

CITY OF PITT MEADOWS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



City of
Pitt Meadows
THE *Natural* PLACE

PITT MEADOWS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

FINAL REPORT

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For:

CITY OF PITT MEADOWS

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1 INTRODUCTION

Pitt Meadows is a community of approximately 20,000 people, located in the traditional territory of the q̓ic̓əy' (Katzie) First Nation. It is one of the smallest municipalities in Metro Vancouver on a population basis and about 78% of the land base is agricultural.

After the arrival of Europeans in the 19th century, the economy in what is now Pitt Meadows was focused on resource extraction, industrial activity along the shores of the Fraser River, and farming. Significant diversification has occurred over the years with the emergence of the transportation sector (airport and rail), manufacturing and distribution, tourism and recreation, and various commercial and public services for the growing population.

This Economic Development Strategic Plan builds on the directions established in the recently updated Official Community Plan (2022). These include a focus on strengthening local business, ensuring the supply of well-situated commercial and industrial land, and building on key assets such as the airport, tourism and recreation assets, and agricultural land.

While Pitt Meadows has traditionally functioned as a bedroom community within Metro Vancouver, there has been a large recent improvement in the balance between local jobs and the local resident workforce, driven by the growth of business park space in the south of the city. Excluding home-based employment, which increased massively in the 2021 Census due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Pitt Meadows increased its non-home-based employment more than any other municipality from 2016 to 2021.

Building on this momentum across a variety of sectors is the objective of this plan.

STUDY PROCESS

The preparation of this strategic plan has been guided through the process by the members of the Pitt Meadows Economic Development Advisory Committee.

The Committee provided input on the project direction and feedback on interim work through a series of meetings starting in May 2022 and continuing through the rest of the year. They also created the updated community vision for economic development shown in section 2.

Other elements of the process included statistical analysis and research on economic, demographic, and related trends, as well as consultation with both residents and businesses. This occurred through online surveys conducted in summer 2022, as well as telephone and in-person interviews with business representatives. An interim presentation on strategic directions was provided to City Council in October 2022.

2 VISION

To enhance our small-town character and lifestyle by supporting local business viability, attracting investment and visitors, and building on our essential agricultural resources.

This vision for economic development in Pitt Meadows has been developed by the Economic Development Advisory Committee in their role as advisors to the development of this strategic plan.



FIGURE 1: PHOTO BY ALEXANDER POPE

3 COMPETITIVE ASSESSMENT

Achieving the Pitt Meadows vision for economic development requires a strategic plan that builds on strengths and opportunities in the community, as well as working to minimize shortcomings. A competitive assessment of the Pitt Meadows economy, demographics, and business climate is therefore an essential step in crafting the plan.

The assessment summarized below is based on consultation with the community, previous studies prepared in Pitt Meadows and regionally, and the economic analysis outlined in Appendix B. While such an assessment cannot possibly cover all aspects of a community, the points highlighted below are most relevant to achieving Pitt Meadows' economic development goals.

STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

These are strengths from the perspective of economic development. They have the potential to be leveraged or enhanced to further the community's economic development goals.

- **Recreation assets**, including multiple golf courses, riverfront, Pitt Lake, cycling destinations, dike trail system, and more.
- Influx of **substantial industrial investment** has expanded the tax base to the benefit of residential and commercial properties.
- **Agricultural land** supports farming and related processing and remains a critical asset as both an economic driver and a vital part of the regional food supply.
- **Pitt Meadows Regional Airport** provides a strong economic driver with significant growth potential for aviation-related industries and potential future waterfront development.

- **Central location** in the region for goods and people movement, aided by direct access to the South Fraser region via the Golden Ears Bridge and to communities to the west via the upgraded Pitt River Bridge.
- **Community arts**, such as Summer Serenade and Bard on the Bandstand, that support community spirit and vitality.
- Strong sense of **community identity**, including small-town feel and agricultural heritage.
- Industrial and workforce concentrations in **agriculture, transportation, manufacturing**, and related **trade and technical fields**.
- **Future development areas** providing opportunity for commercial expansion, including North Lougheed and Harris Road corridor. The civic centre could become a new focus for commercial, institutional and residential investment.

WEAKNESSES AND LIMITATIONS

The following are weaknesses from an economic development perspective. The strategic approach is to acknowledge and work within these limitations, while taking active steps to improve them over time.

- **Limited commercial space**, particularly in smaller unit sizes for startup businesses. A related issue is high commercial lease rates, but this is consistent throughout the region and acts as a filtering mechanism to ensure that only the best business plans and most viable businesses have access to the limited space that is available.
- **Transportation “choke points”** that include rail crossings at grade, the Harris Road/Lougheed Highway intersections, and intersections near

industrial parks. Several of these are currently being addressed, while the status of other projects is unclear given cost increases.

- Very **high-cost agricultural land** limiting the entry of new farmers (the average farm operator age is nearly 60) and challenging the viability of agricultural businesses.
- **Limited economic development resources** at the municipal level to actively pursue economic development initiatives. A related issue is lack of resources for businesses about where to find information and seek assistance.
- Perception in the community of a **limited awareness of the range of businesses and services** that exist locally.
- **Limited public transport** to major employment areas in the south of the city, including the airport and Golden Ears Business Park. Also transit linkages to other communities to facilitate worker movement in and out of the community.

- **Average earnings are typically lower** for jobs based in Pitt Meadows compared to the same industries and occupations elsewhere in the region. This limits the potential for outward commuters to find equivalent local employment.
- **Slow growing population and relatively static labour force** limit the potential for growth to drive new business and employment opportunities (and alleviate labour shortages).
- **Labour shortages** are an ongoing challenge for local business, although not unique to Pitt Meadows and part of broader demographic and structural changes affecting the labour market.
- **Limited commercial services** such as restaurants.
- Local economic impact of **tourism assets is limited by lack of connection to commercial areas.**

4 STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Strategic objectives establish the framework for the individual strategies and action items to follow. The objectives are mutually reinforcing and occasionally overlap, but making progress toward each objective represents progress toward achieving the Pitt Meadows economic development vision.

OBJECTIVE #1 – IMPROVE THE LOCAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF BUSINESS VIABILITY

This objective covers a range of fundamental business inputs that are common across most sectors and for both large and small businesses. These include labour supply, available commercial and industrial real estate, transportation, infrastructure, and local regulations and costs.

OBJECTIVE #2 – SUPPORT A VIABLE AND GROWING AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Agriculture is not only foundational to Pitt Meadows' history and identity but remains one of the pillars of the local economy. The City has a critical role in providing vital services and a supportive regulatory framework for local agriculture, while also serving as a nexus of influence for local farmers in interactions with regional, provincial, and federal governments. Agriculture is also a dynamic sector with varied opportunities for both traditional and advanced-technology growth.

OBJECTIVE #3 – INCREASE THE PROMOTION AND ECONOMIC VALUE OF TOURISM

Tourism is a different type of economic sector that typically requires central coordination of marketing and promotion for the benefit of an entire community or region. This function is currently not being provided for Pitt Meadows, yet the city has multiple tourism assets. Enhancing the economic value of tourism requires capturing a greater economic benefit from visitors through expanding commercial operations or better linking visitors with existing commercial areas.

OBJECTIVE #4 – PURSUE OTHER GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Pitt Meadows has many additional opportunities for new business development that either provide high-quality employment opportunities locally or expand the range of commercial or recreational amenities for residents, or both.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

STAFFING

This plan was prepared with the understanding that the City of Pitt Meadows will not have dedicated economic development personnel. As indicated under each of the strategies outlined in sections 5 to 8, the implementation lead for each strategy has been assigned to either the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC), specific City departments, or partner agencies.

In most cases, the involvement of EDAC or City departments in a substantial initiative (in terms of time commitment or financial resources) will require an approved budget allocation for additional resources.

Initiatives that involve regular monitoring of local conditions, information collection, or relationship building would benefit from an ongoing economic development function. The City may consider this in the future and there are various models for economic development staffing used in BC municipalities. An economic development coordinator could be either a full-time position or a split position with other duties in a related department like planning. For example, the City of Vernon in the past has had a staff position called Economic Development Planner that is essentially a split role between junior planning and economic development coordination.

ROLE OF EDAC

The Economic Development Advisory Committee has an important role in the implementation of this strategy. While the exact process will be determined by EDAC, under the guidance of City Council and staff, their role could include:

- Recommendation of priority initiatives on an annual basis.
- Working with committee staff liaison on the preparation of business plans for funding specific initiatives.

- Ongoing advisory role in the execution of projects, including by providing input on the direction of initiatives and feedback on interim progress reports.
- If desired, taking a more active role in certain initiatives through the creation of project sub-committees where interested EDAC members contribute their expertise toward the planning and/or execution of priority initiatives.

Apart from the project-based focus references above, EDAC has a role as the conduit between the business community and the City. Using personal and business connections, EDAC members should continually be in dialogue with the community about business and worker conditions and where appropriate, raise issues at the EDAC table or suggest guest speakers to be featured at EDAC meetings. The Committee could informally have a rotating responsibility to identify guest speakers to raise awareness of a specific issue or economic opportunity to the rest of the Committee and by extension, City leadership.

PRIORITIZATION

All the strategies included in the report are important, but there is a hierarchy of importance based on the urgency of an issue or opportunity, the ability of the City to implement the strategy with the expected level of resources, or the likelihood of success. Priorities are indicated by three levels:

- **High.** These are the most important issues and considered most readily achievable by the City in the short term.
- **Moderate.** Initiatives that may require more time or resources and/or have less immediate urgency.
- **Longer-Term.** Initiatives that may represent longer-term opportunities to be pursued after top priorities are addressed.

In addition, several strategies are noted as requiring ongoing support.

5 LOCAL BUILDING BLOCK STRATEGIES

These strategies are designed to achieve **Objective #1 – Improve the Local Building Blocks of Business Viability.**

STRATEGY 1: INCREASE SUPPLY OF LEASABLE COMMERCIAL SPACE

The 2019 Rollo & Associates report on commercial and industrial land in Pitt Meadows suggested that the commercial real estate market was broadly in balance between supply and demand.

While population growth has been modest since that time, events such as the COVID-19 pandemic (which has caused many working residents to permanently shift to working from home at least part-time and thus create a larger daytime market), and the addition of hundreds of new jobs at Golden Ears Business Park in the south of the city, suggest that the commercial market is now larger. Consultation for this study also identified the limited availability of commercial real estate, particularly in smaller units for new companies, to be an impediment to local business growth.

There are relatively few sites for potential commercial expansion, so growth in commercial supply over the medium to longer term is most likely to occur through the North Lougheed development, through the redevelopment and intensification of the Harris Road corridor from Hammond Road north to Lougheed Highway, and through possible redevelopment of existing commercial sites along Lougheed or at Meadowtown Shopping Centre.

ACTIONS		
<p>1.1 Encourage commercial and mixed-use developers to maximize the amount and variety of commercial space within new developments, including North Lougheed and along Harris Road.</p> <p>1.2 Use consultation and survey results from this plan, as well as ongoing local insight gathered by EDAC and the City, to identify to developers the increased number and range of commercial amenities desired, including restaurants.</p> <p>1.3 Support redevelopment of aging commercial properties through a supportive development approval process.</p> <p>1.4 EDAC, when asked by Council to provide comment on development projects, to highlight the importance of commercial space to the local economy.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
HIGH	Planning & Development	None

STRATEGY 2: INCREASE DIVERSITY OF UNIT SIZES AND PERMITTED USES IN INDUSTRIAL AREAS

New industrial space at Golden Ears Business Park (GEBP) has provided essentially all the new employment space in Pitt Meadows in recent years and the project has successfully attracted significant new employment to the city.

Business consultation suggested that prevalent demand for new space in the city is primarily commercial rather than industrial, although not exclusively. At the time of this study’s preparation, construction and leasing were underway for Phases 3 and 4 of the GEBP project. Phase 3 had the most available space, with individual units typically being more than 4,000 square feet in size.

Consultation identified a desire for some smaller industrial units for new companies, although Onni (the GEBP owners) are responding to market demand and will optimize their project’s configuration for that purpose. It may be possible through dialogue with the City’s economic development representative to provide an opportunity for smaller companies to share what would otherwise be leased as single units.

Regarding the expressed desire for more commercial space, the industrial zoning for GEBP does allow a variety of commercial uses provided they occupy no more than 15% of total floorspace, including office, food service, and retail. While the City is correctly requiring industrial land to be used for primarily industrial purposes, emerging forms of urban

industrial development in higher-density markets like Vancouver are increasingly combining related uses into single facilities, such as product design and prototyping (done either on computers in an office-like setting or in a workshop), and related retail sales or food service. Craft breweries with tasting rooms and retail sales are a good example. This vertical integration of company functions on a single site is partly a response to high land costs and limited industrial space in the region and allows companies to maximize the economic value from a single site.

ACTIONS		
<p>2.1 Ensure that City zoning and other regulations are supportive of evolving industrial needs.</p> <p>2.2 Maintain dialogue with industrial developers and operators to share information on industrial market demand and identify ways to provide opportunities for smaller companies entering the industrial market.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
MODERATE	Planning & Development	None

STRATEGY 3: IMPROVE MATCHING OF EXISTING LABOUR SUPPLY WITH LABOUR DEMAND

Consultation suggests that labour availability is one of the primary challenges facing local businesses in Pitt Meadows and across British Columbia.

Many of the shortages in BC are in entry-level service positions, which is reportedly occurring in Pitt Meadows as well. While there are long-term demographic and societal forces affecting this issue in Pitt Meadows and elsewhere, there are some possible initiatives that could be undertaken locally to support local businesses.

These include a job fair that would allow local employers to promote their companies and the local job opportunities they offer. This is a similar idea to the Mission Career Expo and Job Fair held in fall 2022.

Given that many of the job openings are in entry-level positions, it may be possible for previously under-utilized labour like youth to fill some of the existing gaps. Encouraging local youth to start their working lives with Pitt Meadows companies creates stronger bonds with the community and provides lasting benefits to their future work careers. Often there is an information gap where students are unaware of companies who might benefit from their labour – this information gap could be filled through an informal directory of local companies interested in hiring student workers.

