



# ENGAGEMENT REPORT

## TOWN OF COBOURG

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# 1. Introduction

## Executive Summary

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In October 2020, the Town of Cobourg engaged a third-party consultant to lead a series of research and engagement activities to better understand the impact of tourism in the region.

Setting out with the goal of gaining a better understanding of the impacts of tourism in the region, the Town of Cobourg saw meaningful stakeholder engagement as a critical step in the process. **Laridae**, a full-service management consulting firm, conducted a series of stakeholder engagement activities, including focus groups, key informant interviews, and an online survey. A variety of stakeholders were engaged, including small-medium size business owners and operators located in the Town of Cobourg, tourism and/or business support organizations, visitors to the community, as well as community members.

This work was completed in addition to a comparative analysis research study (delivered in December 2020) that examined how beachfront municipalities across the province and beyond manage and leverage their waterfront for tourism purposes.

The engagement findings included in this report will inform and serve as a backdrop to the planning discussions for the Town of Cobourg as they re-imagine tourism opportunities moving forward.

When viewed in combination with other components, such as the comparative analysis study and other relevant planning documents, the engagement results will enable the Town of Cobourg to make informed decisions regarding effective tourism programming that best meets the needs of the business community. This will not only help ensure a strong recovery from COVID-19, it will also build on the work that is underway and focused on creating a sustainable local economy and a thriving, inclusive community.

What follows is an overview of the themes, ideas, compliments, and concerns identified by each stakeholder group and/or method of engagement.

## Engagement Overview

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The purpose of the engagement with local, small-business owners was to better understand how tourism impacts their day-to-day operations and contributes towards their company's overall success and sustainability. Laridae also gathered suggestions from key community partners for future growth, change, and/or improvements as they relate to the tourism sector and small-business community. Questions posed include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. How would you describe the value of tourism to your business?
2. How has COVID-19, and specifically the reduced tourist traffic impacted your business?
3. How might the Town of Cobourg adjust programming to support tourism going forward?
4. How do community events assist in drawing people to your business?

## Results at-a-glance

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- Engagement: 135 people responded to the survey and a total of 12 participants took part in focus groups and key informant interviews.
- Based on their experiences, 17% of survey respondents rate their overall impression of the tourism sector in Cobourg as excellent and 39% as good.
- 35% of local business owners or operators and business and/or tourism support organizations **strongly agree** that The Town of Cobourg effectively leverages community events and tourism programming to attract people to the area and encourage economic spending.
- 53% of local business owners or operators and business and/or tourism support organizations indicate that the tourism sector has a **significant impact** on the economic growth and well-being of the Town of Cobourg.
- 39% of local business owners or operators and business and/or tourism support organizations indicate that the Cobourg Beach (*and waterfront activity such as the Splashpad, Canteen etc.*) **contribute significantly** towards attracting customers and generating sales for local businesses in general (prior to COVID-19).
- 58% of local business owners or operators and business and/or tourism support organizations indicate that community events, holiday weekends, and festivals in the Town of Cobourg **significantly impact** sales and customer traffic experienced by local businesses.

Themes that emerged are as follows (listed in alphabetical order):

- Beach and Waterfront
- Events, Festivals, and Holiday Weekends
- Impacts of Tourism
- Limitations and Barriers
- Regional Partnerships
- Tourism Opportunities

### Focus Groups

Focus groups were held for small-business owners or operators from the retail, food and beverage, and accommodation sectors, as well as community partners. A total of three 90-minute focus groups were held. The participants were engaged during each of the sessions, and shared current perceptions and experiences, and offered suggestions for future growth, change, and improvements as they relate to Cobourg's tourism sector.

Date and Time	Group	Participants
November 25, 2020 from 8:00am – 9:30am	Small-Business (Food & Beverage and Accommodations)	4
November 30, 2020 from 6:30pm – 8:00pm	Small-Business (Retailers)	2
December 2, 2020 from 2:00pm – 3:30pm	Community Partners	4

### Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were qualitative in-depth interviews with individuals considered knowledgeable about the Town of Cobourg and the tourism sector at-large. The purpose of these interviews was to collect detailed information from experts who – with their particular knowledge, experience, and understanding – could provide insight into the challenges, opportunities and potential solutions for the Town of Cobourg.

Date and Time	Name and Organization
November 26, 2020	Brenda Wood, Regional Tourism Organization 8 (RTO8)
November 30, 2020	Eileen Lum, Northumberland County Tourism

### Online Survey

A confidential, online survey was developed and circulated to stakeholders for a total of five weeks. The Town of Cobourg released a press release on November 16, 2020 to advise residents that a tourism survey would be circulating among local small business owners and tourism support organizations. The survey was circulated via email, social media, through focus groups, and in-person, and was available to stakeholders from November 16, 2020 – December 18, 2020. There were **135 responses** to the survey.

## 2. Engagement Review

### Focus Group Review

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#### Small-Business Focus Group (Food & Beverage and Accommodations)

*Date/Time: November 25, 2020, 8:00AM – 9:30AM*

*4 Participants*

#### Impacts of Tourism

- In general, most participants agreed that tourists are increasing spending and contributing towards the economy in Cobourg. It was noted that tourism impacts businesses located in the downtown core differently than those located outside of the downtown core.
  - Summer tourism is very important to the region. During the summer, due to the downtown's proximity to the beach, businesses benefit from a significant increase in sales over three months and see a considerable number of tourists coming through.
- Participants agreed that there are generally two types of tourists that come to Cobourg.
  - First, those who go to the beach, often bringing their own food or picking up food from No Frills or Tim Hortons. Downtown spending is limited by this group.
  - Second, those who intentionally visit for the downtown.
    - Participants shared that they look forward to seeing the visitors who actually venture downtown and walk along the streets.
- Prior to the pandemic, it was noted that many visitors from other regions would come to the area to try out different golf courses and this generated significant business.
- From the accommodation perspective, it was noted that tourism has changed “dramatically” over the years. One of the most significant shifts has been the change from overnight tourism to “day trippers.”
  - In particular, there used to be a significant portion of American tourists. Overtime, this trend has shifted, and they only see occasional visitors from Florida or “snowbirds.”
  - Some participants shared a perspective that Cobourg previously attracted “real tourists” and now the town sees day trippers almost exclusively.

- One participant shared that their business was on pace and doing very well prior to COVID-19. They had intentions for hosting a big St. Patrick's Day event (and invested \$10,000 in beer for the special occasion).
- When asked how their business accommodates the influx of tourism traffic in the summer months, many participants commented on the need to hire additional labour and add capacity to prepare for a busy season (e.g. preparing menus, working with farmers, grooming the property etc.).
  - It was noted that the change from the winter to summer season is significant.
    - One participant noted that their business goes from thirteen employees in the summer, to five in the winter. It was suggested that leveraging opportunities for 'off-season' tourism would help maintain year-round employment.
    - Some participants modify their business hours and close on certain days in the winter months.
      - "We just kind of dry up in winter because people just don't come."
      - "We're very dimly lit downtown."
  - Another participant noted that, based on the nature of their business, it has been able to operate with the same number of staff year-round.
  - For golf course businesses, it was noted that approximately \$30,000 is generated through Christmas parties alone which contributes significantly to their annual revenue.
    - As a result of the pandemic, "so much innovation has been required this year."

## Tourism Opportunities

- Most participants agreed that there is potential for the Town of Cobourg to host more functions that attract large groups of people over consecutive days.
  - They agreed that it is important to host large-scale functions and conferences, specifically during the off season. They felt that day trippers will come to Cobourg regardless, and that the focus should be on attracting people to stay more than one night and encouraging them to visit multiple venues. In addition, it would be helpful to attract visitors to the community on days of the week that aren't already busy.
    - "The last thing we need to be trying to attract is weekend day trippers."
  - It was noted that many of the town of Cobourg's employees are members of associations. There is an opportunity for the town to sponsor or host the associations' semi-annual meetings.

- One participant felt that the Cobourg Community Centre and Arena (CCC) is underutilized, noting that there is an opportunity for the Town of Cobourg to leverage this building for tourism by hosting more sports functions and conferences.
- Participants agreed that there is a need to address the gaps and slowest periods for local businesses (i.e., Monday-Friday) to help create economic stability. For example, many businesses are busy on weekends serving local residents and would benefit from increased traffic throughout the week.
- One participant noted the success and popularity of Port Hope's annual Cultivate Festival. Festivals such as this one might encourage tourists to lengthen their stay in the area.
  - It was noted that there is one particular staff member that works for the municipality of Port Hope who is knowledgeable about event planning and road closures, committed to making events and festivals successful for the community, and is passionate about overnight tourism in the area.
    - "I find with the Town of Cobourg, there are very few employees who go out of their way to make things happen."
- Although one participant felt that Cobourg is not unique in its location along the Lake Ontario waterfront, others commented on the following unique characteristics that they would like to see leveraged and promoted for tourism:
  - There is accessible parking and the downtown is well kept.
  - "Compared to a lot of small towns, it is relatively safe for seniors."
  - "We want to be that shining star for travelers."
  - "The Town of Cobourg has to address the image that it is allowing to create."
  - Cobourg is one of the larger towns in the region and is surrounded by many tourism assets (e.g. Campbellford suspension bridge). As there are a variety of attractions in the surrounding communities, Cobourg is well-positioned to attract visitors for meals and accommodation.
  - There is an opportunity to improve local marketing efforts by focusing on the promotion of regional opportunities.
    - It was noted that driving loop tours were offered in the past; however, participants were unsure how much tourism that initiative generated.

### Regional Partnerships

- Participants encouraged Cobourg to look at surrounding areas. They suggested working with the county and Port Hope on a larger scale by forming partnerships that benefit tourism.
  - "Make it a whole encompassing experience."



- For example, leveraging the Goat farm in Port Hope and day spas through the creation of experiential tourism packages.
- In addition, it was noted that new events and festivals are a key area of opportunity for the Town of Cobourg. One participant noted that there are currently a few events that are “struggling to survive.”
  - “We’ve been competing against every other small community.”
  - Participants discussed the importance of leveraging local facilities such as Victoria Hall and the CCC, as well as support from service clubs such as the Lions Centre and the Rotary Club.
  - One participant recognized that when the Capital Theatre has a popular show running, it brings in business to restaurants and the downtown core.

### Beach and Waterfront

- When discussing investments that could make the beach and waterfront more useful, participants exchanged views about the East Pier. Previously, residents and tourists could drive out along the pier to enjoy the views; however, this attraction was not maintained, and the pier has been closed off from traffic and is now a walking-only space.
  - Some participants felt that the drive-out pier could have been a popular tourist attraction for Cobourg that would have also been a good place to host events such as car shows.
    - “This was a major tourism attraction that could have been developed.”
  - In its current walking-only state, the pier was described as “filthy” and “covered in seagulls.”
- Participants agreed that the marina expansion on the West Pier should have happened much earlier than it did and questioned whether it is being properly leveraged.
- The boardwalk was described as an asset for Cobourg and some participants felt that there is an opportunity to create more awareness in the community about the stone boulevard. Despite its length, they felt that only half of the path is known by residents.
- One participant also commented on the stand-up paddle boards available at the beach. While they understood that this attraction is located at the far end of the beach for safety reasons, they felt that it would be more successful if it were in a more central and visible location.
  - Paddle boarding and other unmotorized watersports represents additional “instagrammable” moments for Cobourg.

## Events, Festivals, and Holiday weekends

- For businesses located outside of the downtown core, it was noted that it can be difficult to quantify the impact of events, festivals, and holiday weekends as they vary considerably.
  - For example, one participant noted that local hockey tournaments are very beneficial to their accommodation business, whereas they do not experience the same benefit from a waterfront festival.
- For businesses located within the downtown core, many held the opinion that festivals and events are very beneficial – especially the Canada Day Festival. There was a common belief however, that investing money into one-day events does not positively impact local restaurants.
  - Some felt that the Town of Cobourg should focus on creating tourism *experiences* instead. Such as creating more “instagrammable” moments for visitors and finding ways to beautify the downtown.
    - This will gradually attract individuals as it spreads through social media and word-of-mouth.
      - Some examples include, the mural with wings outside the Mystic Roots Salon & Spa where many individuals stop and take a picture, the hot chocolate walk, street performances, or other experiences close by, such as goat snuggles and lama farms.

## Limitations and Barriers

- When discussing the town’s initial response to COVID-19, many participants expressed frustration about having to “jump through hoops” in order to open extended patios.
  - They described the challenges related to obtaining permits for patio expansion and there was strong agreement that the “red tape was very cumbersome.”
  - Some felt that the town was disorganized.
  - Once permission was granted for extended patios, participants were pleased with the outcome and found the added space valuable for their businesses. They expressed interest in being able to do this again next year or explore a more permanent solution.
    - They acknowledged that some residents complained about the appearance of the patios.
    - “If extended patios could be more permanent, it would look nicer.”
    - Permanent extended patios would allow the community to create a lasting esthetic that extends over one to two blocks.

- In general, there was a desire among participants to see greater flexibility around change within the town's systems and processes. Participants emphasized the importance of having people who can inspire change in the community and make it happen at the decision-making level.
  - This can be achieved by more open-minded practices and by supporting the ideas of people who want to make changes.
  - "The town needs to be onboard with supporting ideas."
  - Participants felt that there is an opportunity for the town to make more of an effort to better understand the industry and its challenges.
- In addition to greater flexibility, participants discussed supporting infrastructure for tourism. Some questioned how many hotel rooms are available in Cobourg and whether the town is making an effort to increase accommodation availability to support overnight tourism. They also discussed the impact of disruptor companies such as Airbnb.
  - "As soon as there is a wedding or major event, no one is getting a hotel room in Cobourg."
  - It was noted that by supporting the necessary infrastructures, such as accommodation and parking, this will support tourism.
- Many participants emphasized the importance of working together and creating a strong community. Some felt that collaboration is challenging and commented on a divide that exists between people who have always lived in Cobourg and those who are newer to the community and to downtown in particular.
  - It was commonly felt that there is reluctance to host joint downtown events and a lack of willingness to collaborate and develop joint promotional ideas.
  - It was noted that whenever there is a meeting or opportunity to share feedback, it tends to be the same group of people that participate and those who have the strongest opinions are often missing from the discussion.
- In addition, participants strongly agreed that there is a pocket of people (that have been born and raised in Cobourg or lived in the area for a long time) that don't see the value of tourism.
  - It was noted that COVID-19 has elevated this sense of division, as people are using the pandemic as an excuse to support the "locals only" messaging.
    - "This is mitigated racism."
- Participants discussed the impacts of local and provincial housing, homelessness, and the opioid crisis on tourism. These issues impact bench availability, street cleanliness, and the overall visitor experience.
  - It was noted that if an older tourist confronts a homeless person during their visit to Cobourg, they likely won't return.

## Small-Business Focus Group (Retail)

*Date/Time: November 30, 2020, 6:30PM – 8:00PM*

*2 Participants*

### Impacts of Tourism

- With a variety of retail options downtown, a vibrant restaurant selection, an active waterfront, and many other places to visit, it was noted that, “tourism is exceptionally important to Cobourg.”
- Prior to COVID-19, one participant noted that their business “thrived” on tourism and even had an international customer base. They estimated that 25% of customer traffic was generated from people coming from the beach.
- Another participant agreed, adding that their business is busiest during the summer. They see many customers coming from St. Anne’s Spa and boaters from across Lake Ontario and even the U.S.
  - They estimated that even throughout the pandemic, 70% of customers were coming from outside of Cobourg. They speculated that these were likely individuals who needed a break from quarantining and felt that Cobourg and Northumberland were a safe option.
- It was noted that the pandemic has impacted business significantly.
  - In particular, one participant noted that they had to close down one branch of their business.

