

**Richmond Economic
Development Strategy**

What We Heard Report

MARCH 2026



Introduction

Context

The City of Richmond is developing a new Economic Development Strategy to guide how the city will support future economic activity. It will focus on leveraging Richmond's assets and strengths—including its people, infrastructure, and land base—to shape a resilient and sustainable future economy. The City is taking a balanced approach that considers economic prosperity and business growth alongside environmental sustainability, social equity, and community wellbeing.

The strategy will help ensure that Richmond is competitive, equitable, and adaptable as our global and regional economic environment evolves. It will help guide investment, inform land use and infrastructure planning, and drive collaboration between the City, businesses, and community organizations.

This **What We Heard Report** summarizes input gathered through public engagement conducted between September and November 2025. The purpose of this report is to document key themes, priorities, and perspectives shared by Richmond residents, businesses, institutions, and community organizations. These insights have informed the development of draft guiding principles for the Economic Development Strategy, and they will continue inform the development of the Strategy, including the priorities and actions that will be explored in subsequent phases of the work.

Engagement Objectives

The objectives of this engagement were to:

- Build a stronger understanding of what's working well in Richmond's economy, what challenges businesses and workers are facing, and what economic opportunities Richmond should prioritize;
- Ensure the strategy reflects lived experience and expert insights across a range of demographic groups, business sectors, and business sizes;
- Gather input on how Richmond can build an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient economy and business community; and
- Understand expectations for the City's role in supporting economic development and addressing economic challenges.

Public Engagement Approach

There were six key ways for the community to provide input:

1. **A public survey** designed to gather input from Richmond residents, workers, and visitors on the vision for economic development in Richmond, key issues and opportunities, and the role of the City.
2. **Business and community leader interviews** with representatives from a wide range of businesses and organizations to understand sector and demographic specific economic challenges and opportunities.
3. **On-Site pop-ups at public events and venues** to promote survey participation and secure real-time input on economic issues and opportunities.
4. **Topic-specific roundtable discussions** to validate interview insights, and uncover opportunities to address specific business challenges, risks, or trends.
5. **An Economic Advisory Committee (EAC) workshop** to dive into opportunities to develop Richmond's innovation ecosystem.
6. **City of Richmond advisory committee presentations and discussions** to identify the intersection of economic development with other City objectives and initiatives.

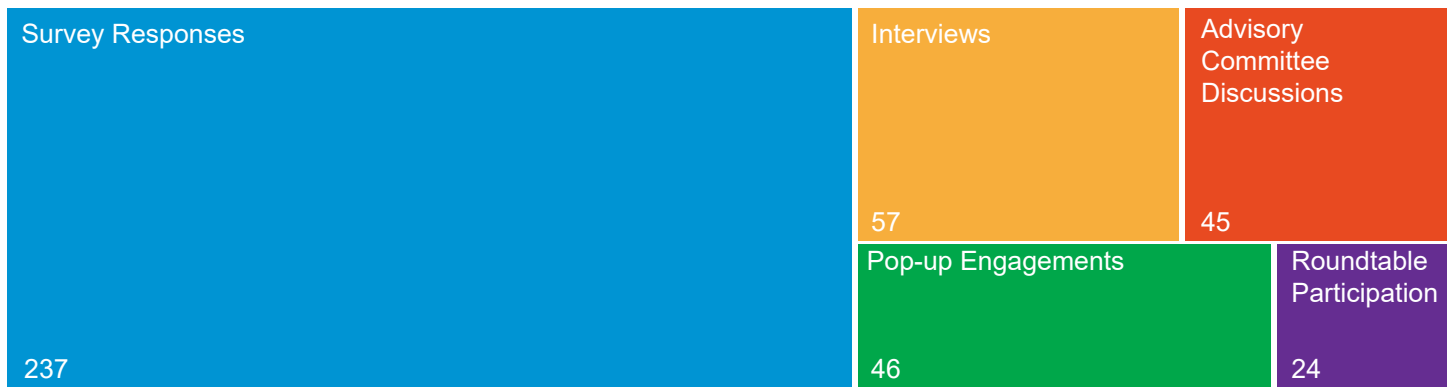
Awareness Building

The City used several channels to promote opportunities to participate in the public engagement process. These included social media, direct emailing to businesses (more than 700 direct emails sent to businesses and community organizations), use of the 'Let's Talk Richmond' platform, newsletters (about 12,000 sent), and signage in public places. See **Appendix A** for details.

Engagement Profile

In total, more than 400 Richmond residents, business owners, community organizations, employees, students, and visitors were engaged through the survey, several dozen interviews, five pop-up engagements at high-traffic locations and events, four topic-specific roundtables, and six advisory committee discussions (See Figure 1.1). Participants spanned a wide range of ages, employment positions, and industry sectors. See **Appendix B** for a detailed breakdown of engagement participants.

Figure 1.1 | Individuals Engaged by Engagement Format



Key Findings

Public engagement resulted in extensive feedback in the following areas:

- **Local Business Support** | Participants emphasized the importance of supporting existing local businesses to grow, adapt, and remain competitive. This included interest in reducing barriers to doing business, improving access to space and infrastructure, and supporting workforce participation.
- **Transportation** | Transportation and congestion were widely identified as key challenges affecting businesses, workers, and residents. Participants highlighted the impact of commuting, goods movement, and access to employment areas on economic productivity and quality of life.
- **Economic Inclusion** | Engagement highlighted ongoing barriers to economic participation for some groups, including youth, newcomers, and people with disabilities. Participants emphasized the importance of workforce supports, accessible employment pathways, and collaboration between employers, service providers, and institutions.
- **Industrial Area Planning** | Engagement underscored the importance of Richmond's industrial areas to the regional and national economy. Input focused on the need for coordinated planning, infrastructure investment, and clarity around the long term role of industrial lands.
- **Sustainability, Innovation, and Resilience** | Engagement emphasized the importance of aligning economic development and innovation agendas with environmental sustainability and resilience. Participants highlighted interest in developing innovative business solutions to shared challenges

such as climate adaptation, earthquake and natural disaster risk management, the energy transition, and efficient goods movement.

- **Permitting** | Several opportunities were raised by the community to improve the predictability, clarity, and efficiency of permitting and licensing processes.
- **Zoning and Placemaking** | Engagement identified opportunities to review zoning to address gaps in the market and to engage in placemaking activities, such as activation of public spaces, to support economic activity and community vibrancy.

Engagement participants also shared input on sector specific challenges and trends, as well as potential economic development roles of the City.

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Key Findings

Local Business Support

What We Heard

Supporting existing local businesses to grow and adapt emerged as a top priority in the engagement process. Participants consistently emphasized the importance of helping businesses remain viable and competitive amid rising costs, changing market conditions, and broader economic uncertainty.

Businesses described several interconnected factors that influence their ability to grow and adapt, including:

- Access to suitable commercial and industrial space,
- Availability of a reliable workforce,
- Predictability and clarity of regulatory and permitting processes.

Where We Heard This

This theme emerged across multiple engagement activities. Supporting local businesses ranked as the top economic priority in the public survey (Figure 2.1)

and was reinforced through interviews, roundtable discussions, and advisory committee discussions. While different sectors and business sizes emphasized different challenges, participants broadly aligned on the importance of focusing economic development efforts on retaining and strengthening existing businesses.

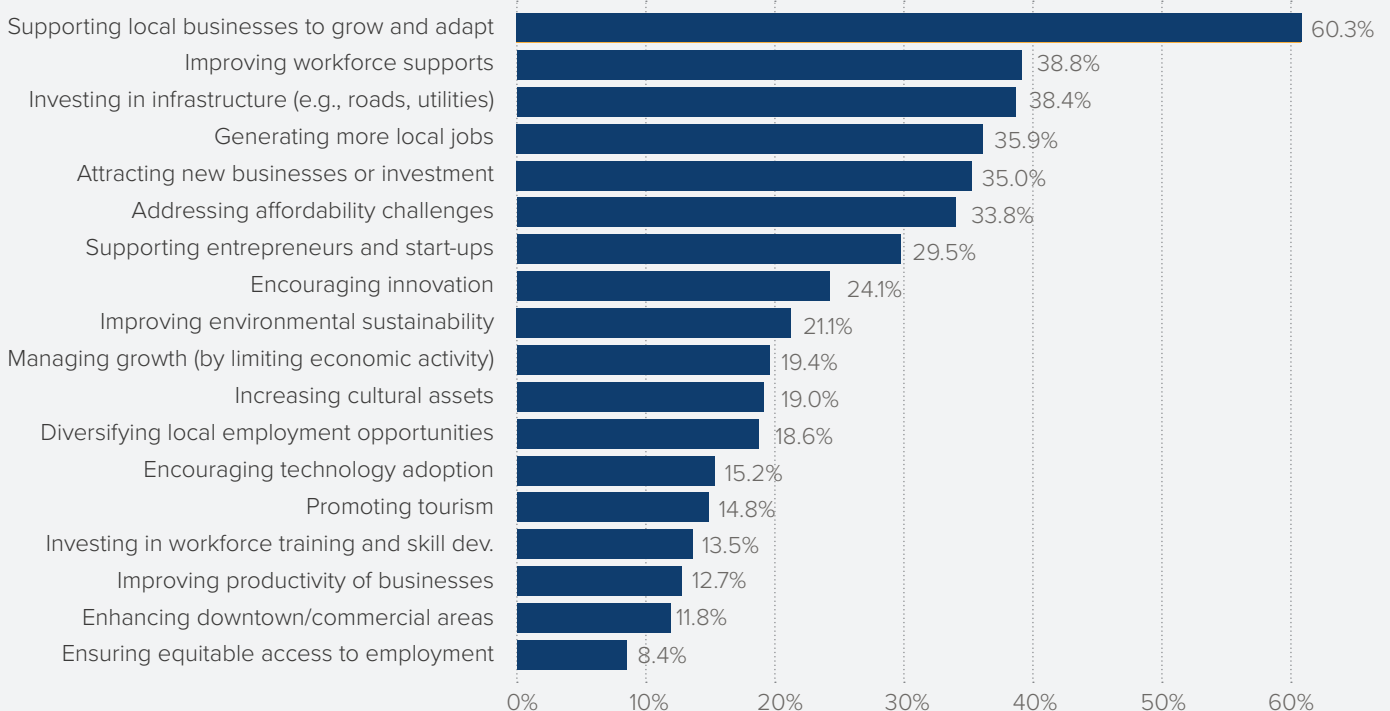
Considerations

Business needs vary by industry sector, business scale, and physical space requirements. For instance:

