



TOURISM SMITHERS

STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

Operating Year 2022



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT) Program is a funding tool at the provincial level that is available for tourism marketing by eligible destinations. The program is jointly administered by the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture & Sport and Destination BC and is intended to help grow BC revenues; specifically, local economies, visitation and jobs as well as amplify BC's tourism marketing efforts. The 3% MRDT tax collected in Smithers provides revenues from short-term accommodation providers that in turn are used for strategic marketing activities and projects.

The Town of Smithers has been receiving the MRDT since 1991. Through a service delivery contract between the Town of Smithers and Tourism Smithers, the municipality administers MRDT funds to the designated recipient; Tourism Smithers. Tourism Smithers has been the benefactor of the MRDT funds since the year 2000, and the resources are a major contributor to the marketing and promotion strategies of the organization.

The 2023 survey was comprised of 19 questions, aimed at determining:

- Tourism Smithers alignment with Destination BC.
- Stakeholder measurement of awareness of marketing activities delivered by Tourism Smithers in 2022.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with MRDT
- Stakeholder satisfaction with service provider, Tourism Smithers in 2022
- Identification of stakeholder perception of key barriers to tourism growth.
- Stakeholder recommendations on future program planning and product development.
- Impact of COVID-19 on stakeholder business operations.

The survey was distributed to **134** community stakeholders representing the broad local tourism base that included government, local businesses and industry related services. Also, to note:

- **8** bounce back emails, finalizing the total number of recipients to be **126**.
- There were **29** respondents.
- Average length of time to complete the survey was 15 minutes.

The response rate to the Stakeholder Survey was **23%**. This was a lower response rate than received in 2022 (reflecting the 2021 operational year), however, the survey was distributed to 40 more stakeholders. The lower response rate may have been the result of the industry experiencing a high volume of surveys being distributed by other organizations during the same period, as well as operators commenting on limited resources to dedicate time away from their day-to-day demands to complete the survey.

	No. of surveys	No. of respondents	Bounce back surveys	Response Rate
2019	84	20	3	24.7%
2020	90	43	6	26%
2021	86	24	8	28%
2022	126	29	8	23%

As with the previously conducted Tourism Smithers stakeholder surveys, the results of this survey will help to provide insight to the level of satisfaction held by Tourism Smithers stakeholders with regards to program deliverables and use of the MRDT funds in the 2022 operating year and to understand the impact and ongoing challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as ensure the ability for the organization to deliver effective programs that target desired audiences with destination marketing initiatives aimed at increasing awareness to the destination, increasing visitation, extending stays and stakeholder recovery.

METHODOLOGY

An online survey was developed via *Survey Monkey* and the planning steps were initiated to Destination BC and Tourism Smithers for feedback on April 11, 2023.

Additional recommendations were incorporated into the final survey which was distributed on April 17th, 2023 through to May 19th, 2023. Reminders were sent to recipients on May 4th and May 17th. The stakeholder survey supports the 2022-2027 Business Plan and the survey results will be considered in the 2024 Tactical Plan.



SURVEY ANALYSIS

The following is an analysis of the survey data specifically relating to awareness of Tourism Smithers and the organizations project deliverables in 2022 as well as an interpretation of the questions results.

1. Overall, how familiar is your organization with the projects and programs delivered by Tourism Smithers? Please rate on a scale of 1 - 4 where 1 - Not aware at all and 4 - Very aware

	NOT FAMILIAR AT ALL	SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR	FAMILIAR	VERY FAMILIAR	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Tourism Smithers projects & programs	13.79% 4	55.17% 16	20.69% 6	10.34% 3	29	2.28

There were 29 respondents to this question, with 79% being aware/somewhat aware of projects and programs delivered by Tourism Smithers, (same as the 2021 survey) and approximately 10% are very aware (a decrease of 4% compared to the 2021 survey).

2. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 - Not familiar at all and 5 - Strongly familiar, how aware are you of the following marketing activities that Tourism Smithers has delivered?

