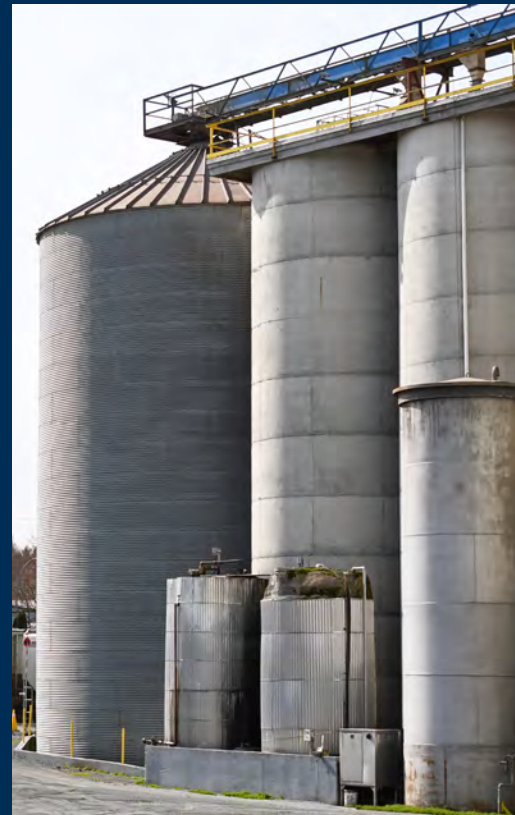


March 2025

# Regional Economic Review

Fraser Valley Regional District



High-Level Overview of the FVRD's Labour Force and Economy

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# 1. Executive Summary

The 2025 Regional Economic Review provides a high-level overview and analysis of the region's economic makeup and labour force trends, evaluating the current characteristics, trends, opportunities, and challenges associated with the economy and employment in the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD).

This work supports the goals, policies, and directives of the FVRD's *Fraser Valley Future 2050* Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) and the FVRD Board's Strategic Plan for 2023-2026.

This report is intended to compliment existing plans, policies, and reports by member municipalities by providing a regional perspective and identifying shared priorities and areas of regional concern.

The region's residents live, work, and play within the ancestral and unceded traditional territories of the Stó:lō, Sts'ailes, Nlaka'pamux, and St'at'imc Peoples. Indigenous Peoples have stewarded these lands and waters since time immemorial, shaping the region's earliest and most current economies. Indigenous governments, businesses, and entrepreneurs are key to this region's economic strength and growth. In recognition of this truth, the FVRD is committed to advancing reconciliation by supporting Indigenous economic development, fostering partnerships, and recognizing the enduring presence, contributions and resilience of Indigenous peoples.





## 1.1. Key Findings

### Labour Force and Employment Trends

Traditionally focused on goods-producing and resource-based industries, the FVRD's labour force is evolving with increasing educational attainment and a growing emphasis on local employment. Insights into sector growth, workforce distribution and emerging opportunities highlight the region's shifting labour force landscape.

- The FVRD's labour force is becoming more educated; however, significant gaps persist between the FVRD's education rates compared to neighbouring Metro Vancouver, the province, and the country as a whole.
- FVRD residents are more likely to work in their own community or elsewhere in the region, than leave the region for work. More than 81% of FVRD residents work in the region, with most working in the community they reside in.
- In the FVRD, the top five sectors by employment are construction, retail trade, health care and social assistance, manufacturing, and transportation and warehousing.
- Between 2016 and 2021, the regional labour force expanded by 14,875 workers, with construction (+3,345) and health care (+3,225) seeing the most significant growth. Manufacturing, although still significant, saw a much smaller increase in jobs (+760).
- The FVRD has a higher concentration of workers in construction, manufacturing, and agriculture compared to Metro Vancouver, which has a greater representation in the professional, scientific, and technical services sector. This reflects greater significance in goods-producing industries in the FVRD compared to service-providing industries in Metro Vancouver.
- Led by larger communities, the Fraser Valley's employment landscape is shifting beyond traditional agricultural and resource sectors, with growing opportunities in manufacturing, aerospace, service and high-tech industries. While smaller communities face challenges due to sector declines, advancements in agri-tech and sustainable resource management offer opportunities for future employment and industry growth.
- Industrial lands, agricultural areas, and institutional employers play key roles in shaping employment distribution across the region

## Business and Industry Growth

The expansion of key industries like construction, health care and manufacturing, along with increasing investment in Indigenous-led developments and agri-food processing, is contributing to a more diverse and resilient regional economy. Insight into industry trends highlight opportunities for continued growth and the region's transition toward a clean economy.

- Agriculture remains a cornerstone of the regional economy, with FVRD farms generating over \$1.9 billion in operating revenues in 2020—representing 40% of B.C.'s total farm revenues.
- Of the 2,358 farms located in the region, an estimated 1,042 generated over \$100,000 in revenues, while 460 generated over \$1 million, with a majority of those located in Abbotsford and Chilliwack.
- Food and beverage processing is the largest manufacturing sector in B.C., employing 40,260 people in 2023 with 64.2% of those jobs located in the Lower Mainland/Southwest B.C. Recent expansions, like Vitalus Nutrition in Abbotsford and Red Bull in Chilliwack highlight this growing sector and the increasing demand for space in the Fraser Valley to support a sustainable and resilient agri-food economy.
- First Nations communities play a significant role in the regional economy, particularly in retail trade, public administration, and resource-based industries.
- Indigenous-led developments on and off reserve lands, such as the Sts'ailes Community Health Care Centre and the Eagle Landing Shopping Centre, highlights considerable investments and employment opportunities from First Nations.
- Small businesses are prominent in the region, with approximately 76% of FVRD businesses employing fewer than 10 workers. However, there are also 500+ businesses in the FVRD with more than 50 employees, which is 159 more than a decade ago, many of which are in health care and manufacturing.
- The FVRD has had a 26% increase in business counts in the last decade, in contrast to Metro Vancouver's 18% and the province's 14% increase. In 2024, there were 13,002 businesses with employees in the FVRD, reflecting an increase of 2,658 since 2014.
- In terms of business counts, the construction sector remains the leading industry, adding 564 businesses over the past decade. Health care and transportation have also expanded significantly, whereas retail trade growth has slowed, and the number of agriculture-related businesses has declined.
- Exports from the FVRD accounted for \$2.2 billion in 2023 with manufacturing representing the largest export sector (\$1.3 billion). Reliance on the U.S. for over 89% of total exports underscores the need for market diversification and stronger domestic supply chains to ensure long-term economic resilience.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Data Sources

To profile the labour force, business enterprises and overall economy, select data was taken from the 2021 Census and other Statistics Canada data as well as provincial data sources, including B.C. Statistics. Data was selected based on its relevance to employment in the region and includes information from all of the FVRD's member municipalities. This data contains information on occupations, business enterprises, education levels, commuting patterns and more. As communities throughout the region adapt to changes in the global landscape, the monitoring and measuring of trends and patterns in the labour force and broader economy can help serve as an indicator of growth and provide valuable insights into the nature and distribution of economic activity across the region.



### 2.2. Challenges and Limitations

Statistics Canada conducts a Census every five years, with the most recent occurring in 2021 and the next scheduled for 2026. The 2021 Census was conducted during a period of significant economic disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, data sourced from the 2021 Census may not accurately reflect the current economic conditions or post-pandemic recovery since.

Data from smaller less populated areas can be subject to data suppression in order to protect privacy, potentially leading to gaps in the data. These areas also tend to have smaller sample sizes which can result in greater variability and less reliable estimates. This limitation is particularly relevant when analyzing data from First Nations communities and the FVRD's Electoral Areas, where population counts are lower, and data availability may be more limited.

Building permit data from B.C. Stats defines commercial buildings as those "used in the trade or distribution of goods and services, including office buildings". As a result, some building permits classified as 'industrial' in municipal records, may be attributed as 'commercial' in B.C. Stats data, affecting the relative permit value totals presented in this document.



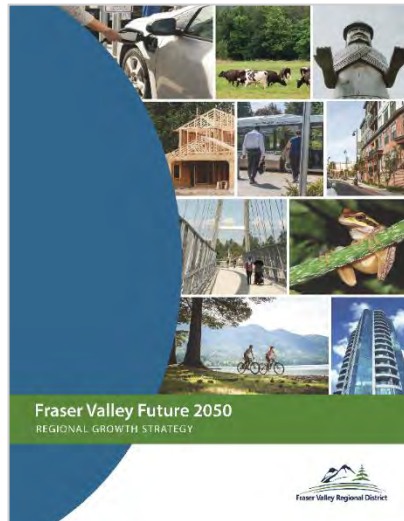
## 2.3. Regional Growth Strategy

A Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is a strategic plan enabled by the Local Government Act, for guiding long-term regional growth through the coordination of activities by local and provincial governments.

The FVRD's [Fraser Valley Future 2050](#) RGS considers a range of topics and issues, all from a regional perspective, and with the goal of creating healthy, sustainable, and complete communities. As a long-range vision with a 20–30-year scope, the RGS aims to ensure the region as a whole is working toward a common future.

The RGS is organized into eight non-hierarchical and highly interconnected sections. Each with an overarching goal, policies, and directives used to guide long-term growth in the region.

Policies and directives under *Goal 2.0 Economic Strength and Resiliency* highlight the importance of understanding and responding to the needs, challenges, and opportunities facing the region's current and future economy.



### RGS Topics & Goals:

1.0 Collaboration

**2.0 Economic Strength & Resiliency**

3.0 Living Well

4.0 Community Building

5.0 Ecosystem Health

6.0 Transportation & Mobility

7.0 Infrastructure & Services

8.0 Climate Change

### 2.0 Economic Strength & Resiliency

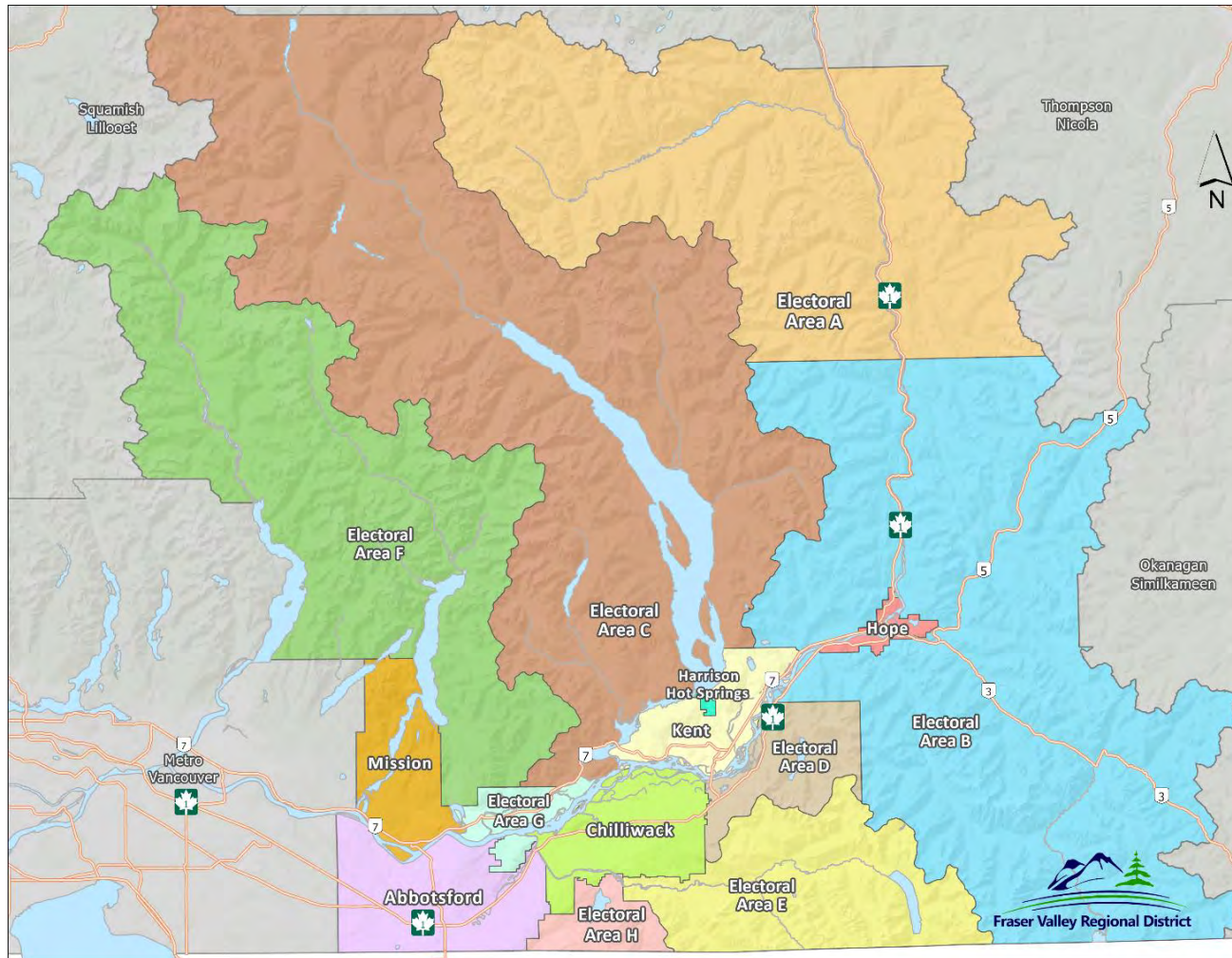
Goal: To realize the region's economic potential by providing opportunities in employment and education that will grow the economy by building on the region's strengths.

- Policy 2.1 Protect and support employment lands.
- Policy 2.3 Create opportunities for employment and education.

### 3. Regional Context

The FVRD is comprised of six member municipalities, the City of Abbotsford, the City of Chilliwack, the City of Mission, the District of Kent, the District of Hope and the Village of Harrison Hot Springs, as well as eight electoral areas. Together they feature a variety of diverse communities ranging from small rural villages to the fifth-largest city in British Columbia.

**Figure 3.1 – Jurisdictions of the FVRD**



The FVRD has a total land area of 13,361 km<sup>2</sup> of which much is Crown Lands or lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

### 3.1. Population Growth

The FVRD is the third most populated and one of the fastest growing regional districts in B.C. With an estimated population of 340,718 in 2021, the FVRD makes up 11% of the Lower Mainland's population. The FVRD has experienced steady population growth over the past few decades with the most rapid period of growth occurring between 1971 and 2001.

By 2050, the FVRD's population is expected to reach over 500,000, with most growth contained within the region's urban areas. This is an increase of approximately 164,000 residents, or 48% of the current population. Most of the FVRD's growth will be limited to the region's six municipalities, with the majority of new residents settling in Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Mission. Significant growth is also expected to take place within First Nations communities, especially those adjacent to urban centres.

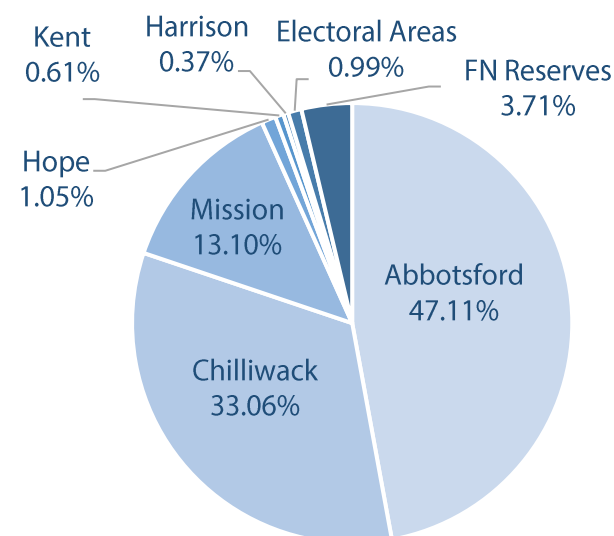


**Table 3.1** - FVRD RGS Population Growth Estimates (2021-2050)\*

Jurisdiction	2021	2030	2040	2050
Abbotsford	165,404	192,171	218,515	242,480
Chilliwack	95,314	110,493	130,781	149,400
Mission	43,354	48,896	55,913	64,793
Hope	6,840	7,628	7,939	8,563
Kent	6,563	6,773	7,013	7,561
Harrison	1,951	2,134	2,357	2,553
EAs	12,136	12,443	13,329	13,749
FN Reserves	9,156	11,309	13,966	15,228
FVRD	340,718	391,847	449,813	504,327

\*High estimates (takes into account estimated census undercount)

**Figure 3.2** - Distribution of FVRD Estimated Population Growth (2021-2050)



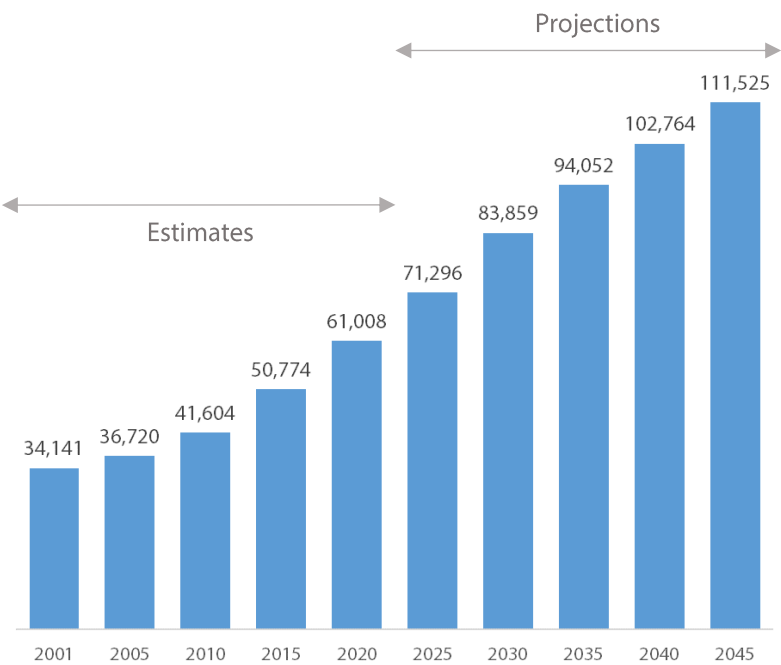


### 3.2. Aging Population and Workforce

While the region’s population is growing, it is also aging, creating increased demand for workers to replace retirees and putting greater pressure on healthcare systems.

In just two decades, an additional 40,000 residents over the age of 65 are expected to reside in the region. In 2045, those 65 years and older are projected to make up nearly 25% of the population, as opposed to an estimated 14% in 2005 and 19% projected in 2025.

**Figure 3.3 – FVRD Population Growth Estimates of Persons Aged 65+**

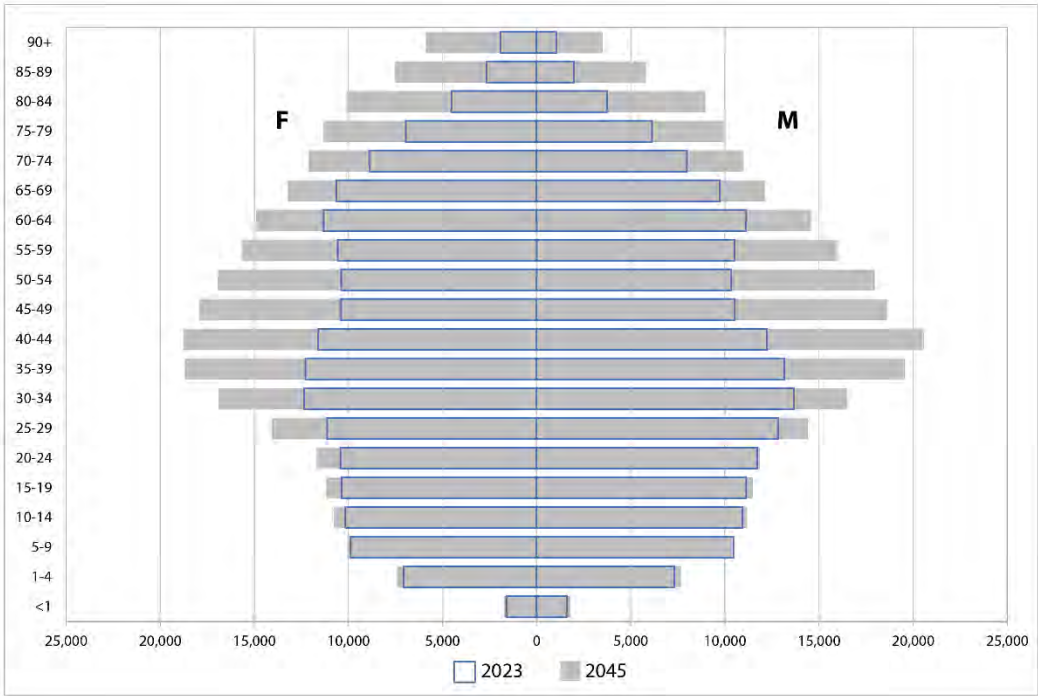


Source: B.C. Stats

Comparably, the share of population under the age of 15 is expected to trend downwards from approximately 20% in 2005 to just over 11% in 2045, likely due to a lower number of births.

While the proportion of the population aged 15-64 (working age) is projected to remain relatively stable, the median age of the overall population is expected to increase, equaling a shift towards older workers (40-64) compared to younger workers (15-39).