- Businesses requiring larger footprints, such as industrial transportation and warehousing businesses, larger manufacturers or recyclers, and some retail operations, emphasized the importance of affordability and availability of suitable space.
- Professional services and technology firms more often raised concerns related to workforce attraction, including the need for commuting options and access to amenities near their workplaces.

Figure 2.1 | Public Survey Response

I think the top priorities of the local economy should be:



- Smaller businesses described having limited internal capacity to navigate regulatory processes, access information, and manage rising costs. These constraints were framed as affecting their ability to expand, reinvest, or adapt in response to changing economic conditions.

Participants emphasized that their business success is shaped by interconnected factors. Access to space, workforce availability, and permitting predictability collectively influence investment and location decisions, rather than any single factor in isolation.

Transportation

What We Heard

Richmond's location and transportation links were identified as one of its biggest economic strengths (Figure 2.2). Businesses noted that transportation infrastructure drives:

- Business location decisions, with many transportation and logistics firms valuing rail access, proximity to the airport, a central location for serving the region's four deep-sea port terminals, and proximity to related transportation, warehousing, and logistics businesses.
- Richmond's role in regional and national supply chains, including its roles in supporting goods import and export (through the airport and port), as well as regional distribution and last-mile delivery.

At the same time, traffic and congestion, along with transit connectivity, were raised as major challenges for Richmond (Figure 2.3). Participants emphasized that transportation and transit issues influence:

- Cost of doing business, as congestion can lead to escalating costs of moving goods through and within the city.
- Workforce attraction and retention, as it can be challenging to navigate long commute times and limited transit options to some employment areas.
- Overall quality of life for residents and workers as

high transportation costs (affiliated with the need for a personal vehicle) and long commute times (affiliated with traffic and congestion) can contribute to a lower quality of life.

Where We Heard This

This theme emerged across multiple engagement activities. Access and connectivity was identified as the top economic challenge in the public survey and was reinforced through interviews with businesses and topic-specific roundtables. Engagement with transportation, logistics, and industrial businesses surfaced more specific input related to goods movement, access to employment lands, and last mile connectivity for workers. Advisory Committee discussions also highlighted the broader impacts of transportation challenges on workforce participation, economic inclusion, and access to services.

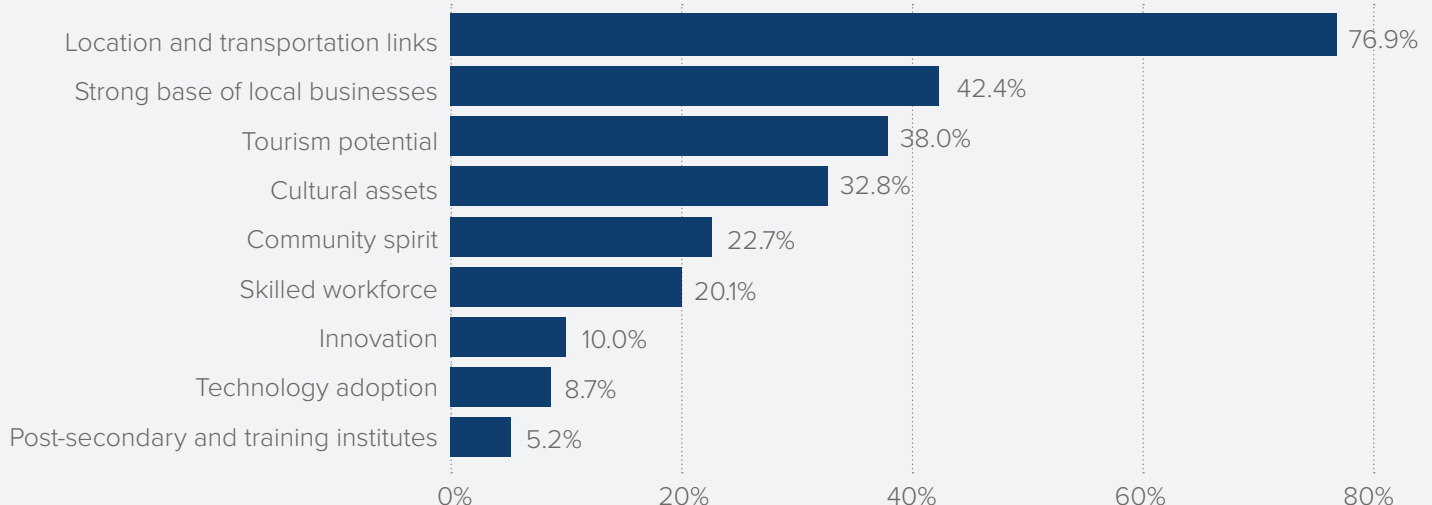
Considerations

Transportation challenges differed by location and business type.

- Businesses operating in industrial areas, including Mitchell Island, the River Road industrial area east of Knight Street, and the South Fraser Lands,

Figure 2.2 | Public Survey Response

I see the following as Richmond's biggest economic strengths:



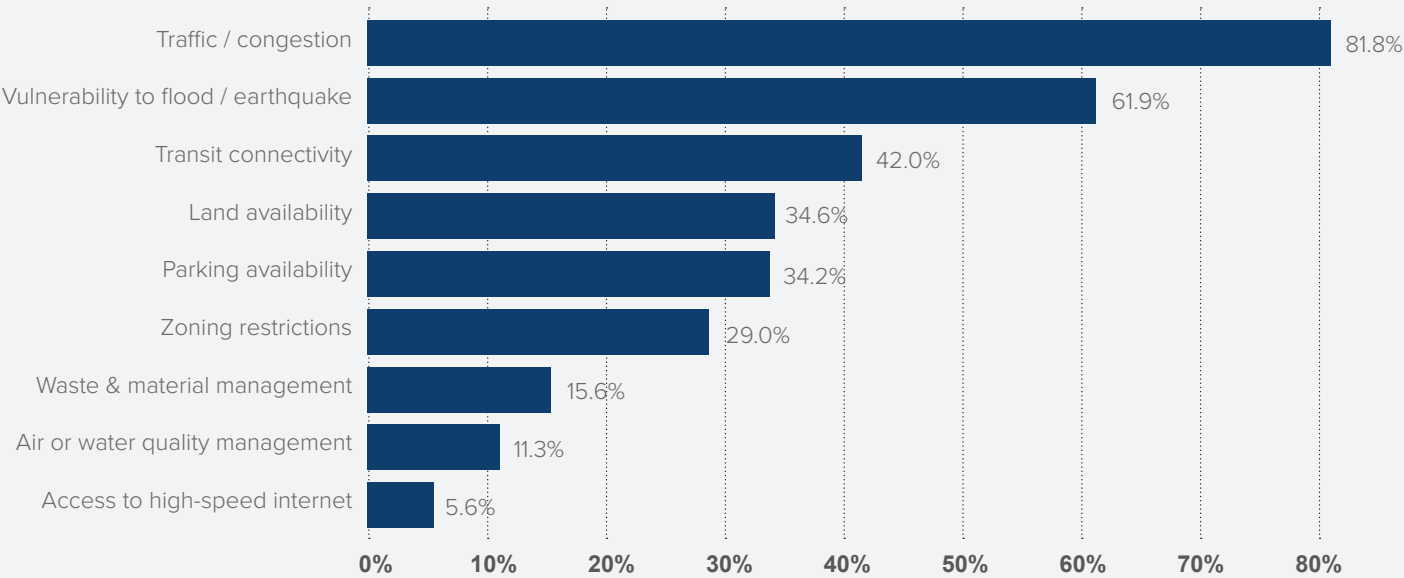
- emphasized limited transit service as a barrier to employee attraction and retention. These businesses also expressed efficiency and safety concerns affiliated with the design of the road network both within these districts and connecting these districts to regional trucking routes.
- Businesses in more central or mixed use areas more commonly raised concerns related to congestion, parking availability, and commute reliability.
 - Workforce impacts were a recurring concern. Participants described long or unreliable commutes as

compounding labour shortages, particularly for lower wage, shift-based, or entry level roles. Transportation challenges were framed as influencing who can realistically access employment opportunities in Richmond.

