

## What we heard in Whitehorse

<b>Community</b>	Whitehorse
<b>Date</b>	Tuesday, March 20, 2018
<b>Time</b>	7 p.m.
<b>Location</b>	Westmark Hotel
<b>Facilitator</b>	Shena Shaw
<b>Note taker</b>	Carleen Kerr Sarah Marsh
<b>Participants</b>	14 participants

### Thinking Ahead: Round 1

In regards to sustainably growing tourism in Yukon, and regardless of whose responsibility it is:

#### What is already working well?

- Montana Mountain is a good example of hard work to drive tourism
- We are getting pretty good at attracting the people who have the Yukon on the bucket list
- Culture is doing really well here – in spite of tourism
- People are surprised that there is a really vibrant music scene, all kinds of artists
- There are things to do here – the natural beauty is remarkable
- It is the cultural and arts experiences that bring people joy and make them want to come here
- Yukoners are helpful and want to help tourists out they should be encouraged to do more
- Wilderness tourism is working well
- People-friendly jurisdiction
- Good collaboration when it comes to delivering tourism services
- Yukon has some good branding around the ‘bucket list’ activities
- We have so much more access to the wilderness now than we had in the 1990s
- We have visitors from Asia who are coming for the Northern Lights
- Carcross itself has been turned from a town to a real asset
- Tourists love going there
- Whitepass brings the travellers to Carcross

- Carcross is really doing what other communities could do – the government and the First Nation Government are really working together
- Wilderness tourism
- Don't want to be a one trick pony
- People are friendly
- Day trips
- Collaboration
- The bucket list – there is a consistent 'hit-list' of things to do
- Carcross

### **What can tourism partners build on/do more of?**

- There are a number of trails right here in Whitehorse, but we don't do enough to talk to tourists about it
- Montana Mountain is great for mountain bikers – but what about walking trails for older people?
- We brag about moose and the outdoors, but we don't brag about the culture and arts awards that we are winning
- We should brag about these things because that's what people will notice
- We need to engage non-traditional stakeholders in these types of conversation early in the process – not at the end
- Need to widen who we consider our stakeholders – culture, arts, gas companies – there are so many stakeholders
- Better access to information – understand the shifting travel trends
- People want information at their finger tips
- Lots of discussion around hours of operation – need to ensure visitors understand the winter realities, or operators need to meet their expectations
- Need to consider additional Wi-Fi but need to be mindful that some people want to escape that for their trip
- We need to make better awareness of the arts and culture community here in the Yukon
- Need to come up with local, authentic packages and tours that can be marketed to the people who are coming here
- More and more people want these types of packages and not necessarily the wilderness packages

- Opportunity to bring back and promote the Stay Another Day program – whether they are camping, or staying somewhere else
- There used to be these old airstreams getting pulled by Cadillacs, and it was a real tour where people would spend a lot of money here
- We should try to reinvigorate the things that once worked – promote these types of things that support staying another day
- There is an attitude that the Department of Tourism and Culture is trying to get the geese overhead and then the Yukoners are expected to shoot them down
- There is no support to corral the people to actually build the experiences
- There is a disconnect between the department and on the ground development
- The new travellers are not looking for packages – they want independent experiences and we need to support that through arts and culture
- We need to do a better job at helping locals be the tourists – so that they spend their money in the communities and better understand what Yukon has to offer
- Easier access to information
- Shifting travel trends
- Unprepared people may have a less positive experience
- Hours of operation – chicken and egg
- Unclear expectations – be honest about what we are
- Iceland example – too many visitors, their infrastructure can't keep up
- Similar challenges with Ice Cave north of Haines Junction
- The power of social media – important to control the message
- Damage to the environment with increased visitation
- Finite budget – there is only so much we can do

### **What opportunities do you see?**

- Could do a better job using walking opportunities to drive tourism
- If walking tours were well integrated it would be great – we already have pull offs, and campgrounds as a starting point
- Supposing every community committed to making a walking trail – there is an opportunity to bring a number of partners together to support walking trails
- Opportunity to showcase the amazing people we have here
- We could expand the Whitehorse Trolley – all the way out to Haines Junction
- A footbridge across the River would help the public access the other side
- Opportunity for partners to come together to move forward on projects