The 2021 Census results suggest that Pitt Meadows has recently made major strides in redressing the historic commuting imbalance that saw most working residents commuting to other communities. This is still true, but job growth primarily through new operations at Golden Ears Business Park has

substantially increased local employment and some of this employment has been taken up by Pitt Meadows residents. The resident survey identified that about half of respondents who commute elsewhere would be interested in working in Pitt Meadows, provided a comparable job was available.

ACTIONS		
<p>3.1 Partner with organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, WorkBC and School District No. 42 to coordinate a Pitt Meadows job fair and facilitate other recruitment initiatives.</p> <p>3.2 EDAC members use their connections to promote and encourage participation in a job fair and similar events.</p> <p>3.3 Through ongoing consultation efforts, EDAC input, and as a by-product of the job expo, create a directory of local companies open to hiring student labour and share with schools and relevant youth organizations.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
HIGH	EDAC Communications Major Employers, Chamber of Commerce	Moderate to high, requiring contract support to stage events.

STRATEGY 4: PROVIDE SUPPORTIVE SMALL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT THROUGH POLICY AND REGULATION

Providing a supportive environment for starting and operating local small businesses is part of nurturing the strong sense of small-town community in Pitt Meadows.

Having more innovative and creative small businesses will also help create a more vibrant commercial landscape and a greater variety of local employment opportunities. The Official Community Plan goal for employment and the economy is “Pitt Meadows is a community where the economy is vibrant and diverse, and local businesses are flourishing.”

All small businesses operate within the policy and regulatory environment established in part by the City of Pitt Meadows. The intent of this strategy is not to single out specific items, but to emphasize the importance of the City continuing to be aware of the environment their current and potential future policies would create and working to balance a health small business environment (moderate taxes, strong public services and infrastructure, sensible regulations) with other local priorities.

EDAC has a valuable role in both providing feedback to Council on business impacts and providing a conduit for the business community to reach out to the City to raise issues.

ACTIONS		
<p>4.1 Maintain awareness in deliberations over new and updated policies and regulations of the impact on small business.</p> <p>4.2 Be open to receiving business feedback on these impacts and take remedial action where possible and appropriate.</p> <p>4.3 EDAC to regularly solicit input from the business community, including through invited guest speakers, to maintain a high level of awareness of ongoing business conditions.</p> <p>4.4 Continue to support the diversification of the local tax base through new industrial assessment and other means that minimize tax impacts on the commercial sector.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
MODERATE	All City Departments EDAC	None

STRATEGY 5: ENHANCE CITY’S ONLINE RESOURCES FOR BUSINESS INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Pitt Meadows does not currently have an organization dedicated to supporting entrepreneurs and local small business with information and referrals to support services. This was done previously by the City’s Economic Development Corporation and is often filled in rural BC communities by a Community Futures office or Chamber of Commerce.

While the staffing of a business counsellor position is not a typical activity for a municipal economic development function, the City could undertake a modest research project to identify and share information on support services. Many larger economic development groups maintain similar “resource guides” and distribute them through their website. The City could do the same, in a similar fashion as the existing Community Directory on pittmeadows.ca, but with a specific business support focus and identifying resources, grant programs available both locally, in the North Fraser region, and elsewhere.

EDAC can provide valuable business community perspective in support of this project.

ACTIONS		
<p>5.1 Undertake a research program to identify support services accessible to local business, including those offered by the provincial or federal governments. Resource guides prepared by other community economic development agencies are an excellent starting point as many non-local resources are similar across BC.</p> <p>5.2 Work with communications staff to make the information available as a directory or simply a PDF download through the City website.</p> <p>5.3 Partner with Chamber of Commerce to support entrepreneurs and small businesses with information and referral to support services.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
MODERATE	Communications EDAC	Modest research contract (suitable for a summer internship)

STRATEGY 6: ENCOURAGE CONTINUED GROWTH OF A COHESIVE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

One of the strongest underlying themes from the business consultation is the value that local companies place on the Pitt Meadows identity. As reflected in the Economic Development Vision in section 2, great value is placed on the small-town character and cohesive nature of the community. As part of this, local companies want to know about and support each other for their service and supply needs whenever possible.

The Tourism Strategies (starting with Strategy 18) include several recommended initiatives to raise the awareness of local businesses to visitors, but those tools are also valuable for promoting Pitt Meadows to itself. An extension of these online tools and promotion is for the City to host a local business expo and online directory, either on its own or in partnership with organizations like the Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of the expo is to further raise awareness among residents of goods and services produced locally, as well as allowing businesses to identify new suppliers and partners in their home community.

An in-person expo is a significant undertaking, although would benefit from being held on a regular basis every 1-2 years (approximately), perhaps on an alternating schedule with the recommended job fair under Strategy 3.

Promotion of a cohesive business identity would also benefit from the adoption of a common logo, nickname, hashtag, or other identifier that becomes widely associated with business in Pitt Meadows. It is NOT recommended that the City create such a logo or nickname as there is no guarantee that it would be accepted and used. Rather, the city's local business community should be encouraged to organically define itself over time and the City can follow and support whatever directions emerge.

EDAC can support this initiative by encouraging relationships between local companies and providing information to the City on business events and successes that can be shared more widely. Opportunities to encourage and foster business-to-business linkages should be regularly identified and encouraged by EDAC members, such as including local business networking within larger community events.

ACTIONS		
<p>6.1 With contributions from EDAC members and key partners like the Chamber of Commerce, identify and invite local companies to participate in a local business expo.</p> <p>6.2 Regularly promote and celebrate local business success through regular social media and other communication channels.</p> <p>6.3 Through their role as the business community conduit to the City, EDAC to regularly share information around the table and serve a “matchmaker” function by identifying potentially fruitful relationships between local companies.</p> <p>6.4 Develop an online directory of local businesses and services.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
MODERATE	EDAC Communications	Moderate to high, requiring contract support to stage events.

STRATEGY 7: REGULARLY REVIEW VALUE OF DEDICATED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

As noted in the Strategic Plan Overview in section 4, the implementation of this plan assumes that the City will not have dedicated economic development staff resources. Specific initiatives will be resourced through existing departments, external organizations, or by contracting services for a dedicated purpose.

As the implementation of this plan proceeds over time, economic conditions will change and new opportunities will emerge. The City should regularly consider, perhaps as part of the annual budgeting or strategic planning process, whether dedicated staff and budget for economic development are required.

If the City decides to dedicate more resources to economic development in the future, the plan is still applicable, but can be implemented more quickly and realize benefits in coordination and information collection and sharing, going forward.

EDAC also has a role in this process by providing feedback to the City on the advisability of dedicated resources and helping to outline the additional projects and possible outcomes this would enable.

ACTIONS		
7.1 Regularly consider the appropriate level of staff and financial resources dedicated to economic development.		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
MODERATE	Corporate Services City Council EDAC	None

STRATEGY 8: MAINTAIN STRONG REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

While this plan is focused primarily on what the City can do internally to support economic development, it is also located within a dynamic and fast-growing metropolitan and provincial economy. Maintaining relationships with other governments to share information and collaborate in areas of mutual interest is also critical.

The most important partnership is with qícəy' (Katzie) First Nation, to acknowledge their traditional territory, to redress historic injustices, and to benefit from complementary economic activities. For example, the planned Eagle Meadows Business Park on qícəy' (Katzie) Reserve lands is located very close to industrial and other businesses in the city. There may be natural synergies between businesses located in each jurisdiction and fostering these supplier and service relationships would have mutual benefit. Coordination on infrastructure and construction impacts is also important.

Another example is the Nation's interest in expanding its tourism product development (they have recently undertaken a feasibility study on tourism development opportunities). Visitor to the Pitt Meadows area may partake in both qícəy' (Katzie) and city-based activities, suggesting that coordination has potential benefits for creating a better tourism experience and maximizing the economic impact of visitors.

The City of Maple Ridge is a traditional partner in many areas, including through joint ownership of the airport. They have a substantial economic development team and a recently completed strategy focused on attracting manufacturing. Regular discussions on economic development issues with Maple Ridge, as well as the District of Mission, may lead to additional joint initiatives in the future such as the former True North Fraser agriculture and tourism branding.

Regionally, Invest Vancouver is the agency tasked with supporting economic development and their strategic priorities have a particular overlap with Pitt Meadows in agritech. The provincial and federal governments are also active in economic development and maintaining those relationships is a valuable objective.

Tourism promotion is another area where partnerships are critical, including with Tourism Vancouver and Destination BC, to ensure that current and evolving assets in Pitt Meadows are widely known and promoted.

Local business organizations, including the Ridge Meadows Chamber of Commerce and WorkBC, can also help advance local economic development. The City may consider opportunities for collaborative action as part of the implementation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

ACTIONS		
<p>8.1 Ensure that economic development topics and possible areas of mutual interest are a part of regular, positive relationships with neighbouring governments and regional and provincial authorities.</p> <p>8.2 Arrange annual or semi-annual engagements with possible economic development partners, such as Invest Vancouver and Tourism Vancouver, to share information and raise awareness of Pitt Meadows assets.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
LONGER-TERM, ONGOING	City Council All Departments	None

STRATEGY 9: ATTRACT POST-SECONDARY OR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTION TO PITT MEADOWS

The attraction of a post-secondary campus or similar facility to Pitt Meadows was previously identified as an option in the draft North Lougheed Study Area land use plan. An urban-style facility, perhaps occupying one or more floors of a central office building, could also be a target of a future civic centre redevelopment centered on the current City Hall site and extending up Harris Road to the north.

Post-secondary facilities are quality employers and have numerous spinoff benefits on surrounding communities, particularly if they have a research or training linkage with existing assets, such as agriculture. But it was mentioned in local consultation as a desirable goal due to the skill development benefits for the local workforce.

Like any investment attraction initiative, the process to attract a post-secondary facility is largely a sales exercise. It involves identifying candidate schools, crafting a value proposition based on the Pitt Meadows community and the specific development where the campus/facility would be located, and creating a relationship with potential targets to communicate information and make the case for Pitt Meadows. For public sector institutions, it may also be worthwhile for the City to lobby senior government agencies.

The title of this strategy also references training institutions, which are a broader category that encompasses various private colleges. Pitt Meadows already has a mix of such facilities with the Vancouver Aviation College at the airport and the Justice Institute of BC's Driver Education Centre.

ACTIONS		
<p>9.1 Monitor the potential for post-secondary attraction as part of large development projects, such as North Lougheed and civic centre/Harris Road Corridor.</p> <p>9.2 If necessary, contract for additional resources to help formulate a sales package for the community, perhaps in partnership with the project developer, or to lobby senior governments.</p> <p>9.3 Ensure that the desire for a post-secondary or training facility is regularly communicated through public project information and through regular communication with other levels of government and partner economic development agencies (Province, Invest Vancouver, etc.).</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
LONGER-TERM	Planning & Development	None in short-term, potential moderate contract costs when needed.

STRATEGY 10: ADVOCATE FOR QUALITY UTILITIES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES ACROSS THE COMMUNITY

Quality telecommunication services are a necessity for the modern economy as nearly every industry now uses technology and manipulates data that was previously the domain of high technology.

Consultation suggested no overall problems with this issue in Pitt Meadows, except for Osprey Village, which has experienced internet and power outages and inconsistent cellular service. The City can assist on these issues by advocating with service providers when issues arise. Ensuring quality services in the southeast of the city will only grow in importance and may create a natural common cause with qicəy' (Katzie) First Nation as their planned Eagle Meadows Industrial Park develops.

This is among the issues in which EDAC should maintain awareness and encourage input from local business if future problems arise.

ACTIONS		
<p>10.1 Engage regularly with businesses in affected areas (such as Osprey Village) and communicate any challenges to the relevant companies.</p> <p>10.2 Investigate with the companies and relevant City departments on structural issues to infrastructure that may be causing problems.</p> <p>10.3 Ensure infrastructure is in place to manage increased digital traffic and power demand in high-growth areas.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
MODERATE, ONGOING	Engineering & Operations Planning & Development City Council (for advocacy)	Potential increase in staff time beyond regular responsibilities.

STRATEGY 11: CONTINUE WITH TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

Several major transportation improvement projects are underway or planned for Pitt Meadows, including the separation of road and rail on Harris Road through a new underpass, helping to eliminate traffic shortages and enhancing goods movement, public safety, and general traffic flow. Due to a funding shortfall, the timeline for the Harris Road project is uncertain, but addressing the issues of rail interruptions of traffic flow remains a City priority.

The recently completed Official Community Plan recognizes the value of goods movement and the existing challenges faced by the community. The consultation for this study supports these conclusions and identified several problem areas, including the Harris Road/Lougheed Highway intersection, that the City and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure are already working to address over the long term.

There is a need to work with TransLink to secure significantly improved transit service to Pitt Meadows Regional Airport. Not only is the lack of service a detriment to airport staff and users, but post-secondary students are among the largest users of public transit in most communities and

students at Vancouver Aviation College at the airport are currently poorly served.

The growing industrial areas in the south of the city also require improved transit service for staff. These needs will continue to increase as the industrial parks reach full occupancy.

ACTIONS		
<p>11.1 Continue to implement the City's Transportation Master Plan and to update plans as conditions evolve.</p> <p>11.2 EDAC to serve as a conduit for business transportation challenges to be raised with the City, and from there to regional and national transportation partners.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
LONGER-TERM	Engineering & Operations	None

STRATEGY 12: ENHANCE AIR TRAVEL LINKAGES

Pitt Meadows Regional Airport is a major asset for local economic development and a clear comparative advantage over many other communities. While the airport is currently embarking on a substantial growth period (see Strategy 24) focused on industrial aviation tenants, flight training, and charter traffic, over the long term the addition of more regularly scheduled air service would be a further benefit to Pitt Meadows and the surrounding area.

The only recent scheduled service has been through Harbour Air Seaplanes, operating from the adjacent Pitt Meadows Water Aerodrome on the Fraser River. They provided direct flights to downtown Victoria, but the service has been intermittent in recent years. Even if scheduled service never becomes a regular feature of the main airport, the expansion of floatplane service could increase connectivity not only to Victoria but other

markets like Nanaimo, the Sunshine Coast or Kelowna, provided a market opportunity exists for year-round or seasonal service.

ACTIONS		
12.1 Assist the Airport, when requested, to create business cases or complete other steps required to expand scheduled air service.		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
LONGER-TERM	Pitt Meadows Regional Airport	Potential increase in staff time beyond regular responsibilities.