Of the 29 respondents, over 51% of respondents were familiar/strongly familiar of the Ski North program – an increase of 11% compared to 2021. Media relations and the Ride North program scored lowest, with 21% respondents not aware, however, this is an improvement of 19% compared to 2021. The Smithers Visitor's Guide (76%) and Ski and Stay program (66%) are projects that respondents are most aware of.



	NOT FAMILIAR AT ALL	NOT VERY FAMILIAR	SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR	FAMILIAR	STRONGLY FAMILIAR	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
▼ Ski and Stay	6.90% 2	0.00% 0	24.14% 7	31.03% 9	34.48% 10	3.45% 1	29
▼ Ski North BC	24.14% 7	6.90% 2	13.79% 4	24.14% 7	27.59% 8	3.45% 1	29
▼ Smithers & Area Visitor's Guide	6.90% 2	3.45% 1	10.34% 3	41.38% 12	34.48% 10	3.45% 1	29
▼ Ride North	20.69% 6	13.79% 4	24.14% 7	24.14% 7	10.34% 3	6.90% 2	29
▼ Route 16 / #Route16	17.24% 5	17.24% 5	31.03% 9	20.69% 6	6.90% 2	6.90% 2	29
▼ Steelhead Paradise	20.69% 6	17.24% 5	20.69% 6	24.14% 7	10.34% 3	6.90% 2	29
▼ Promotional Video	13.79% 4	13.79% 4	20.69% 6	31.03% 9	13.79% 4	6.90% 2	29
▼ Attend Trade & Consumer Shows	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0
▼ Media Relations	20.69% 6	13.79% 4	27.59% 8	27.59% 8	6.90% 2	3.45% 1	29
▼ Media Relations/FAM Tours	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0
▼ Social media (FB/IG)	13.79% 4	13.79% 4	20.69% 6	20.69% 6	31.03% 9	0.00% 0	29

3). How satisfied are you in the following key deliverables? Please rate each on a scale of 1 - Very dissatisfied to 5 - Very satisfied

	VERY DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEITHER DISSATISFIED OR SATISFIED	SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
▼ 1. Destination Marketing	3.57% 1	10.71% 3	21.43% 6	39.29% 11	10.71% 3	14.29% 4	28
▼ 2. Partnership & Product Development	3.45% 1	17.24% 5	27.59% 8	20.69% 6	10.34% 3	20.69% 6	29

Approximately 50% (14 respondents) 51.2% (13 respondents) are either very satisfied or satisfied with destination marketing efforts by Tourism Smithers, which is down slightly from last year and 31% of respondents are either very satisfied or satisfied with partnership and product development deliverables (down 8.5% from last year). There were 4 respondents who are dissatisfied/very dissatisfied with destination marketing while 6 respondents identified dissatisfaction in partnership & product development efforts by Tourism Smithers.

4). Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with Tourism Smithers use of MRDT funds in 2022? Please rate on a scale where 1 is "Very Dissatisfied" and 4 is "Very Satisfied".

This question had a calculation error, and could not be analyzed.

5). Taking everything into account, how satisfied are you with the overall performance of Tourism Smithers?

	VERY DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEITHER DISSATISFIED OR SATISFIED	SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Overall Performance of Tourism Smithers	0.00% 0	13.79% 4	24.14% 7	34.48% 10	20.69% 6	6.90% 2	29

Over 55% of respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall performance of Tourism Smithers in 2022, with 4 respondents stating they are dissatisfied. In comparison to last year's survey, this is an improvement of 4% in satisfaction rating overall.

6). If your response to the previous question was very dissatisfied, what could Tourism Smithers do to improve your satisfaction? Fill in your response below.

