- Night Market by the Pier
- Yoga for All
- White Rock Busker's and Comedy Festival
- White Rock Jazz and Blue's Festival
- Gear Up4CF
- Oxford Hill Climb
- Lululemon Summer Yoga Series
- Paint the Beach
- Pride Ride
- Picnic on the Pier
- Pride Family Day
- Dancing at the Pier
- Yoga at the Pier
- Uptown Music Festival
- Ride for Lung Health
- Yoga at the Beach
- International Overdose Awareness Walk
- Oceanwide Information Session/Booth
- Elections BC Information Session/Booth
- Choir Not Choir
- White Rock Craft Beer Festival
- Canadian Walk for Veterans
- Run to Remember
- Multiple Myeloma March