### Events, Festivals, and Holiday Weekends

- Cobourg has always been good at hosting events, on average, around once a month. These events drive consumers into town. It was noted that these need to be promoted even more.
  - “We’re a gem.”
  - In particular, sidewalk sales and Ladies Night Out were described as attractions that drive a lot of traffic to retail businesses.
- One participant felt that car traffic poses a barrier to walk-in business and emphasized the importance of street closures. They noted that during sidewalk sales, they bring in an additional two-three staff members to manage the increased traffic.
  - “When street closures happen, the traffic is phenomenal, the sales are awesome.”
- Participants discussed the street closures in response to the pandemic, where traffic was stopped on King Street for ten blocks. This allowed consumers to casually walk down the middle of street and helped with physical distancing.

- They noted that some store operators felt the street looked too empty and shared negative comments about this on social media.
- Although the street closure was intended for the restaurants, the retail industry “benefited tremendously.”
- One participant felt that many of the restaurants did not take advantage of the street closure and overall, people felt it wasn’t well coordinated.

### Beach and Waterfront

- One participant felt that visitors come to Cobourg for three primary reasons: walking availability, waterfront access, and retail opportunities. In particular, the beach was described as a draw for Cobourg.
  - They noted that their business sees a selection of regular customers who come from the beach. They clarified that their business is more dependent on other customer bases, such as individuals returning from St. Anne’s Spa.
- It was noted that Breakers Motel is booked every single year and has many repeat customers. When people leave, they book again.
  - The Woodlawn Inn, previously an upscale restaurant and hotel, has been replaced by an addictions centre. This was described as a disadvantage in the context of tourism.

### Tourism Opportunities

- Both participants strongly agreed that the Town of Cobourg would benefit from focusing on the music industry. They noted that many musicians travel between Toronto, Kingston, and Montreal and felt that music-related festivals would attract many people to the area.
  - There was a desire to host performances from well-known artists – specifically rock and roll (as opposed to cover bands).
  - It was noted that bylaws and concern around crowds of young people might impede this type of event from happening.
    - “If the town were willing to have actual music things, that would be a draw.”
- In addition to leveraging the music industry, participants felt that food festivals and food trucks might also attract people from outside of Cobourg.
  - They recognized that Cobourg currently offers some food-centered events (e.g. BBQ Ribs Event); however, they felt that these could be more successful with improved marketing efforts.
- Participants agreed on the importance of pursuing tourism initiatives and events that are unique, fun, and promote shared interests across the community and beyond.

- “With proper planning, less events, but better events will create more traffic.”
- The following ideas and examples were shared:
  - Embrace and celebrate 420 with a specific event.
  - Host an event or festival that is geared towards animal lovers (e.g. Woofstock Festival for Dogs in Toronto).
  - Busker festivals and street performers.
  - Ladies Night Out is a good example of a successful event.
- Participants discussed the role of the campgrounds and the trailer park located by the beach, noting that many of these people come for the entire season.
  - “We get an awful lot of people in our store that set up in the trailer park.”
  - It was noted that many families who stay in the trailer park represent significant spending power (i.e., they have up to \$100,000 of camping equipment) and often have relatives visiting on the weekends.
- Another opportunity that was discussed was the historical significance of many buildings in Cobourg that were built pre-1867. It was noted that these could be leveraged by offering historical tours (in addition to those currently offered by the Cobourg Jail).
- Both participants would like to see more businesses open seven days a week (on Sunday) and strongly feel that this is needed to see tourism grow in Cobourg.
  - One participant shared that on Sunday, many of their customers say, “thank you for opening.”
  - After an event or performance on Saturday night, there is often significant traffic on Sunday.
  - “For tourism to grow, we should all be open on Sunday.”

### Regional Partnerships

- While one participant shared that their business is currently in discussion regarding potential partnership opportunities with a spa just north of Cobourg, the other participant described some challenges with forming partnerships due to the nature of their business.

### Limitations and Barriers

- Participants shared their views regarding paid parking, parking availability, and awareness of parking across the community.
  - One participant felt that the town should not be charging people to pay for parking on King Street.

- Many individuals are unaware of the parking lots that are located behind stores on King Street. These areas provide two hours of free parking and are a short walk from store fronts and the beach. Participants felt that greater promotion of parking availability would be beneficial.
  - In the past, it was noted that shop owners have expressed frustration with residential owners parking on the street.
- It was identified that one of the challenges Cobourg faces is reluctance to change and open-mindedness around welcoming those from outside the area.
- The community has seen a significant influx of individuals moving to Cobourg from other areas, Toronto specifically. Participants felt that this demographic is not always well received.
  - One participant described this as, “basic systemic racism.”
  - “There is a lot of pushback for those who do not live in the area.”
- In addition, it was noted that there is a “we’ve always done it that way” mentality and reluctance around change (e.g. street closures) that exists within the community.
  - “I’m not sure what we do to negate their negative impact on what we’re all trying to do.”
- One participant also felt that compared to other downtowns, Cobourg is safer, more welcoming at night, and not facing homelessness as much as other communities.

## Community Partner Focus Group

*Date/Time: December 2, 2020, 2:00PM – 3:30PM*

*4 Participants*

### Impacts of Tourism

- Although participants noted that tourism attracts individuals to the beach and Cobourg’s downtown, they acknowledged that tourism does not have the same level of impact outside the downtown core. They further noted that it can be challenging to drive visitor traffic beyond the immediate downtown vicinity.
  - It was noted that the beach is very popular and plays an important role in bringing people downtown.
  - Downtown hotels also contribute to traffic in the downtown core.
- Some participants felt that specific businesses downtown benefit more than others (e.g. food and beverage and some clothing retail), whereas other businesses remain less affected by tourism as they might not appeal to tourists in the same way.
  - “We do benefit from tourism downtown. Could we benefit more? Absolutely.”

- It was noted that the museum surveyed the public to understand how they discovered it. Of those who participated, 40% identified that they discovered the museum by walking, driving, cycling, or running by the building. These results were surprising.
- In 2019, the Town of Cobourg organized a number of local tours. Participation in the tours was mixed, and depended on whether people wanted to walk five to six minutes to go to the museums (Marie Dressler House and Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre)
  - It was noted that they observed a significant decline in attendance when tourism moved out of the Marie Dressler House, as people would go to the house to get tourism information.
- It was noted that the way in which tourism benefits the local economy is difficult to capture and varies according to the different channels of tourism such as beach goers, trailer and campground individuals, those staying in hotels, and marina visitors.
  - Participants acknowledged that beach goers typically visit from 10 AM to 5 PM and then return home, whereas others stay later or overnight.
- They expressed a desire to access more tourism data, beyond anecdotal information. In addition, it was noted that the community has experienced difficulty finding out exactly how many visitors come to Cobourg.
  - One participant questioned whether there is downtown cellphone tracking data available, noting that it would be interesting to see who is local or from outside the region.
  - It was also noted that Cobourg has had pedestrian counters downtown in the past and this tracking method may be brought back in 2021.

### Events, Festivals, and Holiday Weekends

- When discussing tourism drivers in Cobourg, participants identified events and festivals organized by the town as the “largest attractor.” They shared the example of the Sandcastle Festival.
  - They have found that events hosted on King Street do not increase numbers outside the downtown core. In addition, events hosted at the beach tend to draw people away from the downtown.
  - Many felt that road closures are either embraced or criticized by the community, depending on the timing and the type of organization.
- Participants also acknowledged how the seasonality of the beach impacts tourism. They noted that the largest attractions occur in the summer season.
  - Furthermore, it was noted that Cobourg previously hosted a National hockey tournament that attracted a large crowd. Apart from this event, participants felt that there are limited winter-specific tourism attractions and draws.



## Beach and Waterfront

- It was acknowledged that the majority of the town is on the lake, and many people move to Cobourg from the city for work-life balance. Furthermore, tourists sometimes like the area so much that they later move or retire there.
- Participants recognized that many visitors to the beach bring picnic lunches and their own food. They felt that it's difficult to understand how many beach visitors actually go into town to buy food and to shop.
  - It was noted that there are almost no food or drink options available directly at the beach.
- Some felt that the impact of the beach depends on the clientele of those going there. They noted that when Cobourg hosts beach volleyball tournaments along the waterfront, this typically brings people downtown.
- In addition, the Ontario Winter Games for those aged 55+, RBC Cup, and other major events that create an enjoyable atmosphere generate traffic for downtown businesses and the accommodation sector.
- It was noted that when the beach was closed this year, many businesses were very upset.

## Tourism Opportunities

- In terms of opportunities to leverage Cobourg's waterfront, it was noted that Cobourg has a long, rich history with Lake Ontario and Rochester, New York. In the past, people would travel across the lake on car ferries and coal would be imported. When the need for coal diminished, so did this travel and migration of people.
- Participants felt that developing more accommodations and hotels tends to result in mixed reactions and ideas regarding location and size of the new developments.
- In general, participants agreed that there is an opportunity to further explore experiential tourism within Cobourg.
  - It was noted that there has been an idea circulating for many years to offer a minibus between various locations, including the beach and cultural attractions. Tourists could "hop on and off" while the bus travels on a repeating circuit. This initiative would require funding and support from the town.
  - Over a year ago, a cultural master plan for the Town of Cobourg was developed; however, it has not been actioned. One participant felt that it was not properly integrated within a tourism master plan or strategy and there was some disconnect.

- Participants would like to see Cobourg become more technology friendly and to focus on creating interactive experiences and leveraging storytelling.
  - It was noted that leveraging technology is part of a cohesive, town-wide strategy for Cobourg. This strategy will engage people who come into town for a variety of reasons, including local sports groups, daycares, and hotel visits.
- They commented on Northumberland's tourism brochures for bike tours, apple routes, etc., noting that they were unsure if Cobourg has similar material. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to have brochures available in local hotels.
- It was noted that Cobourg has many unique characteristics and positive attributes that can be leveraged for tourism:
  - Many "hidden gems," a variety of great businesses, innovative ideas (i.e., Venture 13).
  - Strong sense of community, a small-town feel, with many people who have come from the city.
  - The community attracts a younger demographic that have come to raise children and have begun encouraging others to join them.
  - Mix of county and suburbia, sometimes looked at as a stopover on the way to the County.
- It was suggested to look at Prince Edward County's tourism material. In particular, how they focus marketing efforts on two specific attractions: the wine county and art studios. They encouraged Cobourg to focus on two specific attractions to make it simple for visitors.
  - One participant added that there is nothing wrong with being a beach town; however, the town needs to promote more than just the beach.
    - For example, Cobourg is a strong sports community, including winter sports.
- In addition, participants felt that there is a need to step back and think of how the community can bring people in and integrate the cultural masterplan with the tourism strategy. They emphasized the importance of not treating these as separate from one another.
- Participants acknowledged that there are many priorities competing for budget, and some were unsure if tourism has received enough funding to make a difference.
  - It is important to think through the funding required to have an impact, attract people and businesses, and treat it as an investment.

## Key Informant Interview Review

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### Key Informant #1

*Date: November 26, 2020*

*Participant: Brenda Wood, RTO8*

### Impacts of Tourism

- It was noted that the RTO8 region sees “millions of dollars from tourism” and the location of Cobourg is key for the RTO8. The participant described the location of Northumberland, highlighting that it is located along Lake Ontario and situated along Highway 401.
  - “Cobourg is really a gem in the area.”
  - They added that Cobourg’s proximity to both large and small cities (e.g. Port Hope) is an asset, and the town is also recognized as a transportation hub. The participant highlighted many local attractions that align with art, culture and heritage, unique shopping, the market, the beach, downtown walking, culinary experiences, train station/VIA rail etc., and felt that there is a variety of opportunities for residents and visitors. They noted that individuals can “easily spend a weekend” or a couple of days in Cobourg.
    - “There is something for everybody.”
    - “It is a destination.”
    - The participant described the town’s ambiance as “warm” and “welcoming.”
- It was noted that weekends in Cobourg are typically busy and there is an opportunity to promote tourism activities for mid-week travelers (i.e. Monday-Thursday). The participant felt that many people prefer to travel during this quieter time.
  - It was noted that some communities have hosted performances, offered special promotions, or discounted rates by partnering with restaurants and local businesses to encourage mid-week travelers to visit the area.

### Tourism Opportunities

- The participant acknowledged that there has been significant growth in small and online businesses (e.g. artisanal and crafting work) recently and felt that there is opportunity for the Town of Cobourg in this area. They suggested that entrepreneurs, operating virtually and through e-commerce portals have the potential to grow, and perhaps through growth, these businesses could eventually open up a brick-and-mortar location in downtown Cobourg.
  - It was noted that there are many empty store fronts in Cobourg’s downtown.

- “If given the opportunity, they [small online businesses] could occupy one of those downtown businesses.”
  - “There’s huge possibility.”
  - Many of these small start-ups use the Venture Centre and businesses are selling their goods through places such as Homegrown Hamper and Northumberland Goods.
    - The participant felt that people don’t necessarily recognize the growth in this sector.
  - They emphasized the importance of supporting local and avoiding Amazon and Wayfair, as these companies do not contribute towards communities. This year more than ever, the “shop local” message is being driven.
- The participant strongly believed that tourism is a driver for economic development. They felt that in the foreseeable future, it will be important to explore outdoor tourism initiatives, domestic travel opportunities, and “hyper local tourism” (within a 40km radius).
  - In particular, it was noted that the data is showing that for the next 2-3 years, people will be comfortable with outdoor experiences, hiking, cycling, paddling, fishing, and outdoor recreation (excluding festivals).
  - Individuals won’t be comfortable getting on an airplane, and people will want to stay fairly close to home.
  - Ideas include restaurants offering their customers a ‘picnic basket’ option, bike rentals, small group activities, and outdoor adventures.

## Beach and Waterfront

- It was noted that the Town of Cobourg hosts a variety of successful festivals, food trucks, and a farmers market along the waterfront. The participant felt that there may be an opportunity to explore bike rentals, other activities that would encourage people to travel beyond the main waterfront area.
  - It was noted that this could be accomplished by developing an outfitters establishment that provides equipment for canoeing, kayaking, and paddle boarding.
- Aside from food and beverage, the participant acknowledged that Cobourg offers recreational beach activities such as sand sculpting.
- They suggested that areas such as Collingwood and Midland do particularly well at promoting their waterfront. In addition, they would like to see the Town of Cobourg leverage the beach to offer tourism activities in the wintertime (beyond skating) with the goal of extending the visitor season.

- The participant also recognized that a common complaint among the community is that visitors come to the beach and bring their own lunch and often leave behind their garbage. They noted that this is an issue for many communities. In addition, they emphasized the importance of exploring ways to encourage visitors to invest money into the community.

### Regional Partnerships

- The participant noted that there is an opportunity to build on the “hub-and-spoke” model for tourism, where travelers come and stay in Cobourg, but also have the opportunity to see the surrounding area (e.g. County Road 28, Port Hope, Hope Goat, Brighton, etc.)
  - “I love to see that partnership.”
  - “That hub-and-spoke works really well.”
- Over the last four or five years, the participant noted that RTO8 has held experiential training sessions to help enhance partnership development and networking opportunities. They also encourage businesses to attend the Edge of the Wedge experiential travel training program. It was noted that the DMO has offered financial support for participants in this program.
  - Graduates of the program support capacity building by reaching out to new businesses and forming tourism partnerships.

### Limitations and Barriers

- The participant acknowledged the local debate and conflicting views regarding tourism in the area, noting that the pandemic has also had an impact on these views.
  - In particular, they felt that there have been issues around accepting tourists, especially those of Asian descent, which was described as inhibiting progress for the Town of Cobourg and a reputational risk beyond tourism.
  - This is seen through social media and word of mouth.
  - “I don’t know how they overcome that.”

### Key Informant #2

*Date: November 30, 2020*

*Participant: Eileen Lum, Northumberland County Tourism*

### Impacts of Tourism

- The participant noted that the communities within Northumberland County greatly rely on the visitor economy. The agriculture sector is the number one economic driver for the region and tourism is second.
  - They noted that tourism has grown over the years and there has been considerable development in this sector over time.