There were additional comments by 10 respondents, and were as follows:

- Creating a round table for all tourism related businesses, inform them twice a year about planning events, participation of tourism related businesses and offering more entertainment options for tourists.
- Research other options before committing to a contract. There are better services out there for less money
- We need to hear more from them. Hear lots from regional and provincial tourism organizations but very little from local.
- Tourism Smithers could contact operators and offer solutions for our guests, such as transportation from hotels, airport, etc. Currently, there is no help with that.
- New Business, need support
- Less focus on the ski hill more focus on other area activities
- Engagement and consultation. Consensus is that there is so little communication with local businesses.
- Airline charter schedules and proper airport navigational aids are key in contributing to both the overall tourism and industry sectors. Both charter schedules and navigational aids for the Smithers airport are insufficient, making Smithers less appealing compared to Terrace.
- I have yet to see any promotional material that encompasses fully what this town, specifically the downtown core offers. No maps or pamphlets in hotels.
- Tourism Smithers needs to focus less on the attraction of fall fishermen. Need to focus on regional tourism opportunities and less on catering to foreign tourists
- Great videos and marketing materials!

7). *Tourism Smithers strives to collaborate and be an inclusive, industry-driven organization. How do you rate Tourism Smithers level of performance on the following ways of conducting business? Please rate each on a scale where 1 - Poor and 5 – Excellent*

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Collaborates and consults with the tourism industry on key decisions	17.24% 5	24.14% 7	17.24% 5	20.69% 6	6.90% 2	13.79% 4	29
Provides leadership and direction to the Smithers & Area tourism industry	17.24% 5	20.69% 6	24.14% 7	10.34% 3	13.79% 4	13.79% 4	29
Understands my business/organizational needs	20.69% 6	27.59% 8	27.59% 8	10.34% 3	10.34% 3	3.45% 1	29
Is focused on markets that align with the needs of the local and regional tourism industry	20.69% 6	27.59% 8	20.69% 6	17.24% 5	10.34% 3	3.45% 1	29
Informs the tourism industry of its corporate strategy & direction	17.24% 5	27.59% 8	31.03% 9	6.90% 2	6.90% 2	10.34% 3	29

All 29 respondents answered this question; with between 3% and 14% of respondents who did not know how to rate Tourism Smithers in conducting business. This is a strong improvement compared to last year, with 18% and 23% respondents unsure. Between 17% and 21% (5 or 6) rated Tourism Smithers poor in all categories of conducting business. This is up slightly (1%) in comparison to last year's survey.

8). *Please indicate the degree of growth, if any, for each of the following tourism products and/or experiences (e.g. arts & culture, mountain biking, fishing, indigenous) in Smithers? Please rate each of the following program areas on a scale of 1 - 4 where 1 - Low potential to grow and 4 - Strong growth potential.*

Responses to Q8 were diverse, with respondents rating hiking (69%), mountain biking (62%) and skiing (Nordic/alpine/backcountry at 59%) as having the most potential for growth. In 2021, these activities ranked at 70% for most potential for growth. Steelhead angling, jet boating, golfing and hunting all ranked equally by 17% of respondents as having the lowest potential for growth. There were 4 respondents who provided additional comments:

- Restaurants
- Each business has potential for growth, if promoted.
- Dog sledding, sleigh rides
- Off-road vehicle (sled and ATV) - strong; trail running - potential.

	LOW POTENTIAL TO GROW	SOME POTENTIAL	POTENTIAL	STRONG GROWTH POTENTIAL	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
▼ Steelhead angling	17.24% 5	20.69% 6	17.24% 5	17.24% 5	27.59% 8	29
▼ Jet boating	17.24% 5	27.59% 8	27.59% 8	3.45% 1	24.14% 7	29
▼ Rafting / paddlesports	0.00% 0	10.71% 3	42.86% 12	39.29% 11	7.14% 2	28
▼ Mountain Biking	0.00% 0	6.90% 2	20.69% 6	62.07% 18	10.34% 3	29
▼ Mountaineering	3.45% 1	13.79% 4	31.03% 9	37.93% 11	13.79% 4	29
▼ Motorcycle touring	0.00% 0	17.24% 5	37.93% 11	20.69% 6	24.14% 7	29
▼ Hiking	0.00% 0	3.45% 1	20.69% 6	68.97% 20	6.90% 2	29
▼ Skiing (nordic/alpine/backcountry)	0.00% 0	10.34% 3	24.14% 7	58.62% 17	6.90% 2	29
▼ Indigenous Experiences	0.00% 0	27.59% 8	13.79% 4	48.28% 14	10.34% 3	29
▼ Golfing	17.24% 5	17.24% 5	31.03% 9	10.34% 3	24.14% 7	29
▼ Hunting	17.24% 5	27.59% 8	27.59% 8	6.90% 2	20.69% 6	29
▼ Retail/shopping	10.34% 3	24.14% 7	27.59% 8	27.59% 8	10.34% 3	29
▼ Arts & Culture	0.00% 0	24.14% 7	34.48% 10	31.03% 9	10.34% 3	29