**Figure 3.4 – FVRD 2045 Population Estimates by Gender and Age**

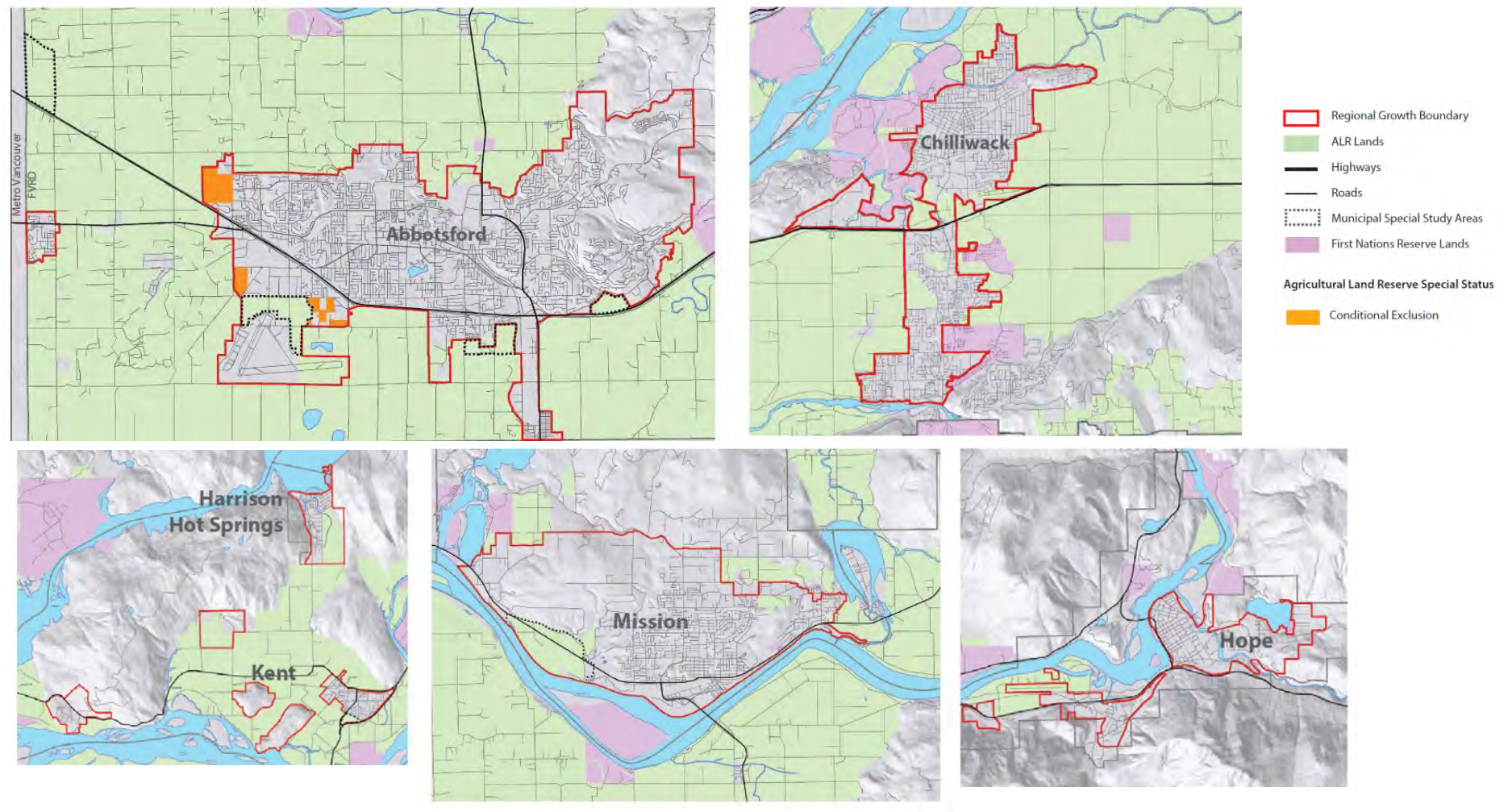


Source: B.C. Stats

### 3.3. Land Use

The region's Regional Growth Boundaries, as defined by the RGS, help to contain population growth within established urban centres, promoting the development of compact and complete communities<sup>1</sup>, which is associated with a variety of social, environmental and economic benefits.

**Figure 3.5 - Regional Growth Boundaries and ALR by Municipality**



<sup>1</sup> B.C. Ministry of Housing – Complete Communities Guide: <https://bit.ly/4bLnC4S>



The FVRD's municipalities continue to face challenges accommodating a growing population while also saving land to meet employment needs. The largest and most populated municipalities of Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Mission experience land use pressures due to physical constraints, including a prevalence of lands within the ALR, difficult topography, and environmentally sensitive areas. These constraints limit the availability of developable industrial land, making it harder to accommodate business expansion and economic growth.

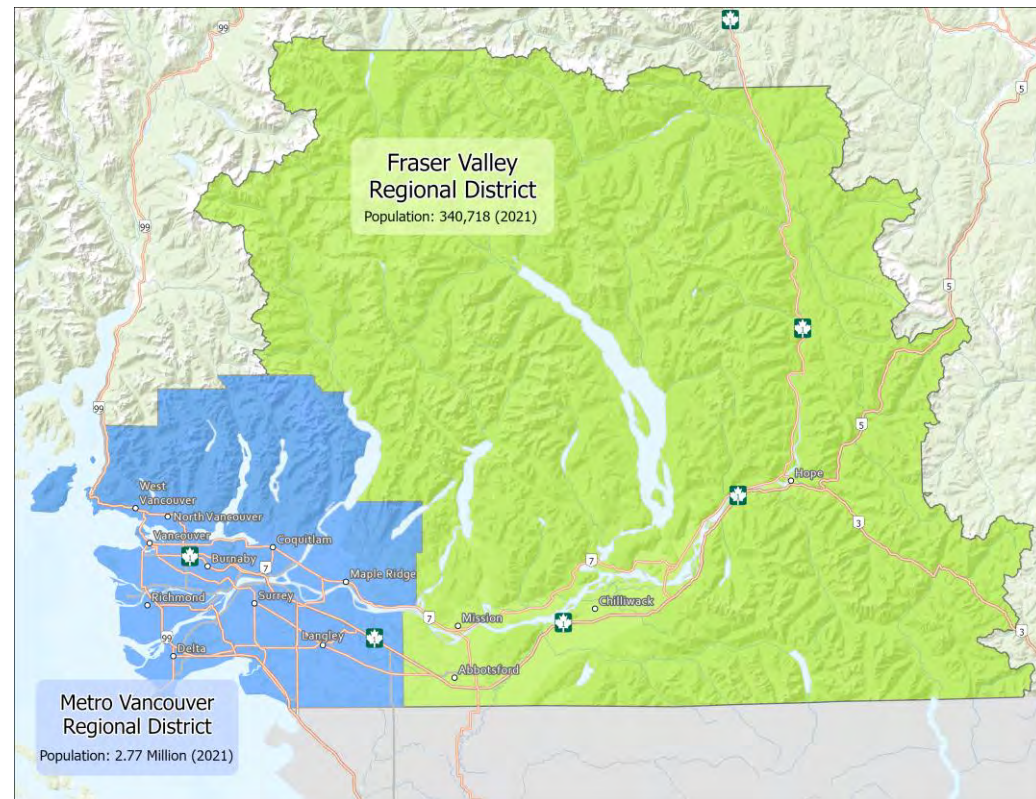
### Impacts of Metro Vancouver's Growth

Continued population growth in the neighbouring Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) is intensifying demand for land in the Fraser Valley, putting pressure on housing, industrial lands, transportation corridors and outdoor recreation. Surging housing prices in Metro Vancouver has contributed to increased migration eastward, further tightening the region's housing supply and driving prices upwards.<sup>2</sup>

The shortage of industrial land in Metro Vancouver is also pushing businesses eastward. Metro Vancouver anticipates that its remaining supply of industrial land will be substantially absorbed by the 2030s, and it is already facing a lack of large, contiguous sites that are viable for larger distribution and manufacturing facilities.<sup>3</sup> As a result, many businesses are relocating elsewhere, including to the Fraser Valley, where industrial land has traditionally been more available and affordable. However, industrial land supply in the Fraser Valley is also shrinking, with industrial parks nearing build-out and further expansion of lands constrained by the ALR and limited by environmental and site-specific challenges.

Despite these growth pressures, the FVRD's proximity to Metro Vancouver provides key economic advantages including access to air, rail and port facilities, as well as a large consumer market. Additionally, a growing regional labour force and demand for industrial and employment space across the Lower Mainland will continue to drive business expansion and investment in the Fraser Valley.

**Figure 3.6** – Geography and Population of Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley Regional District



<sup>2</sup> CMHC Housing Market Insight, March 2021: <https://bit.ly/3TWvOYM>

<sup>3</sup> Metro Vancouver Regional Industrial Lands Strategy, June 2020: <https://bit.ly/4ktoOhm>



### 3.4. Employment Projections

Regional employment is projected to increase steadily over the coming years with an additional 87,000 jobs by 2050. In line with population projection breakdowns, employment is expected to grow most significantly in the FVRD's largest municipalities of Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Mission, with growth projections of 54%, 70% and 68%, respectively.

Canada's workforce is also expected to grow in the coming decades, driven primarily by immigration. A Statistics Canada study found that like population, the size of the country's workforce is directly influenced by immigration. However, since not all immigrants enter the labour force at a young age, their impact on renewal of an aging labour force is limited.

With lower fertility rates and fewer young people joining the workforce to replace those leaving, future growth in the labour force will also depend on the participation rates of older workers. According to Statistics Canada, participation rates of those aged 55 and over has already increased significantly over the past two decades, the continuation of these upward trends could have a significant impact on the size, composition and demographic weight of the labour force, but also on the needs of older workers in terms of employment assistance, labour market flexibility and skills upgrading.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 3.2** – FVRD RGS Employment Growth Estimates (2021-2050)

Jurisdiction	2021	2030	2040	2050
Abbotsford	77,583	86,152	108,376	119,715
Chilliwack	41,193	48,404	60,769	69,989
Mission	18,606	21,506	26,325	31,231
Hope	2,437	2,787	2,829	3,143
Kent	2,853	3,040	3,253	3,600
Harrison	715	783	979	1,083
EAs and FN Reserves*	5,563	6,147	6,586	6,991
FVRD	149,045	168,212	209,076	236,028

*\*High estimates – Employment projections not available for individual electoral areas or Indigenous communities.*



<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada 2024 - Canadian labour force: What will happen once baby boomers retire?: <https://bit.ly/3DpMWkt>

### 3.5. Employment Participation Rate

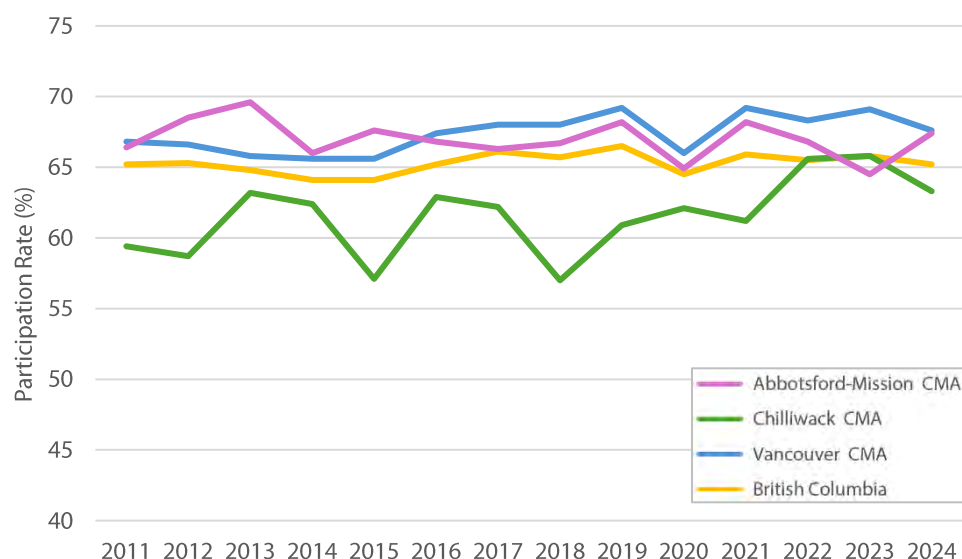
The employment participation rate measures the percentage of the working-age population (aged 15 years and older) who are in the labour force, either actively employed or looking for work. Similar to the unemployment rate, it is an important indicator of the economy. High participation rates, typically in the mid-60s or higher, often indicate a more robust labour force and a regional economy with ample job opportunities.

Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) provides more recent participation rates but only covers the FVRD's Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs). In contrast, the Census of Population, conducted every five years, offers a more detailed view across all FVRD jurisdictions. The most recent 2021 Census showed that the average participation rate across the FVRD's three largest municipalities, Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Mission (64.4%), was 9.7% higher than the average of the FVRD's eight electoral areas (54.7%). Participation rates in rural areas tend to be lower due to a larger share of retirees and fewer available job opportunities

In 2024, the LFS reported a participation rate of 67.4% in Abbotsford-Mission, 2.2% higher than the provincial average and 0.2% lower than Metro Vancouver. Meanwhile, Chilliwack's participation rate was 63.3% in 2024, 1.9% lower than the province and 4.3% lower than Metro Vancouver. In the past year, Abbotsford-Mission's rate increased by 2.9%, while Chilliwack's decreased by 2.5%. While Abbotsford-Mission's rate has fluctuated around 67% since 2011, Chilliwack's has increased significantly from 57.0% in 2018 to a peak of 65.8% in 2023.

It should be noted that while the Abbotsford-Mission CMA covers Abbotsford and Mission, the Chilliwack CMA includes the less urban jurisdictions of Kent, Harrison Hot Springs, and Electoral Areas D, E, and H.

**Figure 3.7 – Employment Participation Rates (%) (2011-2024)**



**Table 3.3 – Employment Participation Rates (%) (2011-2024)**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Abbotsford-Mission CMA</b>	66.4	68.5	69.6	66.0	67.6	66.8	66.3
<b>Chilliwack CMA</b>	59.4	58.7	63.2	62.4	57.1	62.9	62.2
<b>Vancouver CMA</b>	66.8	66.6	65.8	65.6	65.6	67.4	68.0
<b>British Columbia</b>	65.2	65.3	64.8	64.1	64.1	65.2	66.1

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Abbotsford-Mission CMA</b>	66.7	68.2	64.9	68.2	66.8	64.5	67.4
<b>Chilliwack CMA</b>	57.0	60.9	62.1	61.2	65.6	65.8	63.3
<b>Vancouver CMA</b>	68	69.2	66.0	69.2	68.3	69.1	67.6
<b>British Columbia</b>	65.7	66.5	64.5	65.9	65.5	65.8	65.2

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey

### 3.6. Clean Economy

In 2018, the FVRD engaged the Delphi Group to undertake research and analysis to better understand the region's existing capacity and competitive strengths related to the clean economy.

"The "clean economy" is an economy that aims to reduce environmental risks and ecological scarcities, and that aims for sustainable development without degrading the environment."

*FVRD Clean Economy Study, 2018*

The study estimated that the clean economy was responsible for generating \$1.17 billion in direct GDP in 2016 and \$2.45 billion in gross output, employing approximately 11,110 people or 7.4% of the region's workforce in 2016.<sup>5</sup>

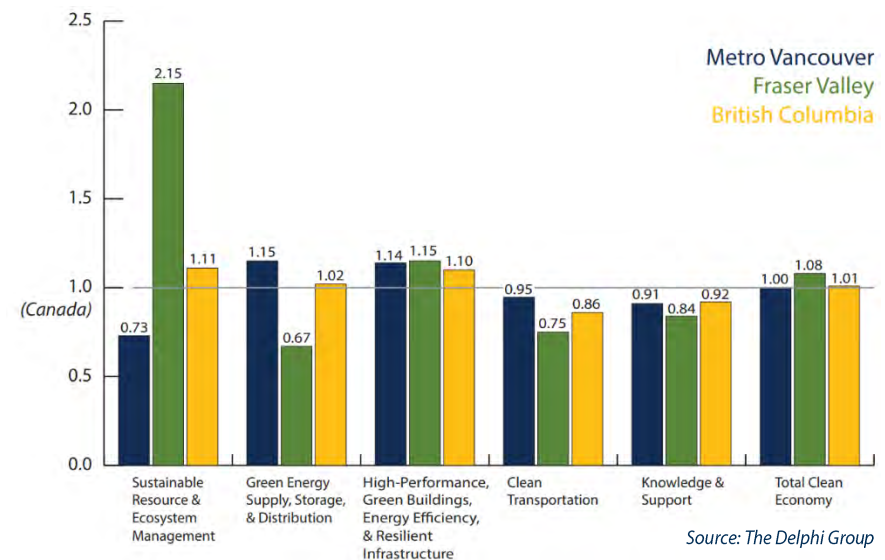
#### The FVRD's Clean Economy Sectors



The study found that the region holds a comparative advantage in the Sustainable Resource and Ecosystem Management sector due to its well-established agriculture operations, which have the potential to increase value-added food processing, waste-to-resource projects and application of precision agriculture technologies.

It was also identified that the Fraser Valley is well-positioned to be active in the Green & High-Performance Buildings sector through leveraging its strengths in local manufacturing and presence of developers experienced in sustainable building construction methods.

**Figure 3.7 – Clean Economy Comparative Advantage by Sector**



These sectors are synergistic. Together, they benefit from the region's existing strengths in research, design, engineering and technical services, construction and manufacturing, and natural asset management. As these sectors continue to expand, they will create opportunities to further build each other up and work towards an integrated economic ecosystem.

<sup>5</sup> FVRD Clean Economy Study – Delphi Group, 2018: <https://bit.ly/3XMud9n>



### 3.7. Housing Supply and Affordability

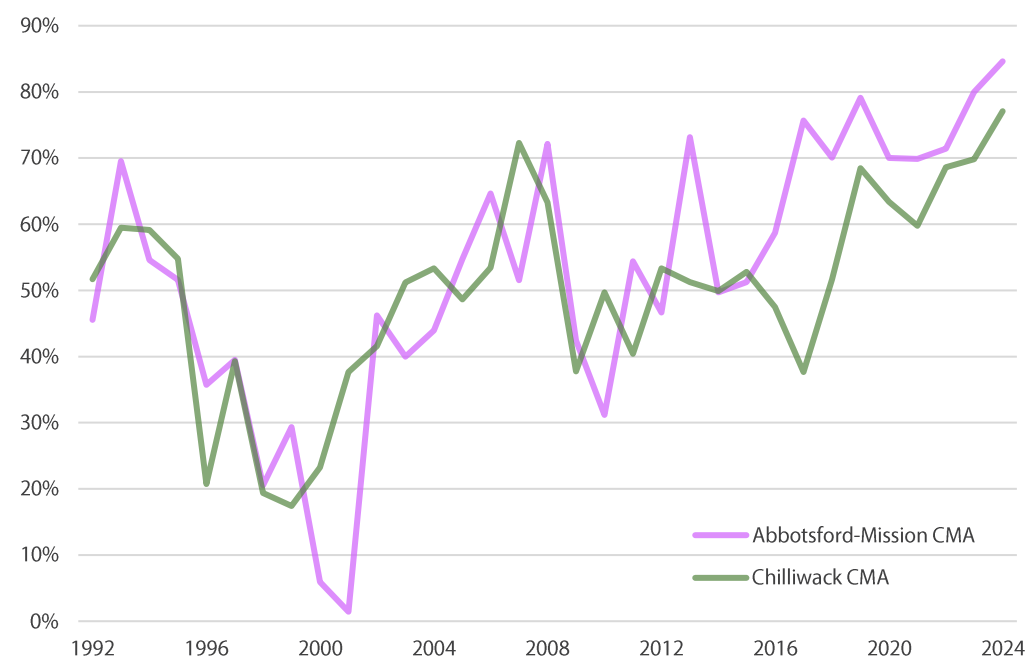
Housing supports the retention and expansion of local economies. As urban centres within the FVRD continue to densify, new housing in the FVRD continues to shift away from single-family developments and towards multi-family housing.

In 2024, 85% of housing starts in the Abbotsford-Mission Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) and 77% of housing starts in the Chilliwack CMA were multi-family units. An increase in semi-detached houses, row houses and apartments contributes to a wider range of affordable housing options.

While the average cost of buying a home in the FVRD is still less than in Metro Vancouver, housing in the Fraser Valley has become much less affordable, with smaller communities and more affordable dwelling types seeing some of the most significant price increases in recent years.

Similarly, average rental housing costs are lower in the FVRD than in Metro Vancouver; but considerable increases in recent years have made rent less affordable, particularly for middle- and lower-income households.

**Figure 3.8 – Multi-Family Housing Starts as a Percentage of Total Starts by CMA (1992-2024)**



Source: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation

**Table 3.4 – 2024 FVRD Housing Prices by Dwelling Type**

	Single Family	1-Year % Change	5-Year % Change	Townhouse	1-Year % Change	5-Year % Change	Apartment	1-Year % Change	5-Year % Change
<b>Abbotsford</b>	\$1,209,234	2.2%	49.1%	\$686,334	4.9%	49.5%	\$453,396	6.3%	46.8%
<b>Mission</b>	\$1,039,989	3.2%	53.9%	\$689,363	2.9%	43.6%	\$441,270	-5.3%	47.6%
<b>Chilliwack</b>	\$890,360	3.7%	51.2%	\$605,764	7.4%	51.5%	\$366,322	7.3%	57.7%
<b>Hope &amp; Area*</b>	\$621,371	10.9%	50.9%	\$483,347	2.9%	63.4%	\$324,500	3.0%	62.3%
<b>Kent*</b>	\$878,215	14.1%	78.1%	\$594,654	17.1%	50.0%	\$213,655	-2.9%	28.2%
<b>Harrison Hot Springs*</b>	\$969,569	9.0%	62.7%	\$682,917	11.9%	66.8%	\$619,691	14.6%	72.3%

Source: Fraser Valley Real Estate Board and Chilliwack and District Real Estate Board

\*Average sales prices for townhouses and apartments in Hope & Area, Kent and Harrison Hot Springs may be skewed due to a lower number of unit sales.

## 3.8. Agriculture

Agriculture forms a significant part of the Fraser Valley's economy. In 2020, farms in the FVRD produced over \$1.9 billion in operating revenues, totaling roughly 40% of B.C.'s total farm revenues. Farms in the FVRD consistently generate the highest operating revenues compared to other regional districts in B.C. Of the 2,358 farms located in the region, an estimated 1,042 generated over \$100,000, while 460 generated over \$1 million, with most of the latter being located in Abbotsford and Chilliwack. Additionally, 46% of farms generating revenues over \$1 million in B.C. were located in the FVRD.

