



SYLVAN LAKE VISITOR FRIENDLY ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

FINAL REPORT (NOVEMBER 21, 2016)

expedition
MANAGEMENT CONSULTING

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Overview

From July to November 2016, Expedition Management Consulting Ltd. was commissioned to undertake a Visitor Friendly Assessment of the Town of Sylvan Lake. The main objective of the assessment was to analyze how the destination presents itself to visitors – its ambience and visual appeal, wayfinding and signage, customer service, public services and amenities, and visitor information. Based on this assessment, a practical action plan was developed that will lead to tangible improvements in the visitor friendliness of Sylvan Lake.

Situational Analysis

Sylvan Lake has a long history as a popular resort town. The spring-fed lake, well-developed waterfront, and beach areas have attracted leisure travelers since the Town incorporated in 1913. Tourism is recognized as a key industry in Sylvan Lake, and significant investment has been made by tourism stakeholders in plans and policies that impact tourism development.



Tourism Supply

Tourism in Sylvan Lake is built on the businesses, services and amenities that support the visitor experience. It is important to note that most of the Town’s tourism supply also serves residents. This is positive, because when locals support what visitors also enjoy, a community is in a strong position to leverage the positive economic and social benefits of tourism.

“It is important to note that most of the Town’s tourism supply also serves residents.”

Sylvan Lake’s tourism supply offers visitors a wide variety of attractions and experiences, most of which are related to the large, spring-fed lake. A range of accommodation and restaurant options support the visitor experience, while a number of specialty shops and tourism festivals and events further enhance the visitor experience.

Current Target Markets

To date the Town of Sylvan Lake has not completed a detailed market analysis to define its target market. Travel Alberta has identified Free Spirits as the Explorer Quotient (EQ) Traveller Type that is the primary target market for Alberta, and further analysis suggests this is also the case for Sylvan Lake (see Section 2). Therefore, we propose that the Town utilize the following target market as a starting point for discussion:

Free Spirits – Youthfully-spirited Alberta families drawn to water-based experiences in a waterfront commercial district animated by festivals, activities and niche shops and eateries.

Competitive Advantage

Sylvan Lake's competitive advantage is a combination of its **central location**, easily accessed from Edmonton and Calgary, and its **animated commercial waterfront**. This combination sets the Town of Sylvan Lake apart from other lake destinations that draw from the same Edmonton, Calgary and central Alberta markets. It is continued public and private sector investment in the Town of Sylvan Lake and its Waterfront Commercial District that will continue to distinguish Sylvan Lake as a destination.

Visitor Friendly Assessment

On July 25, August 9, 20 and 21, 2016 the assessment team spent full days in Sylvan Lake and experienced the destination from a visitor's point of view. During the tours, the team recorded what they saw through photographs and notes. Each team member focused on their respective area of expertise, but also took a holistic view of the tour and commented on all five visitor friendly categories. Upon completion of the tour, the assessment team evaluated the visitor friendliness of the community using five key criteria:

1. Overall Ambience / Community Visual Appeal
2. Wayfinding / Signage
3. Public Services / Visitor Amenities
4. Quality of Service / Professionalism
5. Visitor Information

Our team also conducted a digital and online presence assessment of the community. The following tourism websites and social media platforms were included in the assessment:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Visitreddeer.com | 4. Facebook.com |
| 2. Sylvanlake.ca | 5. Twitter.com |
| 3. Travelalberta.ca | 6. Instagram.com |



Mystery Shop and Business Mentorship

As an additional input into the Visitor Friendly Assessment, the consultant team performed Mystery Shopping of six Sylvan Lake businesses. After the evaluation, the businesses that received mystery shopping were invited to participate in one-on-one follow-up mentorship sessions with the assessors to discuss their strengths, growth areas and unique recommendations.

Action Planning

Within each of the five assessment categories, multiple goals were set that will improve the visitor friendliness of Sylvan Lake if achieved. Specific and actionable initiatives were then developed to support each goal. With input from the Committee, each initiative was then assigned a priority and cost rating, along with an initiative lead and timeline for completion.

Key Action Items

- Complete a streetscape plan for 50th Street
- Develop a comprehensive signage plan
- Reinvest unused funds from the Façade Program in Visitor Friendly Initiatives
- Establish a public art policy and program
- Beautify vacant lots
- Ensure redevelopment of the waterslide site includes consideration of a boat launch and day mooring
- Significantly improve signage for public parking
- Provide customer service, HR, and marketing training for businesses
- Increase cleanliness of public washrooms
- Develop a Tourism Festival and Event Strategy
- Develop an animation and programming plan
- Work with Alberta Environment and Parks to develop restrictions/permitted use for the beach area
- Develop a marketing plan
- Consider introducing a shuttle bus to the beach
- Develop a new visitor map
- Enhance social media presence and tourism website
- Confirm primary and secondary target markets
- Link tourism objectives to the Cultural Master Plan (and other plans)
- Gather important visitor data
- Complete a Visitor Friendly Assessment in Winter
- Measure results and celebrate success
- Consider hiring a Tourism Development Officer

Next Steps

There are a number of key initiatives that the Town should consider moving forward. Below is a brief timeline describing activities that should occur within the next year.

Strategic Priorities Within the Next 12 Months

1. Obtain commitment from Town Council to work to improve visitor friendliness.
2. Establish a Visitor Friendly Working Group or ensure Visitor Friendly Implementation is a standing item on WCD Committee agenda.
3. Begin implementation of the action plan. Particular focus could be directed towards the “quick wins” in order to achieve successes early and help build momentum.
4. Evaluate action plan initiatives and re-align priorities at the end of year 1.

Conclusion

The Visitor Friendly Assessment provides valuable information to the Town of Sylvan Lake; a practical action plan, and a starting point to improve visitor friendliness. With this plan in hand, the Town of Sylvan Lake can begin to enhance all aspects of their visitor friendliness, including ambience and visual appeal, wayfinding and signage, customer service, public services and amenities, and visitor information. The successful implementation of this plan will ensure that Sylvan Lake continues to be a destination of choice for tourists seeking water-based experiences, and will significantly contribute to the vitality and growth of the local tourism industry.



01

INTRODUCTION

01 INTRODUCTION

What is Visitor Friendliness?

Being visitor friendly is about more than having friendly local residents. It's about the look and feel of a community—its warmth, attractiveness and welcoming feel, how easy it is for visitors to find their way around, and how well they are treated. Visitor friendliness contributes to creating positive memorable experiences for visitors. Visitor friendliness also ripples throughout a community, enhancing the quality of life for residents and encouraging community pride (Visitor Friendly AB).

What is a Visitor?

The Alberta Government Visitor Friendly Guide defines a visitor as follows:

“A visitor is someone who visits your community for reasons other than commuting to work or school, or for routine visits such as conducting sales or service calls, household grocery shopping and appointments. Not all visitors to your community will be tourists. You may find that the majority of your visitors are locals coming into town for shopping, appointments or community events. Being visitor friendly will encourage locals to support your community rather than driving to major centres. This will help keep money in the community.”

The Guide identifies “types” of visitors as follows:

Day-use Visitors (same day trips)

- Do not stay overnight
- Come to your community from more than 40km away
- Come to your community:
 - a) for a specific attraction, activity or event or,
 - b) by stopping en route to another destination
- May require services related to travel (service stations) and food and beverage (lunch, supper or light groceries)
- May look for shopping and retail services or public amenities like picnic areas, walking trails or public washrooms

Overnight Visitors En Route to Somewhere Else

- Stay overnight, likely arriving in the evening and departing in the morning. They don't necessarily visit attractions. At the present time, Sylvan Lake has very few of these types of visitors.
- Require support facilities and services including accommodation, service stations, food and beverage services.
- May look for food and beverage services that are open in the evening, and possibly some evening activities.

Multi-day Visitors

- Stay for one or more nights. They visit attractions and participate in activities or events in the area
- Could be visiting for the weekend
- Require support facilities and services including accommodation (e.g. hotel, bed and breakfast, campgrounds), food and beverage services that are open in the evening, evening activities, retail shopping and craft outlets, travel services (gas stations, sewage dump stations, grocery stores), picnic areas, walking/biking trails, events and festivals

Project Objectives

The objective of the project is to complete a visitor friendly assessment for the Town of Sylvan Lake. This assessment will analyze how the municipality presents itself to visitors – its ambience and visual appeal, wayfinding and signage, customer service, public services and amenities, and visitor information services. Based on this assessment and input provided by the Committee, a practical action plan for the Town will be developed that will feed into the WCD Branding, Development and Marketing Action Plan. This action plan will have action items that will lead to tangible improvements in the visitor friendliness of Sylvan Lake.



Project Team Members

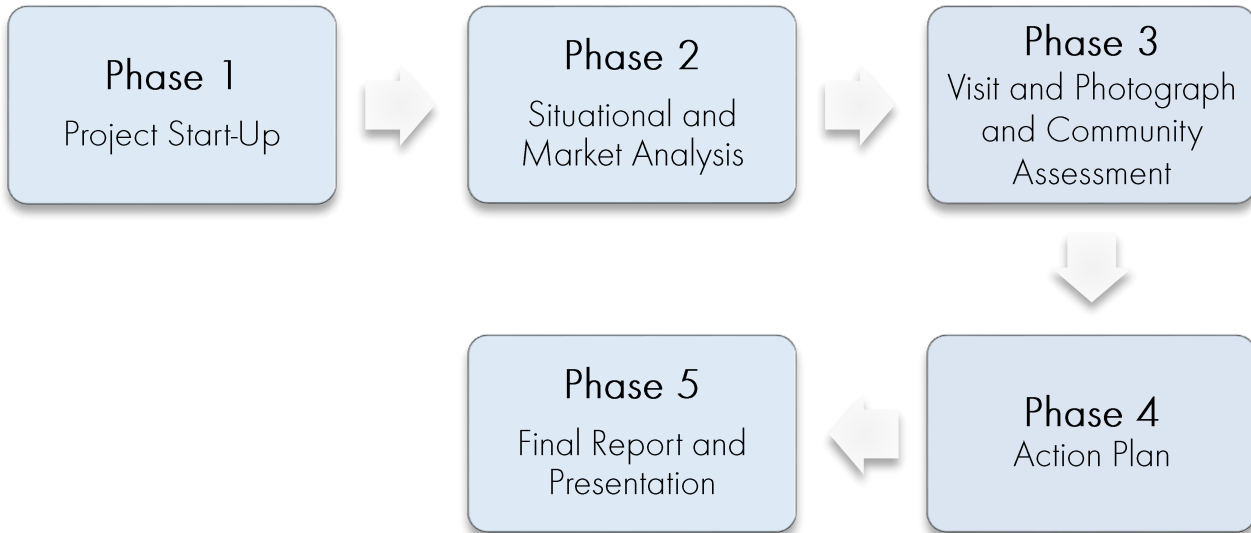
The VFCA committee was established in the summer of 2016 for the purpose of providing input and direction to the project. Below is a list of committee representatives:

WCD Revitalization Committee	
Organization	Representatives
Business and/or Property Owners	Collette Barker (Chair), Tamara Hughes (Co-Chair), Cindra Bouteiller, Derold Clark, Charlie Everest, Maurice Iles, Pam Mitchell, Marc Pritchard
Chamber Representatives	Denise Williams, Lance Lewis, Doug McGill
Town of Sylvan Lake	Megan Chernoff (Councillor), Vicki Kurz, Kim Devlin, Monique Pummings
Alberta Culture and Tourism	Rebecca Goodenough
Consultant Team	
Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.	Justin Rousseau (Project Lead), Maxwell Harrison
Omni Management Consulting Alliance	Cheryl Lockhart
ParioPlan	Sara Jean Sherman, Karolina Drabik
Bob Robertson – Visual Communication Design + Consulting	Bob Robertson
Scatliff + Miller + Murray	Deron Miller
Parodos Social Marketing	Marliss Weber, Randy Brososky



Project Process

The VFCA project had five, interconnected phases, including Project Start-Up, Situational and Market Analysis, Visitor and Photograph and Community Assessment, Action Plan, and Final Report and Presentation.



About This Document

Section 2 of this document contains the findings from the situational and market analysis, while Section 3 highlights the results from the visitor and business surveys. Section 4 describes the key findings from the visit and photograph tour, and digital and online presence assessment. Section 5 contains the action plan, and Section 6 outlines the next steps and conclusion.



02

SITUATIONAL AND MARKET ANALYSIS

02 SITUATIONAL AND MARKET ANALYSIS

This section provides a brief snap shot of Sylvan Lake including a summary of visitor activities, attractions, accommodations, festivals and events, visitor information, shopping, transportation and other services. The purpose of this section is to provide a sense of what the destination has to offer visitors. Section 4 goes on to provide a more detailed assessment of visitor friendliness.

Community Overview

The Town of Sylvan Lake is on the southeast shore of Sylvan Lake, one of the most recognized and visited lakes in Alberta. Centrally located 20 minutes west of Red Deer and an hour and a half from both Edmonton and Calgary, this lakeside community is attractive to year-round residents, summer residents and visitors. The Town's location and appeal has resulted in strong population growth. The current population of over 14,000 residents is expected to increase to nearly 20,000 by 2022. It is a young community (about 30% are under 19 years old) and home to Albertans in the prime of their careers and raising families (47% are 25-54 years old). It tends to be a more affluent community (median household income is above provincial average) with average property values higher than Red Deer and Edmonton (\$462,557).ⁱ It is also a commuter town with 60% of residents driving to Red Deer, Red Deer County or elsewhere in Alberta for work. Many small businesses are successful in Sylvan Lake, serving a growing residential, summer residential and visitor population through construction, professional, technical and real estate services, as well as oil and gas and retail.ⁱⁱ



Tourism in Sylvan Lake

"Sylvan Lake is the premier year round, lakeside community in Alberta, where proud residents welcome guests with hospitality."ⁱⁱⁱ

Sylvan Lake has a long history as a popular resort town. The spring-fed lake, well-developed waterfront, and beach areas have attracted leisure travelers since the Town incorporated in 1913. In the summer alone, over 761,000 visitors travel to the lakeside community.^{iv} As written on the Sylvan Lake Tourism website, "The lake is the pride and joy of our community. It is not only breathtakingly beautiful but also the central attraction for visitors to Sylvan Lake." While the lake is the primary draw, "the Vision for tourism in Sylvan Lake is not one of simply a beach attraction. Rather it is a themed year-round "downtown district" within the broader, prosperous and growing community of Sylvan Lake."^v As the waterfront district continues to develop, so will the economic impact of tourism in Sylvan Lake, estimated at \$75 million in 2014.^{vi}

Tourism-Related Planning

Tourism is recognized as a key industry in Sylvan Lake, and, over the years, the municipality and local and regional tourism stakeholders have invested in plans and policies that impact its development.^{vii} Collectively, these plans and their implementation shape Sylvan Lake as a destination and as a complete community with a prosperous residential, commercial and industrial mix.



The following is an overview of key regional and local plans and local bylaws and policies shaping tourism in Sylvan Lake.

Central Alberta Destination Management Plan: Realizing Our Potential, 2015

In 2015, eleven communities in Central Alberta, including the Town of Sylvan Lake, came together to create a framework to guide tourism development, marketing and management at a regional level. The ten-year plan set a collaborative vision in which, by 2025, Central Alberta will be “A unique, must-experience destination offering visitors authentic, affordable and sustainable experiences - year round.” To support this vision, the plan focuses on:

- Enhancing experiences
- Growth and diversification of tourism benefits
- Well-being of the environment and host communities

Tourism Red Deer Strategic Marketing Plan, 2016-2018

Tourism Red Deer is the destination marketing organization for the City of Red Deer and region. It provides coordinated leadership to the tourism industry, offering marketing and partnership opportunities, industry training, and support services for event planners and sport tourism. Tourism Red Deer operates the Red Deer Visitor Information Centre, providing travel counseling services to Alberta and international travelers in-person, by phone and online. In its Strategic Marketing Plan 2016-2018, Tourism Red Deer recognizes family and friends as its key market, as seen in the *Be Our Guest* campaign in 2016 to encourage residents to invite family and friends from across the country to visit Red Deer and region. Tourism Red Deer recognizes Sylvan Lake as a destination that can deliver the value and experience the family and friends market seeks, giving it main page profile on www.visitreddeer.com.

The Town of Sylvan Lake Tourism Strategy: 2013-2018

This comprehensive tourism strategy was prepared in consultation with Council, Town administration, key stakeholders and the public. The strategy identifies priorities and actions required to achieve the vision for tourism, in which “Sylvan Lake is the premier year round, lakeside community in Alberta, where proud residents welcome guests with hospitality.” Implementation is underway and Town administration and Council continue to play a key role. Priorities and actions focus on:

- Leadership, collaboration and supportive policies
- Product development (including developing the themed downtown district, attracting niche businesses to that district, expanding overnight accommodation, and attracting new major events and one major attractor)
- Tourism marketing (including a strategic marketing plan that puts Sylvan Lake on the “must see” list)
- Access (including improvements to signage, visitor information and guest services, parking and circulation, and boat access)

Town of Sylvan Lake Council Strategic Plan, 2015

In 2015, Council reviewed and updated its Council Strategic Plan, confirming the vision in which *“The Town of Sylvan Lake is a vibrant lakeside community with a high quality of living that respects the environment, provides diverse economic opportunities, and values efficient, inclusive and transparent government.”* The plan identifies goals and priorities that directly or indirectly impact tourism, including:

- Advocacy related to infrastructure funding, provincial park/lakefront development, and the beach
- Land use by-law review
- Diversification of the tax base, including an expanded tourism focus, and communicating and validating the value of tourism
- Development of a Connected Trail Plan
- Development of a Culture Master Plan
- Policy framework for a community grants program

Urban Planning

The Town of Sylvan Lake’s Planning and Development Department provides leadership in setting and implementing plans that guide future development within the municipality. The Urban Planning documents that impact tourism and visitor friendliness in Sylvan Lake are focused around the waterfront and downtown core. These documents include:

- **Waterfront Area Redevelopment Plan, 2006** - guides growth and development of the downtown and waterfront areas to ensure development makes the best use of limited land base and protects the integrity of the lake as a natural resource.
- **Waterfront Urban Design Guidelines, 2015** - provides direction to the architectural features that should be included for residential and commercial development.
- **50th Street Area Redevelopment Plan, 2010** - encourages development of 50th Street into a vibrant, pedestrian friendly environment for residents and visitors, which is supported by new street-oriented commercial opportunities, increased residential densities and improved streetscape options.
- **50th Street Urban Design Guidelines, 2010** - provides direction to the architectural features for properties located with the 50th Street Area Redevelopment Plan.

Economic Development Planning

The Town of Sylvan Lake's Economic Development Office provides leadership to investment attraction, tourism development, and business retention and expansion. This office oversees the implementation of the Corporate Tourism Strategy, Downtown Revitalization Initiative and Business Visitation Program. Assessments impacting tourism include:

- **Economic Impact Assessment of Sylvan Lake Tourism, 2014** - Provincial impact of summer tourism in Town of Sylvan Lake for the 2014 operating year. Economic impact assessment included direct spending, indirect spending and induced spending.
- **Retail Gap Analysis, 2015** - identify gaps, potential opportunities and future positioning of retail nodes in Sylvan Lake.
- **Goods and Services Gap Analysis (Phase 1 and 2), 2013** - identify gaps, potential opportunities in goods and services in the downtown district.
- **Downtown Facade Improvement Program, 2014** - encourage retail and commercial building owners to invest in facade and storefront upgrades with grant funding towards renovation costs.

Bylaws and Policies

Council passes bylaws and policies to maintain the health, safety and wellness of the community. Bylaws and policies impacting tourism are:

- **Regulate and License Drinking Establishments** - enacted to minimize adverse impacts of Drinking Establishments on the community and to protect public safety.
- **Parks and Open Spaces** - enacted to control public use of parks and public facilities by the general public and for festivals and events.
- **Pedicab and Quadracycle** - enacted to regulate the for-hire and rental use of pedicabs and quadracycles.
- **Smoke Free** - enacted to limit the effects of second-hand tobacco smoke for residents and visitors.
- **Tourist Home** - enacted to regulate vacation properties.
- **Mobile Vending and Busking** - enacted to regulate food trucks and mobile vending.
- **Special Events Policy** - enacted to promote a consistent approach to approving and ensuring compliance of Special Events.
- **Business Investment and Attraction Policy** - framework to assist the facilitation of new business development and review of economic development proposals.

Organizations Impacting Tourism

Municipal Government

The municipal government clearly plays a strong leadership role in tourism in Sylvan Lake. Through Council and Town administration, it sets plans and policies shaping tourism, sets and enforces by-laws impacting residents, visitors and business owners, and invests in implementation of its urban and economic development plans. In addition, the municipality invests in visitor information centre operations and staffing, beach ambassadors, special events coordinators, summer peace officers, parks operations and maintenance, and recreation programming.

Sylvan Lake Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber plays a leadership role. It is a member-driven, volunteer-led organization and through its membership works on business development and economic initiatives. It is the voice of business in Sylvan Lake. In partnership with the Town, the Chamber established a Waterfront Commercial District (WCD) Revitalization Committee. This subcommittee of the Chamber is comprised of downtown property and business owners, chamber directors, chamber and Town staff. This committee advocates and educates business and property owners on revitalization, encourages networking, reviews and provides direction to existing and future plans impacting the WCD.

Alberta Parks

The provincial government through Alberta Parks manages Sylvan Lake Provincial Park located within the Town and its Waterfront Commercial District.

Tourism Red Deer

Tourism Red Deer is contracted to provide Sylvan Lake’s only “official” tourism website.

Tourism Supply

Tourism in Sylvan Lake is built on the businesses, services and amenities that support the visitor experience. It is important to note that, aside from accommodations, most of the Town’s tourism supply serves residents, summer residents and visitors alike. This is positive - when locals support what visitors also enjoy, a community is in a strong position to leverage the positive economic and social benefits of tourism.

The following summary of Sylvan Lake’s tourism supply is based on an inventory collected by the Sylvan Lake Visitor Information Centre in 2016. This inventory focuses on the Waterfront Commercial District, but does include key assets located outside the district that are important to tourism.

Transportation

The vast majority of visitors to Sylvan Lake arrive by personal vehicle.^{viii} The provincial highway system connecting the Town to Red Deer, Calgary and Edmonton is excellent, and their respective airports have car rental services. Sylvan Lake is 135 km from Edmonton International Airport, 148 km from Calgary International Airport, and 36 km from Red Deer Regional Airport.

Once in Town, visitors need to park, which poses a challenge in summer months when over 2500 motor vehicles arrive each day.^{ix} There are two public parking lots in the WCD of Sylvan Lake, eight gas stations, and six garages in Town. Two of the garages are open seven days a week. There are two taxi services open 24/7. There is no local bus or shuttle service.

Accommodations

The Town has seven hotels/motels with a total of 271 rooms. Two of the properties have conference or meeting facilities: Best Western Plus Chateau Inn and Comfort Inn and Suites. There are five licensed tourist homes (cottage/cabin and vacation property rentals) within the Town. Additional vacation properties are made available by private home owners who use online services such as Airbnb and Vacation Rental By Owner.

There are five RV parks and campgrounds in or close to Town. Jarvis Bay Provincial Park is 7 km from Town, on the northeastern shore of the lake. The provincial campground has 167 sites (52 powered and 115 non-powered). The four RV parks (one of which is also a campground) have a total of 293 sites.

