

WHITE ROCK
City by the Sea!

Economic Development Strategic Plan

2022



City of White Rock
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Executive Summary

The City of White Rock's Official Community Plan (OCP) and Council's Strategic Priorities both emphasize the importance of a strong and diversified local economy, that supports the local business community, attracts new investment, and makes White Rock a great place to live. The update of the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) acknowledges and incorporates those priorities.

Council values making the best possible community decisions in collaboration with residents and stakeholders, and so a robust consultation process was used to ensure that the views all interested stakeholders were heard. Input was solicited from residents, local businesses, community partners, senior staff within the City administration, tourism personnel and elected officials. These discussions provided valuable insight into the opportunity areas for the City and potential limitations on economic growth.

The City is part of a rapidly evolving regional economy. Its strategic location as part of Metro Vancouver, its burgeoning clusters of resident and visitor friendly businesses, its sandy beaches, historic Pier and 2km Promenade, make it a highly desirable location to visit and live. It is home to a unique blend of local independent businesses, a vibrant Arts & Culture community, an extensive network of Health & Wellness providers, and a popular Waterfront. The 2021 -2022 Economic Development Strategic Plan recognizes the distinctiveness of White Rock and provides a framework that is focused on leveraging the City's existing strengths and making improvements that enhance its overall attractiveness to businesses, investors, residents, and visitors.

The three primary Goals outlined in the Economic Development Strategic Plan recognize that White Rock is well-positioned to capitalise on post pandemic trends including the preference for shopping local, an interest environmentally sustainable goods, the rise in remote work, the desire to participate in live experiences and events, and the increase in domestic tourism. The Objectives that support the Goals detail actions that can be taken to leverage this opportunity and improve the business environment, and resident and visitor experience.

Economic Vision

The Economic Development Strategic Plan is designed to provide optimum outcomes for local businesses, residents, and visitors, and this is reflected in the Economic Vision Statement:

“The City of White Rock supports a prosperous and diverse economic base through policies, practices and other placemaking initiatives that make the City a desirable place to live, work, visit, shop and invest.”





Economic Goals and Objectives

This vision is supported by three Economic Goals with corresponding Objectives and Action Steps.

GOAL #1:

To attract and retain small to medium sized independent businesses that will enhance the existing character and charm of the city.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Create a more business-friendly experience at City Hall
2. Improve the resiliency of the local economy through retention and expansion activities
3. Promote White Rock as an ideal location for small to medium size independent businesses

GOAL #2:

To promote private and public development and projects that enhance White Rock's existing strengths and improve its overall attractiveness and liveability.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Encourage the establishment of clusters of local, independently owned businesses that reflect the character of the community and appeal to residents and visitors alike
2. Promote the development of public and private spaces that facilitate social interaction
3. Support the expansion of White Rock's current Arts and Culture corridor along Johnson Road from Five Corners to North Bluff Road
4. Undertake initiatives that make White Rock a highly desirable location for those who work from home

GOAL #3:

To increase visitation to White Rock by making the city the most captivating destination South of the Fraser River.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Improve the pedestrian experience throughout the city
2. Expand cultural programming and activities, with a focus on the shoulder seasons (October through April)
3. Improve the attractiveness of the Waterfront streetscape through aesthetics and economic diversification
4. Grow year-round day visits and increase the number of overnight visits to White Rock

Priorities for Action

The Objectives have 54 associated action steps. Of these, 16 have been selected as priorities based on their ease of implementation and relative impact. They are focused on making it easier to do business in the City, promoting the City to potential investors, accessing senior level government funds to support economic development, making improvements to community spaces, and determining the optimum model for the delivery of tourism services

Jump Start Action Items

1.	Identify and apply for provincial and federal grants available to support municipal operations and initiatives
2.	Review City regulations and bylaws that have been identified as a concern by business operators, (Sign Bylaw, Sidewalk Use Agreement Bylaw) to identify ways to improve them
3.	Undertake a comprehensive review of parking throughout the city (<i>currently underway</i>)
4.	Review municipal taxes and charges for business to ensure they are competitive with the City of Surrey
5.	Identify business community stakeholders by sector for regular dialogue with the City to identify challenges and opportunities
6.	Create a user-friendly Business Resource Guide for new and existing businesses (<i>complete</i>)
7.	Create an external business directory and internal contact list for businesses (<i>complete</i>)
8.	Update the community profile and enhance economic development information on the City's website (<i>currently underway</i>)
9.	Expand the definition of permitted use for home-based businesses (<i>currently underway</i>)
10.	Develop a strategy to attract small to medium size enterprises in the Tech and Advanced Education sectors
11.	Identify opportunities for patio expansion on to City space and encourage businesses to apply for Sidewalk Use Licences
12.	Evaluate the current Tourism Service and Funding model to determine if it is the most effective model for supporting the development of tourism infrastructure, visitor experiences and market awareness
13.	Identify additional shoulder season event options and determine community capacity to present them (<i>ongoing</i>)
14.	Evaluate the feasibility of using Marine Drive as a "Pedestrian First Zone" between Vidal and Martin Street (<i>currently underway</i>) (WES)
15.	Determine the feasibility of allowing all season patios
16.	Add public Wi-Fi Uptown and at Five Corners

Introduction

This project was undertaken throughout 2021, during the COVID19 Pandemic, a time of unprecedented economic events in the global economy. Stock markets experienced record highs, governments incurred record levels of debt to support individuals and businesses, central banks intervened to support government spending and markets, entire sectors of the economy were shut down and social activities were severely restricted. As the pandemic enters its third year, supply chain disruptions and rising inflation have emerged as primary concerns. Central banks have begun to end quantitative easing and are expected to begin to raise interest rates from their historical lows.

The ultimate impact of these events and policy changes for the global economy remains unknown. It was widely anticipated that the economy would enter a period of robust growth once normal activities resume, but there remain many unknowns. The pandemic has accelerated trends that were already underway (online shopping for example) and made previously limited practices routine (working from home for example). As the pandemic marches on it is becoming clearer which trends will accelerate, which will continue as is, which will decelerate, and which will go away.

How will these events affect the White Rock economy and the context for this Strategic Plan? White Rock will not be immune from any positive or negative economic conditions that result and will need to continue to pivot to meet new opportunities and challenges and adapt to the events as they occur. It is clear at this stage, however, that White Rock is uniquely positioned to take advantage of many of the consumer preferences that have emerged in the last 22 months. A more stable environment is materializing and the competitive strengths and weaknesses of White Rock relative to other locations in Metro Vancouver appear to be strong.

There are few local government policy tools that affect macroeconomic conditions, but the pandemic has shown that municipal governments can be nimble and appropriately reactive in responding to business needs. The focus of this Strategic Plan is on creating a favourable local environment for economic development and the analysis that underlies the plan encompasses a long-run view and the recommended strategies are anticipated to be valid for multiple years to come.



Engagement Snapshot

The consultation process engaged residents, local businesses, members of the Economic Development and Arts and Culture Advisory Committees, various community partners and White Rock City staff through a combination of surveys, workshops, and one on one consultations.



White Rock at a Glance

COMMUNITY PROFILE



Population
20,900
est. 2001



Population growth, steady at
+3%
every 5 years



Sought after destination for active retirees,
53%
of the population is 55+

COMMUNITY WORKFORCE

Highly skilled workforce with
74%
of the population engaged in:


-  **22%** Sales & Service
-  **19%** Business & Finance
-  **14%** Management
-  **11%** Education & Law
-  **8%** Healthcare

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

White Rock has some of the highest average housing prices in the Fraser Valley Real Estate area, perhaps being reflective of the value placed on this beautiful seaside community .

-  **\$1.8 million** Single-family
-  **\$885,000** Townhouse
-  **\$623,000** Condo

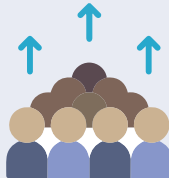
Robust residential construction activity with an average of **\$119 million** in Building Permits issued in each of the last 6 years.



COMMUNITY AMMENITIES



Delightful, compact city of **5 square kilometres**



Most densely populated city south of the Fraser River at **3,773** per square kilometre



Moderate year-round climate, less rain and **20% more sunshine** than Vancouver



Major tourist destination, home to the famous **White Rock and historic Pier**

RETAIL AND RESTAURANTS



Vibrant cafe culture
16 cafes and tea shops



Wide variety of dining
70 restaurants with menus from around the globe



Sustainable, environmentally concious retail environment with

8 Thrift stores	9 shops selling locally sourced goods	3 craft breweries
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COMMUNITY EVENTS



22
Annual festival and events




6
Annual concerts




White Rock Farmers' Market runs **May** to **October**


FAMILY FRIENDLY



2
Elementary schools



2
local high schools



15
Child care centres, plus numerous enhanced education options

Economic Development Vision and Goals

Economic Development Vision

The Economic Development Strategic Plan establishes a framework for guiding economic activities that is aligned with the City's other plans, policies, and initiatives. It ensures that White Rock's economic development will be responsive to the demands and opportunities created by an evolving post-pandemic economy and leverages other initiatives being undertaken by the City. The plan is designed to provide optimum outcomes for local businesses, residents, and visitors, as reflected in the Economic Vision Statement:

“The City of White Rock supports a prosperous and diverse economic base through policies, practices and other placemaking initiatives that make the City to be a desirable place to live, work, visit, shop and invest.”

Economic Development Goals, Objectives & Actions

A Strategic Priority for City Council is to “make the best possible community decisions in collaboration with residents and stakeholders and support the prosperity and diversification of the City's economic base”. The Economic Development Strategic Plan contains three primary goals that are designed to nurture a resilient and sustainable community and that reflect Council's priorities. Each goal is supported by corresponding objectives and actions steps.

Definitions:

- Small business – up to 50 employees
- Medium business – 50 to 150 employees
- Existing Character and Charm – small town atmosphere, local independent businesses, vibrant Waterfront, Arts & Culture community, Events & Activities



Economic Development: Goal 1

The first goal establishes processes by which the City can effectively engage on a regular basis with key economic stakeholders, Metro Vancouver municipalities and other levels of government. It acknowledges that the success of local entrepreneurs and businesses is due to hard work, ingenuity, and perseverance, while recognizing that City Hall can play a vital role by fostering an environment that meets the need of both existing and new businesses. It outlines business retention and attraction activities that will focus on expanding the presence of small to medium sized businesses that are local and independent, in line with the preference expressed by businesses and residents. This goal also recognizes that collaboration with neighbouring municipalities and stakeholders on projects and initiatives will strengthen the regional economy and acknowledges that White Rock's economic development efforts will be enhanced by participation in Invest Vancouver's regional economic initiatives.

GOAL 1:

To attract and retain small to medium sized independent businesses that will enhance the existing character and charm of the city.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Create a more business-friendly experience at City Hall
2. Improve the resiliency of the local economy through retention and expansion activities
3. Promote White Rock as an ideal location for small to medium size independent businesses

ACTIONS:	
<p>Create a more business-friendly experience at City Hall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review City regulations and bylaws that have been identified as a concern by business operators, (Sign Bylaw, Sidewalk Use Agreement Bylaw) to identify ways to improve them
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review municipal taxes and charges for business to ensure they are competitive with the City of Surrey
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a comprehensive review of parking throughout the city (currently underway)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a user-friendly Business Resource Guide for new and existing businesses (complete)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an external business directory and internal contact list for businesses (complete)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take appropriate actions and liaise with the development and construction industry in anticipation of the implementation of the Provincial Step Code initiative in February 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request an additional Planning & Development position during the 2023 – 2027 Financial planning process. Assign initial responsibility for (1) identifying and implementing opportunities for digitization and process improvement, and (2) ways to improve communication between PDS, Engineering and businesses
<p>Improve the resiliency of the local economy through retention and expansion activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain an Economic Development budget to fund contract employees/consultants, or establish a part time Economic Development position, to complete Economic Development related projects (including grant writing for all departments)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and apply for provincial and federal grants available to support municipal economic development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify business community stakeholders by sector for regular dialogue with the City to identify challenges and opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct business surveys annually to get feedback on the business climate, satisfaction with the City and the BIA, and recommendations on ways to address common issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify specific challenges and opportunities in the Uptown and in the Five Corners commercial areas and develop a plan to address them

Economic Development: Goal 1

ACTIONS:	
<p><i>(continued)</i> Improve the resiliency of the local economy through retention and expansion activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve White Rock’s aesthetics through the appropriate policies, guidelines, and initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Apply design guidelines to new development and review as needed ◦ Establish a façade improvement incentive program ◦ Extent street beautification guidelines to all commercial areas including lower Johnston Road and Marine Drive • Identify economic development opportunities that can be pursued in partnership with neighbouring local governments
<p>Promote White Rock as an ideal location for small to medium size independent businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the community profile and enhance economic development information on the City’s website (complete) • Develop a business brochure (digital and print) that illustrates White Rock’s investment attractiveness and unique characteristics that can be used to promote the city • Promote White Rock to specific industry associations that represent businesses in target sectors • Identify opportunities related to the expansion of Peace Arch Hospital and surrounding commercial areas and promote them to businesses in the health and wellness sector

Target Sectors / Emerging Opportunities	
Maker Sector:	Craft Brew Pubs / Locally sourced / Butcher / Vegetarian, Vegan / Organic / Home cooked meals to go/ Arts & Crafts / Fabric & Knitting
Entertainment Sector:	Theatre / Cinema / Dance Halls / Concerts / Festivals / Art Shows / Comedy / Film
Science & Technology:	Digital Health / Marine research or reclamation / E-Gaming
Childcare Sector:	Daycares / Playgrounds / Afterschool activities
Food & Beverage Services:	Cafes / Take out / Food Trucks/ Fine Dining / Delicatessen /Wine Bars
Marine Based:	Water sports / Day cruises / Competitions / Fishing

Economic Development: Goal 2

The second goal outlines tactics to attract businesses that can create “clusters”, that will help make the city a great place to live and visit, for example, Craft Breweries, Thrift Stores, Cafes, Wellness Clinics, Childcare Services, businesses that are related to Arts and Culture, and businesses that are activity based. The tactics outlined in this goal will encourage the inclusion of public space in new developments and support the City’s Cultural Strategic Plan to further develop an Arts & Culture corridor Uptown. In addition, it identifies and looks to exploit White Rock’s opportunity to become a highly sought-after community for those who Work from Home (WFH).