The productivity of agriculture in the Fraser Valley is a factor of the region's unique geography and favourable farming conditions. High-quality soils support a diverse array of crops, while mild winters, warm summers and one of Canada's longest frost-free periods leads to a longer growing season. Additionally, the FVRD's proximity to a large market of an estimated 3.3 million people in the Lower Mainland in 2023, as well as access to air, rail and port facilities, provides farmers with a competitive advantage in both domestic and global markets.

**Table 3.5 – Comparison of Farm Totals and Revenues (2020)**

*Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census of Agriculture*

Jurisdiction*	Total # of Farms	% of Total B.C. Farms	Total Operating Revenue	% of Total B.C. Revenue	Avg. Farm Revenue/Farm**
B.C.	15,841	100%	\$4,795,494,785	100%	\$323,452
MVRD	2,118	13.4%	\$1,312,244,930	27%	\$678,163
FVRD	2,358	14.8%	\$1,939,199,141	40%	\$872,334
Abbotsford	1,254	7.9%	\$1,082,808,853	22.6%	\$904,602
Chilliwack, Electoral Areas E and H	721	4.6%	\$684,417,543	14.3%	\$1,012,451
Electoral Area G	78	0.5%	\$66,106,116	1.4%	\$881,415
Kent, Harrison Hot Springs and Electoral Area D	115	0.7%	\$63,046,042	1.3%	\$594,774
Mission and Electoral Area F	156	1.0%	\$39,194,407	0.8%	\$284,017
Hope, Electoral Areas A, B and C	34	0.2%	\$3,626,180	0.1%	\$116,974

\*The Census of Agriculture reports data by Census Consolidated Subdivision, with FVRD jurisdictions being grouped together according to these subdivisions.

\*\*Based on the number of farms reporting revenue, which differs from the total number of farms presented in the second column.

**Table 3.6 - Agricultural Production in the FVRD (2021)\***

Livestock	# of Animals in the FVRD	% of B.C. Total
Cows, beef	2,575	1%
Cows, dairy	49,159	61%
Sheep	2,509	5%
Pigs	66,965	75%
Horses and ponies	873	5%
Goats	6,009	35%
Total hens and chickens	15,329,188	67%
Laying hens 19 weeks +	2,580,460	76%
Broilers, roasters and Cornish	10,636,530	63%
Turkeys	350,544	48%
Ducks	114,824	93%
Honeybee Colonies	14,113	28%

Egg Production	# of Eggs produced in the FVRD (dozens)	% of B.C. Total
Table Eggs	72,417,743	76%
Hatching Eggs	9,340,889	84%

Crops	FVRD Area (Ha)	% of B.C. Total
Total Hay Crops	10,784	7%
Total Field Crops	27,367	5%
Wheat	1,981	8%
Corn	10,639	54%
Rye	347	30%
Total Fruits, Berries & Nuts	6,475	23%
Strawberries	66	28%
Raspberries	744	87%
Blueberries	5,163	47%
Total Vegetables	1,844	30%
Sweet Corn	666	62%
Broccoli	184	69%
Brussels Sprouts	224	85%
Carrots	45	14%
Peppers	20	14%
Cauliflower	42	47%

Other	FVRD Area	% of B.C. Total
Nursery Products	868 ha	37%
Sod	409 ha	62%
Mushrooms Total Area	119,496 m <sup>2</sup>	37%
Greenhouse Total Area	1,952,741 m <sup>2</sup>	33%
Greenhouse Vegetable Area	1,045,118 m <sup>2</sup>	30%
Greenhouse Flower Area	805,097 m <sup>2</sup>	46%

\*Only select categories listed. Totals do not represent a sum of listed parts.

Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census of Agriculture

An inventory of the number of livestock from the 2021 Census of Agriculture noted that the FVRD is home to over 61% of B.C.'s total population of dairy cows, 75% of its pigs and 67% of its total hens and chickens. It noted that the FVRD was responsible for 76% of the province's table egg production by number and 84% of its hatching egg production.

In crop growing areas, the FVRD represented only 7% of total hay crops and 5% of total field crops, but had 23% of the total fruit, berries & nuts and 30% of the total vegetable growing area.

The Fraser Valley represented 87% of the province's raspberry growing area and 47% of its blueberry growing area. It also amounted to 54% of the total corn growing area, including 62% of its sweet corn.

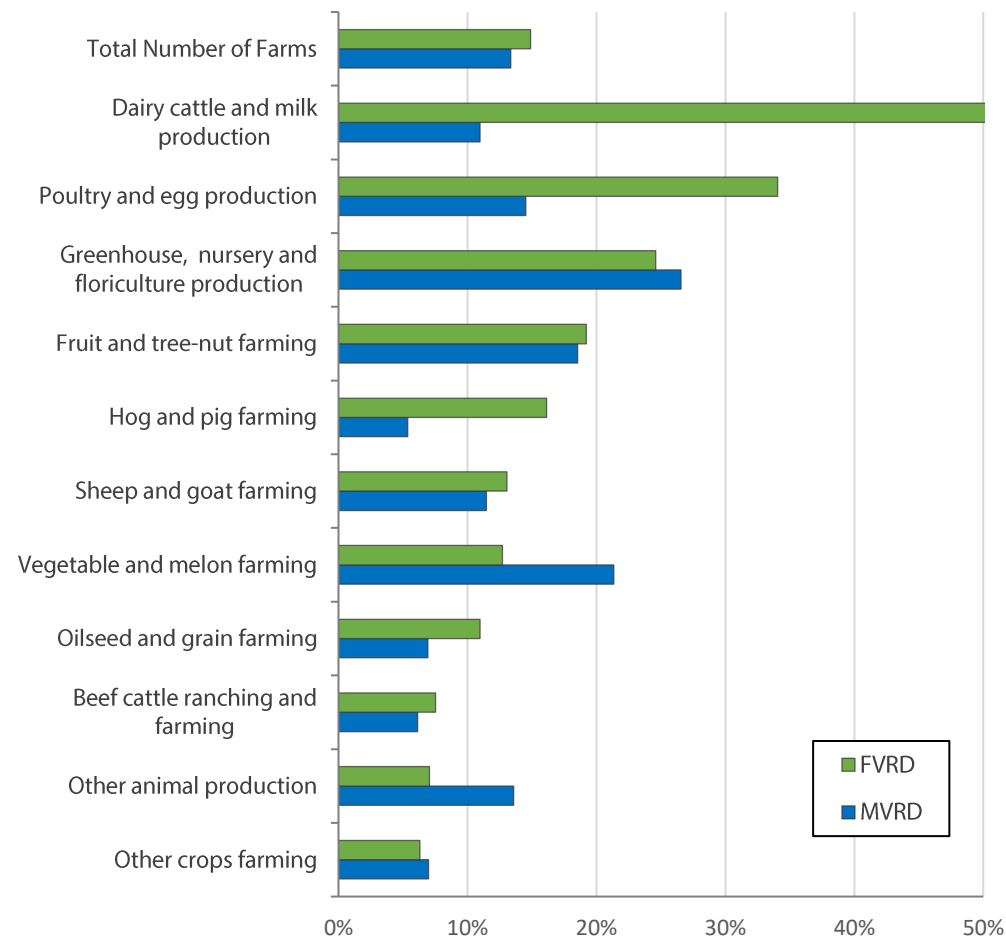
Other agricultural products included 62% of the province's sod, 37% of its mushrooms, and 33% of the total greenhouse growing area which included 46% of the province's total greenhouse flower area.



**Table 3.7** – Comparison – Number of farms per Industry Group (2021)

Industry Group	B.C. (#)	FVRD (#)	% of B.C. Total	MVRD (#)	% of B.C. Total
Total Number of Farms	15,841	2,358	15%	2,118	13%
Dairy cattle and milk production	492	247	50%	54	11%
Poultry and egg production	1,266	431	34%	184	15%
Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production	1,167	287	25%	310	27%
Fruit and tree-nut farming	3,036	583	19%	563	19%
Hog and pig farming	93	15	16%	5	5%
Sheep and goat farming	636	83	13%	73	11%
Vegetable and melon farming	1,077	137	13%	230	21%
Oilseed and grain farming	419	46	11%	29	7%
Beef cattle ranching and farming	2,284	172	8%	140	6%
Other animal production	2,350	166	7%	319	14%
Other crops farming	3,021	191	6%	211	7%

Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census of Agriculture

**Figure 3.9** – Number of Farms per Industry Group as a Percentage of B.C. Total (2021)

Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census of Agriculture

A comparison of the number of farms per industry group between the FVRD and MVRD reveals the Fraser Valley's strengths in agriculture. Despite only having 240 more farms than Metro Vancouver and 15% of B.C.'s total number of farms, the FVRD is home to 50% of the province's dairy cattle and milk production farms and 34% of its poultry and egg production farms. Both the MVRD and FVRD lead the province in greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production, while vegetable and melon farming take on a larger role in the MVRD.

## The Agricultural and Food Processing Economy in B.C.

Agriculture and food processing are deeply interconnected industries that play a key role in B.C.'s and the FVRD's economy, contributing to both jobs and economic growth.

Primary agriculture, which focuses on the production and sale of crops and livestock, generated \$4.9 billion in sales in 2023, contributing \$2.0 billion to provincial GDP, and employed 35,805 people across B.C.<sup>6</sup> The top agricultural exports in 2022 were mushrooms, blueberries, floriculture, cherries and pork, with total export values reaching \$1.2 billion.

Food and beverage processing transforms these raw materials into value-added goods for domestic consumption and export. In B.C., the food and beverage sector employed 40,260 people in 2023 making it the largest manufacturing sector in B.C. in terms of employment, with about 64.2% of those jobs located in the Lower Mainland/Southwest region.<sup>7</sup> It generated \$13.2 billion in goods revenue and \$3.2 billion in GDP.<sup>6</sup>

In 2022, B.C.'s combined agriculture, seafood and food and beverage sectors exported \$6.16 billion worth of goods to 143 countries, representing 9.5% of provincial exports. The U.S. accounted for 81.3% of these exports, totaling approximately \$5 billion.<sup>6</sup> B.C.'s other top export markets included China, Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong.

## The Need for Industrial Land to Support Growth

While agriculture relies on farmland for crop and livestock production, food and beverage processing depends on industrial land for facilities that handle processing, packaging, storage, and distribution of goods. Without sufficient industrial space, the region's ability to support an agri-food economy could be constrained. As the food processing sector grows, securing land for these developments will be crucial to maintain a strong and integrated agri-food system that meets the needs of both local and

global markets. Recent large-scale food manufacturing projects, such as the expansion of the Vitalus Nutrition facility in Abbotsford and the addition of Red Bull into Chilliwack's Food and Beverage Processing Park, highlight the demand for space in the Fraser Valley to accommodate this growth.

Investments in food processing not only strengthen local supply chains and improve food security but also advance the region's clean economy. Processing more agricultural goods locally helps reduce transportation emissions, strengthens circular economic networks and promotes innovative, low-emission technologies. The FVRD is uniquely positioned to expand its clean economy due to its strong agricultural base, proximity to large markets and access to clean hydroelectric power.

As demand for sustainable food systems grows, the region's expanding food processing sector can play a pivotal role in advancing clean economy goals while improving economic resilience by creating long-term economic and employment opportunities.



Province of British Columbia: <https://bit.ly/4hIYpcZ>

<sup>6</sup> B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food– Sector Snapshots 2022 & 2023: <https://bit.ly/4bLDxiE>

<sup>7</sup> B.C. Stats– Labour Market Statistics, Employment by Detailed Industry: <https://bit.ly/3Fnp4OR>

### Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) in the FVRD

Protecting agricultural land and the productivity that such lands represent is essential, for not only maintaining, but growing the Fraser Valley's agricultural economy.

The ALR was established with the purpose of protecting B.C.'s agricultural land base, playing a critical role in growth management across the region.

In the FVRD, the ALR has shaped development, concentrating growth into increasingly dense urban cores surrounded by active, highly productive and economically important agricultural lands.

There is an estimated 71,458 ha of land in the ALR within the FVRD, making up only 5.1% of the region's land base. However, the actual amount of land being farmed is smaller. When the last inventory was conducted by the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture in 2011, they identified that about 67% of the effective ALR in the FVRD was farmed, 9% was associated with waterbodies, buildings, roads and landscaping and 24% was either in a natural or semi-natural state.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 3.8 – ALR Totals in the FVRD**

Jurisdiction	ALR Area (ha)	% of Total FVRD ALR	% of Total Jurisdiction Area
<b>Municipalities</b>			
Abbotsford	27,235	38.1%	69.9%
Chilliwack	16,964	23.7%	58.0%
Mission	1,503	2.1%	5.7%
Hope	354	0.5%	7.6%
Kent	6,518	9.1%	29.5%
Harrison Hot Springs	135	0.2%	19.5%
<b>Electoral Areas</b>			
Electoral Area A	686	1.0%	0.3%
Electoral Area B	5,739	8.0%	1.8%
Electoral Area C	1,170	1.6%	0.3%
Electoral Area D	806	1.1%	3.4%
Electoral Area E	1,220	1.7%	1.9%
Electoral Area F	2,219	3.1%	1.0%
Electoral Area G	5,195	7.3%	44.8%
Electoral Area H	1,714	2.4%	14.1%
<b>FVRD Total</b>	<b>71,458</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>

Source: Agricultural Land Commission spatial data – Jan 2025



<sup>8</sup> FVRD Agricultural Land Use Inventory 2011 – 2013: <https://bit.ly/3DrXIXo>



### 3.9. First Nations

The lands and waters within the area we identify as the FVRD have been home to Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial. The Nlaka'pamux, St'at'imc, Stó:lō, and Sts'ailes Peoples, each with their own distinct history, traditions, and culture, hold inherent rights and title to this land, as affirmed by Section 35 of the Constitution Act.

The FVRD's jurisdictional boundaries exist within an intricate and overlapping network of territorial boundaries, interest areas, reserve lands, and administrative precincts. This includes 31 First Nations with reserves in the region and more than 55 communities with interests across the region<sup>9</sup>.

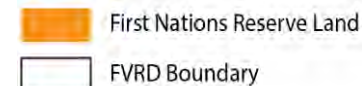
The following First Nations are located within the FVRD:

Āthelets (Aitchelitz First Nation)	Sq'ewá:lxw (Skawahlook First Nation)
Boothroyd Indian Band	Skwah First Nation
Boston Bar First Nation	Shxwhá:y Village
Chawathil First Nation	Shxw'ōwhámél First Nation
Xwchíyò:m (Cheam First Nation)	Sq'ewqéyl (Skowkale First Nation)
Kwantlen First Nation	Th'ewá:li (Soowahlie First Nation)
Kwaw-kwaw-Apilt First Nation	Spuzzum First Nation
Leq'á:mel First Nation	Sxwoyehálá (Squiala First Nation)
Máthekewi (Matsqui First Nation)	Sts'ailes
Peters First Nation	Semá:th (Sumas First Nation)
Popkum First Nation	Ch'iyagtel (Tzeachten First Nation)
Samahquam	Union Bar First Nation
Sq'éwlets (Scowlitz First Nation)	Xa'xtsa Nation (Douglas First Nation)
Seabird Island Band	Yeqwyeqwí:ws (Yakweakwioose First Nation)
Skatin Nations	Yale First Nation

**Figure 3.10 – Map of Indigenous Reserve Lands that overlap with FVRD boundaries**



#### Jurisdictional Boundaries



Note: The FVRD is located within the cultural regions of the Stó:lō, Sts'ailes, Nlaka'pamux, and St'at'imc Peoples. This map does not reflect the extensive traditional territories of the Indigenous communities in which the FVRD is located.

<sup>9</sup> First Peoples' Language Map of B.C., 2022: <https://maps.fpcc.ca>

## Economic Contributions

First Nations Peoples contribute to the economy through direct employment and spending by First Nations governments, businesses, and households. These contributions extend beyond their own communities, with positive impacts to regional, provincial, and national economies.

Indigenous-owned businesses are also significant contributors to the provincial economy. In the fourth quarter of 2024, 6,634 private-sector businesses in B.C. had majority Indigenous ownership, representing 4.1% of all private-sector businesses in the province.<sup>10</sup>

In the FVRD, substantial development on First Nations reserve lands further increases this economic impact. Residential, mixed-used, industrial, and commercial developments on First Nations reserve lands provide much-needed housing, business, and employment opportunities, as well as essential community amenities such as sports fields and health care facilities.

In addition to developing reserve lands, several First Nations in the region are acquiring nearby non-reserve lands for economic development, further driving economic growth.

First Nations communities and businesses play a key role in the region's economic growth and workforce. In December 2024, there were 181 businesses with employees located on First Nations reserve lands<sup>11</sup>, which the 2021 Census estimated to support 1,610 jobs<sup>12</sup>.



There are **181 employers** and **1,610 jobs** located on First Nations reserve lands within the FVRD.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, last quarter of 2024

<sup>11</sup> Statistics Canada Business Register - December 2024

## Development

First Nations are not only strengthening their own communities and economies but also making significant contributions to the broader social and economic fabric of the Fraser Valley.

Development on First Nations land has the potential to improve the health and well-being of surrounding communities, and the region as a whole, highlighting the broader benefits of reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination.

**Figure 3.11** – Skowkale, Aitchelitz, Yakwekwioose (S.A.Y.) Lands Office and Administration Building



<sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada 2021 Census



## Residential

As urban centres within the FVRD densify, First Nations are uniquely positioned to lead development that meets the broader needs of the region, particularly in relation to housing supply.

Housing is an important aspect of a strong economy. In the Chilliwack CMA, there were approximately 965 housing completions on First Nations reserve land over the last five years, accounting for more than 20% of total housing completions.<sup>13</sup>

These developments are helping to address the housing supply and affordability challenges by providing both market and non-market housing across a range of housing types.

**Figure 3.12** - Skynest, Ch'íyáqtel (Tzeachten) First Nation



Credit: Andmark Properties, 2025

## Commercial and Industrial

First Nations are helping to meet the growing demand for commercial and industrial space, strengthening the broader economy in the process.

As available land for economic development becomes increasingly scarce in the FVRD and neighbouring Metro Vancouver, First Nations are leveraging their lands for new industrial parks, business districts, and commercial hubs.

These developments not only attract investment and create jobs but also support the needs of existing businesses and industries, which are vital to the regional economy.

Increases to commercial and industrial lands on First Nations reserve lands has the potential to further diversify the region's economy and helps to ensure businesses remain in the region, particularly businesses undergoing expansion.

**Figure 3.13** - Kilgard Business Park, Semá:th (Sumas) First Nation



Credit: RockWest Mechanical, 2022

<sup>13</sup> Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation – Starts and Completions Survey

## 4. Regional Labour Force

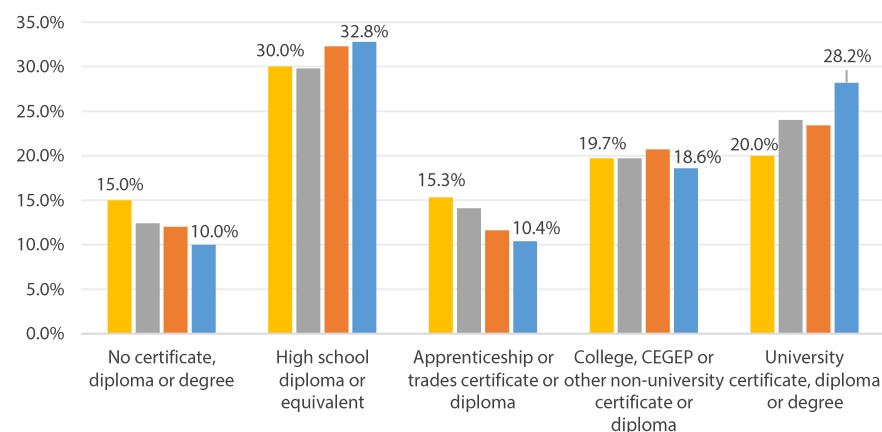
### 4.1. Education

With technological advances occurring in industry sectors across the economy, higher education is rapidly becoming a necessity for employment. According to WorkBC, 76% of the approximately 1.1 million expected job openings between 2024 and 2034 will require some form of post-secondary education or training, or management/supervisory experience<sup>14</sup>.

Between 2006 and 2021, the FVRD's labour force has become increasingly more educated. The share of those without a high school diploma decreased by 5.0%, while the share of those with a university certificate, diploma or degree increased 8.2%. However, there has been a decrease in the percentage of workers whose highest credential is an apprenticeship or trades certificate/diploma. While this may indicate a regional shift away from goods-producing jobs in industries like construction, it does not necessarily mean fewer workers are entering the trades. Some workers may now hold additional post-secondary credentials while remaining in trade-related fields.