6 AGRICULTURE STRATEGIES

These strategies are designed to achieve **Objective #2 – Support a Viable and Growing Agriculture Sector.**

Agriculture remains one of the pillars of the Pitt Meadows economy and has elements that touch on many other important issues, including housing, labour supply, climate change, food security, preservation of green space, and high-tech innovation.

While agriculture has its own dedicated Advisory Committee within the City of Pitt Meadows, it is highlighted within the economic development plan due to its economic importance and to provide additional focus on future growth opportunities. Many of the issues and strategies discussed in this section will be further examined in the City's updated Agriculture Plan, expected to be complete by 2024.

STRATEGY 13: INVEST IN CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENTS TO CRITICAL FARMING INFRASTRUCTURE

Due to the unique geography of Pitt Meadows in a low-lying coastal area surrounded and bisected by multiple rivers, local government infrastructure is critically important to the viability of agricultural operations. This is most evident in the management of water, which must be removed after the spring freshet and other periodic flooding events, but also made available at other times of year for irrigation. Pump stations, drainage ditches and dikes are all constructed and maintained by the City of Pitt Meadows, along with other infrastructure like roads.

This situation has necessitated a close and ongoing relationship between the City and the agricultural community, represented by the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC). This is the primary forum where agricultural issues are discussed with the City, with much emphasis on not only investing in the necessary infrastructure but also effectively maintaining it (e.g., ensuring pump stations do not fail during critical periods, managing vegetation in drainage ditches). Climate change is making the situation even more challenging with more severe and less predictable flooding and drought events.

The AAC will remain the venue for directly addressing these issues in detail, but the Economic Development Strategic Plan recognizes the economic value of agriculture and supports the need for this ongoing infrastructure renewal, coupled with effective operation and maintenance. At the same time, it is recognized that Pitt Meadows has a large land area

relative to the size of its population and often requires senior government grant funding to afford major capital projects.

The 2022 Official Community Plan (OCP) contains a prominent discussion and list of policies to support the local agricultural sector, all of which are consistent with the feedback and consultation conducted for this study.

ACTIONS		
<p>13.1 Continue to engage with the Agricultural Advisory Committee to identify infrastructure-related needs and challenges.</p> <p>13.2 Continue implementing the agriculture infrastructure related policies in the 2022 Official Community Plan.</p> <p>13.3 Continue to seek senior government funding support for agriculture infrastructure expansion and upgrades.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
HIGH	<p>Engineering & Operations</p> <p>Planning & Development</p> <p>Agricultural Advisory Committee (for ongoing input/guidance)</p>	No costs specific to the Economic Development Plan

STRATEGY 14: COMMIT TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF AGRICULTURE-RELATED REGULATION

There are a wide variety of regulations impacting farm operations in Pitt Meadows. Municipal, regional, provincial (including Agricultural Land Commission) and federal governments all have a role.

Background research and consultation with farmers for this study suggests a substantial and ever-changing regulatory environment, including:

- Permissible agricultural activities (ALC and municipal)
- Staff housing (municipal)
- Labour, including foreign labour (federal and provincial)
- Transportation (municipal, regional, and provincial)
- Farm security (municipal)
- Infringement and/or conflicts with adjacent non-farm uses (municipal)
- Non-farm uses of Agricultural Reserve Land (golf courses, rural residential, etc. – municipal and provincial ALC)

Compliance costs and restrictions to otherwise financially sound decision-making are impediments to agricultural viability, which is already extremely challenging in such a high-cost, heavily urbanized region.

For municipal regulation, the City can take an active role in reviewing whether the original purposes of regulations are still valid, whether it is achieving this purpose, and whether unanticipated negative consequences are being experienced by farmers. Adjusting or removing ineffective

regulations is a highly visible and tangible way to enhance agricultural viability.

For regulation from senior levels of government, the City can still work with the farming community to understand the impact and communicate or lobby for changes on behalf of local farmers to these authorities.

ACTIONS		
<p>14.1 Collaborate with the farming community to identify problematic regulations.</p> <p>14.2 For municipal regulations, consider the balance of agricultural impact and achieving the original goal of the regulation, adjusting as necessary.</p> <p>14.3 For senior government regulations, identify problematic areas and communicate these to the relevant authorities. If necessary, involve City Council in public advocacy on behalf of the farming community.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
HIGH	Mayor and Council Agricultural Advisory Committee (for ongoing input/guidance)	Moderate staff time

STRATEGY 15: PROMOTE POSITIVE APPROACHES TO AGRICULTURE/PUBLIC INTERACTION

Having major farming operations located right next to an urban community, all within a growing metropolitan region, inevitably creates areas of friction between farming and the public.

Education is part of the solution to this problem, both in terms of the value that agriculture provides to the community, but also with specific guidance on correct behaviour in those areas of friction. Examples are how to respond when driving behind a slow-moving farm vehicle on a local road, or whether it is advisable to walk through farmland.

For example, signage or social media posts or City web pages could include “tips” for living cooperatively with farms, such as “Farms may give us green space, but they are not parks. Entering farm property is a biosecurity risk because you might accidentally introduce invasive plant species or disease-causing pathogens that infect farm animals. Please enjoy farms from a distance.”

ACTIONS		
<p>15.1 Create information tools to support greater public understanding of local agriculture and a series of “tips” for how to respond to public/farm interactions.</p> <p>15.2 Implement these messages through regular City communication channels, including website and social media.</p> <p>15.3 Encourage City Council and senior staff to include one or more of these “tips” when speaking publicly on the value of agriculture.</p> <p>15.4 Consider the need for additional signage in areas of high interaction, such as rural roads (warning of slow-moving vehicles) or adjacent to population areas (warning the public to stay off farmland).</p> <p>15.5 Consider additional educational tools, such as signage on dikes overlooking nearby farms, explaining about the crops being grown or the farming history of the area.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
MODERATE	Planning and Development Communications Agricultural Advisory Committee (for ongoing input/guidance)	Moderate, depending on extent of programs. Contract support to develop materials likely required.

STRATEGY 16: SUPPORT AGRI-TECH INNOVATION

The technological frontier of farming is continually being pushed forward and new products and new methods of production are constantly being created. Many innovations in farming are responding to emerging issues like climate change, water shortages, and pest management.

Innovation also responds to cost pressures, and like any other sector, when a critical input like agricultural land becomes extremely expensive, the incentive is to use technology and innovation to maximize the economic value generated for each parcel.

There are many ways to achieve this, including through agritech (technological innovations in farming), expanded food processing, or by adding complementary lines of business to the farm, such as filming, event hosting, or agri-tourism (most of these are covered by the next strategy).

There is an emerging cluster of agritech companies in Metro Vancouver, a fact reflected in agritech being one of the priority focus areas for Invest Vancouver, which is the regional investment promotion agency.

The provincial and federal governments have funded a B.C. Centre for Agritech Innovation, located at the SFU Surrey campus. It provides financial and technical support to agritech companies to test product ideas for real-world application and scaling to market. They often need agri-food partners to participate in the testing process to help ensure results are farm-ready.

Existing agritech operations demonstrate the potential to provide tremendous economic value on a small land footprint, with the added benefit of displacing imported vegetables or other products that generate carbon emissions in transport.

With suitable supports, local farms may choose to adopt agritech solutions to part of their operations, such as new precision seeding and crop watering technologies, innovations in animal feed, or the addition of an indoor growing or processing facility alongside traditional agriculture.

Some agri-tech facilities are essentially indistinguishable from industrial facilities and could also be encouraged to locate in industrial areas rather than using scarce agricultural land.

ACTIONS		
<p>16.1 Maintain relationships and awareness of agritech development through the Centre for Agritech Innovation.</p> <p>16.2 Further explore the electrical and water requirements of potential agri-tech opportunities to identify any local constraints and potentially use local availability of these utilities as a selling feature.</p> <p>16.3 Encourage local farmers to participate in pilot projects to encourage early adoption of value-enhancing technologies.</p> <p>16.4 Explore the use of currently under-utilized ALR land as the location for agritech demonstration projects.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
LONGER-TERM	Planning & Development Agricultural Advisory Committee (for ongoing input/guidance)	Moderate staff time

STRATEGY 17: SUPPORT OTHER WAYS TO INCREASE ECONOMIC VALUE OF ON-FARM ACTIVITY

This strategy follows from the previous strategy’s discussion of high land costs driving the maximization of on-farm value generation. There are various well-established opportunities to accomplish this, including expanded food and beverage processing, farmgate sales, and hosting non-farm activities like filming, tourism, and special events. Feedback from the local farming community suggests that the effective operation of all these ancillary activities is heavily affected by regulation, as discussed in Strategy 14.

Processing facilities are a major capital investment and securing a sufficient return on this investment requires the facility to be operating as much as possible. Regulations govern the processing of products grown on the farm versus transported to the farm from elsewhere, which usually keeps facilities idle much more than the operators would prefer.

Agri-tourism has been a long-standing activity in the community, such as constructing corn mazes or hosting farm tours for local schoolchildren, but feedback suggests most farms view it more as an education and public relations tool rather than a significant generator of ancillary revenue. Even so, activities like the resumption of the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows Circle Farm Tours should be supported as a contributor to agricultural awareness and farmgate sales for some operators.

Filming is heavily controlled for the purpose of managing broader impacts on the community, but feedback suggests the potential use of Pitt Meadows farm sites is limited by restricting the duration of shoots.

ACTIONS		
<p>17.1 In concert with Strategy 14, explore ways to assist farmers to expand their ancillary revenue generation opportunities with less restrictive regulations.</p> <p>17.2 Ensure that secondary farm businesses are incorporated into related sector initiatives, such as tourism promotion including agri-tourism, local business directories identifying farmgate sales sites, or film promotion including farm locations.</p> <p>17.3 Encourage local farms to take advantage of information and resource links provided by relevant food processing industry association, such as the BC Food Processors Association, BC Meats (BC Abattoir Association), or the BC Blueberry Council, among many more.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
LONGER-TERM	Planning & Development Agricultural Advisory Committee (for ongoing input/guidance)	Moderate staff time

7 TOURISM STRATEGIES

These strategies are designed to achieve **Objective #3 – Increase the Promotion and Economic Value of Tourism.**

STRATEGY 18: LEVERAGE CITY INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TOOLS TO RAISE AWARENESS OF LOCAL AMENITIES

Pitt Meadows is increasingly recognized within the Lower Mainland as a destination for outdoor recreation activities, including cycling on the riverfront dikes, kayaking and other water activities on Pitt Lake and the Pitt and Alouette Rivers, hiking on the many community trails, and golfing on multiple high-quality courses.

Most of these activities (except golf) can be accessed free of charge, which limits the direct economic benefit to Pitt Meadows businesses. As one aspect of increasing the economic benefit from tourism, this strategy aims to raise the profile of the local business community to visitors, as well as highlight other amenities that might lengthen a stay or prompt a return visit.

In addition to the recreational amenities mentioned above, Pitt Meadows has a variety of arts, culture and heritage assets that should be promoted. These include the Pitt Meadows Museum, various public art installations around the community, and the relocating Pitt Meadows Art Gallery.

Note this strategy is included under tourism, but raising awareness of commercial options is also valuable to the local community that consultation suggests is not fully aware of the local options for goods and services.

ACTIONS		
<p>18.1 Explore the addition of an online GIS-based business directory where local companies are identified on a map and profile information is linked from the City’s business license database.</p> <p>18.2 Ensure that public sector and non-profit amenities and facilities, such as cultural and heritage organizations, are fully incorporated into tourist information tools, including the directory mentioned above and potential app and other tools referenced in the subsequent tourism strategies.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
HIGH	EDAC Corporate Services (Communications, GIS) Major Employers, Chamber of Commerce	Staff time on technical GIS work and communications tasks.

STRATEGY 19: PRODUCE CARTOON-STYLE TOURIST MAP

A colourful, tourism-oriented cartoon map can highlight the many recreational amenities as well as commercial areas in the city. This idea is modeled on similar maps produced in communities like Port Moody and Salt Spring Island.

This idea originated at EDAC and members may consider taking a lead role in producing the map, perhaps through a dedicated sub-committee. Selling advertising around the border of the map or on the reverse side is one option to defray production, printing, and distribution costs.

Tourist attractions operated by qic'əy' (Katzie) First Nation should be invited for inclusion on the map.

ACTIONS		
<p>19.1 Investigate map production requirements, based on experience in other communities, and create a Request for Proposal to secure contractor support.</p> <p>19.2 Widely distribute the map at tourist and commercial sites in Pitt Meadows, as well as regional and provincial visitor information centres.</p> <p>19.3 Consider the creation of a “Pitt Meadows Visitor App” that provides maps and information on the location of amenities and could be enhanced to provide walking tour narration for key areas like Pitt Lake, Fraser River, Osprey Village and Harris Road commercial areas, farming areas in the centre of the community, and others as time goes on.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
MODERATE	EDAC Communications	External contractor required to compile map information and for graphic design and printing services. Additional resources for future app development.

STRATEGY 20: USE MUNICIPAL POLICY AND INVESTMENTS TO LINK TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND COMMERCIAL AREAS

Many of the most popular tourist attractions in Pitt Meadows are free to use, including the dikes and other trails, Pitt Lake, and the Pitt and Alouette Rivers. They are also mostly located some distance from commercial areas in the city and many visitors are likely to arrive, spend time in the community, and leave without spending anything in Pitt Meadows.

Creating closer linkages between commercial and recreational areas can happen in a physical sense, by literally moving either the visitors to the amenities closer to each other, or by bridging the information gap where visitors are simply unaware of nearby commercial amenities they might enjoy.

The previous two strategies both focused on providing visitors with more information, but another option is to bring commercial amenities to where the tourists are. This could be done by expanding the City’s mobile food vendor policies to encourage food trucks and potentially other vendors to locate near tourist hotspots on busy days.

Alternatively, the community could attract more visitors to central parts of the community that are closer to commercial amenities, such as the various festivals and events held in Spirit Square.

ACTIONS		
<p>20.1 Review mobile food vending policies to ensure they are supportive of tourist needs.</p> <p>20.2 Review signage in high-traffic tourist areas to ensure appropriate directions are provided to the nearest commercial amenities.</p> <p>20.3 Ensure policy is supportive of the development of new tourist assets, such as a waterfront restaurant as part of the Airport’s waterfront development plans.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
LONGER-TERM	Planning & Development	Moderate staff time

STRATEGY 21: CONTINUE TO INVEST IN TOURISM AMENITIES

The economic value of tourism should be considered in a larger context than the pure dollars and cents spending figures.