- One of the challenges around tourism is a shortage of resources (including human resources).
  - “Too few people to deliver.”
  - The participant shared Peterborough as an example, noting that they have approximately eight staff members. They felt that regional tourism should have at least this number of staff.
- The participant described tourism as a “no brainer” and “key economic driver.”
- In addition, they noted that local business owners commonly indicate that 20% of their revenue is generated by visitors. This means that they are essentially a “tourism-related business.”
  - The participant felt that many businesses don’t understand what a tourism-related business actually is and that many people think tourism business is limited to attractions.
- The participant highlighted that tourism directly impacts economic growth for Cobourg through business attraction. Specifically, the participant felt that new businesses help keep the community vibrant and the region wouldn’t see the same flow of people if it weren’t for the arrival of new businesses.
  - They noted that every municipality should have someone who is dedicated to business attraction by working with the existing business community.
    - The amount of revenue generated from tourism (approximately 113 million) infused into the area can help with this.
- When discussing where visitors to the Town of Cobourg are coming from, the participant felt that in order to pinpoint this, it would help to have a survey. That being said, they noted that visitors tend to primarily come from the general direction of urban communities and environments. Cobourg’s access to Highway 401 is an important characteristic as this attracts people who are commuting from one urban area to another.
  - In particular, Oshawa, the GTA, and York region are core markets for Cobourg (the participant noted that these are all current pandemic hot spots).
  - In addition to these areas, other visitors come from Montreal.

## Beach and Waterfront

- It was noted that there were studies done several years ago on developing a boutique hotel where the trailer park is currently located. They felt that Cobourg is in need of more accommodation, ideally situated closer to downtown and the beach area.
- The participant felt that people who go to the beach in Cobourg represent an alternative market to those who visit the shops and downtown core. They described a disconnect between the downtown and the beach.

- In particular, the participant acknowledged that most of the shops in Cobourg cater to an older demographic and described those who visit the shops as belonging to a more mature demographic (40-54 in age). They felt that this group represents a strong market to “tap into” for tourism purposes.
- In contrast, those who visit the beach and who come for the recreational aspect tend to be families. These people come for the day and stay in one area. The participant noted that this is the same type of group who go camping at Presqu’île beach.
  - Although it is very difficult to get these individuals to leave the beach, the participant suggested it might be helpful to conduct a survey to discover what products and services appeal to them.
    - A previous study suggested that food trucks would specifically cater to this group.
    - The participant shared examples of shops and products available in Bobcaygeon that appeal to the beachgoer demographic.

### Tourism Opportunities

- Through continuing to partner with neighbouring regions (to offer overnight accommodations, cycling tours, etc.), the participant felt that Cobourg could encourage longer stays with its visitors.
  - “Not one municipality has everything, even though they think they do.”
  - “It does come down to partnerships.”
  - The participant also recognized that a key accommodation facility in Cobourg recently closed.
- They felt that everyone is trying to work towards the goal of experiential tourism packages and described successful examples that have worked well in other areas such as partnerships between local cycling clubs in the Peterborough area.
  - In Cobourg, the cycling clubs average age is 60, which the participant noted is an extremely mature demographic.
  - “We’re all trying to work towards that goal.”
  - The participant felt strongly that there is an opportunity for Cobourg to work more closely with RTO8 and send key business operators to workshops (e.g. Ignite).
- It was noted that in the past, the DBIA hosted a series of food tours and tried to combine these with cycling. It was suggested that Cobourg may be limited by its small size and would benefit from exploring partnerships with areas such as Graton and Port Hope to overcome this barrier.

- “They need to expand their partnership to include other areas.”
- The participant emphasized that it is important for municipalities to understand that these opportunities take time and often require several years of nurturing.
  - They shared the example of the waterfront trail adventure, noting that there are certain gaps in visitor services that also need to be addressed for initiatives to be successful.
  - The participant acknowledged that up until the end of next year, there will be more funding as a result of COVID-19.
    - “They really should take advantage of this.”
- Another tourism-related opportunity for retail shops is for them to closely examine their merchandise and understand the market they are serving and whether visitors really want to buy their products.
  - “It wouldn’t hurt to have a merchandise specialist take a look.”
  - It was suggested to look to Bobcaygeon and the Village of Warkworth for examples of retail shops and restaurants that cater specifically to visitors.
- Furthermore, the participant encouraged local businesses to adopt standard hours of operation and a stronger digital presence, noting that it is upsetting when visitors travel from a distance only to find out that businesses are closed.

### Limitations and Barriers

- As a result of the pandemic, it was noted that the Town of Cobourg is trying to help residents recognize the visitor economy, rebuild their sentiment towards visitors, understand cultural diversity, and challenge their assumptions and biases.
  - The participant acknowledged that Cobourg has had a long history of not wanting visitors. The pandemic has heightened this sentiment and many individuals feel even more justified in this way of thinking.
    - People are upset when they see other people on the beach eating their own food.
    - It was noted that this issue is not isolated in Cobourg, but also effects the Trent Hills area. It is important to find a strategy to overcome this.
  - They noted that when people are not friendly, this isn’t good because visitors sometimes become residents and eventual business owners in the area.
    - First visits/first impressions encourage people to come back.
- Another limitation for the Town of Cobourg is that it can be quiet and sometimes seem like they have three seasons instead of four. The participant noted that this is problematic, especially when trying to work with food tourism, as many restaurants close during the winter (from January to March).



- The participant emphasized the importance of re-establishing tourism as a priority and for the municipality to make a long-term commitment to the sector as the town's priorities keep changing.
  - Furthermore, the town should have a separate budget dedicated towards tourism with one person responsible for carrying out the work and understanding all of the connections. They felt that hiring consultants on a regular basis can sometimes contribute towards further disconnect.
    - “I don't think one could actually make real plans or commit to anything without a predetermined budget.”

## Survey Review

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As noted above, the engagement phase included an online survey that was developed and circulated to stakeholders for a total of five weeks. The Town of Cobourg released a press release on November 16, 2020 to advise residents that a tourism survey would be circulating among local business owners/operators and business/tourism support organizations

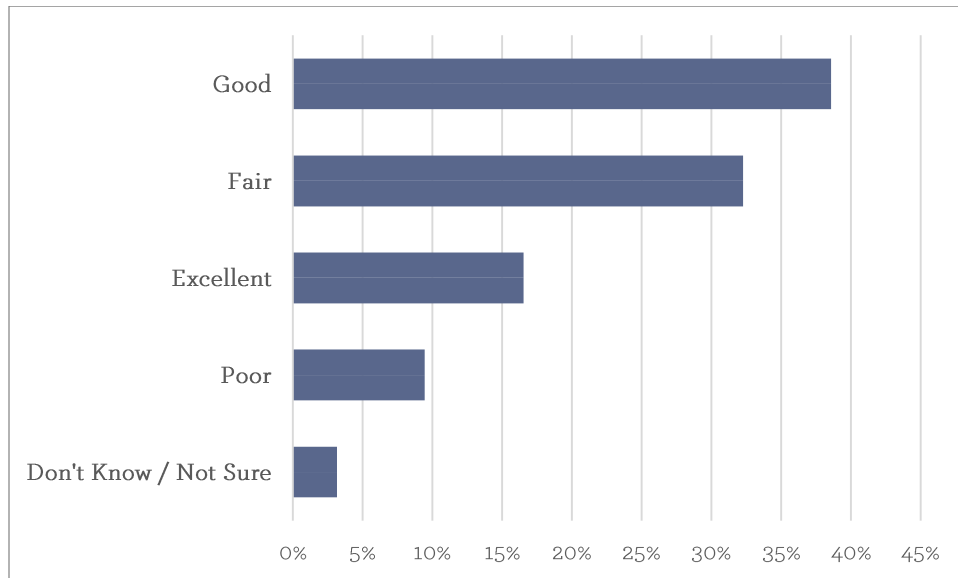
- **Live Dates:** November 16, 2020 – December 18, 2020.
- **Offered to\*:**
  - Small-medium size business owners and operators located in the Town of Cobourg
  - Business and/or Tourism Support Organizations
  - Interested members of the community
  - Visitors to the community
- **Dissemination:** Circulated via email, social media, through focus groups, and in-person.
- **Total Responses:** 135 responses to the survey.

Please note that questions including comments from survey respondents are presented **as written** to preserve the voice of participants and ensure accurate reflection of their sentiment and feedback.

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\*Note: local business owners/operators and business/tourism support organizations were the **target** audience for this survey.

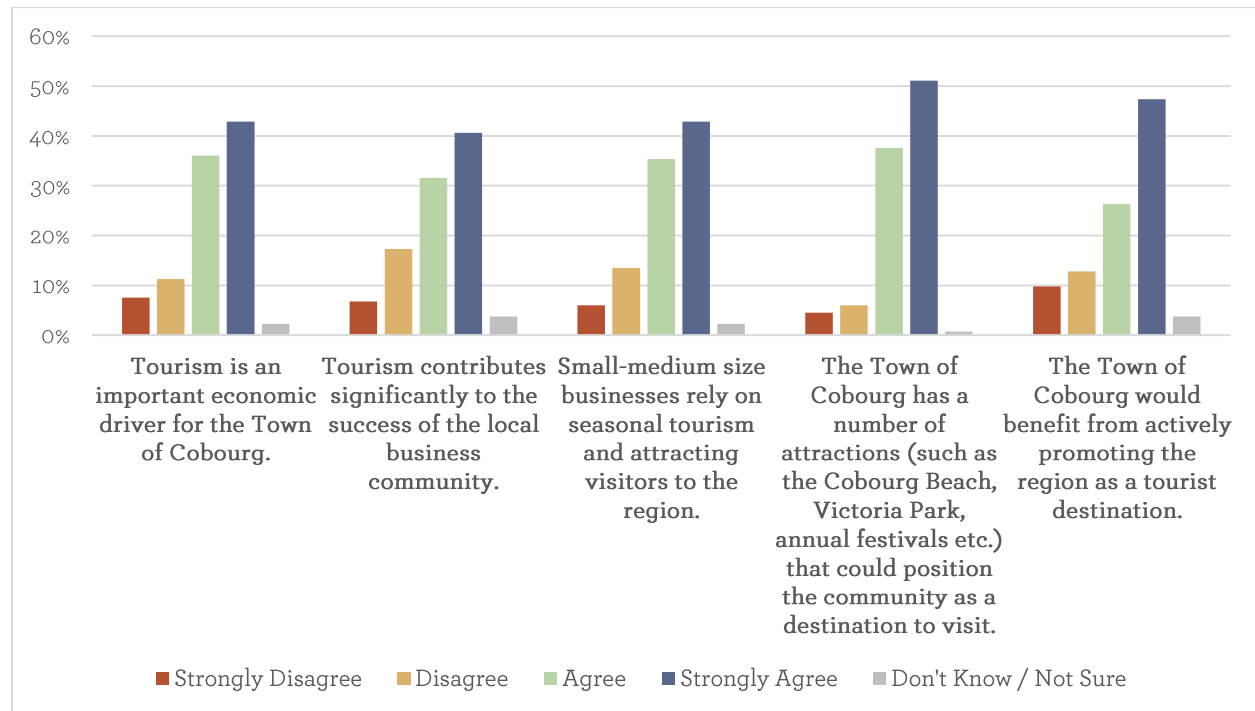
Question 1: Based on your experiences, please rate your overall impression of the tourism sector in the Town of Cobourg.



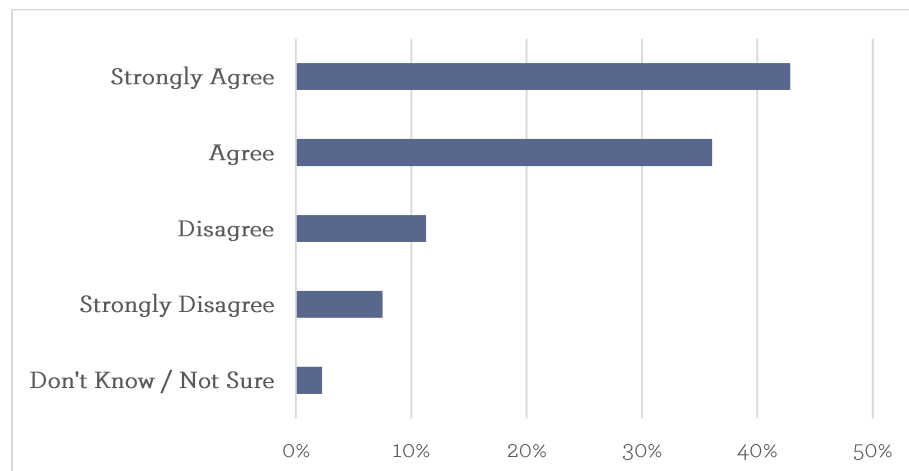
For those who identified as:

- A business owner or operator
  - 32% Good
  - 32% Fair
  - 28% Excellent
  - 8% Poor
- A business and/or tourism support organization
  - 40% Excellent
  - 20% Good
  - 20% Fair
  - 20% Poor
- An interested community member
  - 41% Good
  - 33% Fair
  - 13% Excellent
  - 9% Poor
  - 5% Don't Know/Not Sure
- A visitor to the community
  - 40% Good
  - 20% Excellent
  - 20% Fair
  - 20% Poor

Question 2: To what degree do you agree with the following statements:



**Statement #1:** Tourism is an important economic driver for the Town of Cobourg.

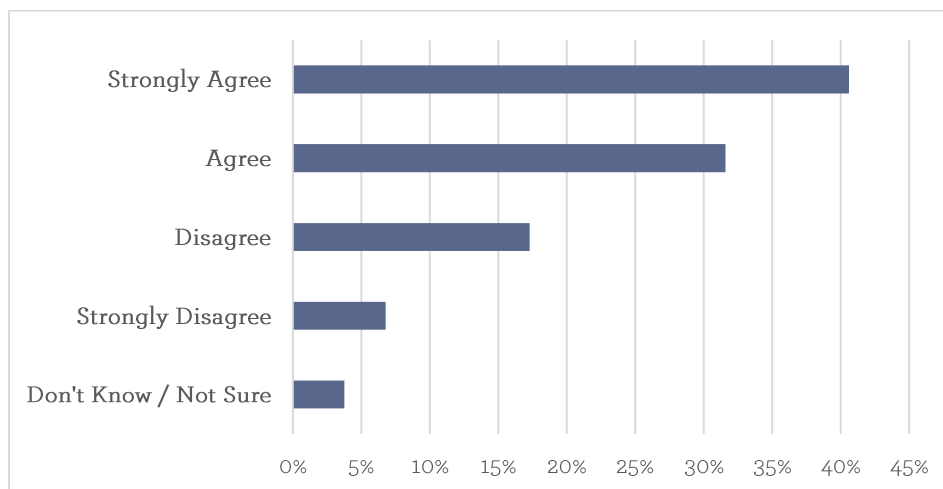


For those who identified as:

- A business owner or operator
  - 68% Strongly Agree
  - 21% Agree
  - 4% Disagree
  - 4% Strongly Disagree
  - 4% Don't Know/Not Sure

- A business and/or tourism support organization
  - 60% Strongly Agree
  - 40% Agree
- An interested community member
  - 37% Agree
  - 35% Strongly Agree
  - 15% Disagree
  - 10% Strongly Disagree
  - 2% Don't Know/Not Sure
- A visitor to the community
  - 60% Agree
  - 40% Strongly Agree

