

# Municipal Red Tape Detective

*How hard is it to start a business in BC? CFIB goes undercover as a secret shopper to investigate 20 municipalities on red tape burdens*

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Running a business comes with a long list of challenges - many of which are not often recognized or understood by entrepreneurs when they start a business. One of these culprits is known as “red tape”. Red tape, otherwise known as excessive regulatory burden, ranges anywhere from lengthy nonsensical paperwork to poor customer service. Regulatory burdens weigh heavily on the owners of small and medium-sized businesses in British Columbia; understanding where and how these red tape problems exist is an important step to addressing the root of the problem. While red tape is caused by all levels of government, this piece examines regulatory burden at the municipal level.

To better understand what it’s really like to start and run a business, CFIB used a secret shopper approach to develop a greater understanding of municipal regulations. With the findings, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) has undertaken a research project investigating red tape in 20 municipalities<sup>1</sup> in British Columbia.

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<sup>1</sup>Municipalities examined are: Burnaby, Coquitlam, Delta, Kelowna, Langley, Maple Ridge, New Westminster, North Vancouver, Pitt Meadows, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Prince George, Richmond, Surrey, Vancouver, Victoria, West Vancouver, North Vancouver, Township of Langley

## Introduction

Red tape is not always the easiest thing to understand. One simple way to think about red tape is how much it costs. For British Columbian businesses, regulatory burden is estimated to have cost BC businesses over \$5.3 billion in 2017 alone<sup>2</sup> with approximately one-third of that cost attributed to red tape. For businesses, some of that red tape begins at the municipal level.

To further examine red tape issues at the municipal level and help understand the implications, this report has ranked the level of municipal red tape in the Metro Vancouver region, Prince George, Kelowna and Victoria. This report examines municipal regulations through the eyes of a business owner by analysing online information and information obtained directly from municipal staff.

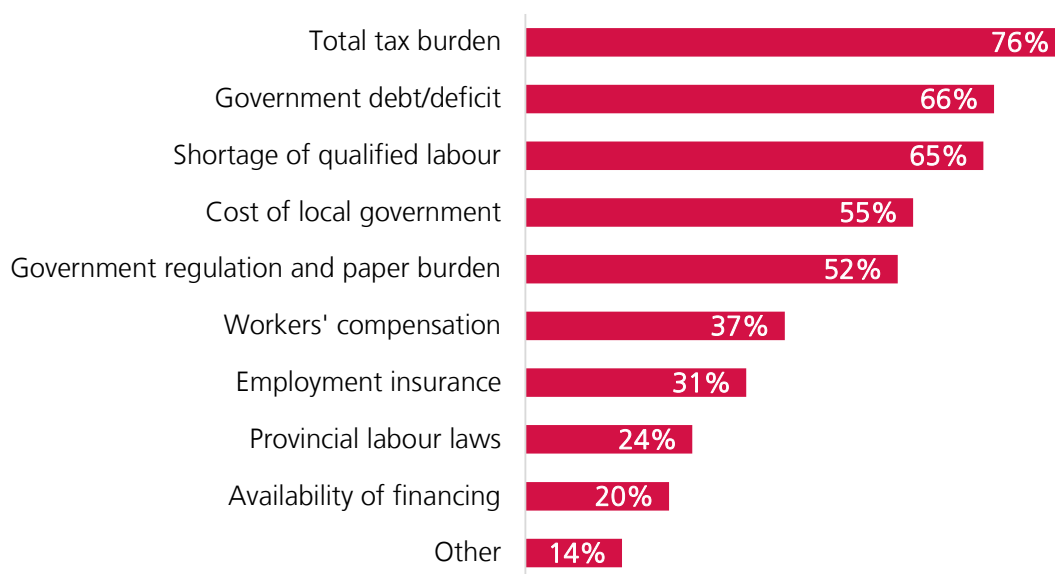
Each municipality is given a score out of 100 and provided unique recommendations based on their grades. The grades are calculated using analysis of three categories: Access to information, Quality of Information, and Regulatory Framework.

## Small Business Perspective

Red tape does not go unnoticed by small business owners in British Columbia. In fact, 52 per cent of entrepreneurs describe government regulation and paper burden as a serious concern (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Which of the following are a serious concern to your business?

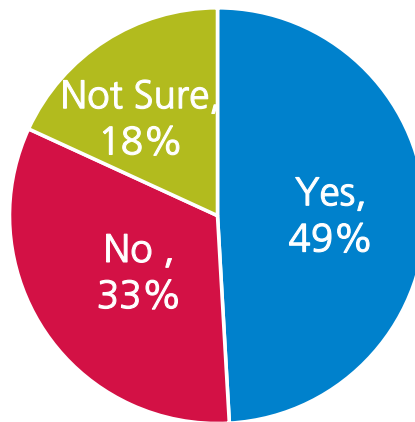


Source: CFIB, *Our Members' Opinions, BC, July - December 2017*, 1403 respondents.

<sup>2</sup> CFIB *The Cost of Government Regulation on Canadian Businesses 2018*, Queenie Wong

Figure 2

Does your local government do a good job on fair bylaws & regulations?



Source: CFIB, Our Members' Opinions, BC, July - December 2017, 1403 respondents.

Figure 3

Does your local government do a good job on fair bylaws & regulations?



Source: Municipal Issues Survey, British Columbia – Aggregate, June, 2017, n=576

Unfortunately, over one third of small business owners in BC believe their local government does not do a good job of ensuring fair bylaws and regulations (see Figure 2). In addition, it was found that 51 per cent of BC businesses would like to see their local governments make it easier to run their business so they can better succeed (see Figure 3). One way for local governments to achieve this is by cutting red tape. This can be as simple as minimizing burdensome regulations on permits, having simple and clear language on all paperwork, and having a user friendly website.

Business owners in BC are feeling the burden of local red tape. Through close examination of some red tape related items, this report aims to help identify problem areas and provide feedback to municipalities on ways they can increase the ease of doing business locally.

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## Methodology

To understand and evaluate municipal regulations in the 20 BC municipalities, CFIB created an index with three categories. The index is a comparative tool that reflects part of the reality entrepreneurs' face, regardless of whether they are looking to start a business, are new business owners, or are long term business owners. By grading and comparing municipalities, we are able to reveal which areas municipalities are doing well and where there is room for improvement. A summary of each category follows; further details of the grading can be found in the Appendix IV.

### Categories

#### *Access to Information*

The first category looks at each municipality's website user-friendliness, ability to find information, and online services and resources. Online accessibility is important, as it is often the first means for potential, new, or existing business owners to obtain information. Ensuring a website is easy to navigate, provides useful resources, and reports information publically helps businesses retrieve the information they need. When information is difficult to find, it can delay business decisions and add to red tape. For a breakdown of each metric evaluated and the grading system for this category, see Appendix IV section 'a'.

#### *Quality of Information*

The second category examined used a 'mystery shopper' approach where CFIB anonymously contacted municipalities through email to gather information. A number of questions were emailed to contacts found on the respective municipal websites. For further information on questions asked, please refer to Appendix II.