Transportation issues intersected with other economic pressures. Engagement highlighted strong links between transit access, affordability, and workforce availability, reinforcing the importance of extensive and efficient transit options to Richmond's economy.

Figure 2.3 | Public Survey Response

I believe Richmond's biggest economic challenges are:



Economic Inclusion

What We Heard

Community organizations stressed that economic inclusion hinges on access to stable employment.

Participants noted that barriers to employment cannot be separated from challenges related to affordability, transportation access, child care, language and communication, and navigating complex regulatory systems and social supports.

Participants noted that information gaps, bias, and stigma continue to hinder access to employment for newcomers, youth, and people with disabilities. In addition, businesses and job-seekers are often unaware of funding programs and operational supports available to them. This can limit individuals' ability to enter and remain in the workforce even where job opportunities are available.

Employer capacity can have a significant influence on inclusive hiring practices. Larger organizations described having greater internal capacity to adopt inclusive employment practices. Small and mid sized businesses expressed limited capacity for adopting more inclusive hiring practices without clear guidance and support.

Where We Heard This

This theme emerged most strongly through targeted engagement. Specifically, economic inclusion was raised through interviews with community-serving organizations, as well as in a targeted economic inclusion roundtable and in discussions with City advisory committees.

Related issues also surfaced through roundtables on transportation and warehousing and Mitchell Island. In these roundtables, participants raised workforce participation barriers stemming from limited transit access to industrial districts.

Survey participants did not rank "equitable access to employment" as a priority for the Richmond economy (See Figure 2.1). This discrepancy between survey respondents and interviewees highlights the value of engaging through multiple channels as different community members may participate in different ways.

Considerations

Engagement revealed key differences in how employment barriers are experienced.

- Youth employment challenges were described as related to limited entry level opportunities, gaps in job readiness supports, and uncertainty about long-term job prospects affecting the motivation of youth to seek employment.
- Barriers faced by people with disabilities included needing workplace accommodations (which can take the form of physical workplace accommodations or role modifications) and stigma or misperceptions affecting hiring and retention. Neuro-divergent individuals were noted as a growing group who could benefit from workplace accommodations.
- Newcomers and refugees experience many systemic barriers to economic inclusion. Participants described challenges related to language proficiency, cultural and workplace norms, recognition of international experience, and navigating credentialing or licensing systems.

Across all groups, barriers to employment can be compounded by limited awareness of available financial and operational supports by various government and non-profit organizations. In addition, several organizations providing support to youth, newcomers, and people with disabilities noted challenges with service capacity and continuity. Specifically, funding uncertainty and limited program capacity affect their ability to deliver sufficient service to the community.

About 15% of survey participants felt negatively about their employment prospects in Richmond (See Figure 2.4). Among this group, survey participants most commonly cited two factors impacting their employment prospects (See Figure 2.5):

- Lack of available jobs at the appropriate level of seniority for my experience (most commonly cited among middle managers and professionals), and
- Lack of available jobs in my field (most commonly cited among respondents in the film, technology, and professional services sectors).

Figure 2.4 | Public Survey Response

I feel the following about my employment prospects in Richmond:

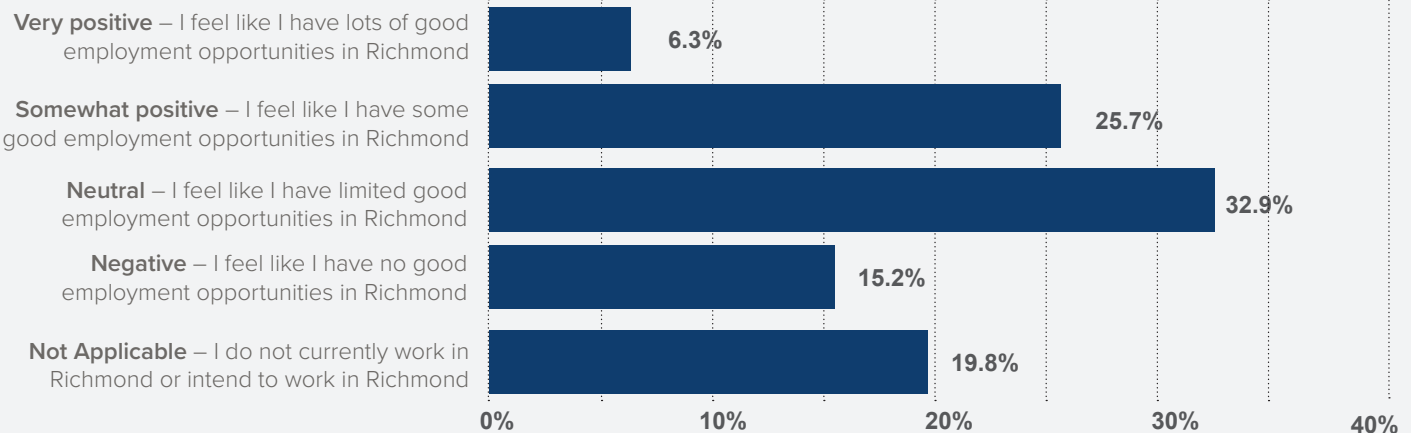
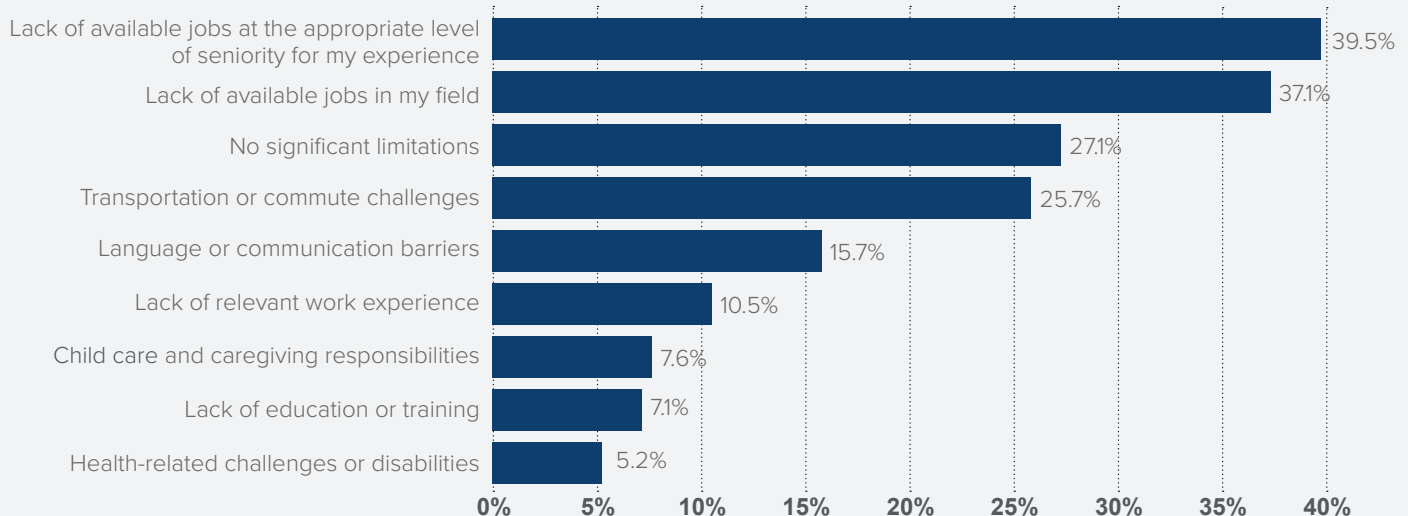


Figure 2.5 | Public Survey Response

I feel the following factors are currently limiting my employment opportunities:



Industrial Area Planning

What We Heard

Richmond's industrial areas and trade supporting lands were described as critical to the regional economy. Participants emphasized that these areas support regional distribution, national goods movement connected to the port and airport, and the supply chain for construction, waste management, retail, and other population-serving sectors.

Input highlighted that reliable transit access, supportive land use planning, and safe and efficient transportation infrastructure for goods movement are key to ensuring businesses in Richmond's industrial districts can continue to grow and remain competitive.

Industrial areas were not viewed as uniform. Participants emphasized that different locations and types of industrial activity face distinct constraints and risks.

Where We Heard This

This theme emerged most strongly through targeted business engagement. Industrial areas and goods movement issues were raised through interviews and roundtables. Discussion of goods movement and industrial land priorities featured prominently in the Transportation & Logistics and Manufacturing & Technology roundtables, as well as engagement focused on Mitchell Island.

Considerations

Industrial areas functioned differently across the city. Engagement highlighted differences among locations such as the South Fraser Lands, the River Road industrial area east of Knight Street, Sea Island, and Mitchell Island. Each experiences distinct access, infrastructure, and operational constraints.