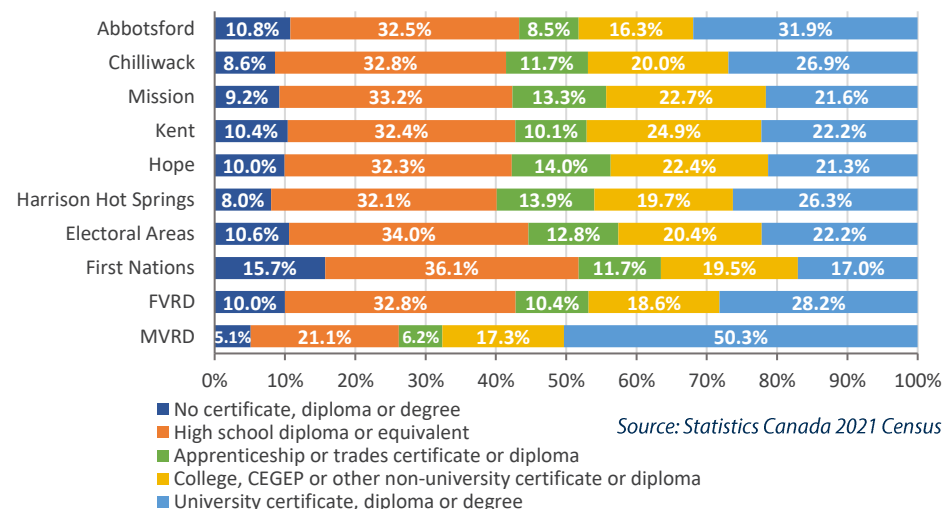
While most of the FVRD's communities are in line with the regional average there is some variation. For instance, Abbotsford has the highest percentage of its labour force with university level credentials but also has the highest share of those with no certificate, diploma or degree. Additionally, since 2006 the share of those with college or university level education in First Nations communities has increased over 12.4% while those without a high school diploma has decreased 10.1%.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 4.1 – Highest Educational Attainment of the Labour Force Aged 25-64 in the FVRD (2006-2021)**



Source: 2011 National Household Survey & Statistics Canada 2021, 2016 & 2006 Census

**Figure 4.2 – Highest Educational Attainment of the Labour Force Aged 25-64 per Jurisdiction (2021)**



Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

<sup>14</sup> B.C. Labour Market Outlook – WorkBC, 2024: <https://bit.ly/41NIPXg>

<sup>15</sup> Statistics Canada 2021 & 2006 Census



**Table 4.1** – Comparison of the Highest Educational Attainment of the Labour Force Aged 25-64 across Jurisdictions (2006-2021)

	2006				2021				% Change (2006 to 2021)			
	FVRD	MVRD	B.C.	Canada	FVRD	MVRD	B.C.	Canada	FVRD	MVRD	B.C.	Canada
No certificate, diploma or degree	14.9%	8.2%	9.9%	11.7%	10.0%	5.1%	6.2%	7.4%	-5.0%	-3.1%	-3.6%	-4.3%
High school certificate or equivalent	30.0%	23.0%	25.3%	23.1%	32.8%	21.1%	24.1%	21.3%	+2.8%	-1.9%	-1.2%	-1.8%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	15.3%	9.7%	11.9%	12.5%	10.4%	6.2%	8.5%	10.1%	-5.0%	-3.5%	-3.5%	-2.5%
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	19.7%	19.6%	20.5%	22.1%	18.7%	17.3%	19.2%	22.2%	-1.1%	-2.3%	-1.3%	+0.1%
University certificate, diploma or degree	20.0%	39.5%	32.4%	30.6%	28.2%	50.3%	42.0%	39.1%	+8.2%	+10.8%	+9.6%	+8.5%
<b>Totals</b>												
High school or below	45.0%	31.2%	35.1%	34.8%	42.8%	26.2%	30.3%	28.7%	-2.2%	-5.0%	-4.8%	-6.1%
Some post-secondary or apprenticeship/trades certificate	55.0%	68.8%	64.9%	65.2%	57.2%	73.8%	69.7%	71.3%	+2.2%	+5.0%	+4.8%	+6.1%

Although post-secondary attainment in the FVRD has increased, it has done so at a slower rate than Metro Vancouver, the province and the country as a whole. Despite this, the percentage of the FVRD's labour force without any formal education has declined at faster rates than other jurisdictions.

In Metro Vancouver 73.8% of the labour force has some level of post-secondary education, compared to 57.2% in the FVRD. This gap reflects the economic structure of each regional district as service-based industries such as finance, technology and professional services are more predominant in Metro Vancouver, while the FVRD's economic base is anchored in goods-producing sectors like construction, agriculture, and manufacturing. However, service industries in the FVRD are growing and as businesses adopt more automation, clean technology, and advanced manufacturing processes, the demand for specialized skills is expected to grow. While university degrees play a role, trades certifications, technical diplomas and applied training will remain key in supporting economic growth and the region's transition towards a clean economy.

## 4.2. Place of Work

### Working in the Region

The percentages presented in table 4.2 challenge the perception that the FVRD is merely a bedroom community for Metro Vancouver. In fact, a majority of FVRD residents work within the region. In 2021, 65% of FVRD residents aged 15 years and over who were employed reported working within the same Census Subdivision (CSD) where they lived, while 81% stayed within the FVRD or the same Census Division (CD) for work.

Among the municipalities, Mission has the lowest percentage of residents working in the FVRD at 67%, while Chilliwack, Hope and Kent each see around 90% of their residents staying within the FVRD for work.

### Working from Home

At the time of the 2021 Census, roughly 14.2% of employed FVRD residents worked from home. Nationally, Statistics Canada has since reported a decline in the share of the employed population working mostly from home, from 24.3% in May 2021 to 18.7% in May 2024.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, a minor decrease in the percentages in table 4.2 could be expected.

Higher percentages of residents staying within their home CSDs for work, such as in Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Hope, suggest that these areas host jobs that serve surrounding communities. In contrast, lower percentages, such as 25% and 20% in Electoral Areas D and E respectively, indicate that many residents are likely commuting to urban centres like Chilliwack for employment. Electoral Area A, which is located at a greater distance from adjacent communities, is an exception.

Expanding the FVRD's clean economy will provide more opportunities for residents to work closer to home, not only reducing emissions but building economic self-sufficiency by supporting local employment.

**Table 4.2 – Geography of Work for FVRD Residents (2021)\***

Census Subdivision (CSD)	% Staying within CSD of Residence	% Staying within the FVRD (CD of Residence)
<b>Municipalities</b>		
Abbotsford	70%	77%
Chilliwack	72%	91%
Mission	47%	67%
Hope	75%	91%
Kent	53%	92%
Harrison Hot Springs	43%	90%
<b>Electoral Areas</b>		
Electoral Area A	73%	86%
Electoral Area B	33%	80%
Electoral Area C	37%	78%
Electoral Area D	25%	93%
Electoral Area E	20%	92%
Electoral Area F	32%	76%
Electoral Area G	44%	82%
Electoral Area H	38%	87%
<b>FVRD Total</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>81%</b>

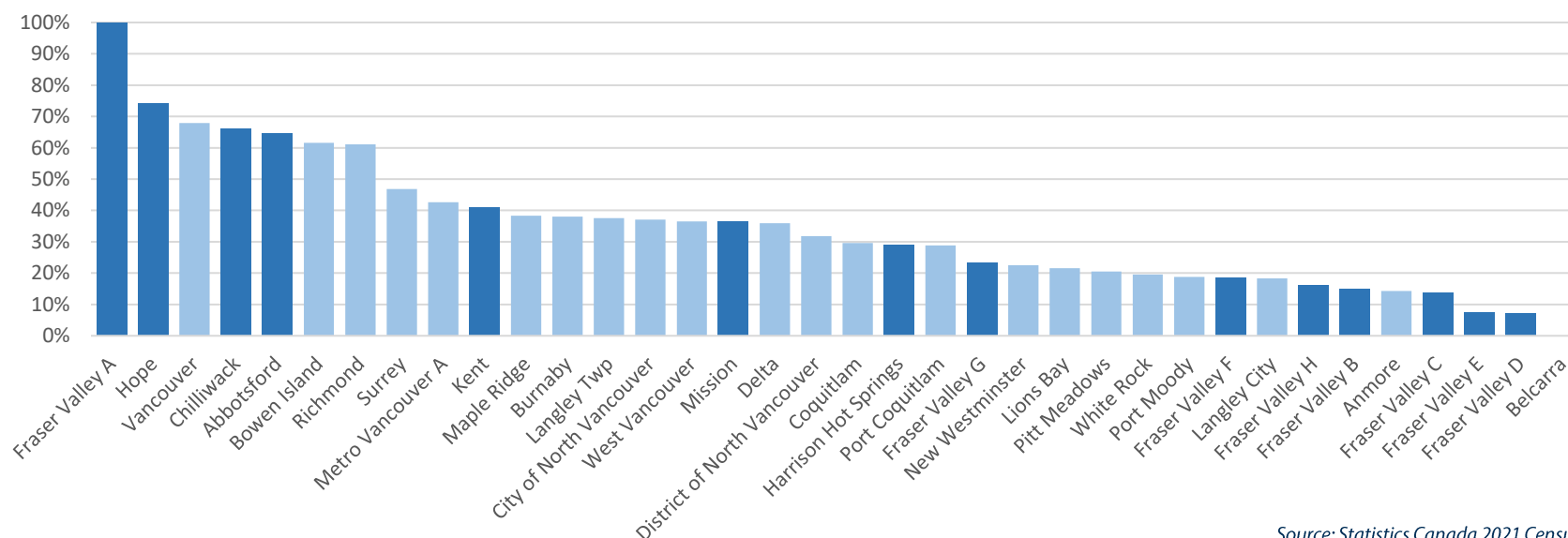
*Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census*

\*Percentages are based on employed individuals who commuted to a usual place of work and those who worked from home. This data excludes persons who reported a workplace with 'no fixed address'.

<sup>16</sup> Statistics Canada, The Daily – More Canadians commuting in 2024: <https://bit.ly/3R4oDvm>

## 4.3. Commuter Flow

**Figure 4.3 – Percentage of MVRD and FVRD Commuters Staying Within Their Home Jurisdiction (2021)**



Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

\*Percentages are based on employed individuals who commuted to a usual place of work.

Figure 4.3 illustrates the share of work commutes that begin and end in the same jurisdiction based on trips from a place of residence to a usual place of work. Unlike data presented on the previous page, these percentages exclude those working from home and focus solely on commuting patterns within the Lower Mainland, encompassing the FVRD and Metro Vancouver.

The data shows that the FVRD's largest municipalities, Abbotsford and Chilliwack, have a relatively high percentage of internal commutes, with 65% and 66% of commutes starting and ending within their own boundaries respectively. At the highest end, the FVRD's Electoral Area A recorded 100% of commuter trips staying in that area, while Hope saw roughly 74% of commutes start and end within its boundaries. This pattern is likely a reflection of their respective geographic isolation away from larger population centres, which limits cross-jurisdiction commuting.

In contrast, Mission and several of the FVRD's smaller electoral areas show much lower percentages of internal commutes. For instance, Electoral Areas C, D and E report internal commute shares of 14% or lower, illustrating their reliance on employment opportunities located outside of their own jurisdictions.

**Table 4.3** – Commuter Flow based on Place of Residence to Place of Work (2021)\*

Municipality	Internal Commutes	External Commutes	Top 3 Commute Destinations (From Municipality to Destination)	Top 3 Commute Origins (From Origin to Municipality)
Abbotsford	31,685 (65%)	17,395 (35%)	1. Township of Langley (5,650) 2. Surrey (3,160) 3. Chilliwack (1,935)	1. Chilliwack (3,915) 2. Mission (2,850) 3. Township of Langley (2,570)
Chilliwack	19,060 (66%)	9,730 (34%)	1. Abbotsford (3,915) 2. Surrey (875) 3. Township of Langley (870)	1. Abbotsford (1,935) 2. Kent (490) 3. Fraser Valley D (375)
Mission	4,695 (36%)	8,190 (64%)	1. Abbotsford (2,850) 2. Maple Ridge (1,120) 3. Township of Langley (900)	1. Abbotsford (1,860) 2. Maple Ridge (485) 3. Chilliwack (285)
Kent	655 (41%)	940 (59%)	1. Chilliwack (490) 2. Abbotsford (110) 3. Hope (65)	1. Chilliwack (725) 2. Abbotsford (110) 3. Harrison Hot Springs (95)
Harrison Hot Springs	120 (29%)	295 (71%)	1. Kent (95) 2. Chilliwack (85) 3. Abbotsford (25), Hope (25)	1. Chilliwack (120) 2. Kent (60) 3. Mission (10)
Hope	1,150 (74%)	400 (26%)	1. Chilliwack (165) 2. Kent (60) 3. Surrey (55)	1. Chilliwack (275) 2. Kent (65) 3. Fraser Valley B (60)

Table 4.3 provides insight into commutes starting and ending within the FVRD's six municipalities, illustrating the interdependence of neighbouring communities on each other for employment.

For instance, the Township of Langley was the top external commute destination for residents of Abbotsford, while the Township of Langley represented the third highest number of commuters travelling into Abbotsford, behind Mission and Chilliwack.

For residents of Chilliwack, Abbotsford was the top external commute destination, while the highest number of commuters to Chilliwack came from Abbotsford. In Mission, the top one and two external commute destinations and origins belong to Abbotsford and Maple Ridge respectively, while for Kent, those were Chilliwack and Abbotsford.

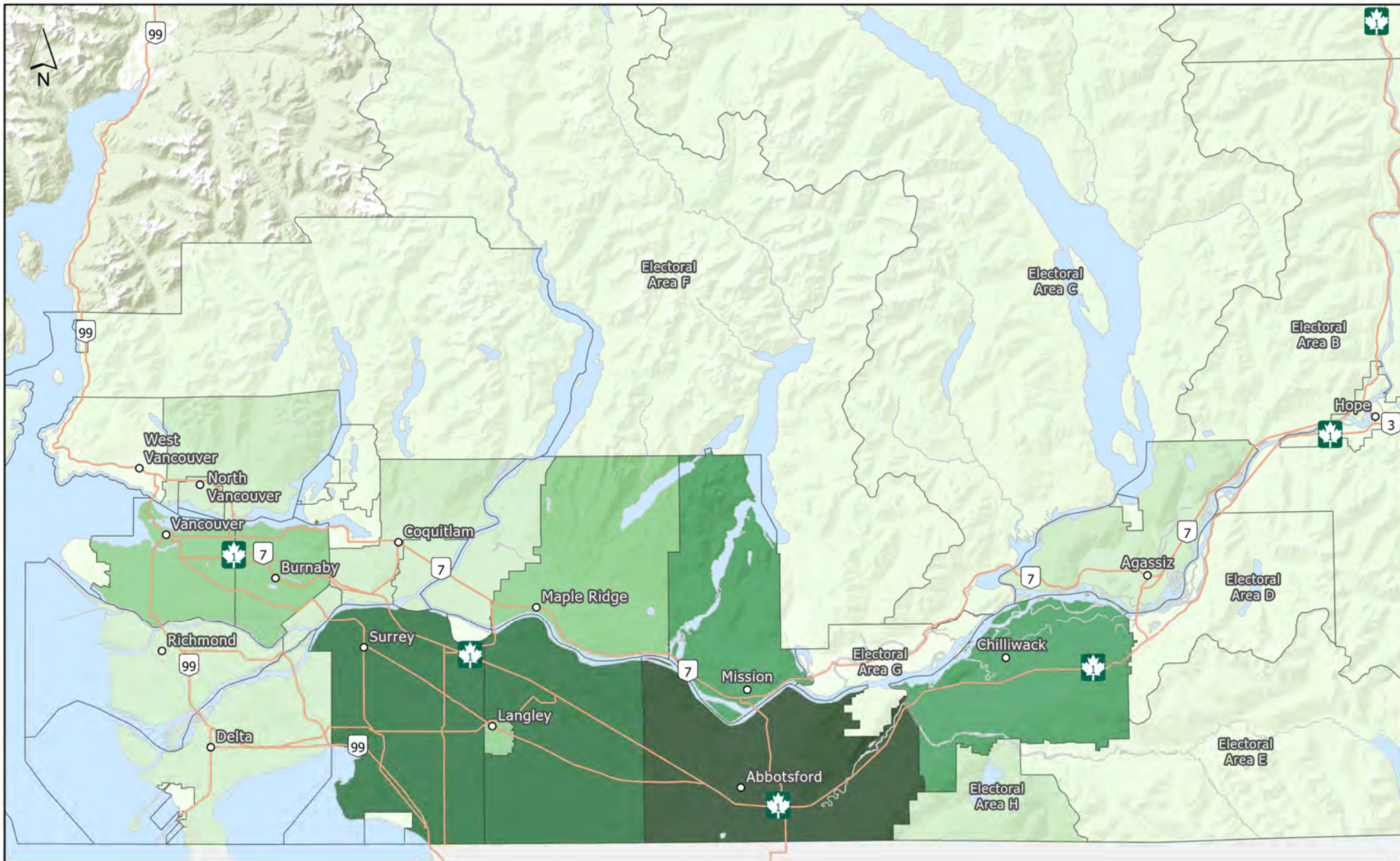
Also notable, is a significant number of commuters from Electoral Area D to Chilliwack and Electoral Area B to Hope.

\*Internal commute refers to a commute within the jurisdiction in which the commuter resides.

External commute refers to a commute outside of the jurisdiction in which the commuter resides.

Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census



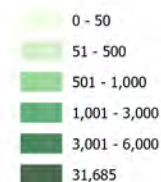


**Map 4.1**

## Commuting Flow from Abbotsford to Census Subdivision of Work

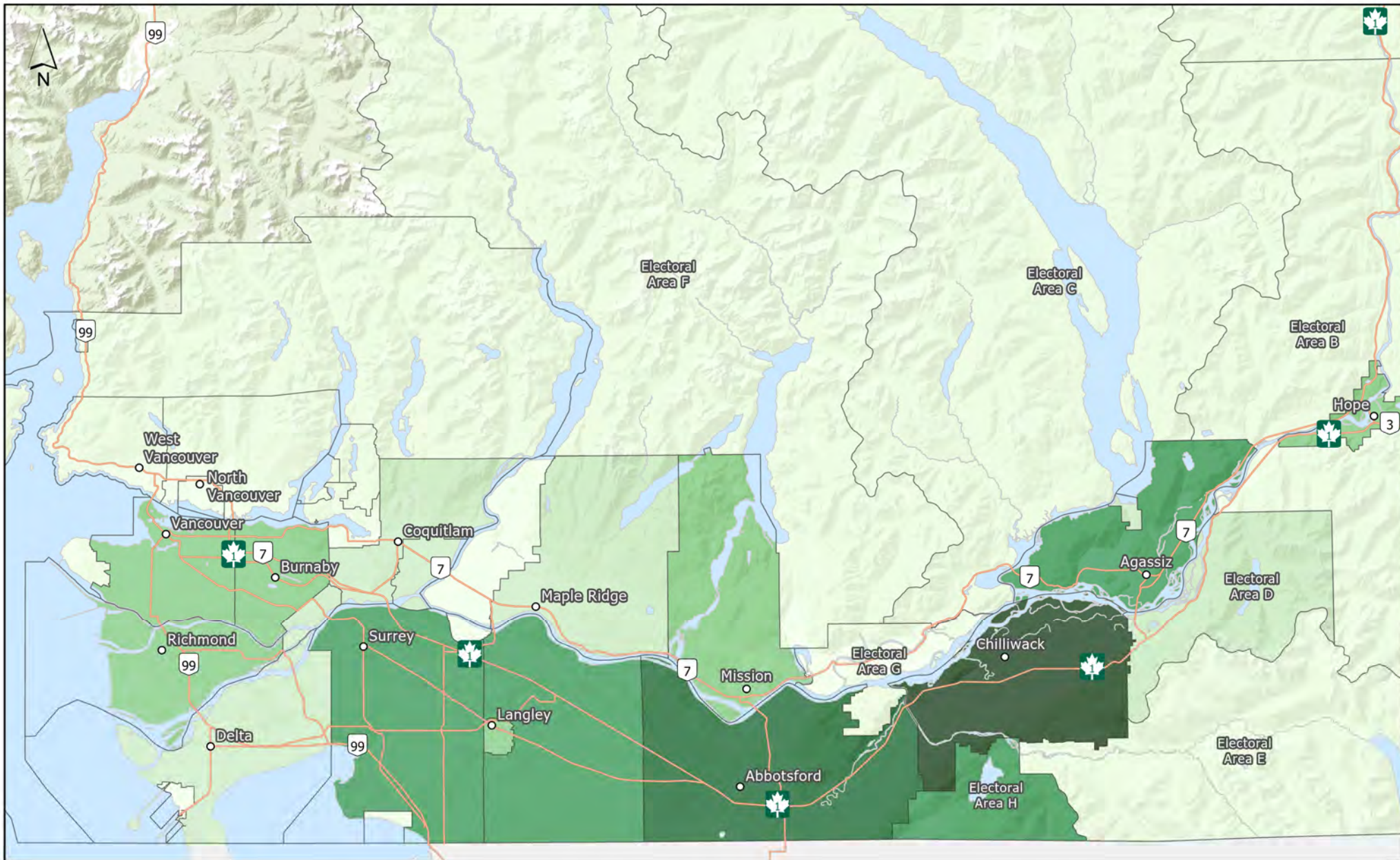
Based on the employed labour force aged 15 years and over, who reported having a usual place of work. Commuting refers to the travel of a person from their place of residence to their usual place of work. (Statistics Canada 2021)

### Number of Commutes



Scale: 1:525,000





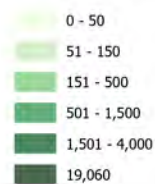
**Map 4.2**



## Commuting Flow from Chilliwack to Census Subdivision of Work

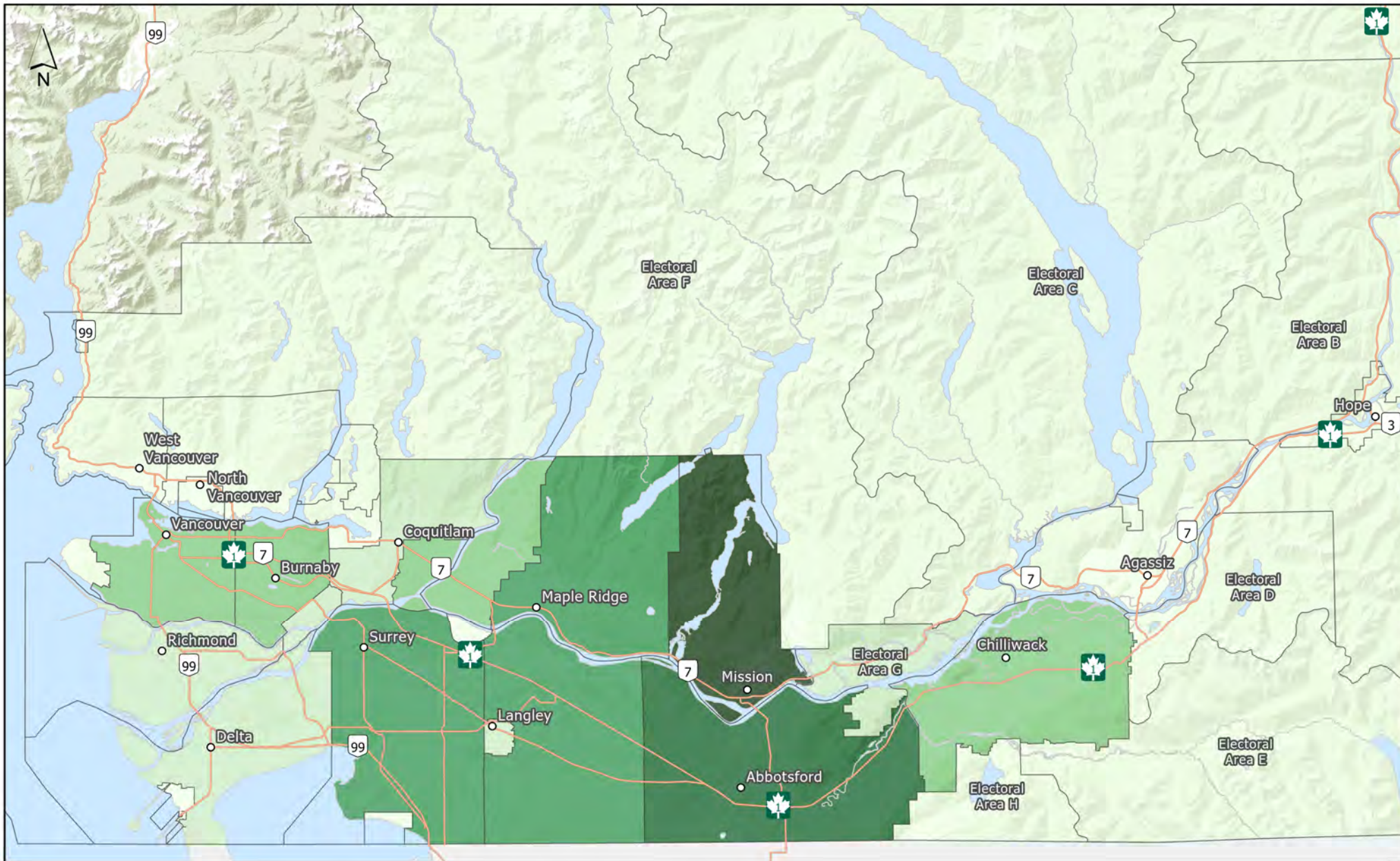
Based on the employed labour force aged 15 years and over, who reported having a usual place of work. Commuting refers to the travel of a person from their place of residence to their usual place of work. (Statistics Canada 2021)

### Number of Commutes



Scale: 1:525,000



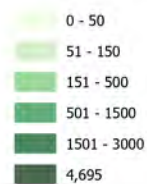


**Map 4.3**

## Commuting Flow from Mission to Census Subdivision of Work

Based on the employed labour force aged 15 years and over, who reported having a usual place of work. Commuting refers to the travel of a person from their place of residence to their usual place of work. (Statistics Canada 2021)

### Number of Commutes



Scale: 1:525,000

## 4.4. Labour Force Composition

### Economic Diversification

The region's economy has traditionally centered on agriculture and the resource industry, with roots extending back to the earliest days of British Columbia. While these sectors continue to provide a vital source of jobs, the employment base has since expanded and diversified, and now includes a wide array of manufacturing, aerospace, service, and high-tech industries. Larger communities like Abbotsford and Chilliwack are leading the way in the development of employment opportunities outside of the traditional resource sectors, while contributing to the clean economy by supporting sustainable transportation and green building initiatives.

