

SHOPPING SURVEY RESULTS COMPILED



Friday, July 7, 2023 – For Immediate Release

July 7, 2023 – The District of 100 Mile House is pleased to announce that the Shopping Preferences and Business Opportunity Survey results have been compiled. The survey has given residents a chance to share what influences their shopping and spending habits and what types of products and services they would like to see available locally.

The survey was designed to find out how shopping habits have changed over the past few years, inform businesses to help them remain competitive, and identify which product and service gaps represent promising investment or expansion opportunities. Ultimately, the goal is to slow shopping dollars leaking out of the local economy.

Response to the survey was excellent, with 597 responses returned. This high level of participation confirms that residents are interested in engaging in the local economy. Some of the major findings are listed below.

- In the past 2 years, residents have gone out-of-town primarily for medical/dental appointments and to visit family and friends.
- 60% said they made impulsive purchases and 86% said they prioritized shopping when out-of-town for other reasons.
- Kamloops, Williams Lake and ONLINE were the top places residents went to shop.
- Big ticket items like electronics and appliances are purchased in Kamloops, followed by 100 Mile House.
- The top 3 reasons residents shop out-of-town are product availability, selection, and price. Combining shopping with other activities out-of-town followed closely.
- The top reasons for shopping ONLINE were similar, with convenience also a top response.
- Respondents said they scheduled out-of-town shopping trips monthly, with every 3 months having the second highest response.
- On average, residents said just over 50% of their monthly spending took place in town.
- 426 people reported their estimated monthly household spending out-of-town. On average they spent \$560, which equals nearly \$240,000 / month.

- 402 people reported their monthly spending ONLINE, on average \$300, equaling \$120,000 / month.
- The products that households regularly purchase out-of-town are clothing and footwear, groceries and specialty foods, and furniture and home décor.
- Regular ONLINE purchases included clothing and footwear, toys and hobbies, and health and beauty products.
- When asked which 5 new businesses residents would like to attract to the municipality, the top responses included restaurants, shoe and clothing stores, and a sporting goods store. Many franchise businesses were also listed. A separate information sheet is being prepared for this question as there were a total of nearly 2,100 businesses reported.
- Residents were asked how their shopping habits have changed over the past 2-3 years. The single highest response was that residents do more ONLINE shopping than they did previously. Many also noted they do more out-of-town shopping and an equal number said that their shopping habits have not changed.
- Other top themes included a preference for longer business opening hours, more competitive pricing, and greater product selection and choice.
- Many respondents said they prefer to shop local and support local business, provided pricing is competitive.

As inflation continues to climb, people are becoming increasingly cost conscious. Shopping for essential goods like groceries may be driving some residents to shop at larger franchises out-of-town rather than general merchandise stores simply to combat rising prices.

How we shop in a smaller community may require greater effort. I.e: we may need to visit 2 or 3 grocery stores to fulfil our household food shopping needs. While this may be less convenient than a one-stop shopping experience, it may actually be less expensive and more convenient than traveling out-of-town.

Each household needs to consider their own costs and thresholds for local shopping. For example, is it really less expensive to cover costs of fuel, eating out, and other expenses to travel out-of-town? Do the cost savings warrant the travel expenses? What value does each household place on the time required to travel to Kamloops or Williams Lake?

Knowing some of the product categories that residents said were not available locally could assist local businesses in creating targeted marketing campaigns to educate people about what range of options are actually available. Posting items they carry and new stock arriving that fit in these categories may generate greater awareness of locally available products and help keep a few more shopping dollars in town.

The product gaps noted in the survey are opportunities for local businesses to potentially fill, or for recruitment of new businesses. Even one new business, if it keeps residents shopping local, could have beneficial spin off effects for other local businesses.

Finally, the survey confirmed that everyone wants to feel they are getting value for their money. That may be tied to excellent customer service, a positive shopping environment, clear return policies, and other considerations not directly related to cost or selection.

Next steps: the findings will be used to support investment attraction efforts by approaching new businesses, supporting investment inquiries, and promoting retail opportunities as part of the investment materials package.

The full survey findings report can be found at:

<https://www.100milehouse.com/Shopping-Survey-2023-Results>

- 30 -

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