REPORT

ECONOMIC BENEFITS ASSESSMENT

White Rock Farmers' Market

White Rock, British Columbia

2026

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SUMMARY

The White Rock Farmers' Market has experienced exceptional growth since its earliest days, as evident in Table 1. These details are from previous studies of the White Rock Farmers' Market in 2006, 2012, 2023, and 2026. The market's move, prior to 2023, to its current location in uptown White Rock at Miramar Village Plaza led to significant growth, doubling both market crowds and vendors. The expansion of the market for the 2026 season continued this trend, with market crowds almost doubling again.

Table 1. Summary of growth and development since 2006.

Year	Number of vendors	Daily visitors at peak	Number of annual shoppers
2006	45-50	~2,400	35,273
2012	60-75	~2,500	46,398
2023	150+	~5,000	105,416
2026	150+	~10,000	196,719

This sustained growth and development has culminated in a vibrant farmers market, which can be described as a destination farmers market. A destination farmers market is one that builds a wholesome shopping experience around the market's core function to sell and buy local farmers' products. A successful destination market attracts different groups of people, some shopping primarily for fresh, quality farm products and others enjoying the experience of a farmers market atmosphere. A destination market, like White Rock, usually complements nearby attractions, with each enhancing the other.

This report presents the findings from the assessment of economic benefits completed for the White Rock Farmers' Market on Sunday, August 9, 2026.

Highlights of results

- The expected total market sales in 2026 doubled since 2023.
    - In 2026, the estimated economic contribution of White Rock Farmers' Market sales to the local economy is between \$7.2 and \$7.6 million annually.
    - Total market sales in 2023 were \$3.7 million.
- The number of market attendees almost doubled since 2023.

  - The expected number of market attendees for the 2026 season, based on past and current trends, is between 197,000 and 206,000 adults.
  - The estimated number of market attendees on assessment day in 2026: 8,250.
- The average amount spent per shopper per visit in 2026: $49.22.
  - The average amount spent in 2023 was $47.30, after adjusting for inflation.
- The economic relationship between the White Rock Farmers' Market and neighbouring businesses is between $5.9 and $6.1 million annually.
- 44% of the survey respondents visit the market either regularly (almost weekly) or frequently (2-3 times per month).
- The market attracts a vibrant mix of new and loyal shoppers.
  - 39% of shoppers have been coming to the market for at least five years.
  - 26% of the shoppers on the day of the assessment started shopping at the market in 2026.
  - 18% of the shoppers on the day of the assessment were visiting for the first time.
- 73% of shoppers live in White Rock and South Surrey.
  - This percentage has declined since 2006, which is a positive indicator of the market attracting more people from further away.

The weather on the day of the assessment was very pleasant: sunny with temperatures in the low twenties. There were 153 vendors present.

Structure of report

The report begins with a short description of the White Rock Farmers' Market followed by a brief explanation of the methods used to complete the assessment. We then present details about market crowds over the past three seasons. The primary purpose of this report is to present the results of the "dot survey," which consists of five questions that we asked market attendees. We describe the results for 2026 and, whenever possible and appropriate, we compare the 2026 results with past studies. The White Rock Farmers' Market participated in province-wide studies of economic benefits in 2006, 2012, and 2023. These studies were led by Dr. Connell and based on the same methods, with only minor variations, which enables us to compare results. The 2026 results are also divided into two periods, the morning (10:00 am – 12:00 noon) and afternoon (12:00 noon – 2:00 pm). The last section presents the results of the economic contributions of the White Rock Farmers' Market through its direct sales.

DESCRIPTION OF MARKET

White Rock Farmers' Market

Market Website:
https://whiterockfarmersmarket.ca/

The description of the market from the website:

Welcome to our vibrant community-based farmers' market, where you'll find an array of vendor-produced goods, including fresh fruits and vegetables with a focus on locally-grown farm produce. We offer baked goods, preserves, garden products, specialty food items like organic cheese, local seafood, vegan foods, gourmet dog biscuits, and unique crafts made by local artisans. There's so much more to explore!

Enjoy a cup of fair trade coffee (or take home a bag) while experiencing live entertainment and various activities in a charming atmosphere in the heart of uptown White Rock. We offer plenty of parking, mostly free, and we're dog-friendly too.

Our market also provides a weekly space for non-profit organizations and hosts ongoing monthly special events. With over 185 vendors, we operate under a "make, bake, or grow" policy. The White Rock Farmers' Market Society is a non-profit organization and a proud member of the BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM). We run for 26 weeks each year, from April through October.

Availability:	Open Sundays from April 19 to October 11, 2026
# Vendors:	150+
Location:	Miramar Plaza and Russell Avenue and Johnston Road between Russell and Thrift Avenue
Contact Info:	Patti Oldfield, Market Manager (604) 842-5698 info@whiterockfarmersmarket.ca 15154 Russel Avenue, White Rock, BC V4B 2P6

RESEARCH METHODS

The assessment of the White Rock Farmers' Market is based on a method called Rapid Market Assessment (RMA), a technique developed by researchers at Oregon State University for studying farmers markets. This method has been used by Dr. Connell to study farmers markets in BC since 2006. The study of the White Rock market in 2026 is based on a "dot" survey.

<u>Dot survey</u>

The dot survey engages shoppers in friendly interaction through multiple-choice questions posted in large print on paper pads at eye level. Figure 1 shows the dot survey for the assessment at White Rock Farmers' Market. The colourful dots appeal to market shoppers, thus encouraging them to participate in the study and requires little effort to recruit participants. For example, researchers ask, "Have you done the dots?", then explain, "Five dots, five questions, one dot per question." When answering the questions, participants are asked to provide answers for their family. People living in the same house but buying their own food could answer questions for themselves. This approach has a high response rate, thereby increasing validity and accuracy.

Figure 1. Dot survey set up at White Rock Farmers' Market, August 9, 2026.

For the dot survey in White Rock, we asked five questions, as listed in Box 1. The first four questions were developed by the research team and have been asked as part of studies of markets in British Columbia since 2006. Asking the same questions at all markets enables us to compare results over time and against other markets. The White Rock market developed the fifth question, which was also asked as part of the benefits assessment completed in 2023, with a variation of this question asked in 2006 and 2012.