GOAL 2:

To promote private and public development and projects that enhance White Rock’s existing strengths and improve its overall attractiveness and liveability

OBJECTIVES:

1. Encourage the establishment of clusters of local, independently owned businesses that reflect the character of the community and appeal to residents and visitors alike
2. Promote the development and revitalization of public and private amenities that facilitate social interaction
3. Support the expansion of White Rock’s current Arts and Culture corridor along Johnson Road from Five Corners to North Bluff Road
4. Undertake initiatives that make White Rock a highly desirable location for those who work from home



Economic Development: Goal 2

ACTIONS:	
Encourage the establishment of clusters of local, independently owned businesses that reflect the character of the community and appeal to residents and visitors alike	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify existing and new business concepts that can be clustered in the community and ensure zoning by-laws and other regulations facilitate the establishment of these types of businesses • Take measure to support vibrancy, diversity, locality and charm in all commercial centres by enacting bylaws designed to limit the number of types of businesses that Council feels there are too many of (as West Vancouver is doing) • Work with the BIA, Explore White Rock, and appropriate City departments to develop a marketing program to position White Rock as the preferred destination for target cluster businesses
Promote the development and revitalization of public and private amenities that encourage social interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities for patio expansion on to City space and encourage businesses to apply for Sidewalk Use Licences • Identify additional space that can be use for expanded markets, festivals, concerts, and other public events in various areas of the community and determine feasibility (for example, concerts in Central Plaza, closing Johnston between Russell and Thrift on Sundays to expand the Farmer’s Market) • Collaborate with Arts & Culture, the BIA, and Explore White Rock on placemaking art initiatives
Support the expansion of White Rock’s current Arts and Culture corridor Uptown along Johnson Road from Five Corners to North Bluff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the completion of a needs assessment survey and the development of a concept plan for an Arts and Culture facility, possibly an Art Gallery and studio space to produce art • Encourage the continued inclusion of arts and culture space in new developments • Recommend cultural development opportunities in the Johnston and Russell area including the development of the NE corner lot
Undertake initiatives that make White Rock a highly desirable location for those who work from home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the definition of permitted use for home-based businesses (currently underway) • Develop a strategy to attract small to medium size enterprises in the Tech and Advanced Education sectors • Identify and attract additional businesses in the childcare and child activity sector to complement the cluster of Day Care Centres • Promote White Rock’s natural beauty, convenient location, and lifestyle amenities to attract professionals looking for an ideal place to work from home • Ensure zoning allows for a variety of housing types, including in-fill, duplex and townhouses, as well as condos and single-family homes

Economic Development: Goal 3



The third and final goal recognizes the opportunity to enhance White Rock’s desirability as a primary destination for tourists by improving walkability, access to transit options and by providing convenient amenities throughout the city. It supports efforts to expand events and activities throughout the year and recommends specific tactics for improving both the attractiveness of the streetscape and the diversity in the types of businesses and attractions that currently exist on the Waterfront.

GOAL 3:

To increase visitation to White Rock by making the city the most captivating destination South of the Fraser River

OBJECTIVES:

1. Improve the pedestrian experience throughout the city
2. Expand cultural programming and activities, with a focus on the shoulder seasons (October through April)
3. Improve the attractiveness of the Waterfront streetscape through aesthetics and economic diversification
4. Grow year-round day visits and increase the number of overnight visits to White Rock

Economic Development: Goal 3

ACTIONS:	
Improve the pedestrian experience throughout the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the feasibility of using Marine Drive as a “Pedestrian First Zone” between Vidal and Martin Street (currently underway)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add public Wi-Fi Uptown and at Five Corners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install digital information kiosks Uptown, at Five Corners and on Marine Drive
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify additional locations where sidewalks can be conveniently widened
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create every-day activities stage sets (moveable furniture and play equipment) for Memorial Park plaza (WES)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the feasibility of converting the parking lot west of the White Rock Museum to a flex-parking lot with overhead structures for weather protection (WES)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to improve the connection from the Waterfront to Uptown (example, Centre Street hillside walkway upgrade currently underway, City funded Shuttle from Waterfront to Uptown during peak summer months)
Expand cultural programming and activities, with an emphasis on the shoulder seasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify additional shoulder season event options and determine community capacity to present them
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that initiatives align with the City’s cultural development aspirations as documented in the Cultural Strategic Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore collaborating with Semiahmoo First Nation to develop an authentic Indigenous cultural visitor experience
Improve the attractiveness of the Waterfront streetscape through aesthetics and economic initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the feasibility of allowing all season patios
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider retaining a real estate and planning consulting firm that specializes in waterfront revitalization to assist with implementation of the action steps related to Waterfront redevelopment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete character design guidelines for East and West beach (WES)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a public realm furniture “tool kit” (WES)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address vacant storefronts and lots through a combination of incentives and animation of vacant space (WES)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract a more diverse mix of businesses along Marine Drive that provides a variety of retail outlets, galleries, and restaurants (WES)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the Pier to include rest stops, a viewing area and day use mooring docks for visiting boaters
Grow year-round day visits and increase the number of overnight visits to White Rock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the current Tourism Service and Funding model to determine if it is the most effective model for supporting the development of tourism infrastructure, visitor experiences and market awareness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the Accessory Vacation Rentals zoning bylaw (completed Dec 2021) to encourage additional participation and ensure compliance to the regulations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly define the compelling White Rock brand and unique selling proposition that will be communicated in all marketing efforts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue private business interests in hotel/convention center to be located in or near White Rock
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the feasibility and desirability of adding a major event and / or attraction, for example, a Funicular, Tall Ships, Boat Tour Operator, Saturday Market and so on

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan outlines the action the City, its partners and its stakeholders will need to undertake to address the issues and opportunities identified in the Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP). The strategy assumes a 10-year timeframe to address all the Objectives and action items set out in implementation plan, but the timeframe for initiating and/or implementing the recommended actions is 5 years. Priority timings are either immediate, short term, or long term. It is assumed that the City of White Rock will revisit the progress of the EDSP after 5 years to assess the effectiveness of the recommendations, adjust the recommendations based on current conditions as necessary, and add new actions in response to changing market conditions and policy considerations.

Implementation Timeframes

Immediate: 0 to 12 months
 Short Term: 1 -2 years
 Medium Term: 3 - 5 years

Acronyms

PDS: Planning & Development Services
EDO: Economic Development Officer
BIA: White Rock Business Improvement Association
SSWR Chamber of Commerce: South Surrey White Rock Chamber of Commerce
WES: Waterfront Enhancement Strategy
EDAC: Economic Development Advisory Committee
ACAC: Arts & Culture Advisory Committee

Jump Start Action Items

1	Identify and apply for provincial and federal grants available to support municipal operations and initiatives	9	Expand the definition of permitted use for home-based businesses (<i>currently underway</i>)
2	Review City regulations and bylaws that have been identified as a concern by business operators, (Sign Bylaw, Sidewalk Use Agreement Bylaw) to identify ways to improve them	10	Develop a strategy to attract small to medium size enterprises in the Tech and Advanced Education sectors
3	Undertake a comprehensive review of parking throughout the city (<i>currently underway</i>)	11	Identify opportunities for patio expansion on to City space and encourage businesses to apply for Sidewalk Use Licences
4	Review municipal taxes and charges for business to ensure they are competitive with the City of Surrey	12	Evaluate the current Tourism Service and Funding model to determine if it is the most effective model for supporting the development of tourism infrastructure, visitor experiences and market awareness
5	Identify business community stakeholders by sector for regular dialogue with the City to identify challenges and opportunities	13	Identify additional shoulder season event options and determine community capacity to present them (<i>ongoing</i>)
6	Create a user-friendly Business Resource Guide for new and existing businesses (<i>complete</i>)	14	Evaluate the feasibility of using Marine Drive as a “Pedestrian First Zone” between Vidal and Martin Street (<i>currently underway</i>) (WES)
7	Create an external business directory and internal contact list for businesses (<i>complete</i>)	15	Determine the feasibility of allowing all season patios
8	Update the community profile and enhance economic development information on the City’s website (<i>currently underway</i>)	16	Add public Wi-Fi Uptown and at Five Corners

Implementation Plan: Workplan and Expected Outcomes

This section details who has lead responsibility for the action item, when it is expected to be actioned, who the appropriate community partners are, and how it will be funded.

Jump Start Action Items are highlighted in blue.

GOAL #1: TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN SMALL TO MEDIUM SIZED INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES THAT WILL ENHANCE THE EXISTING CHARACTER AND CHARM OF THE CITY						
OBJECTIVE 1.1: CREATE A MORE BUSINESS-FRIENDLY EXPERIENCE AT CITY HALL						
ACTION ITEM	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	COMMUNITY PARTNERS	NEW OR EXISTING OPERATIONAL BUDGET	ONE TIME BUDGET	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Review City regulations and bylaws that have been identified as a concern by business operators, (Sign Bylaw, Sidewalk Use Agreement Bylaw) to identify ways to improve them	EDO/ PDS	Immediate	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce			Recommendation for updates put forward to Council
Review municipal taxes and charges for business to ensure they are competitive with the City of Surrey	EDO	Immediate				Review complete and fees adjusted where appropriate
Undertake a comprehensive review of parking throughout the city (<i>currently underway</i>)	Parking Services Manager	Immediate	NA			Recommendations put forward to Council
Create a user-friendly Business Resource Guide for new and existing businesses (<i>complete</i>)	EDO	Immediate	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce		\$2,500 printing cost	Package complete and distributed
Create an external business directory and internal contact list for businesses (<i>complete</i>)	EDO	Immediate	BIA			Directory complete and published
Take appropriate actions and liaise with the development and construction industry in anticipation of the implementation of the Provincial Step Code initiative in February 2022	Building and Bylaw Enforcement	Immediate	NA			Step Code 100% implemented
Request an additional Planning & Development position during the 2023 – 2027 Financial planning process. Assign initial responsibility for (1) identifying and implementing opportunities for digitization and process improvement, and (2) ways to improve communication between PDS, Engineering and businesses	Director PDS	Short Term	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce	\$80,000 (new budget)		Impact of process improvement, for example reduction in length of time to get a building permit