9). Destination marketing organizations such as Tourism Smithers traditionally take on a wide-range of activities outside of marketing and promotion to help grow tourism in their community and region. As described earlier, this survey will be used to assist in Tourism Smithers strategic planning. In your opinion, how much of a priority should Tourism Smithers place on each of the following program areas? Please rate each of the following on a scale of 1 - 5 where 1 - Not a priority and 5 – Essential

All 29 survey respondents answered Q9, with 17 respondents (59%) noting community planning (i.e. ensuring the Township of Smithers plans for tourism while moving forward as essential. Supporting tourism product development and community relations (55%, or 16 respondents) have been ranked as high priorities for Tourism Smithers. These 2 priorities have increased by 9% in comparison to 2021. Only market research was identified by 1 respondent as an activity that is not a priority.

	NOT A PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY	ESSENTIAL	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Supporting tourism product development (i.e. providing tourism insights and/or by identifying opportunities)	0.00% 0	6.90% 2	20.69% 6	55.17% 16	10.34% 3	6.90% 2	29
Market research & industry performance tracking (i.e. accurately measuring industry and Tourism Smithers performance)	3.45% 1	3.45% 1	34.48% 10	34.48% 10	20.69% 6	3.45% 1	29
Industry development (i.e. working with industry to develop skills and capacity that ensure outstanding tourism experiences).	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	31.03% 9	48.28% 14	17.24% 5	3.45% 1	29
Trip and itinerary planning (i.e. ensuring visitors have the information that they need while planning their trip to Smithers and area).	0.00% 0	3.45% 1	31.03% 9	34.48% 10	24.14% 7	6.90% 2	29
Community relations (i.e. working with the community and region on behalf of the tourism industry).	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.45% 1	55.17% 16	37.93% 11	3.45% 1	29
Community planning (i.e. ensuring the Town of Smithers plans for tourism while moving forward).	0.00% 0	3.45% 1	3.45% 1	31.03% 9	58.62% 17	3.45% 1	29

10). How prepared is your business to operate during your next peak season as travel continues to recover from impacts of the pandemic?

This was a new question for Tourism Smithers stakeholders, therefore, there are no comparisons to the 2021 Stakeholder Survey. Almost 90% of the 29 respondents state that they will be ready and full open for the next peak season. While 2 respondents noted they will not open for the next season, 1 of those noted they are closing their business.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Will not open for the next season	6.90% 2
Will open for the season, but at reduced capacity	3.45% 1
Will be ready and fully open	89.66% 26
Unsure / Don't know	0.00% 0

An additional comment from one survey respondent stated the following:

"We will be ready and fully opened but this is a huge BUT in our industry. Due to fish return numbers and the provincial government's lack of having a Steelhead Angling Management Plan in place, operators of Steelhead operations won't know until 1.5 weeks before our season are ready to open if we will be able to operate. We will continue to be managed in this way until there is a Steelhead Angling Management Plan implemented, which we are advised is still many years from being implemented. It makes it hard to book our season, maintain long-term staff and hire new staff to let everyone know that we will not know for certain until just before the season if they will have work. This also extends to our customers, of which we have lots - some throughout the past two seasons. We used to be 98% return guests but the uncertainties of

the Skeena Steelhead and the way it has been managed, particularly in the past two seasons has created a high level of concern for anglers coming from all over the world. Flights, hotels, guides, lodges...it's a big investment for tourists and having no idea until last minute if their trip will happen. No management plan in place has contributed to a lot of damage and uncertainty in our region pertaining to the steelhead fishery. The province does not seem to acknowledge or care about how much this industry brings to the Skeena Region and with proper management and care, it could continue to be a strong and renewable source for our region...but the Steelhead need help, support, and someone to speak for their safe returns to our watershed. “

