

north shore news

North Van is B.C.'s second-best place to work

North Van District scores high on BC Business analysis

Maria Spitale-Leisk / North Shore News

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The North Vancouver waterfront. Photo file, North Shore News

North Vancouver was recently named the second-best B.C. city to work in.

But the findings are skewed because they don't include information from the city, says the North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce president Louise Ranger. If both the city and district were included, North Vancouver could have topped the list, Ranger said. BC Business Magazine recently published a list of Best Cities For Work in B.C., based on seven economic indicators: income growth, average household income, population growth, labour participation, unemployment, level of education and transit usage. The data was compiled by Environics Analytics - a Toronto-based analytics firm that relies on information from sources like Statistics Canada.

While not every city in B.C. was included in the study, on the North Shore, only the District of North Vancouver was analyzed, and not the city.

"I think if they would have included both municipalities, we would be have been number one," said Ranger. "I find it surprising they only included the district, because the majority of businesses are actually in the city. I think it's skewed because they basically took out the entire centre core of our community."

That being said, Ranger is not surprised North Vancouver ranks high on the list of best places to work.

"I think that's pretty amazing, and I think that speaks to that live, work and play environment we have on the North Shore."

Opportunities for high-paying employment, a variety of industries to choose from, and being home to one of the largest commodities ports in the world all contribute to North Vancouver's employment success, according to Ranger.

The challenge, she added, is going to be attracting people to live here by adding affordable housing options and more public transit.

"A lack of good transportation does create barriers to attract good employees. The Mayors' Council transit plan is one good first step to get the additional buses we need," said Ranger.

North Van's employment survey numbers, compared to the other cities, found income growth over a five-year period was 12.52 per cent, the average household income was \$128,689, population growth is 7.33 per cent, unemployment is 5.98 per cent, labour participation was 65.84 per cent and transit usage is 14.71 per cent.

Also noteworthy in the survey, was the exclusion of the "bedroom community" of West Vancouver, where high incomes but a relatively small job market would have skewed the survey results, according to BC Business.

Trevor Melanson, associate editor for B.C. Business Magazine, said the average West Van household income, \$195,350, is so "astronomically high" that no matter how they analyzed the results West Van would always come out on top.

[West Van] was the first [city] we omitted," said Melanson. "We didn't want a city that was obviously a bedroom community to be the best city to live and work."

As for why North Van city data was not considered, Melanson said that speaks to the challenge of integrating data from both municipalities. "We went with the bigger one, we wanted a larger sample size," said Melanson. "My feeling is that it's a reflection of North Van as a whole." Fort St. John topped the list as B.C. best work city.

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How they calculated points:

For 5-year income growth, worth 30%, we multiplied the percentage increase by 150%.

For average household income, worth 20%, we divided incomes by 10,000.