Implementation Plan: Workplan and Expected Outcomes

OBJECTIVE 1.2: IMPROVE THE RESILIENCY OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY THROUGH RETENTION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES						
ACTION ITEM	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	COMMUNITY PARTNERS	NEW OR EXISTING OPERATIONAL BUDGET	ONE TIME BUDGET	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Maintain an Economic Development budget to fund contract employees/ consultants, or establish a part time Economic Development position, to complete Economic Development related projects (including grant writing for all departments)	Director PDS	Immediate		\$50,000 (2022 to come from existing Economic Development budget)		Number of projects successfully completed
Identify and apply for provincial and federal grants available to support municipal operations and initiatives	EDO	Immediate				Number of successful grant applications
Identify business community stakeholders by sector for regular dialogue with the City to identify challenges and opportunities	EDO	Immediate	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce			Stakeholder group assembled
Conduct business surveys annually to get feedback on the business climate, satisfaction with the City and the BIA, and recommendations on ways to address common issues	EDO/ BIA	Short Term	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce	\$2,000		Survey created, administered and tabulated
Identify specific challenges and opportunities in the Uptown and in the Five Corners commercial areas and develop a plan to address them	EDO/ BIA	Short Term	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce			Analysis complete and action plan developed
Improve White Rock's aesthetics through the appropriate policies, guidelines, and initiatives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply design guidelines to new development and review as needed 2. Establish a façade improvement incentive program 3. Extend street beautification guidelines to all commercial areas including lower Johnston Road and Marine Drive 	PDS / EDO	Short Term	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce			Policies developed and approved by Council

Implementation Plan: Workplan and Expected Outcomes

Identify economic development opportunities that can be pursued in partnership with neighbouring local governments	PDS/ EDO	Medium Term	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce			Number of opportunities identified
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OBJECTIVE 1.2: PROMOTE WHITE ROCK AS AN IDEAL LOCATION FOR SMALL TO MEDIUM SIZE INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES

ACTION ITEM	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	COMMUNITY PARTNERS	NEW OR EXISTING OPERATIONAL BUDGET	ONE TIME BUDGET	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Update the community profile and enhance economic development information on the City's website (currently underway)	EDO/ Communications	Immediate				Updates Complete
Develop a business brochure (print and digital) that illustrates White Rock's investment attractiveness and unique characteristics that can be used to promote the city	EDO/ Communications	Immediate	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce		\$500 printing cost for 1,000 pieces	Brochure published online and printed
Promote White Rock to specific industry associations that represent businesses in target sectors	EDO/ EDAC	Immediate	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce	\$5,000 advertising budget		Campaign created and launched
Identify opportunities related to the expansion of Peace Arch Hospital and surrounding commercial areas and promote them to businesses in the health and wellness sector	EDO/ EDAC	Short term	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce	Included in \$5,000 advertising budget		Number of new businesses that open near PAH

Implementation Plan: Workplan and Expected Outcomes

GOAL #2: TO PROMOTE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROJECTS THAT ENHANCE WHITE ROCK'S EXISTING STRENGTHS AND IMPROVE ITS OVERALL ATTRACTIVENESS AND LIVEABILITY						
OBJECTIVE 2.1: ENCOURAGE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CLUSTERS OF LOCAL, INDEPENDENTLY OWNED BUSINESSES THAT REFLECT THE CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY AND APPEAL TO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS ALIKE						
ACTION ITEM	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	COMMUNITY PARTNERS	NEW OR EXISTING OPERATIONAL BUDGET	ONE TIME BUDGET	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Identify existing and new business concepts that can be clustered in the community and ensure zoning by-laws and other regulations facilitate the establishment of these types of businesses	EDO/ BIA	Short term	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce, EDAC			Concepts identified and zoning review complete
Work with the BIA, Explore White Rock, and appropriate City departments to develop a marketing program to position White Rock as the preferred destination for target cluster businesses	EDO	Short term	BIA, Explore White Rock, SSWR Chamber of Commerce, EDAC	\$TBD Annual advertising	\$10,000 contractor	Marketing program created and launched
OBJECTIVE 2.2: PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AMENITIES THAT ENCOURAGE SOCIAL INTERACTION						
Identify opportunities for patio expansion on to City space and encourage businesses to apply for Sidewalk Use Licences	EDO/ BIA	Immediate	BIA			Number of new patio licences
Identify additional space that can be use for expanded markets, festivals, concerts, and other public events in various areas of the community and determine feasibility (for example, concerts in Central Plaza, closing Johnston between Russell and Thrift on Sundays to expand the Farmer's Market)	EDO/ BIA	Short term	BIA			Number of new public spaces that are put into use
Collaborate with Arts & Culture, the BIA, and Explore White Rock on placemaking art initiatives	Manager, Cultural Development	Immediate & ongoing	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce, EDAC, ACAC			Number of new placemaking art installations

Implementation Plan: Workplan and Expected Outcomes

OBJECTIVE 2.3: SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF WHITE ROCK'S CURRENT ARTS AND CULTURE CORRIDOR UPTOWN ALONG JOHNSON ROAD FROM FIVE CORNERS TO NORTH BLUFF

ACTION ITEM	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	COMMUNITY PARTNERS	NEW OR EXISTING OPERATIONAL BUDGET	ONE TIME BUDGET	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Support the completion of a needs assessment survey and the development of a concept plan for an Arts and Culture facility, possibly an Art Gallery and studio space to produce art	Manager, Cultural Development	Immediate	ACAC, EDAC			Needs assessment survey and concept plan complete
Encourage the continued inclusion of arts and culture space in new developments	PDS / Recreation & Culture	Immediate & ongoing	ACAC, EDAC			Number of new developments that include this space
Recommend cultural development opportunities in the Johnston and Russell area	PDS / Recreation & Culture	Short to medium term	ACAC, EDAC			Recommendations adopted by Council

OBJECTIVE 2.4: UNDERTAKE INITIATIVES THAT MAKE WHITE ROCK A HIGHLY DESIRABLE LOCATION FOR THOSE WHO WORK FROM HOME

Expand the definition of permitted use for home-based businesses (currently underway)	PDS	Immediate				Bylaw updated and changes approved by Council
Develop a strategy to attract small to medium size enterprises in the Tech and Advanced Education sectors	EDO/ EDAC	Immediate	EDAC			Strategy complete
Identify and attract additional businesses in the childcare and child activity sector to complement the existing cluster of Day Care Centres	EDO/ BIA	Short term	BIA	Included in \$5,000 advertising budget		Number of additional childcare businesses
Promote White Rock's natural beauty, convenient location and lifestyle amenities to attract professionals looking for an ideal place to work from home	EDO/ EDAC	Short term	Explore White Rock	\$2,000 advertising budget		Campaign created and launched
Ensure zoning allows for a variety of housing types, including in-fill, duplex and townhouses, as well as condos and single-family homes	PDS	Ongoing				Zoning is appropriate for demand

Implementation Plan: Workplan and Expected Outcomes

GOAL #3: TO INCREASE VISITATION TO WHITE ROCK BY MAKING THE CITY THE MOST CAPTIVATING DESTINATION SOUTH OF THE FRASER RIVER						
OBJECTIVE 3.1: IMPROVE THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE THROUGHOUT THE CITY						
ACTION ITEM	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	COMMUNITY PARTNERS	NEW OR EXISTING OPERATIONAL BUDGET	ONE TIME BUDGET	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Evaluate the feasibility of using Marine Drive as a “Pedestrian First Zone” between Vidal and Martin Street (currently underway) (WES)	Engineering & Municipal Operations	Immediate				Evaluation complete and report presented to Council
Add public Wi-Fi Uptown and at Five Corners	Engineering & Municipal Operations	Immediate			\$TBD	Approved by Council and Wi-Fi is installed
Install digital information kiosks Uptown, at Five Corners and on Marine Drive	BIA, Engineering & Municipal Operations	Short term	BIA		\$TBD	Approved by Council and Kiosks are installed
Identify additional locations where sidewalks can be conveniently widened (WES)	EDO/ BIA	Short term	BIA			Locations identified and area businesses are asked for feedback
Create every-day activities stage sets (moveable furniture and play equipment) for Memorial Park plaza (WES)	Engineering & Municipal Operations	Short term	BIA		\$TBD	Approved by Council and Activities stage sets are purchased
Evaluate the feasibility of converting the parking lot west of the White Rock Museum to a flex-parking lot with overhead structures for weather protection (WES)	Engineering & Municipal Operations, Recreation & Culture	Medium Term				Evaluation complete and report presented to Council
Continue to improve the connection from the Waterfront to Uptown (example, Centre Street hillside walkway upgrade currently underway, City funded Shuttle from Waterfront to Uptown during peak summer months)	Engineering & Municipal Operations	Medium Term			\$TBD	Additional improvements identified and actioned

Implementation Plan: Workplan and Expected Outcomes

OBJECTIVE 3.2: EXPAND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE SHOULDER SEASONS						
ACTION ITEM	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	COMMUNITY PARTNERS	NEW OR EXISTING OPERATIONAL BUDGET	ONE TIME BUDGET	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Identify additional shoulder season event options and determine community capacity to present them	Recreation & Culture, EDAC, ACAC	Immediate	BIA, EDAC, ACAC			Number of additional shoulder season events added
Ensure that initiatives align with the City's cultural development aspirations as documented in the Cultural Strategic Plan (CSP)	City Council	Immediate				Council takes CSP into consideration where appropriate
Explore collaborating with Semiahmoo First Nation to develop an authentic Indigenous cultural visitor experience	Explore White Rock	Medium Term				Conversation initiated
OBJECTIVE 3.3: IMPROVE THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE WATERFRONT STREETScape THROUGH AESTHETICS AND ECONOMIC INITIATIVES						
Determine the feasibility of allowing all season patios	EDO / Engineering & Municipal Operations	Immediate	BIA			Discussions held with Engineering and Bylaws and decision made regarding feasibility
Consider retaining a real estate and planning consulting firm that specializes in waterfront revitalization to assist with implementation of the action steps related to Waterfront redevelopment	City Council	Short term			\$100,000	Council has considered and decided
Complete character design guidelines for East and West beach (WES)	PDS	Short Term	BIA, SSWR Chamber of Commerce, ACAC			Guidelines complete and approved
Create a public realm furniture "tool kit" for street furniture and lighting so that it is consistent in all areas of the Waterfront (WES)	Engineering & Municipal Operations	Medium Term	BIA, ACAC		\$10,000 (contractor)	Furniture "tool kit" design and guidelines complete and approved
Address vacant storefronts and lots through a combination of incentives and animation of vacant space (WES)	EDO / PDS	Medium Term	EDAC, BIA			"Vacant no more" program approved and in place

Implementation Plan: Workplan and Expected Outcomes

Attract a more diverse mix of businesses along Marine Drive that provides a variety of retail outlets, galleries, and restaurants (WES)	EDO	Medium Term	BIA, SSWR Chamber			Restaurant mix to total 60% or less
Improve the Pier to include rest stops, a viewing area and day use mooring docks for visiting boaters	City Council	Medium Term	Friends of the Pier, BIA, EDAC		\$TBD	Minimum of one improvement made

OBJECTIVE 3.4: GROW YEAR-ROUND DAY VISITS AND INCREASE THE NUMBER OF OVERNIGHT VISITS TO WHITE ROCK

ACTION ITEM	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	COMMUNITY PARTNERS	NEW OR EXISTING OPERATIONAL BUDGET	ONE TIME BUDGET	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Evaluate the current Tourism Service and Funding model to determine if it is the most effective model for supporting the development of tourism infrastructure, visitor experiences and market awareness	Recreation & Culture, Explore White Rock	Immediate	BIA, SSWR Chamber, EDAC	Apply for funding through Federal Tourism Relief Fund	\$50,000 (contractor)	Evaluation complete and recommendation made to Council
Update the Accessory Vacation Rentals zoning bylaw (complete) to encourage additional participation and ensure compliance to the regulations	PDS	Immediate			\$100,000	Completed December 2021
Clearly define the compelling White Rock brand and unique selling proposition that will be communicated in all marketing efforts	Recreation & Culture, Explore White Rock, EDO	Short Term	BIA, SSWR Chamber, Advisory Committees	Apply for funding through Federal Tourism Relief Fund	\$10,000	Branding process complete
Pursue private business interests in hotel/convention center to be located in or near White Rock	EDO	Medium Term	BIA			Potential investors identified and approached
Evaluate the feasibility and desirability of adding a major event and / or attraction, for example, a Funicular, Tall Ships, Boat Tour Operator, Saturday Market and so on	City Council	Medium Term				Evaluation complete and recommendations presented to Council

Implementation Plan

The success of the Economic Development Strategic Plan will be determined using a variety of quantitative and qualitative metrics that will be measured annually. These metrics will assess the impact of the plan on the desirability of the City as a place to live, work, shop and invest.