It is important for municipalities to write timely and comprehensive responses to inquiries. Establishing quality communication is especially important for potential, new, and existing business owners as they rely on this information when making key business decisions. For a breakdown of each metric evaluated and the grading system for this category, see Appendix IV section 'b'.

#### *Regulatory Framework*

The final category examines a combination of information available on municipal websites and information provided by municipal staff (when prompted) through email inquiries. These metrics are used to evaluate regulatory aspects involving permits and licensing, mobile business license agreements, and the availability of small business resources. The purpose of this category is to analyze the regulatory environment within each municipality. Wait times, costs, policies, and resources are key factors when considering the ease of doing business. For a breakdown of each metric evaluated and the grading system for this category, see Appendix IV section 'c'.

## Grading

The 20 municipalities were given an individual score for each of the three categories which was then summed to provide an overall grade out of 100. From there, the municipalities were ranked from first place to twentieth. By doing so, we are able to make a side-by-side comparison of each municipality while also examining each individually and providing feedback.

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## Findings

### Key findings

- ▶ Prince George and Surrey received a perfect grade in the **access to information** category (30 out of 30)
- ▶ Kelowna and Coquitlam tied in first for the highest marks for **quality of information** category (24 out of 30)
- ▶ Kelowna received a perfect grade for **regulatory framework** category (40 out of 40)
- ▶ Kelowna placed first overall (86), Delta placed second (81), and the City of Langley placed third (78)
- ▶ Port Moody had the lowest score (42 out of 100)

### Best Practices

While no municipality received a perfect mark (100 out of 100), most excelled in certain areas. For example, just over half of the municipalities were using an online service account which allow business owners to submit inquiries, check the status of applications, and make payments online. Online service accounts allow businesses to do a variety of functions while streamlining the process, making them a great benefit.

Municipal specific programs, initiatives, and incentives targeted at local business are also extremely useful. While most municipalities only provided third party resources (such as mentioning the Chamber of Commerce, WorkBC grants, the Board of Trade, etc.), a few went above and beyond. For example, Kelowna has their own Economic Development Commission which issues grants and provides opportunities for start-ups. Victoria and Coquitlam are also using innovative resources. Victoria's *Business Hub* and Coquitlam's *Business LinQ* are dedicated departments for new and existing business owners to use as a resource.

The ability to obtain a Mobile Business License (MBL) is also very helpful for businesses who provide goods and/or services to multiple municipalities. When a municipality is not part of a MBL agreement, a business must purchase multiple business licenses if they wish to operate in multiple municipalities. Once a municipality has entered a MBL agreement, those businesses are then allowed to operate in all municipalities who are part of the MBL agreement. Currently, all municipalities examined in this report are part of an MBL agreement (with the exception of Prince George, which CFIB acknowledges as an exception due to their geographic constraints). However, most municipalities' MBLs do not cover all the municipalities in their respective regional districts. CFIB encourages municipalities to further expand their MBL agreements to cover more municipalities, as this helps cut significant red tape for affected businesses. With a MBL, businesses no longer have to fill out extensive paperwork, wait to obtain, and pay for multiple municipal licences every year.

Municipalities are also encouraged to create an online space where website users are able to submit their red tape experiences. The municipality should commit to respond to each submission individually to provide feedback, and advise where they are able to.

Table 1

### Municipal Scores - by total score

Municipality	Access to Information (/30)	Quality of Information (/30)	Regulatory Framework (/40)	Total Score (/100)	Rank
City of Kelowna	22	24	40	86	1
City of Delta	27	20	34	81	2
City of Langley	24	22	31	78	3
City of Victoria*	25	17	35	77	4
City of Coquitlam	24	24	28	76	5
City of Prince George	30	23	22	75	6
Township of Langley	23	20	31	74	7
City of Surrey	30	19	24	73	8
City of Richmond	23	21	29	72	9
City of Vancouver	23	23	24	70	10
District of North Vancouver	20	21	27	67	11
City of Maple Ridge	20	22	25	67	11
City of Pitt Meadows	14	15	33	61	13
City of North Vancouver	22	22	17	61	13
City of Burnaby	15	22	24	60	15
District of West Vancouver	25	11	23	59	16
City of White Rock	23	19	15	57	17
City of Port Coquitlam	25	13	18	55	18
City of New Westminster	20	13	18	51	19
City of Port Moody	24	4	14	42	20

\* City of Victoria's original grade was 72 out of 100. After further discussion with the municipality, additional points were added. Please see the City of Victoria's section under Individual Analysis for further detail.

Note: 'Total Score' may not equal the exact summation of the three categories due to rounding. Each score is presented as a whole number. Please refer to Appendix V for more detail.

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## Individual Analysis

Limiting the scope of this report to the Metro Vancouver area (with the addition of a few large municipalities in other regions of BC) allows for a more uniform comparison between cities. In addition, a narrower scope provides the opportunity to analyse each municipality individually while providing unique recommendations. This section looks at each municipality individually with regards to *Access to Information*, *Quality of Information*, and *Regulatory Framework*.

### City of Burnaby

Burnaby received a total score of 60 out of 100, placing fifteenth out of the 20 municipalities examined. While the City did well in terms of *Quality of Information*, there is much room for improvement in the other two categories.

**Access to Information:** Burnaby could benefit from improving their accessibility by expanding their online capabilities. This could be done by allowing new businesses to submit their license applications online, or by allowing existing businesses to renew their business license online.

**Quality of Information:** The City responded to email inquiries with consistent information during each three rounds of enquiries. Distributing consistent information is very important, as it helps build reliable communication channels. One way to improve communication with businesses even further would be to ensure administrative contacts are aware of permit and licensing wait times.

**Regulatory Framework:** While some sections received full marks (such as anticipated delay in business license), the City should look at expanding their Mobile Business License program. Currently, there are 17 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver area; however, Burnaby's Mobile Business License program only covers 6 municipalities. Additionally, Burnaby has a relatively expensive initial retail business license fee of \$600 while the renewal license fee sits at \$180. Compared to similar sized municipalities, Burnaby's renewal license fee is more on par with the average. CFIB encourages the City to investigate why the initial high cost fee has been justified so far.

### City of Coquitlam

Coquitlam placed fifth out of twenty municipalities, earning a score of 76 out of 100. The City also received the top score in *Quality of Information* by gaining 24 out of 30 points.

**Access to Information:** While the City received a decent mark in this category and should receive recognition for their 'myCoquitlam' portal which operates as an online service account, there is still room for improvement. Introducing a section to their website to submit new business license applications online would help improve their score.

**Quality of Information:** Coquitlam should also be recognized for their punctuality and satisfactory information provided within email responses.

**Regulatory Frameworks:** in 2018, Coquitlam launched their *Business LinQ* department to better support local business. While there is limited online information, businesses are able to make an appointment or drop-in to the center to discuss any business related items such as permitting and regulatory processes. This is a great initiative and the City should be congratulated for their new program. There is also room for improvement within this category. The City should look to expand their Mobile Business License program, as the current one only covers 3 out of 17 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region.

## City of Delta

The City of Delta placed second out of the 20 municipalities examined, with a score of 81 out of 100.