In effect, tourist spending essentially provides a subsidy to residents to sustain commercial and (paid) recreational amenities at a level that would not otherwise exist. For example, there are four high quality golf clubs in Pitt Meadows. If they were required to serve only Pitt Meadows residents, there would not be four financially viable golf clubs remaining. But having visitors (tourists) patronizing these clubs ensures they are financially viable and helps support the amenity that benefits the local community. This in turn makes Pitt Meadows a more desirable place to live and invest.

Additional public investment in select areas will further enhance the Pitt Meadows tourist experience and provide enhanced amenities for locals.

EDAC can support continued investments in tourism by advocating for the broader benefits of tourism when asked to comment on development applications that have a tourism element.

ACTIONS		
<p>21.1 Continue investing in public amenities for the benefit of visitors and residents, including public washrooms accessible from the Fraser River dikes.</p> <p>21.2 Support facility improvements at Pitt Lake, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Forests and managed by Katzie Development Limited Partnership.</p> <p>21.3 Incorporate information tools into wayfinding signage, such as a QR code that links to online tourist information (see Strategy 18), maps of the trail or park currently being used, and safety information.</p> <p>21.4 Invest in accessibility improvements in high-traffic tourist areas, such as improved wheelchair access to the dike system.</p> <p>21.5 Invest in select facilities for target types of visitors, such as temporary storage for kayakers and cyclists.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
LONGER-TERM	Planning & Development	Variable, depending on capital spending decisions

8 GROWTH OPPORTUNITY STRATEGIES

These strategies are designed to achieve **Objective #4 – Pursue Other Growth Opportunities**.

There are fewer specific strategies within this section for several reasons:

- Some of the best opportunities are related to agriculture and tourism and are covered under the objectives relating to those sectors.
- The most urgent areas of focus that emerged during the strategy development process were related to all-encompassing issues like real estate that are not unique to a given sector and the emphasis of the plan reflects this.
- Pursuing specific investment opportunities is often a time-consuming, expensive, and risky (in the sense that success is not guaranteed) part of economic development. Without dedicated staff, Pitt Meadows is less able to directly pursue external opportunities than some other municipalities.
- Economic development opportunities are ultimately the product of entrepreneurial creativity and are not easily predicted. The more important role for a local government in economic development is to ensure the overall conditions are favourable to allow new ideas to take root and thrive.

STRATEGY 22: SUPPORT AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT

Pitt Meadows Regional Airport is pursuing an ambitious business expansion agenda, as reflected in their 2018 Airport Development Plan. This growth program is well underway, with the recent completion of a modern terminal building and a new Vancouver Aviation College building.

There are multiple additional facilities and infrastructure upgrades underway at the airport and various growth opportunities are being realized, all relating to aviation in some fashion. This includes flight training, aircraft servicing and storage, and catering to private plane traffic entering Metro Vancouver.

All the ongoing and future growth in airside industrial development is increasing the Airport's already substantial economic impact on the community. While aviation-related businesses are suitable for space at the airport, there may be opportunities for business linkages with other Pitt Meadows companies through partners or supplier arrangements.

A related development opportunity that is not strictly aviation-related is waterfront development on the Fraser River. The Airport has long-term plans to construct new commercial facilities on the waterfront to both support the waterdrome (for floatplanes) and to provide a destination dining option in the community. This facility is potentially a great benefit to tourism by anchoring part of the waterfront trail system and adding to the options for dining entertainment in the community. A future tourism promotion could highlight waterfront cycling or walking on the dike system

with Osprey Village commercial services on one end and the waterfront airport facilities on the other.

ACTIONS		
<p>22.1 Support the growth and development of the airport, including the expansion of complementary industries and amenities.</p> <p>22.2 Ensure that airside industrial development is appropriately serviced with utilities and telecommunication infrastructure.</p> <p>22.3 Collaborate with the Airport in managing a future waterfront visioning process.</p> <p>22.4 Identify linkages with other business and economic development projects and companies in the city.</p> <p>22.5 Make promotional and information tools available to private plane users visiting Pitt Meadows so, if interested, they can be informed of local tourism and investment opportunities.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
LONGER-TERM	<p>CAO's Office</p> <p>Planning & Development</p> <p>Engineering & Operations</p>	Variable, depending on level of support required

STRATEGY 23: EXPAND OUTREACH TO REGIONAL FILM SECTOR

Location filming is not a major contributor to the Pitt Meadows economy, but there has been some past success attracting productions for location shoots and there is potential to increase this activity in future.

Pitt Meadows Regional Airport, Osprey Village, and farm settings have all been used repeatedly for previous productions.

While the goal of this strategy is to accommodate the film sector, they should also be required to compensate businesses that are impacted by their activity and the burden on frequently used sites should be carefully managed to ensure businesses and residents remain supportive of the industry.

To date most film activity in Pitt Meadows has been location shooting, but another way to expand the sector's economic benefit is through the attraction of permanent film studio space or related services. Pitt Meadows is somewhat remote from the core of the regional film sector in Vancouver and Burnaby, but the continued expansion of the sector and the shortage of industrial space across the region may create opportunities for permanent filming facilities or various support services to be located in the community.

ACTIONS		
<p>23.1 Continue to maintain a database of potential filming locations in Pitt Meadows based on past shoots and possible future sites.</p> <p>23.2 Maintain up-to-date location information and regularly engage with Creative BC to ensure they are aware of Pitt Meadows opportunities.</p> <p>23.3 Ensure local regulations are supportive of filming activity, while balancing negative impacts on neighbours.</p> <p>23.4 Support the establishment of permanent film sites or support services (sound studios, new media, etc.) in local industrial or commercial properties.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
MODERATE	Arts, Culture and Heritage	Possible minor increase from current level.

STRATEGY 24: ATTRACT A RANGE OF COMMERCIAL AMENITIES TO EXISTING AND NEW COMMERCIAL AREAS

Consultation suggests there is strong demand within the community for a broader range of food service, entertainment, and arts and culture amenities. Residents would like more restaurant options, as just one example.

In most cases, economic development offices leave the attraction of regular commercial businesses to the market. Companies will generally not move to Pitt Meadows without a strong business case, while commercial developers and landlords are motivated to fill their spaces with quality tenants.

However, the additional focus through this strategy is based on consultation and the two community surveys that suggest there is a strong, unmet demand for improved commercial services. This should be communicated to future commercial developers and tenants as a positive factor in making investment decisions about Pitt Meadows.

As discussed under Strategy 1, the 2019 Rollo commercial land analysis suggested the city's commercial market is broadly in balance, but there

are several factors since that time (including the COVID-induced shift in working patterns and the attraction of significant local industrial employment) that suggest a growing market. Also as noted under Strategy 1, before commercial amenities are attracted to Pitt Meadows, new commercial space must be built to accommodate them.

ACTIONS		
<p>24.1 Through regular discussions with project developers, communicate the strong interest identified in surveys and other consultation in enhanced commercial services, particularly restaurants.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
LONGER-TERM	Planning & Development	None

STRATEGY 25: CAPITALIZE ON RESIDENT COMMUTERS AS A BUSINESS ATTRACTION ASSET

There is a perception in Pitt Meadows, like in many suburban communities, that the COVID-19 pandemic caused an inflow of new residents from central municipalities in the region. These new residents may formerly have been living in smaller homes or renting, but moved to take advantage of larger and more affordable housing that is better suited to accommodate working from home. Census data from 2021 (which occurred just over a year into the pandemic) broadly confirms this perception as it shows an increase in new residents in Pitt Meadows from elsewhere in BC, balanced by a slight decline in new residents from the rest of Canada and internationally. Annual population estimates from BC Stats also show strong growth of 2.6% from 2021 to 2022, easily the highest in more than a decade.

Despite very strong local job growth connected to the opening of Golden Ears Business Park, Pitt Meadows continues to have substantial commuting out of the community. In the 2021 Census, there were more than 5,000 employed residents working in another BC community and that number will have increased once COVID restrictions eased.

The largest net outflow of workers is in occupations like trades, transport and equipment operators, business administration, and the public sector. There is a smaller but still notable group of commuters who work in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) occupations, including engineers, natural and applied scientists, and health. These high-skill workers are in high demand and should be viewed as an economic development asset for expanding technology-based industries in the community.

The resident survey indicated that about half of working residents who commute would be interested in working in Pitt Meadows if comparable employment could be found. At this stage, the net outflow of technology-oriented workers is relatively small compared to some other professions.

Regardless, this is an opportunity that should be nurtured over time to encourage more knowledge-based workers to live in Pitt Meadows and ultimately attract satellite offices and new entrepreneurial ventures in tech-oriented fields. (Note that many knowledge-based companies already exist locally in sectors like agriculture and professional services).

It is premature to expend limited resources on targeting knowledge-based companies, but based on shifts in the local workforce, it is not premature to foster a sense of community among local knowledge-based workers.

ACTIONS		
<p>25.1 Attempt to include resident commuters in other initiatives that engage the local business community, such as the job fair, local business expo, or networking events. EDAC members can support this by using their personal networks to invite targeted individuals.</p> <p>25.2 Encourage the development of local co-working spaces for remote workers, either informally or through professional services that rent temporary desks and meeting rooms.</p> <p>25.3 Encourage networking opportunities that would allow commuters and hybrid workers to meet each other and potentially spark entrepreneurial ideas.</p> <p>25.4 Use an updated City web page on economic development to highlight the areas where Pitt Meadows has a surplus of skilled workers relative to local jobs.</p>		
PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
LONGER-TERM, ONGOING	EDAC Communications	Moderate staff time

9 IMPLEMENTATION

The initial implementation of this plan will occur with input from the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) and with staff support from Planning and Development.

Certain initiatives will also be undertaken by other City departments and organizations, often as part of pre-existing plans that are separate from economic development.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

In the absence of a dedicated economic development staff resource, it is challenging to estimate the implementation timeframe for this plan. Recommended actions will be considered as part of the annual business planning process and integrated into departmental business plans as available resources permit. It is noted that implementation of recommended actions with no identified budget implications will still have staff resource implications.

Key steps in the implementation process include:

1. EDAC to recommend, on an annual basis, its priority projects for the following year. These are based on the information and recommendations strategies in this report, as well as new information and opportunities that will arise over time.
2. With the assistance of staff, and as resources permit, integrate priority projects into department business plans and prepare business cases for each initiative to secure Council approval for any required funding.
3. Additional strategies may be initiated by senior City administration, other departments, or Council.
4. Regularly evaluate the outcome of initiatives, including through project-specific data where available. Use this information to inform whether initiatives should be continued and what lessons can be applied to future planning.
5. Following from Strategy 7, review annually the potential additional impact that could be achieved with dedicated economic development staff, including by enabling more individual programs and initiatives to be completed each year. Council members on EDAC will serve as a liaison between the preferences of Council and EDAC on this issue.
6. Prepare an overall update of the recommended performance measures (see next section) to evaluate whether the community's economy is moving in the preferred direction.

STRATEGY SUMMARY

IMPLEMENTATION LEAD:	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	OTHER CITY DEPARTMENT	CITY COUNCIL	
HIGH PRIORITY	1: Leasable Commercial Space				
	3: Matching Labour Supply & Demand	[Communications] 3: Matching Labour Supply & Demand			
	13: Invest in Critical Farming Infrastructure				
	14: Improve Agriculture Regulation			14: Improve Agriculture Regulation	
	[Communications, GIS] 18: Leverage City Tools to Raise Awareness of Local Business				
MODERATE	2: Diversity of Industrial Units and Uses				
	4: Supportive Small Business Environment	[All] 4: Supportive Small Business Environment			
	5: Enhance Online Resources for Business	[Communications] 5: Enhance Online Resources for Business			
	6: Encourage Cohesive Local Business Community	[Communications] 6: Encourage Cohesive Local Business Community			
	7: Review Value of Dedicated Economic Development	7: Review Value of Dedicated Economic Development			
	10: Advocate for Quality Utilities/Telecom		[Engineering & Operations] 10: Advocate for Quality Utilities/Telecom		10: Advocate for Quality Utilities/Telecom
	15: Promote Positive Agriculture/Public Interaction		[Communications] 15: Promote Positive Agriculture/Public Interaction		
	19: Cartoon-Style Tourist Map	[Communications] 19: Cartoon-Style Tourist Map		23: Expand Film Sector Outreach	

IMPLEMENTATION LEAD:	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	OTHER CITY DEPARTMENT	CITY COUNCIL
LONGER-TERM		<p>9: Attract Post-Secondary Institution</p> <p>16: Support Agri-Tech Innovation</p> <p>17: Support Other On-Farm Value Generation</p> <p>21: Invest in Tourism Amenities</p> <p>22: Support Airport Development</p> <p>24: Attract Range of Commercial Amenities</p> <p>25: Resident Commuters as a Business Attraction Asset</p>	<p>[All] 8: Maintain Strong Regional Partnerships</p> <p>[Engineering & Operations] 11: Transportation System Improvements [Pitt Meadows Regional Airport] 12: Enhance Air Travel Linkages</p> <p>[CAO's Office, Engineering & Operations] 22: Support Airport Development</p> <p>[Communications] 25: Residents Commuters as a Business Attraction Asset</p>	<p>8: Maintain Strong Regional Partnerships</p>

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Performance measurement in economic development can easily devolve into a box-ticking exercise, particularly when each strategy is required to have a unique measure. The preferred approach used in this plan is to have several over-arching performance measures that are collectively contributed to by multiple individual strategies. Note that strategies relating to issues covered by other City plans, such as the need for transit and other transportation improvements and possible agriculture indicators, are not directly addressed in the measures that follow.

ONGOING AND LOCAL MEASUREMENT

1. **Changes in total supply of leasable commercial space.** Data on total inventory is incomplete, but the City can more easily measure additions to the inventory through new development and losses from demolitions or conversions.
2. **Metrics specific to City-hosted events.** This includes the potential job fair and local business expo. Specific measures for each event should be determined as part of the planning process and at minimum, would include the number of participants and attendees, but could also include a short post-event survey of participating companies to measure number of job candidates identified, total sales at the event, etc.
3. **Metrics specific to City online activities.** Any City-hosted information tool or social media post has built-in tracking mechanisms that should be monitored for impact over time. This includes potential initiatives like the City-hosted map and business directory, economic development information page, and various social media posts.
4. **Number of licensed businesses.** This is a straightforward metric using City-collected data that measures the size of the local business community over time. Additional consideration could be

given to business counts in priority sub-areas of the City, or home-based businesses, or any sub-group that is a priority for EDAC and the City.

