



Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association: Travel Plans of Ontarians to Huntsville

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strategic insights

August 2020

Research Methodology

- An online survey was conducted among a randomly-selected sample of N=900 adult (18+) Ontario residents who are very or somewhat likely to travel within Ontario in the summer, fall or winter.
- The interviews were conducted between July 27 to August 5th, 2020.
- As a guideline, a probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of $\pm 3.3\%$, nineteen times out of twenty. The margin of error is larger for sub-segments. Although demographic and regional quotas were employed to ensure reliable and comparable sub-segment analysis, the dataset was weighted to ensure the sample is representative of the Ontario population by region, age and gender. Discrepancies in total % are due to rounding.

Region	Number of Interviews	Margin of error
Toronto	200	$\pm 6.9\%$
GTA Belt	200	$\pm 6.9\%$
Greater Ottawa Area	100	$\pm 9.8\%$
Southwest	200	$\pm 6.9\%$
Eastern	100	$\pm 9.8\%$
Northern	100	$\pm 9.8\%$
Ontario	900	$\pm 3.3\%$

Client Sample – Huntsville Travellers

- Also included in the analysis is a sample of travellers to Huntsville who stayed in local accommodation in the past three to five years.
- A survey tool was designed specifically to capture the attitudes and behaviour of visitors to the Huntsville area.
- A link to the survey was forwarded to these travellers and 804 responded.
- **Caution:** The sample is not random and the results are meant to show insight into how frequent travellers perceive Huntsville, their experience in the area and what draws them to the town.



Travel During COVID-19

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Prior to COVID-19, travellers were most likely to be traveling within Ontario in the summer or out of country in the winter



Ontarians

TRAVEL PLANS BEFORE THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK



SUMMER
(July and August)

74% had booked travel



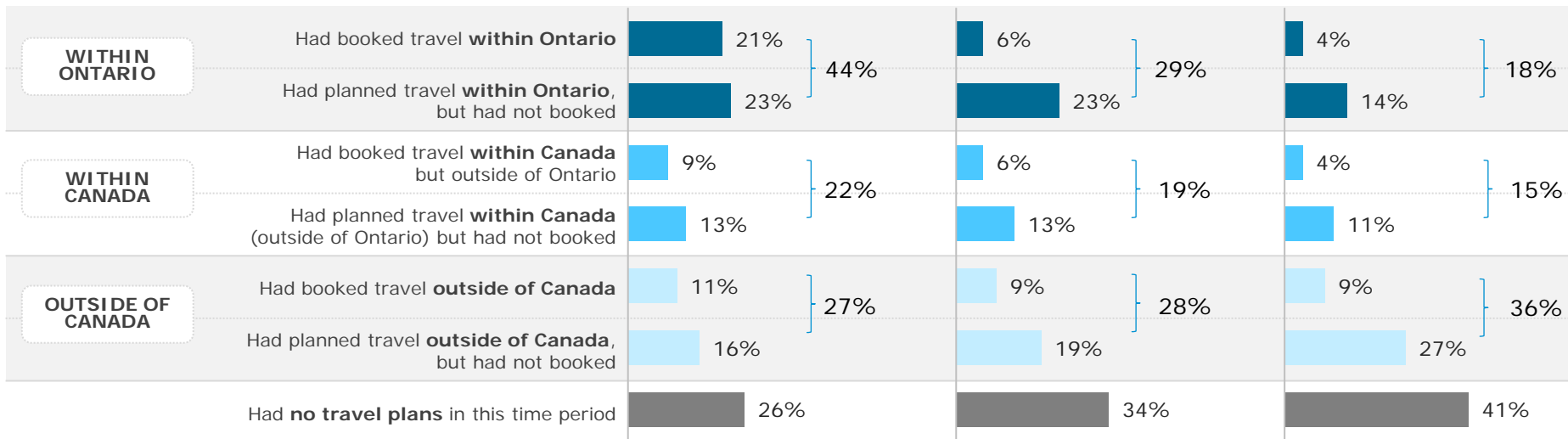
FALL
(Sept through Nov)

66% had booked travel



WINTER
(Dec through Feb)

59% had booked travel



Base: **Total** (N=900)

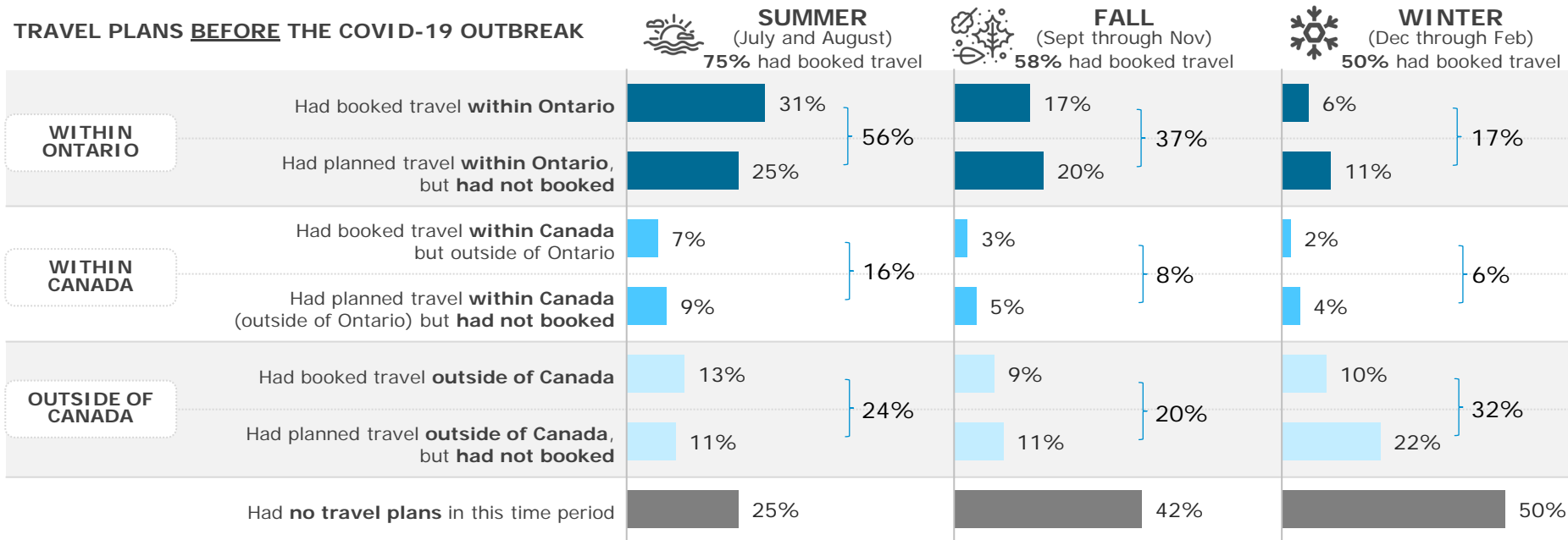
A1. Now we would like to understand how the COVID-19 outbreak in Canada has impacted your travel plans over the next few months. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, had you booked or plan any travel in the following time periods? Please include travel where you were staying at paid accommodations for at least one night (hotel/motel, resort, house/cottage rental, campground), not travel where you were staying with friends or family, at a vacation home that you own or daytrips.

Huntsville travellers were also most likely to be traveling within Ontario in the summer or fall and outside Canada in the winter prior to COVID



Huntsville

TRAVEL PLANS BEFORE THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK



Base: Total (N=804)

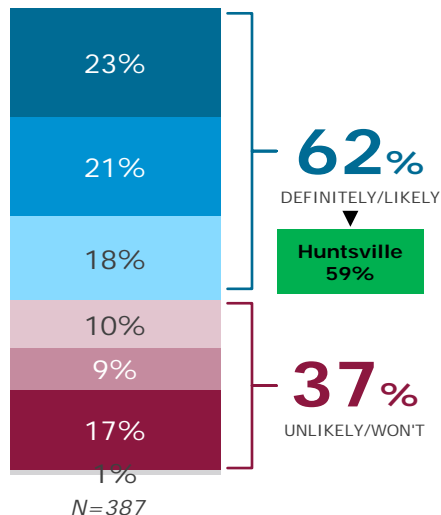
A1. Now we would like to understand how the COVID-19 outbreak in Canada has impacted your travel plans over the next few months. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, had you booked or plan any travel in the following time periods? Please include travel where you were staying at paid accommodations for at least one night (hotel/motel, resort, house/cottage rental, campground), not travel where you were staying with friends or family, at a vacation home that you own or daytrips.