**Access to Information:** the City scored nearly perfect in *Access to Information*. Delta's success in this category can be attributed to the user friendliness of their website and their multi-function online service account, 'MyCity'.

**Quality of Information:** the information provided in email responses varied in quality, which was reflected in Delta's *Quality of Information* score. Providing consistent, accurate information when communicating with businesses is important. Business owners map out their future and make plans according to available information. Ensuring that administrative staff are well-equipped with the tools and knowledge to provide accurate information is essential. The City should ensure there is a higher level of quality control when providing information.

**Regulatory Framework:** Delta should be recognized for their Mobile Business License program which covers 16 municipalities in the region. Delta's Mobile Business License program sets a great example which other municipalities in the Metro Vancouver area should look to follow.

## City of Kelowna

The City of Kelowna received the top score of 86 out of 100, placing first out of the 20 municipalities examined. The City should also be congratulated for their score in *Regulatory Framework*, earning them full marks in the category.

**Access to Information:** while the City performed well in this category, there is room for improvement. For instance, the City could look at expanding options for entrepreneurs looking to submit a new business license online. Currently, there is no online form or downloadable business license application form, and no area online to submit a new business license application.

**Quality of Information:** in all three email responses Kelowna was able to supply helpful information. However, there was some inconsistency in quality of information between emails. The City should consider implementing a method to monitor quality control of information being distributed.

**Regulatory Framework:** one reason for the city's success under *Regulatory Framework* is their Mobile Business License agreement, which covers nineteen municipalities in multiple regional districts. The city was also able to provide information on permit and business



license approval delays; this information is very valuable to businesses as it helps them plan ahead.

## City of Langley

The City of Langley placed third out of 20 municipalities with a score of 78 out of 100.

**Access to Information:** the City did particularly well in this category, and should be recognized for their online account, 'MyCity', and their 'EasyPay' system which allows entrepreneurs to pay for their business license online.

**Quality of Information:** Langley should be recognized for their punctuality in terms of responding to email inquiries. However, there is room for improvement. Overall, the City was graded 'satisfactory' for the content of information provided in email responses. Including more specific information such as permit and licensing costs and wait times, as well as information on local bylaws and small business resources would have improved their score. Ensuring administrative staff are aware of these metrics is important, as business owners rely on availability of information and communication to get answers.

**Regulatory Framework:** the City also did well on their Mobile Business License (MBL) score, where their agreement covers 11 municipalities. While this is a good score, the City should look to expand their MBL agreement to cover all municipalities in the region.

## City of Maple Ridge

The City of Maple Ridge received a score of 67 out of 100, and tied in eleventh place out of the 20 municipalities.

**Quality of Information:** while the City received a satisfactory grade for this category, the content of responses by email lacked in consistency. It is recommended the City invest more resources, implement a higher standard, and offer additional training to the administrative and communication personnel.

**Regulatory Framework:** after examination of both the City's website and email responses, it was noted that there was little information provided outlining small business specific programs, incentives, grants, or initiatives (regardless of whether the resources are within the municipality, or external). These initiatives do exist, and should be communicated as it helps streamline information. While we recommend the City consider developing some of their own program and initiatives, there are many other resources helpful to small businesses (such as Small Business BC) worth featuring on the City's website.

**Regulatory Framework:** Maple Ridge received a middling mark for their Mobile Business License (MBL) program, which covers 11 municipalities. While this is good start, the city should look to expand their MBL agreement to cover all municipalities in the region.

## City of New Westminster

New Westminster received a score of 51 out of 100, placing nineteenth out of 20 municipalities.

**Access to Information:** the City performed well in this category and should be recognized for their multi-function online service account known as 'MyCity'. However, New Westminster is the only municipality out of the 20 examined which has not been using the OneStop Business Registry as of writing this report<sup>3</sup>. This resource is a great tool for new and existing entrepreneurs, and the City would benefit greatly from partnering with OneStop.

**Quality of Information:** the City's worst performing category was *Quality of Information*. This is due to the lack of consistent information provided in email responses. It should be especially noted that there was no email response to the third email, which dropped their mark significantly. It is recommended that the city invest more resources, implement a higher quality of standard, and offer additional training to administrative and communication personnel.

**Regulatory Framework:** the City received a relatively low score under this category mostly due to the lack of publicly available information on permit and business license wait times. Updating wait times on the municipality's website, or at minimum providing administrative staff with that knowledge would be a step in the right direction. Business owners make important decisions based on this information; better communication will help them better plan for their future. The City's Mobile Business License also only covers 5 out of the 17 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region. The City and many independent businesses would greatly benefit from expanding their agreement to other municipalities in the region.

## City of North Vancouver

The City of North Vancouver received a score of 61 out of 100, and tied in thirteenth place out of twenty municipalities.

**Access to Information:** currently, North Vancouver has room to improve their online capability. It is recommended that the City allow businesses to submit new business license applications online and introduce an online service account. Both these items will help minimize red tape by increasing efficiency. In addition, an online service account will help streamline business specific applications, such as making payments, submitting inquiries, and any other function that may be specific to the municipality.

**Quality of information:** the City should be recognized for their consistency in *Quality of Information* provided in terms of the timeliness and accuracy of the information provided. Additionally, the City is using a partial online service account, which lets business owners check the status of applications such as permits and licenses. This is a great tool, and further expanding it into a full service account should be explored. It would allow businesses to check the status of any applications and licenses, make payments, submit inquiries, and any other function that may be specific to the municipality.

**Regulatory framework:** the City received the lowest score in terms of *Regulatory Framework*. This was due to a lack of public information about issues such as delays in permit approval and business licensing. The city could greatly benefit from putting such

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<sup>3</sup> BC Registry Services, Local Government Partners, 2018.

information online, and communicating it when appropriate. North Vancouver also received a low score for their Mobile Business License, which only covers 3 of the 17 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region. We recommend the city look to expand the agreement to cover all municipalities in the region.

### City of Pitt Meadows

The City of Pitt Meadows received a score of 61 out of 100, and tied thirteenth out of 20 municipalities.

**Access to Information:** the City received the lowest score out all municipalities for this category. This is mostly due to limitations surrounding a business owners' ability to apply and renew their business license. Currently, there is no way to submit a new business license application online. Additionally, there is no area to renew a business license online. Creating additional online resources for businesses would be an optimal solution.

**Quality of Information:** it should be noted that under this category, Pitt Meadows did not respond to one of the three emails. It is recommended that the city invest more resources, or provide additional training and standards within their administrative and communication departments.

**Regulatory Framework:** Pitt Meadows earned a relatively high mark for this category. The City quoted minimal delay for both building permit approval times and anticipated delay for a business license. Currently, the City's Mobile Business License program only covers 9 municipalities. Further expansion of the program would benefit the City and local businesses as well.

### City of Port Coquitlam

The City of Port Coquitlam received a score of 55 out of 100, and placed eighteenth of 20 municipalities.

**Access to Information:** this was the City's best performing category, which received near full marks. The City should also be recognized for their online service account, 'myPortCoquitlam', which is a great resource businesses can access through the website to accomplish several business related items. However, currently users are not able to submit a new business license application online. Introducing this function would be a great improvement and help better integrate new businesses into the community.