Economic diversification has not reached all corners of the region. Smaller communities that have historically relied on forestry and resource industries face challenges due to sector declines. However, as agriculture and other labour-intensive sectors become more technologically sophisticated, innovations in agri-tech, energy efficiency, and sustainable resource management have the potential to drive sustainable growth in these communities.

### Top Sectors

In the FVRD, the top three sectors by employment are construction, retail trade and health care and social assistance, each making up over 11% of the total labour force, with manufacturing and transportation and warehousing following in the fourth and fifth spots. In the MVRD, health care and social assistance and retail trade are also among the top three sectors, but the professional, scientific and technical services sector employs a much larger proportion of people, replacing construction in the top three. Construction and educational services replace manufacturing and transportation and warehousing, rounding out the MVRD's top five sectors.

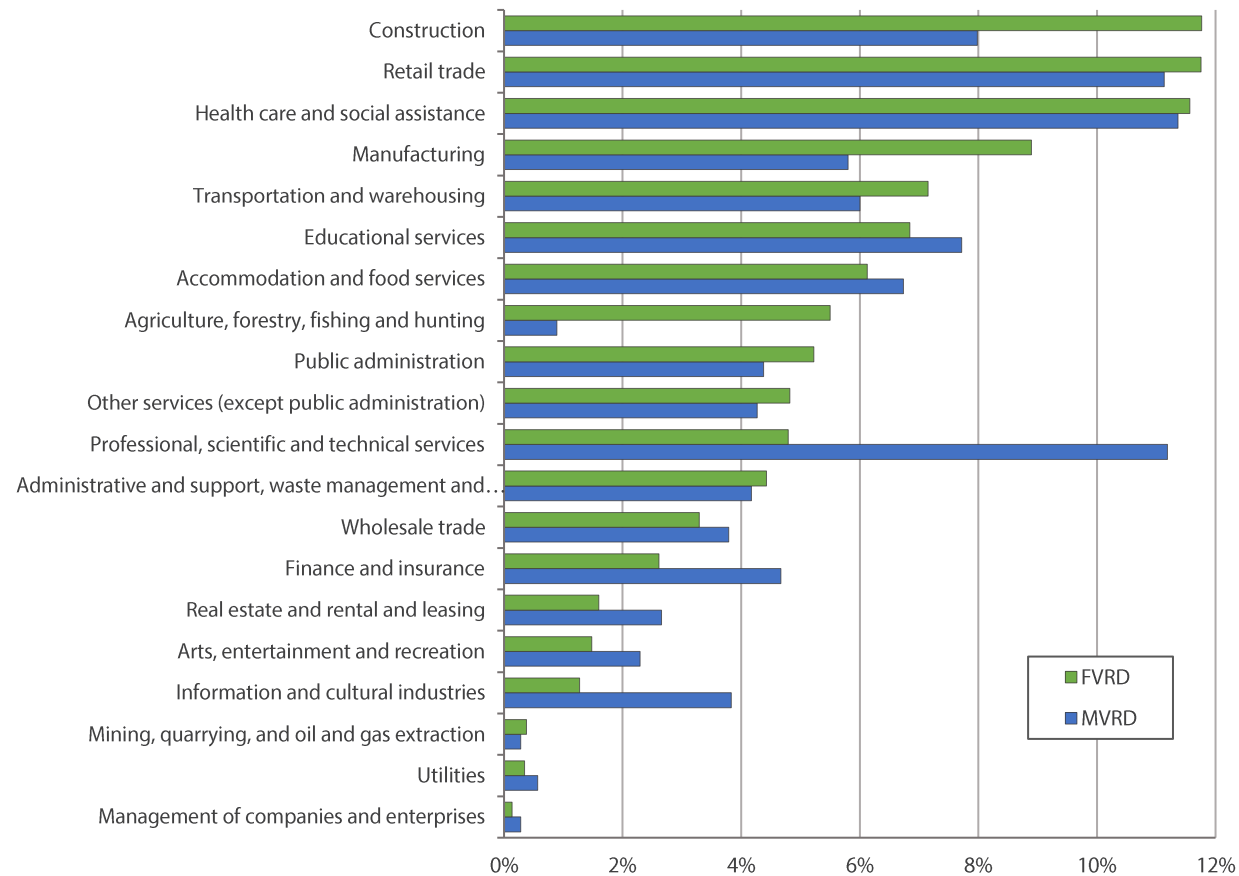
**Table 4.4 – Labour Force Composition per Industry Sector (2021)**

Industry Sector	Fraser Valley Regional District		Metro Vancouver Regional District	
	Persons	Percent*	Persons	Percent*
Construction	18,945	11.77%	114,600	7.98%
Retail trade	18,930	11.76%	159,825	11.14%
Health care and social assistance	18,625	11.57%	163,115	11.36%
Manufacturing	14,325	8.90%	83,255	5.80%
Transportation and warehousing	11,515	7.15%	86,180	6.00%
Educational services	11,020	6.84%	110,765	7.72%
Accommodation and food services	9,865	6.13%	96,660	6.73%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	8,860	5.50%	12,760	0.89%
Public administration	8,415	5.23%	62,815	4.38%
Other services (except public administration)	7,765	4.82%	61,285	4.27%
Professional, scientific and technical services	7,720	4.79%	160,590	11.19%
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	7,130	4.43%	59,880	4.17%
Wholesale trade	5,300	3.29%	54,360	3.79%
Finance and insurance	4,210	2.61%	66,980	4.67%
Real estate and rental and leasing	2,575	1.60%	38,130	2.66%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	2,385	1.48%	32,895	2.29%
Information and cultural industries	2,050	1.27%	55,000	3.83%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	610	0.38%	4,030	0.28%
Utilities	555	0.34%	8,120	0.57%
Management of companies and enterprises	220	0.14%	4,050	0.28%
Sub-total, classified	161,020		1,435,295	
Unclassified	3,030		32,920	
<b>Total - Labour force aged 15 years and over</b>	<b>164,050</b>		<b>1,468,215</b>	

\*Industry percentage share is based on classified employment only.

Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census



**Figure 4.4 – Labour Force Composition per Industry Sector by Percentage of Regional Total (2021)\***

\*Industry percentage share is based on classified employment only.

Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

Figure 4.4 above highlights the differences in industry sector employment between the FVRD and the MVRD based on the percentage of the labour force employed in each sector. The FVRD has a higher proportion of workers in the construction, manufacturing, and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sectors, indicating a greater focus on goods-producing industries. Conversely, the MVRD shows a much larger share of its labour force in the professional, scientific and technical services, finance and insurance, and information and cultural industry sectors, highlighting a stronger concentration in service-providing industries.

From 2016 to 2021, the labour force in the FVRD grew by 14,875 persons, with most sectors experiencing gains. The construction sector saw the largest increase, adding 3,345 workers, followed closely by the health care and social assistance sector with 3,225 additional workers. Although retail trade gained 2,535 workers, it dropped from first to second rank in terms of total labour force in the FVRD, overtaken by the construction sector. Two sectors, accommodation and food services as well as agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, experienced declines in their labour force size, with the decrease in accommodation and food services likely attributed to the pandemic. Manufacturing, the FVRD's fourth largest sector by employment, saw a smaller increase of 760 persons compared to other sectors, resulting in slight decline in its percentage share of the total labour force.

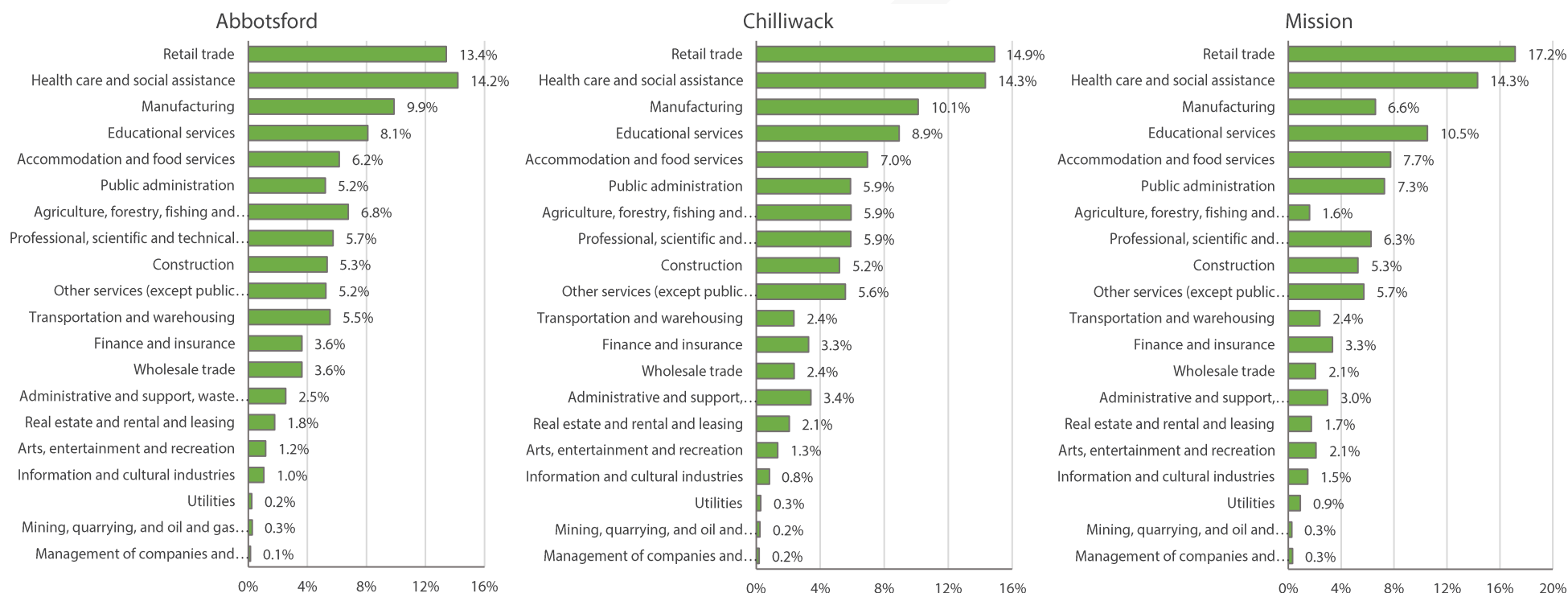
**Table 4.5** – Comparison of Labour Force Counts in the FVRD by Sector (2016–2021)

Industry Sector	Number of Workers			Rank*			Percentage Share*		
	2016	2021	# Change	2016	2021	# Change	2016	2021	% Change
Construction	15,600	18,945	3,345	2	1	1	10.65%	11.77%	1.12%
Retail trade	16,395	18,930	2,535	1	2	-1	11.20%	11.76%	0.56%
Health care and social assistance	15,400	18,625	3,225	3	3	0	10.52%	11.57%	1.05%
Manufacturing	13,565	14,325	760	4	4	0	9.26%	8.90%	-0.36%
Transportation and warehousing	9,925	11,515	1,590	6	5	1	6.78%	7.15%	0.37%
Educational services	9,340	11,020	1,680	8	6	2	6.38%	6.84%	0.46%
Accommodation and food services	10,825	9,865	-960	5	7	-2	7.39%	6.13%	-1.26%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	9,705	8,860	-845	7	8	-1	6.63%	5.50%	-1.13%
Public administration	7,640	8,415	775	10	9	1	5.22%	5.23%	0.01%
Other services (except public administration)	7,650	7,765	115	9	10	-1	5.22%	4.82%	-0.40%
Professional, scientific and technical services	6,465	7,720	1,255	12	11	1	4.42%	4.79%	0.37%
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	7,070	7,130	60	11	12	-1	4.83%	4.43%	-0.40%
Wholesale trade	5,275	5,300	25	13	13	0	3.60%	3.29%	-0.31%
Finance and insurance	3,815	4,210	395	14	14	0	2.61%	2.61%	0.00%
Real estate and rental and leasing	2,290	2,575	285	15	15	0	1.56%	1.60%	0.04%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	2,080	2,385	305	16	16	0	1.42%	1.48%	0.06%
Information and cultural industries	1,870	2,050	180	17	17	0	1.28%	1.27%	-0.01%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	815	610	-205	18	18	0	0.56%	0.38%	-0.18%
Utilities	495	555	60	19	19	0	0.34%	0.34%	0.00%
Management of companies and enterprises	210	220	10	20	20	0	0.14%	0.14%	0.00%
Sub-total, classified	146,430	161,020	14,590	*Industry rank and percentage share is based on classified employment only.					
Unclassified	2,745	3,030	285						
<b>Total</b>	<b>149,175</b>	<b>164,050</b>	<b>14,875</b>						

Source: Statistics Canada 2016 and 2021 Census

Figure 4.5 shows the labour force breakdown by sector for each FVRD jurisdiction based on workplace location. This data includes workers with a usual place of work and those who worked from home but excludes workplaces with 'no fixed address'. Therefore, the graphs illustrate the industry breakdown of jobs physically located in each community and not necessarily the employment of its own residents.

**Figure 4.5 – Proportional Distribution of Workers Based on Location of Work and Industry Sector (2021)\***



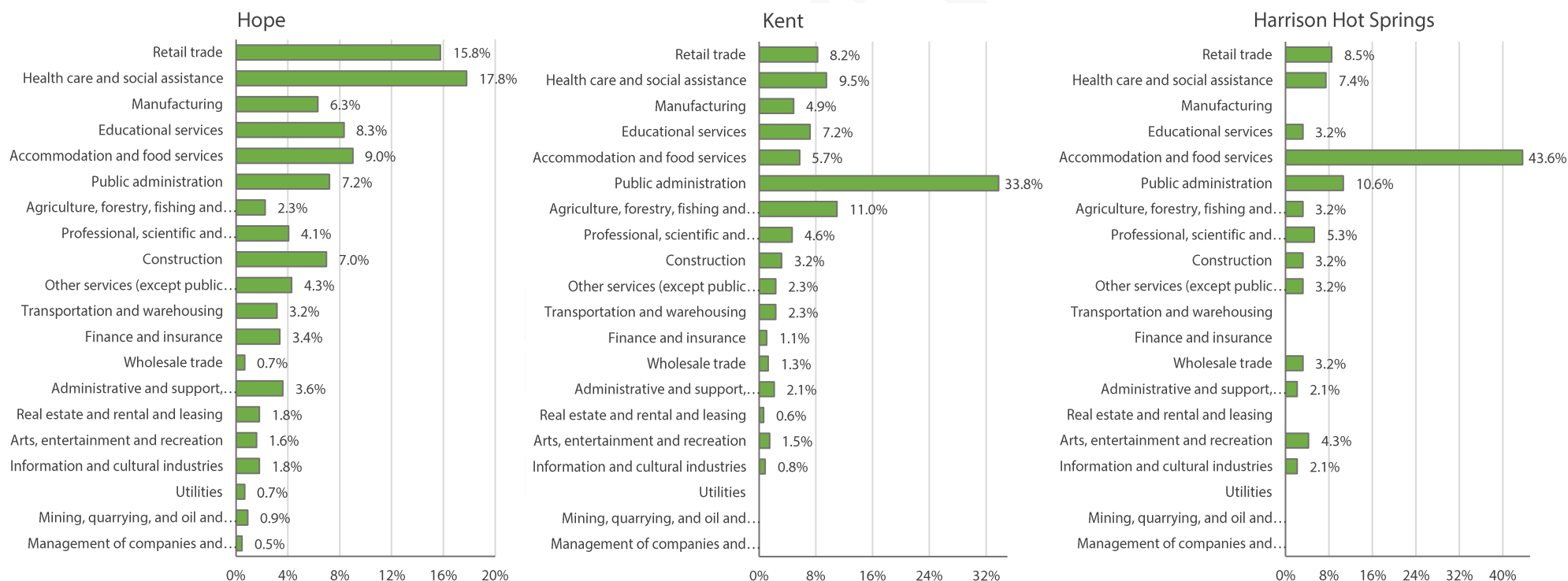
\*Industry percentage share is based on classified employment only.

Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

While Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Mission share similar top employment sectors, a few key differences exist between them. Chilliwack and Mission have higher proportions of workers in retail trade, educational services, accommodation and food services, and public administration. Whereas Abbotsford has a greater proportion of workers in the transportation and warehousing and the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sectors. Mission, however, has a noticeably fewer proportion of workers in the manufacturing and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and sectors compared to the other two municipalities.

**It is important to note that about 58% of workers in the construction sector and 42% in the transportation and warehousing sectors reported having a workplace with 'no fixed address' in the 2021 census. As a result, these sectors rank significantly lower when employment data is based on workplace location rather than location of residence.**

The distribution of employment is more unique in the FVRD's smaller municipalities which reveals the types of industries supported by each community. In Hope, the proportion of workers in the health care and social assistance sector is the highest in the FVRD, while the proportion of workers in the accommodation and food services sector is also noticeably higher than the larger municipalities. However, the wholesale trade sector in Hope hosts the lowest proportion of workers in the FVRD. In Kent, public administration dominates, employing close to 34% of workers, which is a reflection of significant employment provided by the two correctional institutions located in Kent. The agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector in Kent also employs a higher proportion of people compared to the FVRD's other municipalities, while on the other hand, having a much lower proportion of workers in many service sectors such as retail trade and health care.



Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

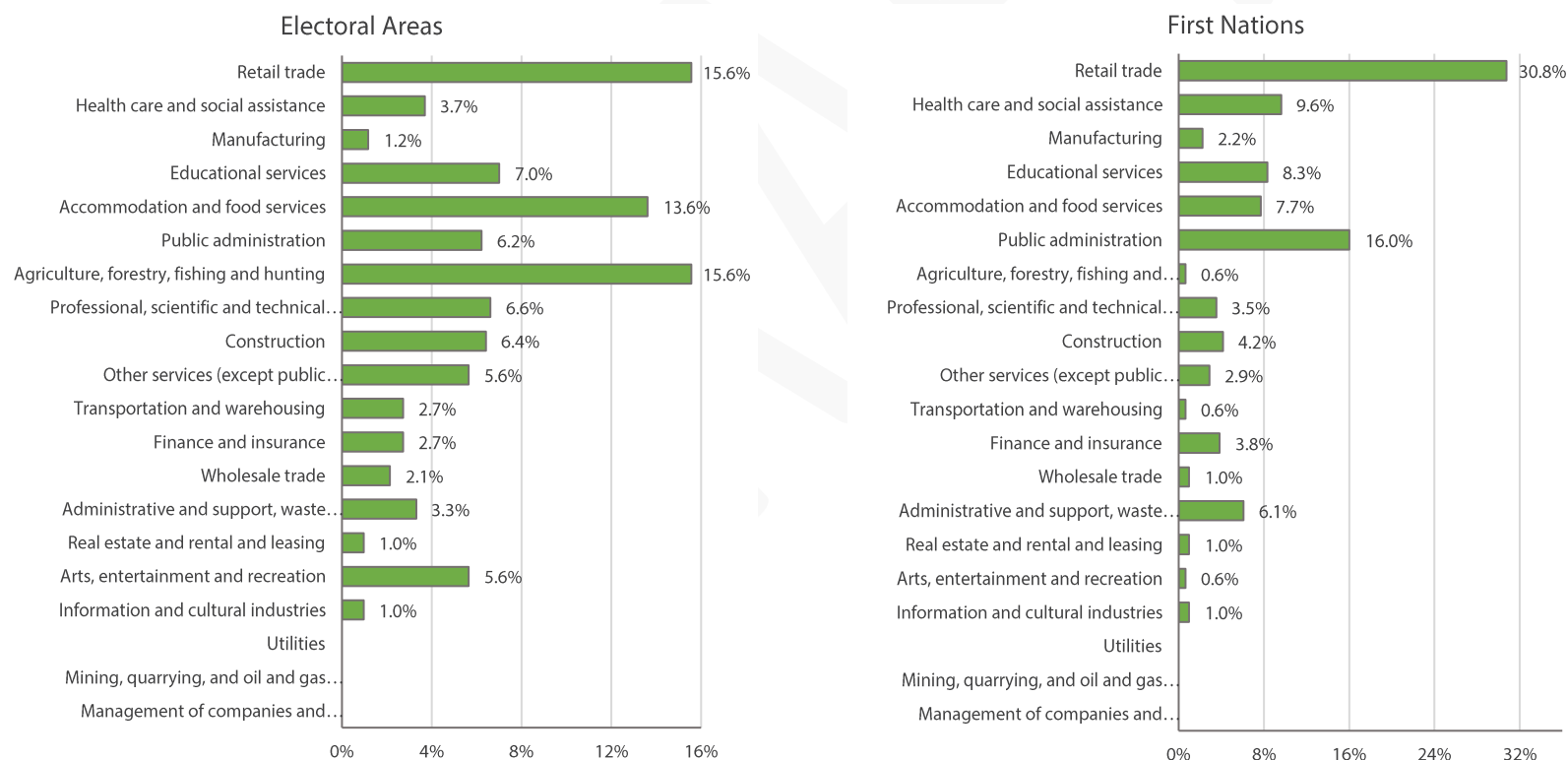
It's no surprise that the accommodation and food services sector employs roughly 44% of the people working in Harrison Hot Springs, illustrating the importance of this sector to the local economy. Moreover, the public administration and arts, entertainment and recreation sectors employ a higher proportion of the workforce compared to most other municipalities, while sectors like manufacturing and transportation and warehousing did not register as having any workers.



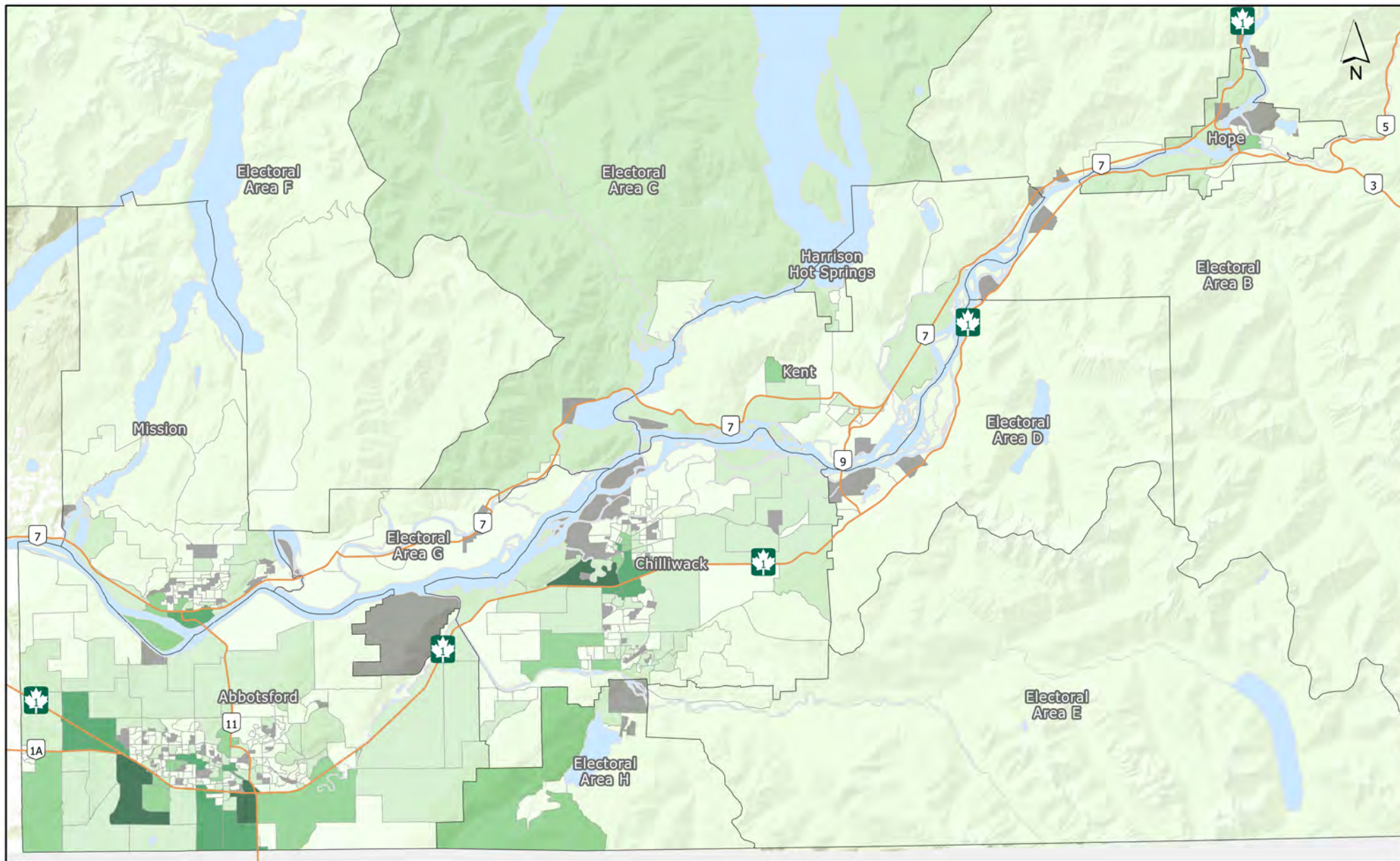
In the FVRD's electoral areas retail trade as well as agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting equally represent the sectors with the highest proportion of employment, with accommodation and food services coming in third. Electoral Area H registers the highest number of total jobs and highest number of jobs in retail trade and the accommodation and food services sector. Meanwhile, Electoral Area G is home to the highest number of agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting jobs.

First Nation communities within the FVRD provide significant employment opportunities to both members and non-members. A large proportion of this employment is related to the retail trade sector with a majority of jobs in this sector located on Ch'íyáqtel (Tzeachten) and Sxwoyehálá (Squiala) First Nation lands, where there are substantial retail developments, including large retail and grocery chains such as Walmart and Save-on-Foods.

Many First Nations in the region are multifaceted employers, offering careers in areas such as education, health care, social and community development, planning, and administration. Seabird Island and Sts'ailes First Nations are prime examples, providing a significant number of jobs in the public administration sector. Initiatives like the First Nations-led Sts'ailes Community Care Campus demonstrate how new developments will further drive employment growth in Indigenous communities and the broader region.



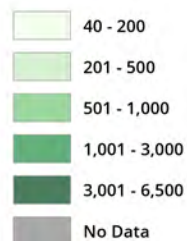
Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census



**Map 4.4**

## Number of Jobs per Dissemination Area

Based on place of work of the population aged 15 years and over, who are employed in the labour force and reported having a usual place of work or working from home. (Statistics Canada 2021)



Scale: 1:315,000



## 4.5. Employment Distribution

Employment in the FVRD is heavily concentrated within the region's largest municipalities, with further concentration within industrial lands and the commercial cores as highlighted in map 4.4 on the previous page, which shows the total number of jobs per dissemination area.

With 6,465 jobs, Abbotsford's main industrial area, located south of Highway 1 and extending to the Abbotsford International Airport, has the greatest number of jobs per dissemination area in the region. This is closely followed by the industrial and big-box commercial area in South Abbotsford, near the Highway 1 and Highway 11 (Sumas Way) interchange. Similarly, the core industrial and commercial areas of Chilliwack and Mission stand out as major employment hubs, each supporting thousands of jobs.

While industrial lands and commercial areas play a critical role in supporting employment, institutions and hospitals also contribute significantly to regional employment. Institutions in Abbotsford, Mission and Kent are noticeable on the map, registering hundreds of jobs in otherwise rural areas. Furthermore, the Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre, along with the Chilliwack General Hospital, account for over 4,000 jobs combined, making them the two most employment-dense dissemination areas in the region. These facilities alongside industrial lands, demonstrate the important role that these employment centres play in the regional economy.

Beyond the urban cores, agricultural and rural areas also play a significant role in supporting employment across the region. These areas are home to hundreds of jobs, in greenhouses and food processing facilities, and in some areas, significant industrial operations. Schools located away from city centres can be important sources of jobs for the communities they serve.

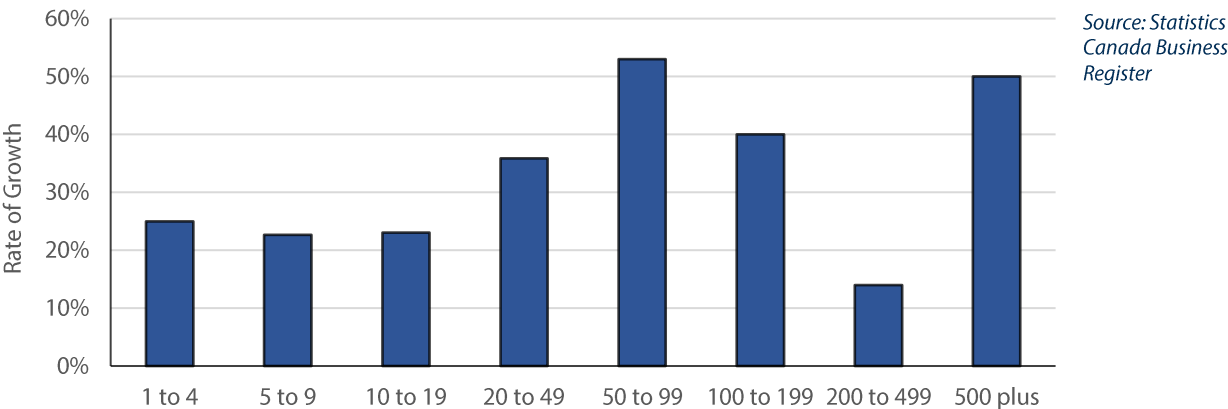


# 5. Regional Economy

## 5.1. Business Counts

Employers, or business enterprises, have a significant influence on the structure of the region’s labour force. As of December 2024, an estimated 13,002 businesses with at least one employee were operating in the FVRD. Since December 2014, this number has increased by 2,658, representing a 26% growth rate over the past decade. The majority (~76%) are small businesses with fewer than 10 employees, while 4% have 50 or more employees. However, larger employers have grown at faster rates, with businesses employing at least 50 people increasing by 159, or 45% since 2014. The health care and social assistance sector led this growth, adding 32 businesses with at least 50 employees, followed by the manufacturing sector, which includes food processors, adding 23. Manufacturing also accounted for the highest number of large businesses, with 31 enterprises employing 100 or more people, highlighting its importance as a regional employment driver. Similarly, the retail trade and health care and social assistance sectors had significant large employers, with 24 and 17 businesses, respectively, employing 100 or more workers. Notably, increases in business counts may reflect both the expansion of existing businesses as well as the entry of new businesses into the region.

**Figure 5.1** – Percentage Growth of Business Counts by Number of Employees in the FVRD (Dec 2014–Dec 2024)



FVRD Business Counts by Number of Employees									
	Total	1 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 19	20 to 49	50 to 99	100 to 199	200 to 499	500 plus
2014	10,344	5,876	2,094	1,305	717	217	80	43	12
2024	13,002	7,343	2,568	1,606	974	332	112	49	18
# Change	2,658	1,467	474	301	257	115	32	6	6
% Change	26%	25%	23%	23%	36%	53%	40%	14%	50%

**Table 5.1** – Total Growth in Business Counts by Number of Employees in the FVRD (Dec 2014–Dec 2024)

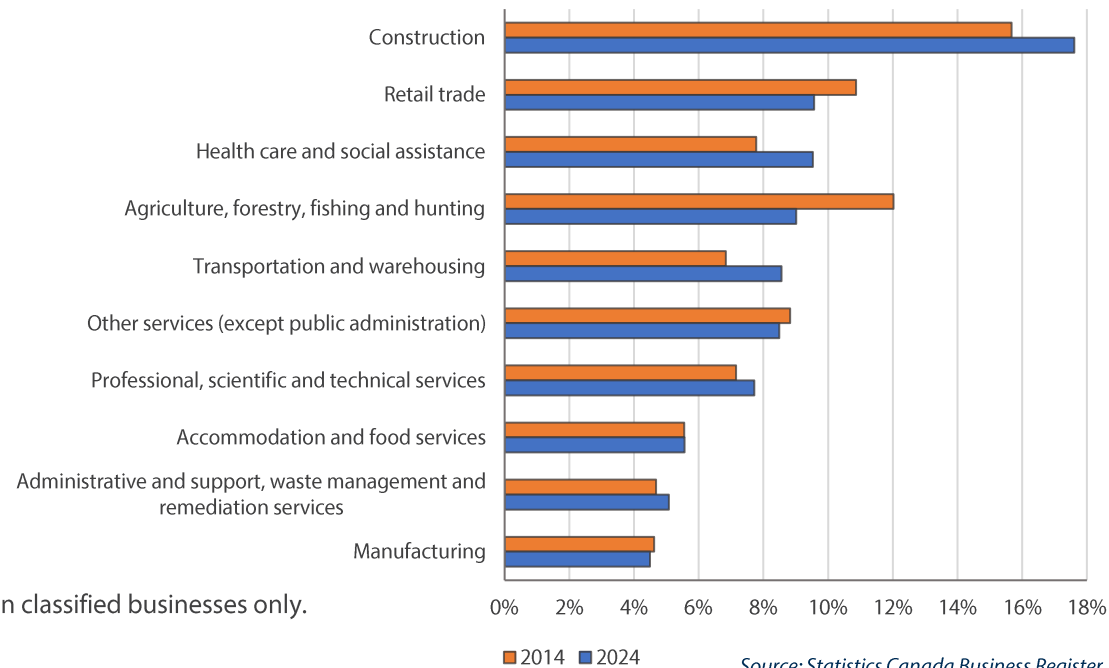
Source: Statistics Canada Business Register



Construction remains the region's most dominant industry in terms of both labour force and total business counts. Over a ten-year period, it added 564 businesses, increasing its share of all businesses in the FVRD by close to two percent. In contrast, the retail trade sector experienced slower growth, while the agriculture forestry, fishing and hunting sector saw the greatest decline in business counts, despite being the region's second and fourth largest sectors, respectively. The health care and social assistance sector expanded significantly, growing from 769 businesses in 2014 to 1,144 in 2024, making it the third-largest sector in terms of business counts, up from fifth place. Similar growth occurred in the transportation and warehousing sector which grew from 690 to 999 businesses over the same period, moving from seventh to sixth place.

Growing industries are positioned to benefit from the region's transition toward a clean economy. The construction sector is set to benefit from demand for sustainable building practices, energy-efficient infrastructure, and green retrofits. The expansion of transportation and warehousing aligns with the adoption of low/zero-emission vehicles and improved logistics for a more sustainable supply chain. Similarly, the growth of the health care and social assistance sector supports long-term sustainability and resilience through the expansion of community-based services, which can increase population well-being, economic diversification, and environmentally conscious service delivery. As the clean economy gains momentum, these sectors are set to play a key role in shaping a more sustainable and diversified regional economy.

**Figure 5.2** – Top 10 Industry Sectors in the FVRD by Percentage Share of Total Business Counts (with at least one employee) (Dec 2014–Dec 2024)\*



\*Industry percentage share is based on classified businesses only.

**Table 5.2** – Comparison of Business Counts (with at least one employee) in the FVRD by Industry Sector (Dec 2014–Dec 2024)

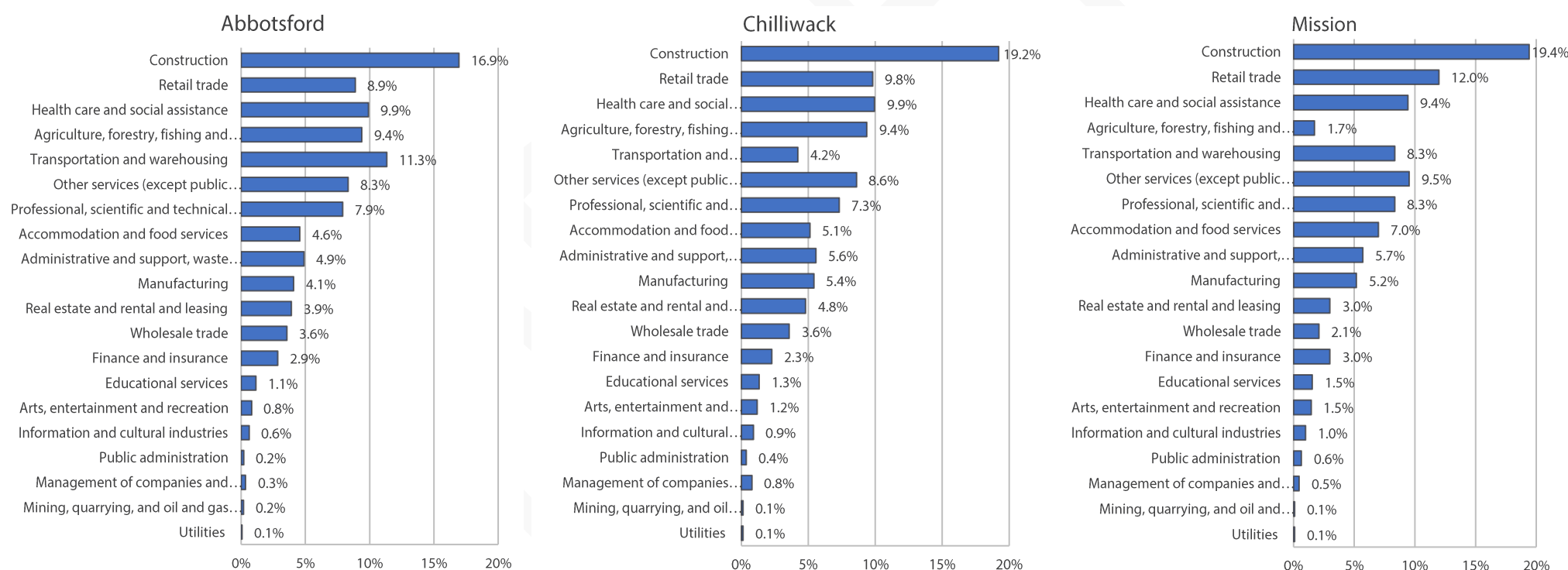
Industry Sector	Number of Businesses			Rank*			Percentage Share*		
	2014	2024	# Change	2014	2024	# Change	2014	2024	% Change
Construction	1,550	2,114	564	1	1	0	15.67%	17.61%	1.94%
Retail trade	1,075	1,149	74	3	2	1	10.87%	9.57%	-1.30%
Health care and social assistance	769	1,144	375	5	3	2	7.78%	9.53%	1.75%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1,189	1,082	-107	2	4	-2	12.02%	9.01%	-3.01%
Transportation and warehousing	676	1,027	351	7	5	2	6.84%	8.56%	1.72%
Other services (except public administration)	873	1,019	146	4	6	-2	8.83%	8.49%	-0.34%
Professional, scientific and technical services	708	926	218	6	7	-1	7.16%	7.71%	0.56%
Accommodation and food services	549	668	119	8	8	0	5.55%	5.56%	0.01%
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	463	609	146	9	9	0	4.68%	5.07%	0.39%
Manufacturing	457	540	83	10	10	0	4.62%	4.50%	-0.12%
Real estate and rental and leasing	395	483	88	12	11	1	3.99%	4.02%	0.03%
Wholesale trade	397	401	4	11	12	-1	4.01%	3.34%	-0.67%
Finance and insurance	304	320	16	13	13	0	3.07%	2.67%	-0.41%
Educational services	126	145	19	15	14	1	1.27%	1.21%	-0.07%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	95	128	33	16	15	1	0.96%	1.07%	0.11%
Information and cultural industries	54	93	39	17	16	1	0.55%	0.77%	0.23%
Public administration	44	68	24	18	17	1	0.44%	0.57%	0.12%
Management of companies and enterprises	128	56	-72	14	18	-4	1.29%	0.47%	-0.83%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	30	22	-8	19	19	0	0.30%	0.18%	-0.12%
Utilities	8	10	2	20	20	0	0.08%	0.08%	0.00%
Sub-total, classified	9,890	12,004	2,114	Source: Statistics Canada Business Register					
Unclassified	454	998	544						
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,344</b>	<b>13,002</b>	<b>2,658</b>						

\*Industry rank and percentage share is based on classified businesses only.

The distribution of businesses presented in Figure 5.3 highlights both dominant industries and notable differences between the FVRD's municipalities. In Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Mission, the construction sector leads, representing 16.9%, 19.2% and 19.4% of total businesses respectively. While retail trade and health care are the second largest sectors in Mission and Chilliwack, respectively, Abbotsford stands out with transportation and warehousing as its second largest sector. In fact, about 73% of all transportation and warehousing businesses in the FVRD are located in Abbotsford, reflecting its role as the region's key logistics hub.

Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, the FVRD's fourth largest sector in terms of business counts, has an outsized significance in the region's more rural areas such as the District of Kent and the electoral areas, where it represents the most dominant industry. In contrast, this sector represents only 2% of total businesses in Mission where retail and services-based industries play a much larger role.