Box 1. Dot survey questions

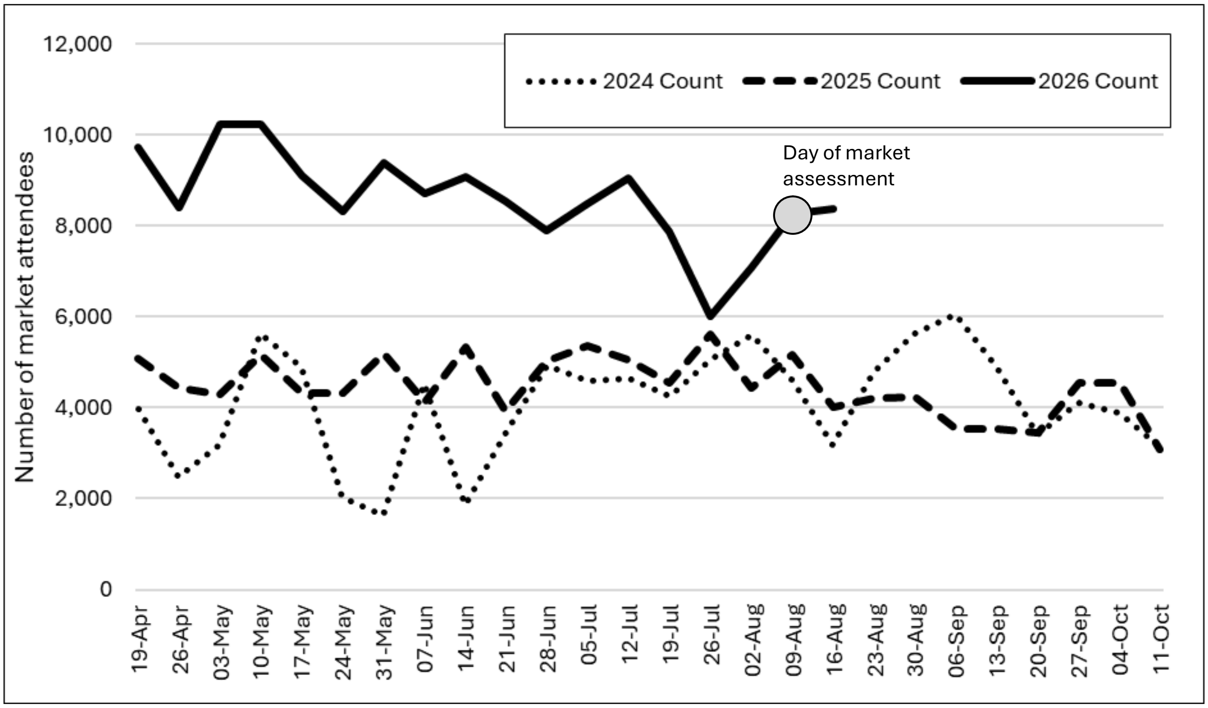
1. How much have you spent, or do you plan to spend, at the market today?
2. How often do you come to this farmers market?
3. When did you start shopping at this market?
4. If you do additional shopping or eating in the neighbourhood because you stopped at the market, how much do you plan to spend?
5. Where do you live?

CROWD COUNTS

On a weekly basis, the White Rock market completes crowd counts. They count all adults entering the market at each major entry point. The market provided their crowd count data for this assessment. As shown in Chart 1, the size of crowds was twice as high as the previous two years during the first month of the 2026 season. The general trend is downward up to the day of the assessment, with a particularly low count on July 26. The crowd count the day of the assessment was 8,250. Chart 1 also includes results for the full season in 2024 and 2025. The total number of attendees was similar for both years, although the weekly counts in 2024 were more variable.

Based on informal observation, we counted attendees as either men or women. We counted 64% of attendees as women, which is consistent with a broad range of past studies of farmers market attendees.

Chart 1. Crowd counts for 2024, 2025, and 2026 (year-to-date).



RESULTS OF DOT SURVEY

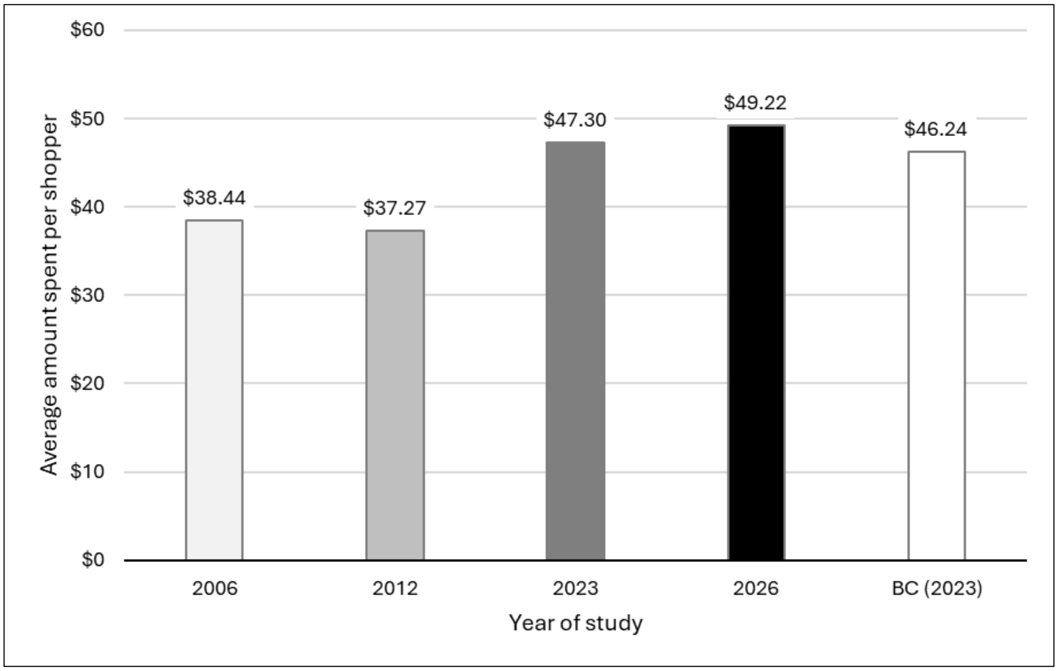
For White Rock, about 860 shoppers participated in the dot survey, which is a 10.5% response rate based on the number of shoppers who completed the dot survey against the estimated number of households who attended the market on the day of assessment. This response rate is the same as that achieved during the province-wide study in 2023.

In this section of the report, we present the responses to each of the five dot survey questions. We focus on the 2026 results while also comparing the results to previous studies, when possible and appropriate. We then present the 2026 results broken down between the morning and afternoon shoppers.

Question 1. How much have you spent, or do you plan to spend, at the market today?