11). Please rate your familiarity with the following government support programs for tourism related businesses, with 1 being “Not familiar at all”, to 5 being “Strongly familiar”.

Based on federal and provincial support programs that were available to the tourism industry in 2022, this is a new question to Tourism Smithers stakeholders, to seek a better understanding of their awareness of available funding programs.

	NOT FAMILIAR AT ALL	NOT VERY FAMILIAR	SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR	FAMILIAR	STRONGLY FAMILIAR	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program (Provincial)	41.38% 12	10.34% 3	20.69% 6	13.79% 4	10.34% 3	3.45% 1	29	2.52
Tourism Relief Fund (Federal)	48.28% 14	6.90% 2	24.14% 7	10.34% 3	6.90% 2	3.45% 1	29	2.31
Active Transportation Grant (Federal)	62.07% 18	17.24% 5	3.45% 1	6.90% 2	3.45% 1	6.90% 2	29	1.93
Tourism Events Program (Provincial)	60.71% 17	28.57% 8	3.57% 1	0.00% 0	3.57% 1	3.57% 1	28	1.68

Of the responses, 1 – 4 respondents were either familiar or strongly familiar with the identified funding programs. There was a high number of respondents (41% - 62%) that were *not familiar at all* of the government support programs, while several respondents were somewhat familiar with the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program and Tourism Relief Fund Program.

12). Since the recent re-start of the tourism industry in BC, how has the tourism revenue of your business changed? (In 2022 compared to 2021).

The majority of the 29 respondents (approx. 52%) noted the revenue of their business increased in 2022 in comparison to 2021, however, approximately 28% (8 respondents) stated the revenue of their business did not change in 2022 compared to 2021.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Increased	51.72% 15
Decreased	13.79% 4
Not Changed	27.59% 8
Don't Know	6.90% 2
TOTAL	29

13). *Aside from the challenges resulting from COVID-19, in your opinion, what are the top barriers to growth of the tourism industry in Smithers and region? Please provide up to three barriers.*

There were over 70 comments that provided input to identifying the top barriers to the growth of the tourism industry in Smithers. The following is a summary and highlight of responses:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport - difficulty with access and lack of flight options • No entertainment in the evenings • Finding volunteers to undertake work • Staffing levels and labour shortage • No Angling Management Plan in place • Lack of transportation including lack of taxi/shuttle/Uber • Finding cash to fund projects • Affordable housing for staff/cost of living • Lack of management on our tourism resources to protect them • Cost of wages - hard to compete with pipeline, work camps, etc. for staff when they can offer higher wages • Inflation of gas and grocery prices (Resulting to less money for tourists to spend in communities) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable marketing • Directional signage to tourism places to encourage visitors • An event that is new and could be a huge draw and a reason for people to want to come to Smithers. • Priority of resource extraction • Distance and cost to travel to Smithers • Better communication between tourists
Businesses like a central management system that cooperates with all levels of tourism needs and options that are already existing • The lack of appealing amenities • Wish there was more available information for our region on just how much the tourism sector provides the provincial GDP in comparison to commercial fisheries, oil & gas, mining, and forestry |
|--|---|

14). *How optimistic are you that your business revenues will grow in the next 24 months? Please rate on a scale of 1 - 5 Not optimistic at all and 5 - Very optimistic*

	NOT OPTIMISTIC AT ALL	NOT VERY OPTIMISTIC	SOMEWHAT OPTIMISTIC	OPTIMISTIC	VERY OPTIMISTIC	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
▼ Your Business Revenue Growth	0.00% 0	20.69% 6	27.59% 8	24.14% 7	13.79% 4	13.79% 4	29	3.72

Approximately 38% of the 29 respondents are either optimistic or very optimistic their business revenues will grow in the next 24 months. This is down by 10% by comparison to stakeholders being optimistic or very optimistic their business revenues would grow from 2021 to 2022. By comparison, approximately 21% are not optimistic – which has increased 16% from last year.

