



Economic Development Strategy

APPENDIX A: VISION

August 17th, 2022



In association with:



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About This Report

This report provides a summary of the community engagement conducted by the City of Coquitlam and the input received. The purpose of this engagement was to inform the community and collect feedback on the Economic Development Strategy (EDS). The engagement took place between April 28 and July 30, 2022. The feedback outlined in this report serves as a record of comments provided into the Economic Development Strategy. Collectively, this feedback has helped to shape the emerging **vision** for success consisting of refined **values** and **themes** outlined in this report. This work helps with providing the necessary strategic alignment to support the development of the **Appendix B: Employment Lands & Economy Review** that was developed in parallel with this report and builds in outlining **goals** and **strategies** for the EDS based on that analysis and the feedback outlined in this report. The final EDS report will include a succinct summary findings from this engagement and will be informed by research and analysis contained in the Appendices.

This report includes:

- A summary of feedback and input received through workshops with Council, Municipal Advisory Committees, and youth.
- A summary of feedback from an online survey.
- A summary of interviews with community members and local businesses.
- A summary of the emerging vision and directions for the EDS based on feedback.

Note that the input received reflects the interests and opinions of people who chose to participate in this engagement process at a particular point in time and does not reflect a random sample.

Executive Summary

In late 2021, the City of Coquitlam initiated the Economic Development Strategy as step towards building a high quality of life for current and future generations supported by a strong local economy and local jobs. The strategy serves as a unifying and guiding roadmap, providing a clear five-year action plan that supports the local economy as well as the ongoing establishment of a complete community to position Coquitlam for success. The EDS will strengthen the City's position as a place for business and a desired quality of life.

A. Engagement Activities and Participation

Input from public was gathered from across the community, including City Council, neighbouring First Nations, youth, local businesses, and members of the public. Their feedback provided a foundation for the development of the EDS, and informed both the emerging vision for the Strategy, along with directions for future action. From April 28 to July 30, 2022, the community was engaged through:

- 821 visits to the project page
- 429 responses to the public survey
- 12 stakeholder meetings
- 1 workshop with Coquitlam Council
- 6 presentations to the Coquitlam's Municipal Advisory Committees
- 2 meetings with kwikwə'əm First Nation Enterprises
- 1 workshop with the Student Economic Society at Simon Fraser University
- 2 working meetings with City staff

B. Key Findings

The top themes across all engagement activities are summarized as follows:

| | |
|--------|--|
| People | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Coquitlam offers range of employment opportunities for residents and workers across the economic spectrum of skills, education, and professional development. • Promote opportunities for Coquitlam residents to live and work in the community by supporting the development of attainable housing choices and other social supports, including childcare and mobility choices. • Celebrate and the cultural diversity of the population and promote equitable growth for all. • Provide a high quality of life with affordable and accessible amenities, services, and infrastructure. |
| Place | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Coquitlam as a vibrant hub north of the Fraser by developing and promoting a strong civic identity and sense of place to do business, explore nature, enjoy the arts and culture, and access distinct business areas. • Ensure land use policy continues to protect for employment opportunities across a range of economic activities. • Identify opportunities to further streamline development applications and encourage innovation and resiliency in Coquitlam’s commercial and industrial spaces. • Protect and leverage the natural environment and greenspaces to improve community livability, provide greater access to recreational opportunities, and attract and retain the labour force. • Support local artists, public art, and arts and culture organizations to enhance the vibrancy and placemaking for local neighbourhoods and businesses. • Create complete, walkable, and attractive community hubs as strategic locations for investment that provide a range of employment opportunities, services, and amenities. • Improve municipal infrastructure to ensure it can support the growth of the population and meet the evolving needs of a changing economy. |

Partnerships

- Ensure that Coquitlam offers a comprehensive and competitive mix of land use policies, business supports and incentives to attract investment and encourage preferred forms of employment, space development, and business growth.
- Prioritize meaningful reconciliation and deepen connections with the First Nations communities to explore future economic opportunities.
- Continue to invest in transportation systems (active transportation, micro mobility, transit, inter-regional transportation) to support and improve linkages across Coquitlam for the movement of residents, students, workers, visitors and goods.
- Support and recognize Coquitlam’s small businesses, entrepreneurs, and home-based businesses and work to strengthen and connect the local business community.
- Leverage existing and develop new partnerships with local educational institutions to ensure the right programs are being offered to meet local business needs, and that students have meaningful opportunities to connect with employers.
- Continue to strengthen relationships with and between local Business Improvement Areas, local business owners, community organizers, and arts and culture organizations.

1. Coquitlam Council Workshop

On April 28, 2022, Hemson and Urban Systems facilitated a workshop with members of City of Coquitlam Council to discuss their vision Coquitlam's economic future, key areas of focus and inquiry, and directions for future study. Prominent themes from the discussion are outlined below.

Shaping Coquitlam's Success Story

- A City in transition; supporting the evolution from a suburban community to a well-rounded city with a collection of distinct neighbourhoods and commercial nodes.
- Desire of a shared vision to propel the community forward.
- Desire to continue with a stable and responsible approach to growth that embraces inclusion, innovation, and flexibility.
- Establishing Coquitlam as a regional economic hub north of the Fraser River.



Image Source: City of Coquitlam

Focus on Community Livability

- Affordable housing is critical in supporting local employment and quality of life.
- Consider strategies to support employee housing choices.
- Leverage the lifestyle options (nature, culture, recreation).
- Prioritize equity and sustainability in the planning processes.
- Prioritize complete communities (walkability, active transportation, diverse mix of shops, services, and local employment).

Supporting the Local Business Community

- Create opportunities for local businesses to grow in Coquitlam and celebrate existing businesses.
- Support collaboration in the business community and community organizations that facilitate business engagement and development.
- Support the entrepreneurship community and explore more shared co-working, business start-up and incubation spaces.
- Support home-based businesses and employment.

Building Partnerships

- Support grass-roots community economic development initiatives and partnerships such as Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) and the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce.
- Explore partnership opportunities with local educational institutions.

Leverage Culture

- Galleries, event spaces, patios, events, great public spaces and placemaking can add vibrancy to the City and support local identity.

- Celebrate diversity and local cultural richness with strategic linkages to support the local visitor economy and creative industries.

2. Community Advisory Committees

Following the workshop with City Council, members of the consulting team and City staff facilitated engagement sessions with members of Coquitlam's Youth Council and Community Advisory Committees, including:

- Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Multiculturalism Advisory Committee
- Sports and Recreation Advisory Committee
- Sustainability and Environmental Advisory Committee
- Universal Access-Ability Advisory Committee
- Culture Services Advisory Committee

The presentation provided an introduction to the Economic Development Strategy and an overview of the project and the visioning process. Committee members were then invited to provide feedback for consideration. Key messages from Advisory Committee feedback are summarized as follows:

A Community Core

- Leverage the opportunities with the establishment of the new City Centre (community connectivity, vibrancy, walkability, employment).
- Attract more technology companies into the new downtown core.
- Create active and diverse spaces (reference the successes in downtown Montreal and downtown Toronto).

Community Amenities

- Prioritize high-quality amenities to attract and retain workers.
- Prioritize greenspaces, events, public spaces and facilities.
- Ensure community services (medical and educational) are meeting the needs of the population.

Culture

- Prioritize a vibrant entertainment district.
- Support artists to establish unique communities and economies.
- Support cultural organizations and events so they are able to serve the community and attract visitors and investment.

Accessibility, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Recognize affordability (particularly housing) as a key economic need.
- Work to relieve pressures on social support systems.
- Continue to connect with multicultural people and organizations to support diverse local communities.
- Support resources for new immigrants.
- Expand beyond a racialized and ethnic diversity lens and consider other types of diversity such as gender, sexual orientation, and neurodiversity.

Local Businesses

- Support small businesses, home-based businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Support the development of more work/office spaces for local businesses.
- Provide more employment opportunities so that people are able to live and work in the City.

Connectivity and Resilience

- Improve transit linkages and choices within the City.
- Improve public transit connectivity between jurisdictions north of the Fraser River to support transportation options.
- Find equitable ways to plan for and adapt to challenges and disruptions brought on by climate change.

3. Online Survey

To engage with the public at large, an online survey was developed and made available through LetsTalkCoquitlam, and advertised through partnerships, bulletins, and social media. The survey was open from May 2, 2022, to June 15, 2022. In total, there were 429 responses.

The views represented in the survey results reflect the priorities and concerns of the respondents only and may not be representative of the general public. Respondents elected to take the survey, and their responses do not reflect a random sample.