5. **City permit data for filming.** This could include number of film shoots, number of days, and any other quantification of local impact that is possible from the collected data.
6. **Tourism-related metrics.** Hard data on tourists may currently be difficult to obtain as most population attractions are ungated. Usage metrics such as trail counters are also imperfect as they also measure resident users. Some data can be tracked through online tools and social media outlined above, but future opportunities to measure visitation over time, such as through special events or by purchasing customized databases such as cellphone tracking data, should be explored.

OCCASIONAL MEASUREMENT PENDING DATA AVAILABILITY

These measures provide more local detail on the economy and are available only through the Census every five years.

7. **Total employment with a regular place of work in Pitt Meadows.** This is a straightforward count for total jobs located within municipal boundaries. It usually requires a purchase of custom Census data but is likely available through already-planned data purchases by Metro Vancouver.
8. **Total employment with a regular place of work in Pitt Meadows, not including home-based.** The previous metric includes home-based jobs in the total, but there is also value in determining employment in non-home locations as they are associated with the non-residential tax base.
9. **Local employment in priority sectors.** This could include agriculture and food and beverage processing, tourism-related services like accommodation, food and recreation, retail (to reflect

the goal of diversifying local commercial amenities), or the tech sector.

10. Median employment income for Pitt Meadows-based jobs. The goal is to increase local incomes such that the gap with regional incomes is narrowed over time, making it relatively more attractive for Pitt Meadows residents to work in their home communities.

APPENDIX A: CONSULTATION SURVEYS

The City of Pitt Meadows issued two surveys in support of the Economic Development Strategic Plan. They were issued through the City’s online engagement platform, Have Your Say Pitt Meadows and were available from July 18 to August 12, 2022. One survey was targeted at residents (yielding 132 completed surveys) and one at local businesses (yielding 13 completed surveys).

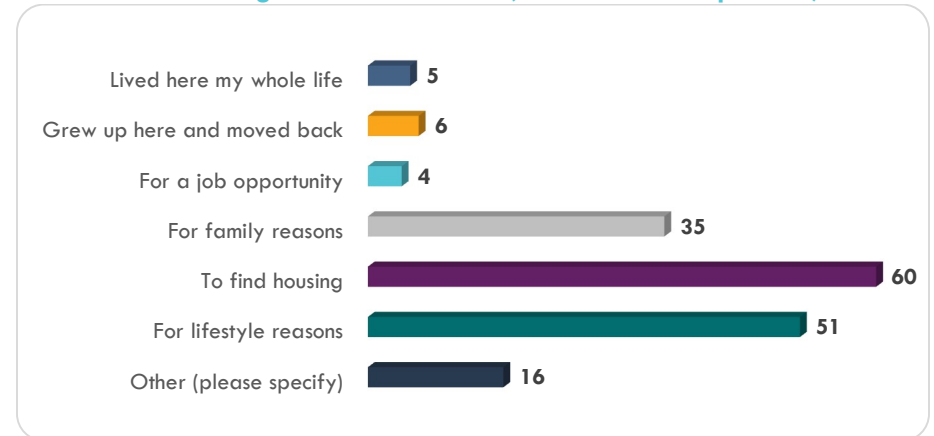
The Communications Department provided major promotional support to the survey through the following:

- A postcard mailer was distributed to residents, businesses and farms (total of 8,308 copies)
- Digital boards at Pitt Meadows City Hall and on Lougheed Highway
- A ¼ page Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows newspaper ad
- Pittmeadows.ca website page and front-page spotlight
- 22 social media posts, a boosted post, and a social media ad
- Email sent to all City of Pitt Meadows staff
- Featured in City Talks newsletter published in the Maple Ridge News
- Featured in Quarterly Report published in the Maple Ridge News

RESIDENT SURVEY

Highlights of the survey responses are found below.

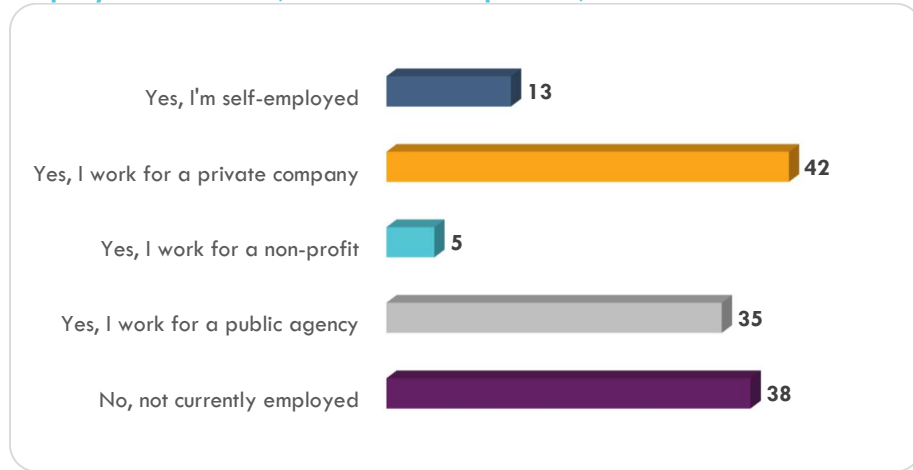
Reason for Moving to Pitt Meadows (Number of Responses)



These results support the notion that Pitt Meadows has a very desirable lifestyle and combined with housing costs lower than many other communities in the region, has a demonstrated ability to attract population. As the statistics in Appendix B will show, population growth has been slow in recent years, but this is primarily due to slow growth in new housing supply related to the city’s relative lack of available development sites.

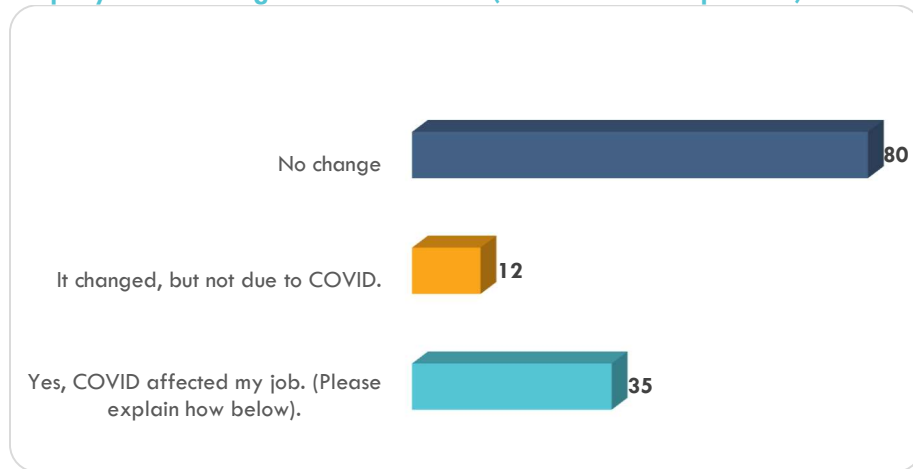
Most of the “other responses” also relate to housing availability and either having friends and family in the area or being attracted to the community lifestyle.

Employment Status (Number of Responses)



The distribution of respondents by employment status is a reasonably close representation of the population at large.

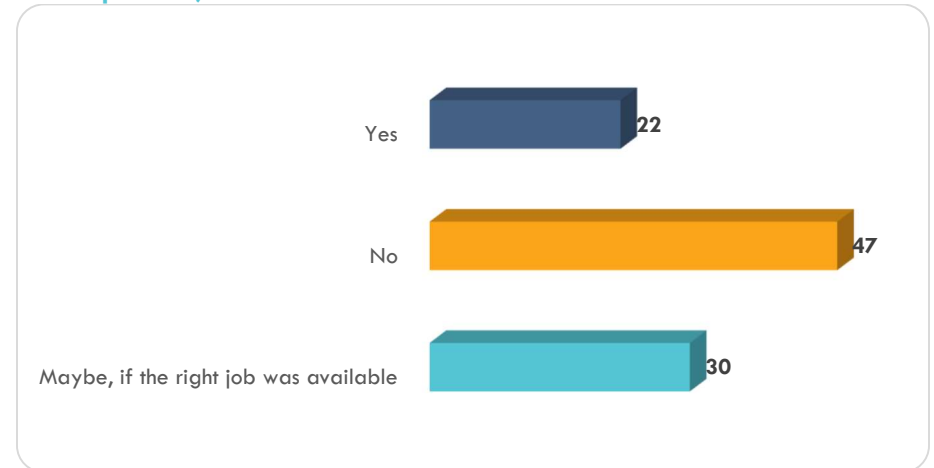
Employment Change Due to COVID (Number of Responses)



Most of the comments on COVID impacts relate to industries that were not able to function during the social distancing era, resulting in layoffs and some business failures. It was a difficult period for many people and several respondents chose to retire rather than return to work. A few also reported being able to transition to new careers and a small number were

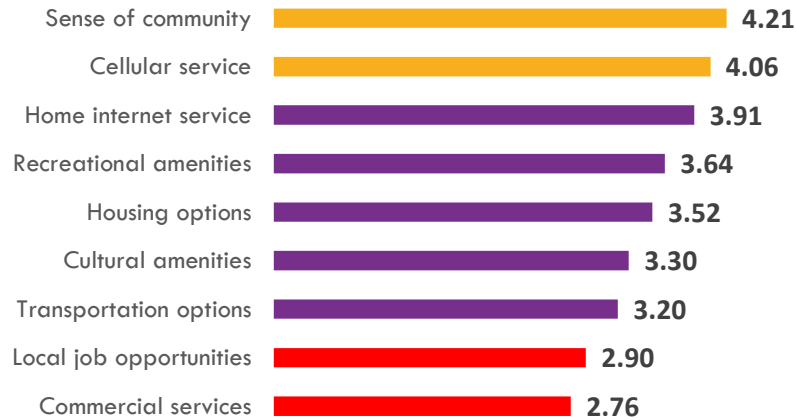
able to successfully transition to working from home or to a hybrid system. These individuals seemed very pleased with their new working arrangement.

If Work Elsewhere, Interested in Working in Pitt Meadows (Number of Responses)



As a small community within a much larger metropolitan region, it is not reasonable for all Pitt Meadows residents to find their ideal employment situation within their home municipality. Perhaps in recognition of this fact, or simply preferring to work elsewhere, nearly half of current commuters expressed no interest in working in Pitt Meadows. Nearly a third are interested if the right job was available and almost 25% are interested in switching to a local job.

Satisfaction with Lifestyle Factors
(1 = Very Dissatisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied)



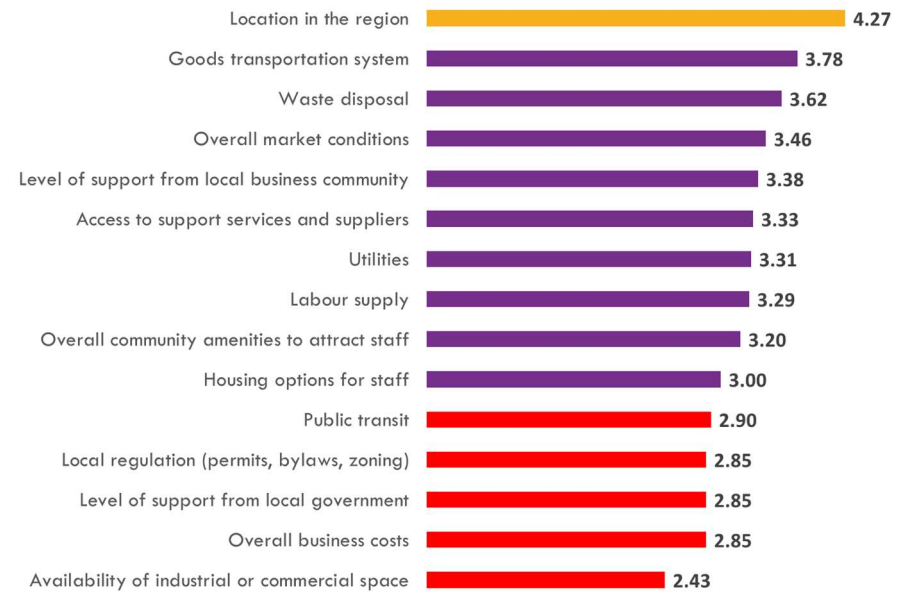
The top-rated lifestyle factor for Pitt Meadows residents is the sense of community. This result helped to inform the updated Economic Development Vision outlined in Section 2.

The only factors that rated below par (below 3.0) were commercial services and local job opportunities. This was also reflected in the consultation interviews, where a strong desire for a wider range of restaurants, entertainment, and other commercial services was expressed.

BUSINESS SURVEY

The response to the business survey was limited compared to the resident survey. The results highlighted below should be interpreted with caution as they may not accurately represent the overall views of the local business community. Further engagement on specific initiatives is recommended prior to their implementation.

Satisfaction with Business Climate Factors
(1 = Very Dissatisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied)



The lowest-ranking business climate factor is the availability of leasable space, with the comments indicating the problem is primarily with commercial space. This was strongly reflected in the business consultation, which also identified labour supply as a key challenge that scored relatively well among the survey respondents.

APPENDIX B: STATISTICAL BENCHMARKING

Appendix B contains a variety of economic and demographic data that were analyzed over the course of the project to provide insight into the characteristics and evolution of the Pitt Meadows economy, as well as comparative strengths and weaknesses compared to similar communities.

This strategic plan is designed to positively influence the future development of the community and should start with an understanding of current conditions and how Pitt Meadows has been changing in recent years. With the importance of labour force issues, special emphasis is placed on labour force data from the most recent Census.

BENCHMARKING

Despite being a small community of approximately 20,000 residents, Pitt Meadows is part of a much larger Lower Mainland economy of more than 3 million people. Many of the forces shaping the Pitt Meadows economy, housing market, and demographics are common to other communities in the region.