15). Over the next 24 months, how optimistic are you that the tourism industry in Smithers will grow? Please rate on a scale of 1 - 5 where 1 - Not optimistic at all and 5 - Very optimistic

	NOT OPTIMISTIC AT ALL	NOT VERY OPTIMISTIC	SOMEWHAT OPTIMISTIC	OPTIMISTIC	VERY OPTIMISTIC	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Tourism Industry Growth	3.45% 1	13.79% 4	44.83% 13	27.59% 8	6.90% 2	3.45% 1	29	3.31

Approximately 35% of respondents are optimistic/very optimistic the tourism industry will grow in Smithers. This is down substantially compared to last year, where 58% of respondents felt the tourism industry would grow in Smithers. By comparison, there was an increase of 7% of respondents who are somewhat optimistic the tourism industry will grow, with a slight decrease in comparison to last year (2%) of respondents who are not optimistic.

16). Looking forward, which of the following would provide value to you and your business in the next 12 months? (Note: Through webinars / virtual workshops).

Of the 29 respondents, the majority (59%, or 17 respondents) who identified digital marketing skills would provide the most value, with communication skills and business skills ranking 2nd and 3rd.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Digital Marketing Skills	58.62% 17
Communication Skills	24.14% 7
Business Skills	10.34% 3
Other (please specify)	Responses 37.93% 11

17). In your opinion what should be the focus for Tourism Smithers in the year ahead?

All 29 respondents provided their opinion. The following is a summary of responses:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding ways to make Smithers more accessible at a cheaper price To clean up the attractions like Twin Falls Park, increasing the size for swimming at Lake Kathleen and updates on changing-rooms and installation of a washroom. Also, a water park for visiting families and local children that attracts tourists to Smithers in the summer and snow clearing of Lake Kathleen for cross country skiers and leisure walkers Pushing recreation Fight for taxi/Uber services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making sure the homeless camp is at least clean and neat looking, or moved to a better suited area. make Main Street feel safe and clean again Small business Continuing all the awesome social media video/campaigns Communication Promoting winter tourism - we are already fully booked July-Oct. Business tourism (conferences, meetings, etc. should be promoted or facilitated to fill low season) Attracting Canadian tourists from eastern |
|--|---|

- It would be helpful to have an updated idea on what our region, through tourism, does provide to the provincial GDP. I am not aware of this information for our region, so please forgive me if it already exists. I just strongly believe that economic studies and reports are going to carry stronger importance for the tourism industries in the north
 - Focusing on angling growth, eco tours, heli-skiing tours, backcountry snowmobiling, indigenous bannock stand.
 - Promoting multi day stays in the area through a variety of activities, mountain bike, nordic ski, hike.
- Canada and the rest of Canada- as Canadians are more likely to travel in their own country as flight prices increase
 - Inclusivity, and fair representation of all the businesses and what they offer the community
 - A tourism Smithers airport shuttle bus that doubles as a transportation link for visitors like a shuttle to tourist activities and even pick up/drop offs hotels to downtown core.
 - Housing because without workers the businesses and recreational facilities that attract tourism will diminish.

18). Which of the following best describes your business or organization?

Approximately 24% of the 29 respondents represented a business in the outdoor recreation sector, while approximately 20% of respondents represented the Smithers accommodation sector. Five (5) respondents represented private organizations. There was 1 respondent that was from the not-for-profit sector, while 1 respondent did not fit the identified categories.