**Statement #2:** Tourism contributes significantly to the success of the local business community.

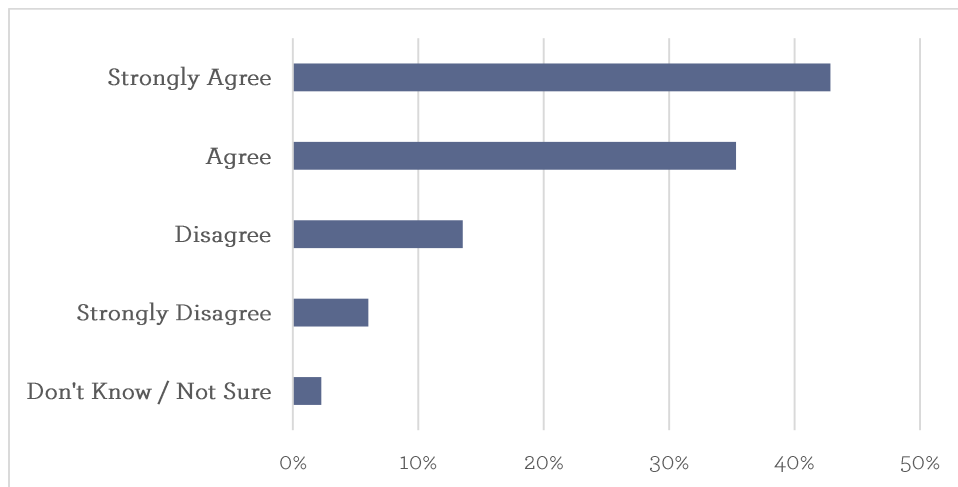


For those who identified as:

- A business owner or operator
  - 61% Strongly Agree
  - 25% Agree
  - 7% Disagree
  - 4% Strongly Disagree
  - 4% Don't Know/Not Sure
- A business and/or tourism support organization
  - 60% Strongly Agree
  - 40% Agree
- An interested community member
  - 33% Strongly Agree

- 32% Agree
- 22% Disagree
- 9% Strongly Disagree
- 4% Don't Know/Not Sure
- A visitor to the community
  - 60% Strongly Agree
  - 40% Agree

**Statement #3:** Small-medium size businesses rely on seasonal tourism and attracting visitors to the region.

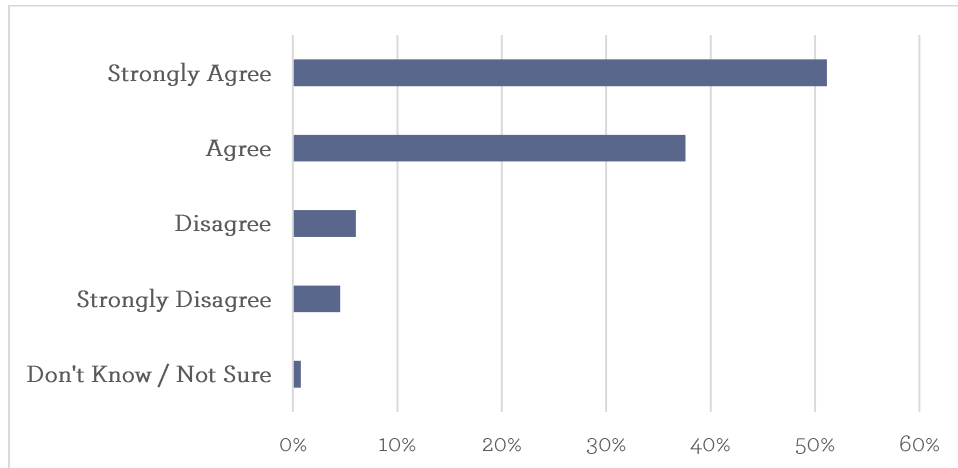


For those who identified as:

- A business owner or operator
  - 61% Strongly Agree
  - 25% Agree
  - 7% Disagree
  - 4% Strongly Disagree
  - 4% Don't Know/Not Sure
- A business and/or tourism support organization
  - 80% Strongly Agree
  - 20% Agree
- An interested community member
  - 39% Agree
  - 35% Strongly Agree
  - 17% Disagree
  - 8% Strongly Disagree
  - 2% Don't Know/Not Sure
- A visitor to the community

- 60% Strongly Agree
- 40% Agree

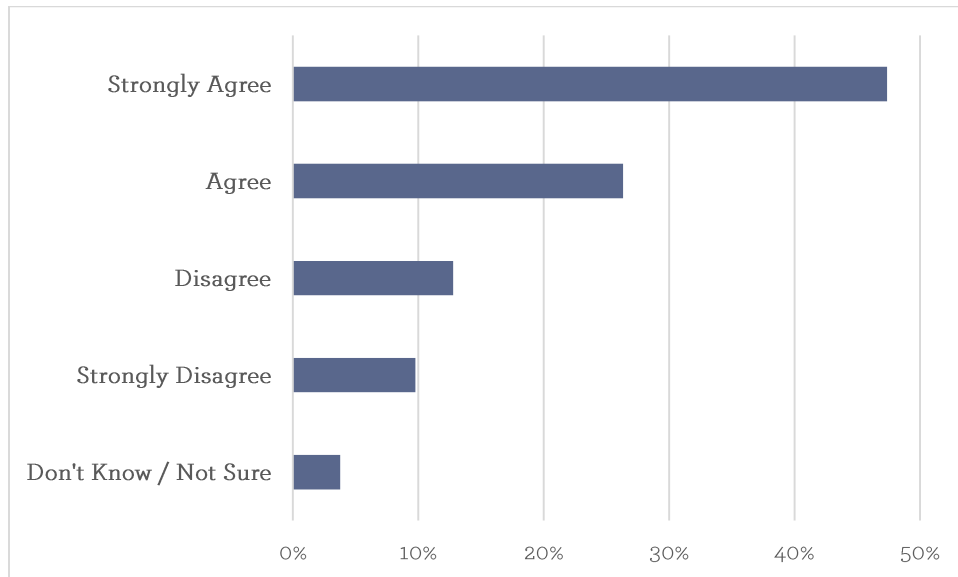
**Statement #4:** The Town of Cobourg has a number of attractions (such as the Cobourg Beach, Victoria Park, annual festivals, etc.) that could position the community as a destination to visit.



For those who identified as:

- A business owner or operator
  - 68% Strongly Agree
  - 29% Agree
  - 4% Strongly Disagree
- A business and/or tourism support organization
  - 80% Strongly Agree
  - 20% Agree
- An interested community member
  - 46% Strongly Agree
  - 40% Agree
  - 8% Disagree
  - 6% Strongly Disagree
  - 1% Don't Know/Not Sure
- A visitor to the community
  - 60% Agree
  - 20% Disagree
  - 20% Strongly Agree

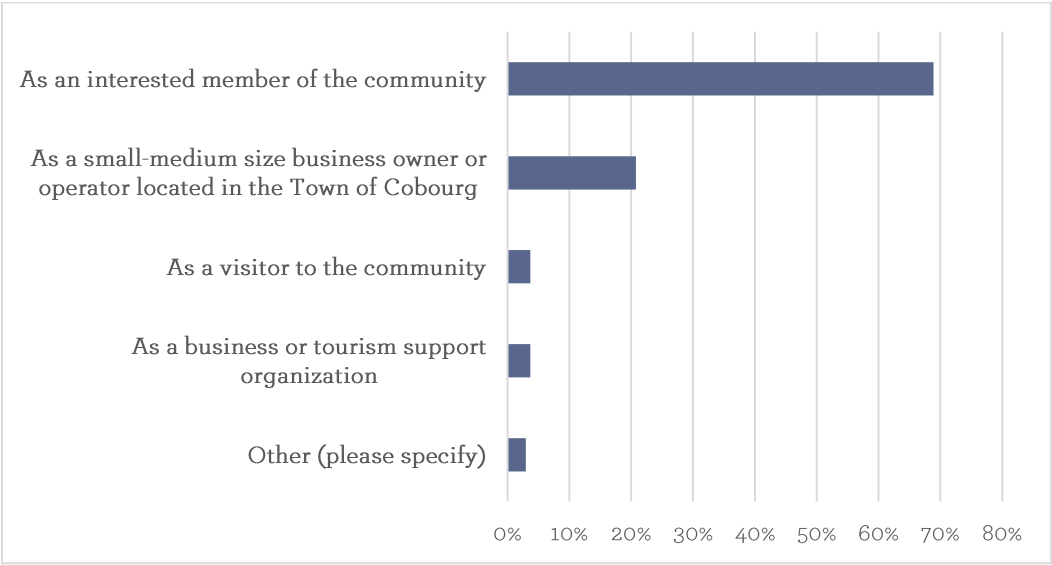
**Statement #5:** The Town of Cobourg would benefit from actively promoting the region as a tourist destination.



For those who identified as:

- A business owner or operator
  - 64% Strongly Agree
  - 21% Agree
  - 7% Disagree
  - 4% Strongly Disagree
  - 4% Don't Know/Not Sure
- A business and/or tourism support organization
  - 80% Strongly Agree
  - 20% Agree
- An interested community member
  - 42% Strongly Agree
  - 27% Agree
  - 14% Disagree
  - 13% Strongly Disagree
  - 4% Don't Know/Not Sure
- A visitor to the community
  - 60% Strongly Agree
  - 40% Agree

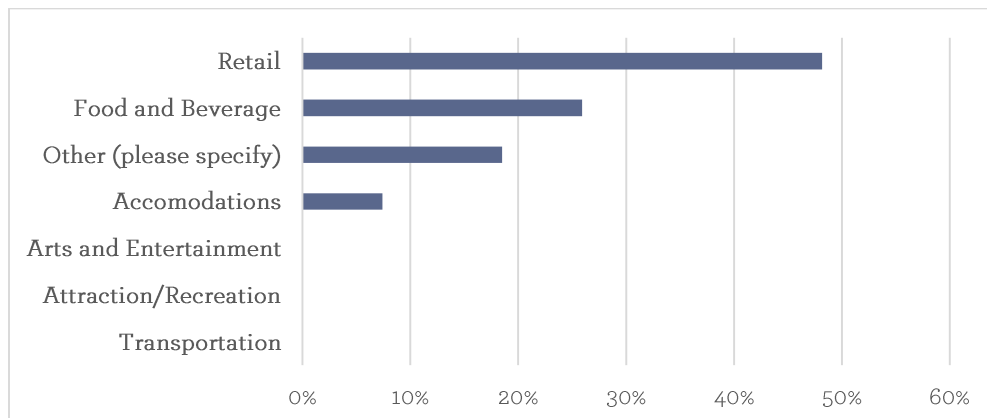
Question 3: From what perspective are you completing this survey?



Other (please specify)
As a volunteer for the NHS shop and Cobourg Ecology Garden
Someone who wants to be able to see the beach, rather than 1/2 tents and umbrellas
The downtown area needs a complete and comprehensive plan for the area. The number of closed businesses and the inconsistency of a theme for the aesthetic of the downtown makes it uninviting. Restaurants with entertainment are a huge draw and yet none exist. Port Hope has figured this out and we need to take a lesson from them. We are lucky to have such a beautiful beach or there would be no draw- what happens to our economy in the winter when that is not available?
We don't need more visitors to the beach, where they spend little, we need other things to attract people to the area, our CCC is a great place for things like Hockey, soccer, baseball, but we need really good skate park for the young who enjoy that kind of thing. People that live in Cobourg would like to see less persons at the beach.

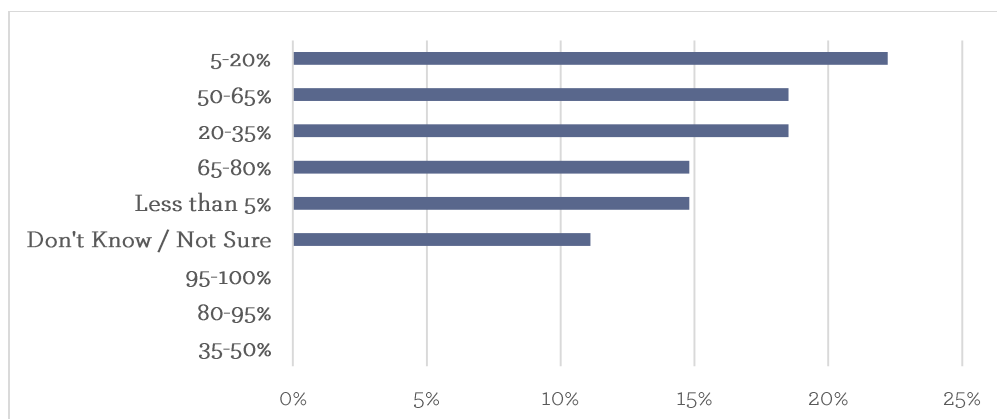


\*2Question 4: What is your business type?



Other (please specify)
Professional Services
Public service: spa/Esthetics
Blacksmith artist
Service and retail
Marketing

\*Question 5: Please complete the following sentence: "In 2019, prior to COVID-19, tourism activity in the Town of Cobourg contributed approximately \_\_\_\_ towards my company's annual revenue."



For those who identified as:

- A retail business
  - 15% (Less than 5%)
  - 23% (5 - 20%)

\*Note: This question was only asked to survey respondents who identified as a small-medium size business owner or operator located in the Town of Cobourg.

- 23% (20 – 35%)
- 23% (50 – 65%)
- 15% (65 – 80%)
- A food and beverage business
  - 43% Don't Know/Not Sure
  - 29% (20 – 35%)
  - 14% (50 – 65%)
  - 14% (65 – 80%)
- An accommodation business
  - 50% (5 – 20%)
  - 50% (65 – 80%)

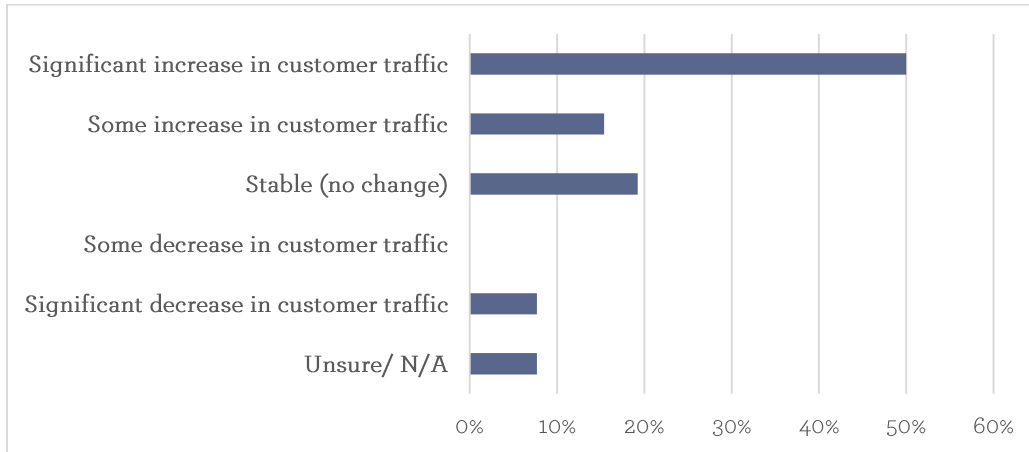
\*<sup>3</sup>Question 6: Approximately how much of your business's annual revenue to you attribute to tourism? (in Canadian dollars)

Responses
Retail
\$20 000
\$15,000
\$80,000
\$80,000
\$75000
Probably none
\$0
?
Food and Beverage
\$150,000
\$85
Impossible to say
\$200,000
\$200,000
\$80-100k
\$400,000
Accommodation
50%
75 %
Other
\$10,000

<sup>3</sup> \*Note: This question was only asked to survey respondents who identified as a small-medium size business owner or operator located in the Town of Cobourg.

\$5,000
5 percent
\$100,000
N/A

\*<sup>4</sup>Question 7: How would you describe the impact that tourism has on customer traffic in a **typical year** (*prior to COVID-19*)?