Places to Eat and Drink

There are 43 food and drink establishments in Sylvan Lake. Visitors seeking a casual, family restaurant have eleven to choose from, including familiar names such as Joey's Only and Boston Pizza. There are eleven fast food chains and six pubs and bars. Visitors looking for fine dining have two local choices: Bravo Gastro and Viva La Serina. There are five restaurants offering ethnic food: two Japanese restaurants, one Chinese, one Vietnamese and one southeast Asian. There is one stand-alone bakery, one cafe, and three stand-alone ice cream shops.

Shopping and Services

For basic traveler needs, Sylvan Lake has seven grocery stores and pharmacies, and five financial institutions. There is a laundromat in Town and public washrooms located by the beach. There are seven Wi-Fi hot spots, other than the Wi-Fi available through a number of businesses.

The waterfront district is home to specialty shops, including Mulberry Lane, Country Lites, Alice's Wonderland, and Anchor's Boutique, a natural remedies and specialty food store, and two art galleries. These shops carry souvenirs, collectibles and local arts and crafts. Sylvan Lake has seven clothing stores, including boutique stores offering Canadian designer product and dresses by a local dressmaker.

There are ten liquor stores.

Tourism Festivals and Events

Sylvan Lake has many festivals and events offered year-round. There are four large annual events that draw significant amounts of visitors, including Jazz at the Lake, Shake the Lake; and Winterfest, which includes the Sylvan Lake Ice Marathons, organized by Foothills Speed Skating Marathon Association.

Sylvan Lake has a number of community events, including 1913 Days, Yuletide Festival, Spooktacular Extravaganza, Santa Claus Parade and others. Over the years, Sylvan Lake has been approached to be the host community for various sporting events, most recently the 2016 Chinook Triathlon.

Attractions and Experiences

The large, spring-fed lake is the natural attraction that supports water-based experiences at Sylvan Lake. Visitors can access the shore and water at Sylvan Lake Provincial Park for activities such as swimming, paddle boarding and kayaking. The provincial park protects a 1.6 km-long sand and grass beach along Lakeshore Drive, from 33rd Street to 50th Street.

For visitors with motorboats, sail boats and sea-doo's, Sylvan Lake Marina and Boat Launch located in Town is open to the public and charges \$40 for boats and \$20 for sea-doo's. There are two other boat launches open to the public: one in the Summer Village of Sunbreaker Cove on the northeast side of the lake, and the second in the Summer Village of Half Moon Bay on the southwest shore.

There are three watersport rental businesses: Sunsport Rentals, Manta Water Sports and Big Moo. Visitors are able to rent various watercrafts, including boats, paddle boats, kayaks, and paddle boards. Alberta Flyboard offers flyboard lessons, and Sylvan Lake Aqua Splash is an obstacle course on water with monkey bars, climbing tower, trampoline, wiggle bridge, slides and more.

Wild Rapids Waterslide Park closed its operations after the 2016 summer season, marking the end of 34 years as a significant attractor for tourism in Sylvan Lake. The municipality purchased the 3.5-acres property, a strategic acquisition that secures valuable shoreline in Town. The municipality will undertake extensive public consultation and planning as it moves to redevelop this property to the benefit of residents, visitors and the local business community.

The NexSource Centre offers sport, recreation and culture experiences to residents and visitors alike. This revitalized recreation centre will include amenities such as hockey and curling rinks, senior's centre, children's play space, a running track, multipurpose space, an aquatics centre, and a space for banquets, conferences and other events. There are many parks and playgrounds in Town. Those that can be looked at as tourism assets include:

- Sylvan Lake Provincial Park with its grass and sand beach
- Centennial Park with its view of the lake, large green space, picnic tables, rental of shelters and huge playground
- Sylvan Lake Dog Park
- Sylvan Lake Action Sports Park for skateboarding, scootering and BMX bikes
- Petro Beach (close proximity to Town)
- Rotary Lighthouse Park with the new, iconic lighthouse
- Four Seasons Park, which provides tournament facilities for baseball and soccer

Other experiences include the Sylvan Lake Hockey Camp, summer farmers' market, Food Truck Thursdays, mini golf, go carts and summer buskers. There are two golf course in Town (Meadowlands and the Sylvan Lake Golf and Country Club).

Emergency and Protective Services

Sylvan Lake has Community Peace Officers with authority to enforce specific provincial statutes along with municipal bylaws. The Town also has RCMP, Fire Department and a community health centre. Hospital and emergency services are in Red Deer.

What Do We Know About Current Visitors to Sylvan Lake?

Sylvan Lake welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, with over 761,000 arriving in the summer months.^x Nine in ten visitors to Sylvan Lake are Albertans (92.8%).^{xi} Of Alberta residents traveling to Sylvan Lake, 33% are from central Alberta, 22% from Edmonton and 18% from Calgary.^{xii} Albertans visiting Sylvan Lake tend to travel in groups of about four (4.3 average party size)^{xiii} and often as a family.^{xiv} Alberta visitors to the Town tend to be younger (60% under 44 years old), more educated (66% have post-secondary), and with disposable income to spend on leisure activities.^{xv} The average Alberta visitor to Sylvan Lake spends about \$35 per day, or just over \$150 for the average Alberta visitor party of 4.3 people. Most of the spending is on food and accommodation, followed by transportation, recreation and then shopping.^{xvi} Alberta visitors stay an average of 1.3 nights on a trip to Sylvan Lake,^{xvii} choosing primarily to camp (62%), followed by staying in a hotel (14%) or a rented cabin, cottage or seasonal home (8%).^{xviii} With an average of only 1.3 nights per trip, this indicates significant day trip to Sylvan Lake. Whether on day or overnights trips, summer visitation brings, on average, 2600 vehicles to Town per day, including approximately 100 motorcycles.^{xix}

Canadians from outside Alberta and international travelers also visit Sylvan Lake. Canadians from other provinces make up 4% of visitors, travel in an average party size of 3.7, and stay an average of 4.8 nights. International travelers constitute 3.2% of all visitors to Sylvan Lake, travel in parties averaging 4.3 people, and stay an average of 3.7 nights. Typically, Canadian and international visitors to Alberta have higher daily trip spending than Albertans; however, in Sylvan Lake, this is not the case. Canadian and international travelers were found to spend slightly less per day than Albertans (\$32.93 and \$30.32 respectively), indicating that these visitors are likely visiting and overnighting with friends and family.^{xx}

Sylvan Lake's appeal to the diverse cultural communities that make up Alberta is seen in the information collected by staff at the Visitor Information Centre. From the 2013 to 2015 summer seasons, staff recorded visitors from Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, China, Colombia, Denmark, England, France, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Russia, Qatar, Philippines, Romania, Ukraine, United States of America, South Africa, Thailand, and Zimbabwe. Whether these visitors were international travelers on an Alberta vacation or residents of Alberta, Sylvan Lake clearly attracts people from different cultural backgrounds traveling with family and friends.

Visiting family and friends is a common main reason to travel to central Alberta. About half (49%) of all overnight visits to the region are for this purpose. Most of these overnight visits (66%) are spent in the homes of family and friends, followed by campgrounds and RV parks (21%), hotels (9%) and other commercial fixed roof (2%) and motels (1%). It's a different story in Sylvan Lake where about 2/3 of visitors overnight in campgrounds. Another area of difference is average length of stay. Alberta visitors stay on average 2.8 nights on a trip to central Alberta; whereas only 1.3 nights on a trip to Sylvan Lake. These differences suggest that visitors choosing Sylvan Lake are looking for something different than on a typical trip to central Alberta.

What Inspires Visitors to Choose Sylvan Lake?

According to the Sylvan Lake Economic Impact of Tourism Study conducted in 2006, 78% of visitors to Sylvan Lake were attracted to the beach, lake or water based activities. While much has changed in the past decade in Sylvan Lake, the lake, its beaches and water-based recreation is still the Town's main attractor. So what do we know about people who seek water-based experiences while on a trip?

In 2006, the provincial and national tourism departments co-funded a comprehensive assessment of travel behaviour and motivators of Canadian and American pleasure travelers to Canada. The Travel Activity and Motivation Survey (TAMS) examined the recreational activities and travel habits of travelers on out-of-town, overnight trips. TAMS provides insights on Canadians who swim and boat while on an out-of-town, overnight trip in Canada. These insights contribute to an understanding of what inspires visitors to choose Sylvan Lake.

Canadians who swim and boat while on a trip in Canada^{xxi}:

- tend to be younger than the average Canadian Pleasure Traveler and overrepresented among Young Singles, Young Couples and Mature Families (i.e. those with teenage children)
- are moderately affluent, above-average levels of education and household income
- tend to travel primarily in their own province or region
- tend to stay at public or private campgrounds or lakeside or riverside resorts
- seek destinations with many activities for adults and children
- seek other water-based and outdoor activities
- are more likely on average to attend a sporting event, musical concert, festivals, attractions and theme parks
- seek a relaxing, escape from their day to day environment

The travel behaviours and motivation of Canadians who swim and boat while on a trip in Canada parallel in many ways what we know about current visitors to Sylvan Lake. They also share some characteristics of the travel behaviours and preferences of Alberta's primary target market - Free Spirits.

Current Target Market

Travel Alberta identifies Free Spirits as the Explorer Quotient (EQ)^{xxii} Traveller Type that is the primary target market for Alberta, and our analysis suggests this is also the case for Sylvan Lake. To date the Town of Sylvan Lake has not completed a detailed market analysis to define its target market, so we do recommend that the Town use Free Spirits as a starting point for discussion.

The Explorer Quotient (EQ) is a sophisticated market segmentation tool offered by Destination Canada. The tool goes beyond typical demographic information. EQ uses psychographic data to segment tourism markets into distinct traveller profiles.^{xxiii} Psychographic data differs from more traditional demographic data (e.g. age, income, gender, etc.) by collecting information on people’s social values and views of the world (e.g. attitudes, beliefs and values). EQ uses this data to break down geographic markets into psychographic groups called Traveller Types. There are 9 different Traveller Types, including Cultural Explorers, Free Spirits, Authentic Experiencers, Personal History Explorers, Cultural History Buffs, Rejuvenators, Gentle Explorers, No-Hassle Travellers and Virtual Travellers. For further description of the EQ tool and Traveller Types, see Destination Canada’s website: <http://en.destinationcanada.com/resources/industry/explorer-quotient>.

Free Spirits are youthful adventurers of all ages. They are highly social and open minded. Their enthusiasm for life extends to their outlook on travel. They are experimental and adventurous, have lots of energy and recharge by being active. They indulge in high-end experiences and share their trip stories on and offline. Free Spirits have higher income, higher education and are most likely to travel with children. For the full description of the Free Spirit Traveller Type, see Appendix E.

Taking into account current visitor trends, behaviours and motivations for travel to Sylvan Lake, we propose the primary target market for Sylvan Lake is:

Youthfully-spirited Alberta families drawn to water-based experiences in a waterfront commercial district animated by festivals, activities and niche shops and eateries.

Sylvan Lake’s Competitive Advantage

What sets Sylvan Lake apart as a destination is a combination of its **central location**, easily accessed from Edmonton and Calgary, and its **animated commercial waterfront**. This combination sets the Town of Sylvan Lake and its Waterfront Commercial District apart from other lake destinations that draw from the same Edmonton, Calgary and central Alberta markets. The Village of Wabamun, for example, is located 45 minutes west of Edmonton on Highway 16 and also attracts boaters and campers. The village has a waterfront park and playground and well-used boat launch to access Wabamun Lake. However, the waterfront and commercial main street are separated by the train tracks, and, while walking distance, the Village of Wabamun lacks the critical mass of retail and food and drink establishments needed to effectively connect the lakeside experience with the commercial main street. Similarly, The Village at Pigeon Lake, located about 100 km southwest of Edmonton, has a strong commercial hub with shopping, dining, spas and accommodation that support visitation to Pigeon Lake and surrounding campgrounds and golf courses. However, this commercial hub is located just off Highway 13 and about one kilometer from Pigeon Lake, separating the lakeside experience from the commercial amenities. Lastly, Gull Lake, located 20 km north of Sylvan Lake, shares the enviable location between Edmonton and Calgary, and the adjacent Aspen Beach Provincial Park gives access and protection to the shoreline. However, the Summer Village of Gull Lake does not have the year-round resident population to support the types of investment in infrastructure and service-sector businesses that gives the Town of Sylvan Lake the vibrant, urban lakeside atmosphere attractive to visitors.

It is continued public and private sector investment in the Town of Sylvan Lake and its Waterfront Commercial District that will continue to distinguish Sylvan Lake as a destination. The municipality has invested significantly in multi-year infrastructure projects such as Lakeshore Drive Redevelopment and proposed 50th Street Redevelopment, resulting in upgraded and new parks, playgrounds, sidewalks, roads and signage that both residents and visitors enjoy. Private investment in real estate developments like WatersEdge Marina contributes to ongoing renewal, as do upgrades to vacation rental properties, cabins and seasonal residences. Of critical importance moving forward will be the re-development of the current waterslide lands. This piece of prime waterfront property has the potential to significantly enhance the visitor experience on the waterfront.

While connectivity between the lakeside experience and the commercial district is what sets Sylvan Lake apart, this also presents unique challenges in tourism management alongside opportunities for tourism development.



03

VISITOR AND BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

03 VISITOR AND BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

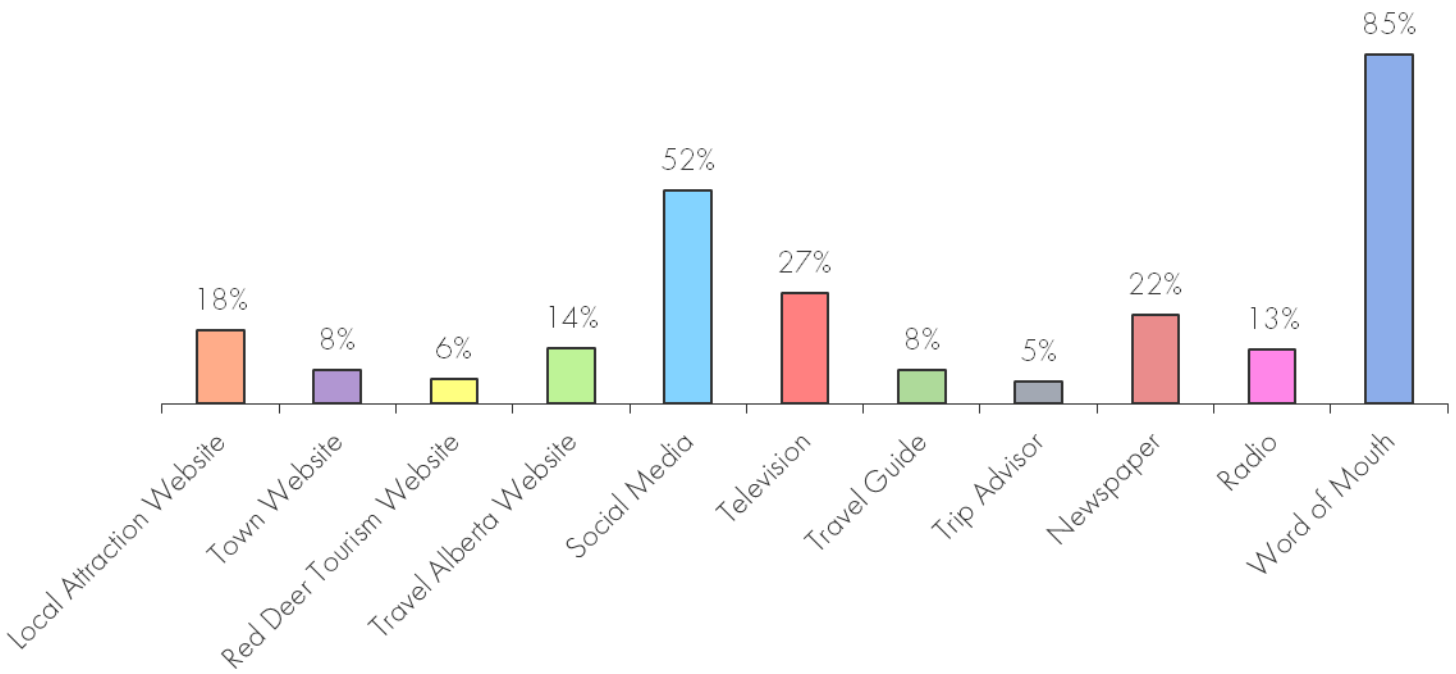
To support the Sylvan Lake Visitor Friendly Assessment project, we conducted a visitor and business survey in partnership with the Committee. The highlights from these surveys are provided below. To see the full results, please see Appendix C and D.

Visitor Survey

The visitor survey took place throughout the month of August, 2016. Visitors were provided hard copies of the survey to fill out and given an online link by Beach Ambassadors. A total of 369 responses were collected.

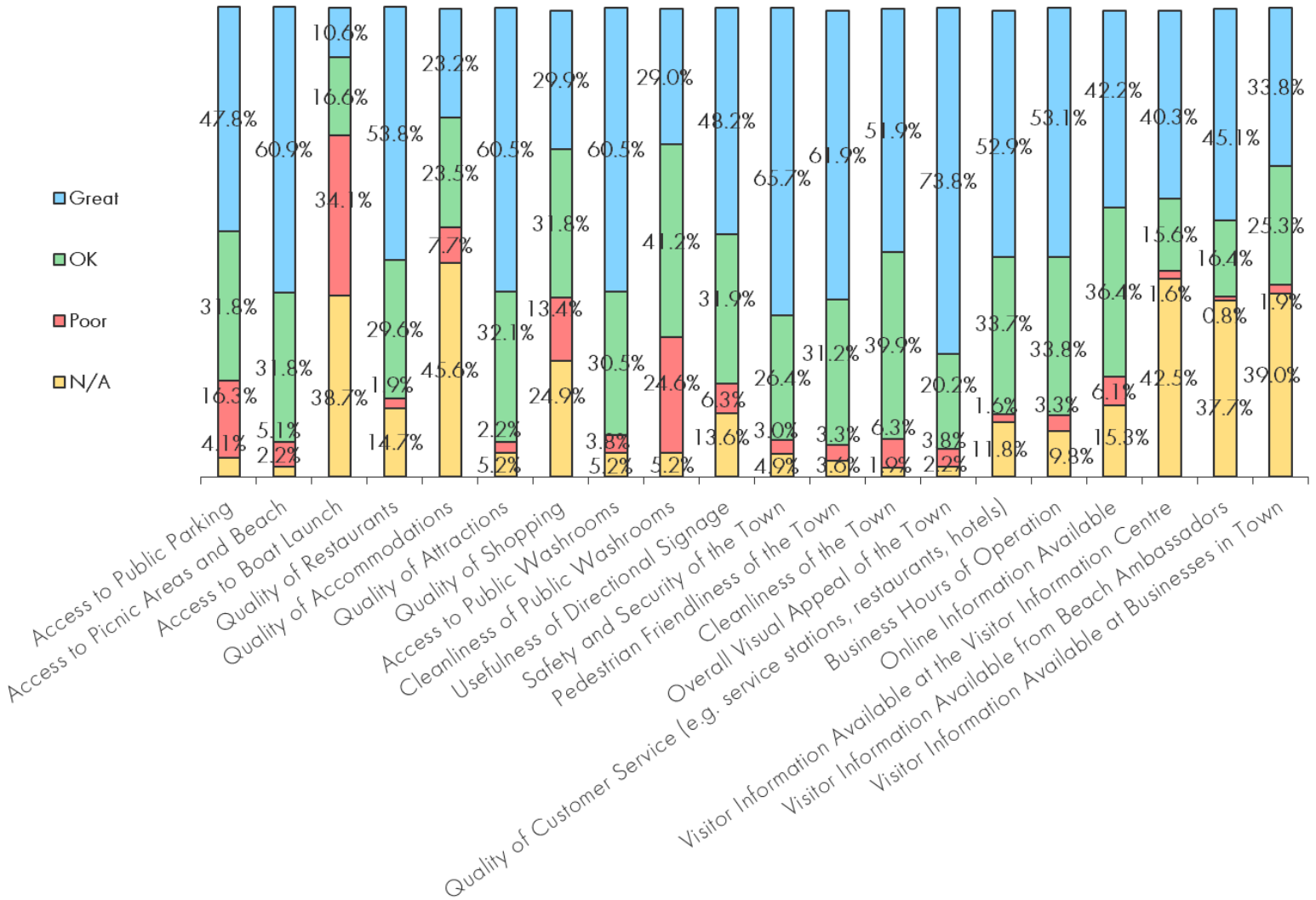
Respondents to the visitor survey overwhelmingly learned about Sylvan Lake through word of mouth (85%). This was followed by social media (52%) and television (27%). Notably, visitors did not as often learn about Sylvan Lake through the various tourism websites. A local attraction website was selected 18% of the time, while Travel Alberta’s website was at 14%, the Town’s website was at 8% and the Red Deer Tourism website was at 6%.

Figure 1. How Visitors Learned About Sylvan Lake



Respondents rated Sylvan Lake as "Great" or "OK" in regards to the overall visual appeal of the Town (94%), access to picnic areas and beach (93%), quality of attractions (93%), pedestrian friendliness of the Town (93%), safety and security of the Town (92%), cleanliness of the Town (92%) and access to public washrooms (91%). Respondents rated Sylvan Lake as "Poor" in regards to access to the boat launch (34%), cleanliness of public washrooms (25%), access to public parking (16%) and quality of shopping (13%). For the rest of the results, see Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. How Visitors Rated Services and Amenities in Sylvan Lake

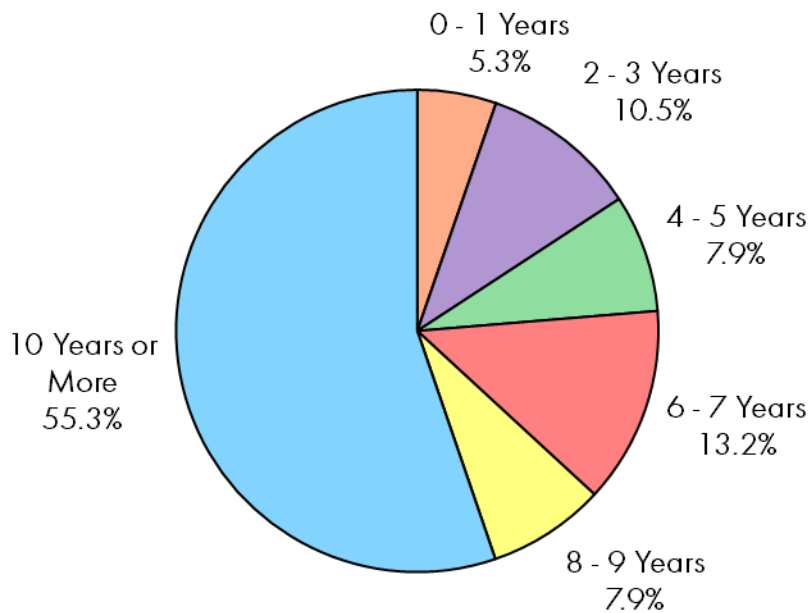


Business Survey

The business survey took place in July and August of 2016. Businesses were given an online link that allowed them to participate in the survey. A total of 38 responses were collected.