**Quality of Information:** Port Coquitlam did not perform as well in this category. While three emails were sent to the City asking for information, only two were replied to. The responses received provided mostly satisfactory information and were sent in a timely manner. The City lost quite a few marks due to lack of information regarding programs, incentives, grants, or initiatives (regardless of whether the resources are within the municipality or external). Creating a dedicated online space to inform businesses of internal and/or external programs would help create greater awareness for business owners and contribute to their success.

**Regulatory Framework:** the City could benefit from expanding their Mobile Business License program, which currently covers only 3 out of 17 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region.

### City of Port Moody

The City of Port Moody received a grade of 42 out of 100, and placed last out of the twenty municipalities. This is primarily because of low scores in *Quality of Information* and *Regulatory Framework*.

**Access to Information:** the City performed reasonably well in this category, which gave recognition to their online service account ‘myPortMoody’. Port Moody’s website could be further improved by introducing an area where new businesses can submit a business license application online.

**Quality of Information:** The City received the lowest grade in this category out of all the municipalities. This is mostly because two out of three email inquiries which were sent to the city received no response. Additionally, in one response which was received, little information was provided and it was recommended the owner of the business come into city hall for further answers. It is helpful for businesses to be able to receive information in the way they want, including through online communication channels. For example, if the administrative staff of the municipality were to have a template email to use in such a scenario, it could help improve communication.

**Regulatory Framework:** Information on permit and business license delay was found to be unavailable online or through email contacts. The City also, both online and through email, only provided general information on programs, initiatives, or resources available to local businesses. Port Moody should look into making the above information publically available. In addition, they would also benefit from expanding their Mobile Business License program, which currently covers only 3 out of 17 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region.

### City of Prince George

The City of Prince George received a grade of 75 out of 100 overall, and placed sixth out of 20 municipalities.

**Access to Information:** The City had a perfect score in *Access to Information*, which showcased their online service account ‘MyCity’.

**Quality of Information:** The City did well in *Quality of Information*, providing either satisfactory or great information in each email response. One area the City could improve in is simplifying communications channels. In all three rounds of emails, CFIB’s mystery shopper business had to speak with multiple contacts in different departments to retrieve information. Centralizing business specific information would help streamline the process.

**Regulatory Framework:** Information on building permit delays and business license delays was not provided in email inquiry responses, and was not found to be available online. Ensuring this information is publicly available and communicated would be a key improvement, as businesses rely on this sort of information while planning for their future. CFIB recognizes Prince George’s geographic restrictions, which evidently influences their

ability to take part in a Mobile Business License (MBL) program. As they are the only city in the Fraser-Fort George region, they have been awarded full points for this category despite not having a MBL program.

## City of Richmond

The City of Richmond received a grade of 72 out of 100, placed ninth place out of 20 municipalities.

**Access to Information:** In this category the City performed relatively well but there is room for improvement. Richmond currently uses a partial online service, 'My Property Accounts online', which allows users to view their property tax bill and utilities. Expanding this service into a fully developed online service account would be a great asset to business owners.

**Quality of Information:** The City's best performing category was *Quality of Information*, which showed consistency of information provided. To even better their score, Richmond could look to centralize business communications. When reaching out through email, CFIB's mystery shopper had to communicate with multiple departments to retrieve information.

**Regulatory Framework:** the City has room to improve in this category. While it is beneficial the municipality provides information on anticipated delays for building permits and business licenses, the wait times remain relatively high (over six weeks for the former and four to six weeks for the latter). Richmond should investigate why wait times are relatively high, and look to increase the efficiency of the process. The City of Richmond's Mobile Business License also only covers 6 out of 17 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region. The City should look to expand the existing program to cover all municipalities in the region.

## City of Surrey

The City of Surrey received a grade of 73 out of 100 in total, placing eighth out of the 20 municipalities examined.

**Access to Information:** the City received full marks in the *Access to Information* category. One of the highlights from this category is their online service account, 'MySurrey Portal' which helps streamline online processes.

**Quality of Information:** the City's results varied significantly between email inquiries. Specifically, in two email responses the information provided was deemed unsatisfactory. Maintaining a consistently high quality of online communication is important, as it is essential that businesses are receiving correct, timely and credible information. It is recommended the City invest more resources, or provide additional training and standards within their administrative and communication departments.

**Regulatory Framework:** Surrey received a passing grade for their Mobile Business License program which covers 11 out of 17 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region. Further expansion of this program would be a great asset to the City and local businesses. Additional recommendations include increasing transparency of anticipated delays for

business licensing and investing in municipal programs, incentives, grants, or initiatives for small businesses.

## City of Vancouver

The City of Vancouver received a score of 70 out of 100, and came in tenth place out of 20 municipalities.

**Access to Information:** of the three categories, Vancouver's results were best in categories *Access to Information* and *Quality of Information*. While the city's website scores well in terms of user friendliness, it could benefit from having a complete online service account that would allow businesses to check the status of any applications and licenses, make payments, and other business related items.

**Quality of Information:** two out of the three emails which were sent to grade *Quality of Information* were responded to promptly, while all emails contained relatively good information. The last email response did not contain any information on permits, such as the cost and where to find relevant forms. Going forward, Vancouver should ensure their communication staff have better access to information that may be relevant to a business owner.

**Regulatory Framework:** the City's score in *Regulatory Framework* shows there is room for improvement. Not only was the anticipated delay in business licensing the highest, with more than a six week delay, there was no information available on the anticipated delay in building permit approvals. From the information collected online and within email exchanges, our mystery shopper was not able to find any small business initiatives unique to the City of Vancouver. Recommendations include increasing transparency of anticipated delays for business permits and investing in municipal programs, incentives, grants, and initiatives for small businesses. In addition, the City and local businesses could benefit greatly from expanding the existing mobile business license agreement. Currently, the City's license only covers 6 out of the 17 participating municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region.

## City of Victoria

The City of Victoria received a score of 77 out of 100, and placed fourth out of 20 municipalities.

**Access to Information:** this was Victoria's best performing category, where the city obtained a near perfect score losing marks only due to the inability for a new business to submit a license application online.

**Quality of Information:** unfortunately, the City did not respond to the last round of emails. Ultimately, this lowered the *Quality of Information* score significantly. Ensuring consistent online communication is critical to helping reduce red tape, as open communication channels are the best way to effectively relay information.

**Regulatory Framework:** the City's original grade for this category (30 out of 40) was increased (to 35 out of 40) after discussions with the municipality over the cost of their business license. The City quoted a \$100 fee for a General Business License; however, the

online application form for a General Business License does not state the \$100 cost<sup>4</sup>. In addition, the current active bylaw does not mention a General Business License fee, so it is not an open and transparent cost. Although the City's grade was increased to reflect the lower cost, the purpose of this report is to detect red tape and measure the ease of starting a business. It is recommended the City make it abundantly clear what the cost of a business license is. Overall, the City did well in this category, which can be attributed to its excellent in house small business resources such as their Business Hub. Another recommendation is that the Business Hub is much more visual and prominent to ensure prospective small business as well as existing ones know exactly where they need to go to get help. Finally, the City received top marks for their mobile business license agreement, which covers all 13 municipalities in the Capital Regional District.