The survey included opportunities for respondents to provide detailed feedback across a range of questions and topics, all of which are being used to inform the EDS. An overview of the survey responses is provided below, broken out between those that self-identified themselves as business owners and non-business owners for context. Feedback from local students is also highlighted to recognize the views of younger stakeholders. Key points of feedback are noted amongst each.

The Timing of the Public Survey and Trends in Responses

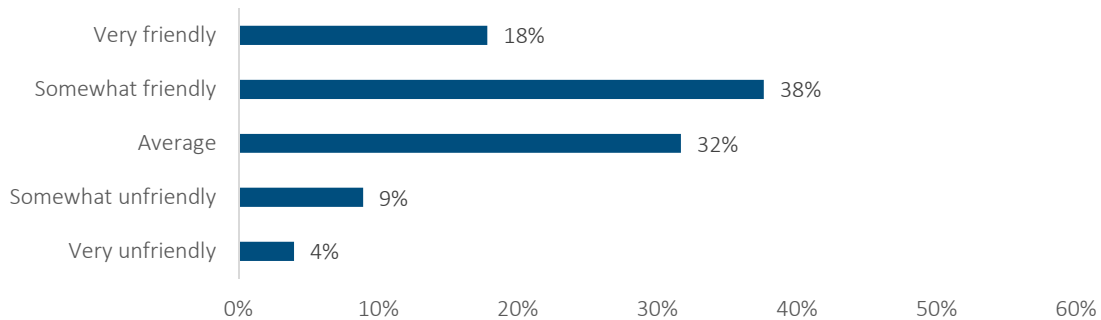
It is worth noting that the survey was administered over a period in which news relating to the broader global and regional economic outlook suggested increasing challenges, including reports of rising inflation and significant interest rate increases from the Bank of Canada. Survey responses specific to Coquitlam's economic outlook collected prior to these stories breaking tended to be more optimistic, while latter responses tended to be more pessimistic. These response trends demonstrate the influence of global factors that may not necessarily be within municipal control, but may have an impact on local business.

Section 1: All Respondents

1.1 How business friendly is Coquitlam compared to other municipalities in the region?

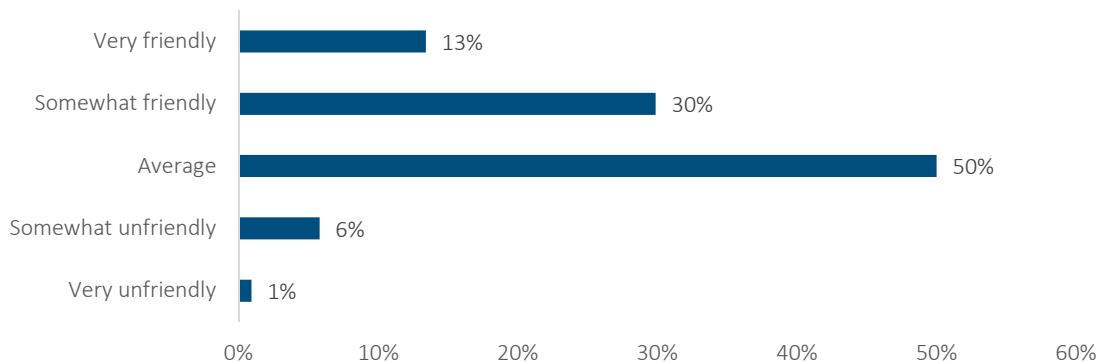
A majority of business owners (56) indicated that Coquitlam offered a very friendly or somewhat friendly environment for businesses. By comparison, more non-owners (164) considered Coquitlam to be average in this regard when compared to non-owners that considered Coquitlam to be business friendly (142). Only a small portion of owners (13) and non-owners (22) considered the city to be unfriendly to businesses when compared to other parts of the region.

1.1.1. Business Owners



Total responses: 101

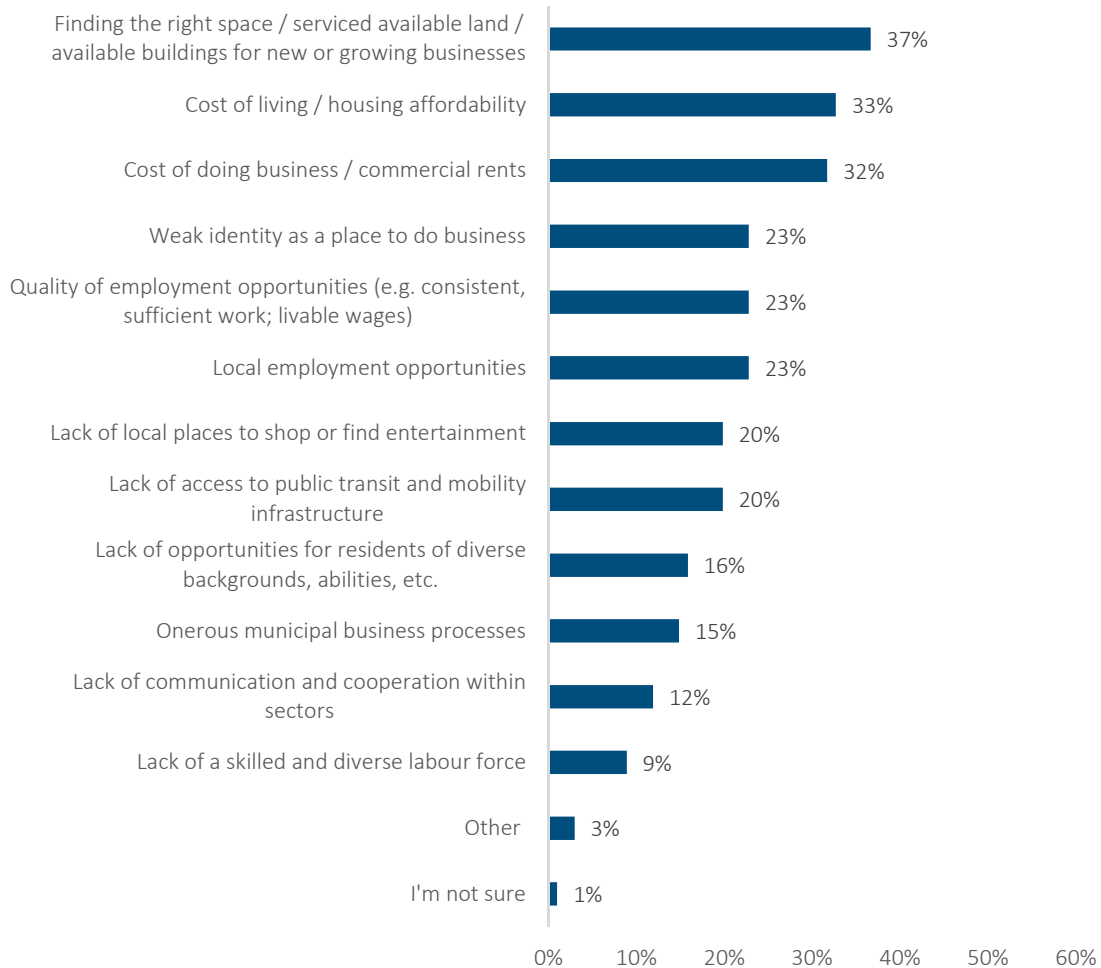
1.1.2. Non-Business Owners



Total responses: 328

1.2 In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing Coquitlam's local economy compared to other municipalities? (select up to 3)