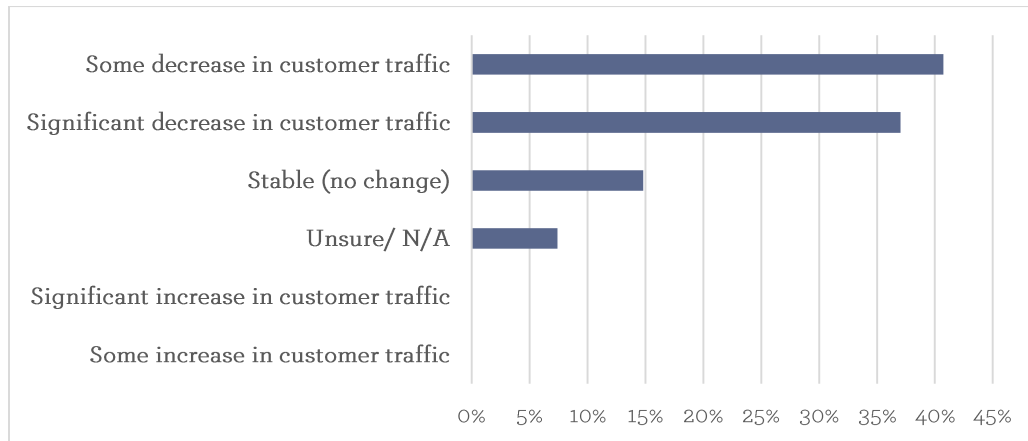


For those who identified as:

- A retail business
  - 67% Significant Increase
  - 17% Stable
- A food and beverage business
  - 43% Significant Increase
  - 29% Some Increase
  - 14% Stable
  - 14% Significant Decrease
- An accommodation business
  - 50% Significant Increase
  - 50% Unsure/ N/A

<sup>4</sup> \*Note: This question was only asked to survey respondents who identified as a small-medium size business owner or operator located in the Town of Cobourg.

\*<sup>5</sup>Question 8: Since COVID-19, how would you describe the impact that tourism has on customer traffic?



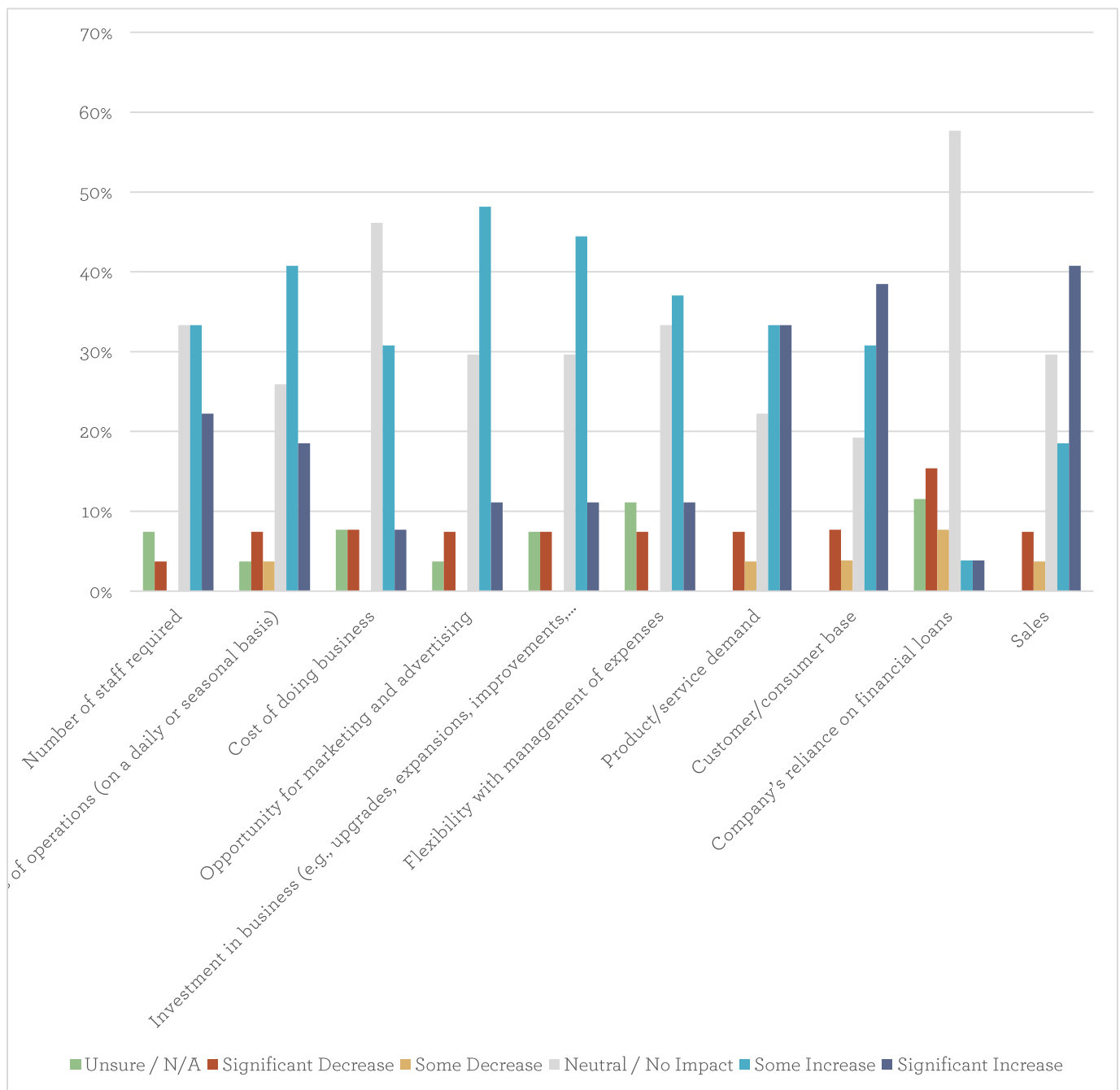
For those who identified as:

- A retail business
  - 38% Significant Decrease
  - 38% Some Decrease
  - 15% Stable
- A food and beverage business
  - 43% Significant Decrease
  - 43% Some Decrease
  - 14% Stable
- An accommodation business
  - 50% Some Decrease
  - 50% Unsure/ N/A

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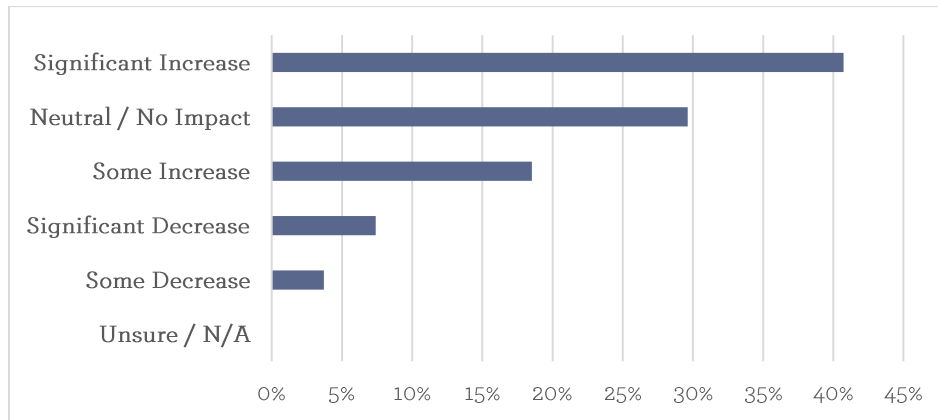
<sup>5</sup> \*Note: This question was only asked to survey respondents who identified as a small-medium size business owner or operator located in the Town of Cobourg.

\*<sup>6</sup>Question 9: In a **typical year** (*prior* to COVID-19), in what ways does local tourism influence business operations and decisions around the following:

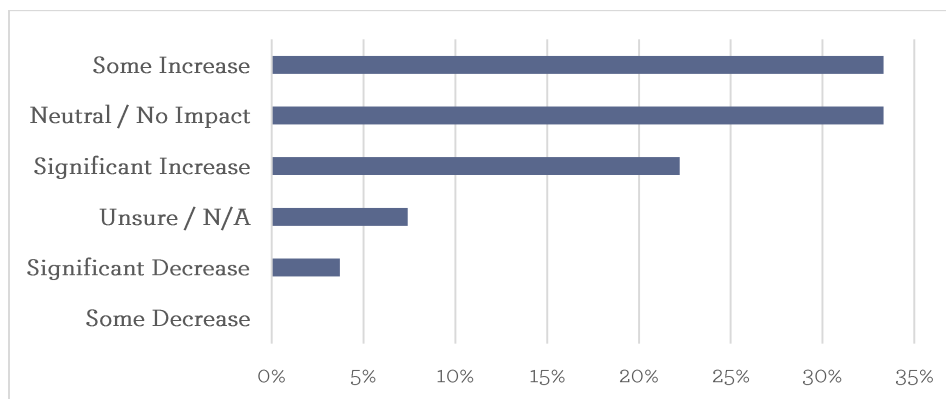


<sup>6</sup> \*Note: This question was only asked to survey respondents who identified as a small-medium size business owner or operator located in the Town of Cobourg.

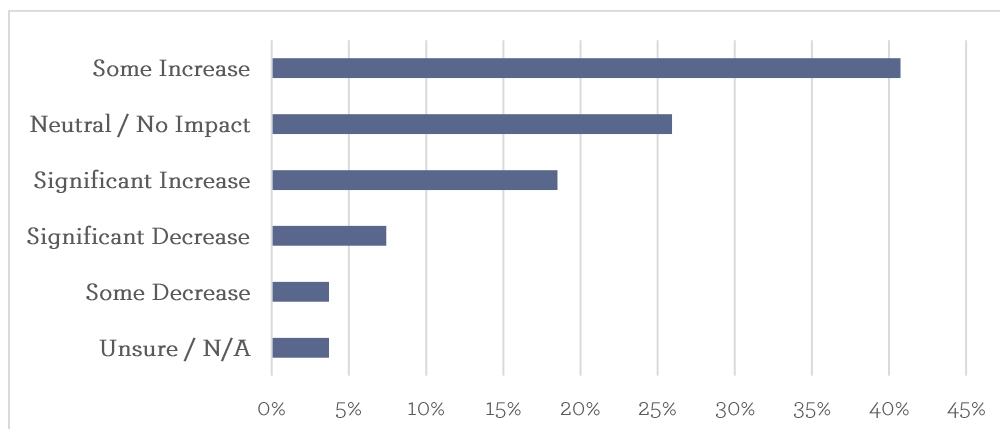
Question 9.1: In what ways does local tourism influence business operations and decisions around: **Sales**



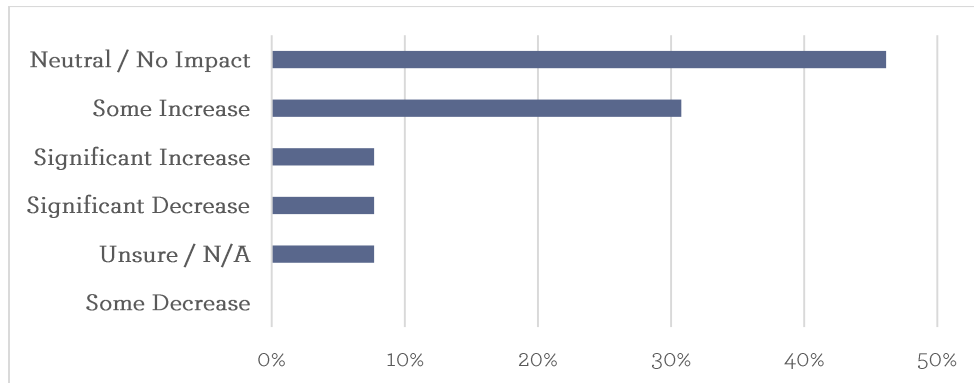
Question 9.2: In what ways does local tourism influence business operations and decisions around: **Number of Staff Required**



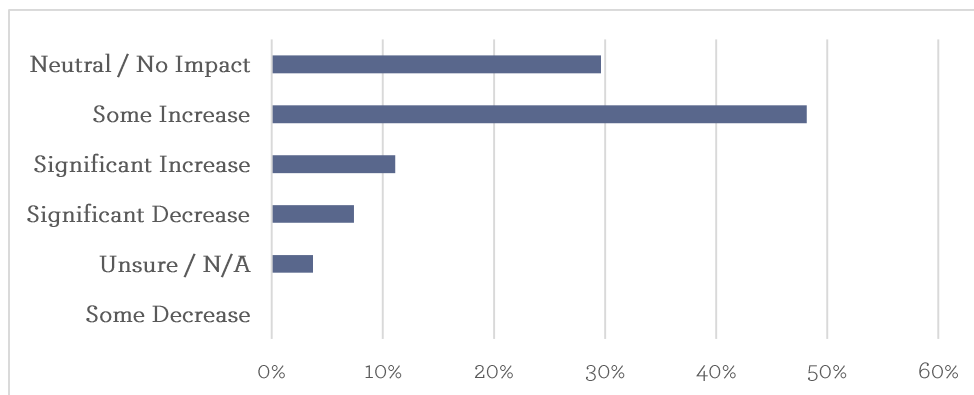
Question 9.3: In what ways does local tourism influence business operations and decisions around: **Hours of Operation (on a daily basis)**



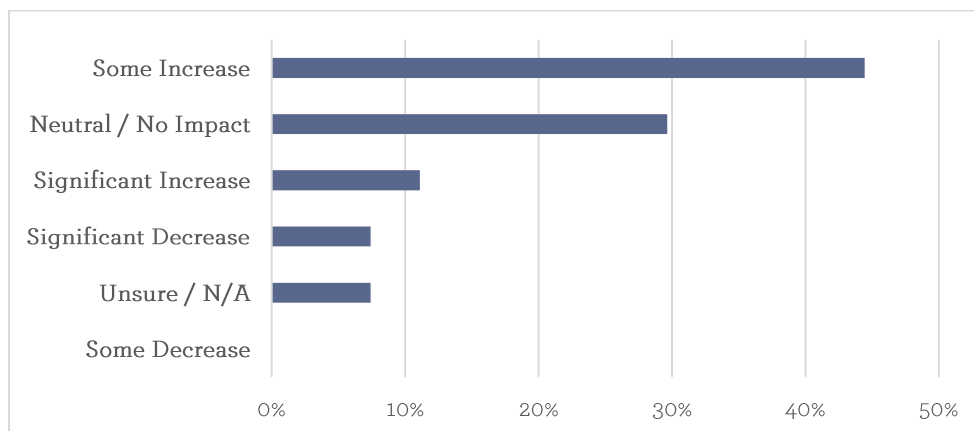
Question 9.4: In what ways does local tourism influence business operations and decisions around: **Cost of Doing Business**



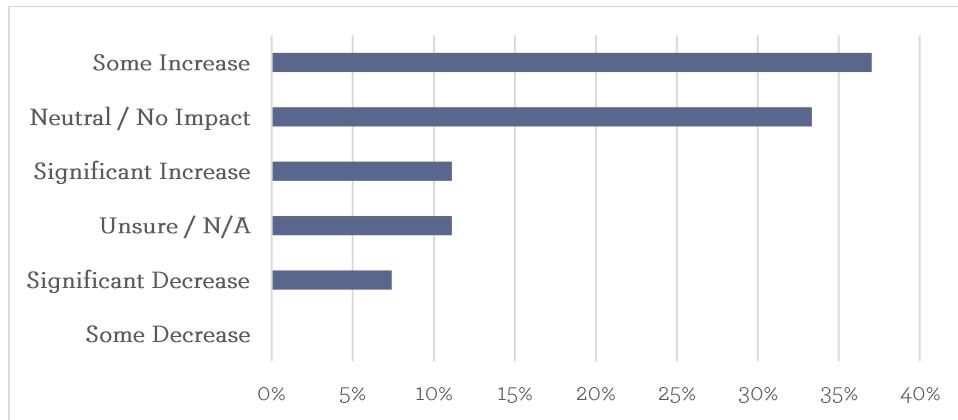
Question 9.5: In what ways does local tourism influence business operations and decisions around: **Opportunity for Marketing and Advertising**