## District of West Vancouver

The District of West Vancouver received a score of 67 out of 100, placed sixteenth out of 20 municipalities.

**Access to Information:** the District received a near perfect score, losing marks only due to the inability for a new business to submit a license application online.

**Quality of Information:** under *Quality of Information*, the email responses received from the municipality varied widely in terms of quality. The District's response to first two emails were received promptly; however, they contained little to no information. In contrast, the last email response from the District contained relatively good information. Overall, the District fell short when it came to providing consistent, quality information while promoting communication channels. It is recommended the District invest more resources, or provide additional training and standards within their administrative and communication departments.

**Regulatory Framework:** the District would benefit from improving certain areas examined under this category. Recommendations include increasing transparency of anticipated delays for business permits and investing in municipal programs, incentives, grants, or initiatives for small businesses. In addition, the District's Mobile Business License agreement only covers 3 out of the 17 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region. West Vancouver benefits from being geographically close to many municipalities, and should take advantage of that by expanding their mobile business license agreement.

## City of White Rock

The City of White Rock received a score of 57 out of 100, and placed seventeenth out of 20 municipalities.

**Access to Information:** of the three categories, the City performed best in Access to Information. CFIB recommends the City expand their online service account 'WebReg' to offer more functions. Specifically, the City would benefit from having a complete online

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<sup>4</sup> City of Victoria, General Business License Application.  
[http://www.victoria.ca/assets/Business/Documents/General\\_Business\\_Licence.pdf](http://www.victoria.ca/assets/Business/Documents/General_Business_Licence.pdf)

service account that would allow businesses to check the status of any applications, licenses, and permits, make payments, and other business related items.

**Quality of Information:** the emails received from the City varied significantly in terms of content and quality. While all response were received within two days, the content varied between providing satisfactory and no relevant information. It is recommended the City invest more resources, or provide additional training and standards within their administrative and communication departments.

**Regulatory Framework:** there is also room for improvement in this category. While information was available on the anticipated delay of permits, information on delay of business licensing could not be retrieved. Ensuring transparency about wait times helps reduce stress on business owners while helping them plan for their future. As for other metrics in this category, it should be noted the City of White Rock is the only municipality examined within this report that does not currently participate in a Mobile Business License agreement. It is recommended the City look into establishing a Mobile Business License agreement, as they could easily partner with neighboring municipalities such as Surrey.

## District of North Vancouver

The District of North Vancouver received a score of 67 out of 100, and tied in eleventh place out of 20 municipalities.

**Access to Information:** the District has room for improvement in terms of their online capabilities. Currently, there is no dedicated email address for licensing and permits inquires. In addition, while there is a dedicated section on their website about licensing and permits, there is no dedicated section for business more generally. Adding a business specific section on the website will help streamline information retrieval for potential, new, and existing businesses.

**Quality of Information:** the municipality provided consistent information during each round of email responses. Overall, satisfactory information was provided; however, there is room for improvement. For example, the responses lacked information on permit and license costs, and where to navigate the necessary forms to apply for either. For existing business owners, or those looking to get started, obtaining this information is essential. Ensuring this information is easily accessible and transparent will help streamline business related inquires.

**Regulatory Framework:** this was the municipality's best performing category. Information about anticipated delay in permits and licenses was easily accessible; this level of transparency helps businesses plan ahead and is a great benefit. However, the District's Mobile Business License (MBL) agreement only covers 3 out of the 17 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region. Expanding their MBL agreement would help cut costs and red tape for businesses who need to operate in multiple locations.

## Township of Langley

The Township of Langley received a grade of 74 out of 100, and ranked seventh out of 20 municipalities.



**Access to Information:** the Township could benefit from expanding their online service account 'MyTownship Account', which currently allows users to submit requests and have them tracked. Introducing other online services such as the ability to submit licenses and permits, make payments, and submit new business license applications would help new and existing business owners.

**Quality of Information:** the Township delivered consistent information with satisfactory email responses. In all three rounds of emails sent, the Township also responded promptly, showing their commitment to deliver information in a timely way. Including more extensive information when asked, such as the cost of permits and business license application forms, would help further improve their grade.

**Regulatory Framework:** this was the Township's best performing category. Accessing important information, such as anticipated delays in permits and business licencing, was easy and publicly available. In addition, the Township was able to provide recommendations on third party resources, financing, or initiatives pertinent to small businesses. There is also room for the Township to grow: their Mobile Business License agreement currently covers 10 municipalities in the region. We recommend expanding the agreement even further to cover all more municipalities in the region.

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## Steps to improve the grade

Based on the results in this report, CFIB is able to identify areas of improvement. While there are a variety of ways for municipalities to combat red tape issues, these steps will serve as a starting point for municipalities to make improvements. The recommendations alone provide a minimum baseline to propel communities forward by solving the concerns of local business owners.

### **Make red tape reduction a political priority.**

Red tape has a serious impact on the economy. Unfortunately, it is too often a low-profile policy issue. From a municipal government perspective, red tape reduction can either best be driven from the mayor's office, or through a permanent committee. This ensures there is political accountability. Steps to alleviate red tape include:

- Investigate inefficiencies. Streamline the approval process for commercial applications (such as permits and licenses), and ensure any delays are communicated. If this is not possible, the reasons why should be clearly communicated.
- Report and reduce the length of time taken to approve permits.
- Reduce the number of business licences categories and costs, and standardize how they are categorized. The initial cost of obtaining a business license should match the annual renewal fee to encourage start-ups. Ensure all administrative fees are transparent.
- Expand the Municipal Business License Program to encompass all municipalities in the region.
- Allow small business owners to pay their municipal tax bills interest-free on a monthly basis, which better coincides with their cash flow requirements.

- Conduct transparent, public consultations and include a business perspective on regulatory change.

### **Measure the regulatory burden.**

In certain municipalities, some of the regulatory burden has been identified but there is so much more to measure. Without measurement there can be no true accountability. Measuring the regulatory burden is not an easy task, since much of the cost of regulation is hidden, indirect or intangible. However, municipalities should identify a measurement process used to show progress in alleviating the red tape burden for small business owners.

- Identify a red tape measurement process (e.g. permit approval time or dollar cost of regulation).
- Ensure information is transparent, and can be tracked so that improvements can be recognized and celebrated.

### **Use municipal websites more effectively.**

CFIB recognizes municipalities in the province have varying financial means, but a website can be a great equalizer. Municipalities can use their websites more effectively to make it easier for business owners to access information and lessen the need to contact a municipality:

- Create an online space where website users are able to submit their red tape experiences. The municipality should commit to respond to each submission individually to provide feedback, and advise where they are able to help.
- Develop an online service account where businesses are able to make payments, submit documents for permits and licenses, view wait times, and create and track inquiries.
- Have a centralized email for business inquiries. Dedicating one email address to business related inquiries will help ensure all questions are being answered and are accounted for.
- Ensure permit and license wait times are available online to better help businesses plan ahead.
- Streamline business permit and licensing experiences by partnering with BizPal, an online tool which improves business planning.
- Encourage resources, grants, and programs pertinent to local businesses. Ensure this information is available online, and consider investing in municipal specific initiatives.