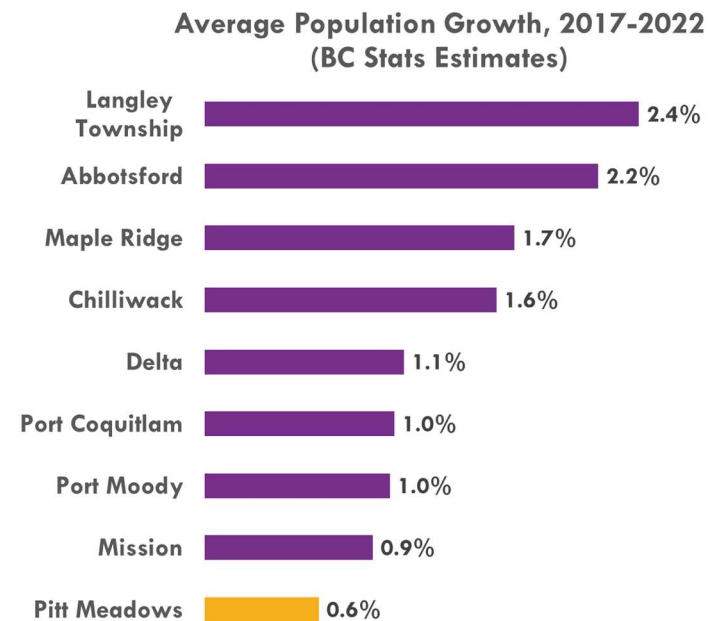
Benchmarking Pitt Meadows to a set of similar communities is a useful way to identify its unique characteristics and comparative strengths and weaknesses within the broader regional economy.

For most data topics, Pitt Meadows is compared against a consistent group of communities chosen for (a) proximity to Pitt Meadows, (b) similar population size, and (c) agricultural prominence in the economy. They are:

- Pitt Meadows
- Delta
- Maple Ridge
- Port Moody
- Mission
- Abbotsford
- Port Coquitlam
- Chilliwack
- Langley Township

POPULATION GROWTH

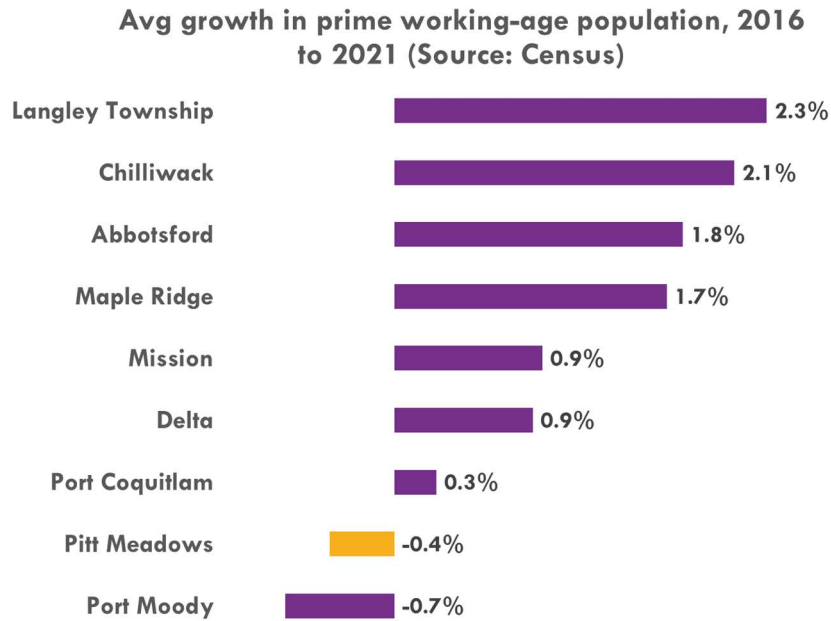
Using annual population estimates reported by BC Stats, Pitt Meadows had 20,400 people in 2022. Over the last five years, its growth rate has been the lowest of the standard comparison group.



Looking only at the most recent year available, which was measured from mid-year 2021 to mid-year 2022, Pitt Meadows had 2.6% growth and ranked 4th among the same group of communities. This supports the notion of a COVID-related bump in migration to suburban communities (the comparison group in total had 2.6% growth in 2022 after averaging 1.8% in the previous decade).

PRIME WORKING AGE POPULATION

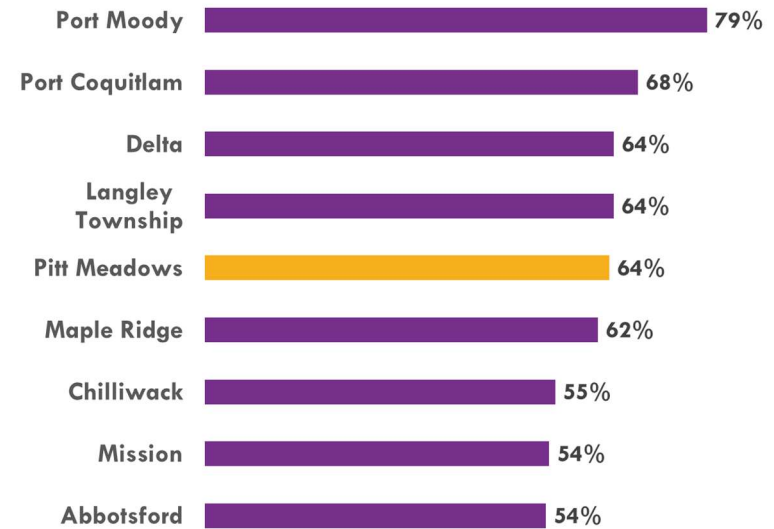
From a workforce perspective, population growth in the prime working-age years of 25 to 54 is more important than total population growth.



The prime working-age population in Pitt Meadows declined by 0.4% per year from 2016 to 2021 (overall population growth was +0.6%). If total population growth in Pitt Meadows remains relatively slow, the resident workforce will likely grow even slower, or continue to shrink. The reason is that slow-growing populations are almost always aging populations. This point supports the need to provide consistent densification and renewal to the housing stock to attract working-age residents and sustain local workforce capacity into the future.

WORKFORCE EDUCATION

Age 25-64 Population with Any Post-Secondary Credential, 2021 (Source: Census)



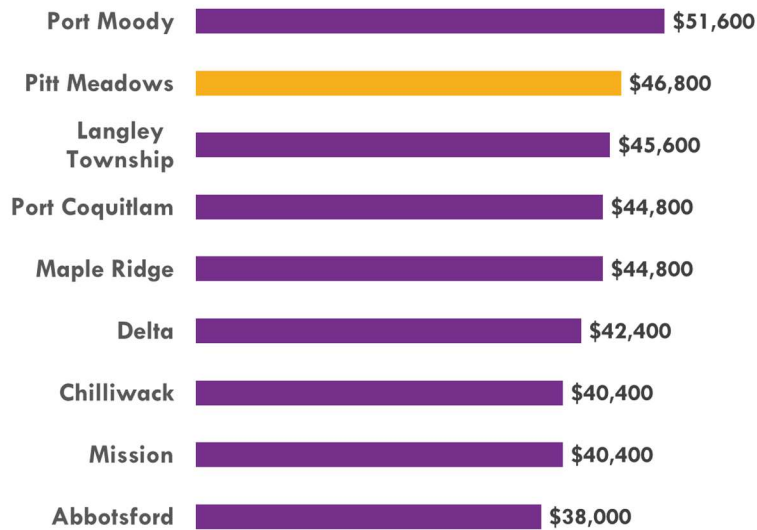
Pitt Meadows ranks in the middle of the comparison communities for the share of the 25-64 population with any type of post-secondary credential. The distribution by level of credential, and rank among this group, is shown below.

Highest Education Credentials, Pitt Meadows Age 25-64, and Rank among 9-City Comparison Group					
Less than high school	High school completion	Trades or apprenticeship	Other post-secondary certificate/diploma	Bachelor's degree	Above bachelor's degree
7%	30%	10%	28%	18%	8%
6th	5th	4th	1st	5th	7th

The Pitt Meadows population ranks in the top half in the population share with trades or apprenticeship training (10% of the 25-64 population, ranking 4th) and 1st in other post-secondary certificates or diplomas (28%). These are usually obtained from colleges or specialized training institutions.

PERSONAL INCOME

Median income among all persons with income, 2020
(Source: Census)



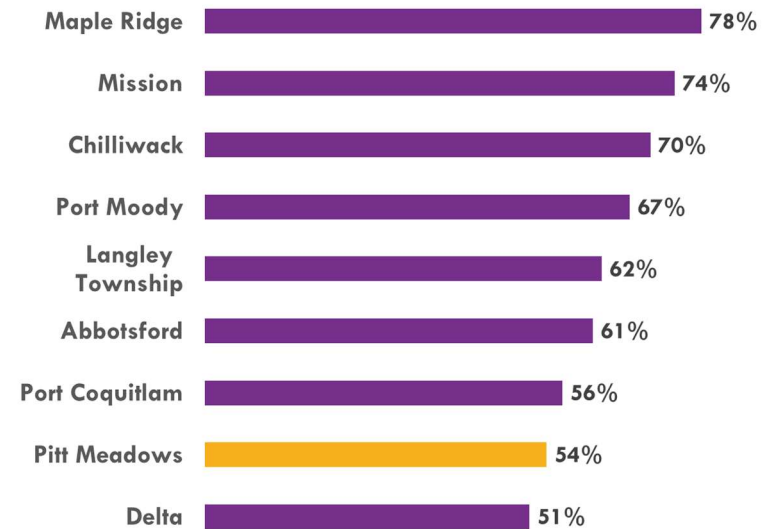
Median income for Pitt Meadows residents ranks near the top among similar communities, which supports the notion of a strong local consumer market.

RESIDENTIAL TAX BURDEN

Minimizing the residential tax burden requires a healthy commercial and industrial tax base that helps to support local services and shares the load with residential properties.

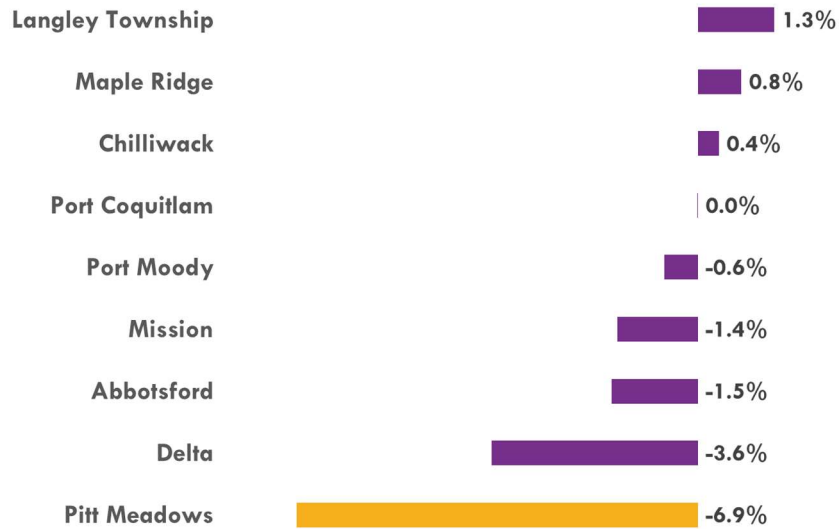
Pitt Meadows scores very well on this measure as only 54% of total municipal property tax is paid by the residential class.

Residential Share of Municipal Property Tax, 2022



There has been much discussion in Pitt Meadows of the impact of major development at Golden Ears Business Park on the City's tax base and how it impacts residential property taxes.

Change in Residential Share of Municipal Property Tax, 2012 to 2022



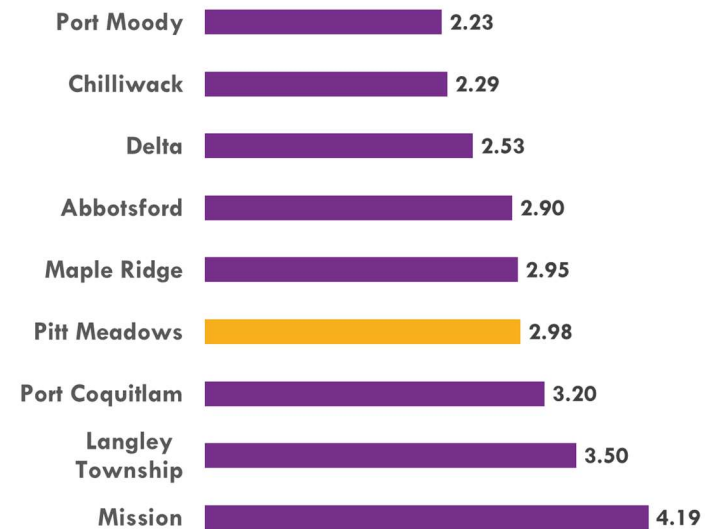
The chart above shows that over the last 10 years, the share of municipal property tax paid by residents has declined by nearly 7 percentage points, easily the most favourable performance (for residents) among the comparison communities. Other municipalities are evenly split between those that have increased and those that have lessened the residential tax burden over this period.

BUSINESS TAX MULTIPLES

All municipalities charge higher tax rates to commercial and industrial properties than to residential properties with the same assessed value.

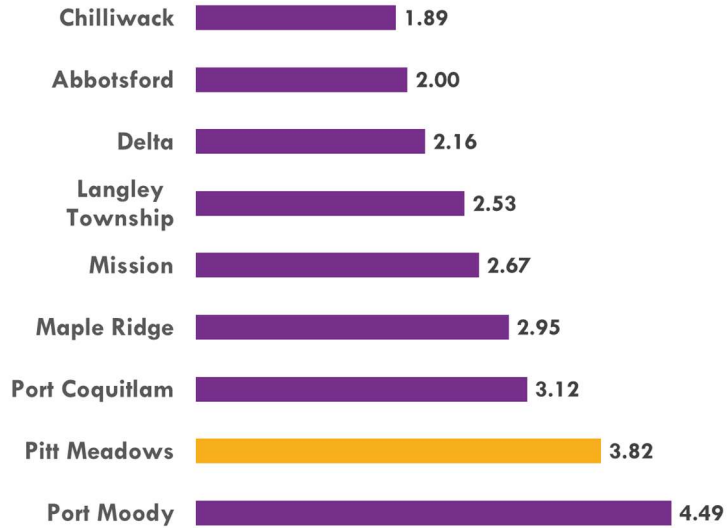
One of the measures of how heavily the local tax burden falls on businesses is to compare the ratio of the business tax rate to the residential rate. This value is often called the “tax multiple” and in 2022, a Pitt Meadows commercial property paid just under three times as much in municipal tax as a residential property with the same value.