GOAL	MEASURE (METRIC)	STATUS
Improved Business satisfaction measures as tracked through an annual survey	Percentage change to prior year	
Increase in the number of businesses established annually	Number of licenced businesses in the current year versus the prior year	
Growth in local employment	Percentage change to prior year	
Decrease in average time to receive development approval or building permit	Reduction as measured in number of months	
Decrease in commercial vacancy rates	Number of vacant storefronts in the current year versus the prior year	
Increase in daytime visits and overnight stays	Percentage change to prior year	
Wider variety of restaurant / retail/ services on Marine Drive	Blend in current year compared to blend in prior year	
Number of new businesses added to target clusters	Number by cluster in current year versus prior year	
Growth in non-residential tax base	Reduction in residential share of municipal property taxes	
Increased number of arts, cultural, tourism events	Number of events in current year versus prior year	
Improved resident satisfaction measure as tracked through an annual survey (examples: satisfaction with the variety of shops & services available, entertainment options, pace of development, condition of sidewalks and roadways, etc.)	Percentage change to prior year	



Appendices

Appendix A: ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

This section provides an overview of some of the key statistical trends and issues affecting economic development in White Rock. The data used to generate the graphs can be found in Appendix D. Much of the data comes from the 2016 Census and will need to be updated with the release of the 2020 census data next year.

POPULATION INDICATORS

Population Growth

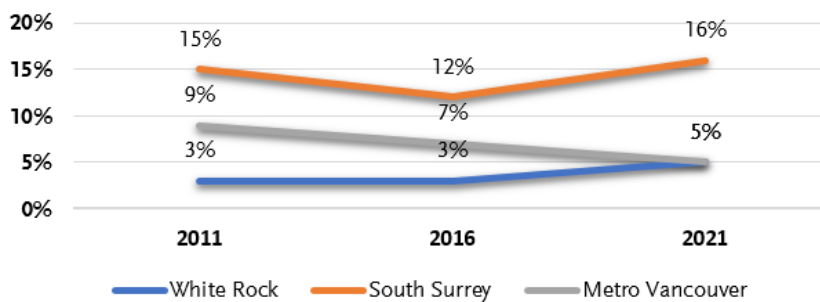
White Rock has had continuous population growth over the last two decades albeit at a slower pace than neighbouring South Surrey or Metro Vancouver. The slower rate of growth is largely due to White Rock's limited land base, which requires most population growth to be achieved through redevelopment and densification.

At the time of the last census in 2016, the population of White Rock was 19,952 individuals; it is currently estimated at 21,000. With a population density of 3,893.1 individuals per square kilometre, and no farm or low density industrial lands, the City of White Rock is the most fourth-most compact community in Metro Vancouver (after North Vancouver, New Westminster, and Vancouver).

The recent and nearing completion of several residential towers more than 12 storeys high will bring over a thousand new apartment units into the city and will contribute to significant population growth, particularly in the Town Centre and uptown areas.

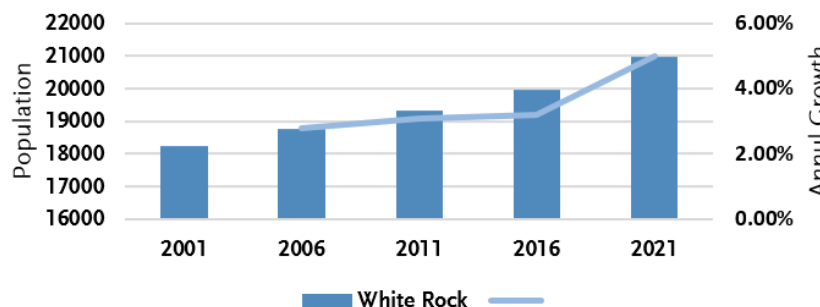
Population Growth Rates 2011 to 2021

(Source: BC Stats Province of British Columbia)



Population Growth 2001 to 2021

(Source: Statistics Canada)



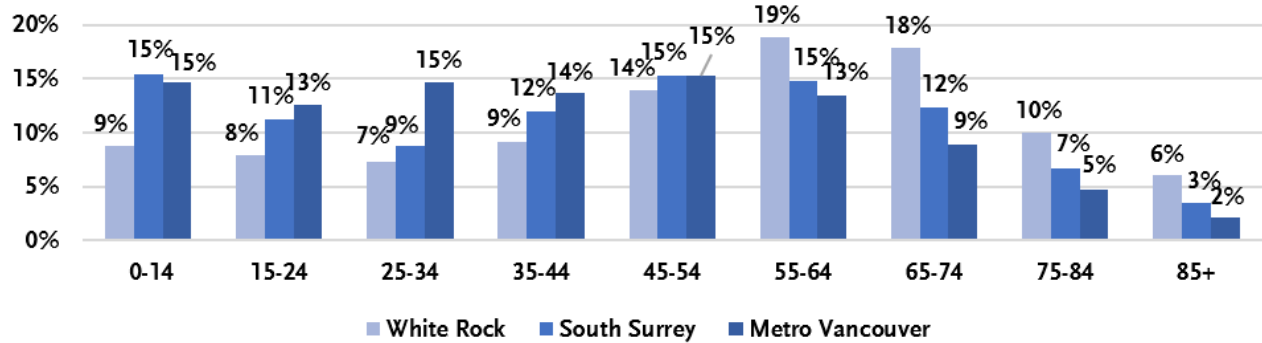
Population Demographics, Age and Sex

One of White Rock's most distinctive characteristics is the age profile of its residents. The city has more than double the percentage of senior citizens as Metro Vancouver, over 40% more than South Surrey, and a lower population share in each age category up to age 55.

The current age profile affects the market for goods and services but overall does not have significant repercussions for economic development because White Rock is part of an integrated metropolitan region where residents of nearby municipalities work, shop and obtain services based on convenience and preference, not geographical location.

Population Age Categories, 2016

(Source: Statistics Canada)

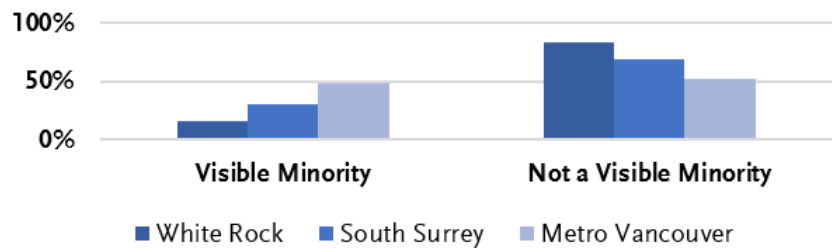


Diversity

While the proportion of White Rock's population that identifies as being part of a visible minority group (16 per cent) is smaller than Metro Vancouver (48.9 per cent) or South Surrey (31 per cent) this share of the community has increased significantly over the past fifteen years.

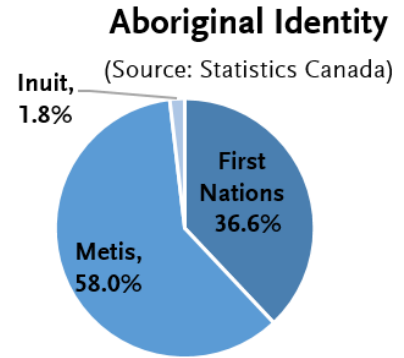
Visible Minority

(Source: Statistics Canada)



Aboriginal Population

There were 560 Aboriginal people in White Rock, representing 3.9 per cent of the population, in 2016. Of this population, 36.6 per cent identified as First Nations, 58.0 per cent as Metis, and 1.8 per cent as Inuit.

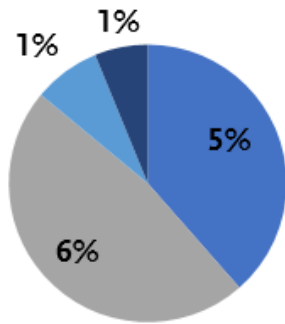


Ethnic Groups

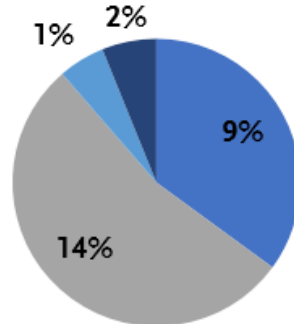
People of Chinese origin represent the largest ethnic group in White Rock, South Surrey, and Metro Vancouver, followed by South Asians.

Top 4 Ethnic Groups

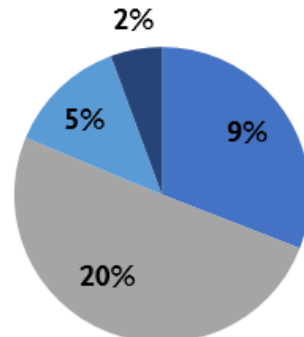
White Rock
(Source: Statistics Canada)



South Surrey
(Source: Statistics Canada)



Metro Vancouver
(Source: Statistics Canada)



■ South Asian
 ■ Chinese
 ■ Filipino
 ■ Korean

Immigration

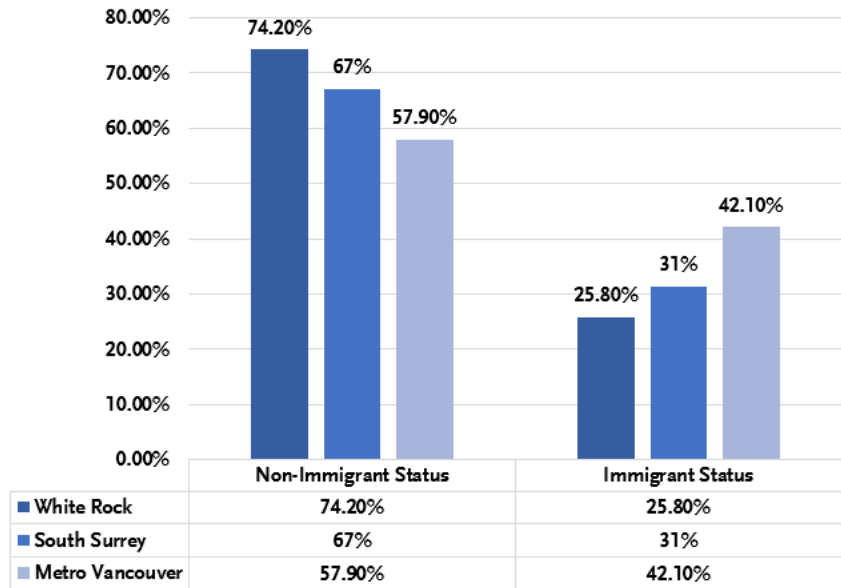
As of 2016, immigrants accounted for approximately 25.8 per cent of White Rock’s population in private households.

This is a much lower percentage when compared to the total population of Metro Vancouver, where 42.1 per cent of the total population has immigrant status.

The majority of recent immigrants, 2011 to 2016, identify an Asian nation as their place of birth.

Population by Immigration Status

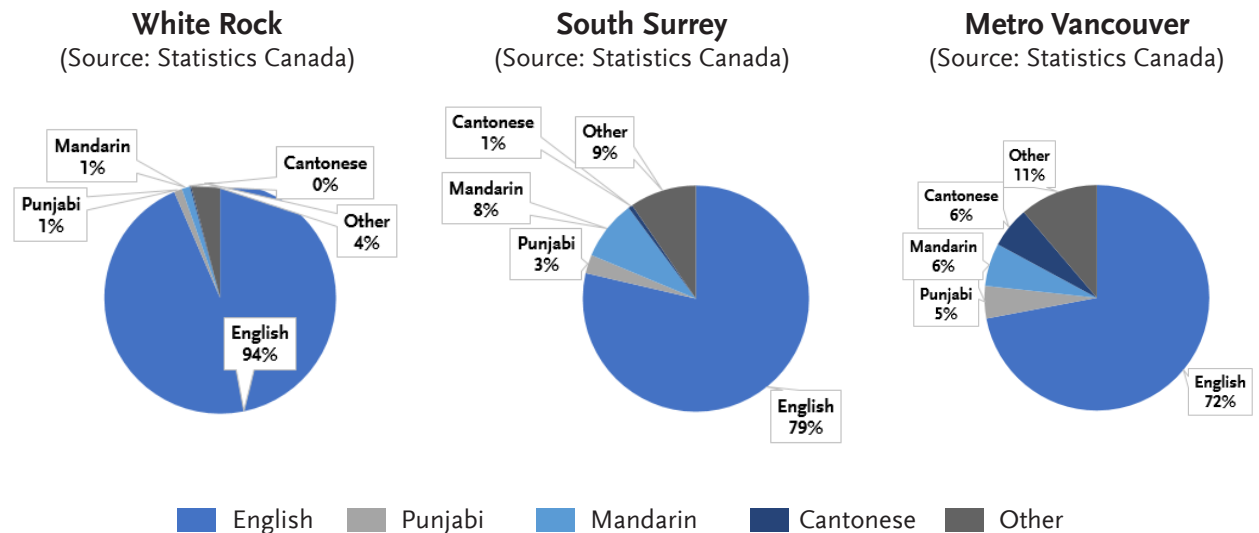
(Source: Statistics Canada)



Language

The vast majority of White Rock residents, 94%, identify English as the language most often spoken at home. This is significantly more than in South Surrey (79 percent) and Metro Vancouver (72 percent), reflecting a less diverse demographic.