### **Ensure customer service standards are established and monitored.**

Customer service is an important aspect of encouraging investment and development within a community. For many of the municipalities examined in this report, the quality of information provided by email varied between each of the three rounds. Quality control of information is essential, as it helps provide businesses and citizens with accurate and helpful information.

- Avoid using jargon to ensure materials are written in plain language and easy to understand.

- Ensure information (such as permit and license wait times, bylaw information, etc.) is readily available for staff to distribute and post it online.
- It is important for an entrepreneur to receive all information from the government in writing to ensure there is no confusion and all obligations are adhered to; it must also be written in plain language.
- Establish customer service standards and measure them with a public feedback mechanism.

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## Conclusion

Overall, it is promising to see municipalities performing well in certain areas. While there is room for improvement, this initial temperature shows that on average the Metro Vancouver region, Victoria, Kelowna, and Prince George are receiving passing grades. Moving forward, CFIB encourages municipalities to take positive steps forward to help reduce red tape and become increasingly business friendly. CFIB looks forward to working together with municipalities across BC to help reduce red tape, increase transparency, and ultimately increase the odds of success for local businesses.

## Appendix I: Access to Information

Access to Information is based on information found on the respective municipality's website. The purpose of this metric is to analyze the user friendliness of each municipality's online presence. Below is a breakdown of the results, and total score.

### Access to Information Score – by Municipality

Table 2

Municipality	Map of zoning areas (1)	Dedicated department email for business specific inquiries (1)	Dedicated online business section (5)	Online service account (5)	Online and/or downloadable business license application form (3)	Able to submit new business license applications online (5)	Able to renew Business License online (5)	Using OneStop Business Registry (5)	Total Points (/30)
City of Kelowna	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	22
City of Burnaby	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	15
City of Coquitlam	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	24
City of Delta	Yes	No	Partial	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	27
City of Langley	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	24
City of Maple Ridge	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	20
City of New Westminster	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	20
City of North Vancouver	Yes	No	Partial	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	22
City of Pitt Meadows	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	14
City of Port Coquitlam	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	25
City of Port Moody	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	24
City of Prince George	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	30
City of Richmond	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	23
City of Surrey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	30
City of Vancouver	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	23
City of Victoria	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	25
District of West Vancouver	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	25
City of White Rock	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	23
District of North Vancouver	Yes	No	Partial	Partial	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	20
Township of Langley	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	23

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## Appendix II: Quality of Information

Quality of Information is based on email responses received from the 20 municipalities directly. Three emails were sent:

- First email sent: 11/08/2017
- Second email sent: 12/1/2017
- Third email sent: 12/20/2017

Due to the timing of the third email sent, the average calculated for determining a municipality's total score for Quality of Information has been weighted. The third email was sent close to Christmas holidays, which is a common time for employees to take time off. This factor could influence response time, which is why a weighted average is used. However, while this is acknowledged and the average is weighted, it is no excuse for a city to have an unreasonable delay in response, or no response at all.

The weighted average calculation is as follows:

$$= (\textit{First email score}) \times (0.4) + (\textit{Second email score}) \times (0.4) + (\textit{Third email score}) \times (0.2)$$

The calculation is weighted in favour of the first and second email response scores, giving both respective scores a 40 per cent weight. The outstanding 20 per cent weight is attributed to the third email score.

The content of the emails asked the following questions. In the actual emails, the text was written more organically to appear real.

### 1. Permits

- Which permits are required to open a business in your city?
- Would I need any additional permits for renovations, displaying a sign, or a patio?
- Are you able to give an estimated wait time on turnaround time for permits?
- Are you able to give an estimate cost breakdown for permits?

### 2. Licensing

- Which business licenses are required in your city?
- Am I able to apply for a business license online? If not, what is the procedure, or could you send me the necessary documents?
- Are you able to give an estimated wait time on turnaround time for licensing?
- Are you able to give an estimated cost breakdown for licensing?

### 3. Bylaws

- Where can I get information about bylaws I need to comply with?
- Are there any additional bylaws I should be aware of?

### 4. Business Initiatives

- Do you offer assistance to entrepreneurs who want to start a business in your city?
- Do you offer any financial support for small businesses, or businesses starting up?
- Do you have any tools or resources for small businesses, or businesses start up?

### 5. Other

- Is there any other information I should know before starting a businesses in your city?

*Note for Tables 3, 4, and 5: cities marked with a **dark grey background** are those which left voicemails in response to the email. Such municipalities are given a default of 10 points as a sum of 'Permit Information', 'Business License Information', 'Bylaw Information', 'Business Resources', and 'Available for further Contact' to accommodate this outcome. There is an understanding of effort in the fact that someone is able to make a phone call. However, if the phone call was the only method of contact and does not include pertinent information, additional points are not awarded beyond the defaulted 10 points.*

## Quality of Information Score: First round (sent 11/08/2017) – by Municipality

Table 3

Municipality	Able to Speak with one department (/3)	Dedicated contact person(s) (/2)	Delay in response (/5)	Permit Information (Form, Cost, Delay) (/8)	Business License Information (Form, Cost, Delay) (/8)	Bylaw Information (/1)	Business Specific Resources (/1)	Available for further Contact (/1)	Any extra relevant information (/1)	Total Points (/30)
City of Burnaby	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	Given	Yes	Yes	22
City of Coquitlam	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Given	Given	Yes	Yes	23
City of Delta	Yes	No	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	None	No	No	18
City of Kelowna	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Great	Satisfactory	Given	None	No	Yes	24
City of Langley	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Great	Given	Given	No	Yes	25
City of Maple Ridge	Yes	Yes	2 days or less	Great	Great	None	None	Yes	Yes	28
City of New Westminster	No	Yes	3 to 5 days	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	None	None	No	Yes	9
City of North Vancouver	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	None	No	No	19
City of Pitt Meadows	No	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	None	No	No	17
City of Port Coquitlam	No	No	No response	No Info	No Info	None	None	No	No	0
City of Port Moody	No	Yes	2 days or less	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	None	None	Yes	No	10
City of Prince George	No	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	None	No	Yes	18
City of Richmond	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Great	Satisfactory	Given	None	No	Yes	24
City of Surrey	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	Given	Yes	No	21
City of Vancouver	No	Yes	2 days or less	Great	Satisfactory	None	Given	Yes	Yes	23

<b>City of Victoria</b>	Yes	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	Given	Yes	No	22
<b>District of West Vancouver</b>	No	Yes	2 days or less	No Info	No Info	None	None	No	No	7
<b>City of White Rock</b>	Partial	Yes	6 to 14 days	Great	Satisfactory	Given	None	No	Yes	22
<b>District of North Vancouver</b>	No	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Given	None	Yes	No	19
<b>Township of Langley</b>	No	Yes	2 days or less	Unsatisfactory	Great	Given	Given	Yes	Yes	21

