

DESTINATION STRATFORD PARTNERS WITH RTO4 TO GAUGE RESIDENT SENTIMENT ON TOURISM

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(Stratford, ON) To better understand the perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of residents towards tourism, Regional Tourism Organization 4 (RTO4) in partnership with Destination Stratford worked with Bannikin to conduct a Regional Resident Sentiment Survey. The resulting survey data will be invaluable in helping to inform Destination Stratford's community projects and initiatives. The online questionnaire was used to engage residents throughout the city from March 3, 2025, through Sunday, April 6, 2025.

Survey highlights include:

- 67% of residents agree / strongly agree that they welcome receiving and interacting with or entertaining people who live outside of our community that they do not know but choose to come for a visit, i.e., visitors.
- 81% of residents agree / strongly agree that overall, tourism in our community is creating more positive impact than negative impact.
- 91% of residents agree / strongly agree that tourism has a role to play in the development of our community.
- 87% of residents agree / strongly agree that it is important to take a community-centered approach to tourism with festivals such as Lights On Stratford and community infrastructure projects like the Boathouse Public Washrooms.
- 87% of residents agree / strongly agree that it is important to develop and support cultural experiences in the winter and shoulder seasons, i.e., outside of the summer months of June, July, and August.

[Click here to access the full survey report online.](#)

The findings from the survey will directly inform the regenerative tourism component of Destination Stratford's 2030 Strategic Plan that aims to foster a spirit of shared stewardship and community solidarity, ensuring that Stratford's offerings remain unique and authentic reflections of the destination. Through this approach, Destination Stratford is committed to supporting local innovation, enhancing community wellbeing, and strengthening long-term resilience.

"Destination stewardship has the potential to produce positive outcomes for the entire tourism ecosystem, which has community at its heart," said Trevor Jonas Benson, Managing Partner of Bannikin. "This means that anyone involved in destination development, management, and marketing needs to meaningfully engage their residents in

conversations and decision-making around tourism. Resident sentiment surveying is a great way to do this, and something we highly recommend.

"Our partnership with Destination Stratford has been deeply valuable. We undertook this research to ensure that tourism grows in step with the needs and priorities of the community, so that residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life, take pride in their city, and benefit from the services and spaces that make Stratford such a remarkable place to live." Marie Zimmerman, Director of Projects & Partnerships, RT04

"As Destination Stratford increases its focus on community-first destination development projects that directly benefit residents while also providing new opportunities for the visitor economy, it is essential for us to have ongoing meaningful conversations, dialogue and touchpoints with our community, both inside and outside of the tourism sector," said Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford. "As best I know, this is the first time an extensive Resident Sentiment Survey focused solely on tourism has been done in Stratford. The Survey findings are incredibly useful in helping us shape our development projects to align with the collective priorities and perspectives within our community."

This research was made possible through the leadership of RTO4. The project was also supported by funding from FedDev Ontario, with Bannikin delivering the survey in partnership with RTO4 and Destination Stratford. A special thank you to the residents of Stratford for their engagement and support with this initiative.

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For more information, please email hello@visitstratford.ca.