Ontarians who booked summer travel within the province are most likely to travel as planned

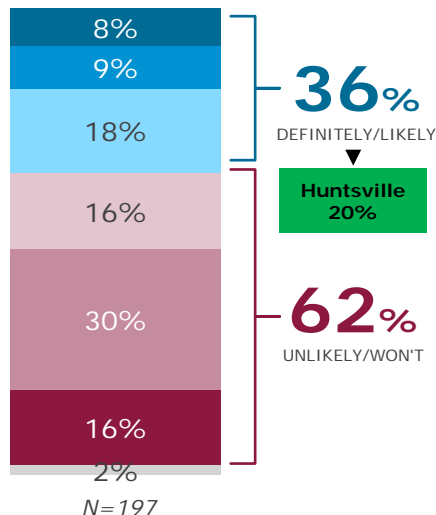
PLANS FOR THE **SUMMER**
SINCE COVID-19 OUTBREAK



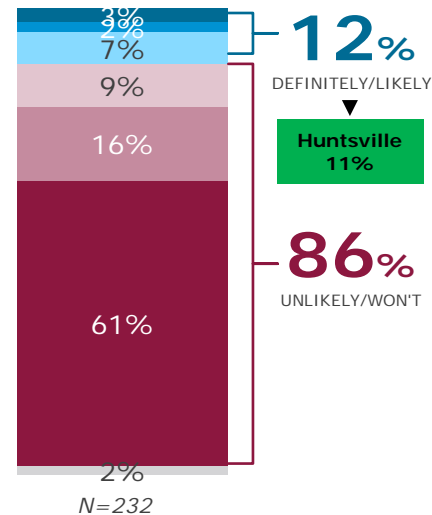
Travel within Ontario: All
travellers likely to travel



Travel in Canada: Huntsville
travellers less likely to travel



Travel outside Canada: All
travellers likely to cancel



Base: Those Who Have Booked Or Planned Over The Summer

A2. Please consider the travel plans you had made for the summer, before the outbreak of COVID-19. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, how likely do you think it is that you will be traveling as planned?

Because of COVID-19 in-province travel is an option to replace cancelled plans



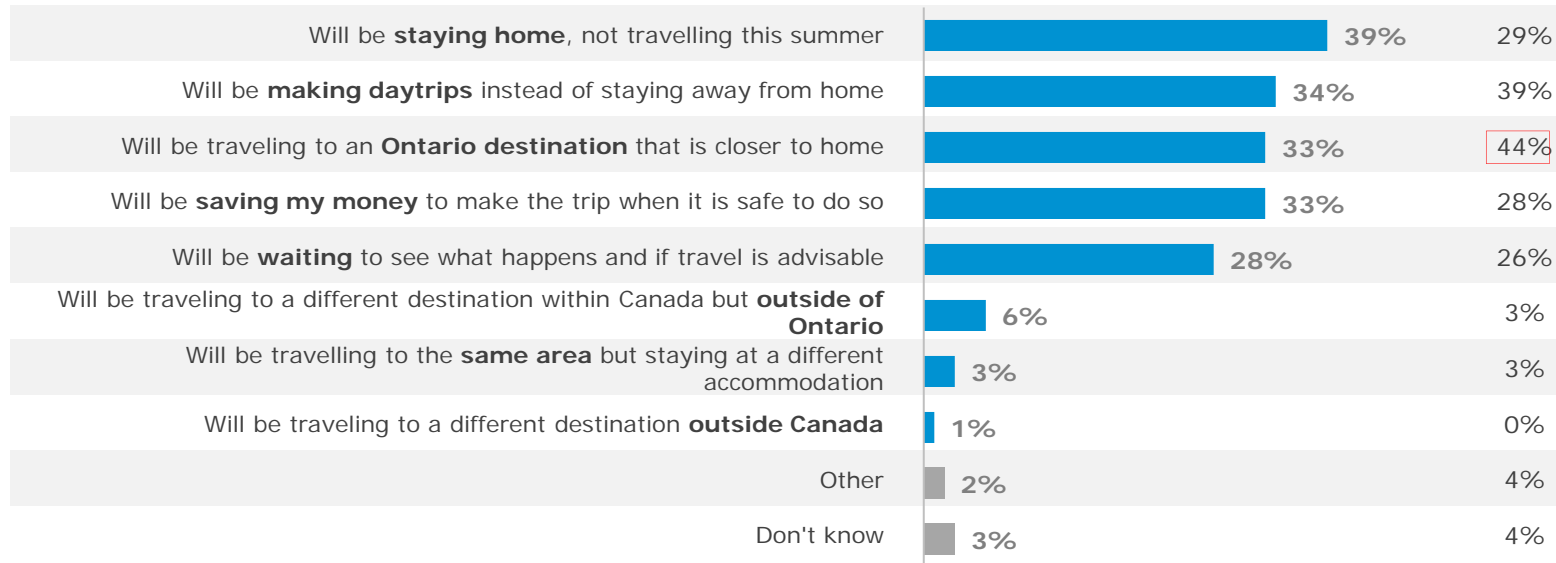
PLANS FOR SUMMER AMONG THOSE WHO ARE CANCELLING



Ontarians



Huntsville



Base: Those who answered Somewhat/Very Unlikely or Definitely Won't in A2 (N=401); Client list (N=354)

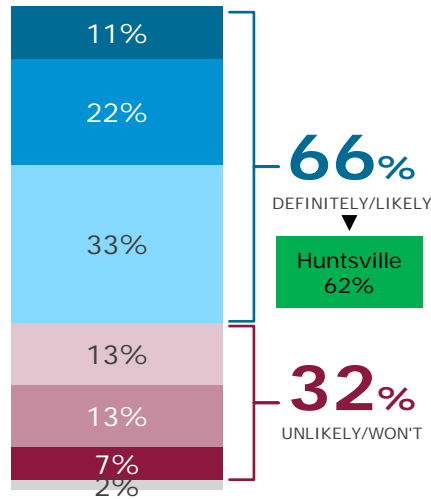
A3. What do you think you will be doing instead of your initial travel plans this summer?

Fall/ winter travellers most likely to travel as planned within Ontario; more hesitant to travel outside the province and won't outside of the country

PLANS FOR THE FALL OR WINTER WITH COVID-19 OUTBREAK

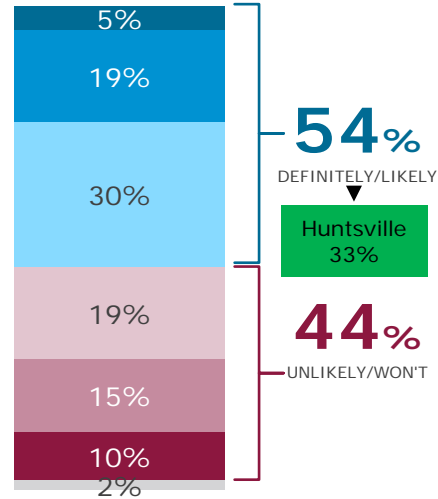


Travel within Ontario: Majority travellers likely to travel



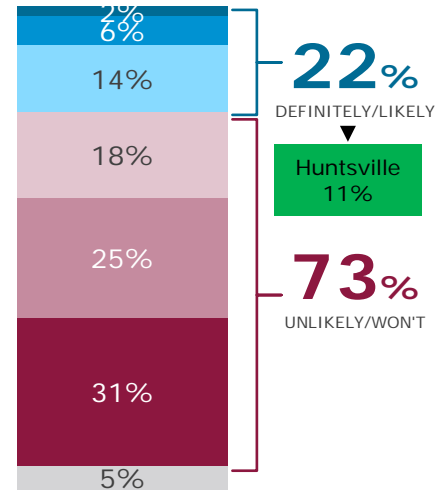
N=295

Travel within Canada: Half likely to travel



N=236

Travel outside Canada: Most will cancel



N=408

Base: Those Who Had Booked Or Planned In Fall Or Winter in A1

A4. You mentioned that you had made plans to travel in the Fall or Winter. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, how likely do you think it is that you will be traveling as planned?

Ontarians cancelling fall/ winter plans will wait until travel is advisable or stay home



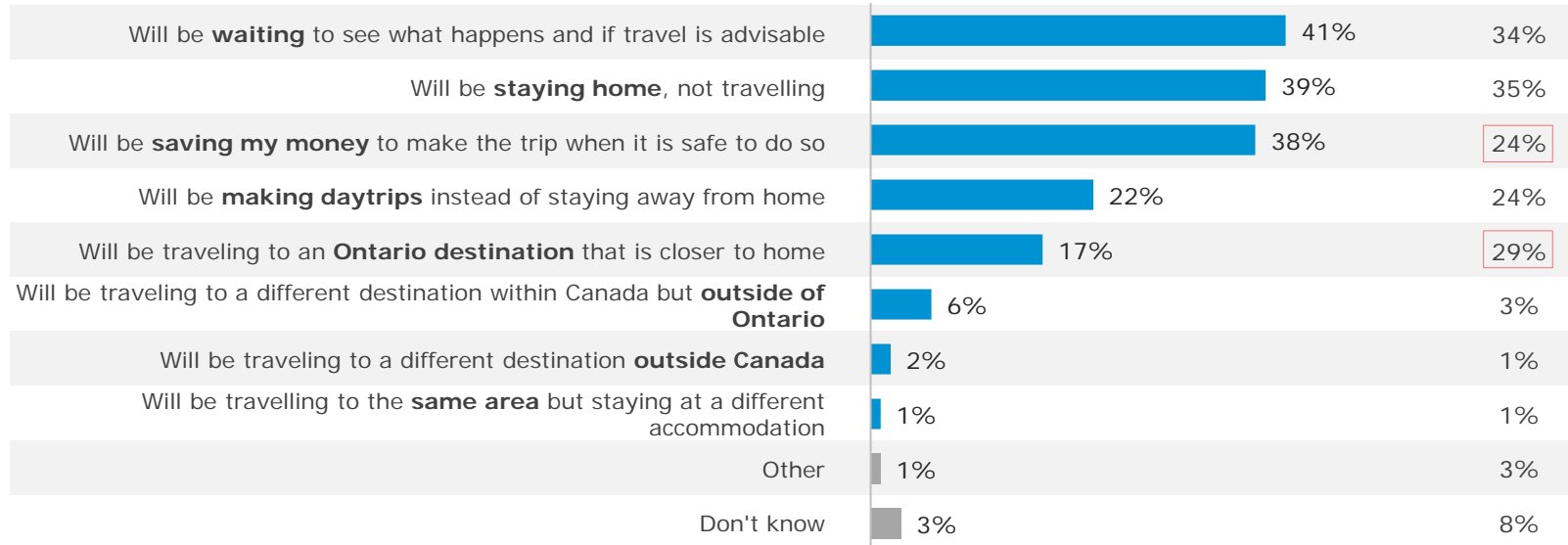
PLANS FOR FALL/ WINTER AMONG THOSE WHO ARE CANCELLING:
 Ontarians will wait and see while Huntsville travellers to consider in-province options