- Markets are changing – more into arts, culture and food
- Take advantage of the shorter tours or packages to support the visitors who only want to come for a day or two instead of three weeks to a month
- Opportunities to grow and expand winter tourism
- Opportunity to profile what we are not
- Make sure we communicate accurately about what we are before our tourists get here
- There are a lot of tourists who are coming up here who don't want to be part of a package - we need to take advantage of that opportunity
- If we have more trails around – we can slow people down and let them experience the communities
- Opportunity to further profile the arts and culture and support them
- The cruise lines have stopped doing the big package tours – they are doing more individual programming and there is an opportunity for us to support that
- While we are very supportive of wilderness experiences, we are missing the opportunity of broadening what and who we are
- We need to be open to selling all of the things that make our territory so unique
- There are many parallels between Gros Morne and Yukon for the natural beauty
- There was a tiny town near Gros Morne with a dinner theatre, and it was sold out and fantastic – opportunity for that here?
- Arts and culture will draw people in
- Opportunity to have the wilderness community and the cultural sector to partner together to support sustainable, authentic experiences
- There is a way to keep it unique and avoid that Disney feel
- People are looking for authentic and cultural experiences – we have that in spades here in the Yukon
- Our authentic and cultural experiences need to be preserved, and better celebrated and supported
- Dawson's UNESCO bid is exactly that – that will be a great opportunity
- The kind of people who go to Newfoundland also come here
- Newfoundland could be an ally
- Opportunity to better target the money band – the 45-70-year-olds.
- These 70-year-olds want the adventure, but also a good bed at night
- They want to do their own tour of the Yukon – how do we support their trips here to the Yukon?
- Yukoners should be ambassadors!

- Build it and they will come
- Opportunity for a walking trail from cabin to cabin in the wilderness
- Opportunity is there to better use social media – its free marketing and people will spread the word for you and we should cash in on that
- Arts, culture and food
- Not trying to be something we aren't - for example, we don't have a five star hotel, let's not pretend we do
- People can drop of the radar here
- Appeal of openness and vastness
- Shift in shorter tours
- Be open to changes
- Winter tourism
- Museums open in the winter

### **Thinking Ahead: Round 2**

In regards to sustainably growing tourism in Yukon, and regardless of whose responsibility it is:

#### **What could be improved?**

- Could do a better job supporting arts and culture
- Arts and culture can fill in the itineraries of visitors
- Arts and culture can ensure that a visitor's experience is more complete
- Economic and social advantage to selling the complete story of the Yukon
- Many tourists feel that it is too expensive here
- Need to do a better job slowing people down – walking trails could be one example
- We can do a better job of attracting the repeat visitor
- The Department of Tourism and Culture ignores culture – treats it like a stocking stuffer, or an after thought
- Advertising demonstrates our beauty – but it takes itself too seriously
- Advertising doesn't take into account the real Yukon, the grizzled old man who whips off his fur jacket and is in drag about to entertain at the local saloon
- We shouldn't take ourselves so seriously – need to be proud of who we are and have some humour about it

- If bus service for locals was expanded and supported then it would also benefit visitors
- Locals and visitors can benefit from infrastructure support such as busses
- If you improve the local infrastructure – you may increase the local market
- Improved data around what tourists want and who our tourists are would be really helpful so that we know who they are and what they want
- Need to figure out what the right blend of tourists for what we want
- We need a blend – don't want all Aurora viewers or RV travellers – we need to find that balance that supports true sustainable tourism
- Targeted and more diverse advertising
- Tourism needs a new vision
- We need to consider ourselves tourists – the things we want are the things that tourists want
- Make more things for us and the tourists are automatically addressed
- The younger money band needs to access information
- There needs to be a portal
- There needs to be a very effective portal – so that when someone types in a search for walking trails or plays, they get linked to the right person
- The Yukon government has that now, but if you don't advertise you aren't linked and are out of luck to tourists
- Tourism is all about partnerships – but the partners who aren't paying aren't getting captured in visitor searches
- Need to do a better job of learning from other jurisdictions – the pitfalls of trying to increase tourism and the impact that has on the community
- Make sure that ordinary people who aren't represented by a particular group have a chance to have their say
- Sometimes only certain people show up at meetings, and you won't hear from the breadth of the people who are passionate about the topic
- Need to remember that not everyone uses the internet
- Need to remember the people you are trying to inform and make sure its done in a way that works for everyone
- Accessibility needs to be improved so that everyone can experience the Yukon

### **What are the roadblocks and barriers of sustainably developing tourism?**

- Age, ability and physical fitness are barriers to accessing our national parks

- There are a number of people who can't enjoy Kluane National Park
- Can't even take a helicopter in for those who can't access the parks on their own two feet
- The size of our population – very few people over a very large area and that causes considerable challenges to how to welcome guests to our barely populated area in a thoughtful way
- There are capacity and population challenges
- Information needs to be made more available – doesn't always need to be advertising – that's just one part of it
- Visitors need to be able to easily access information in a way that works for them
- Tourism sees itself as in charge of tourism and that is the problem
- How can tourism get bigger if you aren't accessing all of the other opportunities, stakeholders?
- Yukon has a finite budget
- Barriers for people with disabilities – need to ensure open and accessible
- Yukoners can be averse to change
- Barriers to people with disabilities
- Opportunity to go barrier free because we don't have the infrastructure currently
- People can be unwilling to change
- How do we demonstrate how this can benefit Yukoners?