- Businesses in the South Fraser Lands expressed concerns about congestion on Knight Street and at the Blundell Road and No. 8 Street intersection impacting the efficiency of their operations. In addition, they noted that limited transit hours to the area can impact their ability to staff (and therefore operate) night shifts. Finally, they noted that uncertainty around the impact of the Cowichan Tribes land rights claims in the area is making businesses hesitant to invest in new facilities and infrastructure.
- Businesses east of Knight Street along River Road expressed concerns about safe commuting for staff

as transit stops short of many industrial sites and there is limited separated pedestrian infrastructure for those commuting the 'last-mile' on foot. They also expressed concerns related to driving speed and driveway access on River Road, noting that the narrow street, commercial driveways, and high volumes of passenger and commercial traffic can result in road conflicts, congestion, and safety concerns.

- Mitchell Island businesses expressed similar concerns around transit access, active transportation infrastructure, and congestion. Specifically, Mitchell Island businesses are looking for improved active transportation infrastructure connecting mainland transit nodes with businesses on the island and on/off ramp solutions for improving fluidity of traffic to/from the island. In addition, Mitchell Island businesses expressed concerns about flooding, noting interest in participating in detailed long-term planning processes for improving water management and flood protection on the island.

Across all industrial areas, participants emphasized the importance of

- Well-designed, reliable, and safe road corridors within industrial areas,
- Efficient access routes connecting industrial areas with the regional transportation network for both goods movement and workforce access.

Sustainability, Innovation, and Resilience

What We Heard

Participants in the engagement process emphasized the importance of integrating sustainability, innovation, and resilience into the City's Economic Development Strategy. Participants noted that Richmond's economy should support long term environmental sustainability and community well-being alongside economic growth.

Participants described preparedness for disruptions—including adverse climate-related events—as critical for business continuity. Innovation was described as an enabler of economic resilience rather than an end in itself. Rather than focusing on specific industries, engagement emphasized developing an innovation ecosystem that addresses practical challenges, such as transportation efficiency, food security, or the energy transition.

Participants raised several tools for promoting innovation and increasing community resilience, such as:

- Establishing coordinated approaches to climate risk management in areas where businesses are vulnerable to flood risk,
- Expanding on climate and circular economy policies and promoting businesses that can aid with their implementation,
- Establishing collaborative green infrastructure planning processes with the private sector, such as for supporting electrification, clean fuels, and on-site flood management.

Where We Heard This

This theme emerged across several engagement channels. Sustainability, innovation, and resilience were raised through topic specific discussions with businesses and institutions, advisory committee input, and the innovation ecosystem workshop held with the City's Economic Advisory Committee (EAC).

Survey respondents highlighted vulnerability to flood and earthquake as a major challenge (See Figure 2.3). In addition, more than 50% of survey respondents highlighted climate change impacts as a major risk to Richmond's economy. In a ranking exercise, survey participants ranked cost of living, transportation constraints, and an aging population as Richmond's top risks (See Figure 2.6).

Considerations

Interviews and roundtables revealed that businesses see resilience as closely tied to natural hazard preparedness. Participants raised flooding, earthquake risk, and extreme weather as concerns with implications for residents, businesses, and industrial facilities, equipment, and infrastructure. Mitchell Island roundtable participants expressed interest in taking a coordinated approach to flood management.

Environmental priorities and related opportunities to support innovation varied by engagement group and context.

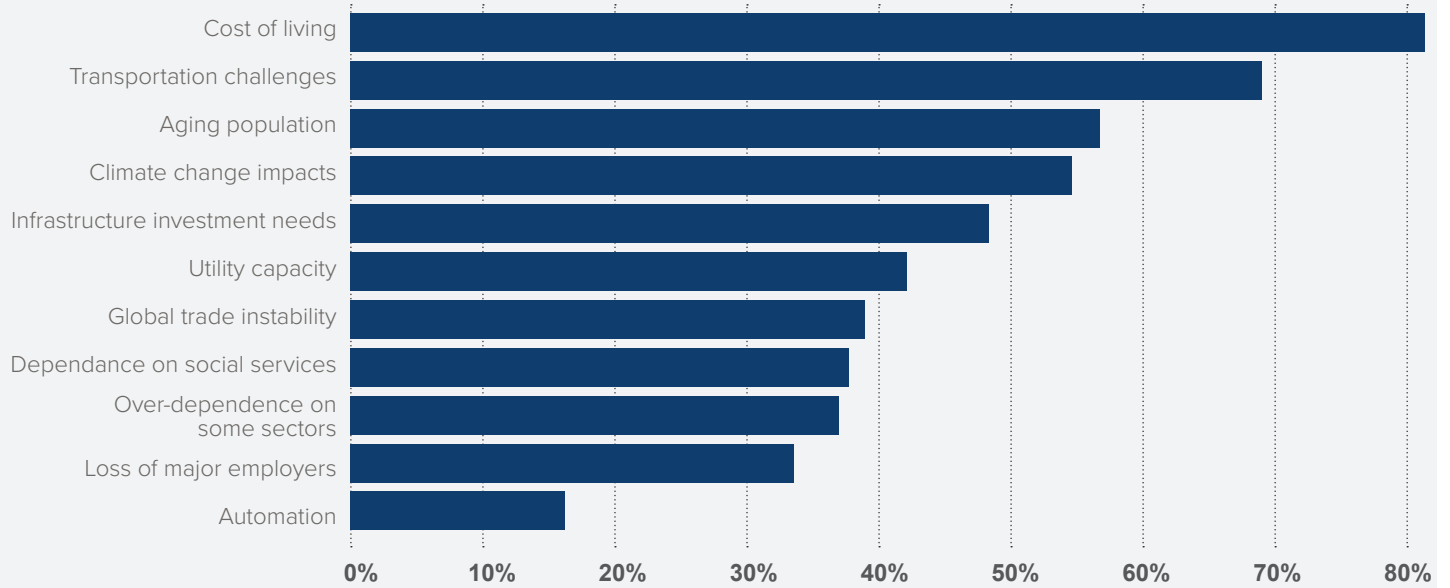
- Interviews and roundtables with businesses in construction and manufacturing highlighted interest in further pursuing circular economy opportunities.
- Interviews with utilities, transportation businesses, and major employers highlighted interest in the energy transition, including adopting clean fuels and electrifying operations.
- Advisory committees identified opportunities to leverage Richmond's extensive agricultural lands, airport proximity, engineering talent, and robust food processing sector to address food security and improve agricultural viability.

Engagement emphasized the City's role in reducing barriers and creating conditions for innovation through planning, permitting, partnerships, and supportive spaces, rather than direct support to individual firms.

In addition, infrastructure reliability was linked to long term resilience. Participants raised concerns related to energy reliability and future capacity as factors affecting operational resilience and planning certainty for trade-oriented businesses.

Figure 2.6 | Public Survey Response

I think the following factors pose significant risks to Richmond's economy:



Zoning, Permitting, and Placemaking

What We Heard

Engagement highlighted the roles of land use zoning, permitting, and placemaking in strengthening existing commercial areas, supporting local business expansion, and fostering new economic activity.

Zoning | Engagement highlighted the importance of land use planning and zoning in facilitating the types of development needed to support business activities in Richmond. It was noted that prior planning efforts geared toward intensifying industrial lands and stimulating office development have been successful; however, commercial development has lagged for other market-driven reasons. Future land use planning efforts might consider how to fill gaps in the market for mid-scale mixed industrial and office spaces.

Permitting | Predictability, clarity, and efficiency throughout permitting processes were described as important to business decision making. Participants noted that navigating permitting, licensing, and land use requirements can create uncertainty and delays, particularly during business expansions, relocations, and tenant improvements. Participants described the value of understanding requirements, receiving consistent direction, and having better visibility into process steps and timelines when working through City processes.

Placemaking | Participants described placemaking as encompassing a range of activities, including cultural events, festivals, and temporary activation of public spaces (such as public markets). These activities were framed as ways to support local businesses, attract visitors, and strengthen community identity. Businesses also noted opportunities to strengthen existing mixed employment areas through increased access to amenities, such as retail and services.

Where We Heard This

Planning and permitting challenges and opportunities were raised through interviews and roundtables, where participants shared experiences related to permitting timelines, communication, and navigating regulatory processes. Placemaking was raised through interviews and advisory committee discussions, particularly in conversations focused on community wellbeing, culture, and local economic activity. These themes were less prominent in broad survey feedback. Participants who

raised placemaking opportunities often did so in relation to specific neighbourhoods or commercial areas.

Considerations

Permitting timelines and predictability were central concerns for businesses.

- Participants emphasized that uncertainty around permitting timelines can complicate coordination of tenant improvements, contractor schedules, and move in dates, particularly during expansions or relocations.
- Clear guidance and communication were seen as highly valuable throughout the permitting process.
- Businesses described the importance of transparent requirements, consistent feedback, and better visibility into process steps.
- Participants noted that permitting complexity can be particularly high for specialized or non-standard uses.
- In industrial contexts, participants linked predictability in planning and permitting to long term decisions about reinvestment and expansion.

Placemaking efforts were seen as a great opportunity for Richmond to continue to grow its economic role in the region.

- Some participants highlighted the role of short-term activities, such as events and pop-up markets, for creating opportunities for local vendors, artists, and small businesses. Ease of navigating City processes was described as a factor that can influence the feasibility of such activities.
- Local context was seen as critical to effective placemaking. Engagement suggested that placemaking initiatives are most effective when they respond to neighbourhood character, scale, and existing conditions rather than applying uniform approaches across the city. Participants emphasized that placemaking should build on local strengths and complement other neighbourhood uses.