Ontarians



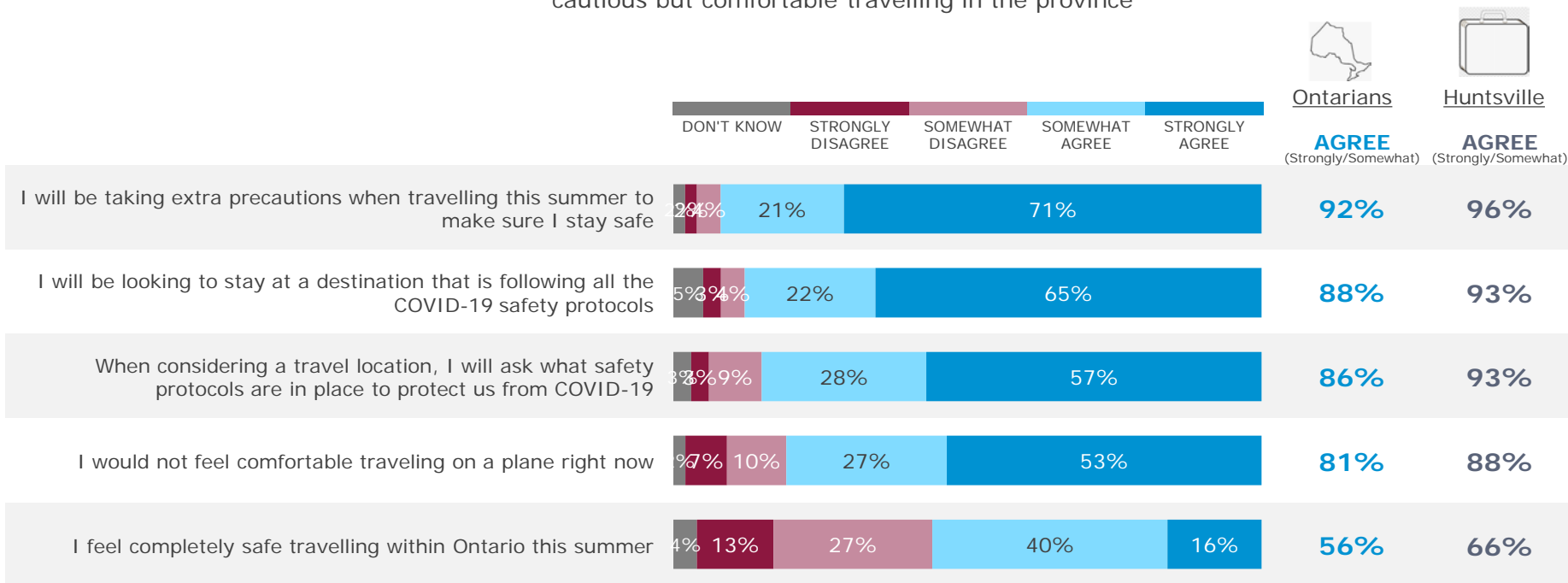
Huntsville



Base: Those who answered Somewhat/Very Unlikely or Definitely Won't in A4 (N=416)
 A5. What do you think you will be doing instead of your initial travel plans this Fall or Winter?

Because of COVID-19 Ontarians are cautious and take safety precautions when travelling

IMPACT OF COVID-19: All travellers are cautious; Huntsville travellers slightly more cautious but comfortable travelling in the province



Base: Total (N=900)

A8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.



Travelling in Ontario

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Muskoka area is most popular as a destination this summer



Ontarians

Likely to travel to Muskoka (Unaided + Aided)

54%

45%

30%



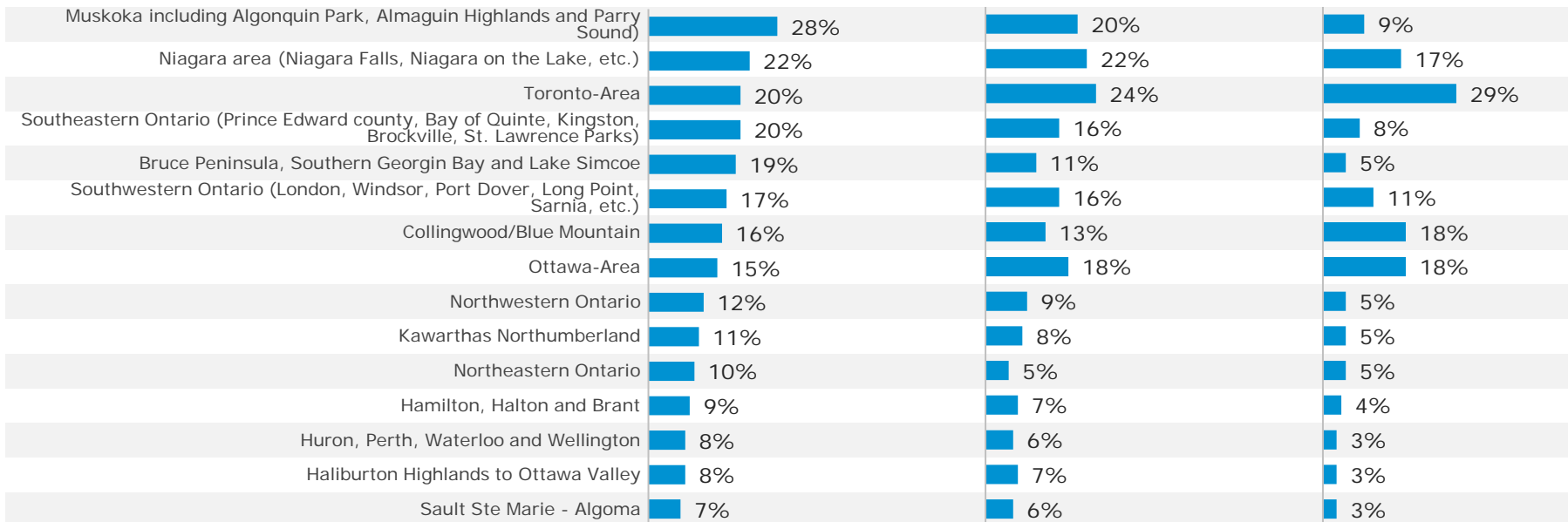
SUMMER
(July and August)



FALL
(Sept through Nov)



WINTER
(Dec through Feb)



Base: Those Answering Very/Somewhat Likely In SCR6
B3. Where in Ontario are you considering for your travel?

N=565

N=722

N=577

Ontarians are open to travelling to anywhere in Muskoka but see the region as diverse



Ontarians

GROUP 1: Ontarians are open to travel to anywhere in Muskoka rather than specific areas

There are **specific areas** within Muskoka that I would like to travel to  23%

I would be open to travelling to **any part** of Muskoka  77%

GROUP 2: Majority of Ontarians see Muskoka as a diverse region


There are a number of very different areas within Muskoka that all offer different things  60%

The whole Muskoka area is similar and offers the same type of vacation to travellers  40%

GROUP 3: Muskoka viewed mainly as an area for outdoor activities

Muskoka offers great vacation options to those who are looking for **outdoor** adventures  55%

Muskoka offers great vacation options for those who are looking for a **cultural** vacation  7%

Muskoka offers options for **both** culture or the outdoors  38%

Base: Total (N=900)

B6. Please consider the following groups of statements. In each, pick the one statement that best describe your opinion. Please pick one statement in each set.