1.2.1 Business Owners

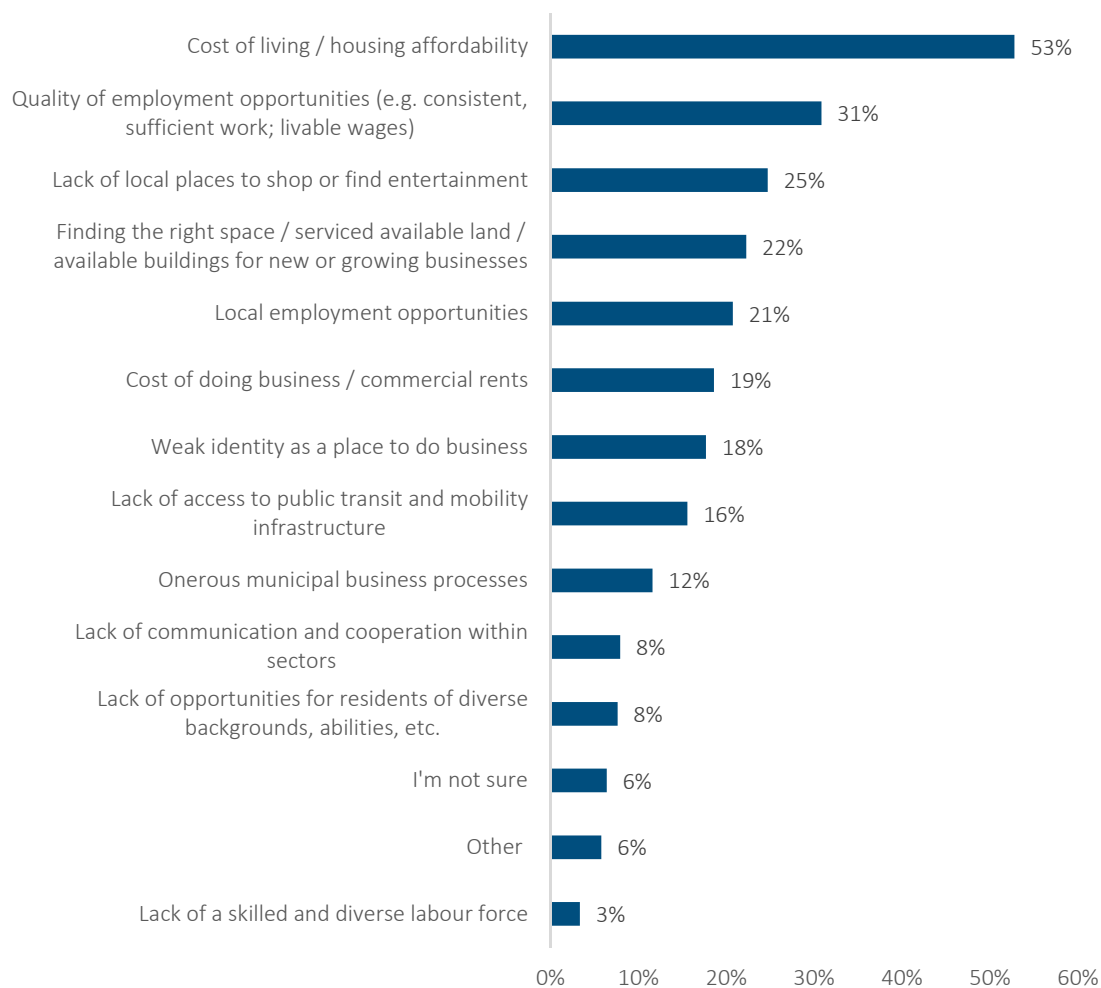


Total responses: 101

Business owners indicated that the top three challenges facing Coquitlam's economy included:

- Finding the right space/serviced available land/available buildings for new and growing businesses (37)
- Cost of living/housing affordability (33)
- Cost of doing business/commercial rents (32)

1.2.2 Non-Business Owners



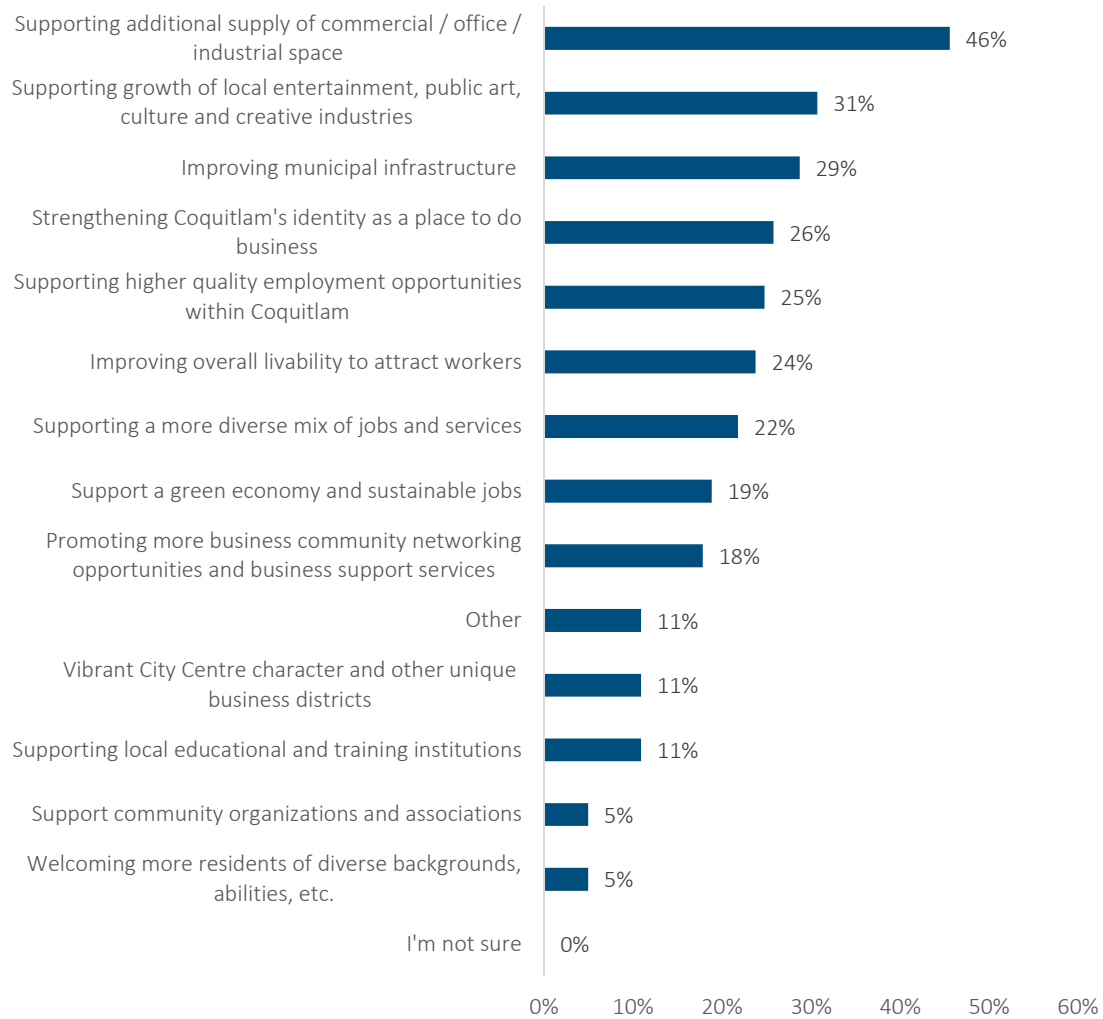
Total responses: 328

The top three challenges facing Coquitlam's economy for those who do not own a business include:

- Cost of living/affordable housing (173)
- Quality of employment opportunities (101)
- Lack of local places to shop or find entertainment (81)