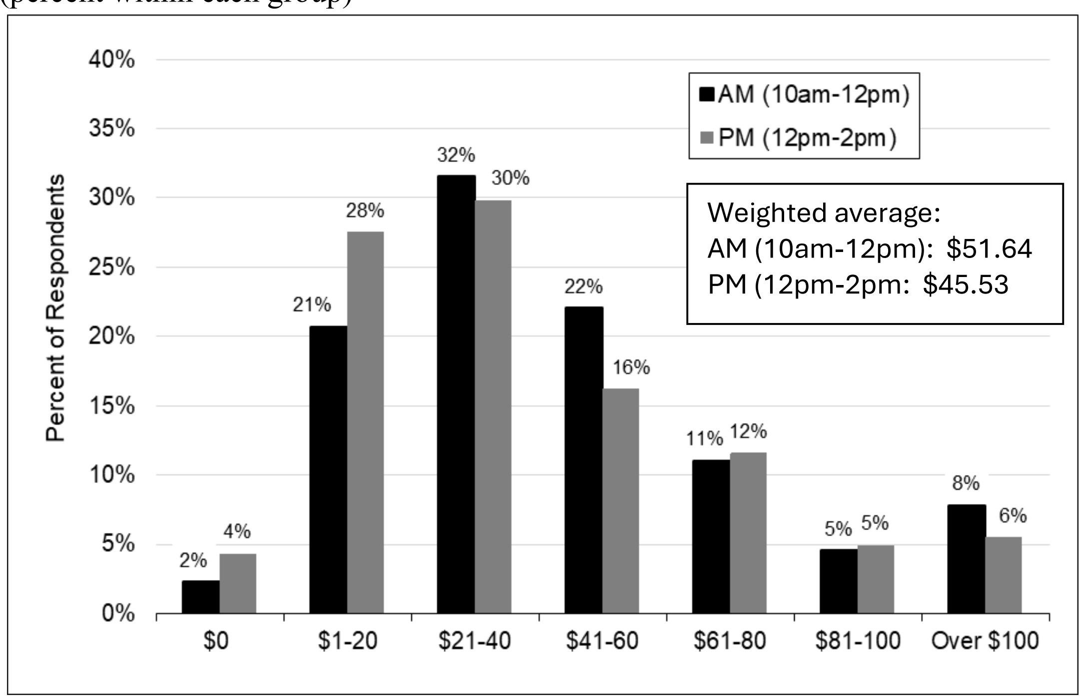
Overall, respondents spent an average[i] of $49.22 on the day of the assessment, which is higher than what was spent in 2023. Chart 2 compares the result from 2026 with past studies at White Rock, as well as the 2023 result for British Columbia (all adjusted for inflation). We see a significant increase between 2012 and 2023, which was likely influenced by the change of the market's location to Miramar Plaza. According to a broad range of studies on farmers markets, shoppers tend to spend more when there are more vendors.

Chart 2. Average amount spent by market shoppers by year of study (adjusted for inflation).



For 2026, the morning shoppers spent more than afternoon shoppers: $51.64 versus $45.53, respectively (Chart 3). For all shoppers, most customers (57% of all shoppers) spent up to $40 at the market that day.

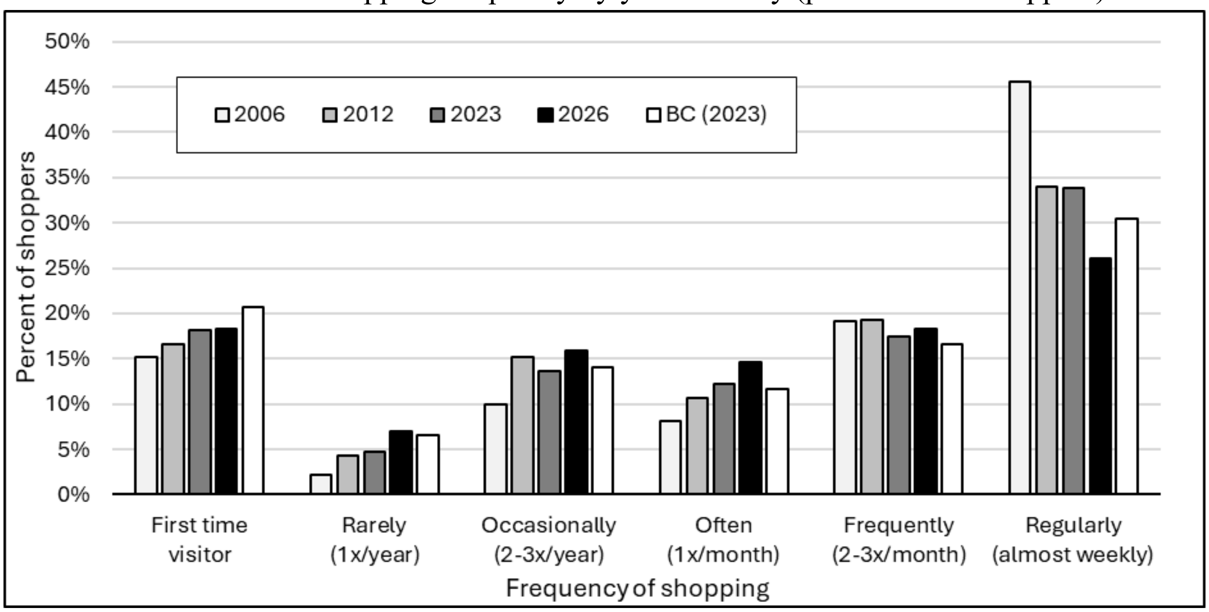
Chart 3. Distribution of amount spent at the market by morning and afternoon groups (percent within each group)



Question 2. How often do you come to this farmers market?

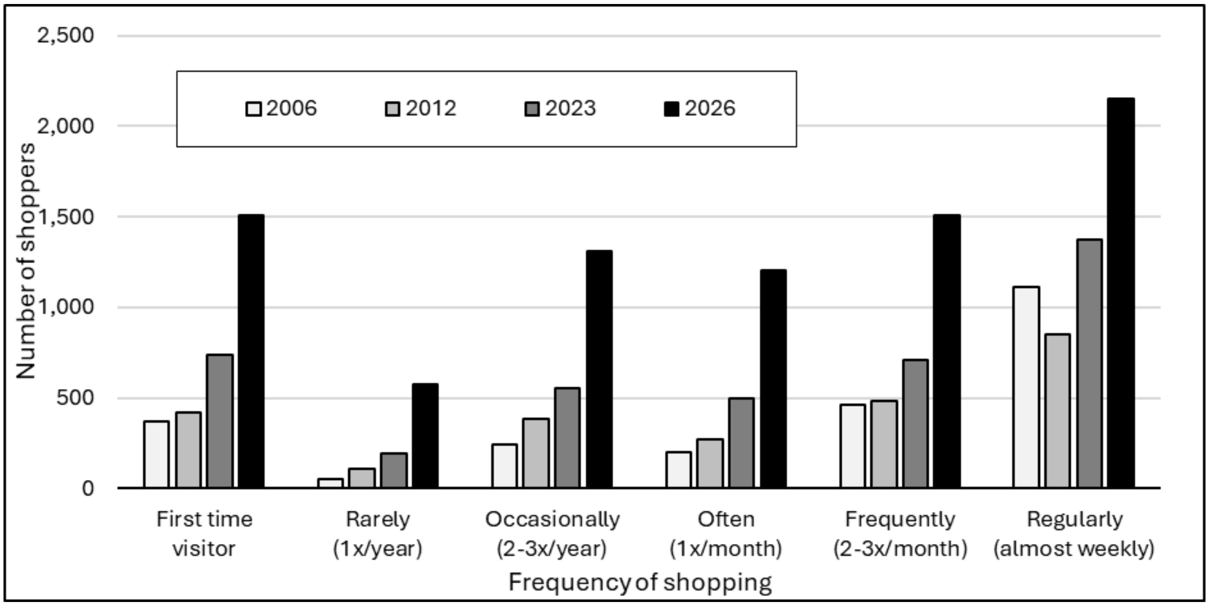
Chart 4 shows the results for how frequently shoppers attend the White Rock market. Looking only at the 2026 results (black), the White Rock market has a broad distribution in the frequency of visits, with Regular shoppers accounting for the highest percentage. About one in four customers (26.1%) shop regularly at the market. First Time visitors to the market account for 18.3% of respondents. This profile of how often people shop at the White Rock market is similar to the provincial distribution. Over time, we can see that since 2006 there has been a steady increase in the percentages of shoppers among the lower-frequency categories. This result indicates that White Rock has successfully cultivated a loyal base of shoppers over the years.