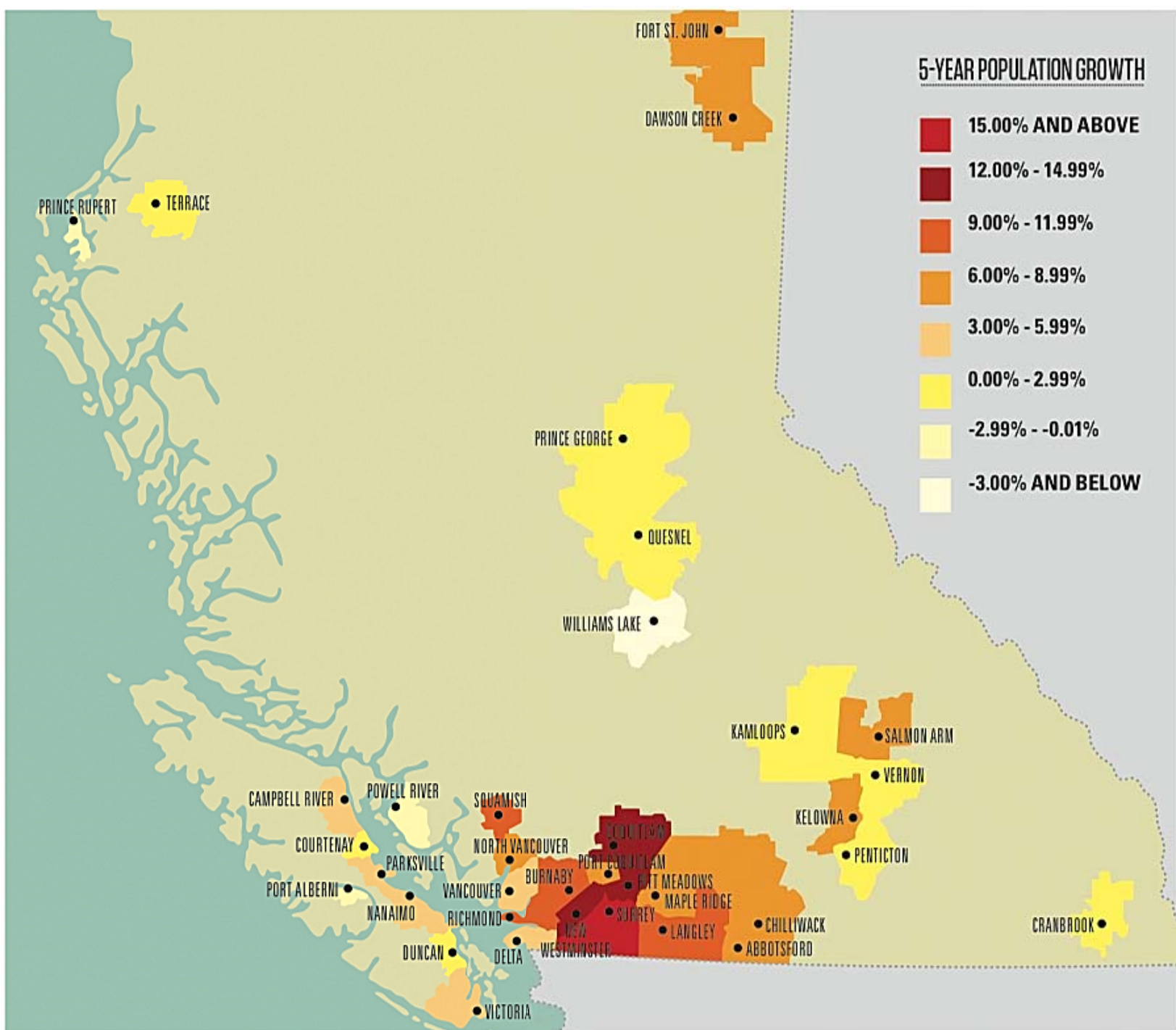
For 5-year population growth, worth 10%, we divided the percentage increase by two. Cities with a population decline received 0 points. For unemployment, worth 15%, we subtracted the rate from 15. So, a 10% unemployment rate equal 5 points, a 5% one, 10 points.

For labour participation, worth 10%, we divided the rate by 10.

For people with degrees, worth 10%, we multiplied the percentage by two then divided that number by 10.

Finally, for people using transit, worth 5%, we divided the percentage by 10.

Note: No sensitivity matrix was provided, so it is impossible to determine which factors were paramount in determining the outcome. The 5yr **7.33% population growth** in the DNV noted in the referenced article (<http://www.bcbusiness.ca/careers/best-cities-for-work-in-bc>) is noteworthy. cjk



15.00% AND ABOVE
Surrey.....15.36%

12.00% - 14.99%
Coquitlam12.83%
New Westminster...12.38%
Pitt Meadows.....12.30%

9.00% - 11.99%
Langley.....11.83%
Squamish11.28%

Burnaby11.06%
Richmond.....10.57%

6.00% - 8.99%
Maple Ridge8.88%
Chilliwack8.32%
Port Coquitlam7.94%
Abbotsford-Mission 7.57%
Dawson Creek7.50%
North Vancouver ..7.33%
Kelowna.....7.05%

Salmon Arm6.37%
Fort St. John6.34%

3.00% - 5.99%
Delta.....5.74%
Parksville5.58%
Vancouver4.54%
Victoria.....4.53%
Nanaimo4.42%
Campbell River....4.19%

0.00% - 2.99%
Courtenay.....2.47%
Duncan.....2.08%
Prince George1.45%
Quesnel1.06%
Kamloops0.47%
Penticton0.28%
Vernon0.13%
Terrace.....0.09%
Cranbrook0.03%

-2.99% - -0.01%
Port Alberni.....-0.78%
Prince Rupert-1.06%
Powell River-2.34%

-3.00% AND BELOW
Williams Lake.....-4.87%