1.3 What areas should Coquitlam focus on to support our local economy? (Select up to 3)

1.3.1 Business Owners

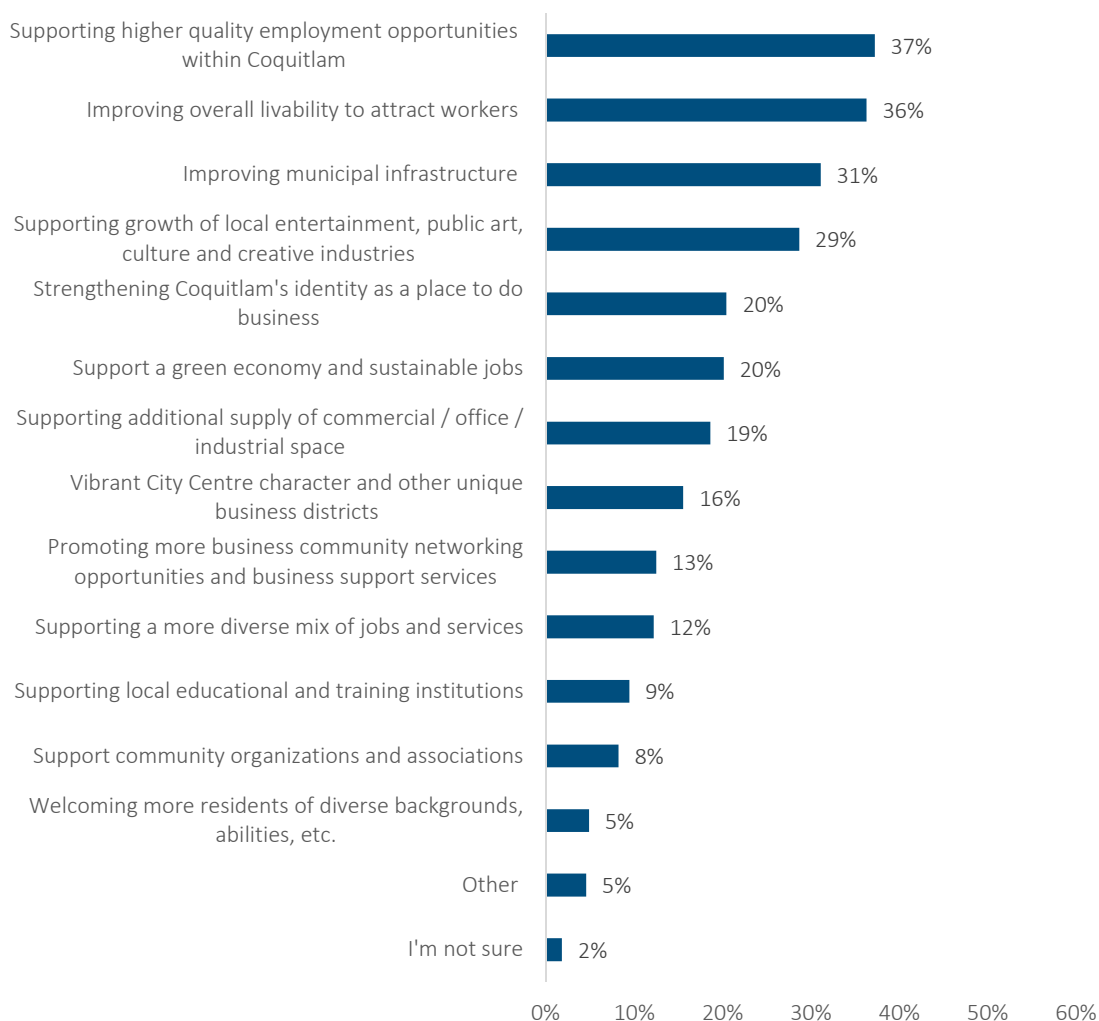


Total responses: 101

For those who own businesses, the top three areas of focus were:

- Supporting the additional supply of commercial/office/industrial space (46)
- Supporting the growth of local entertainment, public art, culture, and creative industries (31)
- Improving municipal infrastructure (29)

1.3.2 Non-Business Owners



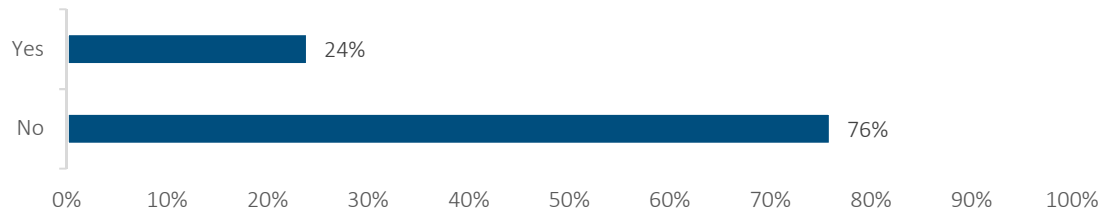
Total responses: 328

For those who don't own businesses, the top three areas of focus were:

- Supporting higher quality employment opportunities (122)
- Improving overall livability to attract workers (119)
- Improving municipal infrastructure (102)

Section 2: Business Owners

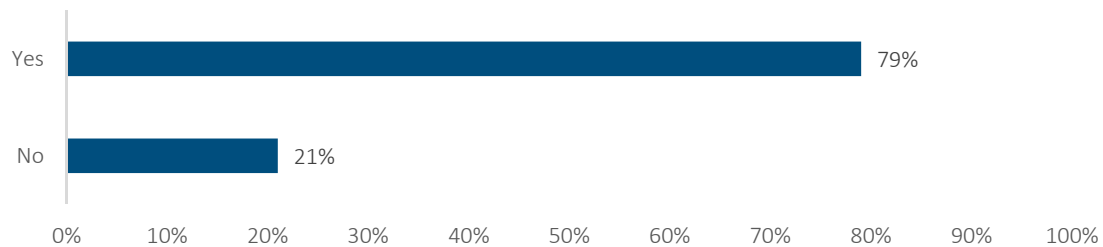
2.1 Do you own a business?



Total responses: 429

One hundred and one (101) respondents identified as business owners.

2.2 Is your business located or have locations in Coquitlam?



Total responses: 101

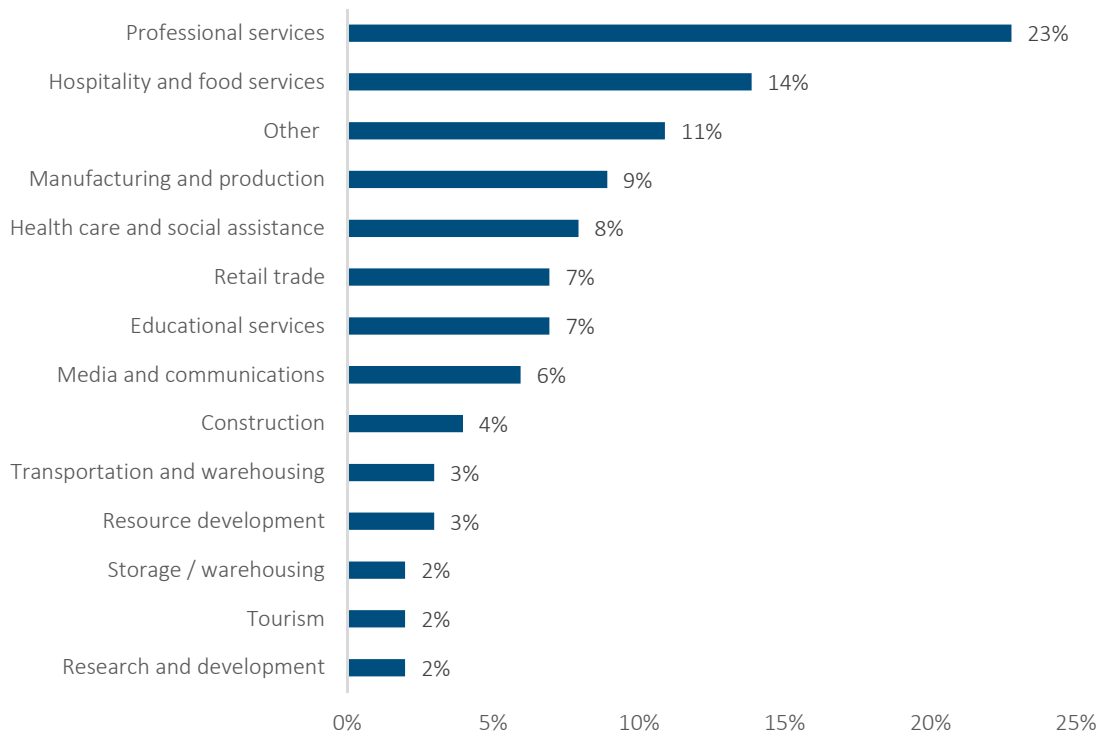
Of those who own a business, the majority (80) were located in Coquitlam.

2.3 If not in Coquitlam, where is your business located?

Respondents were invited to leave a comment. In total, this question received 21 comments. The top locations are listed below:

- Port Coquitlam (8)
- Vancouver (5)
- Surrey (2)
- Burnaby (2)
- Port Moody (2)

2.4 What sector is your business in?



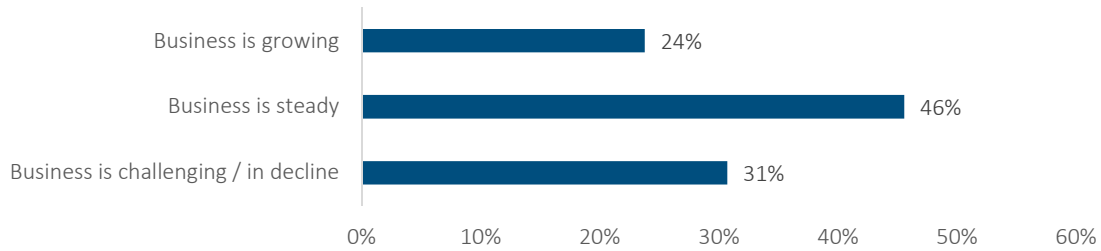
Total responses: 101

The most common sectors for business owners who answered this survey include professional services (23), hospitality and food services (14), and manufacturing and production (9).