Huntsville is the second most popular Muskoka destination in the summer and fall



Ontarians



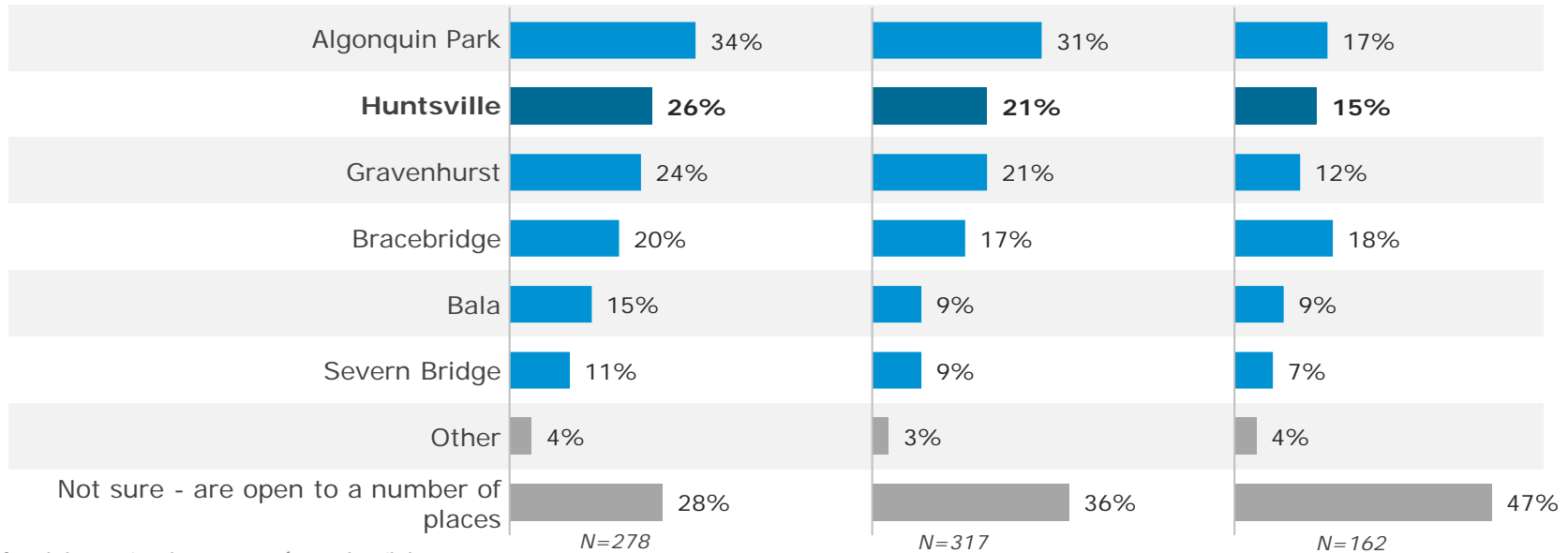
SUMMER
(July and August)



FALL
(September through November)



IN THE WINTER
(December through February)



Base: If Muskoka Mentioned In B3 Or Very/Somewhat Likely In B4
B5. Where in Muskoka would you consider travelling?



Impression of Huntsville



Huntsville meets travellers' expectations



Huntsville

Visitors were satisfied with their last trip

92%
SATISFIED

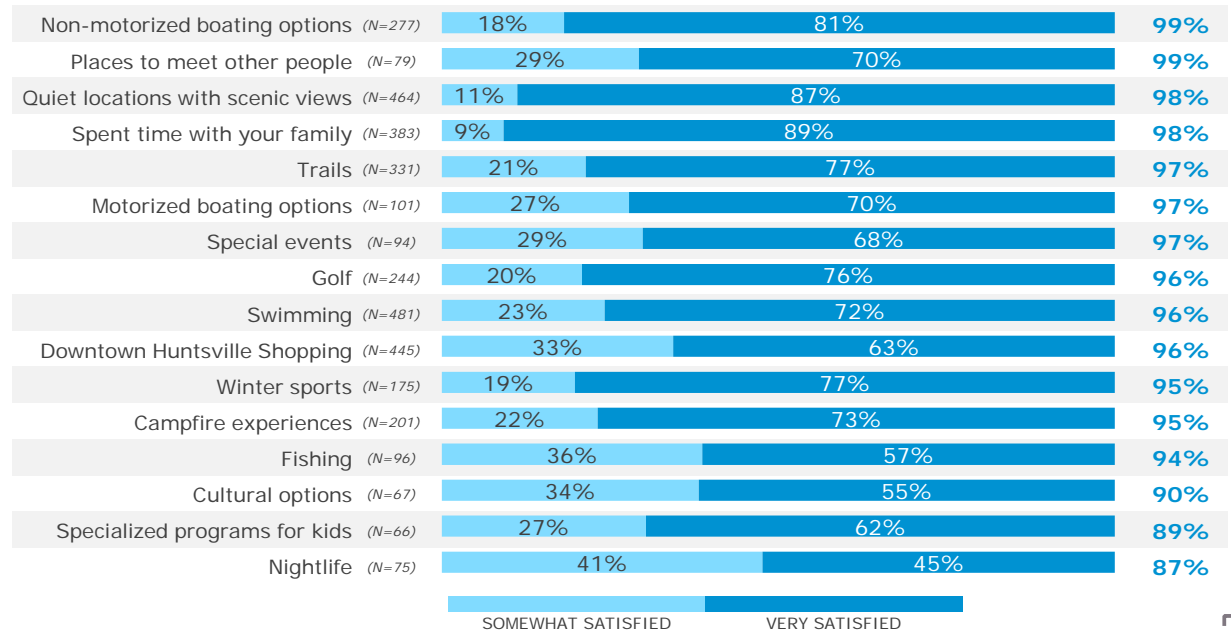
73%

20%

VERY SATISFIED

SOMEWHAT SATISFIED

Visitors were satisfied with Huntsville's activities



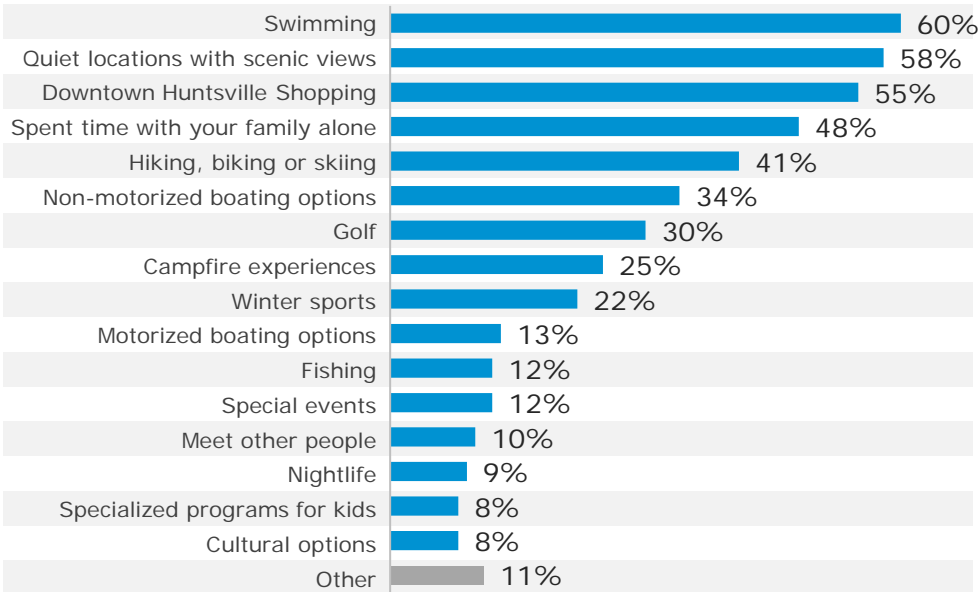
Base: Total (N=804)

B4. Overall, how satisfied were you with your last trip to Huntsville? (Again please consider the last time where you stayed overnight in Huntsville at paid accommodations).

Travellers enjoyed swimming, scenic views and shopping

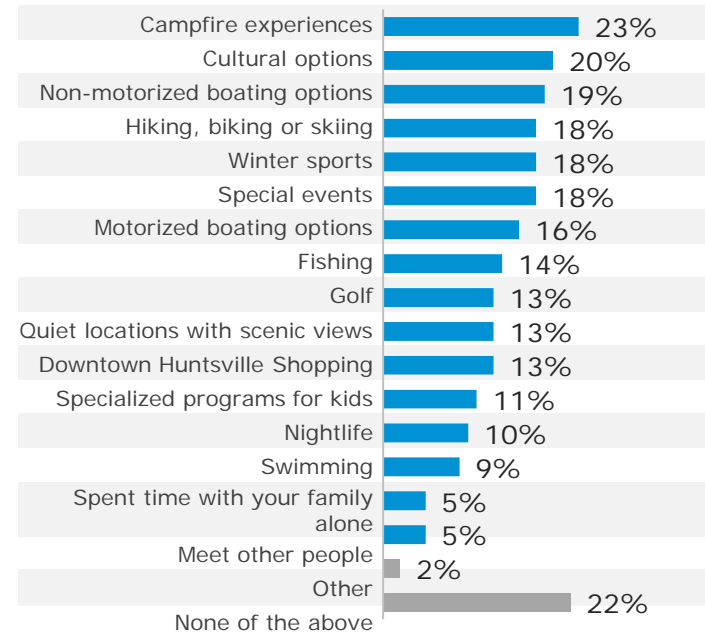


ACTIVITIES DONE IN HUNTSVILLE



ACTIVITIES WOULD BE INTERESTED IN DOING IN HUNTSVILLE

Huntsville



Base: Total (N=804)