Business (Class 6) Property Tax Multiples (Municipal tax only)



Pitt Meadows places a heavier burden on light industrial properties with a tax multiple of 3.8 times. This is the 2nd highest among comparable communities.

**Light Industry (Class 5) Property Tax Multiples
(Municipal tax only)**



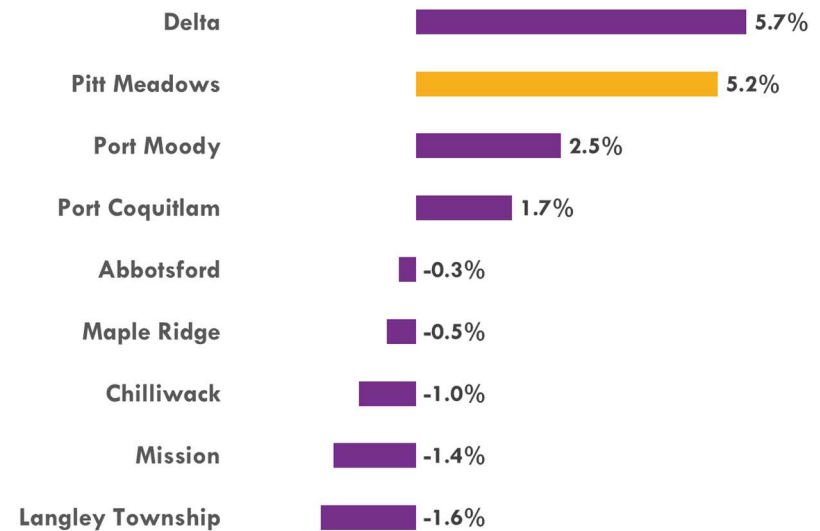
COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ASSESSMENT BASE

An earlier chart showed that the residential share of municipal tax in Pitt Meadows had declined by nearly 7 percentage points in the last decade.

The next chart shows the reason that was possible. It compares the change in each municipality's total property assessment from 2012 to 2022, with a focus on the combined share of business and light industrial properties.

Delta and Pitt Meadows stand out for the increase in the value of commercial and light industrial properties in their communities compared to residential values.

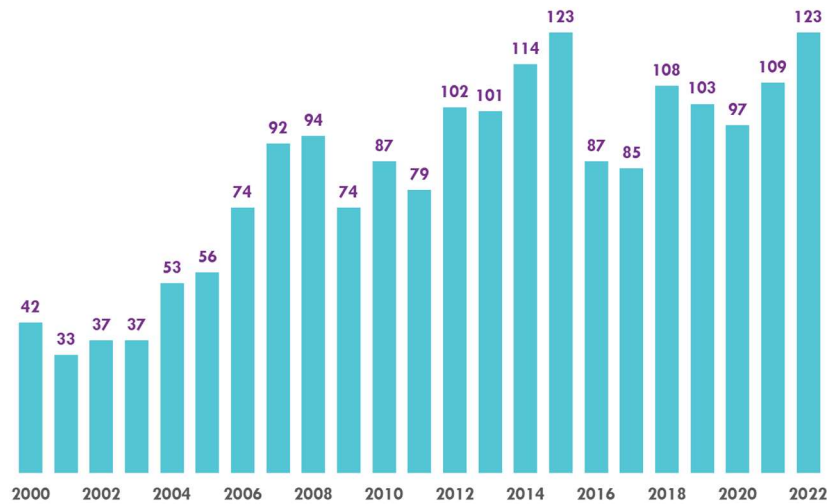
**Change in Combined Business & Light Industrial
Share of Municipal Property Tax, 2012 to 2022**



NEW BUSINESS FORMATION

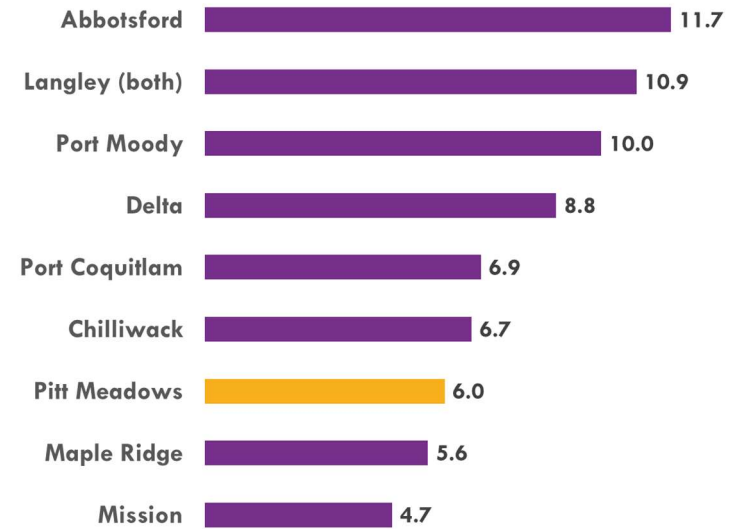
There is no perfect measure of entrepreneurship and new business formation, but one useful indicator is the number of new business incorporations registered with a Pitt Meadows address. This has been increasing steadily over time, reaching 123 incorporations in 2023, which tied the record set in 2015.

Business Incorporations in Pitt Meadows
(Source: BC Stats)



Despite the recent increase in incorporations, when measured on a per capita basis, Pitt Meadows ranks near the bottom among the comparison communities.¹

Business Incorporations per 1,000 Population, 2022



¹ This data is released annually by the Province of BC based on the BC Corporate Registry.

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUTING TRENDS

Pitt Meadows is located within a highly integrated regional economy. Like most municipalities outside the core of Vancouver, Burnaby, and Richmond, it has historically had more working residents than local jobs, meaning it has been a net exporter of workers to the rest of the region.

Most suburban municipalities are actively working to increase the number of local jobs and improve the balance of local jobs to local workers. This supports the concept of a “complete community” where residents have access to employment, as well as shopping, recreation, health services, and other amenities all within their local area. The next few charts explore some of the significant changes in the local employment situation in Pitt Meadows in recent years.

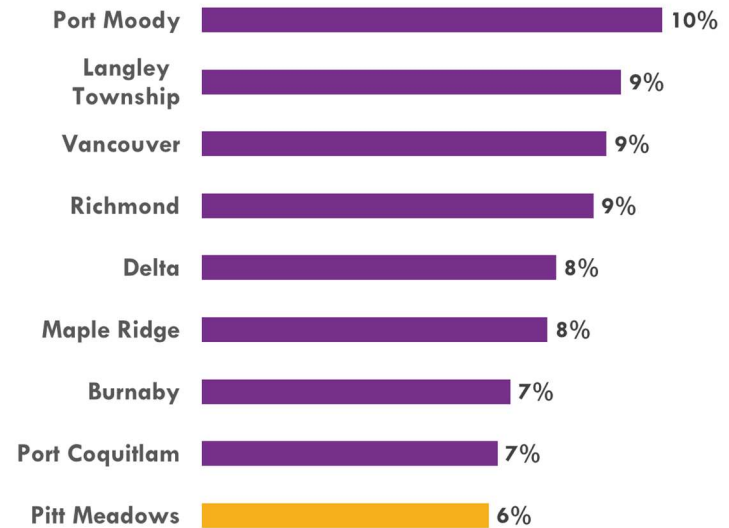
Comprehensive data on the industry and location of employment for individual communities is available only from the Census.

The analysis that follows relies on both 2016 and 2021 data because Census day in May 2021 occurred while COVID pandemic restrictions were still in place and many workplaces had not yet returned to in-person work. This means the 2021 Census shows much higher rates of working from home and a decline in jobs with a fixed workplace outside the home.

HOME-BASED WORK

In 2016, Pitt Meadows had the lowest rate of working from home among the comparison group of communities. This is a different comparison group that is restricted to Metro Vancouver municipalities.

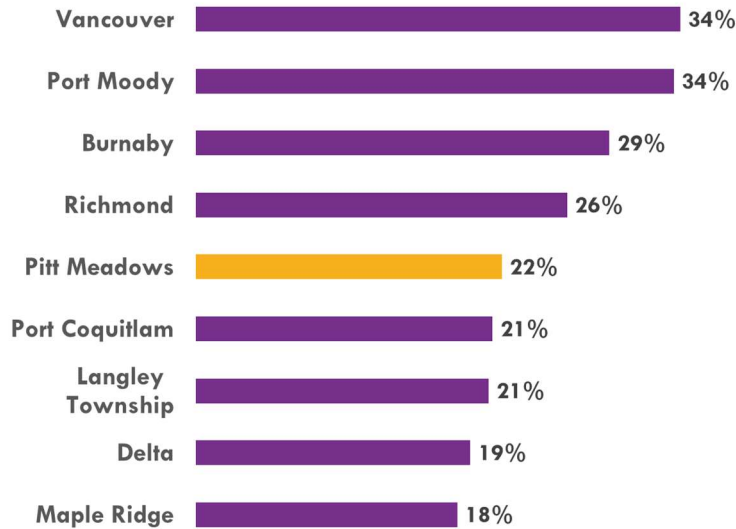
Employed Residents Working at Home, 2016
(Source: Census)



Working from home was traditionally associated with higher rates of university education, working in a professional occupation, and being older, all of which contributed to Pitt Meadows having the lowest work-from-home rate in 2016.

Rates of home-based work were much higher in all communities in the 2021 Census due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Employed Residents Working at Home, 2021
(Source: Census)



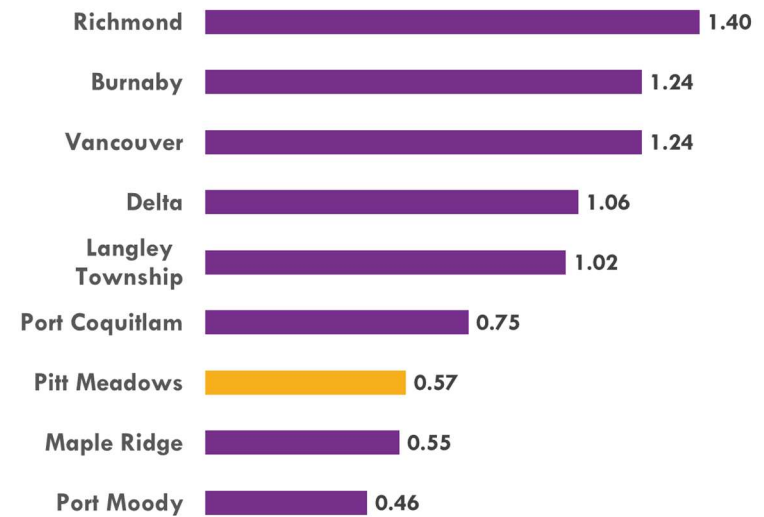
A much broader range of occupations had shifted to home-based work in 2021 and Pitt Meadows had moved to the mid-range of work-from-home rates.

BALANCING LOCAL JOBS AND LOCAL WORKERS

The comparison below of local jobs in each municipality to working residents of that municipality is based only on jobs with a fixed workplace outside the home and workers who travel to a fixed workplace.

In 2016, Pitt Meadows had 57 local jobs for every 100 local workers, a slightly higher rate than Maple Ridge and Port Moody but lower than most other regional municipalities.

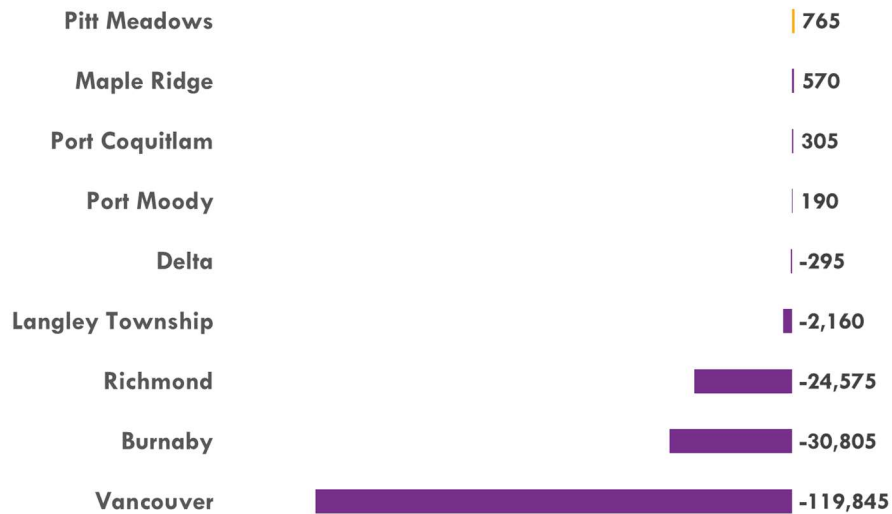
2016 Jobs to Working Residents Ratio
(Excluding Home-Based/No Fixed Place)



The situation looks very different in 2021 when many jobs that were formerly located outside the home shifted to home-based. Vancouver experienced a loss of nearly 120,000 jobs as downtown office towers sat empty and many personal service industries lost jobs.

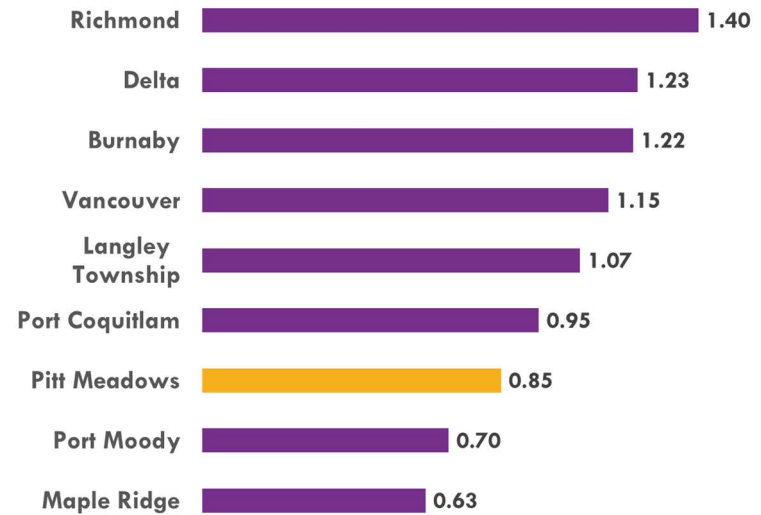
At the same time, Pitt Meadows had the highest growth of fixed workplace jobs. The biggest factor in this growth is the opening of Golden Ears Business Park and the substantial employment attracted to the community by companies like Amazon. Pitt Meadows also had relatively few office-based employers so there weren't as many workers who could easily transition to working from home.