The majority of respondents' businesses were not located in the Waterfront Commercial District (59%). Over half of respondents have been in operation for 10 years or more (55%), indicating that the survey sample has a great deal of experience in Sylvan Lake (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. How Long Businesses Have Been Operating in Sylvan Lake



Respondents rated Sylvan Lake as "Great" or "OK" judging from their customers' feedback in regards to the cleanliness of the Town (97%), overall visual appeal of the Town (95%), access to public washrooms (95%), quality of restaurants (92%) and pedestrian friendliness of the Town (92%).

Respondents rated Sylvan Lake as "Poor" judging from their customers' feedback in regards to access to the boat launch (79%), quality of shopping (26%), quality of attractions (19%), access to public parking (18%) and usefulness of directional signage (18%). These results closely reflect those of the visitor survey. This helps verify results, but also speaks to the awareness business owners have about their customers.

The majority of respondents (68%) felt that it is their role to provide visitor information to customers, while 65% of respondents felt that have enough information about Sylvan Lake to provide sound visitor information to their customers. Worrisomely, these findings indicate that almost 1 in 3 businesses operating in Sylvan Lake feel that either it is not their role to provide visitor information to customers or that they do not have enough information about Sylvan Lake to provide sound visitor information to their customers.



04

VISITOR FRIENDLY ASSESSMENT KEY FINDINGS

04 VISITOR FRIENDLY ASSESSMENT KEY FINDINGS

Overview

On July 25, August 9, 20 and 21, 2016 the assessment team spent full days in Sylvan Lake and experienced the destination from a visitor’s point of view. The team navigated its way to various attractions, stopped at the Visitor Information Centre, took in the sights and sounds of the waterfront, mystery shopped select businesses and Justin stayed overnight at the Days Inn in Sylvan Lake. During the tours the team recorded what they saw through photographs and notes. Each team member focused on their respective area of expertise, but also took a holistic view of the tour and commented on all five visitor friendly categories. It was useful to visit on weekdays and on a very busy summer weekend. This gave the team a good understanding of how the destination functions during peak periods and during quieter times.

Overall the assessment team enjoyed our time in Sylvan Lake. Highlights of our experience include tasty meals at Blondies and Bravo Gastro Lounge, drinks at Fireside Restaurant, and ice cream at the Big Moo. Activities included a walk through the shops, a paddle boat tour and a lovely time on the beach. Our team used several modes of transportation to move through the WCD and complete the assessment (including by car, foot and bicycle). We had very good weather on all four days of the assessment.

Upon completion of the tour the assessment team evaluated the visitor friendliness of the community using five key criteria:

1. Overall Ambience / Community Visual Appeal
2. Wayfinding / Signage
3. Public Services / Visitor Amenities
4. Quality of Service / Professionalism
5. Visitor Information

The information below provides a brief summary of key findings from the visitor friendly assessments. Please see Appendix A for the full assessment.

Overall Ambience / Community Visual Appeal

Key Findings

- The visual appeal along the waterfront and Lakeshore Drive is inviting to visitors. Lakeshore Drive is a model complete street that appeals to the pedestrian-scale through traffic calming measures and creating a buffer between the vehicle realm and the pedestrian. This street really caters to the pedestrian and allows for easy and safe movement of pedestrians between the waterfront and the Lakeside, Marina and Downtown Districts. Figures 4, 5 and 6 illustrate this well-designed street.



Figure 4: The wide sidewalk is buffered from vehicular traffic by boulevard trees, planters, stylized light stands, and benches. The roadway is narrowed by the bump outs at pedestrian crossings, effectively slowing vehicular traffic.



Figure 5: Pedestrian crossings are clearly marked, visible to vehicles and allows for easy access and safe movement from the waterfront.



Figure 6: The trees offer shade and a buffer from the traffic noise on the roadway. The many benches scattered along the walkway invite visitors to rest and observe the views of the lake.

- The low-density character of the Cottage District should be preserved. Sensitive infill of high architectural quality should be encouraged to counteract a lack of integration between new and old built stock. Figure 7 illustrates the aging built stock and newer design.



Figure 7: Lack of Integration of new and old built stock in the Cottage District.

- The visual appeal along 50th Street was inconsistent. Although the benches, banners and planters lining the street have improved the street greatly, more work can be done to revitalize the storefronts and fill the vacant commercial/retail spaces. With regard to storefront enhancement, an incentive for the storeowner to participate is an important element. An example of a successful storefront enhancement is the building pictured in Figure 8 located on the corner of 50th Street and 50A Avenue, that included the nautical theme on the street wall in the front sign. It has adopted the nautical theme that was identified in the ARP as a theme critical to placemaking. The theme has been successfully implemented in public art and gateway features throughout the community.



Figure 8: Bonavista Fine Art is a good example of enhanced storefronts through placemaking.

- The attraction for visitors to Sylvan Lake is the lake itself and it is important to increase public access and connectivity to the lake. The internal streets in all districts have inconsistent sidewalks or no sidewalks at all. The biggest concern was the north-south streets in the Cottage and West Village Districts (Figure 9 shows an example of this in the Cottage District). The provision of sidewalks on both sides of the roadways clearly define the pedestrian and vehicle domains. The residential streets appear as laneways because of the lack of sidewalks, therefore visitors are given no choice but to walk down the road instead of walking on the lawns of the cottages and residences. This created a feeling of danger walking on the road, along with an overwhelming sense of trespassing on this private street. It is important to strike the right balance between pedestrian permeability, while maintaining privacy for local residents. The provision of sidewalks on all roadways would invite visitors to travel on foot, knowing that they can move around Town easily and safely. This observation was confirmed by the ARP that recommends *“opportunities to provide trails / pedestrian greenways to enhance public access to the Lake and parallel to the Lake should be conditions of development”* and is illustrated in Figure 10.



Figure 9: Example of no sidewalks on either side of a residential street in the Cottage District.



Figure 10: Example of sidewalks along both sides of a residential street in the Marina District.

- According to the Waterfront Urban Design Guidelines, the aesthetic theme is the nautical, Cape Cod style resort town. This theme is embodied in most of the public art, new developments and façade improvements in the Marina, Lakeside and Downtown Districts, but is not consistently applied throughout the WCD.
- The plantings and locations for picnics and the child play area work well in the newly designed lakeshore areas.
- There is no strong and consistent visual theme in the Waterfront Commercial District, except for the street furnishings, crosswalk pylons and lamppost banners.
- The Town’s new visual branding elements can be put to good use to tie visual features and themes to public pageantry and information.
- The main commercial area along Lakeshore Drive and recent streetscape improvements enhance the public realm and visitor experience.
- Pedestrian scale lighting, benches, large colourful planters, waste and recycling containers and banners that are colour coded to the zone all help define a unified character for the area, but also may be overdone and create some clutter within the pedestrian realm. A fire hydrant right in the middle of the walkway adds to this clutter.
- The commercial/restaurant buildings do not currently support through architectural character and quality the new streetscape language. The outdoor patios are not “street friendly” and welcoming due to height and design of enclosures.

- Numerous vacant lots exist along Lakeshore Drive and 50th Street and have some jersey barriers to deter vehicle traffic which is a very utilitarian aesthetic and creates an unwelcoming and neglected appearance (see Figure 11).



Figure 11: Example of a vacant lot with a utilitarian aesthetic.

- The access to Lakeshore from behind the main commercial area between 47th and 49th Street(s) is quite uncomfortable as the back of all of these buildings are in poor shape, highly visible and in bad repair.
- On-street parking is allowed in the main commercial area and added to the overall clutter of the experience.
- The street edge along Lakeshore Drive Commercial 44th Street and 46th Street (south side) is defined by older buildings with not much active use, which sterilizes the edge condition. Active edges are lacking along this stretch of Lakeshore Drive.
- Washrooms were highly visible, but could use enhanced cleaning during peak times. Natural light through high windows is effective and pleasant.
- The water is not celebrated enough and is blocked in many areas by new and old private developments. When the water slide is decommissioned, careful thought must be undertaken to ensure that access both visually and physically to the lake are considered and primary drivers in the redevelopment.

- A huge tourist attraction for most waterfront communities are the marinas. People like to see the boats moored and coming and going. Currently the marina is tucked away out of sight and cannot truly be experienced (see Figure 12). Celebrating the marina in some way would enhance the visitor experience.



Figure 12: The marina is tucked away out of sight, making it difficult for visitors to see the boats moored and coming and going.

- More public art should be incorporated throughout the area to provide visual interest, character and enhance the quality of life.
- The blank lower facades of the washroom buildings (front and back) are a missed opportunity for public art or other interpretive features. They are currently quite stark, but could become a feature element that would enhance the pedestrian experience with little effort.
- Waste and recycling bins are placed directly beside benches leading to unpleasant smells and insects such as wasps. This is the typical design language along Lakeshore Drive and can create undesirable locations to sit (see Figure 13).



Figure 13: Waste and recycling bins are placed directly beside benches. This can create undesirable locations to sit because of smells and insects, such as wasps.

Wayfinding / Signage

Key Findings

- Public parking is not well marked.
- Boat launch parking is not well marked (see Figure 14).



Figure 14: This sandwich board sign informs visitors that there is no onsite parking at the boat launch, but does not direct them to other parking options.

- The highway signage is well maintained and could be improved on Hwy 11 at 50th and 60th Streets. New branded signs that define the access/street along with the new visual identity of the Town might work well in these instances.
- Some main arteries are not very well marked (e.g. Memorial at 60th Street, 48th Ave at 60th Street).
- Entry signs show little consistency. The pedestal signs at 60th Street and Lakeshore Drive and on Lakeshore Drive off of Hwy 20 appear to be quite dated in appearance. If there is a desire to define Town entrances and Town district gateways, a common and fresh visual treatment should be applied.
- The entrance feature at the traffic circle at Hwy 11A and Hwy 20 is distinctive, but the finer script type is not very effective applied vertically against the wave elements.
- The directional signs off of the three main south approaches to the Town at Memorial Trail and 47th Ave, 48th Ave and Lakeshore Drive need to be given a common format as part of a comprehensive wayfinding program.
- The application of exterior business signs (using the Waterfront Urban Design Guidelines) as found at Marina Merchants and on the Sylvan Lake Pharmacy building would help to identify business and keep the visual tone of signs from becoming too loud and competitive, which would lead to an escalation of visual noise (see Figure 15).



Figure 15: Exterior business sign for Marina Merchants. This is an example of nautical themed development and signage.

- It became clear that not all businesses have bought into beautification efforts as some storefronts are tired and in need repair (see Figure 16).



Figure 16: This awning over a storefront is in need of repair.

- The finger post signage system that shows amenities and services using a symbol-based system should be evaluated and potentially revised (see Figure 17). Repurposing the existing finger post structures may be an option here. The whole wayfinding scenario for the Town needs to be evaluated. The finger post system requires time for people to absorb and understand what the symbols stand for in the services and amenity panels. The signage system also needs to be tied visually to any mapping system developed by the Town. Any symbols or language used in any medium related to public information or wayfinding must be applied consistently.



Figure 17: Example of the finger post signage system.

- All public amenity, parking restriction, destination or place signs need to be evaluated as part of the development of a comprehensive wayfinding strategy for the Town. These route and destination signs need to be clear and easily recognizable for tourists and residents and display visual features that clearly connect services to the Town. Clear directions to amenities and services need to be established, such as how to get to the boat-launch, where to park your vehicle and trailer after launching a boat, how to get to the RV waste disposal depot, how to get to recreation facilities and how to get to the Town’s health centre. For several examples of successful wayfinding strategies, see Appendix B.

- The visual identity elements designed for the Town several years ago have not been applied consistently (see Figure 18). Other fonts are used to apply the Town’s name and weights of fonts seem to vary. This situation can be improved by paying strict attention to the new branding guidelines recently developed for the Town. The look and feel of the new branding elements must find their way into all aspects of visually applied public information.

Figure 18. Example of inconsistent visual identity elements used by the Town.



- The district banner system works well with the new lamp post system in the three lakeshore areas.
- The visually themed banners on 49th Ave and 50th Street are expressive and add colour (perhaps especially in the winter months).
- The Town’s history panels applied to the street crossing pylons along the promenade are very appealing and effective.

Public Services / Visitor Amenities

Key Findings

- A high priority for visitors is their immediate access to public washrooms. This priority is enhanced for visitors with small children and seniors. The two large public washroom and change room facilities located on the waterfront are excellent. They are located on either end of the waterfront, providing access to visitors entering/exiting the waterfront and do not disrupt the views and continuity of the well-designed streetscape along Lakeshore Drive. The building design also keeps with the urban design guidelines for the district and maintaining the nautical theme, pictured in Figure 19.



Figure 19: Public washrooms and change rooms on Lakeshore Drive.

- Washrooms at the playground in Centennial Park are smaller than other public washrooms, and did not seem to accommodate large visitor volumes.
- Change rooms and washrooms had long lines. Men were waiting to change in bathroom stalls because they wanted privacy. The addition of private change stalls should be considered. This would reduce lines at existing bathrooms/change rooms and enhance the visitor experience.
- The Beach Ambassador hut located on the east end of the waterfront is a visitor information booth for Sylvan Lake, which also provides lifejacket loaners. This is a key amenity where visitors can ask general questions related to amenities and services, and get information on water safety. The booth is well located with a beach hut design that fits the nautical theme of the waterfront and Lakeshore Drive, pictured in Figure 20. This is a wonderful amenity on the waterfront. In addition, the Beach Ambassador huts can be used to offer visitor information or retail sales kiosks in the winter months.



Figure 20: The Beach Ambassador located on the waterfront.

- The pier/park located between 50th Street and 49th Street along Lakeshore Drive is under-utilized, pictured in Figures 21 and 22. The park contains mature trees in the centre and along the water's edge, a few benches scattered along the water's edge, a large sand pit in the centre, large flat grassy spaces and a small space of sandy beach. The space could be better utilized by increasing program elements for active and passive recreation.



Figure 21: The somewhat under-utilized park on the Pier with the large sand pit in the middle, which is used for beach volleyball and other uses.



Figure 22: Basic recreation programming using the park.

- During our visit we noticed the prevalence of pub-style restaurants along Lakeshore Drive, in the Lakeside and Downtown Districts. This type of food establishment caters to all demographics as we observed tables with seniors, young adults, and young families on the patio of Bravo Gastro Lounge as we had lunch. However, these establishments tend to operate during the hours of 11:00 am and 2:00 am, serving the lunch, dinner and late night crowds. The provision of a coffee shop, bakery, deli or health food establishment is key to offering breakfast, brunch, light snacks and specialty coffee options for visitors. These types of establishments will also operate during different hours than the restaurants and pubs. Generally, coffee shops, bakeries and delis operate for between 7:00 am and 2:00 pm for breakfast and lunch, closing in the early afternoon. This variety in types of food establishments and their operating hours animates Lakeshore Drive, Lakeside and Downtown Districts throughout the day and evening.

- Similar to the recommendation for variety of food establishments, the Waterfront Commercial District, specifically Lakeshore Drive and 50th Street, would benefit from a wider range of shops. Lakeshore Drive in particular had 2-3 sporting goods stores selling equipment, gear and clothing related to watersports; otherwise the street was lined with restaurants, pub, fast food, ice cream parlors, motels and an apartment-style building. Downtown Sylvan Lake does have a convenience store and there are two pharmacies in the district, however, the provision of shops such as clothing boutiques, jewelry stores, art galleries and gift shops would allow visitors to easily walk from the waterfront to either browse shops to purchase a water bottle, more sunscreen or just get out of the heat of the summer or the cold in the winter (see Figure 23). These shops should have the flexibility to cater to winter visitors as well.
- The nature of Sylvan Lake as a destination is that it can be accessed locally, regionally and province-wide by vehicle. This includes private vehicles, motorhomes and fifth-wheels. As such, the availability of public parking is a key amenity in determining the visitor friendliness of a community, particularly the Town of Sylvan Lake. Parking is clearly identified on the Tourism map as well as on directional signs along 50th Avenue and 50th Street. However, the large parking lots on Lakeshore Drive and 44th Street are not clearly marked on site. It is recommended that a sign be installed that clearly identifies that this is public parking, and open during specific times. For example, this will show visitors that they have located the public parking and are able to park for free until 11:00 pm and that overnight parking is prohibited.
- During our visit, we noticed that on-street parking along 50th Street is timed, where a visitor can park for free (up to 2 hours) between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm. While on Lakeshore Drive, the on-street parking does not have a time limit. It is recommended that a time limit similar to that on 50th Street be implemented. This would provide visitors whose intention is to do a short stop for a meal at one of the restaurants, for an ice cream cone or to pick something up at a shop with access to parking. This could encourage more visitors to stop as the parking spaces would be available more frequently. This also requires visitors who only use the waterfront to park in the public parking lots available for that use.
- We also noticed that the times displayed on the on-street parking signs along 50th Street are not consistent. Some signs use the 12-hour clock showing the time limit as 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. While other signs use the 24-hour clock showing the time limit as 9:00 to 17:00. Sticking to one style of clock for consistency is recommended.
- There is a lack of alternative transportation options for visitors to Sylvan Lake. Due to the size of the Town, a transit system may not be feasible, however a shuttle bus system could be an option. The shuttle bus can have key stops at the RV park, key public meeting spaces such as the Town Hall in the Gateway District, and use the drop-off point at the public parking on the east end of the Lakeshore Drive. This aligns with the ARP in which it recommended *“that the feasibility of instituting a shuttle bus system in partnership with the Heart of Downtown be explored to move people from peripheral parking areas to the waterfront and downtown areas.”* The shuttle bus could operate year round to shuttle visitors to and from winter events hosted on the waterfront or elsewhere in the town.

Figure 23: Bonavista Fine Art is a good example of diversity in shops.



Quality of Service / Professionalism

Key Findings

- Customer service in the community received mixed reviews with some businesses doing very well and others needing improvement.
- Encouraging a customer-centric approach among service staff, facilitating the distribution of visitor information at all businesses, and generally encouraging a “visitor economy” mindset in the Town (i.e. valuing tourism as a central part of the economy) will be important if the destination seeks to enhance the visitor experience and increase visitor spending.
- Town workers were removing weeds from the tree grates and were very friendly and engaging when a conversation was initiated.
- Encouraging visitors to come to main street is obviously a challenge for the business community. This was apparent in the low number of people in the stores or walking along 50th Street, and was confirmed when speaking with sales staff and business owners in that location. There is a lack of signage at the north end of main street is a concern, given that no stores are immediately visible from the intersection of Lakeshore Drive. There is nothing encouraging visitors to walk further down the street. A business directory would be helpful. Simply re-naming 50th Street to Main Street, rather than Centennial Street, would convey more significance to it. Other options could include referring to it as a Shopping District or Downtown. Without this, there is little indication that there is shopping available further to the south.
- There appeared to be a very different demographic at Wild Rapids compared to along the beach (see Figure 24). A better understanding of these visitors and catering to them would be beneficial. Presumably those at Wild Rapids have reasonably high disposable incomes and may spend more in the Town. Luring this demographic back once Wild Rapids closes will be important. Simply increasing the number of beach visitors to the Town will not replace the lost revenue coming from the water slide visitors.



Figure 24: Wild Rapids was a popular tourist attraction for Sylvan Lake. Replacing this amenity will be a challenge.

- Aside from the Lakeshore development area, the Town has an inconsistent identity leading to an incoherent product offering. As an example, the burgundy colour of the Fireside Restaurant and Lounge was out-of-place alongside the light and summery colours of other developments in the community (see Figure 25).

Figure 25. Example of an inconsistent identity in the community.



- As previously described, customer service received mixed reviews. Basic customer service training would be beneficial for most staff and could be partially covered under the Canada-Alberta Job Grant.
- Many businesses visited were very worn and maintenance appeared neglected (i.e. paint, washrooms). For every business there is a balance between realizing a profit and investing back in the business (and it is a decision for every owner to make). However, the lack of investment could drive customers away – to other lakes or other parts of Town.
- A broader approach is required to generate more traffic and sales for the businesses visited. Unfortunately, there is no one sure-fire way to increase the number of customers, but most businesses could benefit from a marketing plan, which would include a variety of marketing tactics including customer service, an online presence/improved presence, signage, customer outreach, product mix, etc.
Many businesses' either had no web site, or their web site was very poor. As more and more people investigate businesses online before visiting, this concern should be addressed. Web sites do not have to be expensive to build (there are many templates available), but should be professional looking, provide useful information about the business and be mobile friendly.
Increasingly people are using sites such as Yelp and Google reviews when making a decision about frequenting a business. Business owners will need to incorporate monitoring these sites into their marketing activities.
- Related to customer service challenges, some businesses likely struggle with human resources issues. Introduction to a human resources framework (hiring, retention, employee engagement, performance reviews, progressive discipline, Employee Handbook, etc.) would likely benefit most business owners and in turn benefit visitors. A functioning human resources system will reduce employee absenteeism, dissatisfaction and turnover. It sets expectations and repercussions if employees do not follow customer service policies and standards.
- Standard Operating Procedures, written and enforced, will help to set expectations for employees. Without it, customer service, cleanliness, hygiene, etc. are all done on an ad-hoc manner, which is reflected in the way employees interact with customers.

Visitor Information

Key Findings

- As identified in the business survey, many businesses do not feel it is their role to provide visitor information (or they do not have the knowledge to provide it). This situation should be addressed through training, support and consultation.
- The Town’s website should have a branded approach applied to relevant sections for visitors and residents. The website often begins the process of “wayfinding” for visitors and new or potential residents.
- The Beach Ambassadors initiative is a good one to help welcome and inform visitors, but there needs to be a comprehensive information system that starts with the website and continues through all print-based information pieces and includes physical maps at sheltered seating areas or at kiosks, at public washroom locations and in parking or passenger drop-off areas.
- The large outdoor map at the VIC is a good idea and needs to be kept current. Maps of this sort might work in other main entry locations to Town if a traffic “pull out” could be developed that allows visitors to study it and get oriented. As stated before, the map’s design and the features it displays must be consistent from the online map to publicly posted maps to maps found in print-based information pieces.
- The public notice board at the VIC does not appear to be used very well (see Figure 26). Perhaps the Town should explore installing community message boards in public spaces and stores.



Figure 26: The public message board near the VIC does not appear to be used very well.

Digital and Online Presence Assessment

Our team conducted a digital and online presence assessment of the community. The following tourism websites and social media platforms were included in the assessment:

1. Visitredder.com/sylvan-lake
2. Sylvanlake.ca
3. Sylvan-lake-tourism.com
4. Travelalberta.com
5. Facebook.com
6. Twitter.com
7. Instagram.com

The information below provides a summary of key findings from the digital and online presence assessment.