Chart 4. Distribution of shopping frequency by year of study (percent of all shoppers).



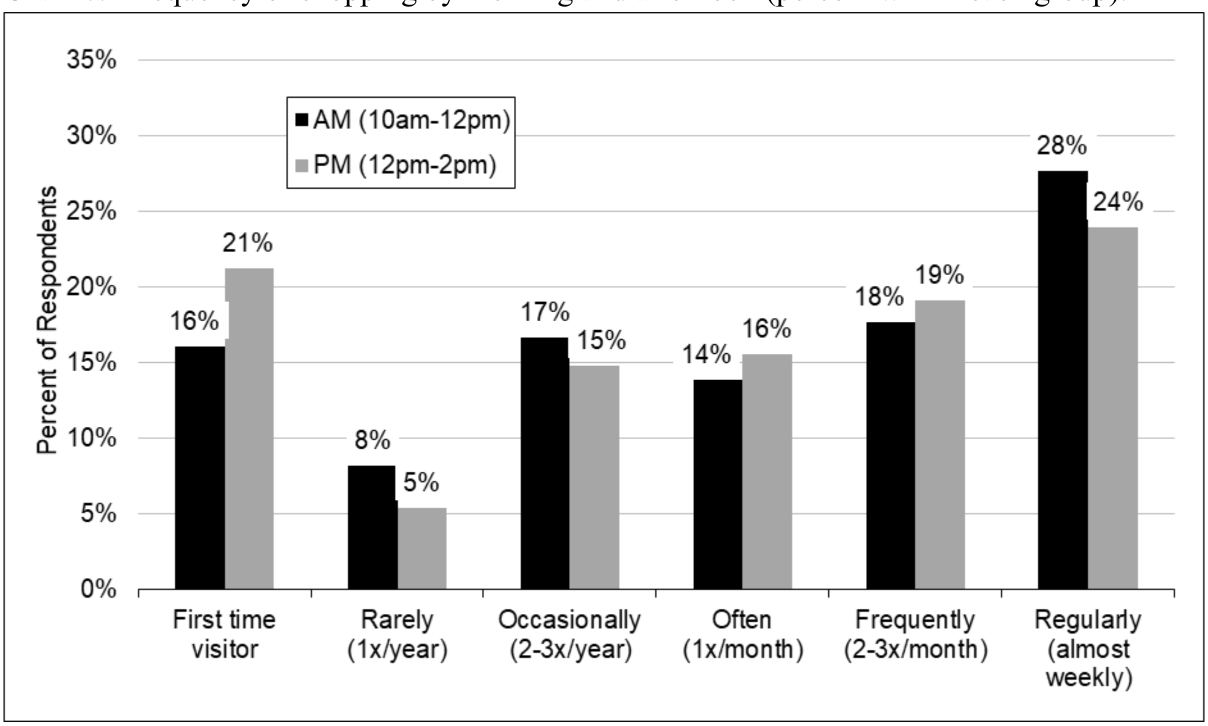
The lower percentage of Regular shoppers shown in Chart 4 above might look like a negative outcome. However, this is not the case; it is a positive outcome, as evident in the next chart. Rather than show percentages of all shoppers, the results shown in Chart 5 represent the absolute number of shoppers in each category. These numbers are based only on the day of the assessment for each year of study. Three points are worth noting. As evident by the higher black bars across all categories, the White Rock market attracted more shoppers across the board. About 1,500 visitors were First Time shoppers on the day of the assessment, which is important because many first-time shoppers are still showing up two-thirds of the way through the season. For Regular shoppers, we can see that the number of these shoppers also increased significantly compared to 2023 and previous years.

Chart 5. Number of shoppers by frequency of shopping by year of study



The distributions of shopping frequency are similar between the morning and afternoon groups (Chart 6). Slightly more Regular shoppers attend in the morning and more First Time shoppers attend in the afternoon.

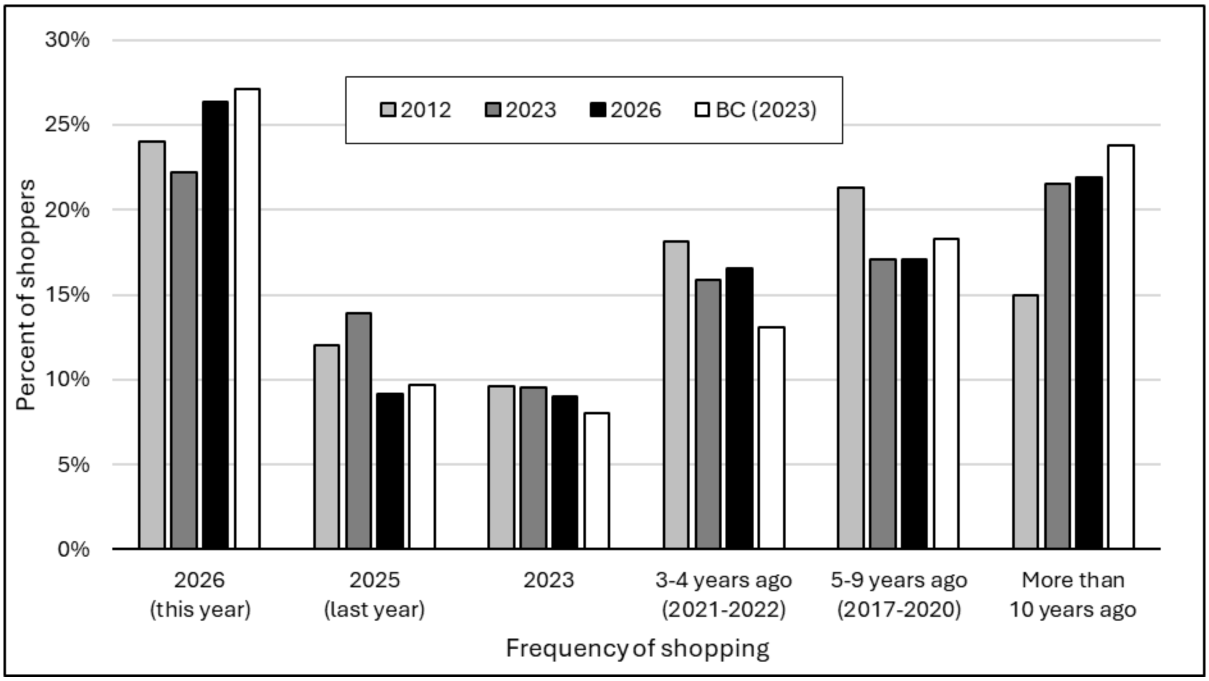
Chart 6. Frequency of shopping by morning and afternoon (percent within each group).