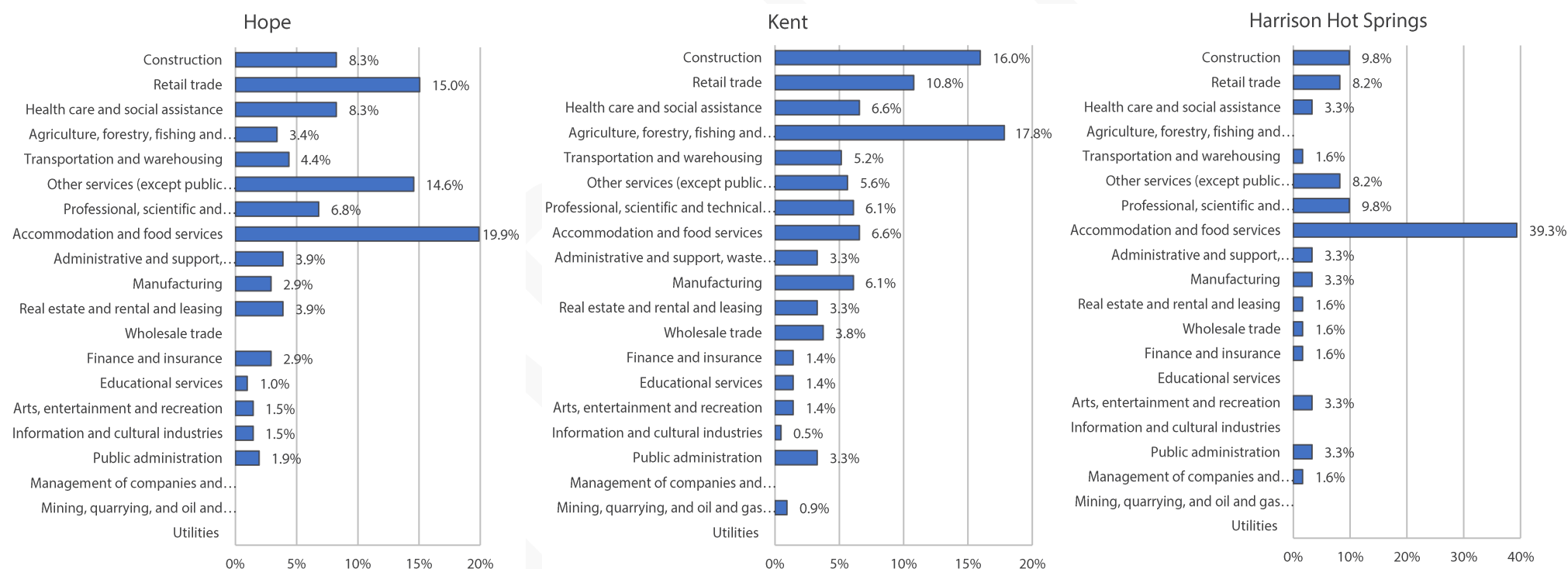
**Figure 5.3** – Proportional Distribution of Businesses (with at least one employee) by Location and Industry Sector (Dec 2024)



Source: Statistics Canada Business Register

In the District of Hope and the Village of Harrison Hot Springs, the accommodation and food services sector represents the highest number of businesses occupying 19.9% and 39.3% respectively. In these more tourism-driven communities, the construction sector is much less significant with the other services (except public administration) sector taking second spot in Hope and the construction and professional services sector tied in a far second in Harrison Hot Springs.

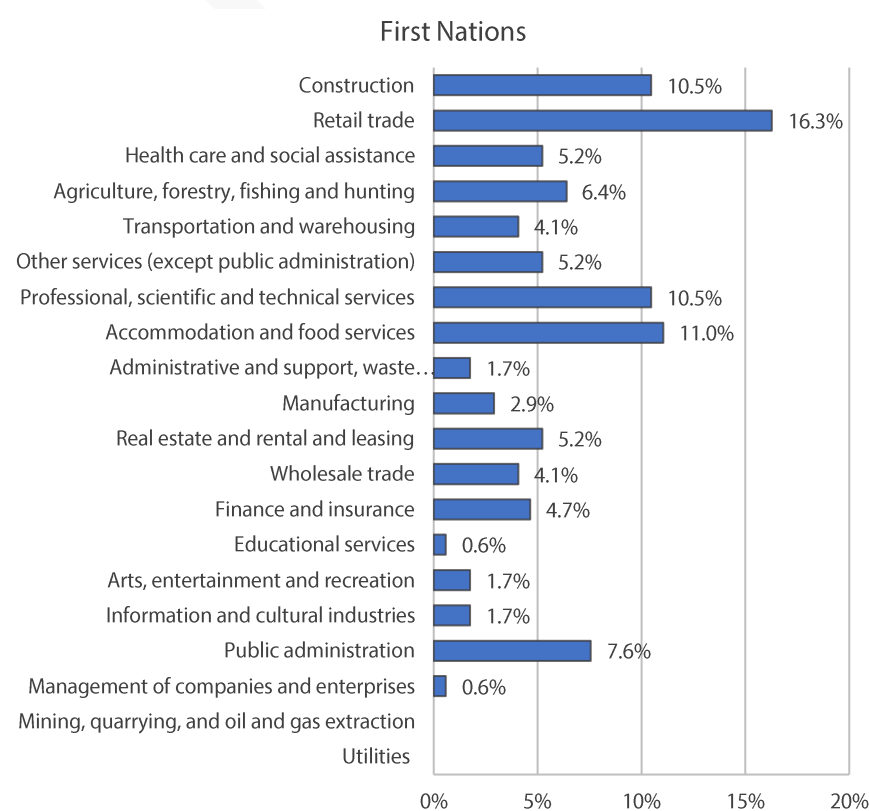
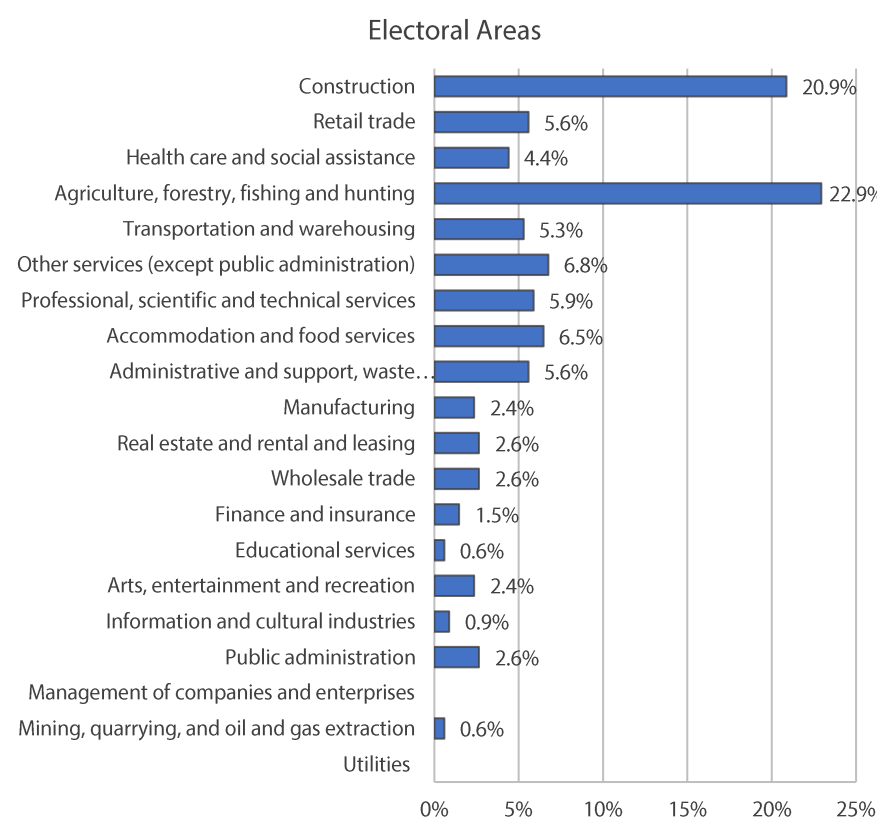
Business count composition differences underscore the varying degrees of economic diversification across the FVRD. Larger municipalities like Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Mission benefit from a wider mix of businesses and industries which can help provide greater resilience during economic downturns. In contrast, communities highly dependent on tourism or resource-based sectors may face greater challenges during economic disruptions or specific industry declines.



Source: Statistics Canada Business Register



A total of 181 businesses with at least one employee are located on First Nations reserve lands within the FVRD, with retail trade being the most prominent sector making up 16.3% of all classified businesses. While sectors such as health care and social assistance, as well as transportation and warehousing are less significant, First Nations communities across the region have a diverse business landscape, employing people in professional, scientific, and technical services, accommodation and food services, construction, and most notably, public administration. Business activity also varies by location, with First Nations near urban centres such as Ch'íyáqtel (Tzeachten) and Sxwoyehálá (Squiala) in Chilliwack, having a higher concentration of businesses, particularly in retail trade and service-based industries.



Source: Statistics Canada Business Register

**Table 5.3** – Total Number of Businesses (with at least one employee) by Location and Industry Sector (Dec 2024)

Industry Sector	Fraser Valley	Abbotsford	Chilliwack	Mission	Hope	Kent	Harrison H.S.	Electoral Areas	First Nations
Construction	2,114	1,120	634	214	17	34	6	71	18
Retail trade	1,149	587	324	132	31	23	5	19	28
Health care and social assistance	1,144	655	328	104	17	14	2	15	9
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1,082	620	309	19	7	38	0	78	11
Transportation and warehousing	1,027	750	139	92	9	11	1	18	7
Other services (except public administration)	1,019	551	284	105	30	12	5	23	9
Professional, scientific and technical services	926	522	241	92	14	13	6	20	18
Accommodation and food services	668	302	169	77	41	14	24	22	19
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	609	323	184	63	8	7	2	19	3
Manufacturing	540	270	179	57	6	13	2	8	5
Real estate and rental and leasing	483	258	158	33	8	7	1	9	9
Wholesale trade	401	235	118	23	0	8	1	9	7
Finance and insurance	320	189	75	33	6	3	1	5	8
Educational services	145	76	44	17	2	3	0	2	1
Arts, entertainment and recreation	128	54	39	16	3	3	2	8	3
Information and cultural industries	93	42	30	11	3	1	0	3	3
Public administration	68	14	12	7	4	7	2	9	13
Management of companies and enterprises	56	23	26	5	0	0	1	0	1
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	22	13	4	1	0	2	0	2	0
Utilities	10	5	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-total, classified	12,004	6,609	3,301	1,102	206	213	61	340	172
Unclassified	998	556	290	83	17	15	3	25	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,002</b>	<b>7,165</b>	<b>3,591</b>	<b>1,185</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>181</b>

Source: Statistics Canada Business Register

## 5.2. Issued Building Permits

Issued building permits are another indicator of economic activity in the region. Totals represent permits for new construction and improvements to existing buildings. The combined total value from residential permits is much higher than industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) buildings and has increased significantly over a 10-year period going from \$205 million in 2014 to \$709 million in 2024, an increase of roughly 245%.

Over the same period, permits for commercial buildings have seen a similar relative increase in total value, going from \$60 million in 2014 to \$293 million in 2024, an increase of roughly 388%.

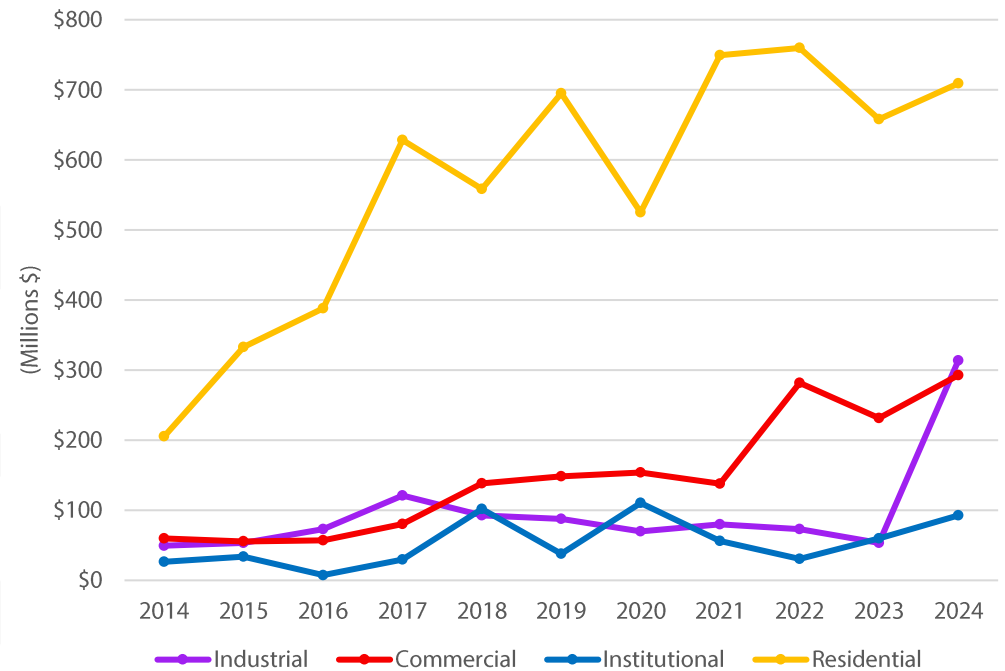
By the end of 2023 the total value of industrial permits seemed to have stagnated, declining to just under \$54 million. However, over 2024 the total industrial permit value skyrocketed up to \$314 million, surpassing the total commercial permit value for the first time since 2017.

Meanwhile, the total value of institutional permits varies and is often dependent on project-based government spending such as the construction of a new school or expansions to a hospital.

The total annual value of ICI building permits issued in the FVRD has fluctuated from 2014 to 2023 peaking at \$385.5 million in 2022. However, in 2024, the total value of ICI permits in the FVRD reached \$699.5 million which is an increase of 81% from its 2022 peak just two years prior. The change seen in total ICI permit values is driven by Abbotsford's \$265 million increase since 2023. However, both Chilliwack and Mission have also seen significant increases in ICI building permit values in 2024.

Total ICI permit values per jurisdiction are shown in table 5.6 on page 51.

**Figure 5.4** – Total Value (millions \$) of Building Permits in the FVRD by Building Type (2014- 2024)



Source: B.C. Stats



### Commercial Permit Value

Increases in the FVRD’s total commercial building permit value were driven by growth in Abbotsford and Mission, offsetting a decrease in Chilliwack. In 2024, Mission saw its commercial permit value increase by over \$70 million, representing a 450% increase compared to 2023. While Abbotsford also saw a significant increase compared to 2023, its total remained below the 2022 peak of \$182 million. After two years of significant gains, Chilliwack’s total commercial building permit value decreased to \$33 million in 2024, roughly in line with its 2021 value.

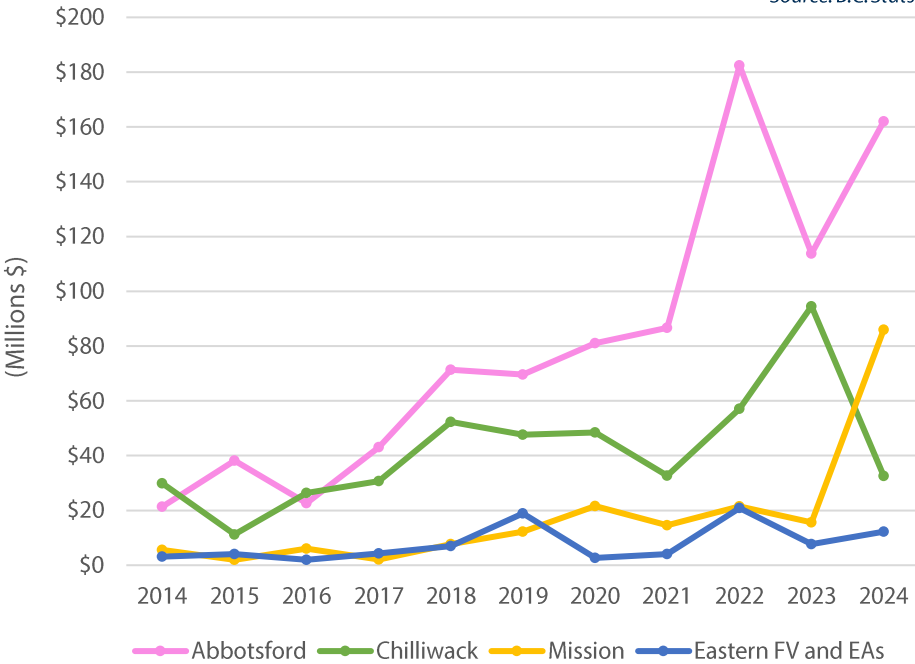
**It is important to note that B.C. Stats building permit data classifies buildings used in the distribution of goods and services as commercial, which can influence reported figures.**

For example, Mission’s increase in commercial permit values in 2024, is largely attributed to the Cade Barr Business Park as well as the warehouse development adjacent to Nelson St. near Silver Creek. Meanwhile, more typical commercial developments, such as the Marriott Hotel located on Industrial Way and Canadian Tire’s expansion into Cottonwood Mall, drove Chilliwack’s commercial permit growth in 2022 and 2023. These developments contribute to job creation, both directly through employment in service industries and indirectly by strengthening distribution networks and economic hubs. Additionally, overall building permit activity supports employment and generates value in construction and related industries, which further supports regional growth.

Total commercial permit values per jurisdiction are shown in table 5.4 on page 51.

**Figure 5.5 - Total Value (millions \$) of Commercial Building Permits for FVRD Jurisdictions (2014–2024)**

Source: B.C. Stats





### Industrial Permit Value

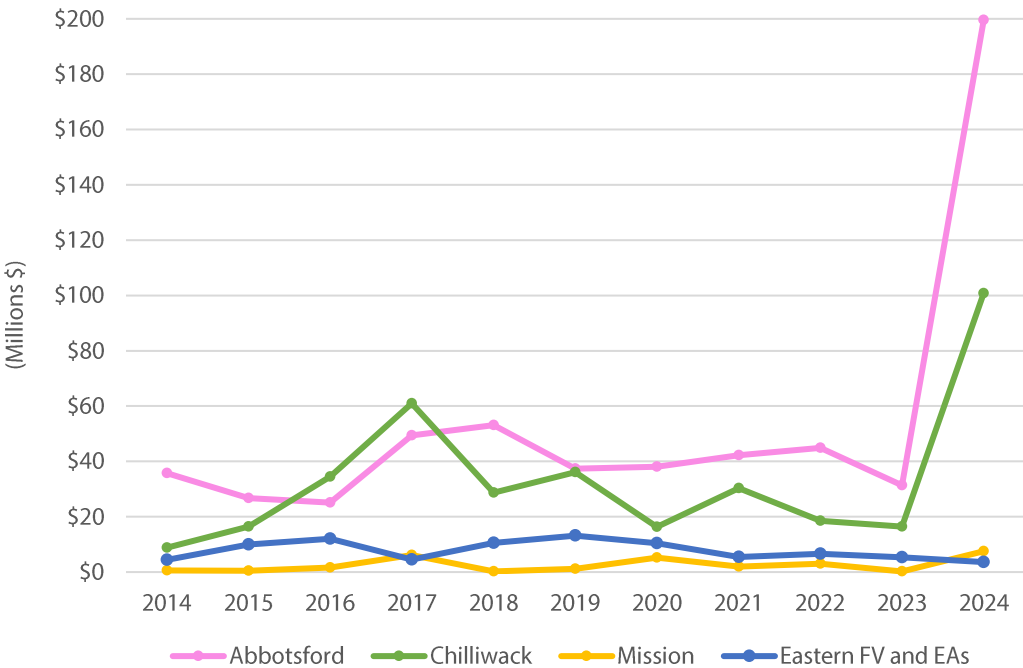
The total value of industrial permits has increased dramatically for both Abbotsford and Chilliwack driving increases in their total ICI permit values and contributing to growth across the FVRD. In 2024, Abbotsford's total value of industrial permits jumped \$168 million, representing a 535% increase in just one year. This spike is largely attributed to the \$185 million expansion of Vitalus Nutrition Inc. dairy processing facility located on Mt. Lehman Road.

Similarly, Chilliwack's industrial permits jumped by almost \$84 million, a 515% increase from 2023. This increase is primarily attributed to the \$79 million development of the Red Bull facility in Chilliwack's Food and Beverage Processing Park. In Mission, the total value of industrial permits was \$7.5 million in 2024, representing a relatively smaller but still significant increase compared to the previous year, surpassing the Eastern Fraser Valley and Electoral Area combined total.

Significant industrial permit increases in Abbotsford, Chilliwack, and Mission highlight the region's growing demand for space to accommodate large-scale expansions, especially in the food processing and agri-tech sectors. With major projects like the Vitalus Nutrition expansion and the Red Bull ingredient facility, there is an evident push for more industrial land to meet the needs of these expanding industries. These developments not only increase food security but also contribute to the region's economic resilience and sustainability, supporting the transition to a clean economy by fostering innovation, sustainable practices and creating jobs in agriculture and manufacturing.

Total industrial permit values per jurisdiction are shown in table 5.5 on page 51.