Themes and Insights

Potential City Roles and Responsibilities

What We Heard

Engagement revealed strong support for municipal economic development leadership. Several potential roles were identified for the City in supporting economic development. These include:

- Attracting new economic activity to Richmond,
- Helping navigate business licensing and permitting processes,
- Planning for future industrial and commercial space, as well as commercial ‘activations’ of public spaces, such as events and markets,
- Facilitating access to supports, such as child care, affordable housing, and transit, that enable workforce participation, and
- Establishing partnerships and business network

development in support of workforce development and innovation.

Where We Heard This

The City’s role in economic development was raised in all forms of engagement. The public survey confirmed that economic development is an important mandate for the City and identified several areas of focus.

In addition, business owners, community organization representatives, advisory committee members, and community members provided feedback on the City’s economic development roles and opportunities through interviews, advisory committee discussions, topic-specific roundtables, and pop-up events.

Figure 2.7 | Public Survey Response

I believe economic development is an important mandate for the City of Richmond:

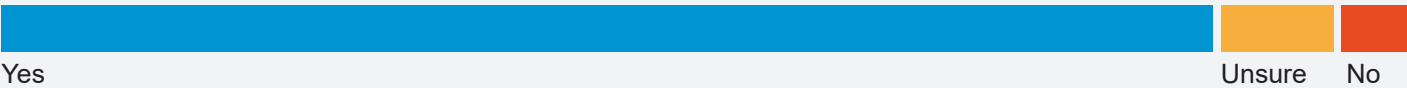
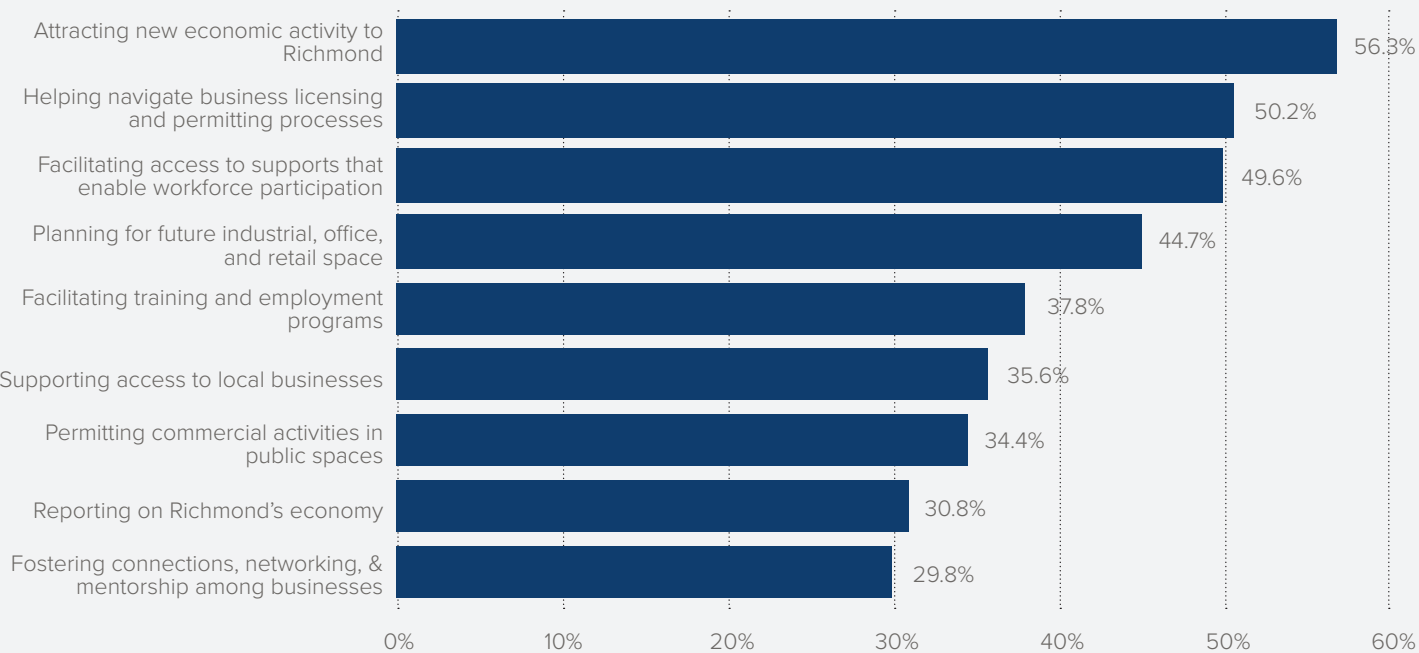


Figure 2.8 | Public Survey Response

I believe the City should be focusing its economic development efforts in the following areas:



Sector-Specific Outlooks and Insights

What We Heard

Engagement revealed interest in seeing many sectors of Richmond's economy grow (See Figure 2.9), including:

- Social service sectors, such as healthcare, education, child care, and non-profit organizations
- Transportation and logistics
- Technology sectors, such as cleantech and biotech
- Hospitality, tourism, film, and cultural industries
- Agrifood

In addition, engagement participants provided views on the role of various sectors in Richmond's economy today and in the future.

Technology Manufacturing | Richmond businesses in the technology and device manufacturing sector noted that they excel in the product and process development part of technology manufacturing. Specifically, they specialize in the design and prototyping of custom solutions where engineering talent is most important. That said, Richmond lacks competitiveness in mass production for technology manufacturing, with businesses preferring to outsource that part of the manufacturing process to companies in Asia or America.

While participants identified an ongoing role for Richmond technology manufacturers as a prototyping and design hub, they did not anticipate this sector to grow in the coming decade as the sector is being impacted by:

- A decline in the resource industries (several niche manufacturers were established to support BC's resource industries),
- Lower costs of production overseas (where many manufacturers are outsourcing mass production),
- Changing trade dynamics (specifically uncertainty around U.S. political directions are impacting investor confidence), and
- Limited community support (with public pressure to shift industrial activities further east in the region).

Food Processing and Manufacturing | Richmond businesses identified a continued strong role for food production and processing in Richmond. The ecosystem of major food retailers, processors, producers (e.g. farmers and fishers), and food processing experts lends, along with availability of industrial space, lends itself to continued growth of this sector. Niche processed or packaged food expertise, such as allergen-free foods, and

vegan or vegetarian alternatives to meat products were noted as an interesting area of growth for Richmond.

Transportation, Warehousing, and Logistics | Richmond's industrial lands play a crucial role in the national supply chain and in regional distribution. Participants stressed that transportation and warehousing businesses in Richmond are major regional employers, attracting a workforce from Surrey, Delta, Vancouver, and elsewhere from across the region.

Engagement participants expressed an optimistic outlook for the transportation, warehousing, and logistics sector, noting that changes in the global trade landscape are likely to result in increased international trade through Vancouver. Participants emphasized the importance of improving land use and infrastructure efficiency to support growth in trade, transportation, and logistics in the region.

Several participants have been exploring opportunities to use barging to move bulk, breakbulk, and containerized freight throughout the region. Although significant investment in, and adoption of, short sea shipping (i.e. containerized barging) is not yet seen as a competitive prospect in the region, participants emphasized the importance of connectivity between rail, road, water, and air modes of transportation as critical to maintaining supply chain fluidity and resilience.

Healthcare | Richmond's healthcare sector is strained and is anticipated to require substantial growth to meet the needs of the growing and aging population. Richmond requires more healthcare professionals (including family physicians, clinic staff, and specialists), multilingual and culturally safe care, and increased home or community care capacity to aid with care for chronic diseases affiliated with aging.

The healthcare sector is evolving to consider more "whole person" care that includes social health, physical activity, and access to healthy food and living spaces. Civic programming, recreation and greenspaces, food security, and affordable, stable housing are all therefore considered essential infrastructure for supporting community health.

Trades | Business owners spanning the trades, construction, manufacturing, aviation, and recycling noted challenges in securing skilled tradespeople. Participants noted that several factors contribute to workforce gaps, including:

- Difficulty attracting young people to the trades,
- Wage competitiveness, or
- Limited transit access or long commute times to Richmond's industrial areas where roles are available.