Question 3. When did you start shopping at this farmers' market?

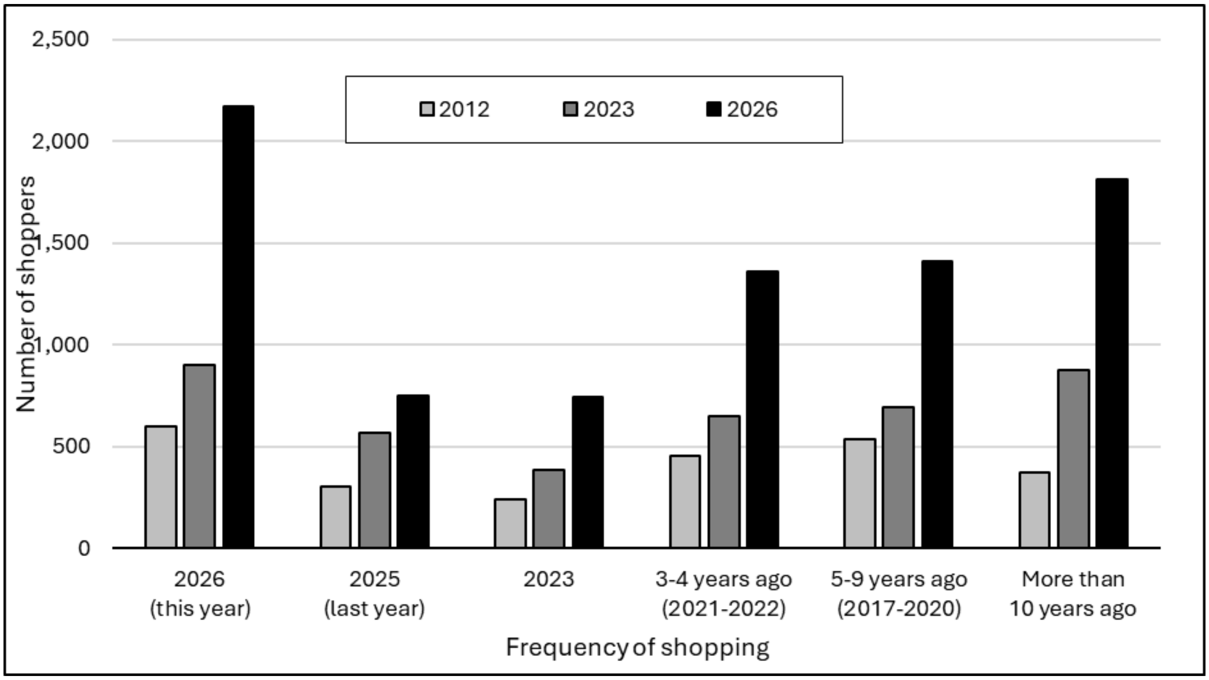
As shown in Chart 7, the market has a good portion of long-time, loyal customers. Of all customers surveyed, four in ten shoppers (39%) have been coming to this market for five years or more, including 22% of all respondents who have been coming to the market for more than 10 years. In addition to the long-time regulars, there were also 26% of respondents started shopping at the White Rock market this year. Comparing results across all years of study, the distribution is very similar.

Chart 7. Distribution of shoppers by year they started shopping at White Rock (percent within each group).



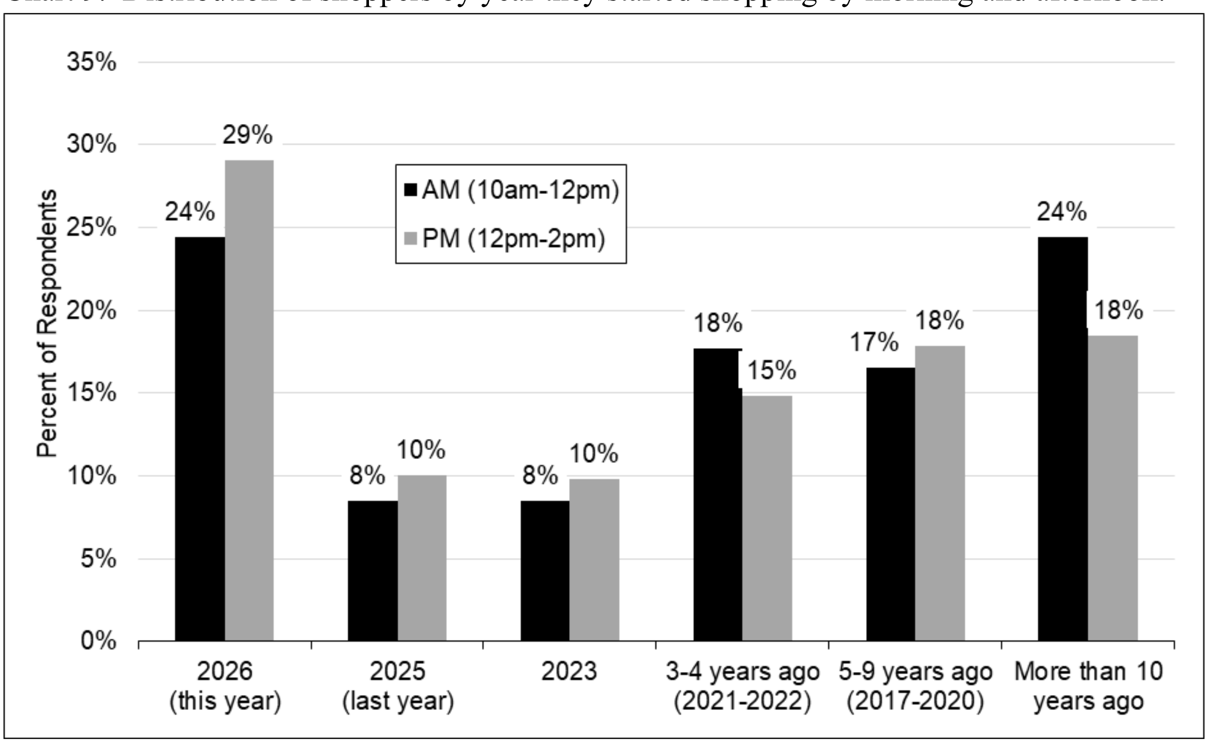
While the percentages are helpful to compare results across different years, the absolute numbers of shoppers in each category provide different insights. As shown in Chart 8, significantly more people started shopping this year, which is expected given the dramatic increase in the total number of shoppers. The number of shoppers in each category increased across all categories on the day of the assessment. Here again we see the market is attracting more shoppers from every category. It is not just more new people who are showing up but also returnees.

Chart 8. Number of shoppers by year they started shopping at White Rock by year of study.



Regarding when people started shopping at the White Rock market, the distributions are similar between the morning and afternoon groups (Chart 9). Slightly more Regular shoppers attend in the morning and more First Year shoppers attend in the afternoon.

Chart 9. Distribution of shoppers by year they started shopping by morning and afternoon.