**Figure 5.6 - Total Value (millions \$) of Industrial Building Permits for FVRD Jurisdictions (2014-2024)**



Source: B.C. Stats



**Table 5.4** - Total Value (millions \$) of **Commercial** Building Permits for FVRD Jurisdictions (2014–2024)

Jurisdiction	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	3-Year % Change	5-Year % Change	10-Year % Change
<b>Fraser Valley RD</b>	60.0	55.5	57.1	80.3	138.3	148.5	153.9	138.0	281.8	231.6	292.8	26.4%	97.2%	388.0%
Abbotsford	21.4	38.2	22.7	43.1	71.4	69.6	81.1	86.7	182.4	113.7	161.9	42.4%	132.6%	657.4%
Chilliwack	29.9	11.3	26.3	30.7	52.3	47.6	48.5	32.7	57.1	94.5	32.6	-65.5%	-31.5%	9.2%
Mission	5.6	2.0	6.1	2.1	7.6	12.3	21.6	14.6	21.4	15.6	86.0	450.4%	600.1%	1,441.6%
Eastern FV and EAs	3.2	4.1	2.0	4.3	7.0	19.0	2.7	4.1	20.9	7.7	12.3	58.9%	-35.2%	258.9%

Source: B.C. Stats

**Table 5.5** - Total Value (millions \$) of **Industrial** Building Permits for FVRD Jurisdictions (2014–2024)

Jurisdiction	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	3-Year % Change	5-Year % Change	10-Year % Change
<b>Fraser Valley RD</b>	49.5	53.5	73.2	121.2	92.6	87.8	70.1	80.1	73.1	53.4	313.9	291.9%	257.7%	534.3%
Abbotsford	35.7	26.7	25.1	49.4	53.1	37.4	38.1	42.3	44.9	31.4	199.5	372.2%	433.6%	458.3%
Chilliwack	8.8	16.4	34.4	61.0	28.7	36.1	16.3	30.4	18.5	16.4	100.8	232.0%	179.6%	1,044.6%
Mission	0.6	0.5	1.6	6.2	0.3	1.1	5.3	2.0	3.0	0.2	7.5	283.5%	556.7%	1,216.8%
Eastern FV and EAs	4.4	9.9	12.0	4.5	10.5	13.2	10.4	5.5	6.6	5.4	3.6	-34.4%	-72.6%	-17.3%

Source: B.C. Stats

**Table 5.6** – Total Value (millions \$) of **Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI)** Building Permits in the FVRD (2014- 2024)

Jurisdiction	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	3-Year % Change	5-Year % Change	10-Year % Change
<b>Fraser Valley RD</b>	136.0	142.7	137.7	231.3	332.8	274.2	334.4	274.4	385.5	344.6	699.5	154.9%	155.1%	414.3%
Abbotsford	75.1	88.4	48.5	107.7	217.7	139.5	157.6	146.9	249.2	157.4	422.7	187.8%	203.0%	462.5%
Chilliwack	43.4	32.7	65.3	101.5	83.6	88.1	133.5	98.6	80.5	117.2	157.9	60.1%	79.3%	264.1%
Mission	9.2	3.1	8.3	9.0	9.1	13.5	27.1	18.7	27.1	42.1	100.0	435.5%	640.6%	991.0%
Eastern FV and EAs	4.4	9.9	12.0	4.5	10.5	13.2	10.4	5.5	6.6	5.4	3.6	61.3%	-50.1%	98.5%

Source: B.C. Stats

### 5.3. Global Exports

Exports play a key role in the regional economy, driving industry growth, supporting jobs, and fostering connections with international markets. The movement of locally produced goods beyond national borders generates significant revenue, strengthens key industries, and enhances economic resilience. In the Fraser Valley, exports are particularly important given the region's strong manufacturing, agriculture, and wholesale trade sectors, which rely on access to global markets, especially the United States.

The FVRD's CMAs had a combined export value of \$2.2 billion, accounting for roughly 15.9% of the region's gross domestic product (GDP).

On an industry basis, manufacturing was by far the largest source of global exports, accounting for \$906 million (55%) of all exported goods in Abbotsford-Mission and \$409 million (69%) in Chilliwack. Other key sectors include wholesale trade and agriculture, accounting for a combined \$656 million (40%) in Abbotsford-Mission and \$169 million (29%) in Chilliwack.

While CMA-level export values for destinations other than the U.S. are unavailable, the top five export countries for all B.C. goods were the U.S., China, Japan, South Korea and India.

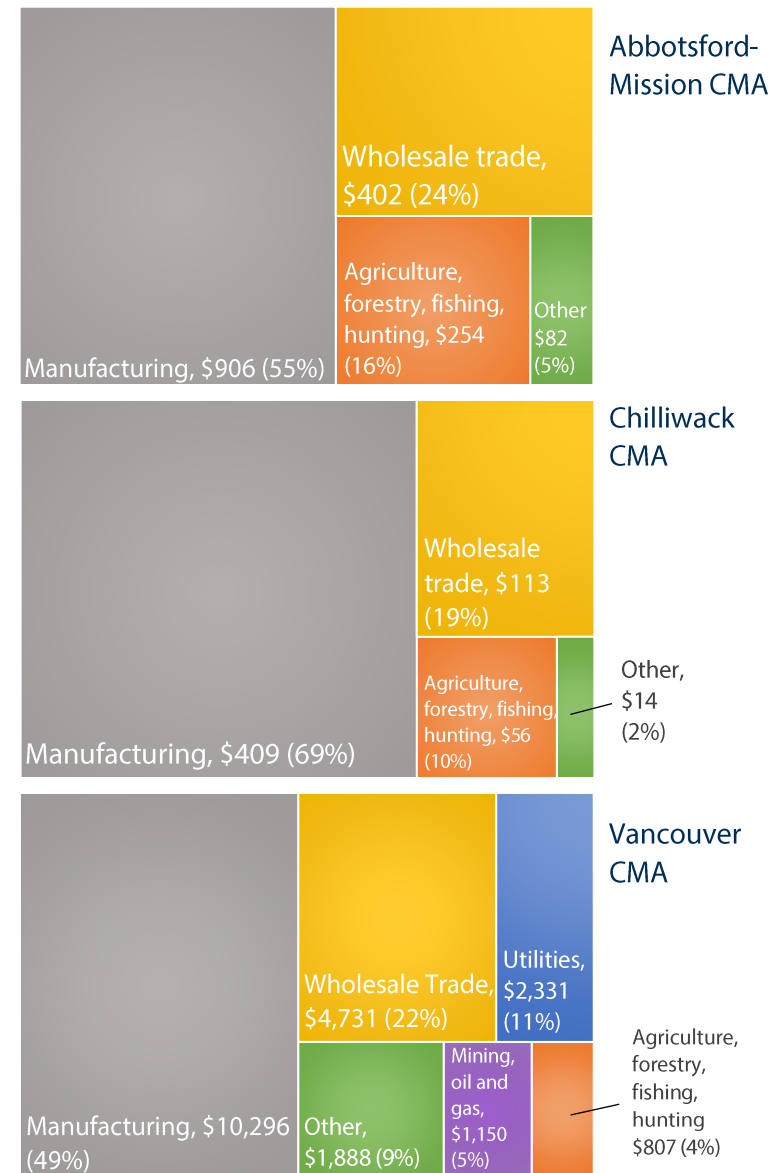
**Table 5.7** - Comparison of Goods Exported Relative to GDP by CMA\*

	Gross Domestic Product		Goods Exported	
	Total Value (\$)	Per Capita (\$)	Total Value of Exports (\$)	% of GDP from Exports
Abbotsford-Mission CMA	\$9.3 Billion	\$45,410	\$1.64 Billion	17.7%
Chilliwack CMA	\$4.8 Billion	\$40,680	\$592 Million	12.3%
Vancouver CMA	\$183.1 Billion	\$66,081	\$21.2 Billion	11.6%

\* Combines 2023 trade and population data with 2021 GDP data.

Source: Statistics Canada, Gross domestic product (GDP), 2021 and Statistics Canada, Trade in goods by exporter characteristics, 2023

**Figure 5.7** – Value (Millions \$) of Exported Goods by Industry and CMA (2023)



Source: Statistics Canada, Trade by Exporter Characteristics – Goods, 2023



## Impact of U.S. Tariffs

The Fraser Valley's deep economic ties to the U.S. are a result of its close proximity to the border and its strong manufacturing, wholesale trade and agricultural sectors. Export figures highlight the potential risk that trade restrictions could pose to the region's industries.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce Business Lab recently assessed which Canadian cities are most vulnerable to potential U.S. tariffs on exports. This vulnerability was measured based on the share of total exports destined for the U.S. and the value of those exports as a percentage of each city's GDP.

In 2023, Abbotsford-Mission exported \$1.49 billion worth of goods to the U.S., representing 90.7% of its total export value and 12.4% of total GDP. Chilliwack exported \$508.9 million in goods to the U.S., reflecting 85.9% of

its total export value and 8.5% of GDP. Similar to Chilliwack, 8.5% of Vancouver's GDP comes from the export of goods to the U.S.

While many of the most vulnerable cities were in Ontario, Abbotsford-Mission and Chilliwack were deemed the most vulnerable in B.C., ahead of CMAs like Vancouver, Victoria, Kamloops and Kelowna.<sup>17</sup>

Out of 41 Canadian cities or CMAs analyzed, Abbotsford-Mission CMA and Chilliwack CMA ranked 15th and 20<sup>th</sup>, respectively.

Diversifying export markets and strengthening domestic supply chains may help mitigate these risks and enhance economic resilience in the face of shifting trade policies, such as those noted in early 2025.

**Figure 5.8 - Importance of U.S. Exports by CMA**

### Abbotsford-Mission CMA

- \$1.49 billion in U.S. exports
- 90.7% of total exports to U.S.
- U.S. exports = 12.4% of GDP
- 330 local U.S. exporters

### Chilliwack CMA

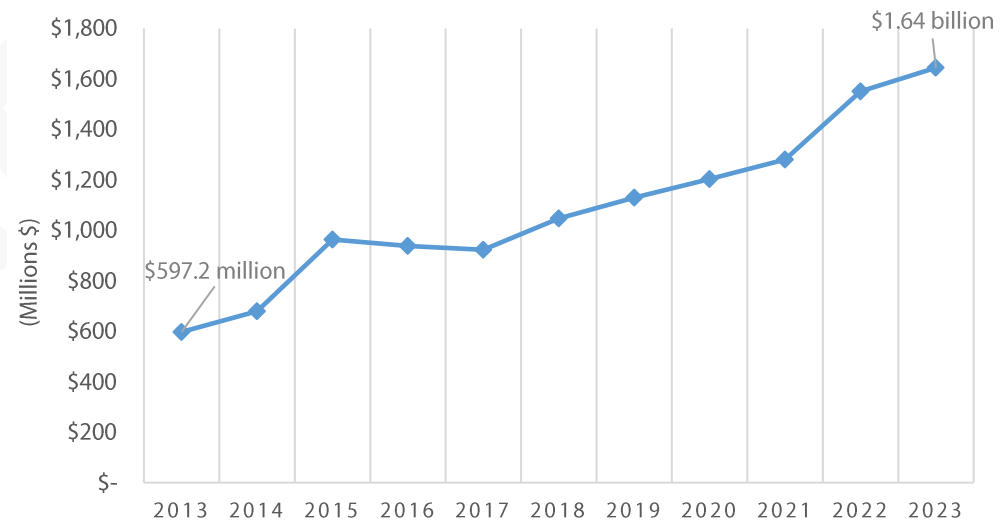
- \$508.5 million in U.S. exports
- 85.9% of total exports to U.S.
- U.S. exports = 8.4% of GDP
- 162 local U.S. exporters

### Vancouver CMA

- \$15.3 billion in U.S. exports
- 72.1% of total exports to U.S.
- U.S. exports = 8.5% of GDP
- 4,120 local U.S. exporters

Source: Which Canadian Cities Are Most Exposed to Trump's Tariffs, Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Business Data Lab, <https://bit.ly/43CaHQE>

**Figure 5.9 - Estimated Value (millions \$) of Globally Exported Goods, Abbotsford-Mission (2013-2023)**



Source: Statistics Canada, Trade by Exporter Characteristics – Goods, 2023

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

## 6. Glossary of Terms

- **Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR):** Protected farmland by the provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). Lands within the ALR are designated for agricultural use to prevent urban and non-agricultural development. Farming is encouraged on ALR and non-agricultural uses are restricted.
- **Agri-Tech:** The use of technology to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability. It addresses challenges such as rising food demand, land scarcity, and the effects of climate change on food security, with the goal of developing innovative solutions for a more resilient and efficient agricultural sector.
- **Baby boomer:** A person born between 1946 and 1964, during the post-World War II baby boom. For 65 years, they remained the largest generation in the Canadian population. This generation has had significant economic and cultural influence and is now reaching retirement age.
- **Building Permits:** Final authorization to start work on a building project granted by public authorities in response to an application by a principal and based on a specific building plan. This can be for new construction, improvements or alterations.
- **Business Counts:** Total number of registered businesses within a specified geographic area. This includes businesses with and without employees. Different types of organizations can be defined as a business such as: a corporation, a self-employed individual, a government entity, a non-profit organization, a partnership, or a financial fund.
- **Census Consolidated Subdivision (CCS):** A group of adjacent census subdivisions within the same census division. Generally, smaller, more densely populated areas are combined with surrounding, larger, more rural areas to create a geographic level between census subdivision and census division. Primarily used for disseminating Census of Agriculture data.
- **Census Division (CD):** Group of neighbouring municipalities joined together for the purposes of regional planning and managing common services. In British Columbia, these are referred to as Regional Districts.
- **Census Metropolitan Area (CMA):** Area of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a core. Must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more live in the core. (The FVRD has two– Abbotsford-Mission CMA and Chilliwack CMA)
- **Census Subdivision (CSD):** Municipalities or areas treated as municipal equivalents for statistical purposes (e.g., Indian reserves, Indian settlements, and unorganized territories). (The FVRD has many – six municipalities, eight unincorporated electoral areas, and thirty-one First Nations.)
- **Circular Economy:** An economic system focused on sustainability and minimizing waste through practices like reusing, repairing, remanufacturing, repurposing, or recycling products and materials. This contrasts with a linear economy, which follows a straight line from resource extraction to waste disposal.
- **Classified Business/Employment:** Businesses and jobs which were categorized into one of the 20 industry sectors as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) based on their primary business activity. While unclassified refers to any business or job for which a NAICS categorization could not be determined.

- **Clean Economy:** An economy that aims to reduce environmental risks and ecological scarcities, and that aims for sustainable development without degrading the environment. Industries or occupations within the clean economy include those that relate to renewable energy, recycling, clean manufacturing and design, transportation, green infrastructure, pollution remediation, waste management, and agriculture etc.
- **Commuter Flow:** The travel of a person or populations from their place of residence to their usual place of work within or to another municipality (i.e., census subdivision), census division (Regional District) or province or territory.
- **Crown Land:** Land, or land covered by water like rivers or lakes, that is owned by the provincial or federal government. It is sometimes referred to as public land. Crown land can be used for a variety of purposes such as resource development, recreation, conservation or research. Its use is regulated by provincial and federal laws and policies.
- **Dissemination Area (Census):** A small, relatively stable geographic unit composed of one or more adjacent dissemination blocks with an average population of 400 to 700 people.
- **Economic Diversification:** Expanding the range of industries in a region to reduce reliance on a single sector. Diversification can improve the resilience of an economy, specifically during periods of economic uncertainty or downturns.
- **Economic Growth:** An increase in the production of goods and services in an economy over time.
- **Electoral Areas:** Unincorporated areas within a Regional District governed by regional authorities rather than municipal governments.
- **Employment Lands:** Areas designated for businesses that generate jobs, occupied by a wide range of industrial, commercial and institutional uses. While agricultural lands are not typically classified as employment lands, facilities such as greenhouses and food processing plants can support a significant amount of employment.
- **Employment Participation Rate:** The percentage of the working-age population (age 15 years and over) that is either employed or actively looking for work.
- **Exports:** The goods and services that a country produces domestically, or within the borders of its own country, and sells to buyers in a foreign country.
- **Farm Operating Revenue:** The total income generated from the sale of agricultural products, including crops, livestock and other farm-related activities, reported to Canada Revenue Agency. Data is available per CCS every five years through the Census of Agriculture.
- **Food & Beverage Processing:** The use of methods and techniques involving equipment, energy, and tools to transform agricultural products such as grains, meats, vegetables, fruits and milk into food and beverage ingredients or processed food and beverage products.
- **Goods-Producing Industries:** Sectors involved in the production of physical goods, such as construction, manufacturing, and agriculture.
- **Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** A measurement of the total value of goods and services produced within a geographic area over a specific period of time. GDP is a key economic measure used by central banks and policymakers to make decisions about the economy.



- **Housing Starts & Completions:** Total number of residential housing projects that have been started or completed over a specific length of time. A housing start is defined as the beginning of construction work on the building where the dwelling unit will be located, usually at the stage when the concrete has been poured. While housing completion defines the point at which construction is finished, and the structure is ready for occupancy.
- **Indigenous-Owned Businesses:** Businesses that are majority-owned by Indigenous entrepreneurs or First Nations governments.
- **Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI):** Refers to the small, medium and large-sized businesses that operate on employment lands. Separation of building and facility types into industrial (e.g., warehouses), commercial (e.g., shopping malls) and institutional (e.g., schools) allows for the categorization of business activity.
- **Industrial Lands:** Lands which support heavy to light industrial uses and are typically occupied by businesses ranging from large transportation, distribution and manufacturing facilities to small local serving producers and suppliers.
- **Labour Force:** The total number of people who are employed or actively seeking employment. It excludes individuals who were not available to work or not looking for work, such as full-time students, people unable to work and retirees.
- **Manufacturing:** The process of chemically, mechanically, or physically transforming raw materials or substances into new products. These products may be either finished goods, ready for use or consumption, or semi-finished goods, which serve as raw materials for further production. Manufacturing establishments are commonly referred to as plants, factories, or mills, and include industries such as food processing.
- **Multi-Unit Housing:** A category of dwellings that accommodate multiple households within one building or structure. Common types of multi-unit housing include semi-detached houses, row houses or townhouses, and apartments.
- **Place of Work:** Refers to the location where an individual typically works. Individuals are classified in the Census as having either worked from home, worked outside of Canada, had no fixed workplace address or worked at a specific address (usual place of work).
- **Reserve Lands:** Lands designated for First Nations communities under federal jurisdiction. (There are 31 First Nations with reserve lands located within the FVRD's geographic boundaries; however, the FVRD has no governance pertaining to these lands.)
- **Service-Providing Industries:** Industry sectors that primarily earn revenue through providing services rather than physical goods, such as healthcare, finance, transportation, entertainment, education etc.
- **Tariff:** A tax put on imported goods or services coming from another country, which increases the prices paid by consumers and businesses.

## 7. Appendix - Commute Data

The following tables present commuting data from the Statistics Canada 2021 Census, detailing the number of employed individuals commuting within and between Census Subdivisions in the Lower Mainland (MVRD and FVRD). The data reflects commutes from a place of residence to a usual workplace and does not include commutes to and from First Nations.

### FVRD to FVRD Commutes\*

Place of Work	Place of Residence													
	Abbotsford	Chilliwack	Mission	Harrison Hot Springs	Kent	Hope	EA A	EA B	EA C	EA D	EA E	EA F	EA G	EA H
Abbotsford	31,685	3,915	2,850	25	110	50	0	0	40	50	80	100	75	75
Chilliwack	1,935	19,060	205	85	490	165	0	25	20	375	275	0	15	330
Mission	1,860	285	4,695	15	20	10	0	0	60	0	10	100	140	0
Harrison Hot Springs	0	120	10	120	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kent	110	725	45	95	655	60	0	0	25	25	25	10	0	10
Hope	40	275	0	25	65	1,150	0	60	0	15	0	0	0	0
EA A	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA C	10	30	10	10	10	0	0	0	35	0	0	0	0	0
EA D	20	60	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	40	0	0	0	0
EA E	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	0	0	0
EA F	10	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	65	0	0
EA G	30	0	70	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	100	0
EA H	60	575	0	10	15	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	95
<b>Total Commutes</b>	<b>35,760</b>	<b>25,095</b>	<b>7,895</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>1,435</b>	<b>1,435</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>510</b>

\*Light blue shading indicates number of internal commutes.

**FVRD to MVRD Commutes\***

Place of Work	Place of Residence													
	Abbotsford	Chilliwack	Mission	Harrison Hot Springs	Kent	Hope	EA A	EA B	EA C	EA D	EA E	EA F	EA G	EA H
Langley Township	5,650	870	900	10	35	0	0	0	10	15	10	0	40	15
Langley City	640	165	135	0	10	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	10
Surrey	3,160	875	880	10	10	55	0	10	25	0	25	20	10	30
White Rock	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delta	490	150	150	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Richmond	335	160	145	0	10	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Metro Vancouver A	15	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vancouver	530	195	330	0	15	20	0	0	10	0	0	15	0	0
Burnaby	555	245	275	0	15	20	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
New Westminster	215	60	65	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0
Coquitlam	370	65	270	0	10	0	0	0	20	0	0	15	0	0
Port Coquitlam	280	55	385	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	10	0
Port Moody	35	0	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Vancouver (District)	85	10	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Vancouver (City)	55	25	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Vancouver	10	15	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pitt Meadows	115	30	210	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maple Ridge	630	115	1,120	10	20	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	40	0
<b>Total Commutes</b>	<b>13,220</b>	<b>3,035</b>	<b>4,970</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>65</b>

\*There were no reported commutes to Anmore, Belcarra, Bowen Island or Lions Bay.



**MVRD to FVRD****Commutes\***

Place of Work	Place of Residence								
	Langley Township	Langley City	Surrey	White Rock	Delta	Richmond	Vancouver	Burnaby	New Westminister
Abbotsford	2,570	275	2,295	90	155	90	340	185	65
Chilliwack	235	30	180	10	50	10	65	45	10
Mission	125	10	155	15	15	10	20	25	10
Harrison Hot Springs	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kent	25	0	30	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hope	10	0	15	0	0	0	15	0	0
EA A	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA C	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0
EA D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA G	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA H	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Commutes</b>	<b>2,995</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>2,685</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>85</b>

Place of Work	Place of Residence								
	Coquitlam	Anmore	Port Coquitlam	Port Moody	North Vancouver (District)	North Vancouver (City)	West Vancouver	Pitt Meadows	Maple Ridge
Abbotsford	155	10	165	35	20	30	20	90	620
Chilliwack	30	0	0	15	15	0	0	0	90
Mission	60	0	45	20	0	0	0	30	485
Harrison Hot Springs	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
Hope	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
EA A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EA G	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
EA H	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Commutes</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>1,235</b>

\*There were no reported commutes from Belcarra, Bowen Island, Lions Bay or Metro Vancouver A

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**Fraser Valley Regional District**

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