### Quality of Information Score: Second round (sent 12/1/2017) – by Municipality

Table 4

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Able to Speak with one department (/3)</b>	<b>Dedicated contact person(s) (/2)</b>	<b>Delay in response (/5)</b>	<b>Permit Information (Form, Cost, Delay) (/8)</b>	<b>Business License Information (Form, Cost, Delay) (/8)</b>	<b>Bylaw Information (/1)</b>	<b>Business Resources (/1)</b>	<b>Available for further Contact (/1)</b>	<b>Bonus Info (/1)</b>	<b>Total Points (/30)</b>
<b>City of Kelowna</b>	Yes	Yes	2 days or less	Great	Great	None	None	Yes	Yes	28
<b>City of Burnaby</b>	Partial	Yes	6 to 14 days	Satisfactory	Great	None	None	No	Yes	21
<b>City of Coquitlam</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Great	None	None	Yes	Yes	24
<b>City of Delta</b>	Yes	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Great	None	Given	Yes	No	25
<b>City of Langley</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	None	Yes	Yes	21
<b>City of Maple Ridge</b>	Yes	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	None	No	No	20
<b>City of New Westminster</b>	Yes	Yes	3 to 5 days	Satisfactory	Great	None	None	Yes	No	23
<b>City of North Vancouver</b>	Yes	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Great	Given	Given	Yes	Yes	27



<b>City of Pitt Meadows</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	Given	No	No	20
<b>City of Port Coquitlam</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Given	Given	Yes	Yes	23
<b>City of Port Moody</b>	No	No	No response	No Info	No Info	None	None	No	No	0
<b>City of Prince George</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Great	Great	None	Given	Yes	Yes	28
<b>City of Richmond</b>	Partial	Yes	3 to 5 days	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	None	Given	No	No	16
<b>City of Surrey</b>	No	Yes	2 days or less	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Given	Given	Yes	Yes	18
<b>City of Vancouver</b>	Partial	Yes	3 to 5 days	Great	Great	Given	None	Yes	Yes	27
<b>City of Victoria</b>	Yes	Yes	3 to 5 days	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Given	Given	Yes	Yes	20
<b>District of West Vancouver</b>	No	Yes	2 days or less	No Info	No Info	None	None	No	No	7
<b>City of White Rock</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	None	Yes	No	20
<b>District of North Vancouver</b>	Yes	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Given	None	Yes	No	22
<b>Township of Langley</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	None	No	No	19

### Quality of Information Score: Third round (sent 12/20/2017) – by Municipality

Table 5

Municipality	Able to Speak with one department (/3)	Dedicated contact person(s) (/2)	Delay in response (/5)	Permit Information (Form, Cost, Delay) (/8)	Business License Information (Form, Cost, Delay) (/8)	Bylaw Information (/1)	Business Resources (/1)	Available for further Contact (/1)	Bonus Info (/1)	Total Points (/30)
<b>City of Kelowna</b>	Yes	Yes	2 days or less	No Info	Satisfactory	Given	Given	Yes	No	18
<b>City of Burnaby</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Given	Given	Yes	No	22

<b>City of Coquitlam</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Great	Given	Given	Yes	Yes	26
<b>City of Delta</b>	Partial	No	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	None	None	No	No	14
<b>City of Langley</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	None	Yes	No	20
<b>City of Maple Ridge</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Given	None	Yes	No	15
<b>City of New Westminster</b>	No	No	No response	No Info	No Info	None	None	No	No	0
<b>City of North Vancouver</b>	Yes	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	None	None	No	No	20
<b>City of Pitt Meadows</b>	No	No	No response	No Info	No Info	None	None	No	No	0
<b>City of Port Coquitlam</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Given	None	No	No	17
<b>City of Port Moody</b>	No	No	No response	No Info	No Info	None	None	No	No	0
<b>City of Prince George</b>	No	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Great	Given	Given	Yes	Yes	24
<b>City of Richmond</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Given	Given	Yes	Yes	23
<b>City of Surrey</b>	Partial	Yes	6 to 14 days	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Given	None	No	Yes	16
<b>City of Vancouver</b>	Yes	Yes	15 days +	No Info	Great	Given	Given	No	No	17
<b>City of Victoria</b>	No	No	No response	No Info	No Info	None	None	No	No	0
<b>District of West Vancouver</b>	Partial	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Great	Given	Given	Yes	Yes	26
<b>City of White Rock</b>	Yes	Yes	2 days or less	No Info	No Info	None	None	Yes	No	11
<b>District of North Vancouver</b>	Yes	Yes	2 days or less	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Given	Given	Yes	Yes	21
<b>Township of Langley</b>	Yes	Yes	2 days or less	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Given	None	Yes	No	22

## Appendix III: Regulatory Framework

Regulatory Framework examines several regulatory processes, including metrics on permits and licensing. The purpose of this category is to analyze resources, costs, and regulatory means within each municipality.

### Regulatory Framework Score – by Municipality

Table 6

<b>Municipality</b>	Anticipated delay in building permit approval (5)	Anticipated delay in business license (5)	Average cost of 'retail' business license (10)	Mobile Business License (5)	Programs/Incentives/Initiatives for Small Business (15)	Permanent Business License (5)	Total Points (/40)
<b>City of Kelowna</b>	Less than 2 weeks	Less than 2 weeks	\$149 or less	5	Municipal Initiatives	No	40
<b>City of Burnaby</b>	Info not available	Less than 2 weeks	\$200 or more	2	Third party resources only	No	24
<b>City of Coquitlam</b>	Info not available	2 - 4 weeks	\$150 - \$199	1	Municipal Initiatives	No	28
<b>City of Delta</b>	4 - 6 weeks	2 - 4 weeks	\$149 or less	5	Third party resources only	No	34
<b>City of Langley</b>	4 - 6 weeks	Less than 2 weeks	\$150 - \$199	3	Third party resources only	No	31
<b>City of Maple Ridge</b>	2 - 4 weeks	Info not available	\$149 or less	3	General Information	No	25
<b>City of New Westminister</b>	Info not available	Info not available	\$200 or more	1	Third party resources only	No	18
<b>City of North Vancouver</b>	Info not available	Info not available	\$150 - \$199	1	General Information	No	17
<b>City of Pitt Meadows</b>	Less than 2 weeks	Less than 2 weeks	\$150 - \$199	3	Third party resources only	No	33
<b>City of Port Coquitlam</b>	Info not available	2 - 4 weeks	\$200 or more	1	General Information	No	18
<b>City of Port Moody</b>	Info not available	Info not available	\$200 or more	1	General Information	No	14
<b>City of Prince George</b>	Info not available	Info not available	\$200 or more	5	Third party resources only	No	22
<b>City of Richmond</b>	More than 6 weeks	4 - 6 weeks	\$149 or less	2	Third party resources only	No	29
<b>City of Surrey</b>	2 - 4 weeks	Info not available	\$200 or more	3	Third party resources only	No	24
<b>City of Vancouver</b>	Info not available	More than 6 weeks	\$149 or less	2	Third party resources only	No	24
<b>City of Victoria</b>	Info not available	Less than 2 weeks	\$149 or less	5	Municipal Initiatives	No	30
<b>District of West Vancouver</b>	Info not available	Info not available	\$149 or less	1	Third party resources only	No	23
<b>City of White Rock</b>	More than 6 weeks	Info not available	\$200 or more	0	General Information	No	15
<b>District of North Vancouver</b>	Less than 2 weeks	2 - 4 weeks	\$200 or more	1	Third party resources only	No	27
<b>Township of Langley</b>	2 - 4 weeks	2 - 4 weeks	\$150 - \$199	3	Third party resources only	No	31