Question 4. If you plan to do additional shopping or eating while in this area of town today, how much do you plan to spend?

This question is asked as part of the province-wide studies; however, every market's location is different, which leads to different interpretations of the results. For White Rock, the market is closely integrated with many adjacent businesses in a relatively small and dense area. In this context, the amount of additional spending can be interpreted as a reflection of this close relationship. Most likely, the market brings people to the area while the area also brings people to the market.

Chart 10 shows the average amount spent by market customers at neighbouring businesses for 2026 compared with the results of past studies. All results are adjusted for inflation. In 2026, the average amount spent per customer was $41.69, which is a significant decline from 2023. One contributing factor is that a higher proportion of shoppers did not spend any additional money at neighbouring businesses (Chart 11). Perhaps many of the First Time shoppers to the market were there to experience the market without specific plans to do additional shopping. These kinds of shoppers would lower the average for all shoppers.

Chart 10. Average amount spent at neighbouring businesses by year of study (adjusted for inflation).

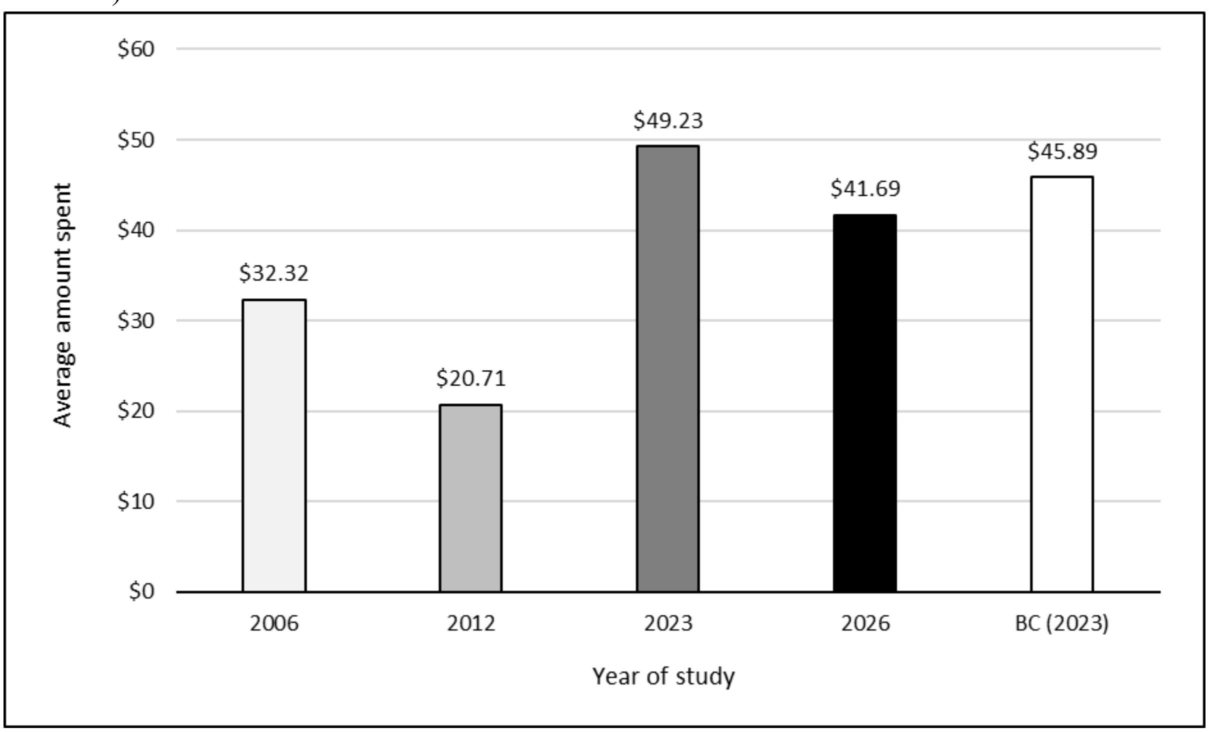


Chart 11. Distribution of spending by shoppers at neighbouring businesses by year of study (percent of all shoppers).

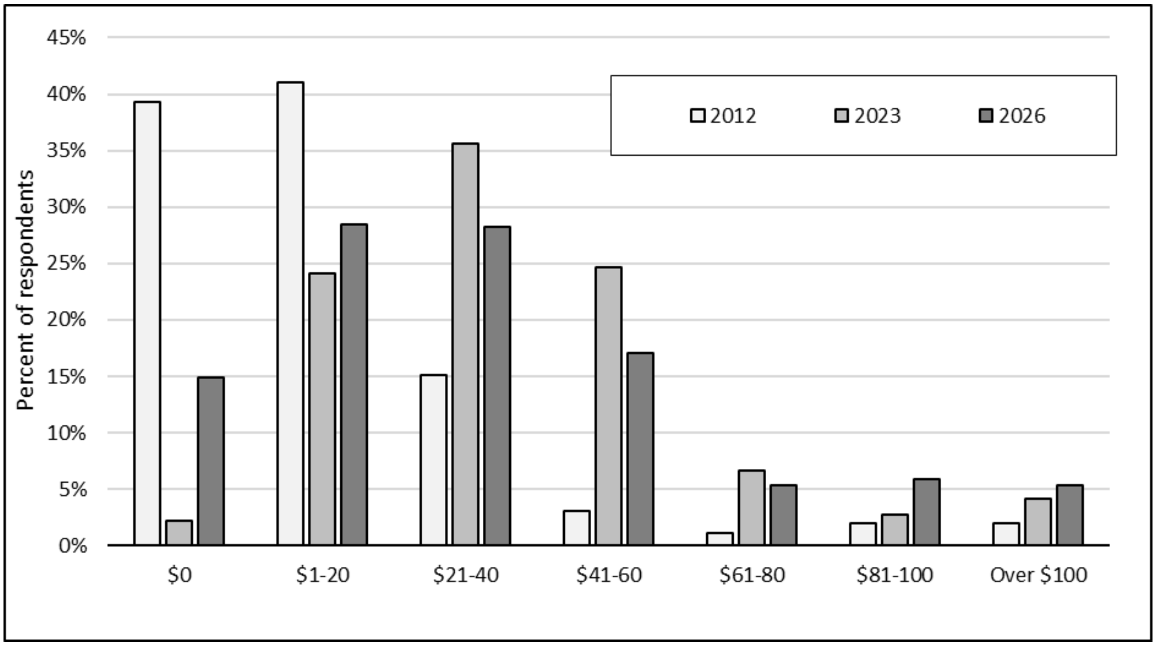


Chart 12 shows the level of shopping activity at neighbouring businesses for each year of study on the day of the assessment. This chart compares the actual number of shoppers spending additional money. Because of the larger crowds, there is a higher level of shopping activity across all spending categories, even though the average amount spent is lower.

Chart 12. Distribution of shopper spending at neighbouring businesses on the day of the assessment by year of study (percent of all shoppers).