Where We Heard This

Sector-specific insights, challenges, and opportunities were primarily raised in interviews and roundtables by both business owners and industry associations. In addition, the public survey asked participants which sectors they thought should grow, shrink, or stay the same in Richmond's economy (see Figure 2.9). Key sector-specific assets were also flagged as important strengths in Richmond's economy through the survey (see Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.9 | Public Survey Response

I would like to see the following sectors grow, shrink, or remain the same in Richmond:

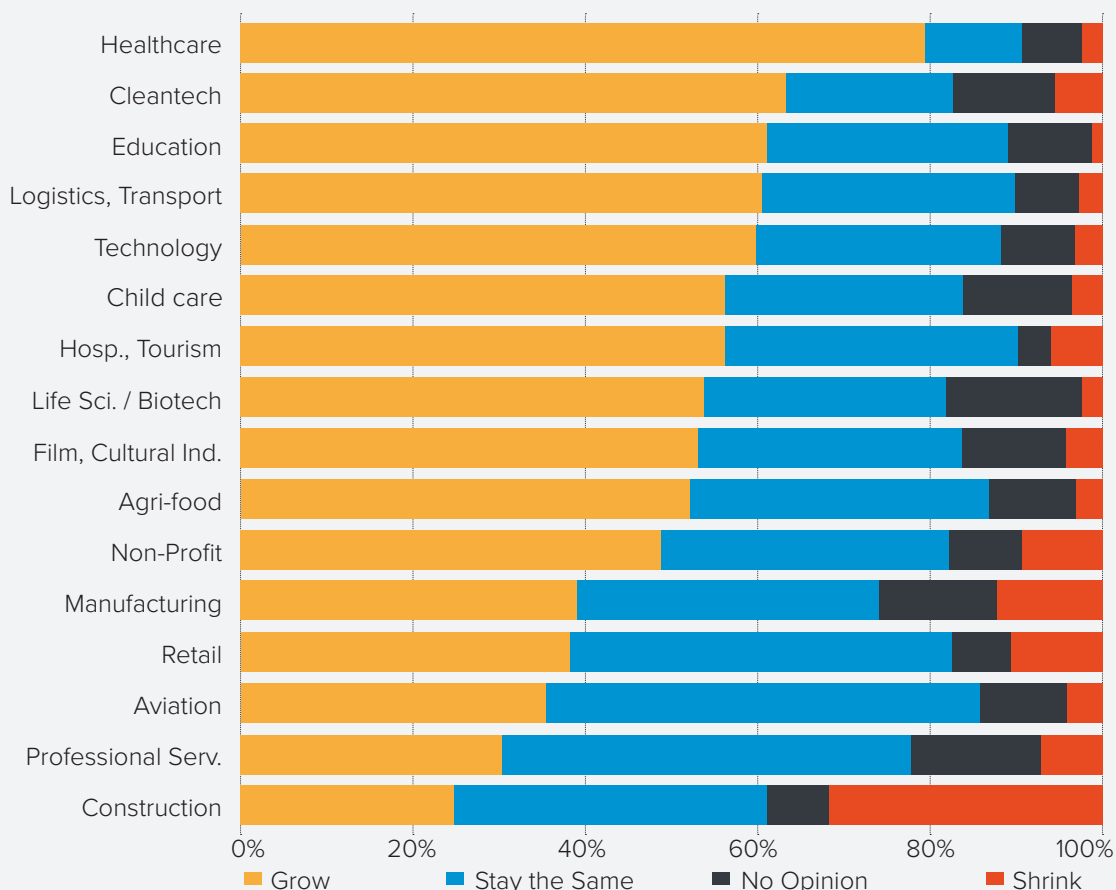
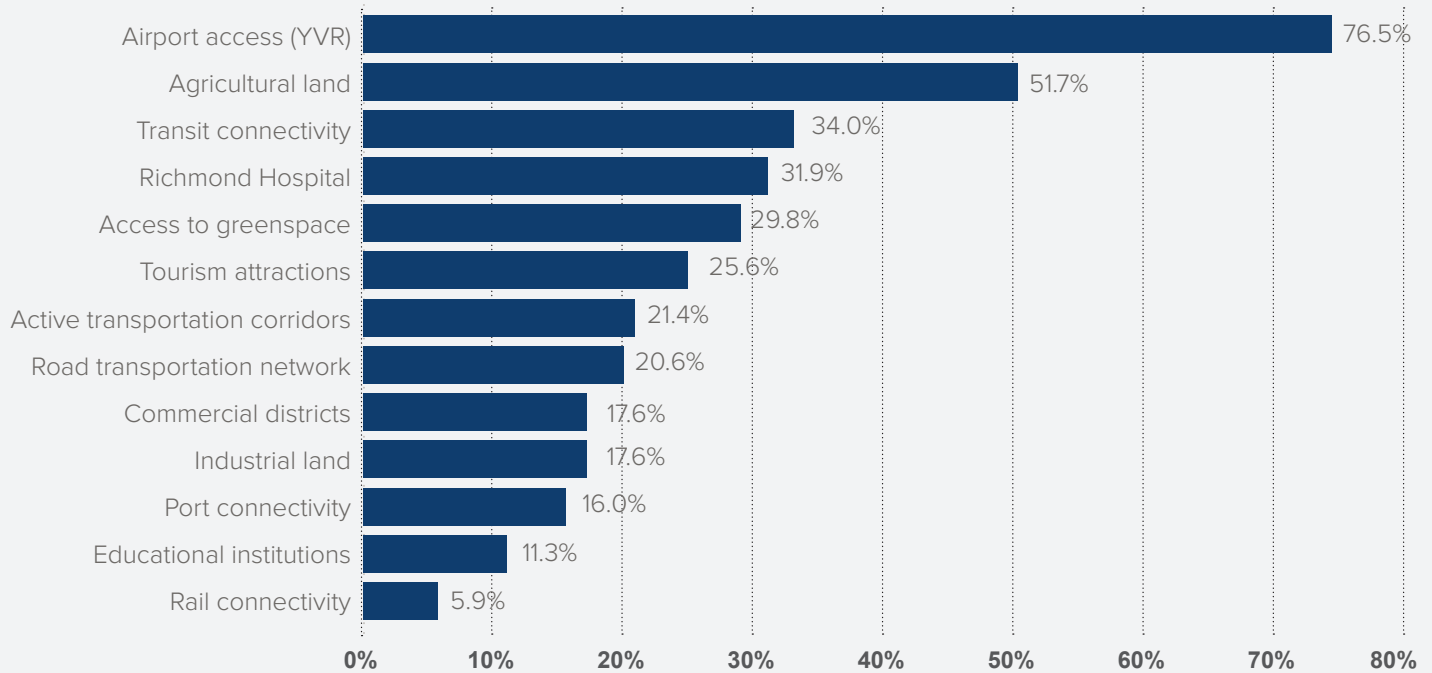


Figure 2.10 | Public Survey Response

I believe Richmond's most important economic assets are:



Cross-cutting Observations

While the thematic findings highlight distinct issues and opportunities raised by the community, engagement revealed patterns that cut across multiple topics and engagement activities

1. Participants consistently described economic issues as interconnected rather than isolated.

Transportation, workforce participation, land use, permitting, affordability, and resilience were frequently discussed together, with participants emphasizing that challenges in one area often influence outcomes in others. This interconnection was evident across themes related to business support, economic inclusion, industrial lands, and infrastructure.

2. Access and predictability were emphasized alongside growth and attraction.

Across engagement, participants highlighted the importance of access—to employment, transportation, space, services, and amenities—as well as predictability in planning, permitting, and infrastructure performance. These factors were repeatedly described as shaping business decisions, workforce participation, and investment confidence.

3. Place based conditions matter to how issues were experienced.

Engagement highlighted meaningful differences across locations within Richmond. Industrial areas, commercial districts, mixed-use neighbourhoods, and public spaces were described as having distinct characteristics and constraints that influence business operations, workforce access, community experience, and resilience. For instance:

- Businesses in specific industrial areas identified gaps in active transportation infrastructure and transit as critical constraints.
- Businesses in office districts identified lack of access to amenities for employees as constraints,

Participants emphasized that challenges and opportunities often depend on local context rather than applying uniformly across the city.

4. Workforce participation is influenced by enabling conditions beyond job availability.

Across multiple themes, participants described factors such as transportation access, child care availability, affordability, scheduling, and system navigation as shaping whether people can enter and stay in the workforce. These enabling conditions were discussed in connection with both economic inclusion and broader business and employment challenges.

5. Resilience was framed as practical and operational.

Participants tended to discuss resilience in terms of preparedness for disruption and continuity of day-to-day operations. Natural hazards, infrastructure reliability, energy systems, and supply chain continuity were described as having direct implications for businesses, workers, and long-term economic stability.

6. The City's role in economic development was often described as enabling and coordinating.

Across engagement activities, participants frequently framed the City's role in economic development as one focused on clarity, coordination, and enabling conditions—such as planning, permitting, infrastructure, convening, and communication—rather than direct intervention in business activity.

Guiding Principles

Proposed Guiding Principles

Rooted in what we heard through public engagement, early research, and in alignment with Council's Strategic Plan and other City strategies, the following Guiding Principles are proposed as lenses to inform the development of Richmond's new Economic Development Strategy.

1. Forward-Looking and Resilient:

Build on Richmond's strengths and assets to create the conditions for strategically ambitious, long-term economic prosperity, while also designing for resilience as challenges and opportunities evolve.

2. Inclusive Prosperity and Shared Opportunity:

Facilitate economic growth that is equitable, accessible, and broadly shared across sectors and diverse communities, considering both people and the environment at the centre of growth.

3. Collaborative and Partnership-Oriented:

Foster strong partnerships with businesses, institutions, community organizations, and other levels of government to leverage shared opportunities and build a high-functioning, connected ecosystem.

4. Leveraging the City's Role:

Support and facilitate the conditions for innovation, investment, and growth through the deliberate and strategic use of the City's tools, resources, and expertise.