## Appendix IV: Detail of Points Awarded

### a. Access to Information - Breakdown of points

Table 7

Map of zoning areas	Dedicated department e-mail address (for licensing/permits)		Dedicated online business section		Using an online service account		Online and/or downloadable business license application		Able to submit new business license application online		Able to renew business license online		Using OneStop Business Registry		
Yes	1	Yes	1	Yes	5	*Yes	5	Yes	3	Yes	5	Yes	5	Yes	5
No	0	No	0	Partial	3	*Partial	3	No	0	No	0	No	0	No	0
-	-	-	-	No	0	*No	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

### A Note on Using an Online Service Account

A score for the Online Service Account is given on a 'Yes', 'Partial', or 'No' basis. Below are the requirements for receiving each point.

Yes: *multiple services using a log in, ability to create an account*

Partial: *able to log in using business license, can do limited transactions*

No: *no online service portal. Websites with only business license renewal as an online option does not qualify for an online service account.*

## b. Quality of Information - Breakdown of points

Table 8

Able to speak with one department/contact	Dedicated contact person(s)	Delay in response	Permit Information (form, cost, delay)	Business License Information (form, cost, delay)	Bylaw information	Business Resources	Available for further contact	Bonus Information
Yes	3	Yes 2 2 days or less	5	Great 8	Given 1	Given 1	Yes 1	Yes 1
Partial	2	No 0 3 to 5 days	4	Satisfactory 5	None 0	None 0	No 0	No 0
No	0	- - 6 to 14 days	3	Unsatisfactory 2	- -	- -	- -	- -
-	-	- - 15 days +	2	No Info 0	- -	- -	- -	- -
-	-	- - No response	0	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -

## c. Regulatory Framework - Breakdown of points

Table 9

Anticipated delay in permit approval	Anticipated delay in business license	Average cost of 'retail' business license	Mobile Business License	Support for Small Businesses
Less than 2 weeks 5	Less than 2 weeks 5	\$149 or less 10	*Formula 5	Municipal Initiatives 15
2 - 4 weeks 4	2 - 4 weeks 4	\$150 - \$199 8	*Formula 4	Third party resources only 12
4 - 6 weeks 3	4 - 6 weeks 3	\$200 or more 5	*Formula 3	General Information 8
More than 6 weeks 2	More than 6 weeks 2	Information not available 0	*Formula 2	None 0
Info not available 0	Info not available 0	- -	*Formula 1	- -
-	-	-	*Formula 0	-

## A Note on Mobile Business License

Mobile Business license is calculated using a formula which weights how many municipalities are included in a license against how many municipalities are actually located in the respective region. The regions examined are: Metro Vancouver, Central Okanagan, Fraser-Fort George, and the Capital Regional District. The equation is then multiplied by 5 to fit the five-point scale of the Mobile Business License metric.

The formula is as follows:

$$= \left( \frac{\text{Number of Municipalities within the Mobile Business License Agreement}}{\text{Number of Municipalities within the region}} \right) \times (5)$$

## A Note on Cost of 'Retail' Business License

For this metric, we examine the average cost of obtaining a business license in the 'retail' category. A retail business license was chosen as it is broadly defined and exists as a business license within all municipalities examined.

Below is a chart recording the cost of a retail business license in the 20 municipalities examined in this report:

The cost for a retail business license was determined by assuming a business requiring 100 square meters of space with 5 employees. This assumption is made because municipalities use different ways to determine the cost of business license fees (by number of employees, square meters, etc.). Let it be noted that the above costs for a retail business license do not include administrative fees. This is done so for a more uniform comparison, as information on the administrative cost is not specified in all business license bylaws examined.

Given the minimum, maximum, and median calculations of retail business license costs within the 20 municipalities, it was chosen to select three different ranges for each municipality to fall within. Each of the three ranges is then assigned a point to be awarded. The ranges selected are: '\$149 or less', '\$150 to \$199', '\$200 or more'. 'Information not available' can also be awarded if the municipality does not publically release information on business license costs.

## Cost for Retail Business License – by Municipality

Table 10

Municipality	Cost
Burnaby	\$ 600.00
City of Langely	\$ 182.00
City of North Vancouver	\$ 196.00
Coquitlam	\$ 197.00
Delta	\$ 110.00
District of North Vancouver	\$ 210.40
Kelowna	\$ 140.94
Maple Ridge	\$ 110.00
New Westminster	\$ 257.29
Pitt Meadows	\$ 160.00
Port Coquitlam	\$ 209.00
Port Moody	\$ 260.00
Prince George	\$ 280.00
Richmond	\$ 139.00
Surrey	\$ 274.25
Township of Langely	\$ 127.50
Vancouver	\$ 145.00
Victoria*	\$ 100.00
West Vancouver	\$ 141.00
White Rock	\$ 275.00

*Note: cost does not include administrative fees*  
*\*Victoria originally quoted to have a retail business license cost of \$200. The report has been amended to reflect a \$100 cost later quoted by the municipality. For further detail, please refer to the City of Victoria's Individual Analysis.*

## Appendix V: Total Score

The 'Total Score' is calculated by summing the grade of each category, and then rounding up or down where appropriate. Below is a table showing the grades for each category with decimal places.

Table 11

### Municipal Scores - by total score

Municipality	Access to Information (/30)	Quality of Information (/30)	Regulatory Framework (/40)	Total Score (/100)	Rank
City of Kelowna	22.0	24.4	40.0	86	1
City of Delta	27.0	20.0	33.7	81	2
City of Langley	24.0	22.4	31.2	78	3
City of Victoria	25.0	16.8	35.0	77	4
City of Coquitlam	24.0	24.0	27.9	76	5
City of Prince George	30.0	23.2	22.0	75	6
Township of Langley	23.0	20.4	30.9	74	7
City of Surrey	30.0	18.8	24.2	73	8
City of Richmond	23.0	20.6	28.8	72	9
City of Vancouver	23.0	23.4	23.8	70	10
District of North Vancouver	20.0	20.6	26.8	67	11
City of Maple Ridge	20.0	22.2	25.2	67	11
City of Pitt Meadows	14.0	14.8	32.6	61	13
City of North Vancouver	22.0	22.4	16.9	61	13
City of Burnaby	15.0	21.6	23.8	60	15
City of West Vancouver	25.0	10.8	22.9	59	16
City of White Rock	23.0	19.0	15.0	57	17
City of Port Coquitlam	25.0	12.6	17.8	55	18
City of New Westminster	20.0	12.8	18.5	51	19
City of Port Moody	24.0	4.0	13.9	42	20



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## Appendix VI: Sources

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*\*Note: information for the City of Richmond and the District of West Vancouver were only provided by email, and could not be found online. As of writing this report, no up to date business license bylaw for the aforementioned municipalities could be located.*