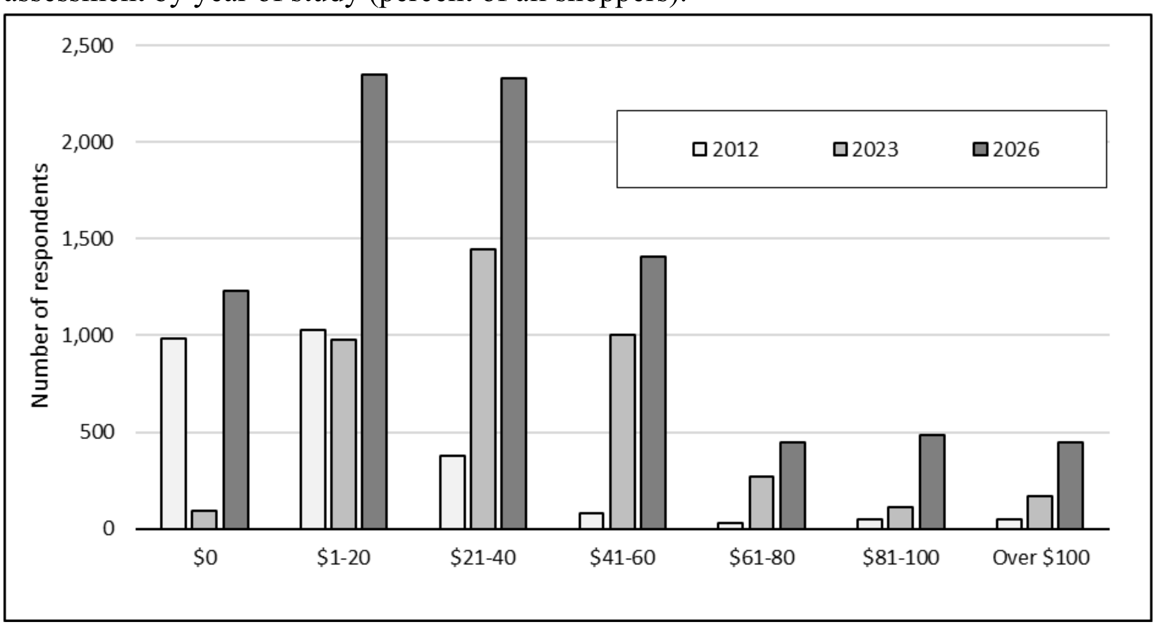
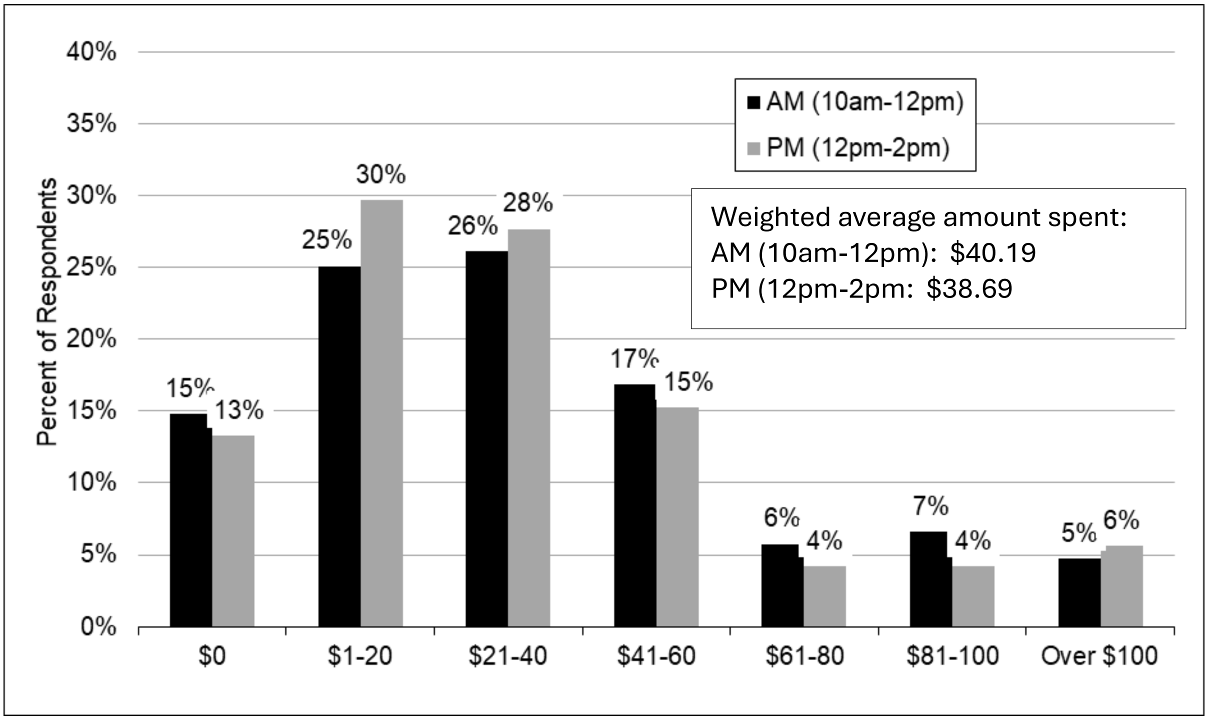


Chart 13 shows the distribution of additional spending by market customers at neighbouring businesses divided between morning and afternoon groups. Morning shoppers spend more than afternoon shoppers: $40.19 versus $38.69, respectively. When combined with results above, we see that morning shoppers also include more Regular shoppers. This relationship between higher spending and higher frequency of shopping is consistent with other studies of farmers market shoppers.

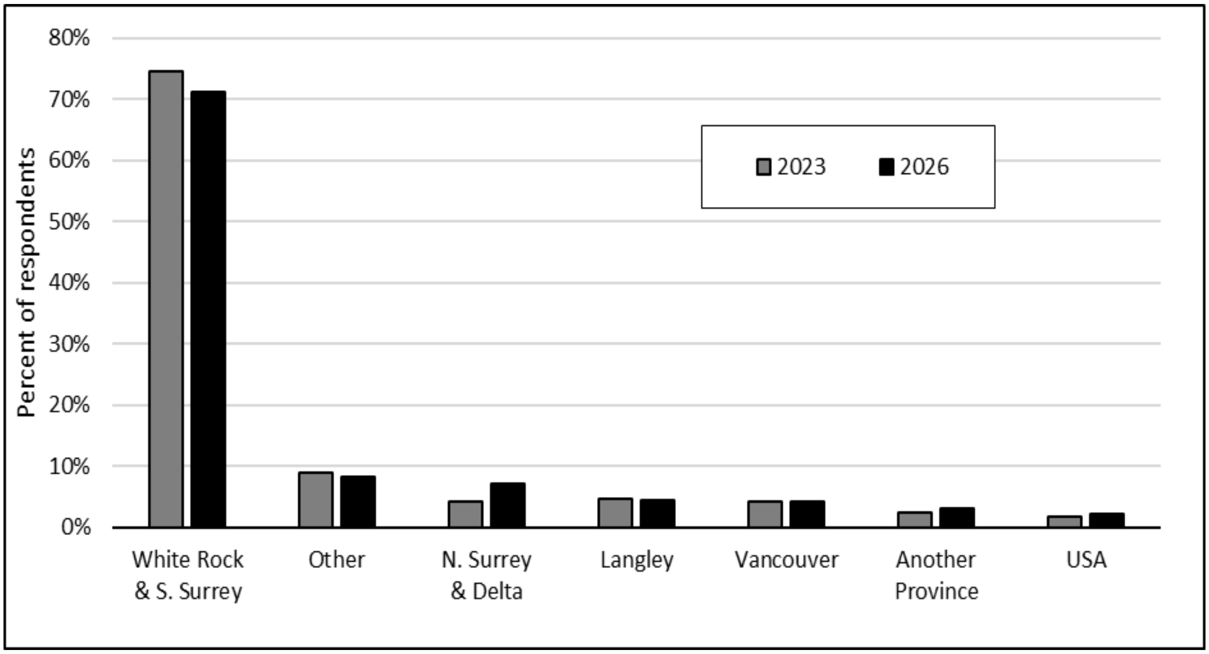
Chart 13. Distribution of shoppers spending at neighbouring businesses (percent of all shoppers by morning and afternoon groups).