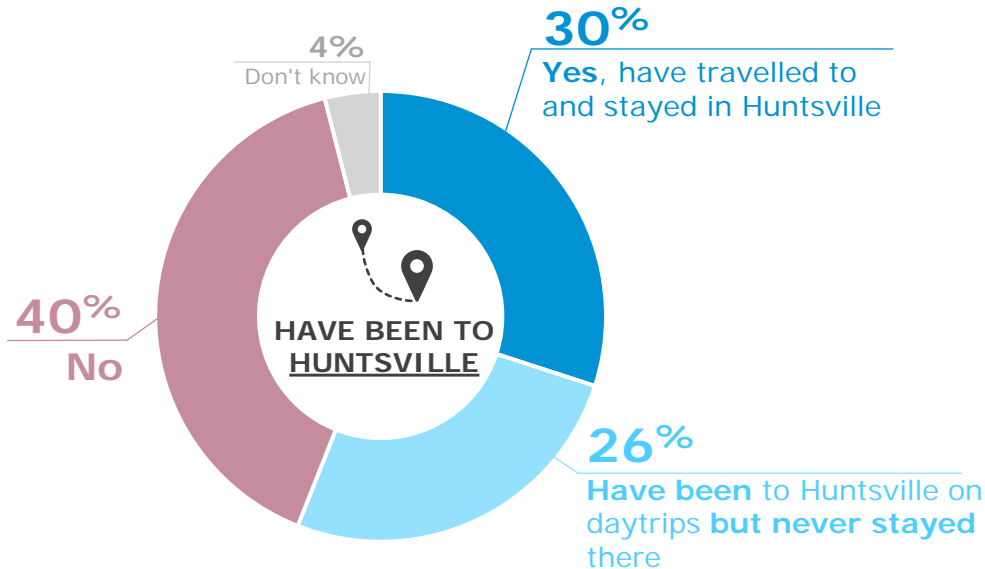
B5. Which of the following activities have you taken part in, on your trips to Huntsville?

Ontarians have travelled to Huntsville but are not that familiar with the town

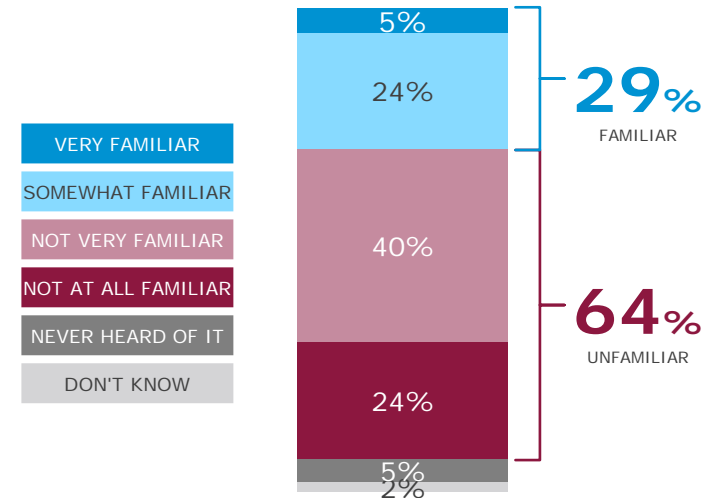


Ontarians

Over half of Ontarians have at least passed through Huntsville



Ontarians not that familiar with Huntsville



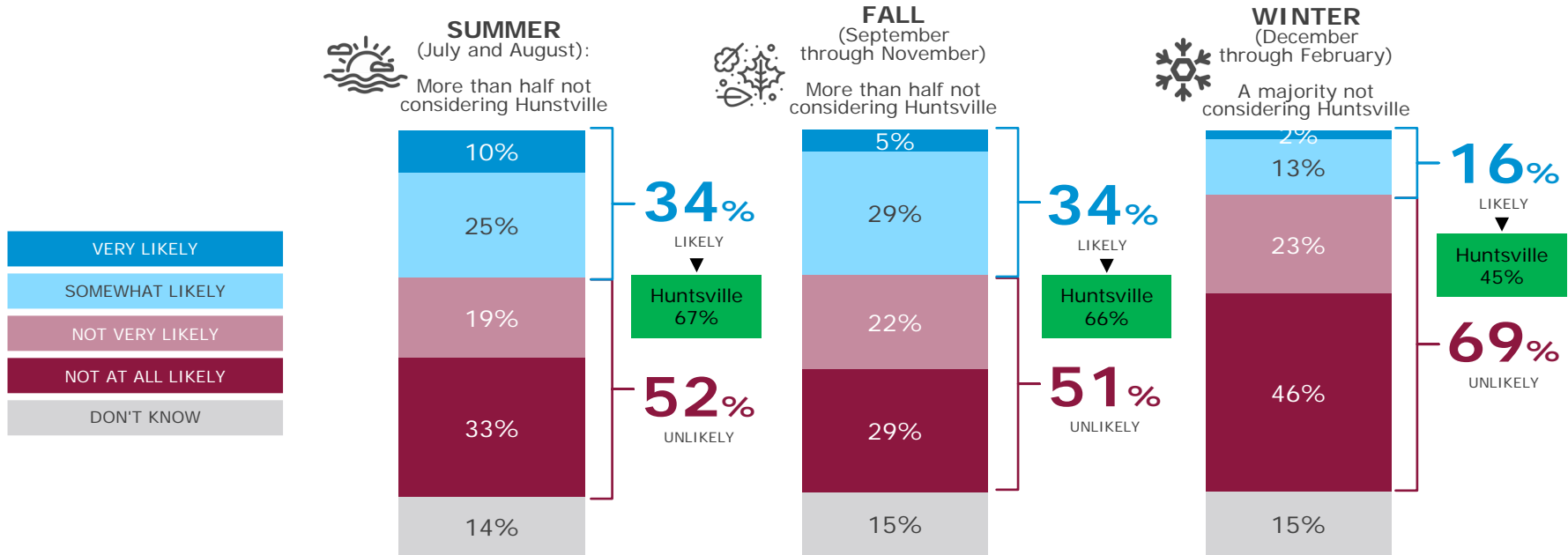
Base: Total (N=900)

C1. Have you ever been to Huntsville Ontario? | C2. How familiar are you with Huntsville?



A third of Ontarians would consider travel to Huntsville in the summer or fall

LIKELIHOOD TO CONSIDER TRAVELLING TO HUNTSVILLE: Huntsville travellers far more likely to consider Huntsville as a destination in all seasons



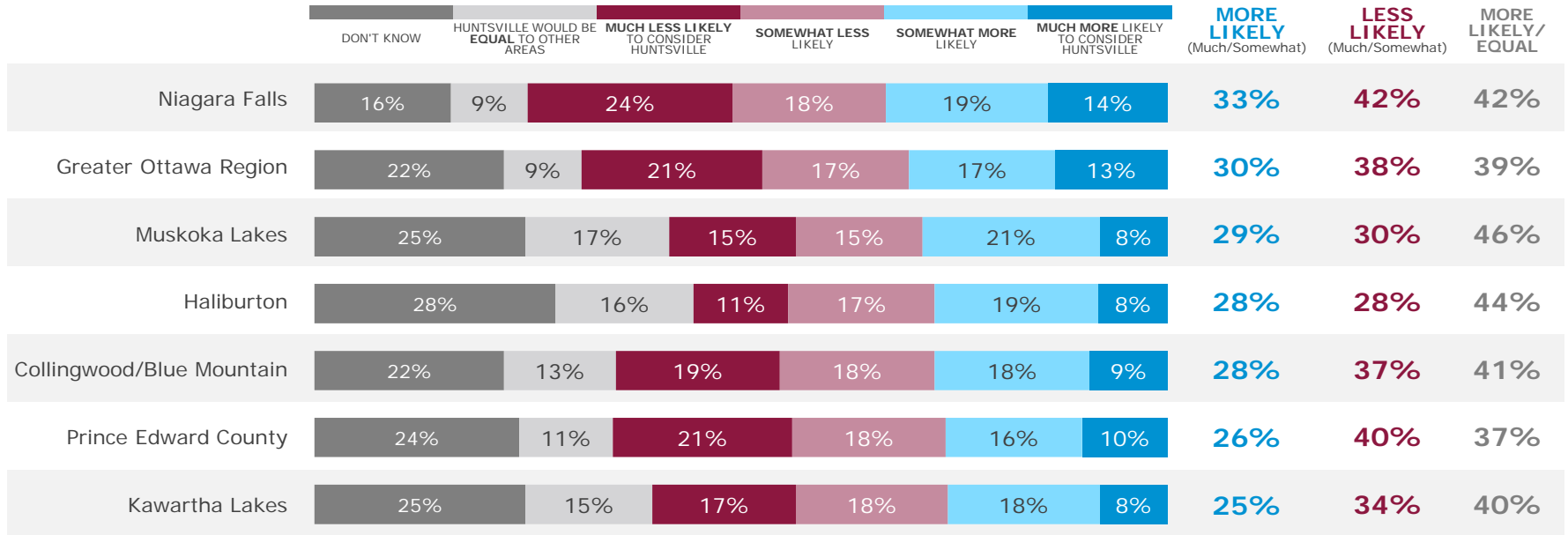
Base: Total (N=900); Total Huntsville (N=804)

C3. How likely would you be to consider a trip to Huntsville Ontario in each of the following time periods?