2016-2021 Change in Fixed Place , Excluding Home-Based



The result of these changes is that by 2021 Pitt Meadows had a much healthier balance of local jobs to local workers.

2021 Jobs to Working Residents Ratio (Excluding Home-Based/No Fixed Place)



The 2021 results are a good news story for Pitt Meadows in achieving a better balance of local employment to local workers, with 85 local jobs per 100 local workers, but there remains some disconnect as many of the new local jobs are not held by residents.

Post-COVID adjustments are likely to push this ratio down in 2026 as many temporary home-based workers return to their workplaces, but then again, future employment growth in the latest phases of Golden Ears Business Park will continue to expand the count of Pitt Meadows-based jobs.

INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE OF LOCAL ECONOMY

The Pitt Meadows economy is, in most respects, fully integrated into the Metro Vancouver economy. Local businesses and households purchase supplies and services both locally and across the region, local businesses sell their products both locally and beyond, and many residents work outside the community.

From an economic development perspective, there is still value in understanding the industries that are particularly concentrated in Pitt Meadows compared to the region overall. This provides insight into the comparative advantages of a Pitt Meadows business location and indicates some potential focus areas for supporting further business development.

The next few data tables present employment and then workforce data at varying levels of detail and include a column called “**Job Concentration.**” This is technically known as a “location quotient” and measures the relative size of an industry locally compared to British Columbia. It is similar to a per capita measure but is “per local job” rather than “per person.”

Sectors with a Job Concentration higher than 1, such as agriculture, are more concentrated locally. The **agriculture/forestry/fishing** value of 2.59 (see Table 1) means that employment in this sector is **2.59 times larger** as a share of the Pitt Meadows economy than its share of the entire BC economy.

Sectors that are less concentrated locally, such as public administration or mining, have a Job Concentration less than 1. The **public administration** value of 0.57 means this sector is **43% smaller** as a share of local employment than total BC employment. Information and cultural industries have a Job Concentration of 1, which means it is exactly the same size locally as in BC.

TABLE 1. PITT MEADOWS EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR, 2021

SECTOR	2021 JOBS IN PITT MEADOWS	JOB CONCENTRATION (RELATIVE TO BC)
Retail trade	1,425	1.46
Manufacturing	720	1.46
Professional, scientific and technical services	560	0.71
Health care and social assistance	525	0.51
Educational services	515	0.83
Construction	455	1.33
Wholesale trade	430	1.70
Finance and insurance	400	1.22
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	395	2.59
Accommodation and food services	385	0.75
Transportation and warehousing	320	1.02
Arts, entertainment and recreation	305	1.84
Other services (except public administration)	275	0.81
Public administration	270	0.57
Information and cultural industries	200	1.00
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	180	0.84
Real estate and rental and leasing	80	0.44
Management of companies and enterprises	35	1.75
Utilities	30	0.65
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	10	0.17
TOTAL	7,505	1.00

Source: Statistics Canada Census, custom order. Data includes jobs with a fixed place of work in Pitt Meadows, including home-based.

Sectors with a high comparative advantage in Pitt Meadows are highlighted in pink. These include manufacturing, agriculture, wholesale trade, and arts/entertainment/recreation.

While the previous table showed all 20 sectors in the standard industry sector classification, the next chart shows a more detailed level of industry code. It highlights only those industries with at least 40 jobs based in Pitt Meadows and a relative concentration at least double the BC average.

TABLE 2. PITT MEADOWS EMPLOYMENT BY SELECTED INDUSTRY, 2021

SELECTED INDUSTRY GROUP	2021 JOBS IN PITT MEADOWS	JOB CONCENTRATION (RELATIVE TO BC)*
Pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing	85	6.96
Pharmaceuticals, toiletries, cosmetics and sundries merchant wholesalers	95	6.95
Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production	145	5.74
Support activities for air transportation	85	4.64
Household and institutional furniture and kitchen cabinet manufacturing	95	4.03
Rail transportation	45	3.92
Specialty food stores	75	3.73
Sawmills and wood preservation	150	3.21
Other amusement and recreation industries	250	2.76
Farms (except greenhouses, nurseries, floriculture and aquaculture)	210	2.55
Grocery stores	540	2.48
Foundation, structure, and building exterior contractors	65	2.29
Furniture stores	45	2.28
Activities related to credit intermediation	40	2.28
Electronics and appliance stores	70	2.13

Source: Statistics Canada Census, custom order. Data includes jobs with a fixed place of work in Pitt Meadows, including home-based.

* See definition on page 51.

JOB GROWTH, 2016 TO 2021

The next table highlights where the largest changes occurred in local employment from 2016 to 2021. This data should be understood in the context of the pandemic and the temporary move of many jobs to home-based. A substantial number of Pitt Meadows residents with a local home-based job in 2021 will move their job back to another community in 2026.

TABLE 3. PITT MEADOWS EMPLOYMENT CHANGE, 2016 TO 2021

SELECTED INDUSTRY SUB-SECTOR	2016 JOBS	2021 JOBS	CHANGE
Professional, scientific and technical services	260	560	300
Educational services	295	515	220
Food and beverage stores	465	640	175
Specialty trade contractors	120	280	160
Insurance carriers and related activities	60	200	140
Chemical manufacturing	10	95	85
Provincial and territorial public administration	10	85	75
Food manufacturing	40	110	70
Administrative and support services	105	175	70
Support activities for transportation	95	160	65
Machinery, equipment and supplies merchant wholesalers	25	85	60
Social assistance	125	185	60
Telecommunications	20	70	50
Federal government public administration	25	75	50
Personal and laundry services	200	150	-50
TOTAL	5,215	7,505	2,290

Source: Statistics Canada Census, custom order. Data includes jobs with a fixed place of work in Pitt Meadows, including home-based.

* See definition on page 51.

The impact of the jump in home-based work shows up most clearly in the growth in professional services as well as both the provincial and federal governments.

WORKFORCE STRUCTURE

The next few tables focus on the workforce that resides in Pitt Meadows, regardless of where they work.

It is based on “experienced labour force” data from the Census, which counts both the employed as well as the unemployed who had worked since the start of 2020 and are counted according to their most recent occupation.

For additional context, each of these tables also shows the median earnings of Pitt Meadows residents (regardless of where they work), compared to median earnings of the same occupations for jobs based in Pitt Meadows. It is only natural that the range of employment opportunities in a small community like Pitt Meadows is limited compared to the entire region, but one of the reasons that at least some residents prefer to commute rather than work locally is because local jobs pay less, on average.

TABLE 4. OCCUPATION OF EMPLOYED PITT MEADOWS RESIDENTS, 2021

BROAD OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	EXPERIENCED LABOUR FORCE	JOB CONCENTRATION (RELATIVE TO BC)*	MEDIAN EARNINGS, RESIDENTS	MEDIAN EARNINGS, LOCAL JOBS
Sales and service	2,355	0.88	\$27,000	\$23,000
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related	2,200	1.17	\$60,400	\$52,800
Business, finance and administration	1,950	1.09	\$53,200	\$54,000
Education, law and social, community and government services	1,300	1.05	\$57,600	\$49,200
Natural and applied sciences and related	790	0.94	\$87,000	\$83,000
Health	750	0.94	\$58,400	\$39,600
Art, culture, recreation and sport	400	0.90	\$32,400	\$26,400
Manufacturing and utilities	400	1.13	\$56,800	\$46,000
Natural resources, agriculture and related production	245	0.85	\$24,200	\$26,000
Legislative and senior management	140	1.08	\$135,000	\$131,000
TOTAL	10,655	1.00	\$52,400	\$44,800

Source: Statistics Canada Census, custom order.

* See definition on page 51.

The workforce distribution by occupation in Pitt Meadows is closely aligned with the overall provincial workforce. The highest Job Concentration is in trades, transport and equipment operators, but it is only 17% above the provincial average.

Similarly, the lowest (natural resources and agriculture), is only 15% lower than the BC average. This may seem counter-intuitive given the prominence of local agriculture, but compared to the rest of BC, Pitt Meadows has almost no workers in forestry, mining, oil and gas, or fishing, and many of

the agricultural workers on Pitt Meadows farms do not live in the community.

The earnings data shows that for 8 out of 10 occupational categories, Pitt Meadows residents earn more, including through commuting elsewhere, than workers employed in Pitt Meadows. Median earnings for jobs in Pitt Meadows are about \$7,500 less than what Pitt Meadows residents earn.

TABLE 5. SELECTED OCCUPATION OF EMPLOYED PITT MEADOWS RESIDENTS, 2021

MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUP	EXPERIENCED LABOUR FORCE	JOB CONCENTRATION (RELATIVE TO BC)*
Technical trades and transportation officers and controllers	900	1.21
Administrative and financial support and supply chain logistics occupations	550	1.15
Helpers and labourers and other transport drivers, operators and labourers	490	1.26
Administrative occupations and transportation logistics occupations	475	1.17
Front-line public protection services and paraprofessional occupations in legal, social, community, education services	455	1.51
Administrative and financial supervisors and specialized administrative occupations	335	1.24
Technical occupations related to natural and applied sciences	325	1.18
Middle management occupations in trades and transportation	265	1.40
Technical occupations in health	200	1.14
Assisting occupations in education and in legal and public protection	195	1.30
Machine operators, assemblers, inspectors in processing, manufacturing and printing	170	1.34
Middle management occupations in manufacturing and utilities	65	1.48

Source: Statistics Canada Census, custom order.

* See definition on page 51.

The table above shows more detailed occupations that are particularly highly concentrated among the Pitt Meadows workforce. The local strengths are predominant in technical and administrative positions.

TRAINING, EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES (TEER)

The TEER categorization is another way to examine workforce capabilities. It was introduced in the 2021 Census and groups occupations according to the combination of education and other qualifications required to hold each position.

The distribution of the Pitt Meadows workforce by these categories is shown below.

TABLE 6. OCCUPATION OF EMPLOYED PITT MEADOWS RESIDENTS BY TEER, 2021

TEER CATEGORY	EXPERIENCED LABOUR FORCE	JOB CONCENTRATION (RELATIVE TO BC)
TEER 0 - Management	1,360	1.07
TEER 1 - University degree (or equivalent experience/expertise)	1,660	0.83
TEER 2 - Post-secondary program of 2-3 years, trades/apprenticeship for 2-5 years, supervisory/safety responsibility, or several years experience in Teer 3	2,575	1.17
TEER 3 - Post-secondary program up to 2 years, apprenticeship up to 2 years, 6+ months of on-the-job training, or several years experience at Teer 4	1,845	1.01
TEER 4 - High school grad, or several weeks on-the-job training, or experience at Teer 5	1,555	0.99
TEER 5 - No formal educational requirements	1,515	0.96
TOTAL	10,655	1.00

Source: Statistics Canada Census, custom order.

Relative to BC overall, the highest local concentration in workforce capabilities is in TEER 2, which aligns with the previous chart showing local strengths in various technical and administrative occupations.

The Pitt Meadows workforce is relatively weakest in TEER 1, which requires a university degree or equivalent.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATH (STEM)

Expanding workforce capabilities in STEM disciplines is a policy focus of senior levels of governments as they are required for success in the tech sector and for pushing forward innovation in health, climate and food science, alternative energy, and many other fields.

Occupations are categorized according to their STEM focus.

TABLE 7. OCCUPATION OF EMPLOYED PITT MEADOWS RESIDENTS BY STEM, 2021

STEM CATEGORY	EXPERIENCED LABOUR FORCE	JOB CONCENTRATION (RELATIVE TO BC)*
A - STEM occupations	560	0.94
A1 - Science and science technology	50	0.73
A2 - Engineering and engineering technology	200	1.05
A3 - Mathematics, computer, and information sciences	300	0.88
B - STEM related occupations	820	0.94
B1 - Business, finance and administration occupations	0	0.00
B2 - Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	210	1.03
B3 - Health occupations	465	0.91
B4 - Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services	0	0.00
B8 - Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations	55	0.82
B9 - Occupations in manufacturing and utilities	75	1.30

Source: Statistics Canada Census, custom order.

* See definition on page 51.

The table shows that Pitt Meadows has a slightly below-average concentration of workforce in STEM and STEM-related occupations. But on the positive side, it has specific areas of strength in engineering and occupations relating to manufacturing and utilities.

MISMATCH OF LOCAL JOBS AND LOCAL WORKERS

Previous analysis in this appendix has shown there are not enough jobs based in Pitt Meadows for all the workers that live in Pitt Meadows. The next table looks at specific occupational groups to identify the 20 largest discrepancies.

In 19 of the top 20 occupations, there are at least 60 more resident workers than there are local jobs. In one case, the reverse is true – there are more local jobs than local workers.

TABLE 8. MISMATCH OF PITT MEADOWS OCCUPATIONS, 2021

MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUP	RESIDENT WORKFORCE	FIXED JOBS IN PITT MEADOWS	MISMATCH
Technical trades and transportation officers and controllers	900	405	495
General trades	470	130	340
Front-line public protection services and paraprofessional occupations in legal, social, community, education services	455	210	245
Professional occupations in health	315	115	200
Professional occupations in law, education, social, community and government services	540	365	175
Administrative occupations and transportation logistics occupations	475	300	175
Assisting occupations in support of health services	235	60	175
Helpers and labourers and other transport drivers, operators and labourers	490	325	165

MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUP	RESIDENT WORKFORCE	FIXED JOBS IN PITT MEADOWS	MISMATCH
Technical occupations related to natural and applied sciences	325	185	140
Administrative and financial supervisors and specialized administrative occupations	335	205	130
Technical occupations in health	200	80	120
Administrative and financial support and supply chain logistics occupations	550	445	105
Assisting occupations in education and in legal and public protection	195	90	105
Professional occupations in finance and business	340	255	85
Middle management occupations in trades and transportation	265	180	85
Sales and service representatives and other customer and personal services occupations	630	555	75
Middle management occupations in retail and wholesale trade and customer services	435	375	60
Specialized middle management occupations in administrative services, financial and business services and communication (except broadcasting)	255	195	60
Occupations in art, culture and sport	110	50	60
Labourers in processing, manufacturing and utilities	110	185	-75

Source: Statistics Canada Census, custom order.