

White Rock Homelessness Count and Lived Experience Summary

On April 16 and 17, 2021 the White Rock RCMP conducted a point-in-time count of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness in the city. This count did not include individuals living in shelters, transitions houses, safe houses, or temporarily in other people's homes. With our knowledge of the many secluded spots in White Rock, we went into bushes, parks, around condos, vacant buildings, in parkades, alleys, and around businesses. We located four individuals during these patrols and engaged in conversations to better understand life from their perspective, as well, we discussed barriers to reaching their individual self-actualization. As point-in-time counts having limitations, the officers at the detachment were also canvassed regarding their encounters with people experiencing homelessness over the last two months in White Rock. 24 individuals in total were identified as being unsheltered. Many of our officers have a rapport with these individuals allowing for candid sharing of their experiences.



What we can share:

- Of the 24 individuals, 33% (8) are female and 66% (16) are male. The ethnicity was predominately Caucasian (92%).
- 25% (6) of individuals have a familial history in White Rock or were previously housed in White Rock.
- 75% (18) of individuals are more connected to Surrey or beyond, and normally have an outdoor camp or overnight with inconsistent hosts in Surrey. Many identified White Rock as being the area south of 24th Avenue (16th Ave is the Northern boundary of White Rock).
- The attraction to White Rock included the calm atmosphere, the proximity to the ocean, and the availability of outdoor electrical outlets.
- For many, fentanyl or methamphetamine has been a predominant factor in becoming or remaining unsheltered.
- Some would not take substance use treatment if offered, others felt that there was not immediate access to treatment when they were at the point of accepting it.
- 29% (7) of the individuals had mental health challenges that the officers believed were so acute that reasonable dialogue was difficult.
- Approximately a third of the individuals avoided shelters due to conflict with other people, or they found it challenging to stay in a structured environment.

Officers in White Rock continue to provide a compassionate service to this marginalized population within the community. Our ongoing participation and communication on this subject, to government and other agencies, is aimed at advancing this complex issue.