Huntsville is competing with other areas in Ontario and while not always preferred, the town is competitive



Ontarians



Base: Total (N=900)

C4. How likely would you be to consider a trip to Huntsville over each of the following travel destinations if you were planning a trip within Ontario?

Travellers who prefer Huntsville have multiple reasons including nature and familiarity



Ontarians

Beautiful scenery/nature- **17%**

Never been, interested in going - **15%**

Outdoor / water activities – **15%**

Been before and liked it – **12%**

Close / easy drive– **12%**

Family / friends close by – **9%**

Less crowded – **7%**

**TOP OF MIND
REASONS
TRAVELLERS ARE
MORE LIKELY TO
VISIT
HUNTSVILLE**



Huntsville

Been before and liked it - **21%**

Close / easy drive– **19%**

Beautiful scenery – **18%**

Family / friends close by – **12%**

Love the area – **12%**

Deerhurst Resort – **12%**

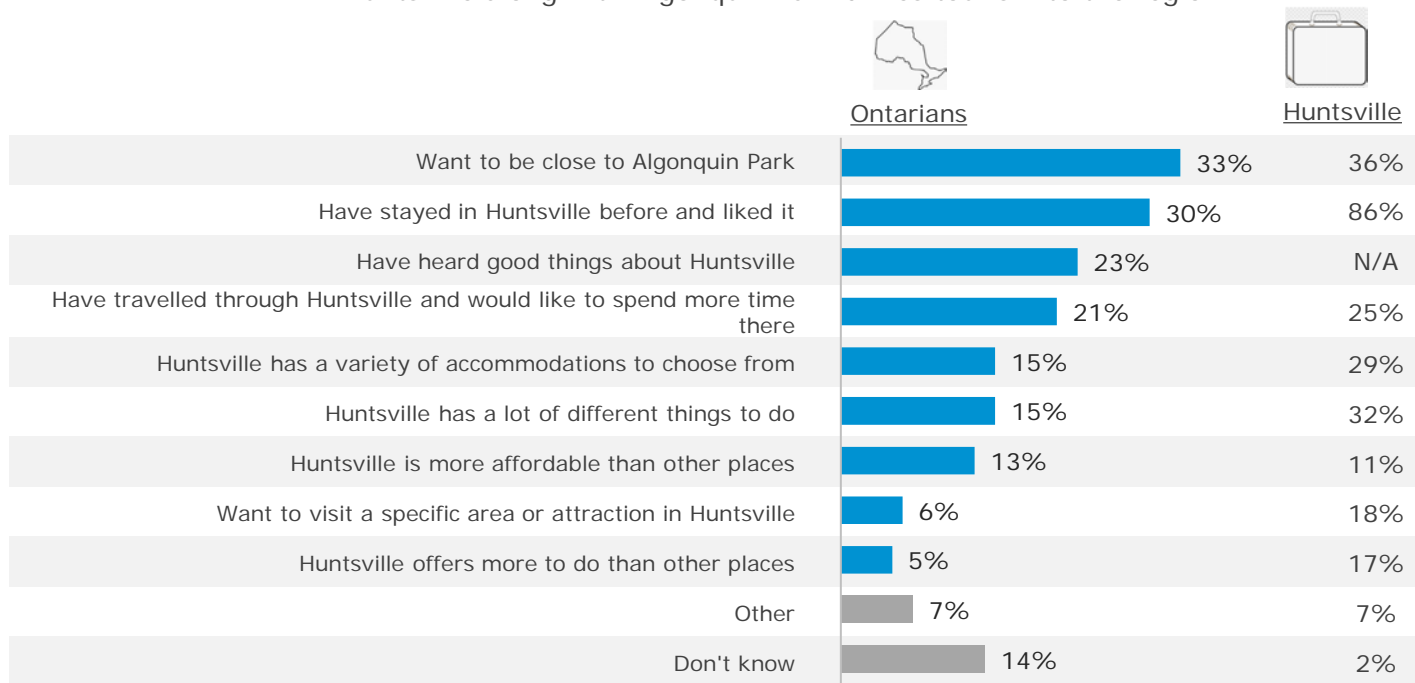
Accommodations available – **11%**

Base: *If Somewhat/Much Less Likely To Consider Huntsville In C4 (N=595)*

C8. Why are you less likely to visit Huntsville compared to other areas of the province? Please be as specific as possible.

Familiarity encourages Ontarians to consider Huntsville as a travel destination

REASONS FOR CONSIDERING HUNTSVILLE: Familiarity with Huntsville along with Algonquin Park drives tourism to the region



Base: *If Much/Somewhat More Likely To Consider Huntsville In C4 (General population N=508); B9 (N=667)
 C6/ B11. Which, if any, are reasons that you are more likely to consider Huntsville compared to other areas of the province?*

Ontarians choose other destinations because of the lack of knowledge of Huntsville and interest in other areas in the province



Ontarians

Not familiar with Huntsville - **21%**

Other destinations also offer activities and may be more interesting - **20%**

Far away and prefer a closer destinations – **14%**

Have already been and would like to try someplace new – **7%**

No family/friends in the area – **5%**

Not interested in Huntsville – **5%**

**TOP OF MIND
REASONS
TRAVELLERS ARE
LESS LIKELY TO VISIT
HUNTSVILLE**



Huntsville

Other destinations also offer activities and may be more interesting - **27%**

Have already been and would like to try someplace new – **16%**

Far away and prefer a closer destinations – **16%**

Expensive – **10%**

Too crowded and too many tourists – **6%**

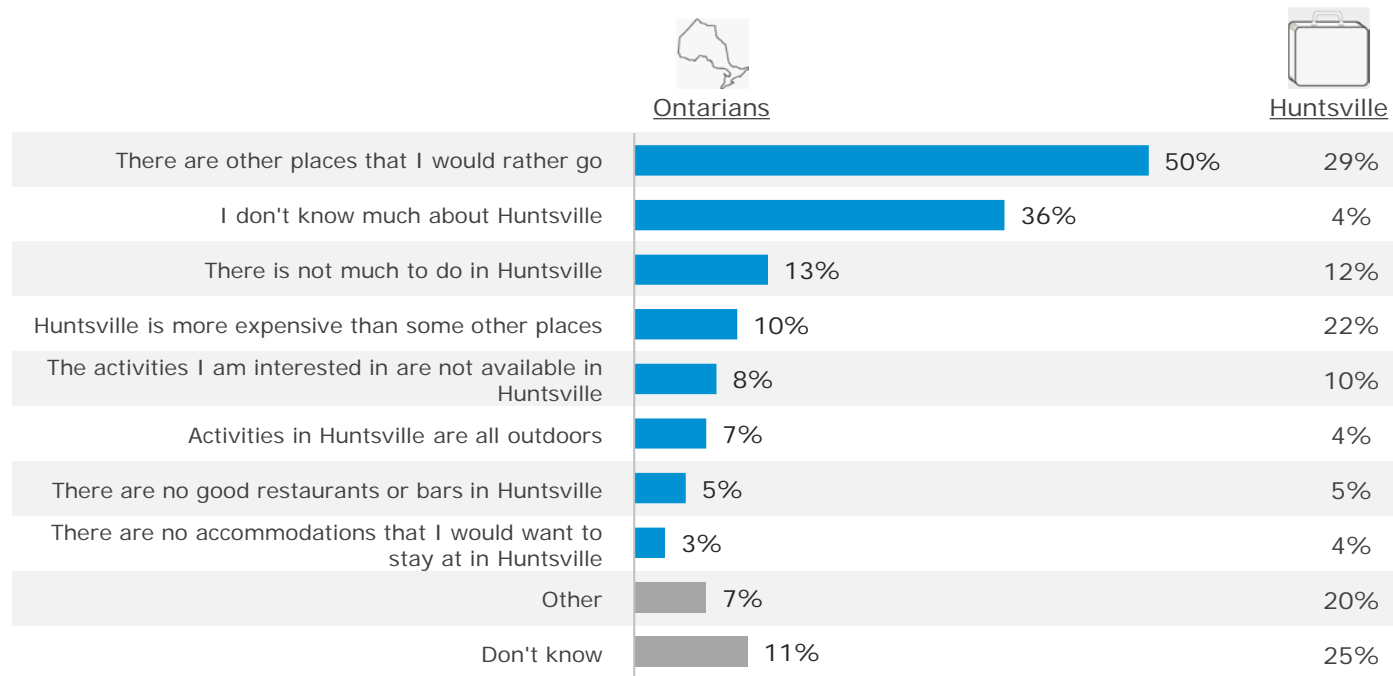
Not familiar with Huntsville – **3%**

Base: *If Somewhat/Much Less Likely To Consider Huntsville In C4 (N=595)*

C8. *Why are you less likely to visit Huntsville compared to other areas of the province? Please be as specific as possible.*

When prompted, Ontarians choose other destinations because they are preferred and/ or they lack of knowledge of Huntsville

REASONS FOR NOT CONSIDERING HUNTSVILLE: Half of Ontarians prefer other destinations while only a third of Huntsville travellers feel this way



Base: *If Somewhat/Much Less Likely To Consider Huntsville In C4 (N=595); B9 (N=497)*