Language Most Often Spoken at Home

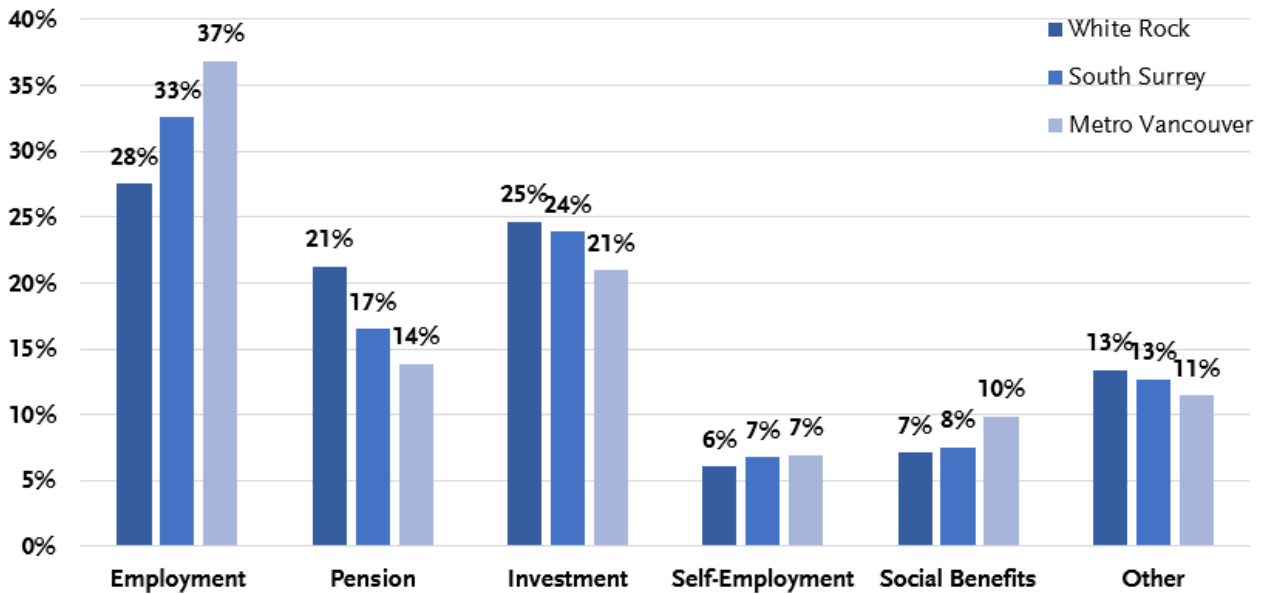


Taxfiler Income by Source

White Rock's age demographics influences the sources of income of White Rock residents. Based on income tax returns from 2017 (the most recent year available), White Rock residents receive 21% of their total income from pensions, a significantly higher percentage than in South Surrey (17 percent) or Metro Vancouver (14 percent). Income from employment is correspondingly lower; other sources of income are at similar levels.

Taxfiler Income by Source, 2017

(Source: Canada Revenue Agency)

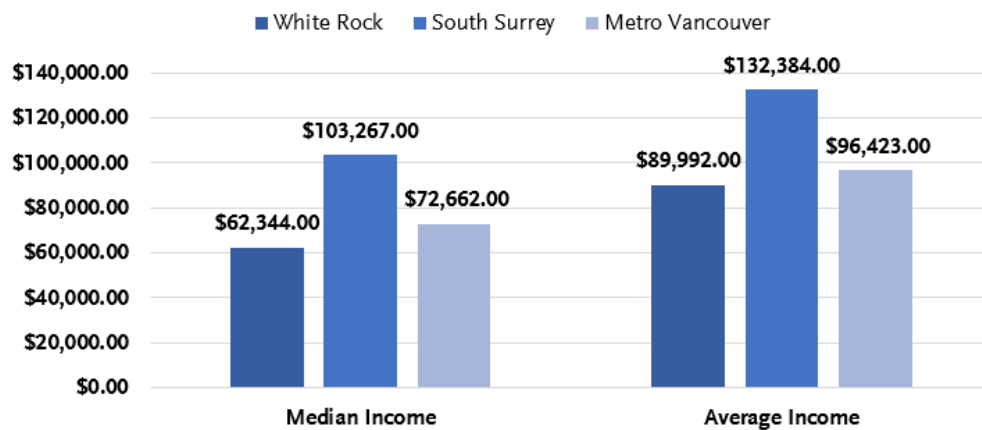


Total Household Income

Median and average total household incomes are lower in White Rock than in South Surrey and Metro Vancouver. This lower value can be attributed to White Rock’s high proportion of single person households, and its larger senior population dependent upon fixed sources of retirement income. It is notable that the median employment income of full-year full-time workers in White Rock is higher (\$58,715) than the Metro Vancouver median (\$54,955).

Median and Average Total Household Income

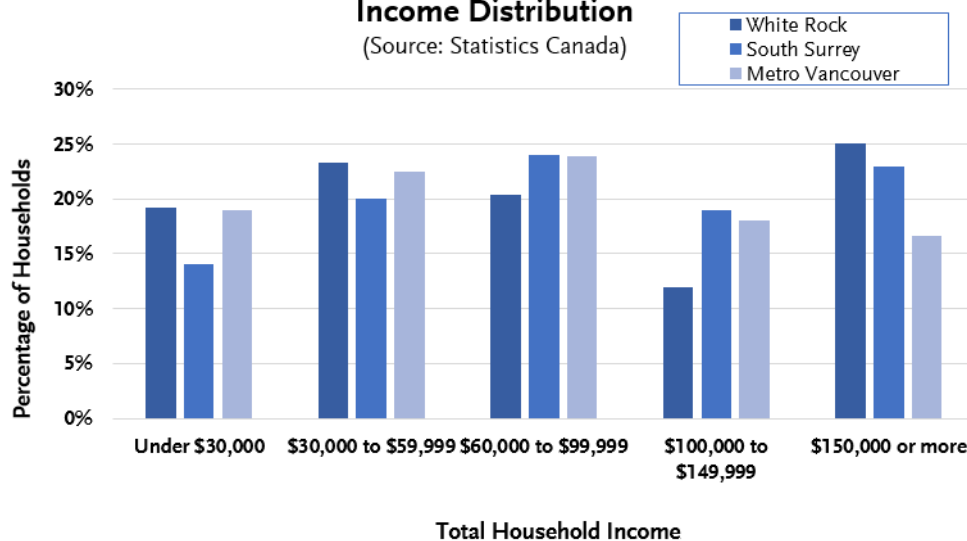
(Source: Statistics Canada)



Income distribution in White Rock is more skewed than in Metro Vancouver and South Surrey, with White Rock having a higher proportion of both lower income and high income households and a lower proportion of middle income households

Income Distribution

(Source: Statistics Canada)

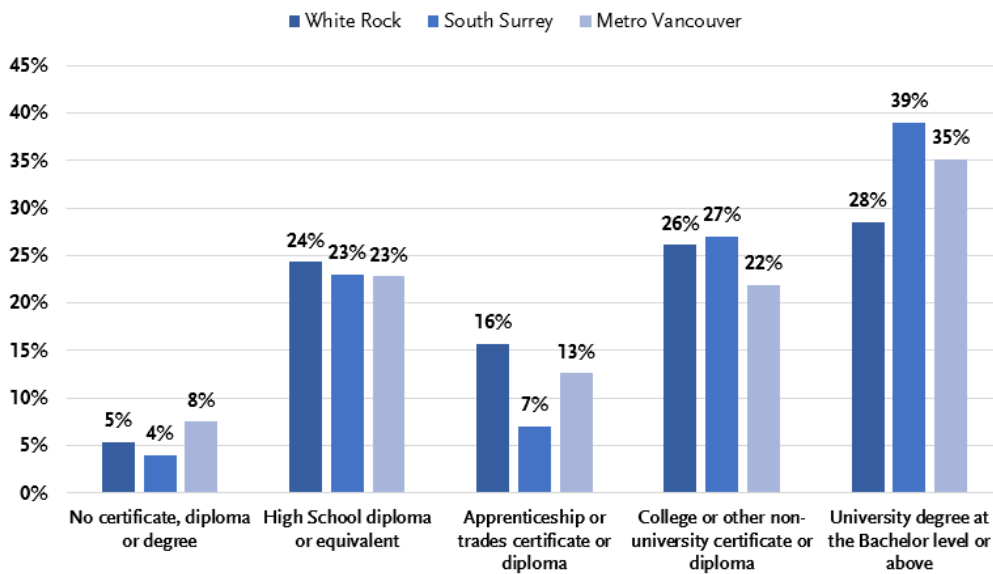


Education

The educational profile of White Rock residents in the working ages of 25 to 64 is very similar to both Metro Vancouver and South Surrey. Relative to neighbouring South Surrey however, White Rock has double the percentage of working age residents with an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma, and 11 percent less working age residents with a university degree at the Bachelor level or above.

Highest Level of Educational Attainment Ages 25 to 64

(Source: Statistics Canada)



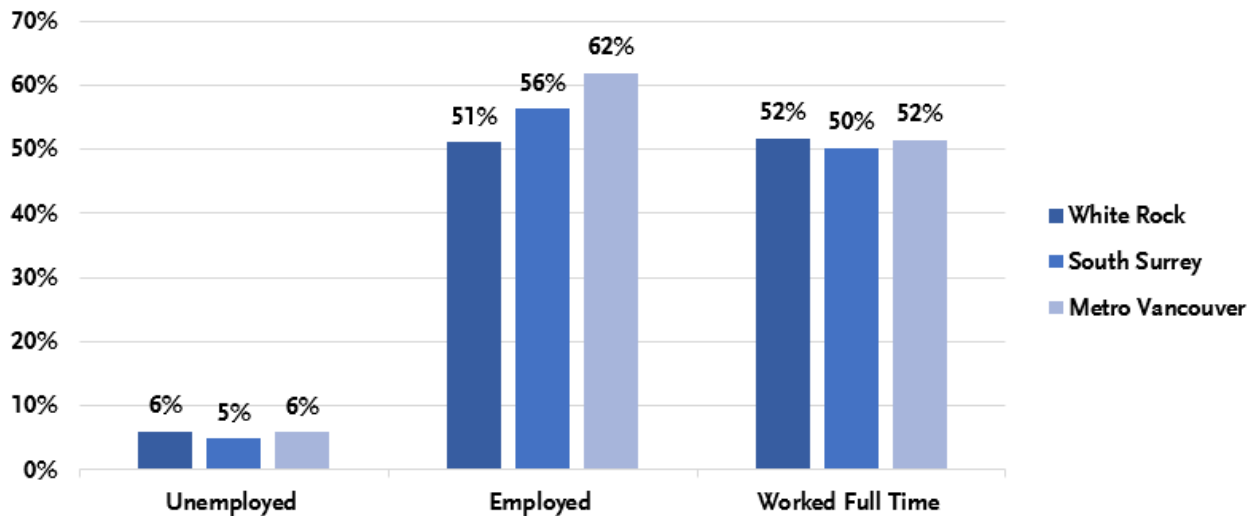
Employment

Approximately 9,450 residents of White Rock were employed in 2016, with approximately 52 per cent of residents working in a full time capacity. Three quarters of the workforce operated at a fixed address.

At approximately 6.0 per cent, the unemployment rate in White Rock is comparable to Metro Vancouver average (6 percent) but slightly higher than South Surrey (5 percent). The employment rate in White Rock is lower in comparison to Metro Vancouver and South Surrey (51 percent vs. 62 and 56 percent respectively), which reflects the age demographics of the community.