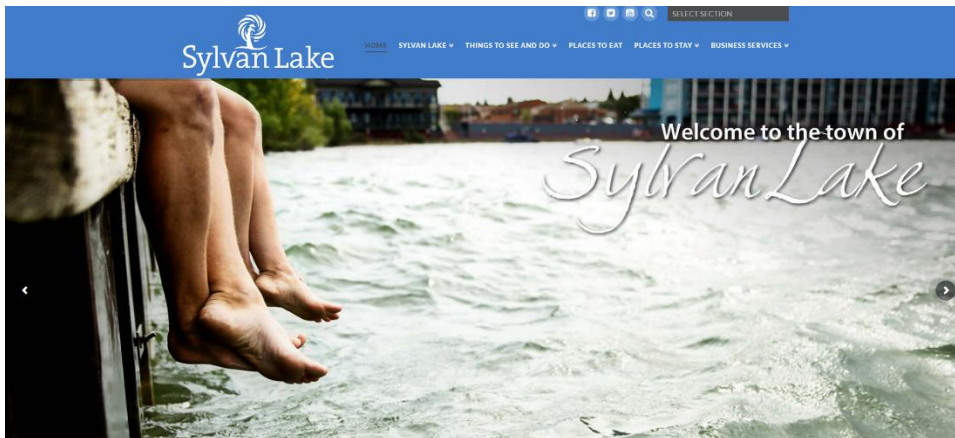
Sylvan Lake's Digital and Online Presence

There is a plethora of information about Sylvan Lake in the online sphere. From Wikipedia to TripAdvisor to the Town of Sylvan Lake website, visitors have a lot of access to information about the Town and its amenities. However, do these sites provide the kind of information that visitors need to make informed decisions about their stay? And do they craft Sylvan Lake's brand story; making it an exciting destination in visitors' minds before they ever arrive?

Generally, our analysis found the logistical information to be well-developed and readily available. What's missing, however, is the answer to the question "Why Sylvan Lake?" This question speaks to Sylvan Lake's brand; the emotional promise it makes to every visitor. For example, when you go to Rome, you think history, architecture and a connection to the ancient past. When you think of Las Vegas, colour, light, nightlife and excitement is what draws you in. However, based on the brand presence of Sylvan Lake, there is little in its online presence to paint, experientially, what the Town is all about. It's clear that there are great accommodations available, as well as good food, and lots of fun things to do, but it's not immediately clear what kind of value (and values) the Town espouses. The Town's story needs to be told in order to attract and retain visitors, particularly as more and more tourism research is done in the online sphere.

What follows is an analysis of the primary websites that come up in Google searches – you may have control of these sites, or you may not, but they all impact Sylvan Lake's visitor friendliness. We also analyzed Sylvan Lake's social media presence and visitors' access to logistical trip-planning information.

<http://visitreddeer.com/sylvan-lake/>



Key Findings

- Overall the website is attractive and modern, with excellent images that catch the eye. Make sure that all sub-pages are consistent in quality with the home page.
- Some confusing information hierarchy and navigation.
- Pages appear to load quickly and run well.
- Template is well-chosen.
- Add Town branding and slogan for consistency.
- Make sure writing style does not rely on clichés and that it answers the “Why Sylvan Lake” question.
- Clarify that Sylvan lake is a beach town, as it is not stated explicitly. This is something that makes it stand out in the Alberta landscape, and it’s important to be explicit about it.
- Social media links are easy to find. However, they do not link to Sylvan Lake specific social media profiles.
- Make sure brand ownership is clear and consistent. The current visitreddeer.com/sylvan-lake URL is confusing.
- No significant gaps in the information presented (with the exception of answering the “Why Sylvan Lake” question). We’d love to know more about your brand story and what truly sets Sylvan Lake apart from other communities in Alberta. This will help visitors decide whether they want to visit the Town and stay for an extended time.
- Currently, the information is organized in three ways: Horizontal navigation across the top of the site, the rotating image banner, and the static images on the bottom of the site. Right now, these three navigation styles are competing for attention, rather than supporting clear information gathering. We recommend simplifying this navigation pattern. Use the navigation across the top as your principle means of information sharing. Reinforce your brand with the rotating images, rather than also using them as live links (information is duplicated anyway). And let the image/links along the bottom tell your story in expanded and interesting ways. For example, the video about Sylvan Lake in the winter is fantastic and has been perfectly situated on the page. It would be great to see a corresponding “Sylvan Lake in Summer” video, and maybe more videos about year-round activities and amenities. Similar to the image rotator, these images/links should reinforce your brand, rather than share the information.

- Only rotate the image when page is reloaded so it doesn't distract from the information gathering process. Think of it as a place for brand reinforcement, rather than information sharing. This is the perfect place for your Town's beauty shots. Make us want to visit because of the fabulous pictures and brand – tell Sylvan Lake's brand story in these images, rather than sharing more information.
- Definitely make use of internal links, as you have, but there is no need for an "About Sylvan Lake" image/link. For example, when you also have it listed in the horizontal drop down menu. There are examples of this duplication throughout the site, which makes it confusing and slow to navigate as a first time user.
- From the visitredder.com site, you may want to consider adding a "Go to the Beach" link that directs to the Sylvan Lake site, again to clarify Sylvan Lake's defining feature.

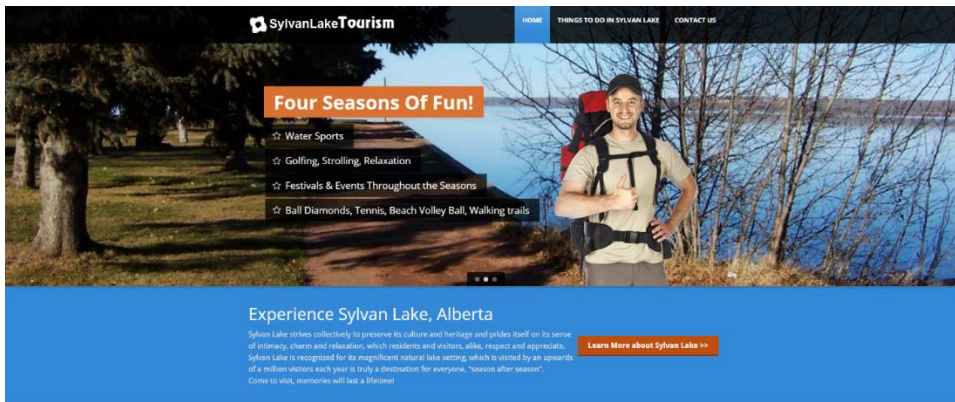
<http://www.sylvanlake.ca/>



Key Findings

- This is a great website for residents. It is the first site to pop up on Google searches, so it is likely to be one of the primary portals for visitors. Therefore, make it even easier for visitors to find the information that pertains to them.
- The Town may want to consider adding a new home page that directs to a residents' portal and a visitors' portal to clearly differentiate between the two primary audiences for the site.

<http://sylvan-lake-tourism.com/>

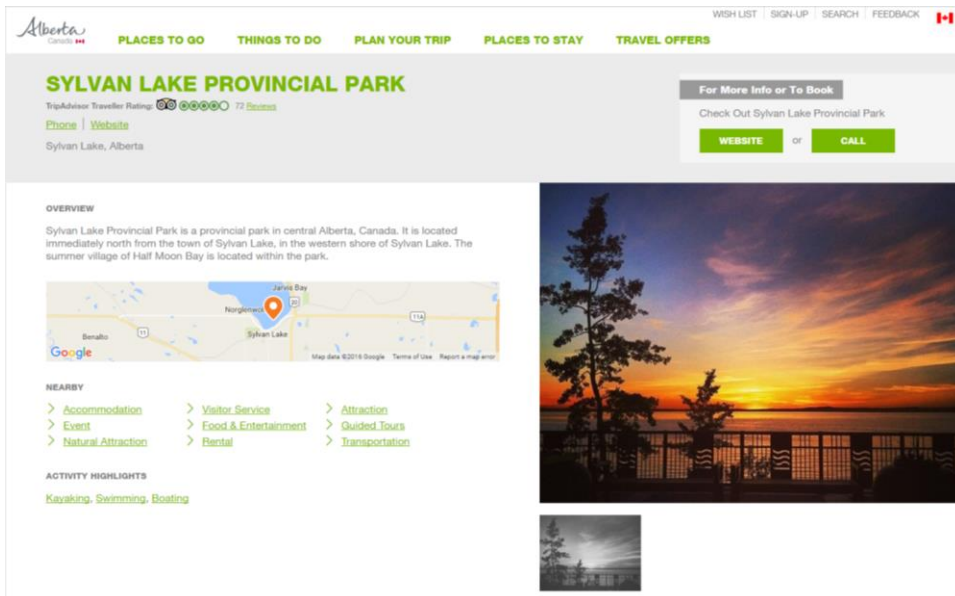


Welcome You to Sylvan Lake, Alberta!

Key Findings

- This site is generally attractive and easy to use, however it is clearly a for-profit site, which may turn some visitors off, and may make some of the information somewhat suspect.
- We're guessing that the Town of Sylvan Lake and/or Sylvan tourism bodies don't own this site, and therefore likely have little control over its contents. That is a concern, as it does impact the digital visitor friendliness of Sylvan Lake. There is likely little you can do about it, other than offering to work together with the creators of the site in order to maintain some consistency.
- The biggest issue with this site is its use of stock photos, as it sets up false expectations for visitors. For example, the beach picture looks like it's from the Caribbean, with turquoise water, white waves and white sand.

<https://www.travelalberta.com/>



Key Findings

- Travel Alberta’s site provides excellent visitor information and does a good job of enticing visitors with fantastic photos and experiential phrases (things like: “Let the cool breeze off the lake ruffle your hair...”) This is what your web properties need more of, to really sell the idea of Sylvan Lake in visitors’ minds.

Sylvan Lake’s Social Media

Facebook (FB)

The low visibility for Sylvan Lake visitors on Facebook is a significant issue, and a lost opportunity.

- Currently, the FB link on the Visit Sylvan Lake page directs to Visit Red Deer’s FB page. This is a significant problem that should be rectified quickly, as it negates the autonomy of Sylvan Lake’s brand, provides no Sylvan Lake-specific information and implies that the two municipalities are one and the same. This can be very confusing and frustrating for the visitor. We recommend replacing the link to the Visit Red Deer FB page with a link to Sylvan Lake’s tourism FB page (<https://www.facebook.com/VisitSylvanLake/>).

What can FB do for visitors?

- Provide concrete information in the digital sphere, in almost real time. Much trip planning happens in the online sphere, and after business hours, so it is a great opportunity to engage positively with visitors before they come to the Town (setting up positive expectations) and to answer questions quickly and “in the moment.” It is best practice to respond to all questions and requests within 2 hours or less, if possible, and be ready to engage with audiences at all times of the day and night. That’s the kind of benefit and service social media provides, and should be an expectation for your page management.
- FB is all about engaging with people. Sharing stories is one of the best ways of connecting with your audience in an authentic way and sharing visitor information. Experiential content works wonders in this context.
- Spread your message widely. Thanks to efficient and well-developed advertising algorithms, FB allows you to share your message widely, but targeted to the people who want to receive it. A relatively small budget is all that is needed (\$200-500 per month) to efficiently get the word out.
- Share your online community’s experiences with your brand. Facebook is ultimately digitally amplified word-of-mouth advertising. Personal referrals are an incredibly strong form of advertising, and can help tip the balance from want to need.

Twitter



- The @SLTourism handle is quite well managed. Good consistent presence, nice use of images, excellent amplification of other voices and content.
- It would be great to see a stronger brand voice with more experiential writing, and significant attention paid to community building (your online community is small for having been online for 6 years).
- Content also feels a bit “advertisey” rather than capturing authentic excitement of being in the Town.
- Direct your Twitter energy into engaging more with your audience – more chatting, less advertising. This will help your online community to grow faster, and build stronger relationships with your followers.
- Consider some Twitter advertising to drive engagement for important promotions, and to build your community faster.
- Consider switching your handle from @SLTourism, which means very little, to @VisitSylvan. This will paint a clearer and more aspirational picture of what the profile is all about. This will mean shutting down this profile and creating a new one, however, you should be able to retain a good number of your followers through a targeted retention campaign, and if you focus on community building, we’d anticipate that you could be back at your present numbers in 3-5 months (or less).

Instagram

- Instagram is becoming an incredibly important platform for the travel industry. Though the article below is two years old, it gives some great tips on how to use the platform for tourist brand building: <http://fredericgonzalo.com/en/2014/06/01/social-media-best-practices-in-travel-instagram/>
- Sylvan Lake tourism does not currently have an Instagram presence. As the Town is so beautiful and visually-friendly, it would be great to capitalize on this aesthetic beauty in the online sphere.
- Many Sylvan Lake businesses and organizations have Instagram profiles, so there would be opportunities to connect and amplify online.

Mystery Shop and Business Mentorship

As an additional input into the Visitor Friendly Assessment, the consultant team performed Mystery Shopping of six Sylvan Lake businesses. A Mystery Shop is a business assessment tool that allows assessor(s) to experience real customer-employee scenarios that are not impacted by the knowledge that the business is being evaluated.

After the evaluation, the businesses that received mystery shopping were invited to participate in one-on-one follow-up mentorship sessions with the assessors to discuss their strengths, growth areas and unique recommendations.

Mystery Shop Results

Strengths

- Some businesses had very welcoming atmospheres.
- Some businesses had friendly, knowledgeable staff.
- Some businesses were clean and free of unnecessary clutter.

Growth Areas

- Several of the businesses require increased maintenance/upgrades to their storefronts.
- One business had a significant problem with customer service, while several others had moderate issues with customer service.
- Professionalism of service staff could be improved (e.g. appropriately attired, body language, interest, etc.).
- Accessibility of some businesses could be improved (e.g. width of doors, stalls wide enough for wheelchair, no uneven surfaces).
- The availability of on-site tourism resources could be increased at most businesses.
- The ability of staff to provide responses to tourism related questions could be improved.



05

ACTION PLAN

05 ACTION PLAN

The action plan is organized in a way that will encourage the ongoing development of key initiatives. Within each assessment category, initiatives have been developed that speak to observations stemming from the community assessment portion of the project. Within each initiative, specific action items have been established that will assist the community in evaluating the success of the plan. Attached to each of the initiatives is an “order of magnitude cost” and a suggested priority rating. The criteria for costing and priority ratings are described below.

Cost Criteria (Initial)

Low Cost	Less than \$5,000
Medium Cost	\$5,000 - \$10,000
High Cost	Over \$10,000

Priority Criteria

Low Priority	There is moderate benefit to strengthening visitor friendliness, and because of phasing considerations, cost, organizational readiness, or relative importance in relation to other initiatives, these initiatives are deemed a lower priority <u>at this time</u> .
Medium Priority	There is a considerable benefit to strengthening visitor friendliness, however; because of phasing considerations, cost, organizational readiness, or relative importance in relation to other initiatives, these initiatives are deemed a lower priority than high priority items <u>at this time</u> .
High Priority	There is a strong benefit to strengthening visitor friendliness and because of phasing considerations, cost, organizational readiness, or relative importance in relation to other initiatives, these initiatives are deemed a high priority <u>at this time</u> .

Quick Wins



A blue star indicates that an initiative is a “Quick Win.” Quick wins are initiatives that can be implemented within a year or two, have a high probability of success and have a relatively low cost.

Establishment of a Visitor Friendly Working Group

It is recommended that the Town develop a Visitor Friendly Working Group (this may be a sub-committee of the WCD Committee or be a standing item on the WCD Committee agenda). This group should be struck within 60 days of the approval of the Visitor Friendly final report and should be comprised of key stakeholders that will be involved in action plan implementation. The working group should assign project leads for each initiative, review project phasing, review suggested prioritization and begin implementation.

Future Planning, Evaluation, and Reporting

A key component of the success of the action plan will be the evaluation of its initiatives. The plan should be reviewed quarterly, at which time priorities should be re-evaluated and a discussion of any variances should occur. If new projects are added (or old projects removed) as the plan progresses, this should be done by weighing the relative priority of all projects in the plan. The action plan should be updated on a yearly basis; therefore, the third quarter evaluation period will set the stage for the updated version of the plan. In the fourth quarter, the updated plan should be formalized and a draft approved by the end of the year.

Project Leads

The Action Plan identifies organizations and departments responsible for leading initiatives. Please see below for a list of these organizations.

Abbreviation	Organization
P + D	Planning and Development (Town of Sylvan Lake)
R + C	Recreation and Culture (Town of Sylvan Lake)
PW	Public Works (Town of Sylvan Lake)
ME	Municipal Enforcement (Town of Sylvan Lake)
Comm	Communications (Town of Sylvan Lake)
Parks	Parks Department (Town of Sylvan Lake)
Town	Refers to multiple departments (Town of Sylvan Lake)
Chamber	Sylvan Lake Chamber of Commerce

Sylvan Lake

1. Overall Ambience / Community Visual Appeal

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
1.1 Improve the visual appeal of the Waterfront Area and 50 th Street.	Commercial, office and residential buildings are showing wear and age. Current Façade Improvement Program is underutilized. Visual ambience of the Town is inconsistent.	1.1.1 Undertake a comprehensive Streetscape Plan and Implementation Program for 50 th Street.	H/H	Town/ Medium	
		1.1.2 Enhance promotion of the existing Façade Improvement Grant Program.	H/L	Town/ Short	★
		1.1.3 Establish a May 1 annual deadline for the existing Façade Improvement Grant Program. After May 1, reallocate unused funds to downtown beautification items and/or initiatives outlined in this document.	H/L	EDO/ Short	★
		1.1.4 Require development permit applications to comply with the <i>Waterfront Urban Design Guidelines</i> . Consider establishing a Design Review Panel to adjudicate.	H/L	P + D/ Short	★ Promote consistent features of the façade design and typographical guidelines for the Town’s business locations.
		1.1.5 Establish a public art policy and program that would ultimately incorporate more public art throughout the WCD to provide visual interest, character and enhance the visitor experience.	M/L	R + C/ Medium	Ensure to identify criteria and funding requirements.
		1.1.6 Clean up the back of the buildings along Lakeshore Drive and undertake more rigorous enforcement of community standards.	M/M	ME/ Short	
	There is a utilitarian aesthetic in some sections of Lakeshore Drive and 50 th Street.	1.1.7 Work with landowners to remove jersey barriers from vacant lots and these areas should be developed as small pocket parks or temporary art installations.	H/M	Town/ Medium	Compliments objective #6 of goal #2 in the WCD Committee Action Plan.
		1.1.8 Unsightly movable street furniture located on empty lots (where food trucks are located) should be re-evaluated and perhaps reduced/relocated to reduce physical and visual clutter.	H/L	Parks/ Short	★
		1.1.9 The “bear bins” along the beach should be reduced and tidied up in their placements.			

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
		1.1.10 Waste and recycling bins should be relocated away from seating areas with enough room to reduce visitors’ exposure to unappealing smells and insects.			
		1.1.11 Install additional canisters for smokers to discard cigarette butts along Lakeshore Drive (especially near lounges/bars).			
		1.1.12 Pursue a walkability audit.	M/M	Town/ Medium	Part of a comprehensive Streetscape Plan.
1.2 Enhance entryways into Lakeshore Drive to improve visitor experiences.	50 th Street from 50 th Ave to Lakeshore Drive is tired. Streetscape and building edges feel run down, sidewalks are in poor shape and the roadway is too wide.	1.2.1 Establish 50 th Street as a main route to the lakefront by narrowing the roadway, widening the walkways and enhancing landscape developments.	M/H	Town/ Medium	Part of a comprehensive Streetscape Plan.
		1.2.2 Feature and pedestrian lighting should be incorporated to create character and evening ambience.		Town/ Medium	
		The intersection at 50 th Ave and 50 th Street is rather subdued as a main entryway into Lakeshore Drive.		1.2.3 Enhance the intersection at 50 th Ave and 50 th Street with feature signage, pageantry and potential nautical or water themed art.	
		1.2.4 The VIC should be upgraded. Consider moving to corner of 50 Ave and 50 th Street as both a VIC and a “Welcome Centre” or relocate to an existing building on 50 th Street.	M/H	Town/ Long	It is recognized that plans are in place to move the VIC to the NexSource Centre, however we present these options for future consideration.
	Memorial Trail is an important roadway and should contribute to the overall entry sequence with feature “experience” oriented upgrades.	1.2.5 Memorial Trail should receive some pageantry (e.g. banners, planters, large scale planting schemes, public art, etc.).	M/H	Town/ 5+ Years	
1.3 Celebrate the water and lake, which is the main attraction for visitors.	The water and lake is not celebrated enough. It is blocked in many areas by new and old developments.	1.3.1 Ensure re-development of the waterside site includes consideration of a public boat launch, public marina and overall public access to the lake. Ensure new developments do not block the view to the lake.	H/H	Town/ Medium	The Town will be implementing a design charrette and will be completing detailed planning for this site in 2017 and 2018.

2. Wayfinding / Signage

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
2.1 Enhance the Town’s main entry signs.	Town entry signage could be more attractive and welcoming	2.1.1 Apply the Town’s new visual identity and branding standards to all district, community and welcome signs.	H/H	Town/ Medium	This includes the pedestal signs at 60 th Street and Lakeshore Drive and at 33 rd Street just west of the junction between Highways 11A and 20.
	Feature entry sign has weak visual features.	2.1.2 Assess the welcome sign at the traffic circle at the junction of Highways 11A and 20 as part of a comprehensive wayfinding program.	M/L	Town/ Medium	
	Highway signs at Highway 11 and 60 th Street, 50 th Street and Highway 20.	2.1.3 Develop clear welcome signs at all key highway entry points off of Highway 11 that include the new visual identity for the Town.	H/H	Town/ Medium	Those signs on municipal property.
2.2 Develop a comprehensive wayfinding and signage program for the Town.	Existing wayfinding signage is inconsistent.	2.2.1 Develop a comprehensive signage program for the Town (including vehicular and pedestrian). Include an assessment of the fingerpost signage system and see if there is a way to repurpose the supports to accommodate any revised wayfinding approach.	H/H	Town/ Short	★
	Lack of signage leading visitors to key amenities and attractions.	2.2.2 Develop a consistent directional signage program to lead visitors to key amenities (e.g. boat launch, parking, RV waste dump, VIC, etc.).	Included in 2.2.1	Town/ Short	★ Compliments objective #2 of goal #1 of the WCD Committee Action Plan.
		2.2.3 Significantly improve signage for public parking and the boat launch parking.	H/L	Town/ Short	
2.3 Promote the newly branded image of the Town.	The visual branding of the Town is inconsistent.	2.3.1 Apply the new visual branding elements for the Town consistently on all public signage and wayfinding.	Included in 2.2.1	Town/ Short	★
	Pageantry elements not visible in all districts.	2.3.2 The new banner program should be applied to other areas within the Waterfront Commercial District.	Included in 2.2.1	Town/ Short	★
	Weak destination signage.	2.3.3 Assess and improve existing attraction signage with reference to the Town’s new branding standards.	Included in 2.2.1	Town/ Short	
2.4 Improve directional signage guiding visitors into Sylvan Lake.	There is no sign indicating Highway 11a is an alternate route into Sylvan Lake.	2.4.1 Work with Alberta Transportation to add a sign on the QE II indicating that Highway 11a is an alternative route to Sylvan Lake. This route could be advertised as a scenic or lakefront route.	Included in 2.2.1	Town/ Long	

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
	Signs for Sylvan Lake appear too late on Highway 11.	2.4.2 Add a sign for Sylvan Lake that appears sooner on Highway 11 from the QE II.	Included in 2.2.1	Town/ Long	
	The intersection at Highway 20 and Memorial Trail is not celebrated.	2.4.3 Improve signage and visual appeal of Highway 20 as a route into Sylvan Lake.	L/L	Town/ 5+ Years	
		2.4.4 Consider developing road-side pull outs entering Sylvan Lake that would house visitor information.	Included in 2.2.1	Town/ Long	
2.5 Improve signage on 50 th Street.	50 th Street is not celebrated enough as the main beach or lakefront route.	2.5.1 Celebrate 50 th Street as the main beach or lakefront route with feature signage, enhanced pageantry to add to the experience, and more descriptive text.	Included in 1.2.3	Town/ 5+ Years	Examples of more descriptive text include: upgrade “next 3 exits” sign to include “beach route” or “lakefront route”.