Respondents were invited to leave a comment if they selected “other”. In total, there were 11 comments. Comments included:

- Technology (1)
- Consulting (1)
- Financial services (1)
- International trade (1)
- Content creation (1)
- Wellbeing and Financial
- Education (1)
- Janitorial services (1)
- Arts and Culture (1)
- Self-employed (1)
- Design (1)

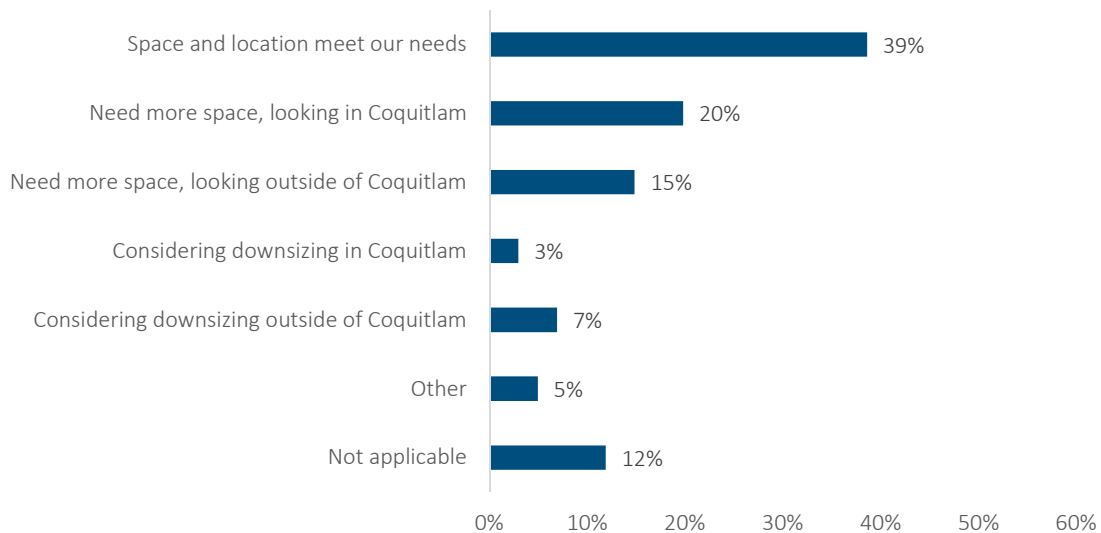
2.5 What best describes your recent / current business situation?



Total responses: 101

Almost half of respondents stated that their business was steady (46), while 31 stated it was in decline and 24 stated it was growing.

2.6 How would you describe your current space needs?



Total responses: 101

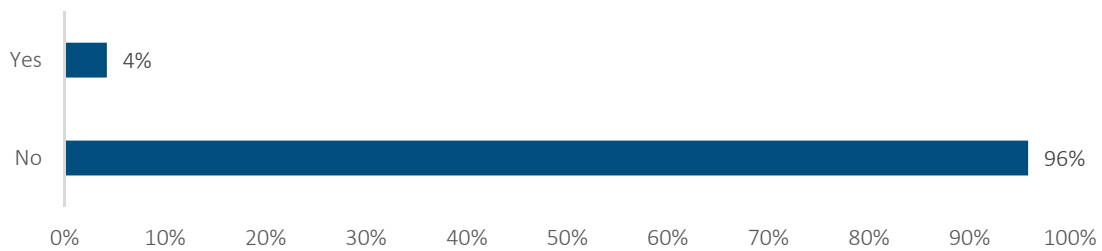
The most common responses when asked about current space needs were that the space/location were meeting business' needs (39). Twenty (20) businesses need more space and are looking in Coquitlam, while 15 need more space but are looking outside of Coquitlam.

Respondents were invited to leave a comment if they chose "other". In total, there were five comments:

- Work from home (2)
- Work from home but would rather work from a part time co-working space (2)
- Looking to leave the high tax jurisdictions (1)

Section 3: Students

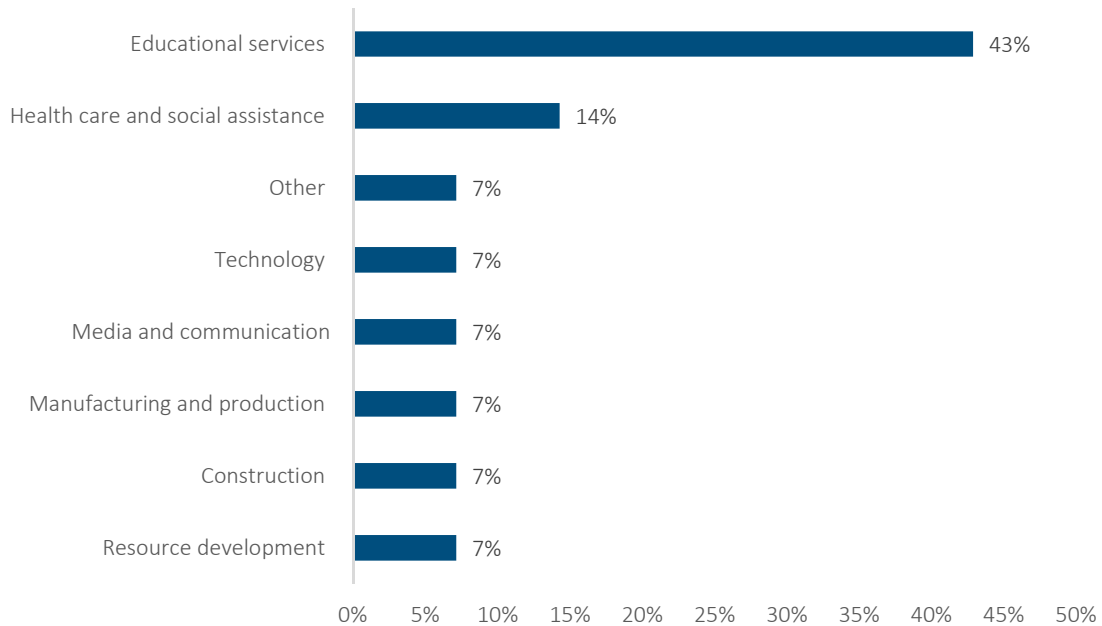
3.1 Are you a student?



Total responses: 333

Fourteen (14) respondents identified as students.

3.2 What kind of sector do you see yourself working in when you have completed your schooling?

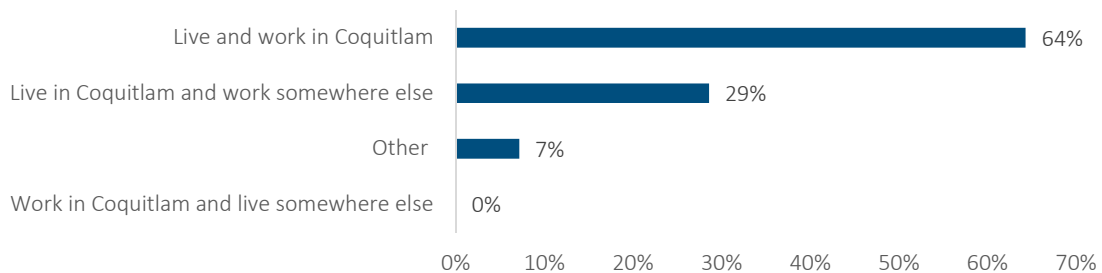


Total responses: 14

Of those who identified as a student, the most popular sectors that they were likely to see themselves working in included educational services (6) or health care and social assistance (2).

3.3 What is your preferred living / working situation?

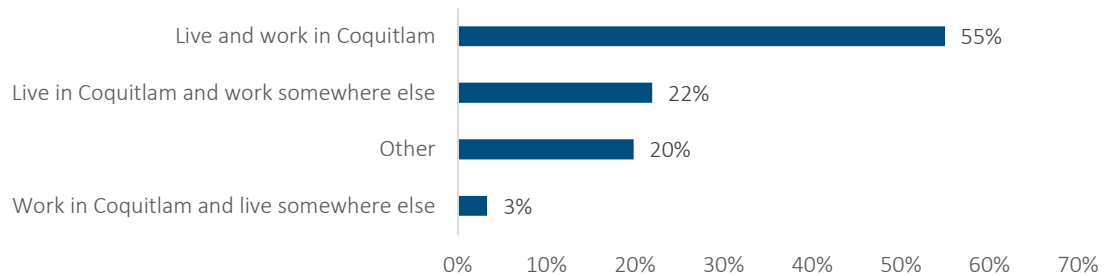
3.3.1 Students



Total responses: 14

Of those who identified a student, the majority (9) indicated they would prefer to both live and work in Coquitlam.