Appendices

Appendix A | Outreach & Engagement Materials

Outreach Process

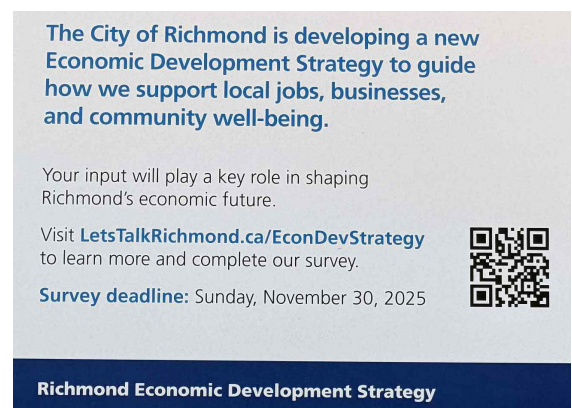
Engagement took place from September 23rd to November 30th, 2025 using a multi-channel approach to capture broad representation across sectors in the local community. Outreach included:

- Direct outreach (emails) to over 700 businesses
- Newsletter circulation to all licensed businesses in Richmond (~10k businesses)
- Pop-up engagements at the Steveston waterfront, Aberdeen Centre, and Lansdowne Centre
- Participation in local business events, including the Business Appreciation Event and the Chamber Mid-Autumn Festival
- Facilitation of discussions with 6 standing City advisory committees

Additionally, the City promoted participation in the consultation process through a number of channels, including:

- The Let's Talk Richmond platform and newsletter
- Social media posts
- A news release
- Digital signage on transit stations and in community centres

Images on this page include examples of postcards, posters, and social media posts used to support outreach.



Interview Questions:

1. What does your business do? What are your goals or objectives over the coming years?
2. Why are you located in Richmond? What do you see as Richmond's key economic assets or strengths?
3. What are the top operational challenges your business is facing? Are these common challenges across other businesses in your sector?
4. What opportunities do you see for the City to support business resilience and growth within your industry? Consider land use, infrastructure, workforce development, and social and environmental actions
5. What trends and risks are impacting your business? Consider political and legal, environmental, social, technological, and economic trends / risks?
6. What do you see as the top economic development priorities for Richmond? What do you see as the role of the City in delivering on them?

Interview questions were adjusted to reflect the role and sector of the interviewee.

Roundtable Topics & Discussion Questions

In total, four targeted roundtable discussions were held about:

- Technology & Manufacturing
- Transportation & Logistics
- Mitchell Island
- Economic Inclusion

Topics were informed by preliminary research and interviews. Individuals from 20 organizations participated in these roundtables.

Manufacturing and Technology

1. What is Richmond's role in the regional manufacturing, tech, and innovation landscape? Why?
2. How do you anticipate the local manufacturing and technology sector to evolve in the next decade?
3. What are your key business challenges and which are unique to Richmond?
4. How might the City help address your business challenges and support growth and resilience of the manufacturing and technology sector?

Transportation and Logistics

1. How do you anticipate Richmond's transportation and logistics cluster will change in the next decade?
2. What do you see as the primary barriers to growth and resilience in the transportation and logistics sector in Richmond?
3. What role would you see the City playing in supporting the evolution the regional transportation and logistics sector?

Mitchell Island

1. What role does Mitchell Island play in the regional economy?
2. What challenges does your business face? Which are unique to your location on Mitchell Island? What role can the City play in helping address them?
3. Are there policies or programs you have seen in other jurisdictions that promote circular practices in your industry?

Economic Inclusion

1. What current programs and supports are available to aid youth, newcomers, and individuals with disabilities in securing employment?
2. What gaps exist between job seekers and employers? What could help bridge those gaps?
3. What opportunities do you see for collaboration between employers, service providers, post-secondary institutions, and the City to improve employment prospects for under-represented groups in the local economy?

Advisory Committee Discussions

Six advisory committee meetings consisted of a short discussion on:

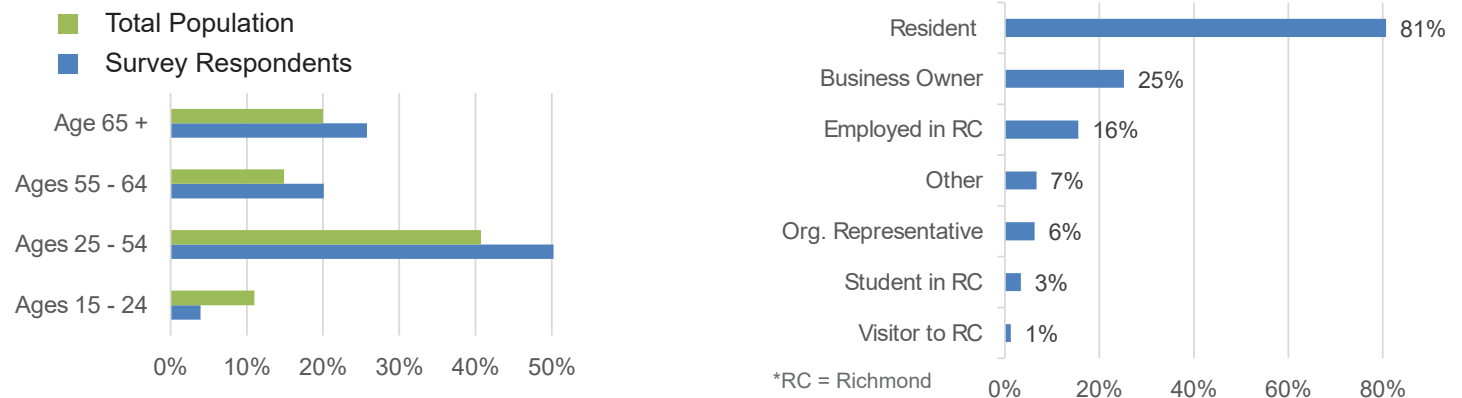
- Related work that is already underway in Richmond,
- Economic challenges the advisory committees would like to see addressed, and
- Opportunities for the economic development strategy to support related City priorities and portfolios of work.

A 90-minute workshop with the Richmond Economic Advisory Committee (EAC) was also hosted as part of the economic development strategy engagement, building off prior discussions on Richmond's innovation ecosystem.

Appendix B | Detailed Engagement Profile

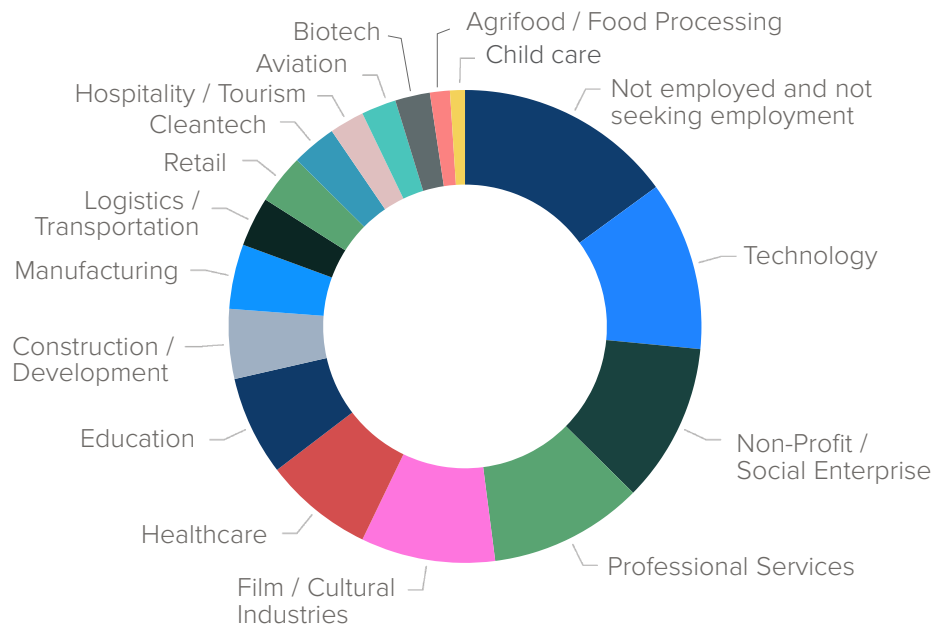
Survey Respondents

Survey respondents spanned age brackets, with about half representing mid-career ages (25 through 54). Survey respondents identified as Richmond residents, business owners, employees, community organization representatives, students, and visitors.



Survey respondents spanned executives, business owners, managers, professionals, and front-line workers, such as tradespeople, salespeople, and administrative staff. In addition, there was representation from a wide range of industry sectors.