3. Quality of Service / Professionalism

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
3.1 Increase employee engagement.	Human resources management systems are not in place for some individual businesses.	3.1.1 Provide education and training on a Human Resources Management program to business owners.	H/H	Chamber/ Medium	Employee engagement has been shown to have a direct and positive impact on customer service.
		3.1.2 Work with business owners to implement a Human Resources Management program for their business.			
		3.1.3 Work with business owners (one-on-one consulting, workshops) to incorporate customer service standards into their Human Resource Management programs (i.e. standard operating procedures, job descriptions).			
3.2 Standardize professional and consistent customer service in the tourism sector.	Customer service is not to the standard that visitors expect while visiting a popular tourist destination.	3.2.1 Provide a destination-wide “train the trainer” customer service seminar in the early spring/late winter.	H/H	Chamber/ Medium	Training for employees may be covered by the <i>Canada-Alberta Job Grant</i> .
		3.2.2 Provide a destination-wide, full day customer service seminar in May of each year for seasonal employees.			Targeted at business owners and managers. Compliments objective #6 of goal #1 of the WCD Committee Action Plan.

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
		3.2.3 Provide a mid-season half day customer service “refresher” seminar.			
		3.2.4 Provide an annual destination-wide summer evaluation seminar in the fall of each year.			Targeted at business owners and managers.
3.3 Improve marketing and business development by individual store owners.	Businesses appear to not have a cohesive marketing strategy.	3.3.1 Provide marketing training for business owners. Travel Alberta offers a suite of workshops that include: – Getting to Know Your Best Customer – Building a Basic Marketing Plan – Media Relations 101 – Understanding Branding	H/L	Chamber/ Short	★ Many businesses are not capitalizing on the huge numbers of tourists visiting the lake each year.
		3.3.2 Work with business owners (one-on-one consulting, workshops) to develop company-specific marketing plans.	H/L	Chamber/ Short	

4. Public Services / Visitor Amenities

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
4.1 Ensure enough public parking is available to visitors.	Unrestricted parking on Lakeshore Drive limits the ability of visitors to access merchants.	4.1.1 Install restricted parking signs that limit parking during the day time to only 3 hours.	H/M	Town/ Short	★
4.2 Maintain a high degree of cleanliness in public washrooms.	Some public washrooms were not clean.	4.2.1 Increase cleanliness and maintenance of public washrooms.	H/H	Parks/ Short	★
4.3 Maintain consistent parking signage throughout the Town.	Parking signs on 50 th Street use both 12-hour and 24-hour clocks.	4.3.1 Update the parking signs on 50 th Street to the 24-hour clock.	M/M	Town/ Short	★

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
4.4 Provide enhanced festivals and events and ongoing programming	There are limited festivals and events in identified need periods (i.e. off season) resulting in significant lost opportunity to drive visitation There is limited diversity of programming in day time and evening.	4.4.1 Develop a Tourism Festival and Event Strategy including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inspiration of a destination-wide shared vision for event tourism in Sylvan Lake • Build industry commitment to implement strategic priorities and initiatives to plan, develop, manage and market Sylvan Lake as a must-experience event tourism destination • Review event development as a key driver of increased overnight visitation and develop a case for investment • Identify the types of tourism events Sylvan Lake should offer • Identify target markets for identified event types • Specifically review opportunities targeted at identified need periods (i.e. winter/off-season) • Align the efforts and resources of the private, not for profit and public sectors • Present an organizational structure identifying the leadership, collaboration and resources required to implement the plan and manage Sylvan Lake’s event tourism strategy 	H/H	Chamber + Town/ Medium	Compliments objective #7 of goal #1 of the WCD Committee Action Plan.
		4.4.2 Develop a destination animation and programming plan for both summer and winter (i.e. ongoing programming in open spaces and in facilities).	H/H	R + C/ Short - Medium	e.g. street entertainment, outdoor skating, interpretation programs, campfires etc. It should be localized in one part of the WCD and visitors should be able to count on “something happening” during identified times.

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
		4.4.3 Enhance promotion of the Town’s existing Recreation, Arts and Culture Grant in an effort to attract new ideas, initiatives, programs and events.	H/H	R + C/ Short	
		4.4.4 Install a programming notice board at the pier on the west edge of the Provincial Park to inform visitors about daily/weekly activity programs.	M/L	Town/ Long	
		4.4.5 Work with AB Environment and Parks to install benches and picnic areas throughout the waterfront park.	M/M	Town/ Long	
4.5 Preserve the equitable use of space in picnic areas along the beach.	Picnic areas are overcrowded with tents, full-sized BBQs, etc.	4.5.1 Work with AB Environment and Parks to develop restrictions/permitted use for the beach area.	H/L	Town/ Long	
4.6 Ensure visitors have access to water safety and visitor information.	The addition of a second beach ambassador hut on the west side of the waterfront could better serve visitors entering from the west.	4.6.1 Build a second Beach Ambassador hut on the west end of the waterfront.	H/M	Town/ Long	Compliments objective #7 of goal #3 of the WCD Committee Action Plan.
		4.6.2 Equip and staff the second Beach Ambassador hut to offer the same services as the original Beach Ambassador location.	H/H	Town/ Long	
4.7 Improve downtown retail properties and decrease vacancy.	There is a high vacancy rate of commercial space on 50 th street Commercial property owners do not see the value in upgrading properties	4.7.1 Develop a marketing plan for the WCD that would increase traffic to businesses and incentivize further investment.	H/H	EDO/ Short	The marketing plan may be a stand-alone initiative or part of a destination-wide plan (as identified in 6.2.3). Compliments objective #3 of goal #1 of the WCD Committee Action Plan.
4.8 Improve pedestrian connections to the lake.	Some streets in the Town have inconsistent sidewalks or no sidewalks at all.	4.8.1 Engage relevant municipal departments to develop a strategy to mark/create pedestrian pathways or sidewalks on all roadways in existing districts.	H/H	PW/ Medium	
		4.8.2 Develop a phasing plan to implement pedestrian pathways or sidewalks in existing districts.		PW/ Medium - Long	
		4.8.3 Review requirements of development permit application to ensure sidewalks are required in all new developments.		PW and P + D/ Short	

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
4.9 Enhance the sandy beach.	Lack of sand in some areas of the beach may not be meeting visitors' expectations.	4.9.1 Work with Alberta Environment and Parks to identify ways to enhance the beach.	H/L	Town/ Long	
4.10 Provide alternative transportation options for visitors and local residents.	There is a lack of alternative transportation options available to visitors and local residents. As such, congestion is caused by vehicle use.	4.10.1 Review the feasibility of introducing a shuttle bus that would transport visitors to the WCD.	H/L	Town/ Medium - Long	

5. Visitor Information

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
5.1 Enhance visitor information availability in public spaces.	Public mapping is limited.	5.1.1 Develop a new comprehensive map for the Town that includes the development of a consistent symbol and/or language-based system to help locate key services and amenities.	H/M	Comm/ Short	
	Information panels (kiosk) locations are limited.	5.1.2 Include information panels (kiosks) at all public facilities and parking areas.	H/M	Town/ Medium	
	Public information is limited.	5.1.3 Develop a "public information strategy" that works in tandem with wayfinding and mapping for the Town.	H/M	Comm/ Medium	
	Pedestrians need more direction regarding the types of businesses located along Lakeshore Drive and along 50 th Street.	5.1.4 Install business directory signs in high pedestrian traffic areas on the sidewalk along Lakeshore Drive.	H/M	Chamber/ Medium - Long	Business Directory/App Development
5.2 Enhance visitor information availability online and in print-based communications.	Website does not reflect new branding.	5.2.1 Clearly show the re-branding features and bring the improved visual communication design features to the online presence of the Town.	H/H	Comm/ Short	★

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
	Print-based information needs improving.	5.2.2 Improve the quality of the Town map and tourist information booklet to reflect a public information strategy and branded design features.	H/M	Comm/ Short	The tourist information booklet is a Discover Sylvan Lake publication, which is a Sylvan Lake News publication. The Town map referenced here is the same as 5.1.1.

<http://visitreddeer.com/sylvan-lake/>

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
5.3 Brand ownership and brand clarity.	The Town’s tourism website is a sub-page of Red Deer’s tourism website. This undermines Sylvan Lake’s autonomous brand, and is a confusing message for the first time visitor.	5.3.1 Establish an autonomous tourism website that will promote Sylvan Lake.	H/H	Comm/ Short	★ The Town has recognized this gap and is currently in the process of developing their own tourism website.
	Town slogan “Brilliant All Year” is missing from tourism site.	5.3.2 Add Town brand elements to the tourism site for brand consistency.	H/L	Comm/ Short	★
5.4 Ensure appearance of the new website is consistently attractive and up-to-date.	While the home page of the existing site is clean and very attractive, the sub-pages are less appealing.	5.4.1 In the new website make use of more colour, more images and less text on the sub-pages for maximum impact.	H/L	Comm/ Short	Good use of multimedia on the sub-pages. As the site grows, be sure to add more videos, as that is a great way of developing the brand.
5.5 Ensure website copy is well-written and helps define “Why Sylvan Lake”.	In the existing site, some of the web-copy relies on clichés, e.g. “Something for everyone”.	5.5.1 In the new website, re-write to answer the “Why Sylvan Lake” question.	H/L	Comm/ Short	Use words and images to paint the experience of what it is like to spend time in Sylvan Lake. Make the writing experiential, rather than purely informational.

<http://www.sylvanlake.ca/>

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
5.6 Ensure consistent, effective, easy to find online information for visitors.	The majority of this website is for Town residents. The visitor information link is present, but not immediately obvious.	5.6.1 Give the “Visit Us” link higher visibility.	H/L	Comm/ Short	★ Alternatively, use an image link on the bottom of the page to link to the Visit Sylvan site, rather than making the visitor read across the horizontal navigation.

<http://sylvan-lake-tourism.com/>

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
5.7 Ensure on-brand, consistent, effective, easy to find information for visitors.	The site is non-sanctioned; therefore, the Town has little control over content. Many stock images are used, rather than real images of Sylvan Lake.	5.7.1 Work toward the removal of http://sylvan-lake-tourism.com , if possible.	H/H	Town/ Short	★

Sylvan Lake Social Media

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
5.8 Establish a strong, branded presence for Sylvan Lake visitors on Facebook.	Currently, the Facebook link on the Visit Sylvan Lake page directs to Visit Red Deer’s Facebook page.	5.8.1 Direct Facebook users to the new tourism website property, and invest in Facebook advertising to drive engagement and build a tourist following.	H/M	Comm/ Short	★
5.9 Establish a strong, branded presence for Sylvan Lake visitors on Twitter.	The Twitter link on the Visit Sylvan Lake site directs to Visit Red Deer’s Twitter page.	5.9.1 Switch the link to direct to Sylvan Lake Tourism Twitter page: https://twitter.com/sl4tourism	M/L	Comm/ Short	★
	Content feels a bit “advertisey” rather than capturing authentic excitement.	5.9.2 Direct your Twitter energy into engaging more with your audience. More chatting, less advertising.	M/L	Comm/ Short	This will help your online community to grow faster, and build stronger relationships with your followers.
		5.9.3 Share more “brand story” posts that paint the picture of what it is like to be in Sylvan Lake.	M/L	Comm/ Short	

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
		5.9.4 Consider some Twitter advertising to drive engagement for important promotions, and to build your community faster.	M/L	Comm/ Shot	
		5.9.5 Consider switching your Twitter handle from @SLTourism to @VisitSylvan (or something similar).	M/L	Comm/ Short	★
5.10 Establish a strong, branded presence for Sylvan Lake on other platforms like Instagram.	Sylvan Lake has been hash tagged more than 42,000 times on Instagram, and yet it does not have a tourism profile of its own.	5.10.1 Develop an Instagram profile to connect and share your highly visual messages with the world.	M/L	Comm/ Short	
		5.10.2 Consider developing a Pinterest page that would showcase businesses.	L/L	Businesses /Medium	

Business Websites

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
5.11 Increase the online presence of businesses in Sylvan Lake.	Many Sylvan Lake businesses do not have well designed, mobile friendly websites.	5.11.1 Encourage each business owner to set up simple, mobile friendly web sites that they, or their staff can easily maintain and keep current.	M/L	Businesses and Chamber/ Short - Medium	
		5.11.2 Consider making available a website template that business could utilize to set up their site.	M/L	Businesses and Chamber/ Medium	
	The online presence of many businesses in Sylvan Lake is weak.	5.11.3 Provide basic social media training for business owners (seminars).	M/M	Chamber/ Short	Compliments objective #3 of goal #5 of the WCD Committee Action Plan.
		5.11.4 Encourage cross-promotion of businesses and other organizations in Town on social media.	M/L	Businesses and Chamber/ Short - Medium	

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
	The Town’s website does provide a business directory, but it is not easily or obviously connected to the tourism information.	5.11.5 Create a business directory on the tourism site that is searchable by both business name and by business category. If possible, link to a reviewing site like Yelp or TripAdvisor to encourage visitors to leave reviews.	M/L	Comm/ Short	
	If you search for Sylvan Lake businesses, Red Deer businesses will frequently be ranked higher, and therefore show up more readily on Google.	5.11.6 Develop a social media promotion to encourage reviews of area businesses and amenities.	M/L	Businesses /Short - Medium	
		5.11.7 Encourage Sylvan Lake businesses to create Google pages in order to be geo-located to your specific area. This will make them more likely to rank highly during Google searches.	M/L	Chamber/ Short - Medium	

6. Strategic Planning and Organizational Development

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
6.1 Enhance communication with key tourism partners/organizations.	Lack of formal communication with the Government of Alberta regarding future direction of provincial park.	6.1.1 Set up a formal annual meeting with the Alberta Environment and Parks to plan joint tourism initiatives in the Provincial Park.	H/L	Town/ Short	★
	Lack of formal communication with Recreation and Culture department.	6.1.2 Link tourism objectives to the cultural master plan currently under development, as well as other long term plans (e.g. land use, infrastructure, economic development, recreation, etc.).	H/L	R + C/ Short	★
6.2 Improve destination marketing and knowledge of customer.	limited understanding of target markets.	6.2.1 Work with Travel Alberta to confirm primary and secondary target markets geographically and by utilizing Destination Canada’s EQ profiles.	H/L	EDO/ Short	★ This can be done in-house and at a low cost with the support of Travel Alberta.
		6.2.2 Gather important visitor data on primary and secondary markets.	H/M	EDO/ Short	
	There is no destination-wide approach to marketing.	6.2.3 Complete comprehensive marketing plan for tourism.	H/H	EDO/ Medium	Compliments objective #6 of goal #5 of the WCD Committee Action Plan.
6.3 Ensure Tourism Strategic Plan is up to date.	The Tourism Strategic Plan will expire in 2018.	6.3.1 Complete an updated Tourism Strategic Plan in 2018.	H/H	EDO/ Long	Link to work completed in the Central Alberta DMP managed by CATA.

Goal	Gap	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
6.4 Ensure adequate human resources are in place to further develop tourism in Sylvan Lake.	Tourism activities are one of many duties of the EDO position at the Town, therefore there are inadequate human resources in place to move tourism initiatives forward expeditiously.	6.4.1 Consider adding a tourism development officer who would be dedicated to moving forward tourism development initiatives in Sylvan Lake.	H/H	EDO/ Medium	

7. Action Plan Implementation

Goal	Initiative	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline	Notes
7.1 Ensure action plan is implemented and regularly evaluated.	7.1.1 Obtain a commitment from Town Council to work to improve visitor friendliness.	H/L	WCD/ Short	
	7.1.2 Establish a Visitor Friendly Working Group or ensure Visitor Friendly Implementation is a standing item on WCD Committee agenda.	H/L	WCD/ Short	
	7.1.3 Promote Visitor Friendly initiatives and educate elected officials, administrators, stakeholder groups, businesses and the general public on the overall benefits of tourism development in Sylvan Lake.	H/L	WCD/ Short	
	7.1.4 Evaluate action plan initiatives and realign priorities annually.	H/L	WCD/ Short	
	7.1.5 Formally celebrate success of completed initiatives annually.	H/L	WCD/ Short - Long	
	7.1.6 In 5 years, complete a follow-up assessment on the community to measure improvement/success.	M/H	WCD/ Long	
	7.1.7 Complete a Visitor Friendly Assessment during the Winter season.	H/H	WCD/ Medium - Long	



06

NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUSION

06 NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUSION

Next Steps

As identified in Section 5, there are a number of key initiatives that the Town should consider moving forward. Below is a brief timeline describing activities that should occur within the next year.

Strategic Priorities Within the Next 12 Months

1. Obtain commitment from Town Council to work to improve visitor friendliness.
2. Establish a Visitor Friendly Working Group or ensure Visitor Friendly Implementation is a standing item on WCD Committee agenda.
3. Begin implementation of the action plan. Particular focus could be directed towards the “quick wins” in order to achieve successes early and build momentum.
4. Evaluate action plan initiatives and re-align priorities at the end of year 1.

Conclusion

The Visitor Friendly Assessment provides valuable information to the Town of Sylvan Lake; a practical action plan, and a starting point to improve visitor friendliness. With this plan in hand, the Town of Sylvan Lake can begin to enhance all aspects of their visitor friendliness, including ambience and visual appeal, wayfinding and signage, customer service, public services and amenities, and visitor information. The successful implementation of this plan will ensure that Sylvan Lake continues to be a destination of choice for tourists seeking water-based experiences, and will significantly contribute to the vitality and growth of the local tourism industry.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Visitor Friendly Assessments

Score Guide:

1	Poor performance throughout the community
2	Poor to Satisfactory performance in most of the community
3	Satisfactory to Excellent performance in most of the community
4	Excellent performance throughout the community
N/ A	Criteria is not applicable in this community

OVERALL AMBIENCE/VISUAL APPEAL			
#	Indicators	Score	Comments
1	Public waste baskets are readily available	3	Lakeshore has ample waste baskets. Limited recycling available.
2	Public waste baskets appear well maintained	3	Most were in good repair, but some were broken.
3	Key locations appear free of graffiti	4	No graffiti observed.
4	Buildings (empty and occupied) appear well maintained	2	Older Buildings and vacant sites need to be enhanced.
5	Streets appear clean	3	There was a large amount of litter along the western edge of the waterfront in Lakeside District. Town staff were seen working (cleaning up sidewalks) and were friendly.
6	Industrial sites/power lines etc. are camouflaged	4	
7	Empty space is well maintained	1	(2) Vacant lots on 50 Street and on the corner of 50 Street and Lakeshore Drive are well maintained and either fenced or screened by benches. Other vacant lots in the Marina District were not well maintained or screened from view. Vacant building site with jersey barriers unwelcoming.
8	Heritage buildings appear well maintained	2	A heritage building located on 46 Street appeared to be in disrepair. The building is up for sale and could do with restoration, given its clearly unique appearance and somewhat visible location along 46 Street. Many buildings could use renovations.
9	Public green spaces are visually appealing	3	New work along lakeshore drive is appealing.

10	Streetscapes are visually appealing (i.e. banners, decoration, planting visible, etc.)	3	<p>Lakeshore drive is appealing – context around Lakeshore could use enhancement.</p> <p>The banner system works well with the new lamppost system in the three lakeshore areas – the visually themed banners on 49th Ave and 50th Street are expressive and add colour (perhaps especially in the winter months) – the Town’s history panels applied to the street crossing pylons along the promenade are very appealing and effective – plantings are well maintained and add to the overall ambience.</p>
11	Public art/murals are prominent throughout the community	2	More art could be incorporated with enhanced scale and prominence.
12	Pedestrian areas are easy to navigate	2	Lakeshore Drive is very good, however, there are many areas that need enhancement to build a pedestrian network (e.g. rail lines are an impediment, sidewalk connection from 50 St. to the VIC is difficult to navigate).
13	Pedestrian areas appear safe	3	The back of buildings along Lakeshore and entering this prime district from the context at times felt like it could be less than safe at times.
14	Key locations appear to be well lit	3	
15	There are adequate walking trails along scenic viewpoints	3	<p>The Lakeshore walk has many vista’s and we took many sunset pictures to capture the beauty.</p> <p>Sidewalks along the north-south residential streets could allow easier movement of pedestrians to and from the waterfront. Most residential do not have sidewalks at all.</p>
16	There is an overall theme to the community (e.g. consistent signage, etc.)	2-3	<p>New development in the Downtown and Marina Districts display the nautical theme with the clapboard-style siding in bright colours, with white trim, reminiscent of a resort town such as the Hamptons.</p> <p>However, the visual theme is not consistently applied in the Waterfront Commercial District. New visual branding elements may help along with the continued application of a consistent street furnishing system.</p>

SIGNAGE/WAYFINDING			
#	Indicators	Score	Comments
17	Highway signage appears well maintained	2	Highway signage could be improved on Hwy 11 at 50 th and 60 th Streets - new branded signs that define the access/street along with the new visual identity of the Town might work well in these instances.
18	Highway signage effectively directed me to the community	3	Feature signage or billboards on Hwy 2 (North and South) indicating Sylvan Lake is a resort town may assist in driving traffic.
19	Gateway signage is visually appealing	2	Little consistency here - the pedestal signs at 60 th Street and Lakeshore Drive and on 33 rd Ave off of Highway 20 appear quite dated in design. If there is a desire to define the Town entrances and town district gateways, there should be a fresh and common design treatment applied.
20	Gateway signage effectively welcomed me to the community	2	The entrance feature at the roundabout at Hwy 11A and Hwy 20 is distinctive, but the script type is not very effective when applied vertically against the wave motif.
21	Business signs are visually appealing	2	There appears to be a lack of consistency and standard for business signage. The application of exterior business signs (i.e., using the Waterfront Urban Deign Guidelines) is evident at Marina Merchants and on the Sylvan Lake Pharmacy building. Getting buy-in for these initiatives would help to identify businesses clearly and keep the visual tone of business signs from becoming too loud and competitive.
22	Business signs effectively directed me to appropriate services	2	Please see Visitor Information.
23	Signage to sites and attractions is visually appealing	2	The finger post signage system that lists amenities and services using a symbol-based system should be evaluated and potentially revised - the whole wayfinding scenario for the Town needs to be evaluated - the finger post system requires time for people to absorb and understand what the symbols stand for - the signage system needs to be tied visually to any mapping system developed by the Town - any symbols used or verbal titles need to be consistent - please see Visitor Information.

24	Signage to sites and attractions effectively directed me to attractions	2	Please see above and Visitor Information.
25	Signage to VIC is visually appealing	2	ALL public amenity signs need to be evaluated as part of the development of a comprehensive wayfinding strategy for the Town – these destination signs need to be clear and easily recognizable for tourist and residents alike and display visual features that clearly connect services to the Town.
26	Signage to VIC effectively directed me to the VIC	2	There was very little visible signage for the VIC, it was even difficult to locate using the Tourism map provided. More frequent signage is a must. Please also see Visitor Information.
27	Signage to key parking areas is visually appealing	2	Clear and identifiable parking signage was lacking. Please also see Visitor Information.
28	Signage to key parking areas effectively directed me to parking	1	There were no signs indicating public parking at the parking lots, there were only general directional signs located throughout the Town. Signs identifying public parking at the site is a must. Signage at the boat launch only indicates “no parking” but there are no signs indicating where trucks/boat trailers <u>can</u> park.
29	Signage at key attractions is visually appealing	3	Please see Visitor Information.
30	Signage at key attractions effectively directed me around the attraction site	2	Please see Visitor Information.