3.3.2. Non-Students

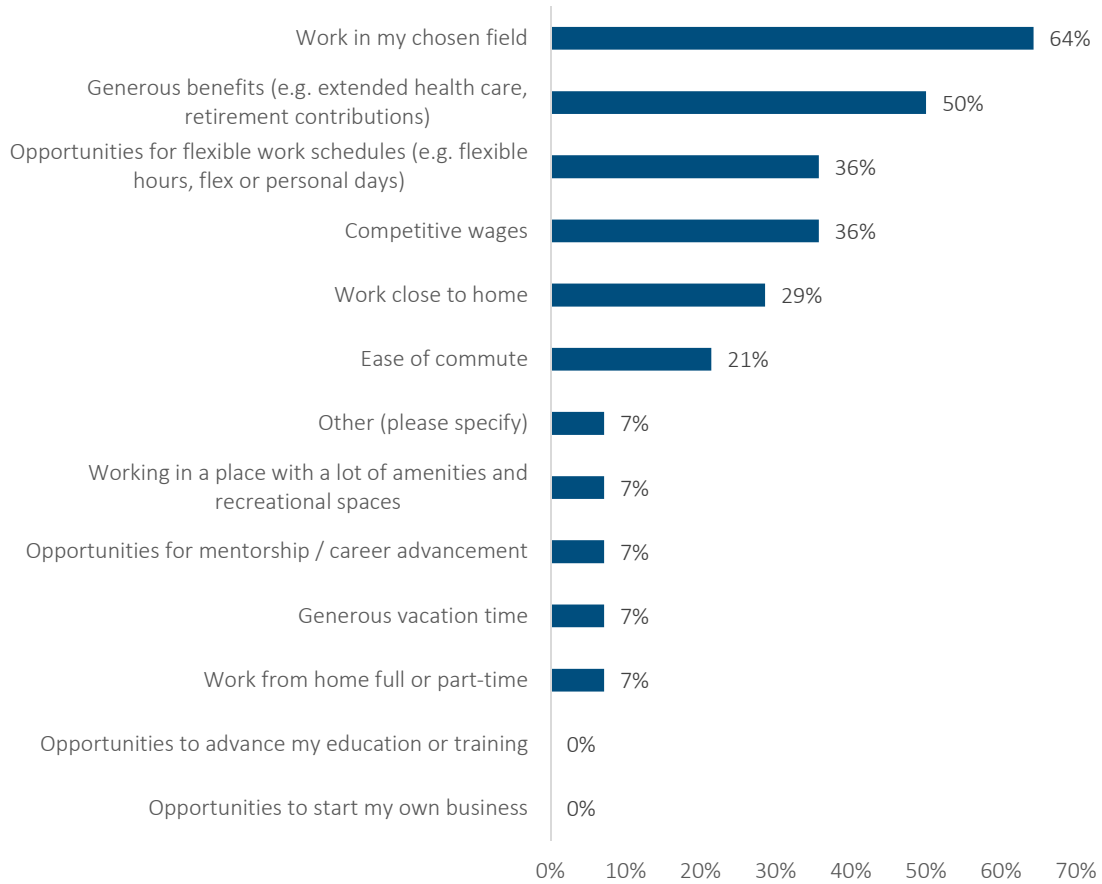


Total responses: 319

Similarly to student responses, those who did not identify as students indicated that the preferred living and working situation was also to live and work in Coquitlam (174).

3.4 When looking for a job, what are the most important things you are looking for? (select up to 3)

3.4.1. Students

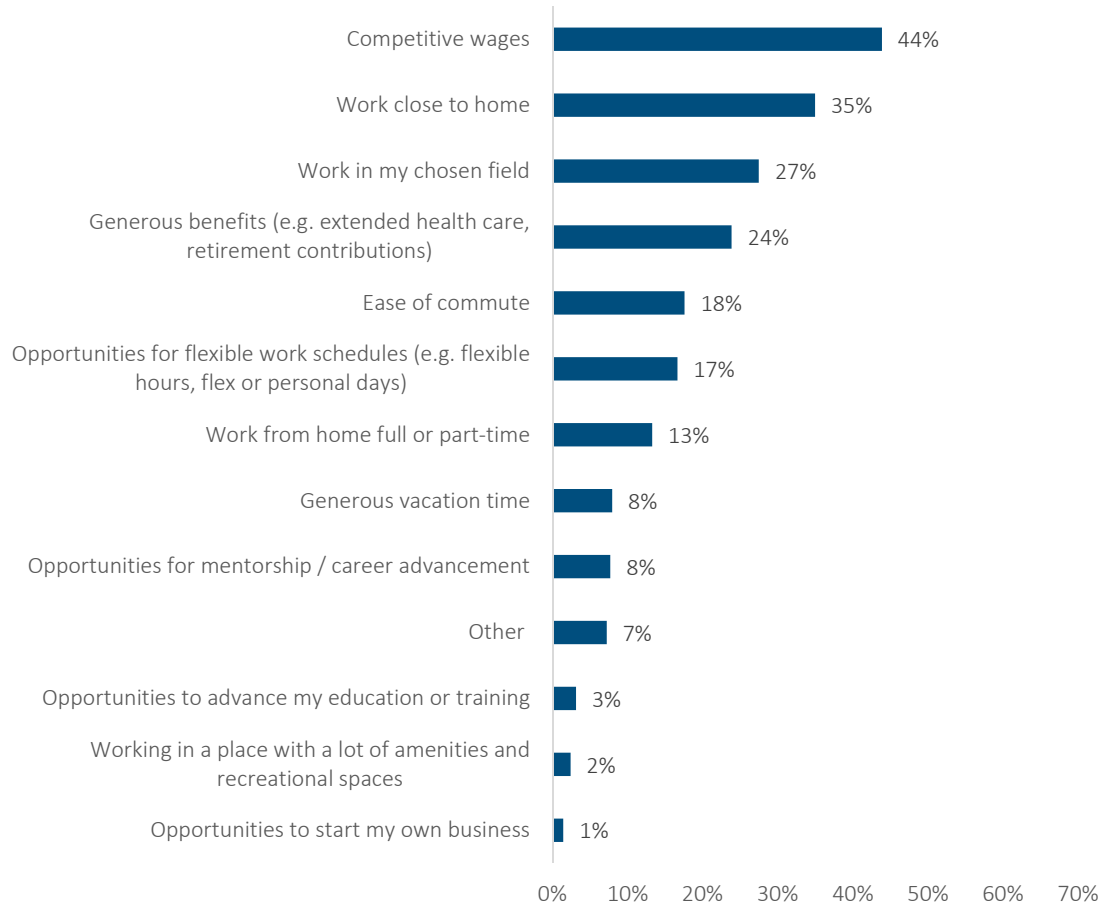


Total responses: 14

For students, the most important things they look for when seeking employment include:

- Working in their chosen field (9)
- Generous benefits (7)
- Opportunities for flexible work schedules (5)
- Competitive wages (5)

3.4.2 Non-Students



Total responses: 415

For those who did not identify as a student, the most important things when looking for a job include:

- Competitive wages (182)
- Work close to home (145)
- Working in their chosen field (114)

Section 4: Other Ways to Support Local Economic Prosperity

For this section, instead of choosing from preset response options, participants were given the option to input their own thoughts via text submission. In total, there were 209 responses. To summarize, responses have been themed, with similar sentiments or ideas grouped together into common themes. Descriptions of the main themes that emerged are listed below for those who identified as business owners, and those who identified as the general public.