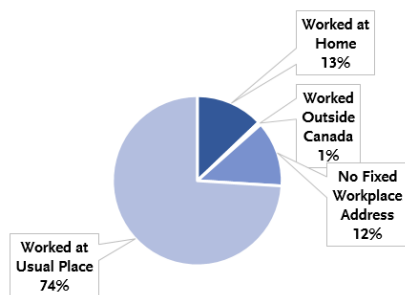
Labour Force Participation

(Source: Statistics Canada)

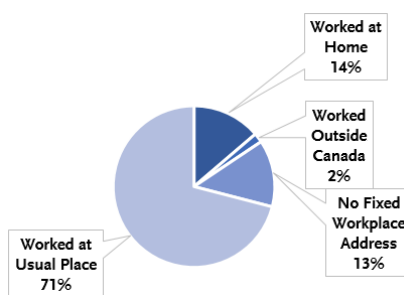


Place of Work

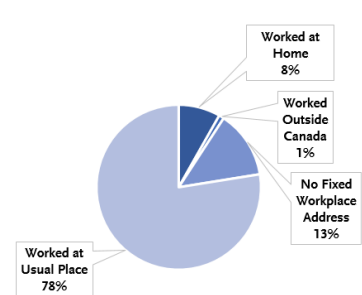
White Rock
(Source: Statistics Canada)



South Surrey
(Source: Statistics Canada)



Metro Vancouver
(Source: Statistics Canada)



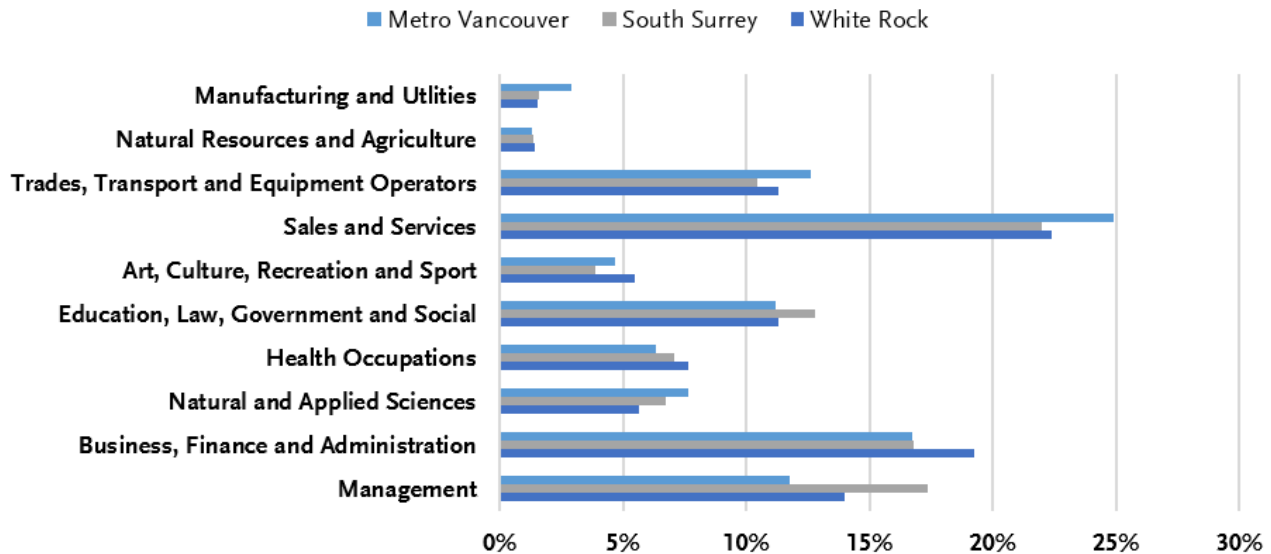
Worked at Home
 Worked Outside Canada
 No Fixed Workplace Address
 Worked at Usual Place

Employment (cont'd)

The distribution of labour by occupation is similar between Metro Vancouver, South Surrey and White Rock; however, there is a greater percentage of residents of White Rock working within the business/finance/administration, healthcare, and arts & culture sectors.

Labour Force by Occupation

(Source: Statistics Canada)

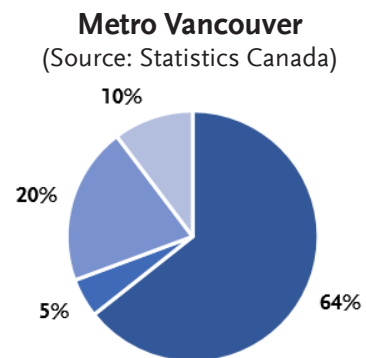
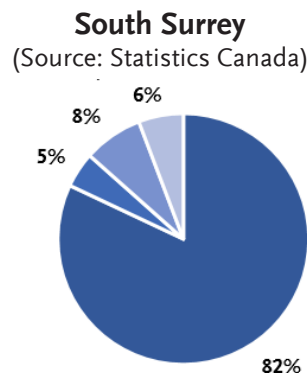
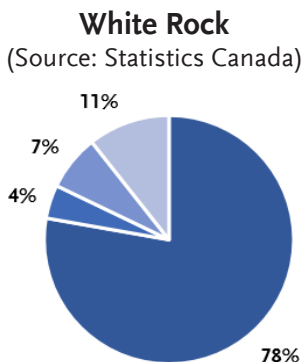


Transportation and Mobility

In 2016, approximately 82% per cent of the employed population in White Rock who commuted to work did so using a personal vehicle – with the majority behind the wheel.

The duration of the typical White Rock commute was under 44 minutes, similar to the typical commute time for South Surrey workers.

While 16 percent of White Rock workers travel elsewhere within the community for work, the majority (81 percent) travelled to another community located somewhere else in Metro Vancouver for work.

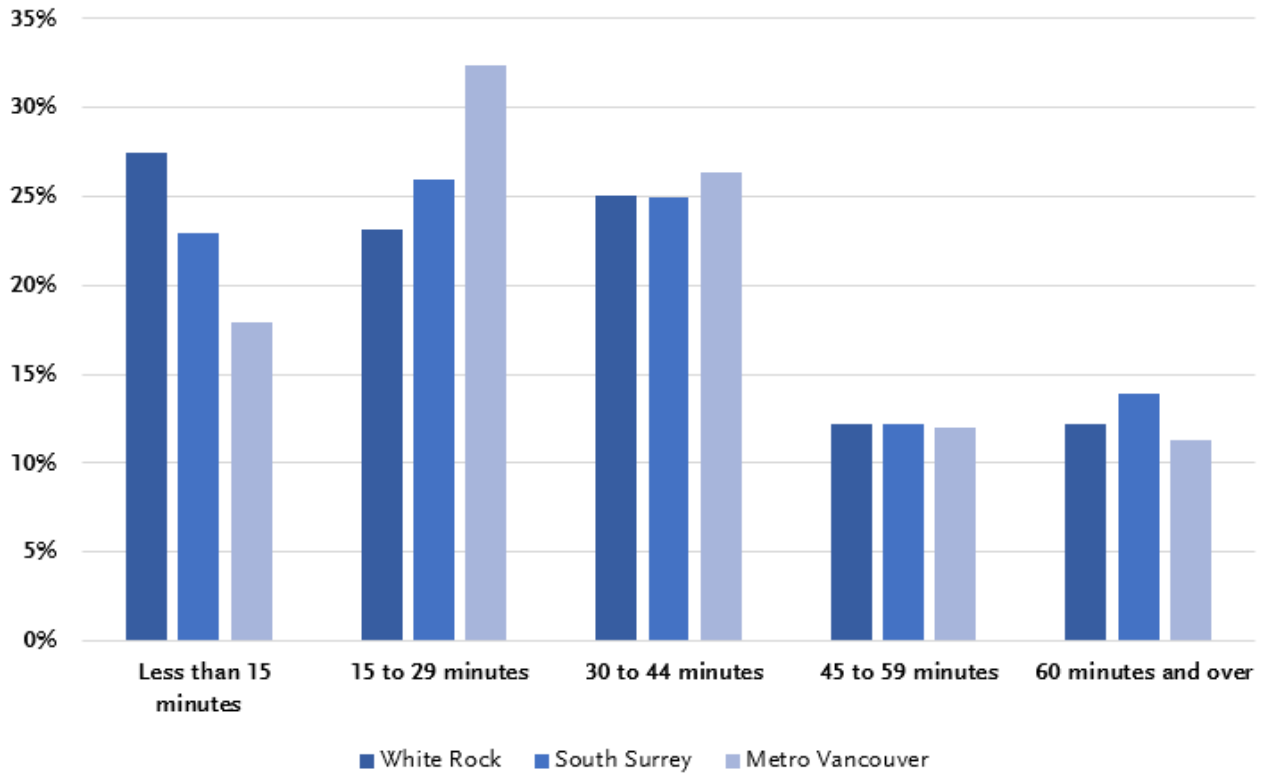


Car, Truck, Van (driver)
 Car, Truck, Van (passenger)
 Public Transit
 Walked, Biked or Other

Transportation and Mobility (cont'd)

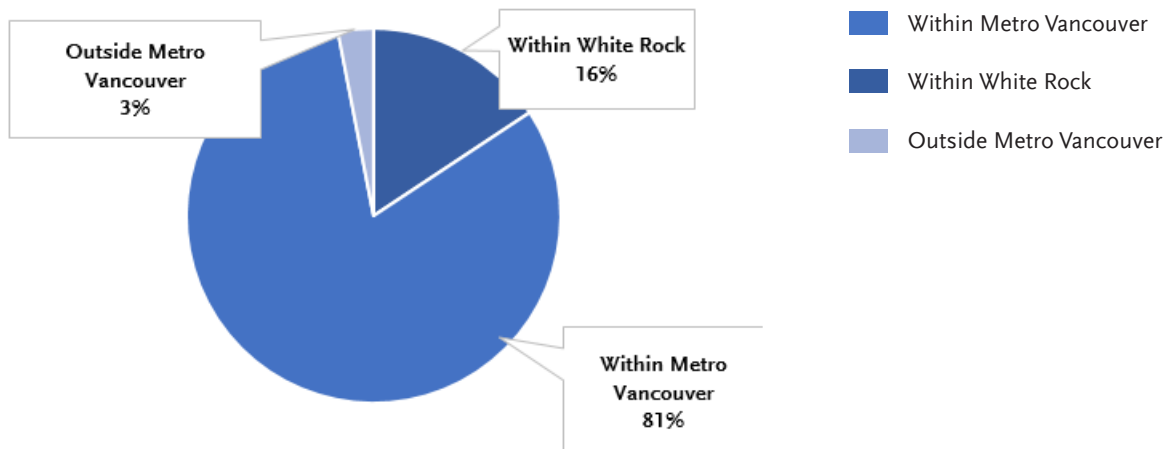
Duration of Commute

(Source: Statistics Canada)



Commuting Destination

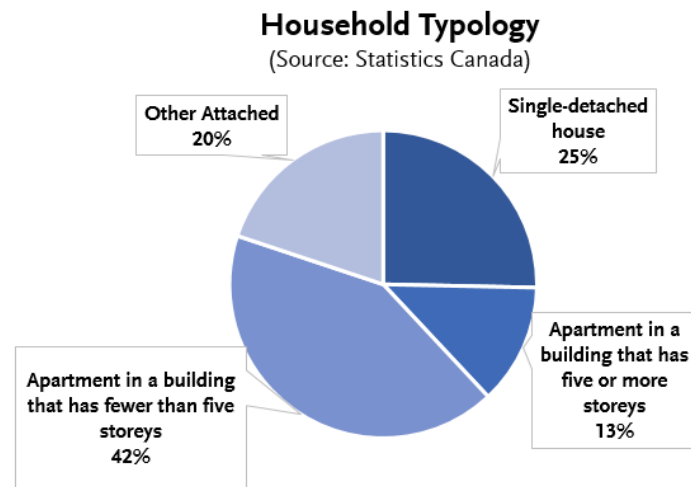
(Source: Statistics Canada)





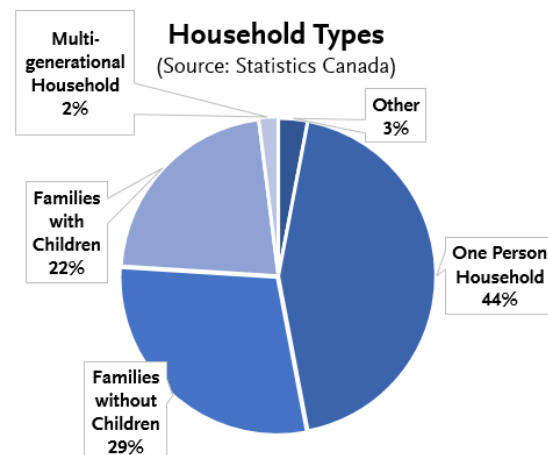
Housing Stock, Type and Age

The total housing stock in White Rock increased by 10 per cent from 2001 to 2016, and an estimated 10% from 2016 to 2021. The majority of the new dwellings take the form of apartment buildings. The growing inclusion of secondary suites in newer single-detached homes is also represented in the 2016 data, falling under Statistics Canada’s broad definition of “duplex units”.