QUALITY OF SERVICE													
#	Indicators	Score	Comments										
31	Service Sector employees/volunteers (other than VIC Staff) were courteous	3	We had mixed reviews with some service staff being very good and others seemingly not interested in providing excellent customer service.										
32	Service Sector employees/volunteers (other than VIC Staff) were attentive	3	As above.										
33	Service Sector employees/volunteers (other than VIC Staff) were able to answer questions effectively	3	A hotel operator was unable to provide a recommendation for dinner. A server in a restaurant did a good job of describing the amenities in Town.										
34	Service Sector employees/volunteers (other than VIC Staff) were neat in appearance	3	There appears to be a disconnect between the service offering and the clientele. The pubs/restaurants on Lakeshore Drive seem to cater to single adults/partiers (even during the day and early evening) and this includes the attire of servers. The clientele, however, seemed to be a mix of families, seniors, couples and singles. At dinner, the table count was as follows: <table border="0"> <tr> <td># Tables</td> <td>Clientele</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Families</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Seniors</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Middle-aged couples</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Singles</td> </tr> </table>	# Tables	Clientele	5	Families	3	Seniors	3	Middle-aged couples	2	Singles
# Tables	Clientele												
5	Families												
3	Seniors												
3	Middle-aged couples												
2	Singles												
35	There are opportunities available to provide feedback on service (e.g. surveys etc.)	1	We were not made aware of opportunities to leave feedback.										
36	Local residents are welcoming	3	We did not have interaction with residents. The multiple no parking signs put up by residents in the cottage district were not inviting (although the parking frustration is understood). Visitors were quite friendly and in a good mood. One older couple from Devon stopped us to ask what we were doing and shared their own experience as a visitor. It was a pleasant interaction.										

PUBLIC SERVICES/VISITOR AMENITIES			
#	Indicators	Score	Comments
37	Public restrooms are available at key locations in the community	4	This is true of the redeveloped portion of the lakeshore.
38	Public restrooms appear well maintained	2-3	Consider increased cleaning (especially on weekends).
39	Public parking is available at key locations in the community	3	On weekends, finding public parking is a challenge.
40	Transportation options are available to travel within the community (e.g. taxi, transit, shuttle service, etc.)	2-3	We were unaware that there is in fact taxi service. This could be promoted more. Lakeshore is walkable. A shuttle service from the RV park to the waterfront could be useful for visitors. This will allow the visitor to leave their vehicle at the RV park, taking pressure off parking along the waterfront, and allow people to carry their beach equipment back and forth with ease.
41	Picnic areas are available at key locations in the community	3	Good supply at the beach for weekdays but on weekends supply is lower.
42	Picnic areas appear well maintained	3	Significant litter on Monday at main beach area after a busy weekend. This didn't get picked up all day.
43	An adequate supply of overnight accommodations are available	4	
44	Diverse overnight accommodation options are available	3	A good supply of mid-range accommodation, but a lower supply of high-end, resort, eco-lodging, and budget (e.g. hostel).
45	An adequate supply of restaurants are available	4	

46	Diverse restaurant options are available	2	Low supply of cafes and delis that serve breakfast/brunch, speciality coffees, and healthy meal options. There are numerous pubs and restaurants, but few other options in the Lakeside and Downtown Districts. Low supply of higher-end restaurants with a view.
47	An adequate supply of other visitor amenities is available (gas stations, banks, restaurants, shopping, internet access, pharmacies, supermarkets, etc.)	2	Visitor amenities are located away from the main visitor destinations in the Marina and Lakeside Districts. Amenities are located south toward the local, long-term residential community. Offering more of these amenities in the Marina and Lakeside Districts would allow visitors the ability to access these services on foot, not by car. This could reduce the vehicular congestion in Town during peak times.
48	Facilities are accessible to users with different needs (wheelchairs, seeing or hearing impaired)	3	All facilities are barrier free, however, access to the waterfront is limited to specific points at the end and in the middle. Providing a less-steep slope towards the waterfront could assist wheelchairs, those with limited mobility, etc.
49	An adequate supply of evening entertainment/activities are available	3	
50	Diverse evening entertainment/activity options are available	3	Mostly restaurants and bars – could diversify night activities for families.
51	An adequate supply of daytime entertainment/activities are available	3	Mostly beach / waterslide oriented – additional activities for families should be considered.
52	Diverse daytime entertainment/activity options are available	3	As above.

VISITOR INFORMATION			
#	Indicators	Score	Comments
53	Community website effectively welcomed me to the community	2	The Town’s website needs to have a branded approach applied to relevant sections for visitors and residents – the website often begins the process of “wayfinding” for visitors and new or potential residents. Missing the answer to the question “Why Sylvan Lake?”
54	Community website effectively directed me to appropriate tourism services and attractions	2	The official website is “Visit Red Deer.” Visitors may not make the link. http://sylvan-lake-tourism.com/ complicates the message.
55	Phone line for tourism information is well advertised	2	We were unaware of a phone line for tourism.
56	Tourism business websites effectively welcomed me to the community	2	Many businesses do not have websites or have very poor websites.
57	Tourism business websites effectively directed me to appropriate services	2	As above.
58	Information (e.g. maps, products, services) is available at outdoor kiosks for 24-hr access	3	The “Beach Ambassadors” idea is excellent. There needs to be a comprehensive information system that starts with the website and continues through all print-based information pieces and includes physical maps at sheltered seating areas, at kiosks, at public washroom locations, drop-off zones and in parking areas.
At the Visitor Information Centre:			
59	VIC is open for visitors at convenient times	3	
60	Comprehensive information is available at the VIC related to the community	3	The large outdoor map is a good idea and needs to be kept current. Maps of this sort might work in other main entry locations to Town if a traffic “pull out” could be developed that allows visitors to study it and get oriented. The public notice board does not appear to be used very well – perhaps the Town should explore having message boards located in public amenity spaces and in selected stores.

61	Comprehensive information is available at the VIC related to the region	2	Picked up the Town map and a copy of “discover Sylvan Lake” – both of these publications are very useful – the map needs work and the booklet needs a redesign. Printed material about the region somewhat limited.
62	Comprehensive information is available at the VIC related to the province	2	Printed material about the Province somewhat limited.
63	Information is available in different languages	N/A	
64	An up-to-date calendar of events is available at the VIC	3	
65	Adequate public internet access is available at the VIC	3	
66	An opportunity to book accommodations, restaurants, entertainment, etc. is available at the VIC	N/A	
67	VIC employees/volunteers were courteous	4	We enjoyed our conversation with the attendant at the Visitor Information Centre. She was happy to explain details on scheduled day and evening events this summer and fall. She provided her contact information to answer any further questions and directed me to the Town’s Facebook page instead of the Visit Sylvan Lake website. She explained that the website is managed by Visit Red Deer and is slow to be updated and often displays inaccurate information. The Visit Sylvan Lake Facebook page provides frequent updates.
68	VIC employees/volunteers were attentive	4	
69	VIC employees/volunteers were able to answer questions effectively	4	
70	VIC employees/volunteers were neat in appearance	4	

APPENDIX B: Examples of Successful Wayfinding Strategies

The Town of Devon

The wayfinding strategy for the Town of Devon incorporates a symbol-based approach in order to allow multiple amenities and services to be identified on street sign blades and on stand-alone main reference signs. The Town of Devon symbol system is based on international symbol standards for public information and therefore displays common features that may have been seen in other contexts, such as national parks. The challenge with this approach is that visitors and residents are required to “learn” the symbol language.



City of St. Albert

The wayfinding strategy for The City of St. Albert is text-based and very clear. The signs lead the viewer progressively and include only key directions to parts of the City where further details in the form of combined and framed sign blade posts provide direction to particular amenities and services. Parking locations are clearly marked and parking areas display maps that allow visitors to orientate themselves, and that show other parking options in the general vicinity.



The Town of Banff

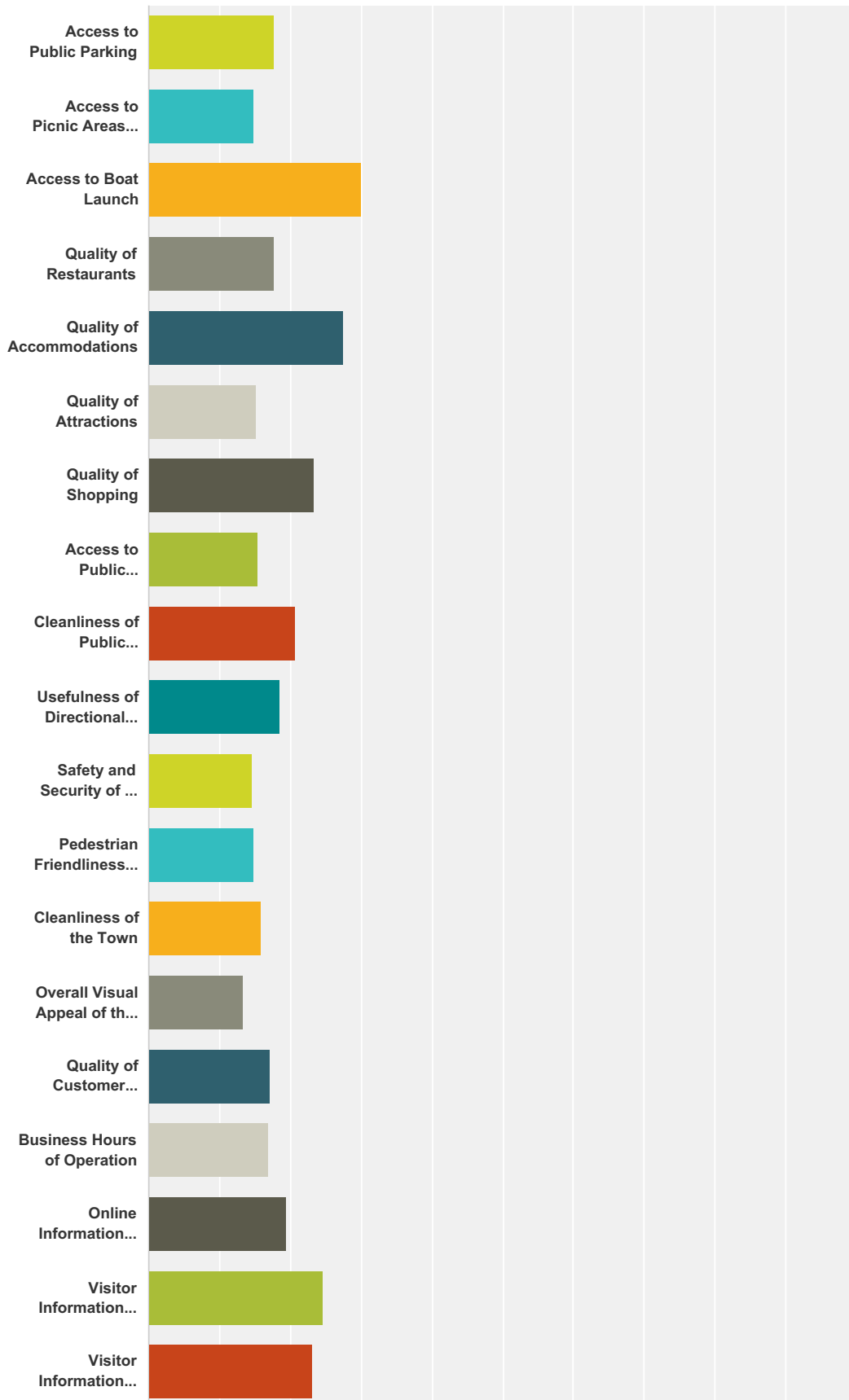
The Town of Banff strategy for wayfinding employs multiple sign blades and symbols to indicate the directions to amenities and services. The symbols used to identify key Town areas and amenities are too detailed and small to work effectively in the context shown below (left photo). Multiple sign blade pylons can work at a scale geared for pedestrians or cyclists, but notice how the pictorial symbols have been replaced with more simplified graphic symbols – two systems for people to decipher!

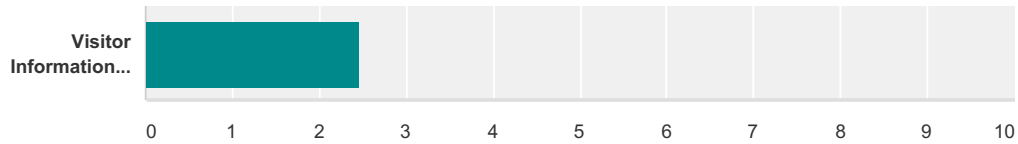


APPENDIX C: Visitor Survey

Q1 Please rate the following amenities.

Answered: 368 Skipped: 1

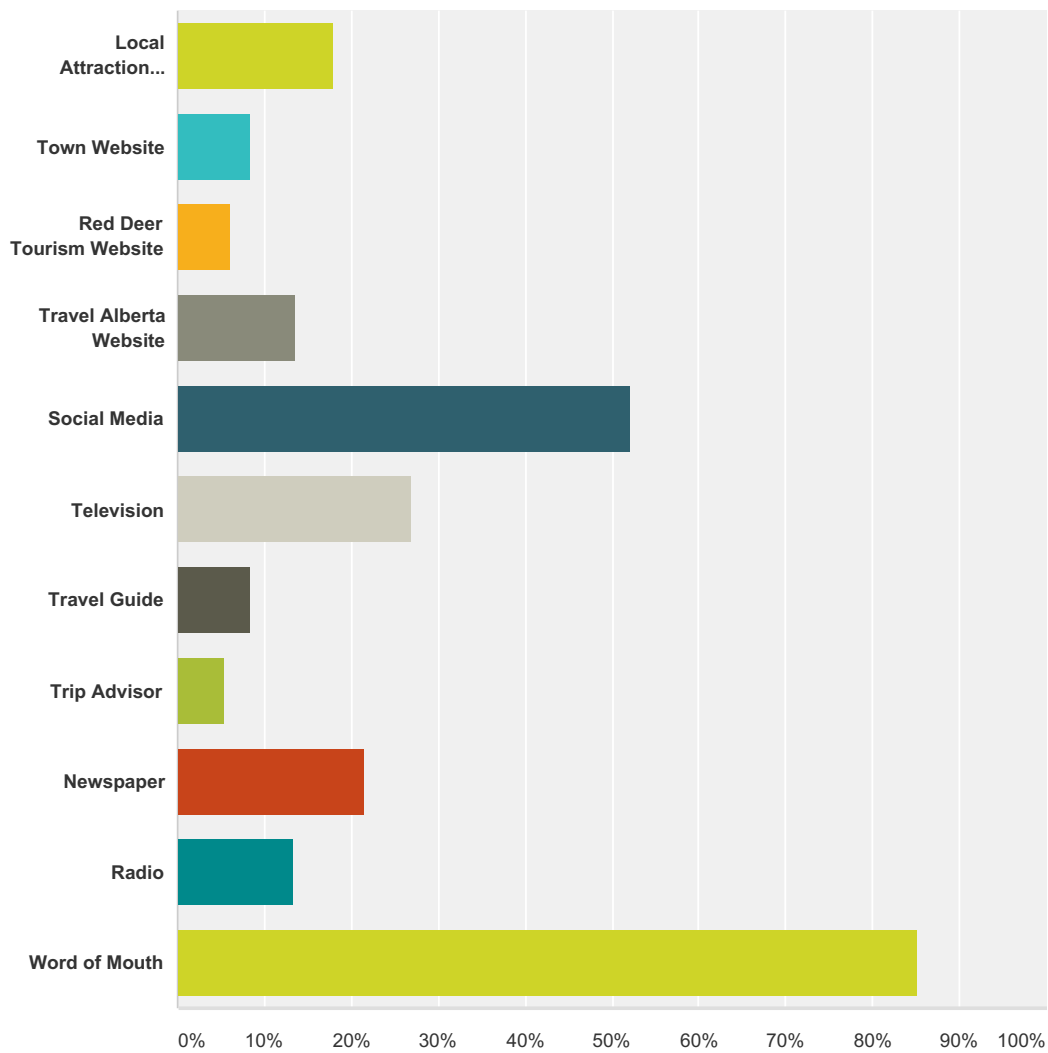




	Great	Ok	Poor	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
Access to Public Parking	47.83% 176	31.79% 117	16.30% 60	4.08% 15	368	1.77
Access to Picnic Areas and Beach	60.87% 224	31.79% 117	5.16% 19	2.17% 8	368	1.49
Access to Boat Launch	10.63% 39	16.62% 61	34.06% 125	38.69% 142	367	3.01
Quality of Restaurants	53.80% 198	29.62% 109	1.90% 7	14.67% 54	368	1.77
Quality of Accommodations	23.22% 85	23.50% 86	7.65% 28	45.63% 167	366	2.76
Quality of Attractions	60.49% 222	32.15% 118	2.18% 8	5.18% 19	367	1.52
Quality of Shopping	29.86% 109	31.78% 116	13.42% 49	24.93% 91	365	2.33
Access to Public Washrooms	60.49% 222	30.52% 112	3.81% 14	5.18% 19	367	1.54
Cleanliness of Public Washrooms	28.96% 106	41.26% 151	24.59% 90	5.19% 19	366	2.06
Usefulness of Directional Signage	48.23% 177	31.88% 117	6.27% 23	13.62% 50	367	1.85
Safety and Security of the Town	65.67% 241	26.43% 97	3.00% 11	4.90% 18	367	1.47
Pedestrian Friendliness of the Town	61.92% 226	31.23% 114	3.29% 12	3.56% 13	365	1.48
Cleanliness of the Town	51.91% 190	39.89% 146	6.28% 23	1.91% 7	366	1.58
Overall Visual Appeal of the Town	73.84% 271	20.16% 74	3.81% 14	2.18% 8	367	1.34
Quality of Customer Service (e.g. service stations, restaurants, hotels)	52.88% 193	33.70% 123	1.64% 6	11.78% 43	365	1.72
Business Hours of Operation	53.13% 195	33.79% 124	3.27% 12	9.81% 36	367	1.70
Online Information Available	42.19% 154	36.44% 133	6.03% 22	15.34% 56	365	1.95
Visitor Information Available at the Visitor Information Centre	40.27% 147	15.62% 57	1.64% 6	42.47% 155	365	2.46
Visitor Information Available from Beach Ambassadors	45.08% 165	16.39% 60	0.82% 3	37.70% 138	366	2.31
Visitor Information Available at Businesses in Town	33.79% 124	25.34% 93	1.91% 7	38.96% 143	367	2.46

Q2 How did you learn about Sylvan Lake? Please check ALL that APPLY:

Answered: 278 Skipped: 91



Answer Choices	Responses
Local Attraction Website	17.99% 50
Town Website	8.27% 23
Red Deer Tourism Website	6.12% 17
Travel Alberta Website	13.67% 38
Social Media	52.16% 145
Television	26.98% 75
Travel Guide	8.27% 23
Trip Advisor	5.40% 15
Newspaper	21.58% 60

Radio	13.31%	37
Word of Mouth	85.25%	237
Total Respondents: 278		

Q3 If Sylvan Lake could do one thing to improve its visitor friendliness, what would it be?

Answered: 239 Skipped: 130

#	Responses	Date
1	More and different food trucks	9/2/2016 10:29 AM
2	Maybe have a better boat launch	9/2/2016 10:26 AM
3	Not sure - love the lighthouse park!	9/1/2016 3:17 PM
4	Not sure - first time here	9/1/2016 3:15 PM
5	Boat launch	9/1/2016 3:14 PM
6	Put something awesome where the water slides are once they're gone	9/1/2016 3:12 PM
7	Replant the grass in Centennial Park	9/1/2016 2:39 PM
8	Have a less rainy summer next year hahahaha	9/1/2016 2:37 PM
9	More police enforcement	9/1/2016 2:34 PM
10	Finish all the road construction already	9/1/2016 2:29 PM
11	More sand	9/1/2016 2:28 PM
12	Nothing!	9/1/2016 2:24 PM
13	More parking	9/1/2016 2:22 PM
14	More to do during inclement weather	9/1/2016 2:15 PM
15	Wants a free boat launch	9/1/2016 12:58 PM
16	More picnic tables	9/1/2016 12:56 PM
17	It's great!	9/1/2016 12:49 PM
18	Cleaner lake	9/1/2016 11:42 AM
19	Town wastes too much money	9/1/2016 11:41 AM
20	Better weather!	9/1/2016 11:38 AM
21	Build a public boat launch	9/1/2016 11:37 AM
22	Less windy	8/28/2016 3:51 PM
23	Nothing! Love the new lighthouse park!	8/28/2016 3:49 PM
24	More parking	8/28/2016 3:47 PM
25	More sand	8/28/2016 3:46 PM
26	Less garbage on the beach	8/28/2016 3:45 PM
27	Better boat launch	8/28/2016 3:44 PM
28	Camping overnight at beach	8/28/2016 3:42 PM
29	More enforcement on dogs & liquor	8/28/2016 3:39 PM
30	Free boat launch	8/28/2016 3:35 PM
31	Closer McDonald's to lakeshore	8/28/2016 3:34 PM
32	More parking	8/28/2016 3:33 PM
33	Zoo cruise	8/28/2016 3:31 PM

34	Fix boat launch	8/28/2016 3:30 PM
35	Nothing!	8/26/2016 5:08 PM
36	Cottage district needs to calm down about street parking.	8/26/2016 5:05 PM
37	More picnic tables on busy weekends	8/26/2016 5:04 PM
38	More washrooms.	8/26/2016 5:02 PM
39	We need more water fountains on the beach!	8/26/2016 4:54 PM
40	Cheaper boat launch	8/26/2016 4:51 PM
41	It's great	8/26/2016 4:49 PM
42	It's great.	8/26/2016 4:48 PM
43	Nothing, it's the best place, I like it a lot :)	8/26/2016 4:47 PM
44	So far, so good.	8/26/2016 4:40 PM
45	Better nightlife.	8/26/2016 4:38 PM
46	Nothing.	8/26/2016 4:37 PM
47	Reduce prices of beer in bars. Improve quality of restaurants.	8/26/2016 4:35 PM
48	First time here but will be back	8/26/2016 4:33 PM
49	Better parking system	8/21/2016 12:22 PM
50	More sand	8/21/2016 12:16 PM
51	More parking	8/21/2016 12:15 PM
52	Nothing- it's beautiful here!	8/21/2016 12:14 PM
53	Let dogs in the water	8/21/2016 12:14 PM
54	Fix the freakin parking	8/21/2016 12:08 PM
55	Not sure	8/21/2016 12:05 PM
56	Less tourists	8/21/2016 11:57 AM
57	More parking	8/21/2016 11:56 AM
58	Better enforcement of dogs on beach	8/21/2016 11:54 AM
59	Reduce noise on lake	8/21/2016 11:53 AM
60	Better boat launch	8/21/2016 11:51 AM
61	Don't know	8/21/2016 11:50 AM
62	More parking	8/21/2016 11:49 AM
63	More parking	8/21/2016 11:47 AM
64	Better boat launch	8/21/2016 11:21 AM
65	Keep the waterslides	8/21/2016 11:20 AM
66	Keep waterslides	8/21/2016 11:18 AM
67	Spot for dogs at beach/water	8/21/2016 11:17 AM
68	Better parking system	8/21/2016 11:15 AM
69	Better boat launch	8/21/2016 11:14 AM
70	Fire pits/BBQ's for day use	8/21/2016 11:10 AM
71	More to do	8/19/2016 1:28 PM
72	Beach for locals only	8/19/2016 1:24 PM
73	Less construction	8/19/2016 1:22 PM
74	Less litter	8/19/2016 1:21 PM