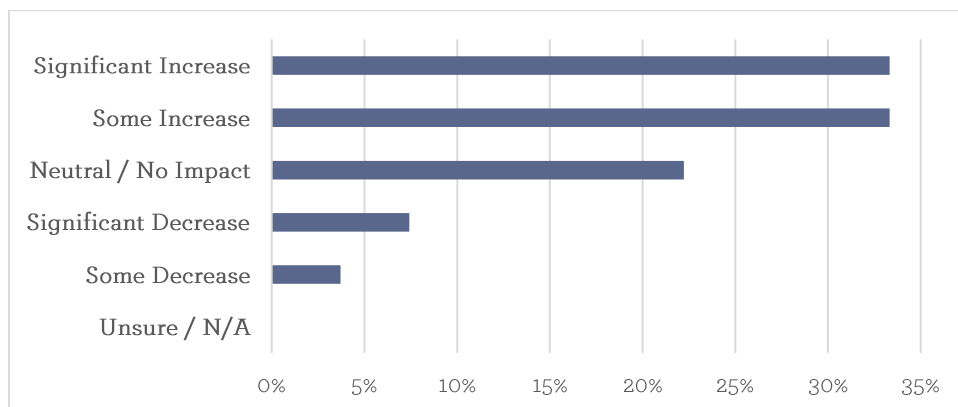
Question 9.6: In what ways does local tourism influence business operations and decisions around: **Investment in Business (e.g. upgrades, expansions, improvements, renovations, etc.)**



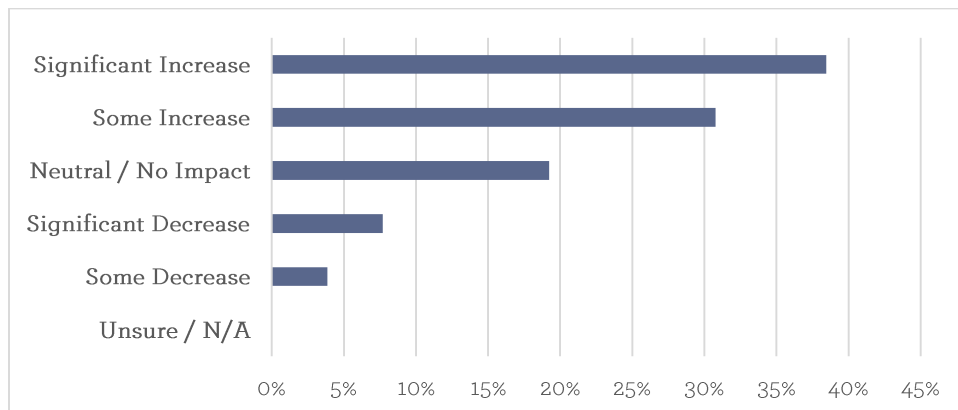
Question 9.7: In what ways does local tourism influence business operations and decisions around: **Flexibility with Management of Expenses**



Question 9.8: In what ways does local tourism influence business operations and decisions around: **Product/Service Demand**

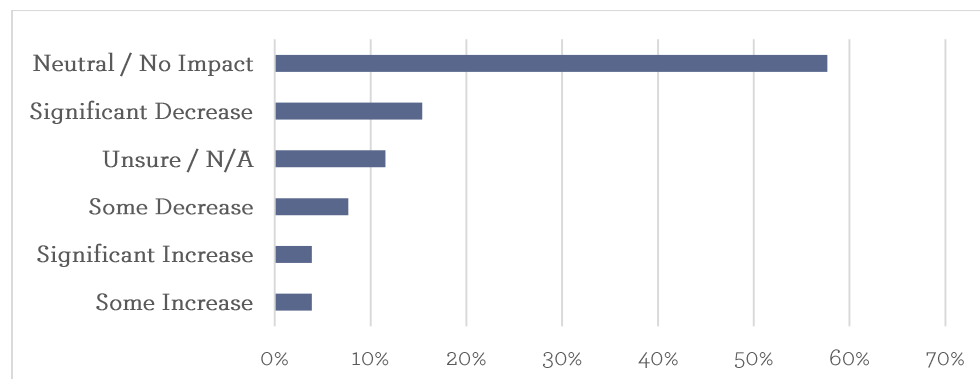


Question 9.9: In what ways does local tourism influence business operations and decisions around: **Customer/Consumer Base**

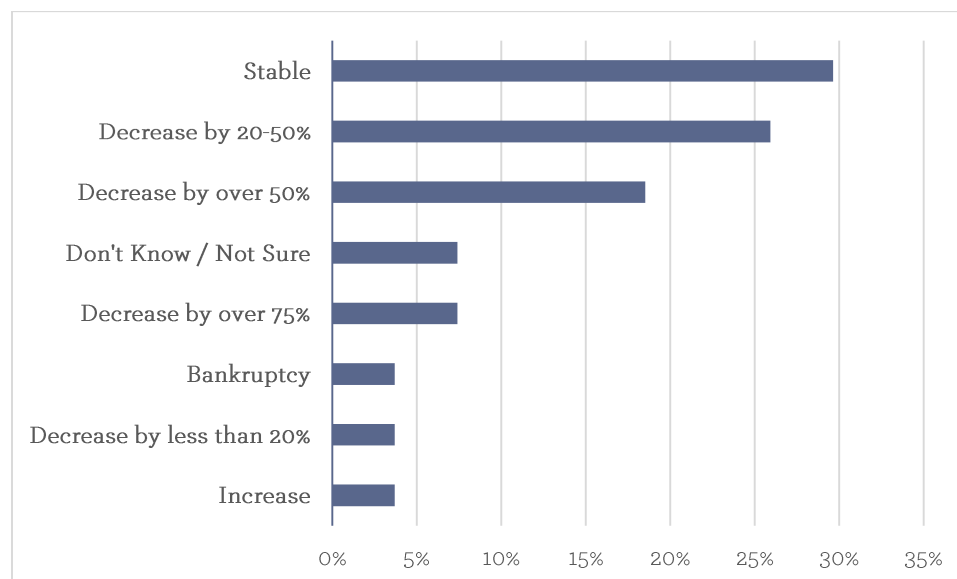




Question 9.10: In what ways does local tourism influence business operations and decisions around: **Company's Reliance on Financial Loans**



\*<sup>7</sup>Question 10: If tourism in the region of Cobourg continues to be negatively impacted by COVID-19 for up to six more months, how do you anticipate your business's revenue to change compared with the year 2019?



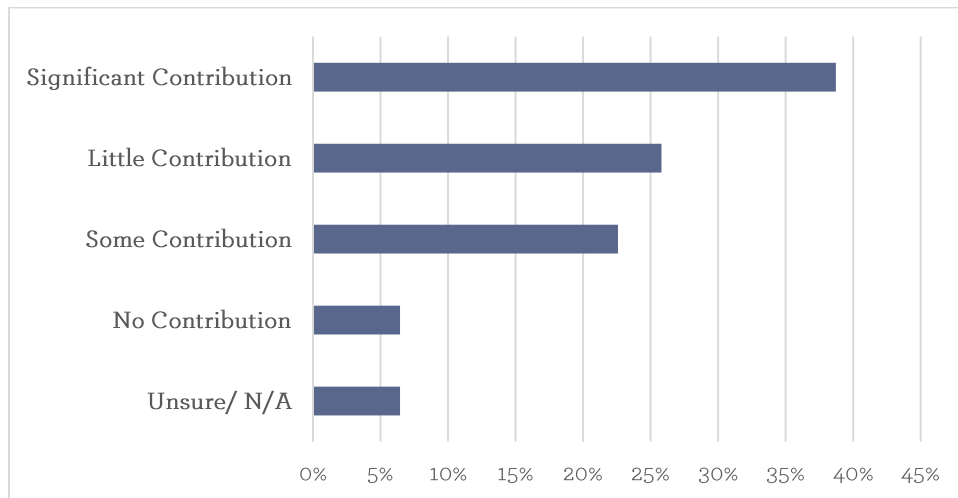
For those who identified as:

- A retail business
  - 8% Increase
  - 23% Stable
  - 23% Decrease by 20-50%

<sup>7</sup> \*Note: This question was only asked to survey respondents who identified as a small-medium size business owner or operator located in the Town of Cobourg.

- 23% Decrease by over 75%
- A food and beverage business
  - 43% Decrease by 20-50%
  - 14% Stable
  - 14% Decrease by over 50%
  - 14% Decrease by over 75%
  - 14% Bankruptcy
- An accommodation business
  - 50% Decrease by 20-50%
  - 50% Don't Know/Not Sure

Question 11: Prior to COVID-19, how did the Cobourg Beach (*and waterfront activity such as the Splashpad, Canteen etc.*) contribute toward attracting customers and generating sales for local businesses in general?

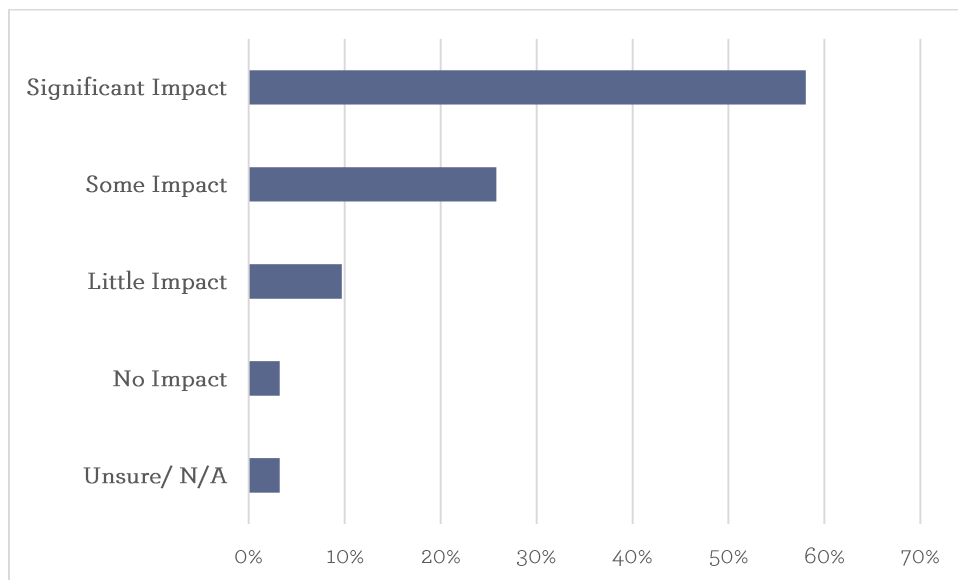


For those who identified as:

- A retail business
  - 54% Significant Contribution
  - 23% Some Contribution
  - 8% Little Contribution
  - 8% No Contribution
- A food and beverage business
  - 50% Significant Contribution
  - 33% Little Contribution
  - 17% Some Contribution
- An accommodation business
  - 50% Some Contribution

- 50% Unsure/ N/A
- A business and/or tourism support organization
  - 80% Little Contribution
  - 20% Significant Contribution

Question 12: How do community events, holiday weekends, and festivals in the Town of Cobourg impact the sales and customer traffic experienced by local businesses? (for example: Cobourg's annual Sandcastle Festival, annual Waterfront Festival, Ribfest, activities hosted in Victoria Park, etc.)

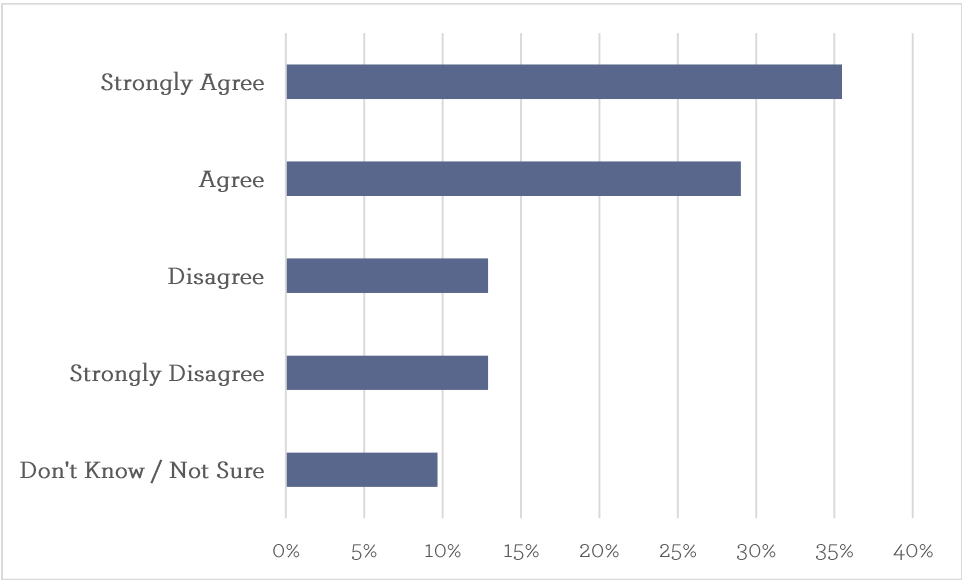


For those who identified as:

- A retail business
  - 69% Significant Impact
  - 23% Some Impact
  - 8% No Impact
- A food and beverage business
  - 50% Significant Impact
  - 33% Little Impact
  - 17% Some Impact
- An accommodation business
  - 50% Some Impact
  - 50% Unsure/ N/A
- A business and/or tourism support organization
  - 60% Significant Impact
  - 20% Some Impact

- 20% Little Impact

Question 13: To what degree do you agree with the following statement, “The Town of Cobourg effectively leverages community events and tourism programming to attract people to the area and encourage economic spending.”



For those who identified as:

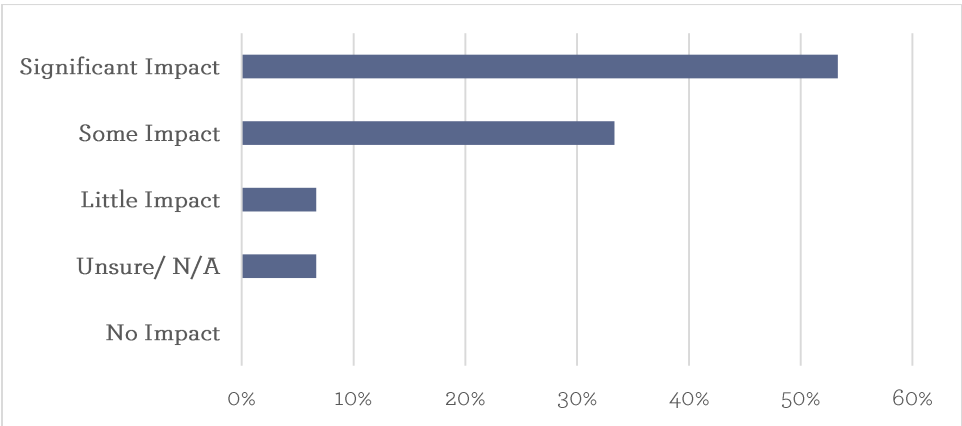
- A business owner or operator
  - 35% Strongly Agree
  - 23% Agree
  - 15% Disagree
  - 12% Strongly Disagree
  - 12% Don't Know/Not Sure
- A business and/or tourism support organization
  - 40% Strongly Agree
  - 40% Agree
  - 20% Strongly Disagree

Question 14: What changes to Cobourg’s community events and tourism programming would you recommend to better attract tourism and encourage economic spending in the region?