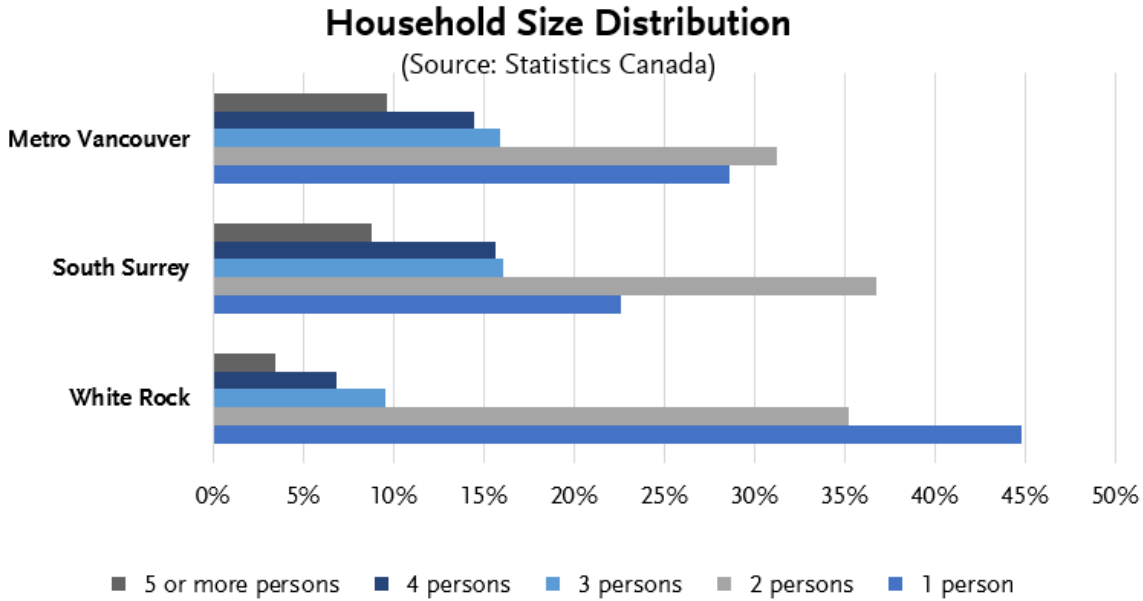
Household Types

In 2016 67.9 percent of all households in White Rock were owners and 32.1 percent were tenants. One-person households (44 percent) are most common, followed by families without children (29 percent) and families with children (22 percent).



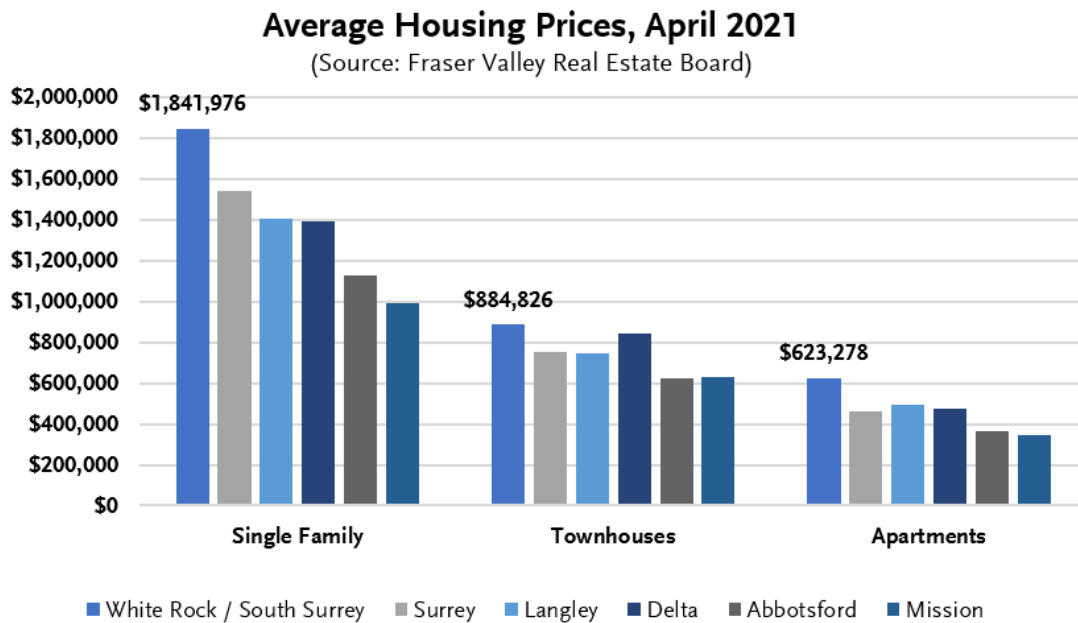
Family Structure

The proportion of census families smaller than three persons in White Rock is higher than in both Metro Vancouver and South Surrey by approximately 20 per cent. Subsequently, the average family size in White Rock (1.9 persons) is smaller than the average in Metro Vancouver and South Surrey (both at 2.5 person).



Housing Prices

The White Rock / South Surrey area has the highest housing prices among the communities covered by the Fraser Valley Real Estate Board.

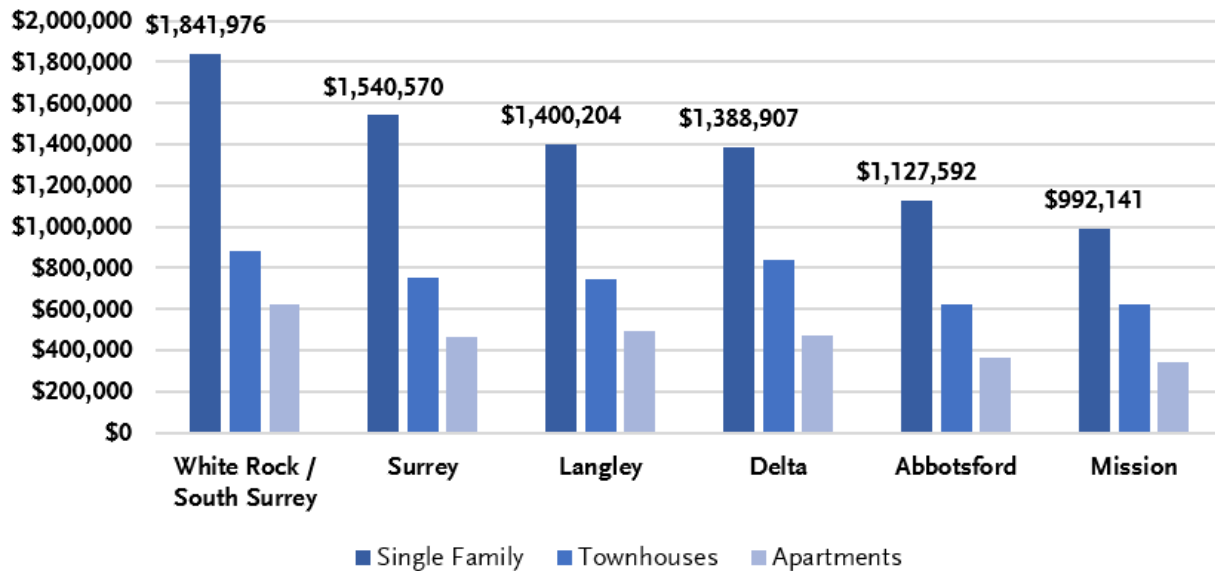


Housing Prices (cont'd)

The average price in the White Rock / South Surrey area for single family homes, townhouses and apartments are above the prices for the same types of dwellings in other Fraser Valley communities.

Average Housing Prices, April 2021

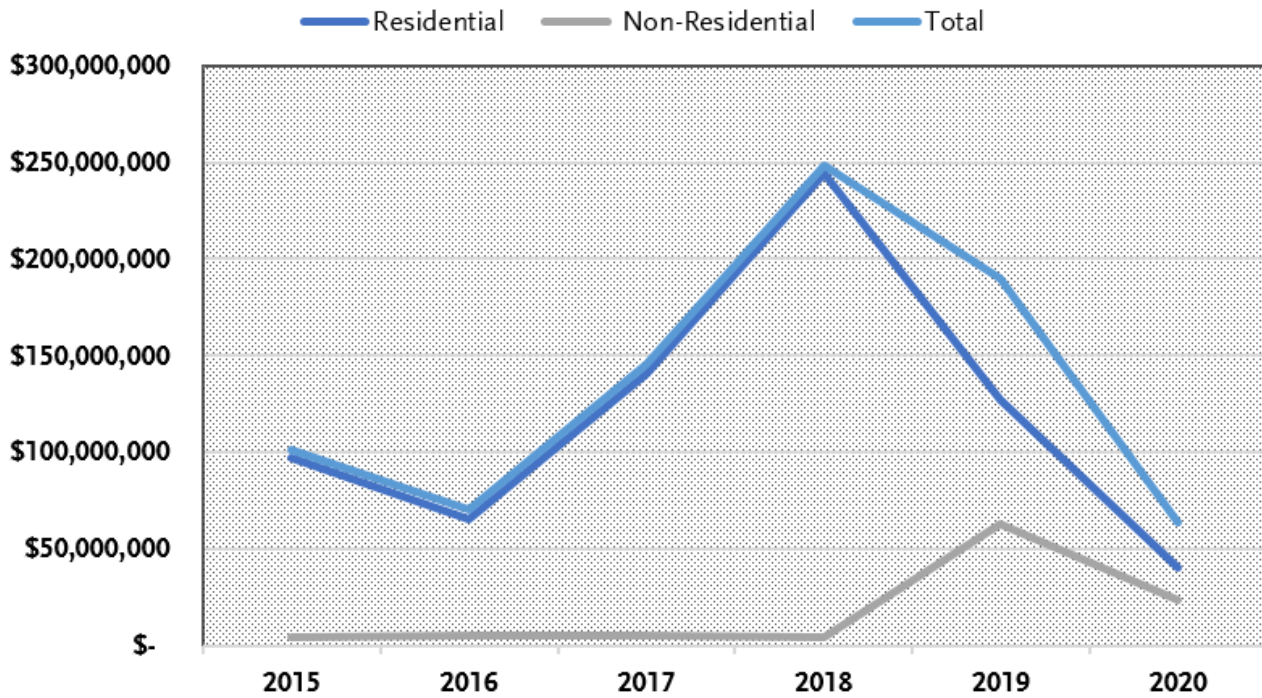
(Source: Fraser Valley Real Estate Board)



Like many other communities, White Rock has accelerated levels of development activity in recent years, with a significant drop off in activity in 2020 because of the COVID19 Pandemic. Total building permits peaked at \$248 million in 2018.

White Rock Building Permits, 2015 to 2020

(Source: City of White Rock)



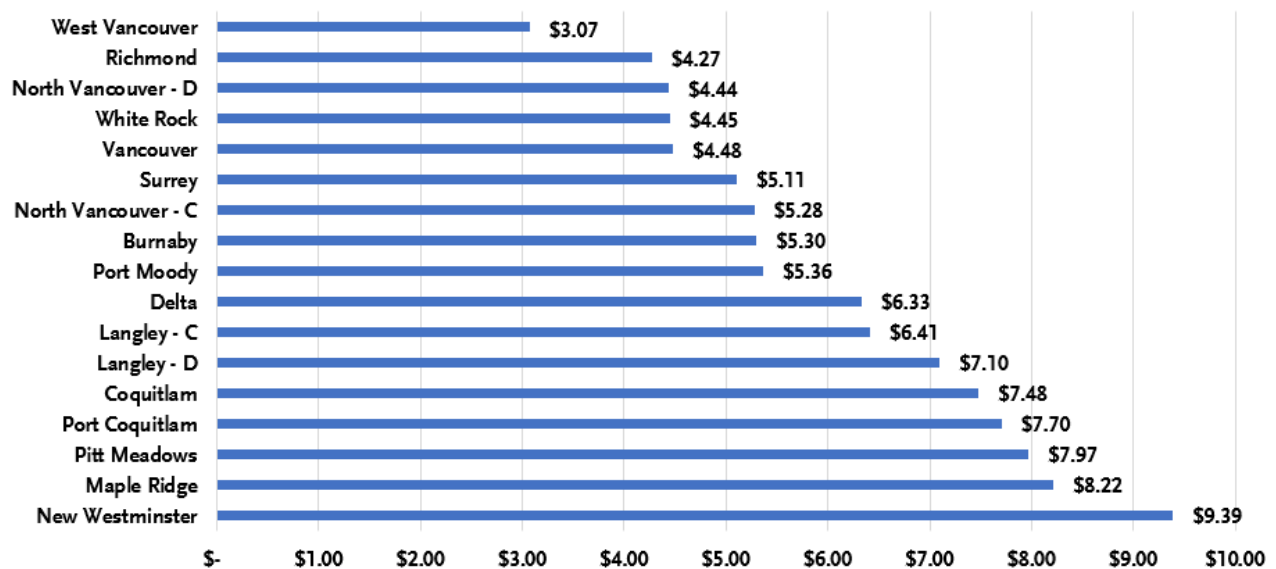
Historically the majority of development in White Rock has been residential and this trend continues.