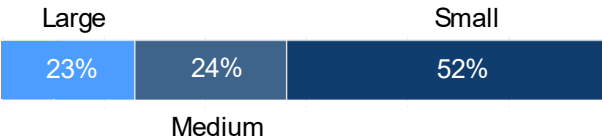
Survey Respondent Sectors



Interviewees

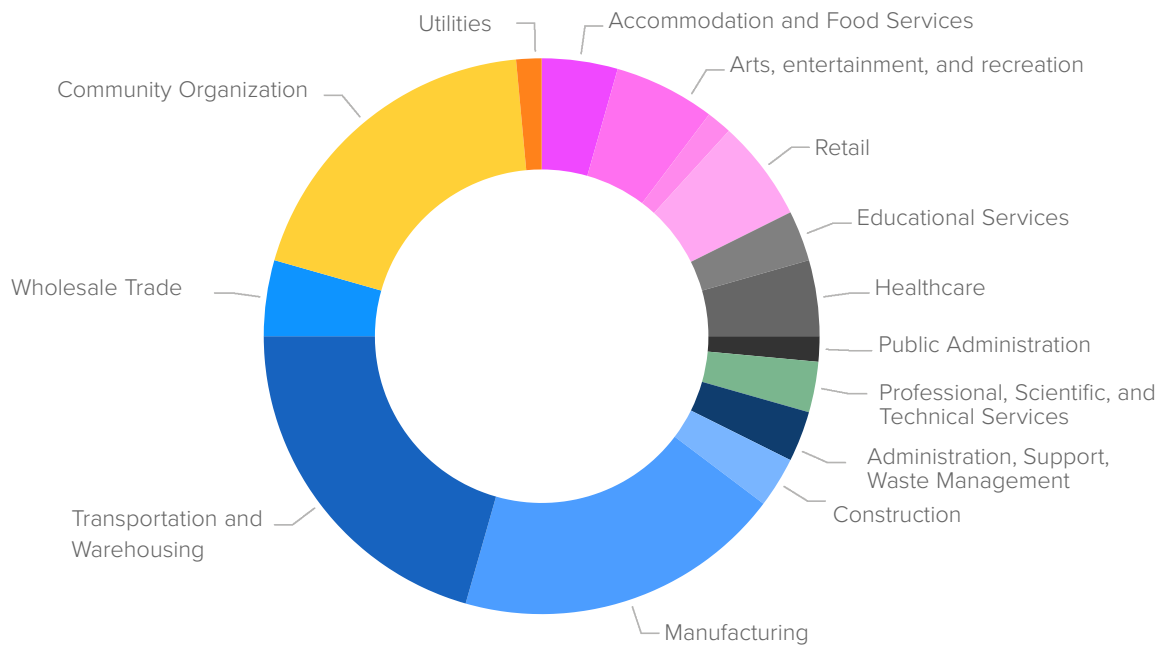
Interviewees spanned sectors and business sizes.

Interviewee Organization Size



In addition to businesses, interviewees included several community organizations that work with and represent equity-seeking groups, such as newcomers, people with disabilities, and youth.

Interviewee Industry Sectors



Advisory Committees

Six City Advisory Committees were consulted for input on opportunities to meet multiple public goals through the economic development strategy. Committees included:

- The Economic Advisory Committee
- The Food Security and Agricultural Advisory Committee,
- The Youth Advisory Committee,
- The Employment Resource Network,
- The Child Care Development Advisory Committee,
- The Council of Communities.

Pop-Up Engagement

Five on-site pop-up events were held at:

- Steveston Village
- Lansdowne Centre
- Aberdeen Centre
- The Chamber of Commerce Mid-Autumn Festival
- The City of Richmond Business Appreciation Event

Appendix C | Survey Questions

Help Shape Richmond's Economic Future

The City of Richmond is developing a new Economic Development Strategy to guide how we support local jobs, businesses, and community well-being over the next 10 years.

This strategy will aim to grow our economy in a way that also supports environmental sustainability, social equity, and a high quality of life for everyone.

We want to hear from residents, visitors, workers, employers, and community groups to help shape the vision, priorities, and actions of this plan.

The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete. Survey responses will be compiled and reported in summary form only. Individual responses will not be attributed to anyone. The information collected will help inform the priorities and decisions in the new Economic Development Strategy.

Thank you for taking the time to participate. Your input is critical to shaping Richmond's economic future.

Q1: I am responding to this survey as a:

- ☐ Business owner or entrepreneur in Richmond
- ☐ Resident of Richmond
- ☐ Someone employed in Richmond
- ☐ Visitor to Richmond
- ☐ Representative of an institution, organization, or community group in Richmond
- ☐ Other

*Please check all that apply.

Section 1: Richmond's Economic Outlook

Q2: I think the top priorities for our local economy should be: Select up to 5.

Business Supports

- ☐ Attracting new business or investment to Richmond
- ☐ Supporting existing local businesses to grow and adapt
- ☐ Supporting entrepreneurs and start-ups
- ☐ Encouraging innovation and technology adoption

Employment

- ☐ Generating more local jobs
- ☐ Diversifying local employment opportunities
- ☐ Ensuring equitable access to employment opportunities
- ☐ Investing in workforce training and skill development
- ☐ Improving workforce supports (e.g. childcare, transportation, housing)

Place-making

- ☐ Enhancing downtown/commercial areas
- ☐ Investing in infrastructure (e.g., roads, broadband, utilities)

- ☐ Promoting tourism
- ☐ Increasing cultural assets (e.g. theatres, festivals)
- ☐ Improving productivity of industrial districts

Livability

- ☐ Addressing affordability challenges
- ☐ Improving the environmental sustainability of the economy (e.g., reducing pollution, renewable energy)
- ☐ Managing growth (e.g. limiting economic activity in congested areas)
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Q3: Which sectors would I like to see grow or shrink in our community?

Likert scale: 1 - Grow 2 – Stay the Same 3 – Shrink 4 – No Opinion

- ☐ Logistics / Transportation
- ☐ Aviation
- ☐ Agri-food / Food Processing / Seafood
- ☐ Cleantech / Green Economy
- ☐ Retail
- ☐ Hospitality & Tourism
- ☐ Professional Services (e.g. Legal, accounting, finance, consulting)
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Life Sciences / Biotech
- ☐ Film / Cultural Industries
- ☐ Construction / Development
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Non-Profit / Social Enterprise
- ☐ Education or child care
- ☐ Health care
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q4: I would rate the following economic risks for Richmond over the next decade as follows:

Likert scale: 1- Not a Risk 2- Minor Risk 3- Major Risk 4 – No Opinion

Demographic Risks

- ☐ Cost of living
- ☐ Strain on social services
- ☐ Aging population

Urban Development Risks

- ☐ Infrastructure investment needs (e.g. road, sewer, greenspace)
- ☐ Utility capacity (e.g. water, power, internet)
- ☐ Climate change impacts (e.g. flooding, extreme weather)
- ☐ Transportation challenges (e.g. congestion, transit capacity)

Business Risks

- ☐ Loss of major employers or industries
- ☐ Automation
- ☐ Overdependence on a few economic sectors

- ☐ Global trade instability
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Section 2: Land Use and Infrastructure

Q6: I believe Richmond's most important assets are: Select up to 4.

Transportation Assets

- ☐ Road transportation network
- ☐ Airport access (YVR)
- ☐ Port and/or rail connectivity
- ☐ Transit connectivity
- ☐ Active transportation corridors

Land and Real Estate Assets

- ☐ Commercial / downtown districts
- ☐ Tourism assets, such as the Richmond Oval and Steveston Harbour
- ☐ Industrial land base
- ☐ Agricultural land base
- ☐ Access to greenspace

Public Institutions

- ☐ Educational institutions (BCIT, KPU)
- ☐ Richmond Hospital
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q7: I believe Richmond's biggest physical economic challenges are:

Select up to 4.

Infrastructure Constraints

- ☐ Traffic / congestion
- ☐ Access to highspeed internet / broadband
- ☐ Transit connectivity

Land Use Constraints

- ☐ Zoning restrictions
- ☐ Land availability
- ☐ Parking availability

Environmental Constraints

- ☐ Vulnerability to flood / earthquake
- ☐ Waste & material management
- ☐ Air or water quality management

Financial Constraints

- ☐ Access to capital for businesses
- ☐ Local consumer purchasing power
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Section 3: Skills and Employment

Q8: I feel the following about the employment prospects in Richmond:

- ☐ Very positive – I feel like I have lots of good employment opportunities in Richmond
- ☐ Somewhat positive – I feel like I have some good employment opportunities in Richmond
- ☐ Neutral – I feel like I have limited good employment opportunities in Richmond
- ☐ Negative – I feel like I have no good employment opportunities in Richmond
- ☐ Not Applicable – I do not currently work in Richmond or intend to work in Richmond in the future

Q9: I feel the following are limiting my employment prospects: Select all that apply.

- ☐ Lack of available jobs in my field
- ☐ Lack of available jobs at the appropriate level of seniority for my experience
- ☐ Lack of relevant work experience
- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Transportation or commute challenges
- ☐ Language or communication barriers
- ☐ Childcare and caregiving responsibilities
- ☐ Health issues or disability
- ☐ No significant limitations
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Section 4: Civic Supports

Q10: I believe economic development is an important mandate for the City of Richmond:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Q11: I believe the City should be focusing its economic development efforts in the following areas:

Likert Scale: 1 – No Effort 2 – Some Effort 3 – Significant Effort

- ☐ Planning for future industrial, office, and retail space
- ☐ Permitting commercial activities in public spaces (e.g. mobile vending)
- ☐ Helping navigate business licensing and permitting processes
- ☐ Fostering connections, networking, and mentorship relationships among businesses
- ☐ Delivering training and employment programs (e.g. skills training, job fairs, mentorship programs)
- ☐ Reporting on Richmond's economy (e.g. employment levels, key sector activities)
- ☐ Supporting access to local businesses (e.g. bike valet programs, local food map)
- ☐ Attracting new economic activity to Richmond (e.g. Sport Hosting, Filming, delegation hosting)
- ☐ Providing amenities, such as child care, to enable workforce participation
- ☐ Other - Please specify: _____