75	Canoe rentals	8/19/2016 1:20 PM
76	Less tourists	8/19/2016 12:49 PM
77	More parks nag by pier	8/19/2016 12:49 PM
78	No more BBQ on beach area!	8/19/2016 12:47 PM
79	Free boat launch for public use	8/19/2016 12:46 PM
80	Keep waterslides	8/18/2016 3:33 PM
81	Warmer weather	8/18/2016 3:32 PM
82	Warmer weather	8/18/2016 3:31 PM
83	Better boat launch	8/18/2016 3:29 PM
84	Less road construction	8/18/2016 3:28 PM
85	Nicer weather	8/18/2016 3:27 PM
86	Nicer weather	8/18/2016 3:26 PM
87	More gift shops or neat gift shop	8/18/2016 3:24 PM
88	Fire pits	8/18/2016 3:22 PM
89	More parking	8/18/2016 3:22 PM
90	More parking stalls	8/18/2016 3:20 PM
91	More chairs/more parking	8/18/2016 3:16 PM
92	More picnic tables	8/18/2016 3:14 PM
93	Have a book store	8/15/2016 1:37 PM
94	Better parking system	8/15/2016 1:36 PM
95	Have shake the lake again	8/15/2016 1:34 PM
96	Less tents	8/15/2016 1:28 PM
97	Better parking	8/15/2016 1:26 PM
98	More areas around lake to access lake	8/15/2016 1:25 PM
99	Boat launch	8/15/2016 1:24 PM
100	Keep the waterslides	8/15/2016 1:21 PM
101	Free boat launch	8/15/2016 1:21 PM
102	Less dogs-I don't see any officers doing anything about it	8/15/2016 1:19 PM
103	Extended beach	8/15/2016 1:16 PM
104	More power outlets	8/15/2016 1:13 PM
105	Lockers	8/15/2016 1:12 PM
106	Better boat launch	8/15/2016 1:10 PM
107	More parking	8/14/2016 1:13 PM
108	More parking	8/14/2016 1:12 PM
109	More parking	8/14/2016 1:10 PM
110	Trails around the lake	8/14/2016 1:09 PM
111	More parking	8/14/2016 1:07 PM
112	More parking	8/14/2016 1:06 PM
113	More fast food by the beach	8/14/2016 1:05 PM
114	More food trucks	8/14/2016 1:03 PM
115	Make it the water playground bigger	8/14/2016 1:02 PM

116	More benches	8/14/2016 1:01 PM
117	Better boat launch	8/14/2016 12:56 PM
118	More things to rent: boats, BBQ, bikes, inflatables.	8/14/2016 12:55 PM
119	More parking	8/14/2016 12:52 PM
120	Miss mermaid	8/14/2016 12:51 PM
121	Rebuild waterslides	8/14/2016 12:49 PM
122	Better boat launch!	8/14/2016 12:46 PM
123	Better boat launch	8/14/2016 12:44 PM
124	More parking	8/14/2016 12:37 PM
125	Keep waterslides. Better boat launch	8/14/2016 12:35 PM
126	Have a place to fill inflatables at beach ambassador booth	8/14/2016 12:32 PM
127	More sand in beach area	8/14/2016 12:30 PM
128	The boat launch	8/14/2016 12:26 PM
129	New, free boat launch and more beach parking	8/12/2016 1:45 PM
130	Close half of these stores downtown and bring bigger ones in	8/12/2016 1:43 PM
131	Get better shake the lake bands	8/12/2016 1:40 PM
132	Cheaper hotels	8/12/2016 1:36 PM
133	Bring better weather for the summer	8/12/2016 12:01 PM
134	Get more access to water fountains	8/12/2016 11:58 AM
135	Cheaper boat rentals	8/12/2016 11:55 AM
136	More stores downtown	8/12/2016 11:51 AM
137	Better parking and boat launch	8/12/2016 11:50 AM
138	Not so much construction	8/12/2016 11:49 AM
139	Not sure	8/12/2016 11:46 AM
140	More events on the beach	8/12/2016 11:45 AM
141	Get a better parking system	8/12/2016 11:41 AM
142	Bring back the boat tours (zoo cruise)	8/12/2016 11:40 AM
143	Better boat launch	8/12/2016 11:37 AM
144	McDonald's by the beach	8/11/2016 1:10 PM
145	Make a beach on the other side of the lake	8/11/2016 1:09 PM
146	Rent tubes	8/11/2016 1:08 PM
147	More parking	8/11/2016 1:07 PM
148	Better boat launch options	8/11/2016 1:06 PM
149	More beach & no smoking	8/11/2016 1:05 PM
150	Keep waterslides	8/11/2016 1:04 PM
151	More washrooms	8/11/2016 1:03 PM
152	Better boat launch	8/11/2016 1:02 PM
153	More parking	8/11/2016 1:01 PM
154	Cheaper boat launch	8/11/2016 12:58 PM
155	Let dogs on the beach	8/11/2016 12:57 PM
156	Pay town employees better, they do a great job	8/11/2016 12:56 PM

157	More movies in the park	8/8/2016 1:32 PM
158	More beach	8/8/2016 1:26 PM
159	Less dog	8/8/2016 1:19 PM
160	Grocery store downtown	8/8/2016 1:15 PM
161	Let dogs in water	8/8/2016 1:13 PM
162	Better boat launch	8/8/2016 1:11 PM
163	Tube rentals	8/8/2016 1:11 PM
164	More parking	8/8/2016 1:09 PM
165	Cheaper/nicer hotels	8/8/2016 1:06 PM
166	Don't know	8/7/2016 4:09 PM
167	Lockers	8/7/2016 4:04 PM
168	Bring back KFC	8/7/2016 3:37 PM
169	Nicer weather	8/7/2016 3:35 PM
170	Free boat launch	8/7/2016 3:35 PM
171	Be friendlier	8/7/2016 3:33 PM
172	Keep the waterslides	8/7/2016 3:31 PM
173	Better/more parking	8/7/2016 3:30 PM
174	No more kids wearing weed paraphernalia	8/7/2016 3:28 PM
175	Get rid of the condos	8/7/2016 3:22 PM
176	Better boat launches	8/7/2016 3:21 PM
177	Another set of washrooms	8/7/2016 3:20 PM
178	More sand	8/7/2016 3:19 PM
179	Parking	8/5/2016 3:54 PM
180	Parking	8/5/2016 3:51 PM
181	MORE PARKING-GOOD GRIEF!	8/5/2016 3:50 PM
182	Too many dogs at the beach area	8/5/2016 1:05 PM
183	Allow weed on pier	8/5/2016 1:03 PM
184	More benches by water	8/5/2016 1:01 PM
185	Another boat launch	8/5/2016 12:57 PM
186	Less dogs on the beach and have police enforce that more	8/5/2016 12:55 PM
187	Less road construction	8/5/2016 12:53 PM
188	On site parking for boat launch	8/5/2016 12:50 PM
189	Better boat launch	8/5/2016 12:49 PM
190	More to do than the water slides	8/4/2016 1:34 PM
191	Rent inflatables	8/4/2016 1:31 PM
192	Grocery store downtown	8/4/2016 1:29 PM
193	Rent volleyball nets	8/4/2016 1:28 PM
194	Make the floaty water park thing bigger	8/4/2016 1:27 PM
195	More outdoor movies	8/4/2016 1:24 PM
196	KFC	8/4/2016 1:23 PM

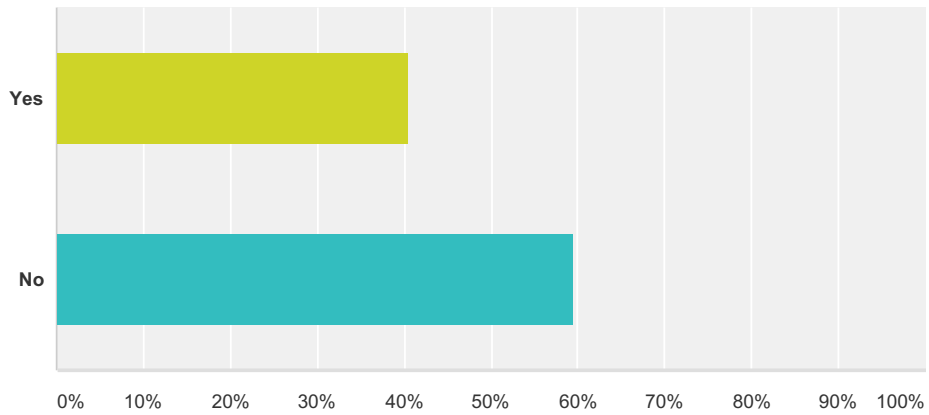
197	Increase town worker pay, they do a great job and deserve a better pay, espically beack workers and ambassadors, also black lives matter	8/4/2016 1:09 PM
198	More picnic tables	8/4/2016 1:04 PM
199	Better/cheaper boat launch	8/4/2016 12:54 PM
200	Allow dogs here	8/4/2016 12:52 PM
201	Rarer Pokemon	8/4/2016 12:51 PM
202	Not sure yet	8/4/2016 12:50 PM
203	Fast food downtown	8/4/2016 12:49 PM
204	Nothing	8/4/2016 12:47 PM
205	Keep the water slides	8/4/2016 12:46 PM
206	Add another set of washrooms by the playground in Centennial Park	8/4/2016 12:44 PM
207	Allow drinking on at beach	8/4/2016 12:41 PM
208	Not sure	8/4/2016 12:40 PM
209	Another boat launch	8/4/2016 12:38 PM
210	More family friendly restaurants on lakeshore	8/1/2016 4:34 PM
211	Bring Cobbs grocery store back	8/1/2016 4:27 PM
212	Less dogs	8/1/2016 4:25 PM
213	Buses in town	8/1/2016 4:22 PM
214	Rent bikes	8/1/2016 4:18 PM
215	Nothing	8/1/2016 4:05 PM
216	More picnic tables near pier	8/1/2016 4:02 PM
217	Rental barbecues	8/1/2016 3:59 PM
218	Not sure	8/1/2016 3:55 PM
219	Cheaper boat launch	8/1/2016 3:53 PM
220	More food trucks at the beach	8/1/2016 12:55 PM
221	Better boat launch	8/1/2016 12:53 PM
222	Cheaper boat rentals	8/1/2016 12:41 PM
223	Get rid of NDP	8/1/2016 12:38 PM
224	Nothing	8/1/2016 12:37 PM
225	Get rid of all the road construction	8/1/2016 12:36 PM
226	Not sy	8/1/2016 12:34 PM
227	Waste less money	8/1/2016 12:31 PM
228	More parking	8/1/2016 12:29 PM
229	Some fast food by the beach	8/1/2016 12:25 PM
230	Nothing	8/1/2016 12:22 PM
231	More vendors	8/1/2016 12:20 PM
232	Keep the slides	8/1/2016 12:15 PM
233	Let dogs in the water	8/1/2016 12:10 PM
234	Nothing	8/1/2016 12:07 PM
235	Nothing	8/1/2016 12:07 PM
236	More picnic tables	8/1/2016 11:55 AM

237	Downtown grocery store	8/1/2016 11:53 AM
238	Build bigger lagoons	8/1/2016 11:16 AM
239	Build bigger lagoons	8/1/2016 11:15 AM

APPENDIX D: Business Survey

Q1 Is your business located in the Waterfront Commercial District (i.e. north of the railway tracks)?

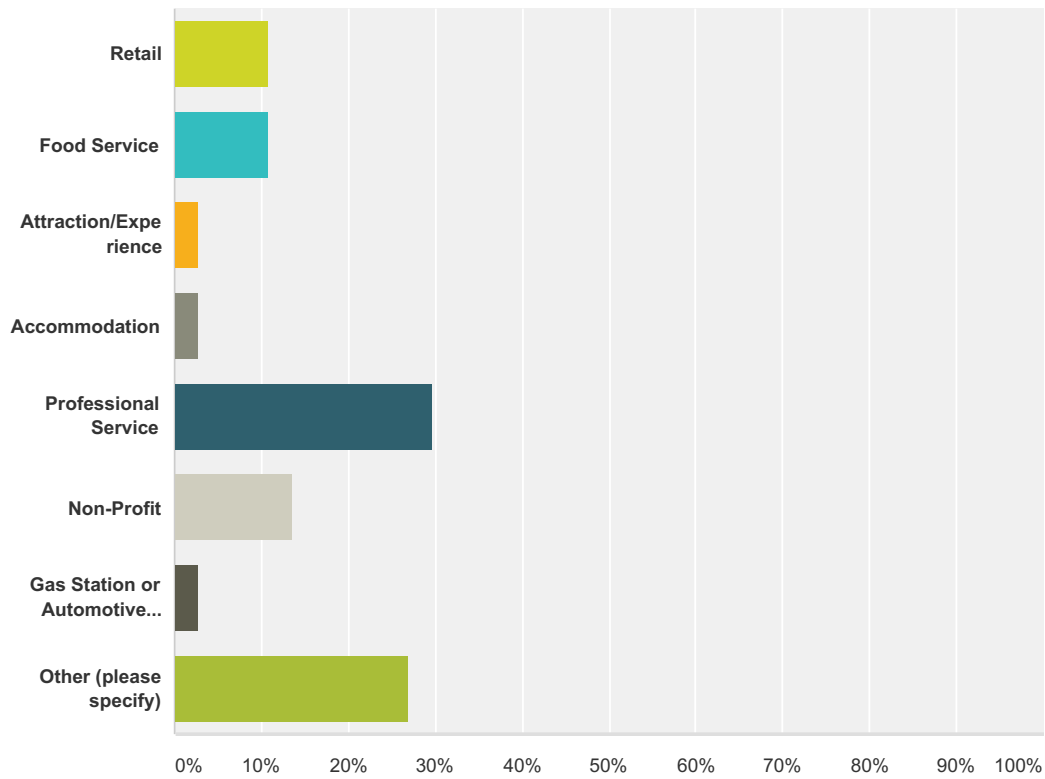
Answered: 37 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	40.54%	15
No	59.46%	22
Total		37

Q2 What is the primary purpose of your business?

Answered: 37 Skipped: 1



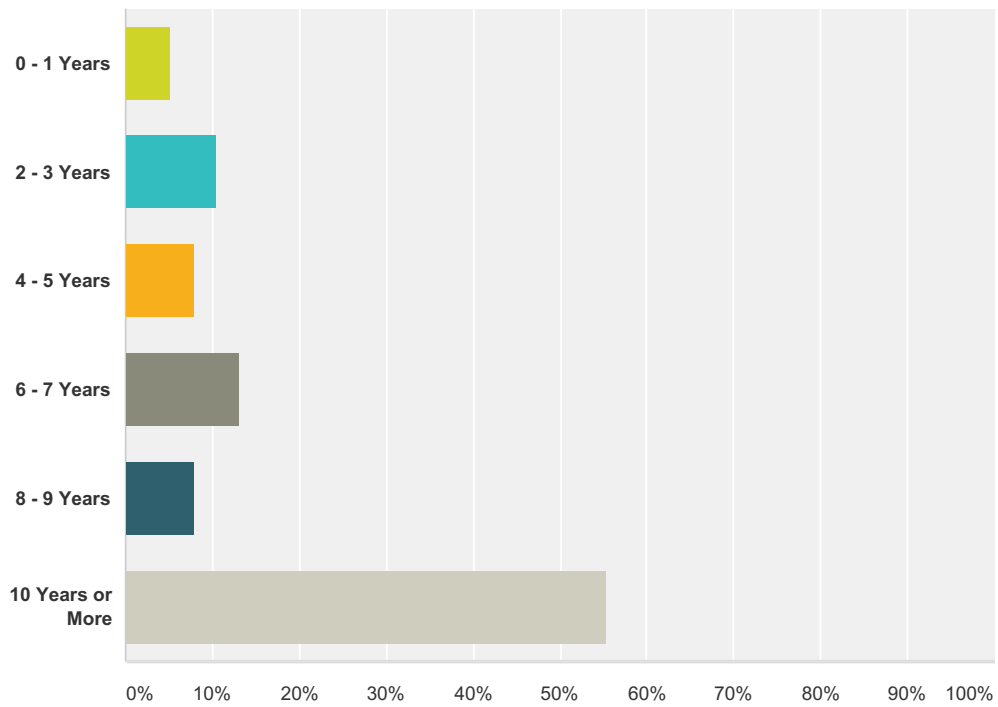
Answer Choices	Responses
Retail	10.81% 4
Food Service	10.81% 4
Attraction/Experience	2.70% 1
Accommodation	2.70% 1
Professional Service	29.73% 11
Non-Profit	13.51% 5
Gas Station or Automotive Service	2.70% 1
Other (please specify)	27.03% 10
Total	37

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	entertainment	9/13/2016 6:36 PM
2	Music school and supply sales	8/2/2016 1:40 PM
3	Electrical Contractors	8/2/2016 9:41 AM
4	Oil and Gas	8/2/2016 9:15 AM

5	Health Care	8/2/2016 9:15 AM
6	Home security and automation sales and installations	7/20/2016 10:28 PM
7	Construction	7/20/2016 5:29 PM
8	Pub Restaurant	7/20/2016 4:09 PM
9	dental	7/20/2016 3:17 PM
10	Auto commercial residential	7/20/2016 3:08 PM

Q3 How many years has your establishment been operating?

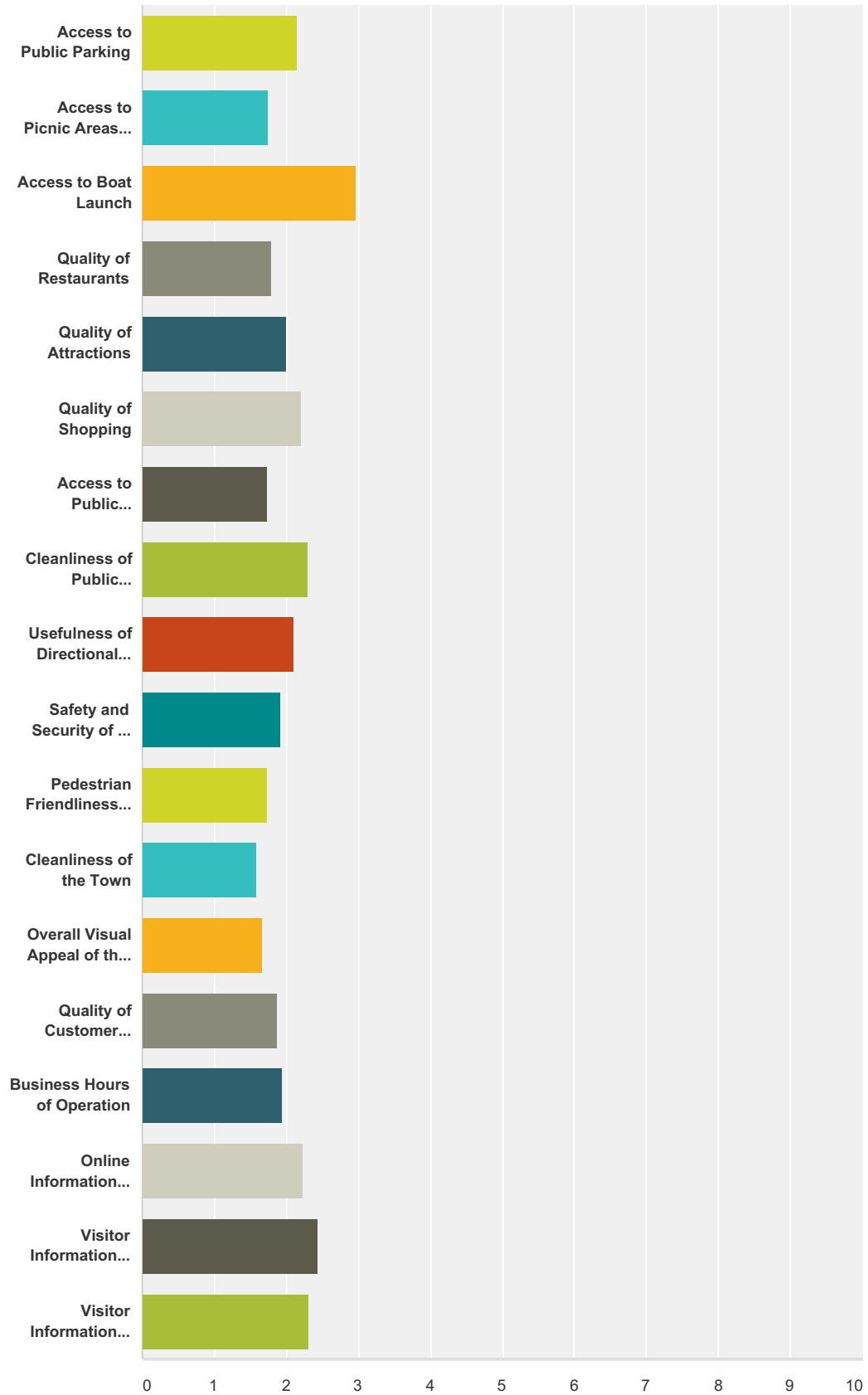
Answered: 38 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
0 - 1 Years	5.26% 2
2 - 3 Years	10.53% 4
4 - 5 Years	7.89% 3
6 - 7 Years	13.16% 5
8 - 9 Years	7.89% 3
10 Years or More	55.26% 21
Total	38

Q4 Judging from feedback you receive from your customers and your own observations, please rate the quality of the following amenities provided to visitors in the Sylvan Lake WCD.