Responses
Small-Medium Size Business Owners or Operators Located in the Town of Cobourg
Conference Centre

I think a reasonable job is being done in programming events.... I think the outdoor sidewalk cafes and sales were great this year perhaps as a result of Covid.
Wider promotion of events to larger audiences
Stop spending so much revenue on promoting and maintaining the beach. If the tax-payer is going to continue to foot the enormous bill for this, town should strongly consider user-pay system for any non-local users. Beach tourism does not provide sufficient benefit to small business/downtown business.
Focus on attracting a non-geriatric demographic by bringing in more contemporary, recognized bands, similar to what is done in Peterborough when they have free concerts but with artists with international recognition, like the Sheepdogs, rather than the old guys with their hobby bands.
Many of the events are Rotary Club events. It would be positive to see more Town of Cobourg run events.
I think we need to put more effort in to keeping the downtown looking good and clean. We also need to try and keep the homeless from begging and sleeping on the main street. People don't want to be afraid of coming to town.
do closures as were done during covid but with more food trucks and other non-competing lines
Break on parking costs at peak shopping times; business tax break for small business; financial support for restoring the downtown buildings.
Longer overnight stays, multi-day conferences, etc.
Develop waterfront more. Make it exciting
Attractions designed for local repeat customers not promoting our natural resources
The fear messaging of Covid has paralyzed our community. We need less Government/Media and more common sense. Covid is real and dangerous, however the Town needs to let locals and local business carry on with protocol and carefully manage their lives. This will encourage people/traffic and therefore our local economy to flourish or at least hold steady. The Truth is that all levels of Government are being dictated to by health officials. Our Elected officials are being controlled by our non-elected officials.
Use of Social media, signage on 401, limit input from citizens. Concert series at bandshell. Hotel at trailer park would increase traffic 365 days a year.
Use of flyer distribution to event participants where local businesses/restaurants can buy ad space in, that is given to each person upon entry to event.
Not sure
<b>Business and/or Tourism Support Organizations</b>
More seasonal events and attractions.
Redirect resources to areas such as sports tourism that can monetize town assets thru user fees instead of promoting waterfront festival and sandcastle festival that only promotes the beach which collects very little revenue if any for the town.
There needs to be more of an emphasis on Heritage tourism by actively promoting Cobourg as a Heritage town and by putting together packages for Heritage tourists to come, visit and learn.
Cohesive advertising.

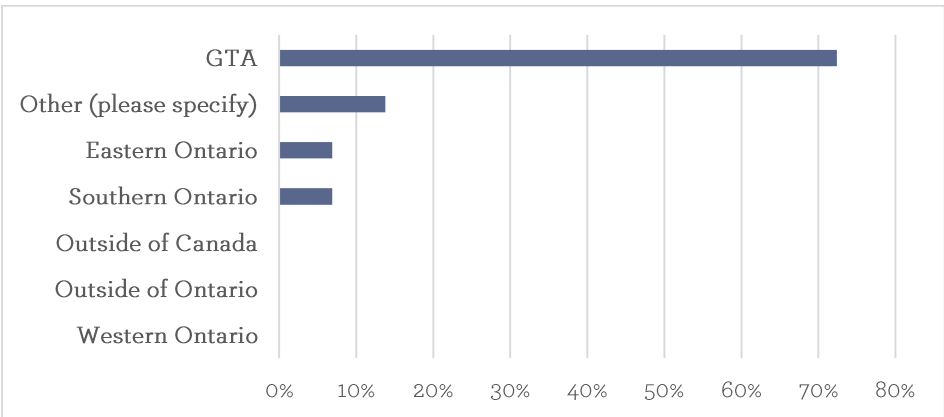
Question 15: In general, how does the tourism sector impact the economic growth and well-being of the Town of Cobourg?



For those who identified as:

- A business owner or operator
  - 52% Significant Impact
  - 36% Some Impact
  - 8% Unsure/ N/A
  - 4% Little Impact
- A business and/or tourism support organization
  - 60% Significant Impact
  - 20% Some Impact
  - 20% Little Impact

Question 16: In your experience, where are visitors and tourists to the Town of Cobourg **primarily** coming from?

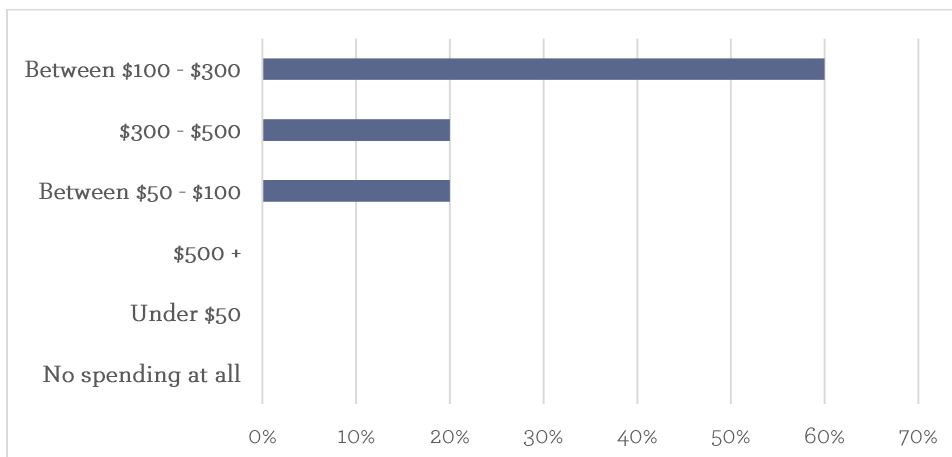


For those who identified as:

- A business owner or operator
  - 80% GTA
  - 13% Other
  - 4% Eastern Ontario
  - 4% Southern Ontario
- A business and/or tourism support organization
  - 40% GTA
  - 20% Eastern Ontario
  - 20% Southern Ontario
  - 20% Other

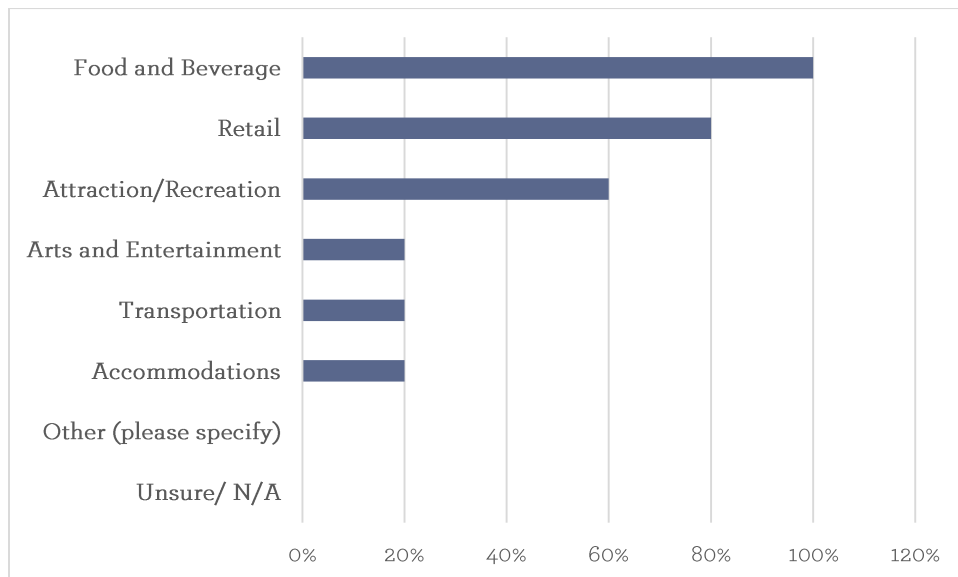
Other (please specify)
Mostly GTA and outside Northumberland County
Just outside of Cobourg (Scarborough, Peterborough, etc.)
I think this can be more than one answer. GTA but also a lot from the east Kingston, Belleville, Brighton
Boating traffic

\*<sup>8</sup>Question 17: When visiting Cobourg, on average, how much do you spend in the region?



<sup>8</sup> \*Note: This question was only asked to survey respondents who identified as a visitor to the community.

\*<sup>9</sup>Question 18: When visiting Cobourg, on average, which services and businesses do you spend the most money with? *(if applicable)*



Question 19: How can the Town of Cobourg more proactively leverage Ontario's resilient and vibrant tourism industry?

Responses
<p><b>Small-Medium Size Business Owners or Operators Located in the Town of Cobourg</b></p> <p>Infrastructure and land development. The economic sister city of Cobourg is Collingwood. Go and see their waterfront. Cobourg's waterfront is underdeveloped and tired.</p>
<p>Host events to bring guests to Cobourg</p> <p>The almost weekly events create something for everyone which keeps people coming back and shopping - the downtown businesses in general need to increase their open hours of operations during summer hours to capture the customers shopping. Attracting more chefs and restaurateurs to the area will also help keep tourists here longer</p>
<p>The beach bar (being run by the local bar owners) was great. Encourage more Train/VIA tourism through targeted marketing (geographic area), bike rentals from station, more parking at station, etc. move skateboard park to Vic Pk and bring in more outdoor activities (frisbee golf etc.) encourage pedestrian travel in the downtown core. encourage "transients" over seasonal renters in the campground/marina. They tend to spend more on the local economy. encourage more Inns/B+B's near the downtown core (like transient boaters and campers - they tend to eat/shop in the local businesses). cater to activities such as fishing charters. re-design and beautify the campground. Provide "glamping" sites/cabins/yurts. Offer these services through the winter. put some of those sites on the sand in front of the boardwalk - extremely popular (look at what other businesses are charging for this service in</p>

<sup>9</sup> \*Note: This question was only asked to survey respondents who identified as a visitor to the community.



Northumberland/Prince Edward County). Allow winter camping and other events (eg a snowshoe race or snowshoe obstacle course) on the beach in the off season (Fall/Winter) - this would be hugely popular if done right. Have one or more communal beach campfire areas (and have at least one that is licensed) that are open during evenings and in the off season when the beach isn't in use. This could easily be done and would be a major draw. License at least part of the beach. People are already drinking on the beach. This would let you have more control over it and make money from the sales. No reason why this can't be done responsibly and turn a profit. Facilitate (rather than obstruct) relevant services offered by local businesses. For example: kayak and paddle board rentals/events offered by GCO (town continues to put up red tape rather than assist). Bike rentals (was previously offered by GCO (this service was essentially sidelined and subsequently hijacked by the town, and now is no longer offered)
Ignore the Cobourg Taxpayers Association and target people who might want to go to The County and entice them to stop and stay in Cobourg.
Keep sharing and advertising all the things we offer in our community.
music festivals
Build network of existing entrepreneurs, support independent business ideas
Stand out for something. While ton will be tattoo parlors, pawn shops and payday loans places if we don't open up very soon.
Target local attractions to local communities, rather than large splashes that attract only to our beach.
Be welcoming instead of fearful with strict protocols in place
Increase town revenue from beach day trippers by rentals (umbrellas, beach loungers, beach games), and more food options at the beach and surrounding area (food trucks)
partner / advertise with transportation sectors like VIA Rail and GO Transit
Unsure
Don't know
I don't know!
<b>Business and/or Tourism Support Organizations</b>
Continue hosting Big events with Multicultural inclusion to promote Multiculturalism.
Development of a consumer attraction plan that focuses on a 200km range that would make Cobourg a top Destination location
Not sure
Encourage entrepreneurs (B and B's) and restaurants to work with cultural and historic sites such as the museum, Vic Hall tours, Art Gallery, Marie Dressler etc. To put together packages for a weekend in Cobourg. Include shopping vouchers etc.
Partnerships
<b>Visitor to the Community</b>
Promote the great fishery you have within the town. We have camped at the park with our grandkids only to find out you're not allowed to fish. In the Spring and Fall, we, a party of 6, used to do a trip each season. Now, the town has restricted access at certain times not making it feasible to fish there. We have taken our group to Bowmanville where they welcome us with open arms.
Have more reason to come to Cobourg. More shops downtown, more stuff to do

Develop packages that include overnight, activity and food & beverage
Better advertising, one go to location with all the activities to do and complete months ahead for visitor planning. More venues for local arts display and sale.
Interested Community Members
After covid, continuous festivities/ events at downtown Cobourg.
Winter activities
Our beach is closer than sandbanks.. and with more accessible fast food , restaurants and grocery and beach accessories shops to make a great beach day.
Out of season Kite Fest on Beach or East pier; DBIA promotes birdhouse contest for trees along King Street; 10ft rebars on outer pier for winter storm ice sculptures; LED grid on lighthouse for evening shows
Deal with homeless and drugs in downtown
Focus less on the beach and more on other attract, such as boutique stores, Victoria Hall and activities such as hiking, cross country skiing. Com Centre should also be promoted for the activities it brings in.
More and better Marina facilities, i.e., an onsite mechanical and systems repair facility, for both resident and transients. Also a travel lift for larger vessels and storage area, also more reasonable fees not as exorbitant as current !!
Better grade restaurants, more in town hotels, ban AirBNB, heavily tax downtown property owners who do not revitalize and modernize their buildings, and extend the boardwalk westward by expropriation of land to accomplish this task.
Accept the fact that Cobourg has little to offer in a tourist context other than the beach. The shopping is basic and bland. There are very few shops that attract and keep a "tourist" clientele. There are no "stand out" restaurants. Nothing worth getting in the car and travelling to. The Town also needs to accept that "beachers" spend very little during their visit. They are day-trippers. Parents with 2 kids, dressed in board shorts, t-shirt and flip flops, lugging all of their beach stuff, is not about to spend time shopping. Besides, most of the stores are closed.
Have a Thrift Shop Festival! Shoppers love coming in from afar. The ones we have in Cobourg are raising funds for charities, the hospital, animals, challenged, and so on. A great tourism attraction in the summer
Eliminate the trailer park and build a bar/restaurant overlooking the beach and marina on the site.
Once Covid is curtailed they should have a huge promotion drive attracting tourists to all areas, not just downtown
The definition of tourism is general....Cobourg has an overabundance of so called "tourists" that bring nothing positive that benefits the town. The costs of cleanup, parking nightmare, and overcrowding to taxpayers is totally unsatisfactory.
Promote festivals
Team with Port Hope and other Northumberland spots to make the whole region a destination
Be safe when able to have events again
Cobourg must promote something other than the beach. There are few decent restaurants and very little unique shopping reasons to visit. Perhaps eco-tourism to Ganaraska Forest?
Keeping it's small-town feel

A weekend or weekday getaway....Things to do: Events, Dining, Etc....Carriage rides or old car rides or a boating cruise. All in a package weekend. Like at Niagara on the Lake
Advertising more. Provide more incentives and subsidies to businesses and groups wanting to establish in Cobourg --incl artistic and cultural. Establish one theme of attraction that town is famous for and revolve around that. Change the ridiculous motto "The Feel good town"
Maintain the strict protocol in keeping the town in a bubble to prevent the impact of the pandemic.
First it must consider the safety of doing so right now. Potential health costs through COVID-19 will remove any profit from large numbers of people arriving from hot spot areas of COVID-19 transfer. For now they should put a lid on attracting further tourists to ensure future tourism will thrive. We have all watched the news casts of irresponsible behaviour at events, parks and beaches.
PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE APPEARANCE OF KING STREET ...TOO MUCH TRASH ...TOO MANY WEEDS ....TRASH CANS NOT CLEARED OFTEN ENOUGH...
If tourism is to generate on overall benefit to the community, the community needs to have a more concerted reason for people to visit multiple places. Visitors to the Cobourg beach often do not go to any other place. A sidewalk sale or downtown sale is not enough. More information at the beach entrances may encourage visitors to see more than the beach. Tourism passports, as an example, or some kind of reward may help. Utilizing Victoria Hall or the Capital Theatre as an hours for events may help. Create new reasons to come.
Don't close the beach and promote more summer events.
Offer more festivals if closing downtown. Cobourg does not have enough unique downtown businesses yet to be able to just close the downtown on weekends for no reason. Create a vibrant waterfront area for visitors. This would also be advantageous for the campground and marina users.
Hours of the shops could be more accessible during off work times. The beach, markets, and festivals could be more widely advertised.
Larger street signs at major intersections. New Welcome to Cobourg signs on Hwy 401. Tell the story of the benefits of tourism to Cobourg citizens to get greater buy-in.
On weekends close King St and install a Farmers and flea market 8am to 5.00 pm every week during the summer months. Reduce the size of the RV park and increase the parkland on the water side. reduce taxes for downtown businesses and get a large store to act as anchor. Offer the arts community. space in one or more of the derelict shops (Co-op) at a very low rent.. Increase parking charges on the waterfront and reduce them behind King St. Place a sign for low-cost parking. Have a boating festival with sail, powerboat racing and kayaking. Shops should be open downtown to 6.00 pm during the season or taxes go up. How about a wine and or a beer festival? With live music. Place a prominent sign to show where the restaurants are and type of food and price. Call me for more ideas xxx xxx xxxx.
I came from a small town in Europe which is a big tourist destination. There are so many coffees shop and restaurants with patios along the waterfront, stands with foods and crafts, music everywhere. I love Cobourg I live here now but compared to Europe it is so quiet
Encourage more restaurants, less trailer parks.
Have far more arts and culture stores, i.e. glass blowers, artists, poets, music
Downtown stores should be open in the evening in the summer.