Part of attracting and retaining businesses is ensuring that business costs, including municipal taxes, fees and charges, are competitive with other locations in Metro Vancouver. It is difficult to make direct comparisons because each municipality provides a different range of public services and pays for these services through a unique combination of taxes and fees. For example, one municipality might provide a service on a user-fee basis, another might fund the same service from general property tax revenues (provide an example).

Property taxes are based on assessed values which also makes comparisons difficult because assessed property values can vary significantly from place to place within the region (and within municipalities) so a comparison of property tax rates is often not a true comparison of actual property taxes paid for a given type of property. Municipalities with very high property assessments can charge much lower property tax rates and still raise the same amount of revenues as municipalities with lower property assessments that charge higher property tax rates.

**Business Property Tax per \$1000 Assessed Value
(municipal portion only) 2020**

(Source: Ministry of Municipal Affairs)



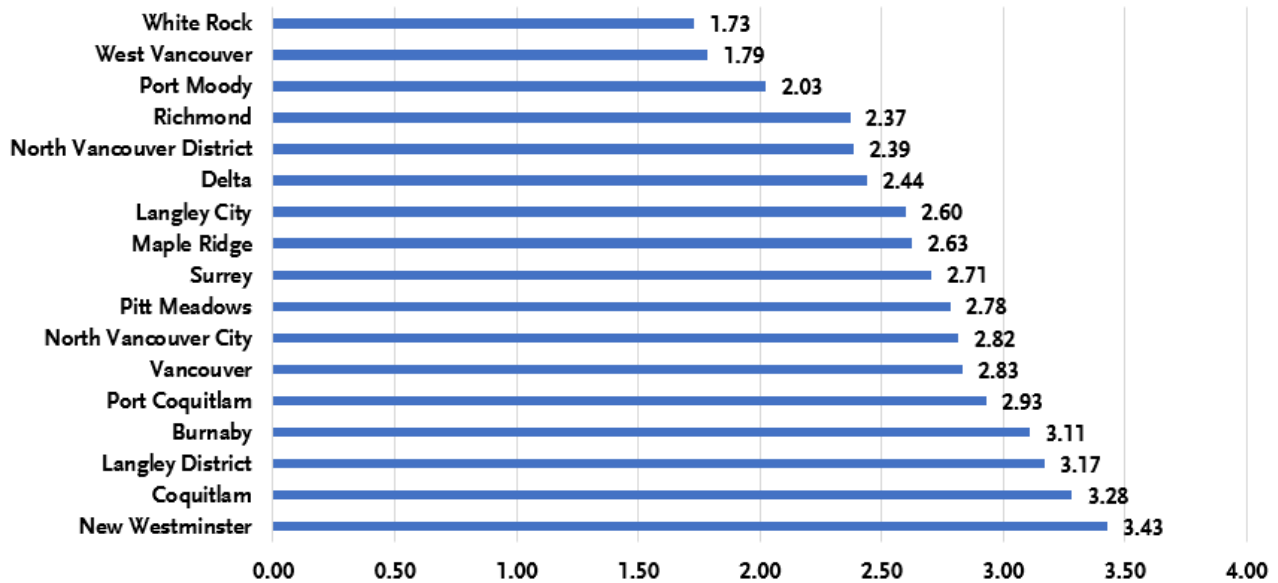
It is important for the City of White Rock to ensure that its property tax rates are similar to those in the City of Surrey. This is because the South Surrey / White Rock area functions as a single market; the assessed values are similar and differences in property tax rates are likely to reflect real difference in property taxes paid. Higher tax rates in White Rock could encourage businesses to relocate to South Surrey.

Another important comparison is the ratio of business to residential property tax rates. All municipalities in Metro Vancouver charge higher property tax rates to businesses, but the ratio varies significantly.

White Rock compares very favourable to other municipalities on this measure, as its ratio of business to residential property tax rates is the lowest in the region.

Ratio of Business to Residential Property Tax Rates (municipal portion) 2020

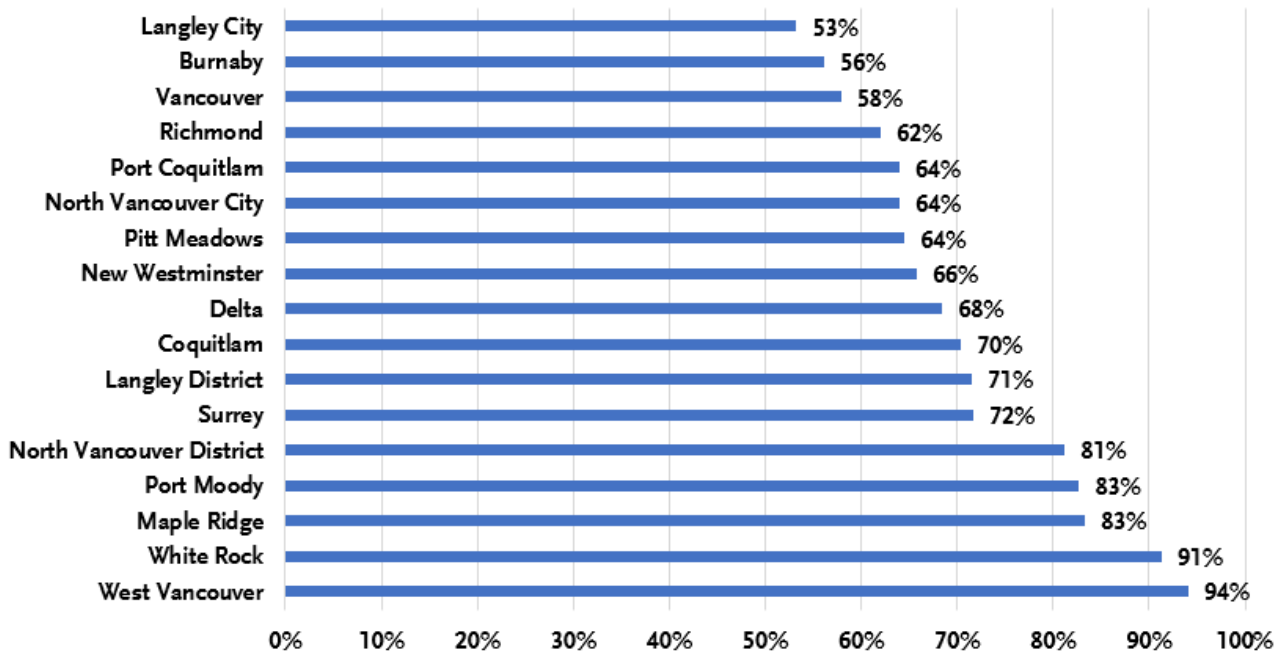
(Source: Ministry of Municipal Affairs)



White Rock relies heavily on the residential sector as a source of property tax revenue, with 91% of revenue drawn from residential taxpayers. This is the second highest rate in the region.

Residential Share of Municipal Property Taxes 2020

(Source: Ministry of Municipal Affairs)





Appendix B: Competitive Assessment of White Rock's Economy

This analysis of White Rock's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) has been compiled from a variety of sources including:

- Consultation with the City's Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Consultation with the business community and residents through the Economic Development Surveys and one on one conversations
- Previous studies completed for the City

The content of the SWOT analysis supported the development of the Economic Development Strategic Plan Vision, Goals and Objectives.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, loyal customer base • Highly engaged residents • Small town atmosphere • Increasing population of South Surrey White Rock area • Proximity to the US border • Waterfront • Multiple major tourism and community events • Eclectic mix of independent businesses • Arts & Culture sector • Health & Wellness sector • Active BIA and Chamber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No undeveloped land • Reliance on residential tax base • Parking costs and availability • Limited housing diversity and affordability • Property taxes • Waterfront vacancies and run-down condition • Waterfront seasonality / cyclical nature of business activity • BNSF tracks and leased land • Town Center / Waterfront connectivity • Lack of formal accommodation for tourists • Lack of entertainment opportunities • Wayfinding on Hwy 99, King George Boulevard, 8th Avenue and I5 • Timely delivery of city services / responsiveness to business concerns • Staff capacity and turnover
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalization of the Waterfront • Collaboration with SFN • Indigenous Tourism • Re-development of the Pier • Development of a hotel / convention centre complex • Re-imagining and re-launching the Tour de White Rock, Canada Day by the Bay, and White Rock Sea Festival • Re-branding (as a highly desirable destination for South of the Fraser and Washington State visitors) and Marketing • Re-development of Town Centre properties • Establishing an Arts & Culture Centre • Expansion of the Health & Wellness sector • Improving the mix of retail, restaurants and drinking establishments • Attracting the Work from Home population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional competition (Fort Langley, Crescent Beach, Steveston) • Seasonality • Reduced cross-border traffic (post pandemic) • Re-development of Semiahmoo Town Centre • Aging population and corresponding decline in retail spending • Balancing development and residents desire to retain a "small town" feel • Reliance on real estate sector

Appendix C: Economic Partners

The process of developing White Rock's Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) engaged the local business community, subject matter experts and various partner agencies. The City's economic partners are described below. Partnership roles are identified in the EDSP Objectives and Action Items.

Local Business Organizations



White Rock Business Improvement Association (White Rock BIA)

The White Rock BIA supports local businesses through marketing and promotional activities, coordinating local events, beautification projects, communicating community changes, and by advocating on their behalf.

The BIA is funded through a special tax levy on commercial properties within its geographic boundaries. The BIA bylaw establishes a 5-year mandate commencing April 2020, and maximum funding of \$364,037.

The City of White Rock has a formal role in BIA operations via:

- Its taxing authority (provision of recoverable grant, and collection of special tax levy)
- Monitoring the work of the BIA to ensure that it fulfills its stated purpose and mandate pursuant to the bylaw
- Partnering with the BIA on specific initiatives



South Surrey White Rock Chamber of Commerce (SS&WR Chamber)

The South Surrey & White Rock (SSWR) Chamber of Commerce was established in 1937 to promote business and economic growth on the peninsula and has been the voice for businesses for over 75 years.

The Chamber provides access to resources, support and marketing opportunities, initiates programs and events, works closely with local government and forms committees dedicated to proactively addressing issues of interest and concern that affect its members and the community.

Major Businesses

The small size of White Rock's local economy means that most businesses are small or medium sized and largely local serving. The major exceptions to this are Peace Arch Hospital (employee count is unavailable), believed to be the largest employer in White Rock. The hospital provides a range of health care services including emergency, surgery, and maternity care. Other large employers include Evergreen Care Homes with approximately 340 employees, the City of White Rock with approximately 200 employees, and the Surrey School District with approximately 110 employees.

Appendix C: Economic Partners

Destination Marketing Organizations

Tourism development and marketing in Canada is highly organized, with resources and other supportive infrastructure provided at the federal, provincial, and regional levels. This enables local communities to participate in collective marketing both domestically and abroad. Tourism development and marketing organizations that support tourism in White Rock include:



Destination British Columbia (Destination BC)

A provincial Crown corporation that leads the marketing of British Columbia as a tourist destination and promotes the development and growth of the provincial tourism industry. Destination BC is focused on attracting overnight visitors to the province by promoting its Super, Natural British Columbia brand to the world, and increasing tourism revenues by supporting industry in the development and delivery of remarkable experiences. They work collaboratively with industry, regional, community and indigenous partners.



Explore White Rock

An independent non-profit society whose primary purposes are to work in collaboration with the SSWR Chamber of Commerce, the City of White Rock, the White Rock BIA, and tourism industry stakeholders to develop, encourage, assist, and promote tourism within the City of White Rock, and to acquire, raise, collect and expend revenue including funds received from the aforementioned partners.



Indigenous Tourism BC

A non-profit, stakeholder-based organization committed to the continued growth of a sustainable, authentic, and culturally rich Indigenous tourism industry in British Columbia

Appendix D: Economic Data Sources

Statistics Canada Census Data 2016
Canada Revenue Agency 2017
BC Stats Province of British Columbia 2021
Fraser Valley Real Estate Board Statistics April 2021
City of White Rock Building Permit Values 2015 to 2020
Ministry of Municipal Affairs Property Tax Data 2020

Appendix E: Consultation Participants

Economic Development Advisory Committee Members 2020 & 2021
City of White Rock Management Team, representing all City departments
White Rock Business Improvement Association
South Surrey White Rock Chamber of Commerce
Explore White Rock
Local business owners and operators
Local members of the community

WHITE ROCK

City by the Sea!

Economic Development Strategic Plan

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