4.1.1. Business Owners

Support for Businesses *(21 comments)*

- Support for small businesses (loans, hiring grants) (7)
- Support new technologies and technology clusters (6)
- Commercial tax breaks (2)
- Foster networking (2)
- Attract skilled workers (2)
- Encourage residents to shop locally (2)

Planning, Zoning, and Development *(17 comments)*

- Better traffic and parking management (3)
- Focus on Town Centre and commercial pockets (such as the Brewery District in Port Moody or Fort Langley) (2)
- Update infrastructure (roads, recreation) (2)
- Explore urban agglomeration (2)
- Capitalize on the potential for Austin Avenue (2)
- Need more options than only high rise residential (2)
- Diverse mix of businesses and services (2)
- Flexible zoning for businesses (spread businesses out into neighbourhoods) (2)

Government Processes *(10 comments)*

- Less government red tape (4)
- Consultation with community (2)
- Lower taxes (2)
- Simplify development approvals (2)

Green Spaces and Environment *(7 comments)*

- Protect the environment (3)
- Prioritize climate change (2)
- Protect and create more greens paces and community gardens (2)

Community *(6 comments)*

- Prioritize walkability (3)
- Host more community events (3)

4.1.2. Non-Business Owners

Planning, Zoning, and Development *(54 comments)*

- Better transportation systems (active transportation, transit, inter-regional transportation) (11)
- Upgrade infrastructure to support growth (8)
- Focus on Town Centre (strong core with identity draws people) (6)
- Zone for businesses (allow commercial in residential areas, protect current industrial and commercial zoning from residential) (5)
- Need more development options than only high-rise residential (5)
- Medium to higher development (less sprawl) (4)
- Issues with traffic and parking (4)
- Capitalize on the potential for Austin Ave (3)
- Diverse mix of shops and services needed (3)
- More transit-oriented development (3)

- Fewer high rises (2)

Support for Businesses *(39 comments)*

- Support for small businesses (incentives, funding, equitable accelerator programs support for entrepreneurs) (18)
- Encourage residents to shop locally (7)
- Commercial tax breaks (5)
- Protect industrial lands (3)
- Foster networking among local businesses (2)
- Lower commercial rent (2)
- Rebrand as business friendly (2)

Community *(29 comments)*

- Prioritize walkability (7)
- Invest in more community spaces (5)
- Invest in the public realm (3)
- Prioritize beautification (3)
- Prioritize culture and cultural programs (3)
- Host more community events (2)
- Enhance community livability (2)
- Create more opportunities for families (2)
- Prioritize child care (2)

Green Spaces and Environment *(15 comments)*

- Protect and create more green spaces (10)
- Protect the trees (3)
- Protect the environment (2)

Government Processes *(12 comments)*

- Less government red tape (7)
- Low taxes (3)
- Consultation with community (2)

Housing *(11 comments)*

- Concerns about the cost of housing (6)
- Rental subsidies/affordable rent (5)

4. Community Interviews

Throughout June and July 2022, 12 interviews and one focus group were held with key stakeholders regarding the Economic Development Strategy. These interviews followed a freeform discussion format, oriented around a number of prompting questions. These questions included the subject's general perspective on Coquitlam's role in the local and regional economy, Coquitlam's competitive strengths and opportunities for future growth, existing weaknesses and future challenges, and any priorities, actions or partners that the EDS should consider as part of the planning process.

Subjects contacted for these interviews represented a range of community members and economic sectors, including business and significant employers, institutional partners, developers, and not-for-profit and student organizations.

Feedback from each of the interviews is grouped based on the sector or type of organization the subject represents and is summarized as follows.

| Education: Douglas College | |
|---|--|
| Interview Questions | Main Themes |
| Coquitlam's strengths and/or opportunities | <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livability • Municipal fibre network <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating more business hubs and shared workspaces • Leveraging the Olympics • Recreational tourism • Coquitlam Centre/Town Centre |
| Coquitlam's existing weaknesses and/or future challenges | <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need safer spaces (better lighting, safety for women) • No spaces for conferences <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of housing • Preference for residential over commercial/tourism |
| Planning priorities (short-term and long-term) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkability • Public realm design • Holistic planning (day care hub across from Douglas College programs) • Modest scaled hotel conference facility • Partnering hospitality college programs with tourism sector • Invest in medical services, hospitals, MRIs • Redevelop Coquitlam Centre |
| Other partners organizations, levels of governments, or resources to consider | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student leadership programs • Provincial ministries |

Development: Marcon Developments, Wesbild Holdings Ltd., Morguard Corporation

| Interview Questions | Main Themes |
|--|--|
| Coquitlam’s strengths and/or opportunities | <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability • Proven appetite for investment and growth • Space for more equitable growth • Community amenities • Labour force availability <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coquitlam Centre/Town Centre • Strata offices • Stacked/dual floor loading industrial • Transit-Oriented Development |
| Coquitlam’s existing weaknesses and/or future challenges | <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clarity for City when moving towards goals • Higher commercial taxes than neighbouring municipalities • Onerous planning processes • Scarcity of land and land prices • Prescriptive industrial zoning limits potential users • Overly detailed by-laws • Relying too much on commercial property taxation <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of housing • Challenges competing with condo development due to construction costs and land values • Compounding of densities in Coquitlam’s mixed uses discourages non-residential components • Cannot expect new development to provide all amenities • Finding right mix of incentives to make new non-residential space financially feasible • Balance of requirements between affordable housing and non-residential space |

**Development: Marcon Developments, Wesbild Holdings Ltd.,
Morguard Corporation (continued)**

| Interview Questions | Main Themes |
|---|---|
| Planning priorities (short-term and long-term) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebrand as open for business • Provide incentives for businesses • Streamline approvals processes for rental housing • Focus on lifestyle options • Build capacity in Coquitlam staff around economic development • Incentivize preferred built forms • Property taxes to support stabilization of new supply • Remain flexible with opportunities and market conditions |
| Other partners organizations, levels of governments, or resources to consider | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Urban Development Institute |

Local Economic Development Partners: Austin Heights BIA, BDC

| Interview Questions | Main Themes |
|---|--|
| Coquitlam's strengths and/or opportunities | <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long standing relationships with many businesses • Tourism, recreation and community events • Progressive economic development team at the City • Uses tax revenues to improve the City <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour force availability • Redeveloping industrial lands to allow for smaller, more efficient units |
| Coquitlam's existing weaknesses and/or future challenges | <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of lodging/hotels • Traffic and congestion • Lack of real estate inventory and office spaces • Slow permitting processes • Reputation of planners not being efficient (additional training and resources for staff) <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of housing • Losing business opportunities to the Fraser Valley (more business friendly) • Preference for residential development over commercial • Infrastructure is not developed in stride with growth • Perception that Coquitlam is not open for business |
| Planning priorities (short-term and long-term) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase capacity within City communications • Build capacity in Coquitlam staff around economic development • Deal with City backlogs • Invest in medical services, hospitals, MRIs |
| Other partners organizations, levels of governments, or resources to consider | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism and hospitality sectors • First Nations |

| Businesses: Openheimer Group, Great Canadian Entertainment | |
|---|--|
| Interview Questions | Main Themes |
| Coquitlam's strengths and/or opportunities | <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investments in active transportation routes • Improved exits off Highway 1 (easier for truckers) • High quality facilities and amenities • Access to nature, parks, and trails • Community festivals and events • Business-friendly Council <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on housing density to help attract talent • Developing hotels/lodging |
| Coquitlam's existing weaknesses and/or future challenges | <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of/extremely high prices for industrial lands, many businesses leave • Lack of active transportation options for employees • Lack of vibrant spaces like Main or Commercial • Traffic congestion and poor commuting options <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of housing • Attracting and retaining talent • Lack of a City identity • Business areas are lacking amenities and connectivity |
| Planning priorities (short-term and long-term) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and create more greenspaces • Streamline permits and approvals • Ensure infrastructure matches housing development • Invest in the United Boulevard BIA • Develop a City identity |
| Other partners organizations, levels of governments, or resources to consider | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional infrastructure coordination • All regional partners (City is not an island) |

| Culture: Evergreen Cultural Centre, Place Des Arts | |
|---|--|
| Interview Questions | Main Themes |
| Coquitlam's strengths and/or opportunities | <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location within the region • Access to nature, parks, and trails • Community events (Caribbean Festival) • Diversity • Uses tax revenues to improve the City • Schools and places for families <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coquitlam Centre/Town Centre • Historical value of Maillardville (French culture) |
| Coquitlam's existing weaknesses and/or future challenges | <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited space for arts and cultural organizations • Lack of space/growth limits arts and culture • Lack of walkability • Limited capacity for cultural planning <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many neighbourhoods still car dependent • Strong competition in the region (Burnaby, Vancouver) |
| Planning priorities (short-term and long-term) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalize on ease of transit for festivals and events • Rebrand as an accessible destination • Invest in more placemaking • Invest into more arts and culture amenities • Invest in more accommodations and lodging • Provide more opportunities/subsidies for artists (where artists go, vibrancy follows) • Prioritize walkability |
| Other partners organizations, levels of governments, or resources to consider | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Society • Cultural groups |

| Recreation: Tri-Cities Offroad Cycling Association | |
|---|--|
| Interview Questions | Main Themes |
| Coquitlam's strengths and/or opportunities | <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to nature, parks, and trails • City is supportive of community organizations <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to advance reconciliation • More planning for Burke Mountain and the Pinecone Burke Provincial Park |
| Coquitlam's existing weaknesses and/or future challenges | <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal policies or plans for community trail building <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of housing • Need to further advance reconciliation |
| Planning priorities (short-term and long-term) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in recreational opportunities (pump track) • Prioritize more master planning (Burke Mountain) |
| Other partners organizations, levels of governments, or resources to consider | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HUB cycling • School District • Local First Nations |

