

NEWS RELEASE

Government spending at Vancouver city hall 84% higher, per resident, than Surrey

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For immediate release

VANCOUVER—The City of Vancouver spends significantly more per resident—and collects much higher revenues per resident, too—than Surrey, the next largest municipality by population in the region, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“With municipal elections slated for October, our study helps residents in the greater Vancouver area better understand the state of their municipality’s finances and how they compare to other cities,” said Josef Filipowicz, senior policy analyst with the Fraser Institute and co-author of [Comparing Municipal Government Finances in Metro Vancouver, 2018](#).

The study compares 17 of the Metro Vancouver Regional District’s 21 municipalities on several measures—including government spending, revenue and debt—from 2007 to 2016, the most recent year of available data.

It finds West Vancouver had the highest level of government spending in 2016 at \$2,583 per person, followed by New Westminster (\$2,225) and Vancouver (\$1,944). Surrey, by contrast, was the lowest spender at \$1,057 per person, well below the regional average of \$1,549.

In other words, Vancouver, the most populated municipality in the region, spent 84 per cent more per person than Surrey, the region’s second most populated city.

Crucially, Vancouver also collected the third highest amount of revenue—\$2,693 per person—compared to Surrey, which collected the second lowest (\$1,673). Put another way, Vancouver collected 61 per cent more revenue per person than Surrey. And once again, West Vancouver topped the list, collecting \$3,253 in revenue per person.

Most of this revenue comes from property taxes on homes and businesses, user fees for services such as water and civic facilities, parking fees and levy fees on homebuilders and property developers.

“Ultimately, it’s up to the residents across the region to decide if they’re getting good value for their municipal tax dollars, but they need comparable information with other municipalities to help make that call,” said study co-author Charles Lammam, director of fiscal studies with the Fraser Institute.

Municipal government spending per person in Metro Vancouver (2016)

West Vancouver	\$2,583
New Westminster	2,225
Vancouver	1,944
Delta	1,823
District of North Vancouver	1,748
City of North Vancouver	1,691
White Rock	1,609
Port Moody	1,536
Burnaby	1,514
Richmond	1,508
District of Langley	1,442

City of Langley	1,309
Coquitlam	1,284
Port Coquitlam	1,235
Pitt Meadows	1,231
Maple Ridge	1,139
Surrey	1,057
Metro Vancouver Average	1,549

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