### Thinking Ahead: Round 3

Think about yourself as well as your neighbours, colleagues or industry partners. With those perspectives in mind:

**What do you think are the 5 most important things that need to be considered to sustainably grow tourism?**

- Diversity. Equity. Accessibility.
- First Nations.
- Free. Nature. Walking.
- Get to know the communities
- Don't forget the communities are unique
- Show visitors more about what they have to offer – help them slow down and really get to know them

- What do we do to get the Yukon to be a destination?
- Does it require more money?
- What does it need?
- We know Yukon is a great place – are we doing a good job letting other people know?
- Creative support to the businesses here locally to focus on getting Whitehorse to be the hub and then send people out to the spokes/communities
- Consider making information region-specific
- Encourage visitors to go to a specific area, get to know that, and then come back another time to visit another region
- There needs to be things that are not alcohol related – like a coffee shop with music, or walking trails
- Building the downtown cores so that there are things for visitors to do
- We are the land of the midnight sun but we aren't embracing it
- There is no life reflected in the downtown
- Some visitors know what to do here – but most don't know what to do here
- Consider a seed loan or incentive for arts or cultural businesses
- They are doing it right in Carcross – why can't we do it there?
- Tourism that is purposeful and that we are the destination
- Less interested in fly through or drive through traffic
- We want the people who want to come here
- An experience that can repeat itself
- We want to preserve the experience for years to come
- Tourism needs to encompass many things – art, wilderness, all kinds of things
- Don't want to be a one trick pony
- We are more than the northern lights
- Do we have the right data?
- Do we know what our tourists look like and how to cater to them?
- Why aren't we helping to get more people out into the communities?
- Keeping money in the communities
- Tourism needs to be driven by, developed by Yukoners so that to the extent possible so we keep the money here
- Need to talk about diversity, equity and accessibility and share that story with visitors – this can be accomplished in the little things like washrooms
- Regional approach to Yukon – it doesn't work to try to see it all right off the bat



- If tourists can get to know the region then they would really get a feel for it here and want to come back and see more
- Sustainability means:
  - Destination/purposeful
  - Focus on experiences that can repeat themselves
  - Encompasses a number of things/aspects
  - Feature
  - Experience
  - Not a one trick pony
  - Stakeholders – defining the ‘who’ of our potential visitors
  - Offer experiences that can last
  - Keep money in the community
  - Local products

**What advice would you give to decision-makers (Yukon Government, Yukon First Nation Governments, municipalities, organizations, individual businesses etc.) to consider as we collectively develop the strategy for growing tourism sustainably in Yukon?**

- We talk about tourism as a product – but if it is going to be effective tourism it is not a product – it is an experience
- If we change the language, we can change the attitude
- It needs to be real – something you feel
- Can’t forget who your constituents are
- Yukoners visiting their own backyard needs to be part of the strategy
- Be open to new ideas and partnership opportunities
- Don’t screw this up
- Need to consider a way to spread funds around to get stuff going
- Drawing people into the Yukon is a bonus – people living here getting out to the communities is a bonus – just keep promoting regardless of to who
- Treat people like you would want to be treated
- Define short term, mid term and long-term goals and then specific goals and then stick to them and don’t diversity too much
- There will always be a lot of suggestions and ideas but need to have some focus
- Every Yukoner can be a tourist and can also be a tour guide
- Yukon can be a walking destination

- You have to build it for us because if you build it for the tourists you miss the point
- Slow down the tourists so that they stay a little longer and that they come back
- Walking and shows are some ideas but, but focus on slowing them down
- Find a way to encourage the businesses that make made in Yukon products sell in Yukon businesses - because that's what the tourists want
- Regional development strategy so that people who come here can define what they want to do and where they want to do it
- If we are telling government there is a problem – can't fix the whole problem
- Need to break it down into smaller problems to tackle each
- Find some initiatives that can support creative local businesses that give some flexibility to do things so there are more things happening in the downtown
- People will tell tourists about how great it is
- Developing a portal for people to find all the information they need
- What happened here tonight – there was joy and humour here tonight
- Need to target an advertising campaign that has some humour
- Show the fact that this is a wide-open place that welcomes people from all walks of life
- Need to be proud of who we are and have a sense of humour about our own stereotypes