Youth and Young Professionals: Youth Council, SFU Economic Student Union

| Interview Questions | Main Themes |
|---|---|
| Coquitlam's strengths and/or opportunities | <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desirable place to live due to various factors (access to nature, parks, and trails, not over-crowded) • Safe neighbourhoods • Great location to raise a family • Transit access <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can fill in and activate urban spaces (Glen Park, leisure in urban spaces) • Options for hybrid-employment, flexible work spaces like WeWork • Expanding jobs across all types and phases of professional development |
| Coquitlam's existing weaknesses and/or future challenges | <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No night life • Lack of vibrancy • Limited medical services <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of housing • Downtown Vancouver still prime location for many professional jobs / opportunities • Falling behind other suburban employment clusters (Surrey) |
| Planning priorities (short-term and long-term) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurants, entertainment and leisure • Co-op and internship programs • Improve linkages between students and local employers • Attract more professional employers |
| Other partners organizations, levels of governments, or resources to consider | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve connections between students, schools and local employers |

5. SWOC Analysis from Feedback

Feedback from the engagement has been summarized into a high-level overview of present Strengths and Weaknesses, and future Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC). This provides a summary of the key issues and features which should be considered when developing the Economic Development Strategy and its policy responses, both in terms of short-term moves and longer-term strategies.

Strengths

Many stakeholder groups were consistent in naming the access to nature, high quality amenities, cooperative City staff as the top strengths. Both the [Local Economic Development Partners](#) and [Culture](#) interviewees noted how Coquitlam re-invests in the community and the improvements are tangible (growth, beautification, transportation improvements). Additionally, both the [Development](#) industry and [Business](#) respondents noted that the City of Coquitlam has demonstrated the appetite for economic growth.

Weaknesses

Many groups and organizations, particularly [Businesses](#), noted a lack of connectivity between employment areas and their customers. There was also a concern about a lack of existing space for different types of economic uses, including office and retail, but also other business supporting businesses and features which would add a sense of interconnectivity and vibrancy to Coquitlam's economy. This lack of connectivity, vibrancy and space was commonly cited as an area in which Coquitlam is trailing other municipalities in the region, and highlighted as an area for improvement.

Other weaknesses that were discussed include the lack of available lodging, a lack of master planning (particularly for culture and recreation amenities), a lack of medical services, and limited land to support growth.

Opportunities

Interviewees from [Education](#), [Culture](#) and [Development](#) sectors highlighted the opportunity to redevelop the Coquitlam Centre/Town Centre.

[Development](#) and [Business](#) respondents noted opportunities for redevelopment of industrial lands to maximize the use of space or provide stacked/dual loading facilities.

Engagement participants from the online survey and municipal advisory committees highlighted the opportunity to center climate resiliency in future economic planning, as Coquitlam collectively works towards a green economy with adequate infrastructure that can withstand future climate impacts (extreme weather events, heat domes). Participants also spoke of the opportunities to embrace and celebrate the multi-cultural demographics of Coquitlam through food, music, festivals, arts and culture, and more.

[Recreation](#) participants discussed opportunities for more trail master planning and community participation in trail development (especially for Burke Mountain) to better leverage the surrounding nature and provide more access to the outdoors for residents.

Challenges

Most interview participants and other engagement participants identified the cost of housing as one of the most prominent challenges facing Coquitlam. Participants also indicated challenges with limited space for their operations, whether that be for theatres, offices, industrial lands, or educational events/conferences.

Informants from [Education](#) and [Local Economic Development Partners](#) highlighted the prominent focus on residential development rather than commercial employment generating uses. [Development](#) stakeholders noted challenges when competing with residential development due to construction costs and land values, and a financial structure that depends too strongly on commercial property taxes.

Stakeholders from [Businesses](#) and [Local Economic Development Partners](#) noted that the Fraser Valley is attracting more opportunities with better incentives and a larger land-base for industry. Stakeholders also emphasized the need to re-position the city as a business-friendly community and prioritize incentives to be a more competitive destination.

Priorities

Some of the key priorities noted across the interview informants and other engagement participants included:

- Protecting existing employment spaces and encouraging continued investment in the employment generating lands and spaces we have.
- Prioritizing commercial development alongside the development of mixed-used communities and affordable housing.
- Develop and promote Coquitlam as a desirable destination to live, work, and visit.
- Investing in green economies and climate adaptation.
- Investing in more placemaking opportunities.
- Supporting the arts and culture, and other community focused events and creative industries.
- Improving local walkability and connectivity between neighbourhoods and commercial areas.

- Leveraging recreational opportunities and access to nature.
- Streamlining the permitting/approvals processes by providing clarity of vision and consistency of requirements.

6. Emerging Vision

Before the community engagement launched, the project team conducted preliminary reviews, and, together with a substantial understanding of Coquitlam’s current context and previous Council direction, developed several guiding values. These have been categorised into two core values that include a desire to build a **Responsible Future** with **Shared Prosperity** opportunities for all community members. These values are outlined below.

Responsible Future

- Motivational, Ambitious, Leading
- Innovative, Unique, Vibrant, Possibilities
- Strategic, Focused, Deliberate, Meaningful
- Resilient, Livable, Sustainable

Shared Prosperity

- Welcoming, Diversity, Inclusive, Reconciliation
- Engaging, Open, Capacity Building, Collaborative
- Quality Employment Opportunities

These values were re-affirmed through the course of the engagement process and were reflected in the findings and feedback gathered from the community.

These values were subsequently distilled into a number of potential themes for the Economic Development Strategy to consider. These themes, which initially took the form of concepts to organize goals, strategies and actions to orient the study around, involved a number of concepts, including:

- Opportunities to attract and nurture local **talent**;
- Leveraging of strategic **infrastructure** investments;
- Establishing Coquitlam as a destination via **placemaking**;
- Supporting the **community** through strategic partnerships; and

- Promoting the growth of **local jobs** across the economic spectrum.

Based on the feedback received through the engagement process, these concepts have been refined into three themes intended to serve as the foundations of the Economic Development Strategy: **People**, **Place**, and **Partnerships**. The following section provides an overview of what was heard throughout the engagement process as it relates to these three themes:

1. People

- a. Ensure Coquitlam offers range of employment opportunities for residents and workers across the economic spectrum of skills, education, and professional development.
- b. Promote opportunities for Coquitlam residents to live and work in the community by supporting the development of attainable housing choices and other social supports, including childcare and mobility choices.
- c. Celebrate and the cultural diversity of the population and promote equitable growth for all.
- d. Provide a high quality of life with affordable and accessible amenities, services, and infrastructure.

2. Place

- a. Establish Coquitlam as a vibrant hub north of the Fraser by developing and promoting a strong civic identity and sense of place to do business, explore nature, enjoy the arts and culture, and access distinct business areas.
- b. Ensure land use policy continues to protect for employment opportunities across a range of economic activities.
- c. Identify opportunities to further streamline development applications and encourage innovation and resiliency in Coquitlam's commercial and industrial spaces.
- d. Protect and leverage the natural environment and greenspaces to improve community livability, provide greater access to recreational opportunities, and attract and retain the labour force.
- e. Support local artists, public art, and arts and culture organizations to enhance the vibrancy and placemaking for local neighbourhoods and businesses.
- f. Create complete, walkable, and attractive community hubs as strategic locations for investment that provide a range of employment opportunities, services, and amenities.
- g. Improve municipal infrastructure to ensure it can support the growth of the population and meet the evolving needs of a changing economy.

3. Partnerships

- a. Ensure that Coquitlam offers a comprehensive and competitive mix of land use policies, business supports and incentives to attract investment and encourage preferred forms of employment, space development, and business growth.
- b. Prioritize meaningful reconciliation and deepen connections with the First Nations communities to explore future economic opportunities.
- c. Continue to invest in transportation systems (active transportation, micro-mobility, transit, inter-regional transportation) to support and improve linkages across Coquitlam for the movement of residents, students, workers, visitors and goods.
- d. Support and recognize Coquitlam's small businesses, entrepreneurs, and home-based businesses and work to strengthen and connect the local business community.
- e. Leverage existing and develop new partnerships with local educational institutions to ensure the right programs are being offered to meet local business needs, and that students have meaningful opportunities to connect with employers.
- f. Continue to strengthen relationships with and between local Business Improvement Areas, local business owners, community organizers, and arts and culture organizations.