I believe it is imperative for the Town Council to have a diverse business focus. Encourage businesses to locate in the Town and particularly downtown. Approve diversity in businesses. We do not need three marijuana shops downtown! Especially, with many of these type of shops located in Alderville First Nation just north of Cobourg.
Free parking at all the parks and beach area. Little shops that don't require a whole paycheck to buy something.
Need to make downtown and Harbour area free parking. have more community activities in parks. Use all the lovely parks not just Victoria. The Christmas lights in park lovely but need to have weekend activities and singers from area and food truck to get winter activities in area. Think upper Victoria should be used for yearly family Christmas decorations. Family get a area of the park and decorate to a theme for the year. They pay so much for the space and it would mean people would be more connected to the area. Town could do so much to get people to town and help local business
Get the out-of-towners who come to the beach spending money in town. Charge a fee for parking which can be validated by local businesses, so parking is free if they spend money in town. Limit parking/driving on Division from King Street to the waterfront on summer weekends and hold art fairs or stalls selling food, crafts, etc., to pull tourists up to King Street.
(Answering as if NO Covid)—Have restaurants: pubs open later and on Sundays. There are already SO many weekend great events—almost at capacity it seems.
Get rid of all the blinding, white LED lights. They are HORRIBLE! Especially the ones that blind the boardwalk.
Get rid of trailer park at the beach! The land should be used for something that would benefit more than that small group of folks
More advertising in the various social media sights
Noting how Port Hope has branded itself with a 'look' to its tourist materials and a central message, I think that unifying Cobourg's message/image in advertising and community visuals can deliver a stronger tourism message. (rather than focusing on disparate individual festivals)
Don't close the beach. Ensure precautions are in place, but when we close it or debate a residents only policy it sends the message that visitors are not welcome
The new hotels in the area will do much to enhance the tourist experience here - attend as many tourism trade shows as possible throughout the province and beyond - if large conferences (eg 10,000+) come to Toronto be there to promote Northumberland and Cobourg - arrivals area at Billy Bishop airport have adverts and materials
Look at how the county did their plan. Combine resources with Port Hope to promote the area.
Develop purpose-driven tourism - cultural and athletic events and activities. For Example: Develop an Indoor Pickleball/Tennis Facility - very big demand for indoor courts. Very popular activity throughout Ontario.
ONE website that has links to ALL activities. Allow more patio area for restaurants. Close King St on weekends. Encourage businesses into vacant buildings (but do the same with existing business so they may continue)
Make it easy for small businesses to make a start, especially in the downtown core. Have aesthetic standards for store fronts in the downtown core. Invest in more flowerpots and mini garden areas downtown for quick leisure stops.

Too much focus is on the beach and waterfront and marina. Why not have a lot more year round attractions activities and interests for visitors and locals?
I think the town is limiting it's future tourism benefits by exploiting and damaging current assets. The waterfront should be protected as a natural asset and promoted for ecological and sustainable activities. Large and intensive crowd activities (fairs, amusement parks, and other heavy use activities should be placed away from waterfront- perhaps behind CCC where parking and amenities can be provided for bus loads of people. The waterfront is vulnerable and best utilized for passive recreational and cultural activities that won't destroy the asset. The downtown businesses must reconsider their business models and reach out to customers thru technology, food and item kiosks during summer etc. Funneling everyone to the beach is not sustainable.
Follow what Port Hope does... we don't need any stupid music downtown and closing streets is ridiculous
Welcome diversity. Re-assess paid parking. Encourage evening/weekend store operating hours. Support food and beverage initiatives which encourage visitation
Attract More businesses to main Street. Easy bike rental...bixi. Free activities that both local and tourists enjoy...free yoga in park eg.
Attract retail stores to Main Street/King Street that will encourage tourist visitors and spending. Add another top end "Best Western" type hotel.
We are already a tourist destination. Our area doesn't need to be promoted more then it already is. As a Cobourg resident, our beach is not for us to use since its taken over by tourists even though our tax payers money pays for it all.
We have a beautiful beach. Cobourg needs to stop giving it away.
I do not believe that the Town of Cobourg should try and leverage this town for tourism. I do not believe that tourism is a viable revenue generator for any town or community. Take a look at Italy to see the costs of tourism as opposed to the profit. Chasing tourism and any revenue is not proven to be a generator. Bring in manufacturers and business to leverage this town.
Please do not promote Cobourg as a tourist destination. Very costly. No verifiable return on investment.
Promoting tourism is not the job of the taxpayers. If businesses want tourists, let them pay for the advertising.
Please, this town needs industry. It does not need to be a vacation destination. We have jobless and homeless and troubled kids with no future prospects other than minimum wage part time work. Bring industry and jobs back beyond King Street and the Mall. Focus funds on attracting businesses so Cobourg won't be a vacation place to pollute all summer and leave homeless all winter. You want small businesses to thrive? EMPLOY THE TOWN PEOPLE WHO WILL SHOP THERE.
Enough is enough. The citizens should not be put out and inconvenienced for more dollars.
It shouldn't.
I don't think more needs to be done
Don't know
Don't promote.
Don't do it!
Do not know?
I'm not sure.

I'm not sure. Is there funding available for more widespread advertising
Really
xx
Other
They can come but they need to respect the fact that they are visiting, take your garbage home. Leave a little room on beach for people that actually live here and pay taxes! And give residents a pass to park at beach and not have to pay, thought our taxes cover things like that! All we ask is they respect the town, can't smoke and drink on beach, both of which I have witnessed first hand, and NO ONE ENFORCES THE NO SMOKING BYLAW, which makes it particularly hard on people who are allergic!
Strategically enhance the downtown with consistent signage with a "themed" approach" i.e. Klienburg, Port Hope etc. Encourage live entertainment in restaurants and make it financially feasible for businesses.
At this time nothing will bring people to Cobourg, everyone should stay home .

Question 20: How might the Town of Cobourg adjust programming to support and attract tourism going forward?

Responses
Small-Medium Size Business Owners or Operators Located in the Town of Cobourg
Provide opportunities for tech and entrepreneurial growth to attract a "GTA weary" citizen born AFTER 1985...
Random thoughts.....Cobourg is a jewel and although some folks do not want an influx of tourists all summer, the trails and forests and outlying areas are to be discovered and consequently folks would come to eat and shop in our spaces if they were unique and different from the ordinary. Often my guests say the town shuts down so early.....very difficult to please everyone.
Continuing with the wide array of events that hit different demographics. The businesses (in general) need to also step up the open hours to capture the customers in the town.
Focus on the 25 to 55 demographic of professionals and artists. Have bigger events rather than more. Make sure that all of downtown is included in marketing pushes. Discourage bringing in out of town food trucks and look to see how to engage with restaurants and markets throughout Cobourg to provide food and beverage to keep people coming back
New events and not the same ones typically done.
I am not aware of the Town's programming to answer this.
Make it more straight forward for small businesses to access assistance they need.
Open the beaches up, give grants and loans to young business people.
Family incentives... family pricing, interactive games that send them around the town.. promote heritage and architecture, tree canopy's etc... not BEACH.
Work with local organizations better, Rotary, Lions, DBIA etc.
Focus on year round activations as opposed to on off events - permanent art installations etc. - beautification of the town.
Direct people from the beach to the downtown

Use of free social media promotion by setting up photo ops with specific hashtag to promote Cobourg.
See previous answer.
<b>Business and/or Tourism Support Organizations</b>
Continue with ongoing Seasonal large events post COVID-19, looking forward for Multicultural Restaurant and Groceries.
Move from Beach promotion to sport events that fill up hotels and restaurants and develop a theme for destination shopping trips for local retailers.
Cohesive advertisement
Not sure
See number 10
<b>Visitors to the Community</b>
You have Lake Ontario right there. Get the self righteous snobs who look out for only a small handful of residents out of council and open the public areas to the public. Restrictions to public property to appease a few is ludicrous. If you don't like people, why would you live beside a public park?
Stores downtown, walking tours, holiday lights exhibit- walk and drive through, all events outdoor
State the health and safety procedures that businesses have implemented
Attract more varied vendors to events with downtown closures. Go for more participation, like Salsa lessons, outdoor cooking lessons, art competitions etc.
<b>Interested Community Members</b>
Inviting neighbouring towns to participate in any Cobourg downtown
More events with diversity of events and entertainment acts.
How much will it cost to have children and parents in Victoria Park after a snowfall to make snow angels all over and colour them using food colouring in spray bottles.
Many events are the same thing, just different names
Proactive, listen ...
Don't close King Street for festivals. Move them to waterfront and park.
Northumberland's Biggest Coffee Morning in 2007 (and still continues today), was something new. A big success organized by 13 women. We need to look outside the box for new events. Not all require King Street to close down. Other countries come up with different ideas that perhaps we could implement. How about a Pancake race?
Tourism is not good for the residents of Cobourg. I doubt whether tourism contributes much to the local economy. The marina should be placed in private hands - there is too much conflict for Cobourg civil servants between making a profit at the marina and looking after resident's interests. That would not happen if private
Build more hotels and other accommodation
Include more winter related events to promote tourism more year round then just mostly summer
Have the programming spread over 12 months. Cobourg is still a beautiful town in the winter. Make more of the downtown skating and waterfront area. An all season patio area would be ideal. Licensed and also kids friendly with hot chocolate stands in the winter and ice-cream in the summer

The only way to support tourism is to start charging for everything as it being free is nothing but destroying the ambience for residents and for what gain? None except increasing cost to our taxpayers.
Not attract tourists that come here only for the beach as they do not contribute to the town economy. They cost us more in clean up.
As above be safe follow public health guidelines. More police and auxiliary presence at the beach daily.
Tourism is undesirable for residents so they should not promote tourism.
Regulate use of sand beach
Start up things to do that don't cost or fun things to do list and publish it
Hire a good branding company to assist tourism department (if there is one) and the communications department of the town. Revamp the websites so that they actually work properly and are more appealing.
Virtual tour of the Beach for people who wish to relax from the anxiety induced caused by this pandemic. Virtual tour can help people visual the main tourist spot
After the vaccine is available to all and COVID-19 is but a memory invest in the town, assist businesses, develop assets such as the beach and Victoria Park.
MORE WEEKEND EVENTS ON KING STREET
If the biggest draw is the beach, regular beach visitors from out of the area need a reason to Cobourg on their visiting list. Victoria Hall could be an anchor to establish a few more coordinated events. Perhaps an art festival, music festival, true water activities like canoe races or silly races with tubes, historical displays. A presentation of all tv shows or movies made here. More events coordinated with Dressler house activities. More multiple location events. Sell a passport that offers reduced admission to locations in the area, a fun way to get stores involved, challenges in the passport.
More events and keep the beach open
Offer more festivals like applefest, maplefest, walking tours of the historic areas. There's enough restaurants downtown to offer a local cuisine day where each could feature their specialty menu item
Keep local downtown businesses open on the weekends. Can't complain about lack of business or tourists when you're always closed early on weekends
Spend money on other services - not tourism.
Using social media to promote. More accessible store hours.
As above, larger street signs at major intersections. New Welcome to Cobourg signs on Hwy 401 to replace our ratty signs. Tell the story of the benefits of tourism to Cobourg citizens to get greater buy-in.
A Festival every week in the Summer
If the town would focus on the main downtown to open every store front. Don't allow owners to leave empty. With COVID it's hard, so have online attractions with local artists, poets, music, Heath fitness groups online. Show all the many diverse talents Cobourg has.
Have summer restaurants/cafes around the waterfront. People like to sit and enjoy the waterfront, while enjoying a snack, meal or drink. Instead of picnic tables what has been tried now. Atmosphere and design are important.



Encourage downtown businesses to enhance their physical aspect of their properties. Several buildings are in much-needed improvement. This strategy would go along way encouraging tourism.
Make local and use what the town and area have to offer. The people and products should case the area. Use the schools and local talent for shows and activities
Tourism for the sake of tourism is a disaster waiting to happen. Growth at any cost is the destroyer.
Market tourism around special events like the sandcastle festival and find a way to incorporate local businesses into the festivities. And bring back the glorious holiday lights on the trees in Victoria park, all LED. Our family really really misses that.
I think the Art Gallery needs a big sign even though the town hall is a heritage site.
Get rid of all the addictions centers and housing projects for mental patients.
More promotion to the various sporting sites. Showcase our sports venues and our waterfront
Advertising budget for publications like 'Grapevine' will get Cobourg accompanying editorial. Don't allow day tourists to park on residential streets near the beach. Make them walk through downtown.
Continue the pedestrian King Street initiative - continue to support local club events - eg. Waterfront Festival, Dragon Boating, Ribfest, beach events, Highland games, hiking event circle routes out of Cobourg and back, cycling circle routes starting in Cobourg and finishing in Cobourg
Make it a destination, not a 401 stop
Review current scheduling. Consider the interests of the intended demographic groups when choosing events. People travel to The County for food and wine etc. Why do people want to come to Cobourg?
Create some theatre productions at Victoria Hall with dinner venues at existing restaurants.
ONE comprehensive tourism website! Maybe more music/dancing in the park
More arts and crafts and local independent shops and one of a kind stores and activities for folks of all ages and economic groups. For example, the older brick buildings near the waterfront could have been artist/work studios to expand the Waterfront arts/crafts festival into a permanent year round attraction. Turn the old deserted building (lakeshore automotive) vacant and deserted into such an arts centre. A year round draw that attracts people with varied interests. The vacant and decrepit old hotel at the corner of division and King St. is also an eye sore that could be a theatre/arts centre for the community and for tourists. Presently it detracts from the downtown area. Build up the community like Harbourfront did for Toronto with such varied activities for all ages. The town is too short sighted with focus on building suburbs and beach goers. How about a food truck competition of fun areas for food trucks. Weekend focuses on particular ethnicities .....food, culture, dance etc. So much could be done but isn't. The above are only a snippet of possibilities. The Park Theatre could and should be utilized as a draw for everyone from near and far. Need to branch out from simply a summer/sun place to veg,
Look at what port Hope does
Better define what their programming is.
More frequent smaller events ...not just the big events.
Stop flooding the "Free Beach" with GTA residents/invaders who do not spend a nickel in town. Provide more mid to upper class tourist focused events at Victoria Park.

Just stop. Use money to focus on people who live here.
Waste of time. Don't bother. It is a poor investment. The Town should not spend taxpayer money shilling for local businesses. Let the ones who benefit pay for it.
2020 difficult year to use as reference.
I think it does enough already
Let businesses pay for it.
Leave it!
? What programming?
See previous note
xx
Not sure?
Again, not sure.
N/A
Not sure
No opinion on this
See above
See above.
See above, #4
Other
Not sure
See above