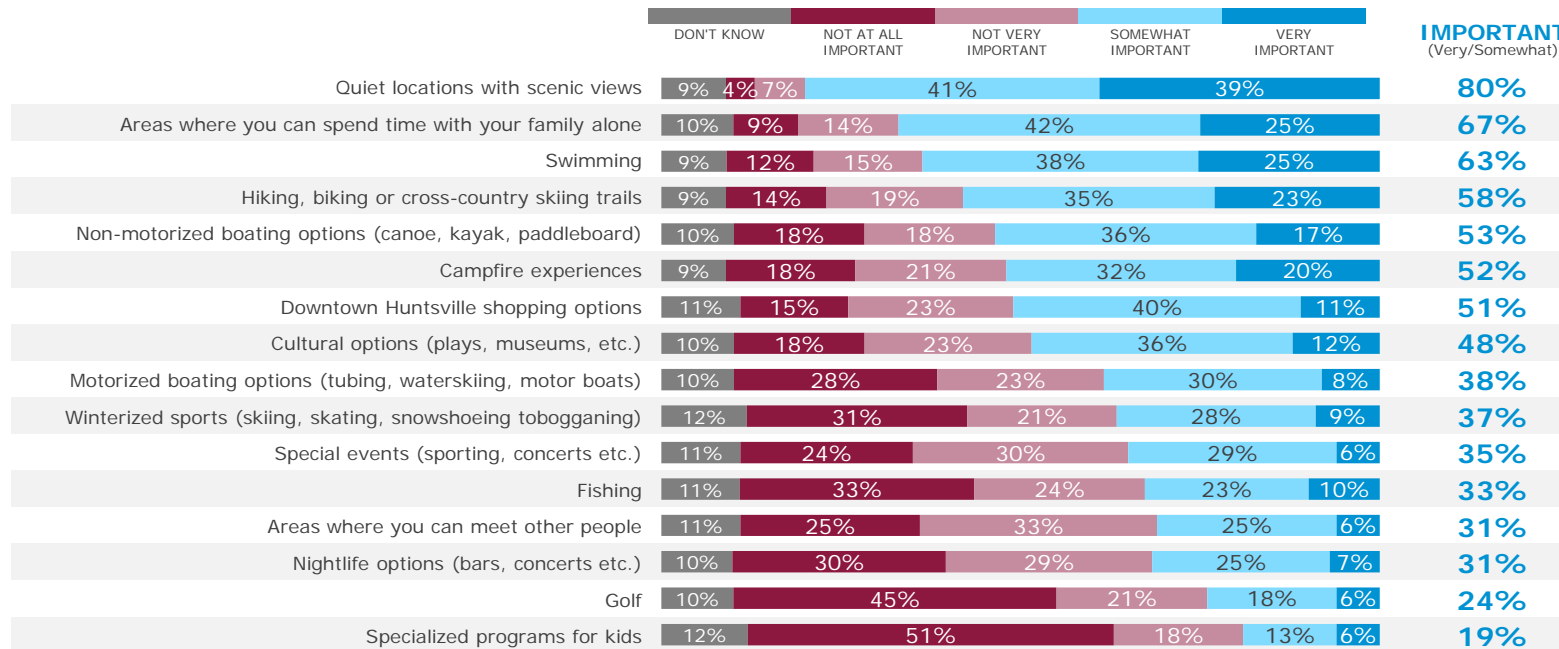
C9/ B14. Which, if any, are reasons that you are less likely to consider Huntsville compared to other areas of the province?

Scenery and tranquillity are most important for potential travellers to Huntsville



Ontarians

HUNTSVILLE'S ATTRACTIVENESS AS A DESTINATION: By far the scenery and tranquillity are appealing to Ontarians considering Huntsville as a destination



Base: Total (N=900)

C13. If you were considering a trip to Huntsville, how important would it be that it offer you each of the following types of activities.

Huntsville is known for its proximity to Algonquin and a variety of activities but knowledge relatively low

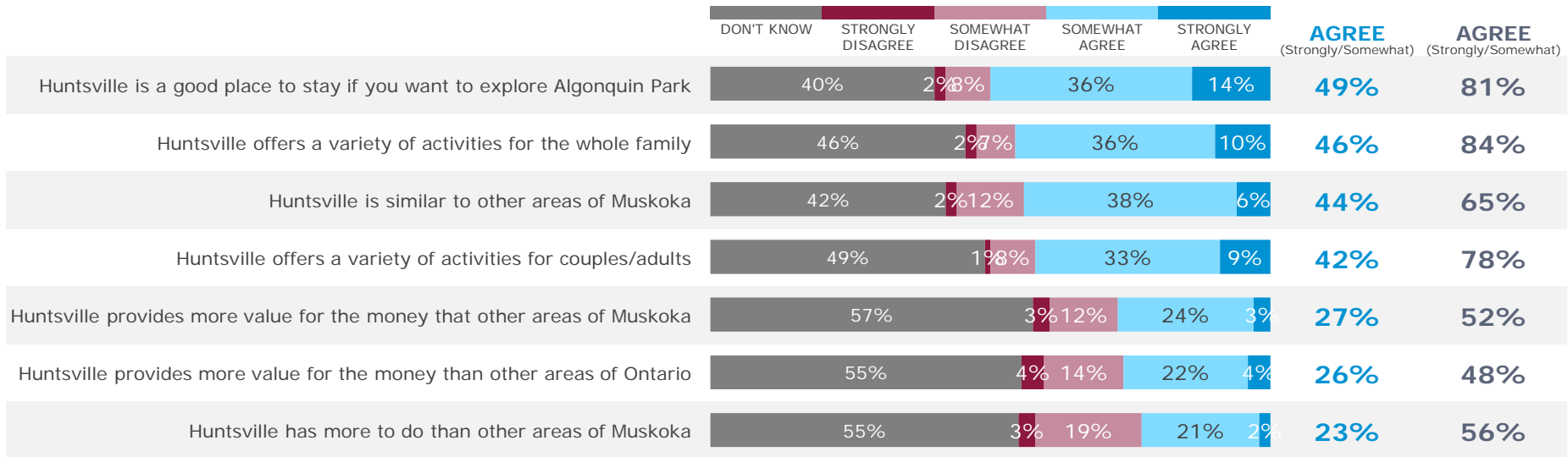
HUNTSVILLE'S REPUTATION: Ontarians are not as familiar with Huntsville but half know it as a place to explore Algonquin and are aware that the area offers a variety of activities



Ontarians



Huntsville



Base: Total (N=900)

C12. Based on what you may have seen, read or heard about Huntsville, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Algonquin Park most well known and visited area near Huntsville

FAMILIARITY WITH HUNTSVILLE: Ontarians are most familiar with Algonquin Park



Ontarians

Huntsville

At least heard of

Heard of

Visited

HAVE NEVER HEARD OF IT
HAVE HEARD OF IT BUT DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT IT
KNOW ABOUT IT BUT NEVER BEEN THERE
HAVE VISITED

	HAVE NEVER HEARD OF IT	HAVE HEARD OF IT BUT DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT IT	KNOW ABOUT IT BUT NEVER BEEN THERE	HAVE VISITED	At least heard of	Heard of	Visited
Algonquin Provincial Park	9%	11%	33%	47%	91%	92%	73%
Downtown Huntsville Shopping	42%	21%	15%	22%	58%	94%	80%
Arrowhead Provincial Park	41%	22%	25%	12%	59%	85%	41%
Group of Seven Outdoor Gallery	48%	22%	23%	7%	52%	70%	26%
Hidden Valley Highlands Ski Area	55%	24%	15%	7%	45%	79%	37%
Algonquin Theatre	57%	21%	17%	5%	43%	60%	18%
Huntsville Lion's Lookout	67%	15%	12%	5%	33%	51%	26%
Muskoka Heritage Place	63%	19%	15%	4%	37%	57%	18%
Treetop Trekking with Huntsville	57%	19%	20%	4%	43%	74%	11%
Sugarbush Hill Maple Farm	61%	18%	18%	3%	39%	51%	8%
Echo Valley Nature and Bike Trails	65%	18%	15%	3%	35%	41%	6%
Hunter's Bay Trail	73%	14%	11%	3%	27%	35%	8%
Limberlost Forest and Wildlife Reserve	73%	15%	10%	2%	27%	41%	10%
Bush Poker Axe Throwing	77%	12%	9%	2%	23%	27%	1%
Escape Cabins	74%	13%	11%	2%	26%	48%	6%

Base: Total (N=900)

C14. How familiar are you with each of the following...