Question 5. Where do you live?

Chart 14 shows the responses to the question about where shoppers live. In 2026 and 2023, the market used the names of cities. In the 2006 and 2012 studies, the version of this question asked about postal codes. The three postal codes of V4A, V4B, and V4P are approximately equivalent to the White Rock and South Surrey category. Across each year of study, starting with 2006, the percentage of people from the local area dropped from 88% to 79% to 73% and, in 2026, to 70%. These declining numbers mean the market is slowly drawing a higher percentage of people from areas further away.

Chart 14. Distribution of where people live, 2023 and 2026 (percent of all shoppers).



ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

The information collected in this assessment enables us to measure the contributions of the White Rock Farmers' Market to the local economy. In this study we measure economic contributions as an estimate of the total annual sales at the market, i.e., the total amount spent directly at the market by shoppers.

Direct annual market sales are calculated as follows:

Average expenditure by customer X Number of spending customers per session[ii] X Number of sessions per year[iii] X Seasonal factor

The seasonal factor accounts for varying sales/crowd levels across a season. For a regular spring-to-fall season, markets generally start off slow and peak for a number of weeks during the summer and then decline. This trend is applicable for most markets and can be used to estimate future sales. The seasonal trend for White Rock in 2026 is very different and less predictable.

Given this uncertainty, we calculated economic contributions for the full season based on two scenarios. The first scenario is based on the trend of year-to-date crowd counts in 2026. The second scenario is based on the general trend for market crowds for the combined full seasons of 2024 and 2025. The estimates for the two scenarios are as follows:

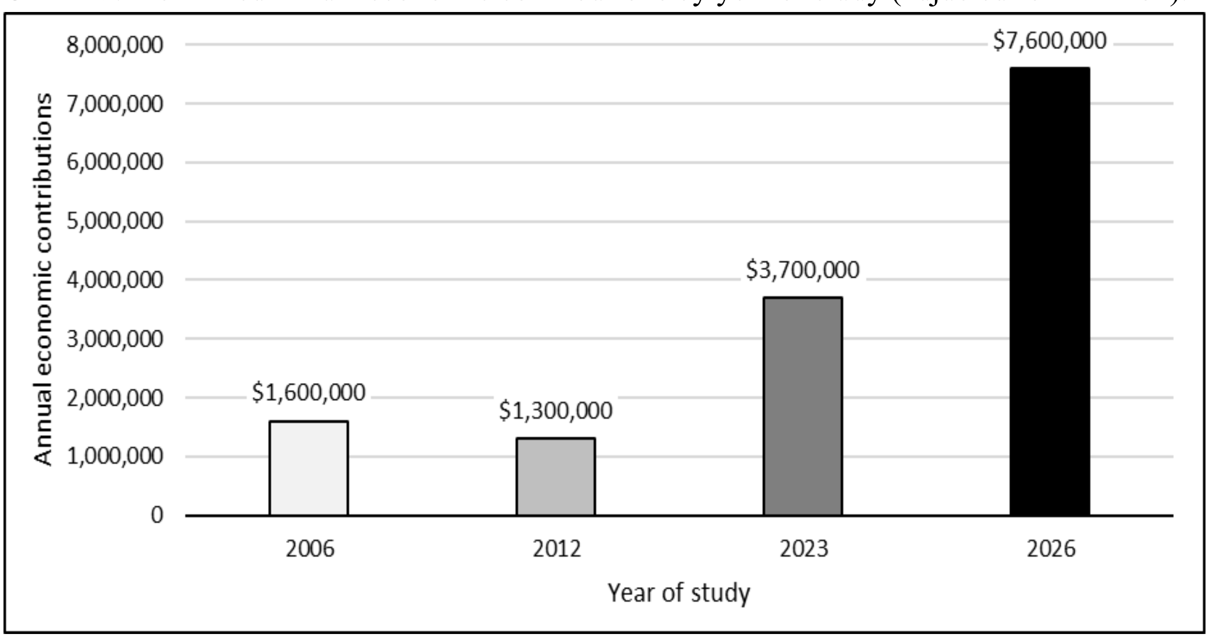
<u>Scenario 1: 2026 trend</u>
$49.22 per customer visit X 147,539 spending customers X 26 (adjusted) sessions
Annual economic contributions (2026): $7.26 million

<u>Scenario 2: 2024-2025 trend</u>
$49.22 per customer visit X 154,455 spending customers X 26 (adjusted) sessions
Annual economic contributions (2026): $7.60 million

These calculations mean that the White Rock Farmers' Market will contribute between an estimated $7.26 and $7.6 million to the local economy in 2026. These monies benefit not only market vendors but also the local businesses that supply these vendors.

Chart 15 shows the estimated annual economic contributions for the White Rock Farmers' market for all studies since 2006, adjusted for inflation. After a drop from 2006 to 2012, the economic contributions almost tripled in 2023 with the move to the new location. Since 2023, the economic contributions is expected to double again, increasing between 96% and 103%. This increase is due to the combined effect of larger market crowds and increase in the average amount spent per shopper.

Chart 15. Estimated annual economic contributions by year of study (adjusted for inflation).



FUNDING DISCLOSURE

The White Rock Farmers' Market funded this study. The market paid for supplies, covered the travel costs of Dr. Connell, and assisted Dr. Connell with the support of the Market Manager. Dr. Connell was not paid for his service. The market recruited volunteers to help implement the on-site assessment.

END NOTES

[i] The average spent per customer is weighted by category based on results of a national study of farmers' markets completed in 2008.

[ii] This is based on the estimated crowd count. However, not all people attending the market are included in the calculation. Some people may not spend any money while other people included in the crown count are members of the same household and should not be double-counted. Based on results of the national study of farmers' markets in Canada in 2008, we estimate that 75 per cent of the crowd count is considered a paying customer.

[iii] Includes special days, if any, such as 'Christmas markets'.