ANSWER CHOICES ▼	RESPONSES ▼
▼ A business in the accommodation sector	20.69% 6
▼ A business in the food & beverage sector	10.34% 3
▼ A business in the transportation sector	3.45% 1
▼ A business in the attractions sector	6.90% 2
▼ A business in the outdoor recreation sector	24.14% 7
▼ A private organization (i.e. retail) that provides products or services to the visitor economy	17.24% 5
▼ A public organization (i.e. gov't) that provides products or services to the visitor economy	6.90% 2
▼ An organization, association, business or agency that supports tourism but does not provide direct services to tourists (e.g. a community organization, a support business)	3.45% 1
▼ Other (please specify) Responses	6.90% 2

19). Question #19 completed the 2023 Tourism Smithers Stakeholder Survey. This provided the opportunity for stakeholders to share last words, i.e. Are there any other comments they would like to share about Tourism Smithers or tourism in Smithers and the Bulkley Valley region overall?

The following are the 15 additional comments to Q.19, where stakeholders had the opportunity to share last words.

- I think they are doing a good job marketing and getting us known
- Tourism Smithers should look more into the updating of attractions that are already available and build new ones. Signs alone do not bring guests to our community and
- Keep up the great work!
- I believe that the foundation of our local tourism industry is reliant on the access to Smithers. The airline schedule is poor and the necessary navigational aids to arrive in poorer weather are non-existent. Smithers

is a big waste of money!

- Thank you for all of the work that you do!
- Thank you for all that you do.
- Thank to you all for your support and efforts! Our town is so lucky to have such a supportive and progressive Tourism Board. I apologize to complain so much about the fisheries management in our area. I can only speak to what I am knowledgeable in and work so hard to preserve.
- It would be very beneficial for tourists to have proper shuttle/taxi/Uber service in Smithers.
- Thank you so much for all your hard work and for putting out surveys like this. It's very lovely that everyone's opinion is taken into consideration at the beginning of the season
Looking forward to getting on board!
- Seems to be a lot of attention and funds for the ski hill. I would like to see more for the other activities in the area.
- Thank you for keeping at it, it's very important. You're doing a good job.
- There have been several 'promotional' videos for Smithers in the past few months - and the scope felt narrow. There is room in any promotional content to highlight - nature, outdoor rec., food & beverage, retail & culture. If its ski hill oriented - there should be restaurants, breweries & retail & accommodations highlighted for après ski opportunities. I wholeheartedly believe we can do better as a community to give all businesses an opportunity to thrive.

is not accessible, especially during the winter months, compared to the Terrace airport. Our business, along with others, has lost a substantial amount of revenue in having to service clients out of Terrace due to poor aviation services here in Smithers. Until there is change, the overall struggle to increase tourism and industrial activity here will remain the same, but likely continue to falter.

- I'm not entirely sure what or how they help any retailers. Which I may say provides experiences outside of recreation
- Tourism is a neglected major economic driver.
- We need to be promoting affordable options for regional travel within the BV. For families who want to fly here, what are their options? Community tourism, like *Be A Tourist in your Own Town* feature. A Smithers Tourism bus/van. Don't know if there are funds for that but hire a summer student with a van that just picks up and drops people off, enabling tourist to see more of the outlying tourist opportunities here.

Stakeholder insights and feedback to tourism-related projects from 2022 and comparisons to 2021 conclude that Tourism Smithers has a better understanding of the perceptions, needs and expectations of local government, businesses and residents.

Observations conclude that by the fall of 2022, the industry settled into the “new normal”, and the perspectives from the stakeholders were more realistic for the year ahead (2023) vs. the previous year, when the industry was just starting to feel a shift away from the restrictions of the pandemic.

The survey results provide additional direction to marketing decisions, project funding decisions, product development decisions, stakeholder communications and revenue planning decisions. The survey results will enable Tourism Smithers to adjust to industry challenges, continue to make informed decisions and utilize their resources to achieve the best results. This will be supported by future opportunities that are presented to the community as the tourism industry continues to move to the recovery phase of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and adjusts to current and immediate future travel trends and expectations of visitors.