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0

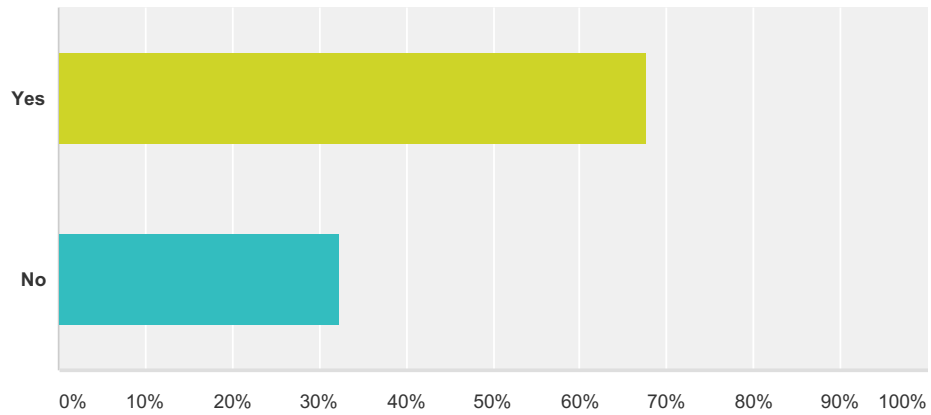


	Great	Ok	Poor	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
Access to Public Parking	7.89% 3	71.05% 27	18.42% 7	2.63% 1	38	2.16

Access to Picnic Areas and Beach	39.47% 15	44.74% 17	15.79% 6	0.00% 0	38	1.76
Access to Boat Launch	2.63% 1	7.89% 3	78.95% 30	10.53% 4	38	2.97
Quality of Restaurants	28.95% 11	63.16% 24	7.89% 3	0.00% 0	38	1.79
Quality of Attractions	19.44% 7	61.11% 22	19.44% 7	0.00% 0	36	2.00
Quality of Shopping	10.53% 4	60.53% 23	26.32% 10	2.63% 1	38	2.21
Access to Public Washrooms	34.21% 13	60.53% 23	2.63% 1	2.63% 1	38	1.74
Cleanliness of Public Washrooms	10.53% 4	68.42% 26	2.63% 1	18.42% 7	38	2.29
Usefulness of Directional Signage	23.68% 9	50.00% 19	18.42% 7	7.89% 3	38	2.11
Safety and Security of the Town	23.68% 9	63.16% 24	10.53% 4	2.63% 1	38	1.92
Pedestrian Friendliness of the Town	36.84% 14	55.26% 21	5.26% 2	2.63% 1	38	1.74
Cleanliness of the Town	44.74% 17	52.63% 20	2.63% 1	0.00% 0	38	1.58
Overall Visual Appeal of the Town	39.47% 15	55.26% 21	5.26% 2	0.00% 0	38	1.66
Quality of Customer Service (e.g. service stations, restaurants, hotels)	26.32% 10	63.16% 24	7.89% 3	2.63% 1	38	1.87
Business Hours of Operation	21.05% 8	65.79% 25	10.53% 4	2.63% 1	38	1.95
Online Information Available	15.79% 6	60.53% 23	7.89% 3	15.79% 6	38	2.24
Visitor Information Available at the Visitor Information Centre	23.68% 9	36.84% 14	10.53% 4	28.95% 11	38	2.45
Visitor Information Available at Businesses in Town	21.05% 8	47.37% 18	10.53% 4	21.05% 8	38	2.32

Q5 Do you feel it is your role to provide to your customer's visitor information relating to Sylvan Lake?

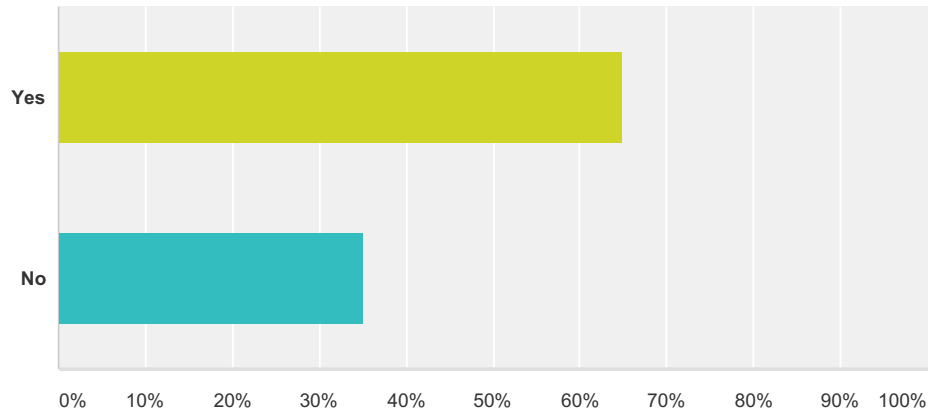
Answered: 37 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	67.57%	25
No	32.43%	12
Total		37

Q6 Do you feel that you have enough information about Sylvan Lake to provide sound visitor information to your customers?

Answered: 37 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	64.86% 24
No	35.14% 13
Total	37

Q7 If Sylvan Lake could do one thing to improve its visitor friendliness, what would it be?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 19

#	Responses	Date
1	a public free boat launch, better access from the south, hwy781,improved tourist center with better hrs and one on hwy 11, improved lakeshore drive parking, allow vlt's, many travelers go elsewhere to spend money	9/13/2016 6:48 PM
2	1.improve wayfinding signage 2. service excellence program	8/2/2016 2:30 PM
3	n/a	8/2/2016 1:54 PM
4	Nothing for now, lots of social media to showcase the great things to do	8/2/2016 1:43 PM
5	Allow for more diversity in the types of businesses permitted. Remove the restrictions regarding the waterfront district. This "vision" is not aligned with the history of the community.	8/2/2016 11:53 AM
6	Create more festival or activities year round	8/2/2016 10:32 AM
7	Better training for service related businesses.	7/30/2016 10:22 AM
8	Cross promote	7/27/2016 9:44 AM
9	I enjoy towns that are more picturesque, following some sort of theme in terms of frontage of buildings. SL looks rundown in places (motels on lake front), and some buildings are painted garish colours (Big Moo). Even the banners on the light poles are too varied.	7/21/2016 9:24 AM
10	Parking	7/21/2016 9:08 AM
11	Public boat launch in town	7/21/2016 8:18 AM
12	Unblock the highway access on 50 street and hwy 11, very confusing and inconvenient for visitors and people who live near 50 st	7/20/2016 10:32 PM
13	Clean up the bar area along Lakeshore Drive	7/20/2016 5:31 PM
14	Update storefront for better appeal and overall feel.	7/20/2016 4:58 PM
15	Improve shopping downtown	7/20/2016 4:14 PM
16	Less Bong shops and less tattoo parlors in the downtown corp...these businesses do not promote Family Friendly outings.	7/20/2016 3:35 PM
17	Public lake access (dock) for both visitors and locals!	7/20/2016 3:32 PM
18	Quaint shops uptown Good example is camrose	7/20/2016 3:10 PM
19	Have buy in of businesses for events that do come to town. Everyone in Calgary dresses western for the Stampede, when we have a festival, there are times businesses don't even know something is happening. There could be a mass email with a clickable calendar to go out to all business owners at least monthly keeping them in the loop of what is happening in town, then they can dress, promote or support if they wish, but they can be informed.	7/20/2016 2:30 PM

Q8 What is one thing that your business could do to improve visitor friendliness?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 17

#	Responses	Date
1	operate vlt's, many tourists ask but we have to send out of town,,Bentley , Red Deer, Spruceview, Leslieville, etc.	9/13/2016 6:48 PM
2	Get access to a more complete list of what Sylvan has to offer and disseminate that information to our employees, on a regular basis.	8/2/2016 2:30 PM
3	n/a	8/2/2016 1:54 PM
4	Have supply of the summer activities booklets to give to patrons	8/2/2016 1:43 PM
5	Have a display that offers brochures.	8/2/2016 11:53 AM
6	Landscaping to create a welcoming enviroment, outdoor seating etc.	8/2/2016 10:32 AM
7	very few visitors come to my business, new people moving to town will come if they are searching for insurance products	8/2/2016 9:55 AM
8	n/a	8/2/2016 9:16 AM
9	see above	7/30/2016 10:22 AM
10	Open longer hours	7/27/2016 9:44 AM
11	create more social media connections	7/22/2016 10:34 AM
12	Have more tourist information available for the days that the VIC is closed.	7/21/2016 9:24 AM
13	Nothing to add	7/21/2016 9:08 AM
14	Provide visitor tourism info, eg booklet etc	7/21/2016 8:18 AM
15	HAve tourism booklets available.	7/20/2016 5:31 PM
16	N/a	7/20/2016 4:58 PM
17	Sponsor Events	7/20/2016 4:14 PM
18	Learn more about all events happening in Sylvan and more about all businesses and products available.	7/20/2016 3:35 PM
19	Maps, brochures in office	7/20/2016 3:32 PM
20	Be friendlier	7/20/2016 3:10 PM
21	Keeping staff up to date on events so they can speak with authority to customers when asked.	7/20/2016 2:30 PM

Q9 Do you have any other comments relating to visitor friendliness in Sylvan Lake?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 21

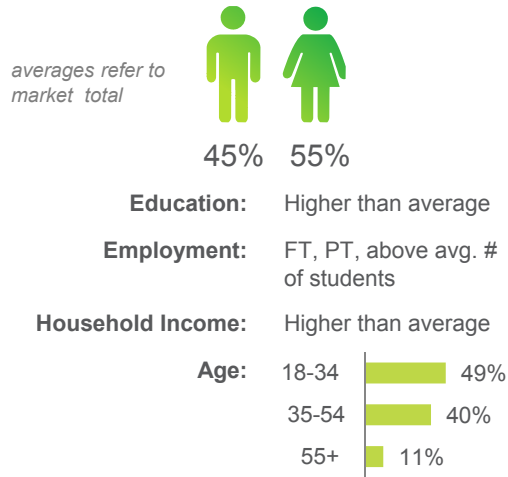
#	Responses	Date
1	Open hwy 781 to allow easy access to downtown businesses , more washrooms along lakeshore drive, a publicly owned easily accessible boat launch, allow vlt's so residents and tourists spend their money in town	9/13/2016 6:48 PM
2	Generally speaking, I do not believe businesses realize how important this issue is to encourage first time and repeat business.	8/2/2016 2:30 PM
3	i think the town does a fine job here, i am displeased with the lack of communication that occurs between the town and local businesses when making changes. Courtesy and communication need to improve.	8/2/2016 1:54 PM
4	None	8/2/2016 1:43 PM
5	Charge a parking fee on weekends (and Statutory Holidays). This will offset the cost of providing visitor information and services, including clean up. DO NOT charge for parking from Monday to Friday. If you do, this will push the locals into areas where they can still park for free, further damaging the already struggling businesses in the area.	8/2/2016 11:53 AM
6	Signage is a huge issue. Especially for visitors trying to park.	8/2/2016 10:32 AM
7	do not implement paid parking	8/2/2016 9:55 AM
8	No	7/30/2016 10:22 AM
9	I like the plantings and hanging flower baskets. I've seen some businesses upgrade their frontage and it looks great - I'm now more inclined to visit those businesses.	7/21/2016 9:24 AM
10	Always improving	7/21/2016 9:08 AM
11	Better signage and parking info	7/21/2016 8:18 AM
12	Need to dredge the sand in so we have a beach again, or even use a loader to pull some of it in, very limited options for taking children/ babies to the beach. It is so shallow and There is so much sand , but there is really no beach to enjoy... the beach area close to the pier is too congested for relaxing.	7/20/2016 10:32 PM
13	More events year round in particular the winter and improve resident participation	7/20/2016 4:14 PM
14	I feel Lakeshore Drive is well taken care of and looks pleasing...however 50th street seems more neglected by the town as far as beautification. I also feel the town should look more closely at the # of certain types of businesses they allow...for example...do we really need a dozen liquor stores, 5 Tattoo shops and 2 Bong stores (which are both located on the same street right by family friendly retailers). Just my 2 cents...	7/20/2016 3:35 PM
15	You need to work on parking. Do not worry about charge for parking. Worry about the poor plan of town for parking!!!!!!!!!!!!!! We build community centre with no parking that bad planning!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!	7/20/2016 3:20 PM
16	Make it easier for businesses to operate, use sinage as example	7/20/2016 3:10 PM
17	more places to butt out a smoke along lakeshore. not a friendliness thing, but a betterfication item.	7/20/2016 2:30 PM

APPENDIX E: Free Spirit (EQ Traveller Type)

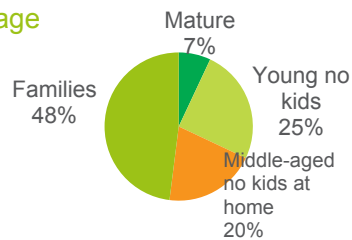
Canada
Free Spirits
 12% of Canadian Market



Demographics



Lifestage



Free Spirits are highly social and open-minded. Their enthusiasm for life extends to their outlook on travel. Experimental and adventurous, they indulge in high-end experiences that are shared with others.

Social Values

Top defining Values

- Importance of Brand:** A brand name is an indicator of quality, style and status.
- Need for Status Recognition:** They want to show off their success to the world.
- Joy of Consumption:** Love to shop! Free Spirits find shopping highly gratifying, but they are not impulsive. They are discriminating consumers and will shop around to get what they want, which is not necessarily the cheapest product.
- Penchant for Risk:** They are confident risk-takers, secure in their ability to reach their goals no matter what obstacles they may face.
- Selective Use of Professional Services:** They are willing to trust professionals to help them with major purchases or planning.

Bottom defining Values

- Skepticism Towards Advertising:** Not mistrustful of societal institutions like government or big business, Free Spirits have a degree of confidence in advertising.

Travel Values

A Free Spirit will seek:

- Comparison Travel:** They love to travel – and brag about the superiority of the places they have visited
- Luxury:** They often aspire to stay in the most luxurious accommodations and venues.
- Samplers:** They want to see all the main attractions, but not in depth – they will employ detailed itineraries, ensuring that they don't miss anything!
- Shared Experiences:** Free Spirits are attracted to groups where they can socialize and share the experience with others – using social media for sharing during and after the trip.
- Exhibitionism:** They enjoy being the centre of attention and will dance the night away in a nightclub.
- Hedonistic Rejuvenation:** Vacation is a time to be carefree and indulge – they will enjoy spa, nightlife and great cuisine and other opportunities for a little pampering.

A Free Spirit will avoid:

- Reluctant travel:** Free Spirits are always planning their next trip – they are not content to experience the world through the Internet or TV.

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Experience Appeal and Travel Behaviours

10 Most Appealing Activities (in descending order)

1. Marine life viewing (whale watching, other marine life)
2. Wildlife viewing - land based animals & bird watching
3. Visiting national, provincial/state parks to view wildlife and surrounding nature and/or to participate in adventure
4. Dining at restaurants offering local ingredients
5. Viewing Northern/Southern Lights/Aurora
6. Visiting aquariums/zoos
7. Visiting well known historic sites and buildings
8. Visiting amusement/theme parks
9. Staying at an international brand hotel
10. Visiting national, provincial/state parks to visit interpretative centres/museums

3 of the Least Appealing Activities

1. Farm stays
2. Undertaking travel philanthropy/voluntourism
3. Staying at a hostel

Last Trip

Party composition & size: while the majority tend to take trips with adults (62%) they are more likely than average to take children with them on long-haul trips (39% vs. 27%).

Duration: Most Canadian FSs took trips between 4-7 nights (39%), but they have a higher than average likelihood to have travelled for 8-14 nights (27% vs. 22%). Avg duration: 9.7 nights.

Spend: All Canadian FSs had a higher than Canadian average spend of \$3,498 per party per trip.

Top 3 Sources for Trip Planning

1. Websites of online retailers, travel agencies or tour operators
2. Websites of airlines, hotels, attractions or other services at destination
3. Discussions w/ friends, family, business colleagues

Product:

- More active participation*
- More entertainment*
- Involves the main sights
- Kid-friendly for those who travel in the family
- Social events, festivals
- Multi-faceted
- Convenient

Price:

- Offer a range of options
- Menu of choices

Canadian Free Spirits

Promotion:

- Get people talking
- Lively and direct
- Even stronger new media presence, coupled with traditional travel advertising*
- They want to read about the 'must sees' in publications (media relations)
- Stylish
- Emphasize comfort and the familiar

Close the Sale!

- Travel agencies, travel operators and tour guide websites are sales channels – make sure where possible you are listed!
- Partner with airlines, hotels, attraction and services in your area
- Include a clear 'call to action' on websites and social channels
- Make it clear how to book online or connect via phone

**compared to the global Free Spirit*

APPENDIX F: Mystery Shop Evaluation Form

General Information

Name of Facility:	
Date of Assessment:	
Assessor (s) Name (s):	
Context: <i>For example:</i> <i>Time of year (is this in the middle of summer, late fall, winter)</i> <i>Comment on external conditions that day (i.e. weather, roads, number of people, etc.)</i>	

Mystery Shop Evaluation Form

<p>Score Guide</p> <p>1 Poor performance throughout the facility</p> <p>2 Below Average performance in most of the facility</p> <p>3 Average performance in most of the facility</p> <p>4 Above Average performance throughout the facility</p> <p>5 Excellent performance throughout the facility</p>	
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Facility			
<i>Through the Customers' Eyes</i>			
#	Indicator	Score	Comments
1	Condition of parking area (road surface, cleanliness, etc.)		
2	Condition of grounds (landscaping, well maintained, clean, free of litter)		
3	Condition of entryway (well maintained, clean)		
4	Hours of operation were visible		
5	Waste containers were available and reasonably empty		
6	Facility was easy to find (well marked by directional signage)		
7	Access to sufficient customer parking available		
8	Cleanliness of the facility (inside)		
9	Interior was free of unnecessary clutter		
10	Interior lights were all working		
11	Atmosphere was welcoming		
12	Cleanliness of the washrooms (counters and mirrors were clean)		
13	Sinks and dispensers were in good working order		
14	Toilets were in good working order		
15	Availability of supplies (toilet paper, soap, etc.)		
16	Wheelchair accessible (width of door/stalls wide enough for a wheelchair, no uneven surfaces)		

Mystery Shop Evaluation Form

<p>Score Guide</p> <p>1 Poor performance throughout the facility</p> <p>2 Below Average performance in most of the facility</p> <p>3 Average performance in most of the facility</p> <p>4 Above Average performance throughout the facility</p> <p>5 Excellent performance throughout the facility</p>	
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Initial Contact			
<i>Through the Customers' Eyes</i>			
#	Indicator	Score	Comments
17	Were you acknowledged when you first entered the facility?	YES / NO	
18	Did you have to wait before being assisted?	YES / NO	
19	If the answer the previous question was YES, please specify the number of minutes you had to wait	Min:	
20	Was the wait time reasonable given the number of customers in the facility/waiting for service?	YES / NO	
21	Did staff approach you, or did you have to approach staff for assistance/service?	YES / NO	

Mystery Shop Evaluation Form

<p>Score Guide</p> <p>1 Poor performance throughout the facility</p> <p>2 Below Average performance in most of the facility</p> <p>3 Average performance in most of the facility</p> <p>4 Above Average performance throughout the facility</p> <p>5 Excellent performance throughout the facility</p>	
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Customer Encounter			
<i>Through the Customers' Eyes</i>			
#	Indicator	Score	Comments
22	Staff are appropriately attired (look professional, clean uniform, name tag, etc.) – Note name		
23	Acceptable hygiene		
24	Body language suggests interest		
25	Professional approach (not chewing gum, eating at the counter, horseplay, etc.)		
26	Greeted you promptly (verbally or with eye contact)		
27	Greeting was friendly/sincere (including smile quality)		
28	Made eye contact (frequency & quality)		
29	Gave full attention		
30	Willingness to help		
31	Listened to you attentively		
32	Spoke clearly and articulately		
33	Used appropriate vocabulary		
34	Hospitable/Sincere/Friendly		
35	Showed genuine empathy and genuine concern towards your needs		
36	Thanked you for visiting the facility and invited you to come back		
37	Able to answer local/regional tourism related questions		

38	On-site tourism resources available (e.g. program manual, brochures, etc.)		
39	On-site tourism resources used to respond to questions		
40	Overall level of satisfaction with the facility – please comment		
41	Overall level of satisfaction with staff you encountered – please comment		
42	What is the one thing that done very well – facility and/or staff?		
43	What is the one thing the facility and/or staff should try to improve?		

APPENDIX G: References

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- ⁱ Town of Sylvan Lake, Western Management Consultants, Millier Dickinson Blais Ltd. (2014). Town of Sylvan Lake Tourism Strategy, 2013 – 2018.
- ⁱⁱ Town of Sylvan Lake Tourism Strategy: 2013-2018
- ⁱⁱⁱ Town of Sylvan Lake Tourism Strategy: 2013-2018
- ^{iv} According to the Economic Impact Assessment of Sylvan Lake Tourism, 761,223 people visited Sylvan Lake in the summer of 2014. The Sylvan Lake Tourism website states over 1 million visitors year round travel to Sylvan Lake.
- ^v Town of Sylvan Lake Tourism Strategy: 2013-2018
- ^{vi} Economic Impact Assessment of Sylvan Lake Tourism, 2014
- ^{vii} Studies, plans, policies and programs impacting tourism in Sylvan Lake include: Mobile Vending Business Bylaw (2016), Waterfront Urban Design Guidelines (2015), Retail Gap Analysis (2015), Downtown Facade Improvement Program (2014-current), Economic Impact Assessment of Sylvan Lake Tourism (2014), Goods and Service Gap Analysis (2013), Town of Sylvan Lake Tourism Strategy: 2013-2018, 50th Street Area Redevelopment Plan, 50th Street Urban Design Guidelines (2010), Special Events Policy (2010), Town of Sylvan Lake Waterfront Area Redevelopment Plan (2006)
- ^{viii} 90% arrive by personal vehicle and 8% by RV, according to the Sylvan Lake Economic Impact of Tourism, 2006, cited in the Town of Sylvan Lake Tourism Strategy: 2013-2018.
- ^{ix} Economic Impact Assessment of Sylvan Lake Tourism, 2014. In 2014, an estimated 100 motorcycles, 1727 cars, 602 trucks and 169 RVs arrived daily in the town site.
- ^x Economic Impact Assessment of Sylvan Lake Tourism, 2014
- ^{xi} Economic Impact Assessment of Sylvan Lake Tourism, 2014
- ^{xii} Town of Sylvan Lake Tourism Strategy cites the 2006 Sylvan Lake Economic Impact of Tourism
- ^{xiii} Economic Impact Assessment of Sylvan Lake Tourism, 2014
- ^{xiv} The Town of Sylvan Lake Tourism Strategy cites the 2006 Sylvan Lake Economic Impact of Tourism to state 73% of visitors to Sylvan Lake are families, traveling with a 3.89 party size.
- ^{xv} Sylvan Lake Economic Impact of Tourism Study, 2006, cited in The Town of Sylvan Lake Tourism Strategy: 2013-2018
- ^{xvi} Economic Impact Assessment of Sylvan Lake Tourism, 2014. Based on the spending habits of Alberta visitors to Alberta.
- ^{xvii} Economic Impact Assessment of Sylvan Lake Tourism, 2014
- ^{xviii} Sylvan Lake Economic Impact of Tourism Study, 2006, cited in The Town of Sylvan Lake Tourism Strategy: 2013-2018
- ^{xix} Economic Impact Assessment of Sylvan Lake Tourism, 2014
- ^{xx} Economic Impact Assessment of Sylvan Lake Tourism, 2014
- ^{xxi} TAMS 2006 - Canadian activity profile: swimming and boating while on trips
- ^{xxii} The Explorer Quotient (EQ) is a market segmentation tool offered by Destination Canada. The tool goes beyond typical demographic information and uses psychographic data to segment tourism markets into distinct traveller profiles. Psychographic data differs from more traditional demographic data such as age, income and gender by collecting information on people's social values, attitudes and beliefs. EQ uses this data to break down geographic markets into psychographic groups called Traveller Types. There are nine different Traveller Types, including Cultural Explorers, Free Spirits, Authentic Experiencers, Personal History Explorers, Cultural History Buffs, Rejuvenators, Gentle Explorers, No-Hassle Travellers and Virtual Travellers.
- ^{xxiii} Retrieved from
http://en.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/pdf/Resources/EQ/eq_profiles_ver2_2015_eng_lowres.pdf

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