Provincial parks near Huntsville are appealing to Ontarians as a place to visit

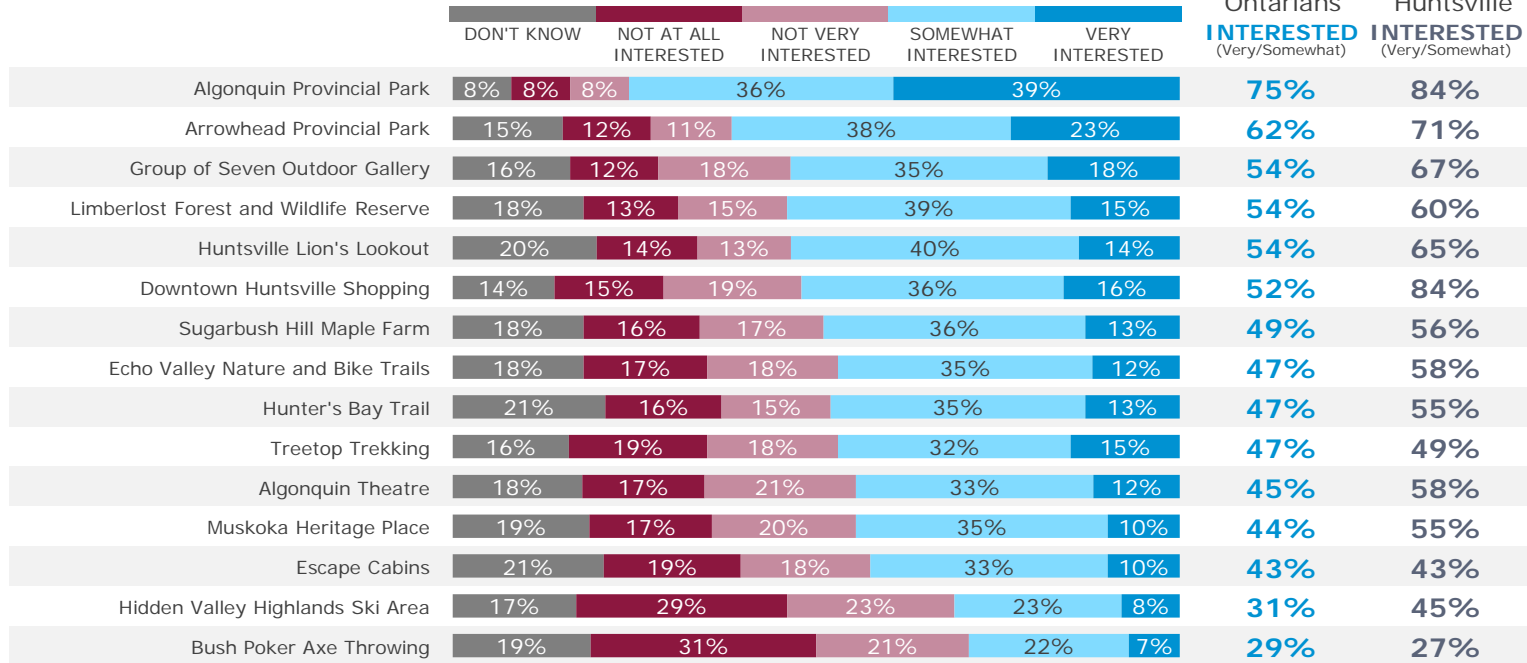
INTEREST IN HUNTSVILLE: Ontarians are also interested in visiting the provincial parks



Ontarians
INTERESTED
(Very/Somewhat)



Huntsville
INTERESTED
(Very/Somewhat)



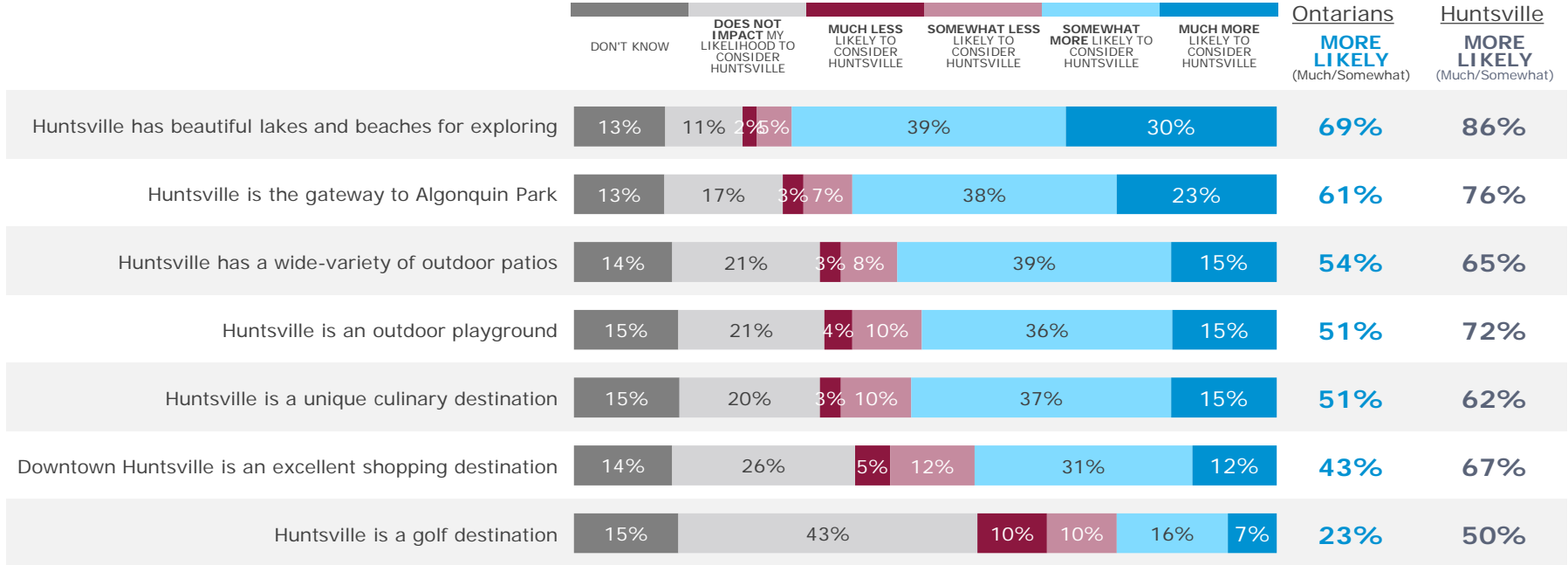
A fifth neither agree or disagree suggesting low knowledge of these areas

Base: Total (N=900); Huntsville travellers (N=804)

C15. And how interested would you be in visiting each of the following? If you have visited it in the past, please indicate your interest in visiting it again.

Huntsville as a 'beaches and lake' destination and 'gateway to Algonquin' resonate with Ontarians

DESCRIBING HUNTSVILLE: Travellers respond to Huntsville as a beautiful area with lakes and a gateway to Algonquin Park



Base: Total (N=900)

C16. The following are statements that are about Huntsville. For each of the following, how does this statement impact your likelihood to consider Huntsville as vacation destination?

After hearing about Huntsville more Ontarians would consider travel to the town



Ontarians

Prior to hearing about Huntsville:

34% LIKELY

34% LIKELY

16% LIKELY



SUMMER
(July and August):



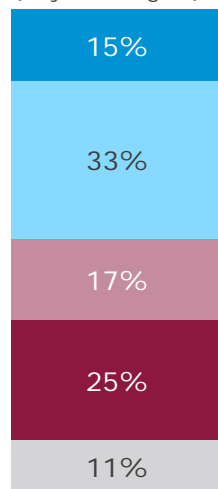
FALL
(September through November)



WINTER
(December through February)

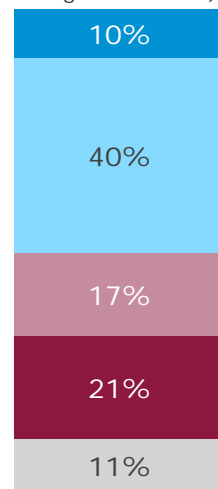
Huntsville travellers already 'sold' on the area and do not need to be prompted to visit

	Summer	Fall	Winter
Pre:	67%	66%	45%
Post:	69%	70%	44%



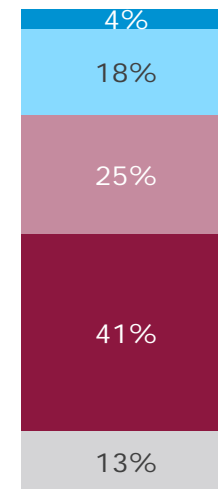
48% LIKELY

41% UNLIKELY



51% LIKELY

38% UNLIKELY



21% LIKELY

65% UNLIKELY

Base: Total (N=900)

C17. Thinking about all you have heard about Huntsville today, how likely would you be to consider a trip to Huntsville in each of the following time periods? *Details in the notes



Summary of Findings

COVID-19 is making travellers hesitant to travel outside of Ontario, but most are willing to make a plan in province

- Prior to COVID-19, three quarters of all travellers had booked their summer plans and a majority had travel plans for both the fall and winter. Travel within the province was most popular in the summer months but in the winter more travellers were planning international travel.
 - Frequent travellers to Huntsville are more likely than the Ontarians to travel within the province in both summer and the fall.
- Because of COVID-19, travellers have cancelled summer travel plans outside of Ontario but a majority have not cancelled local travel. Those who have cancelled, plan to stay close to home, go on daytrips and replace travel outside the province to destinations within Ontario.
- Ontarians are more optimistic about fall and winter travel plans and are hesitant to cancel destinations to other parts of Canada. Half believe they will still travel within Canada and more Ontarians will consider travelling outside of Canada than in the summer (although a majority have cancelled plans). Those who have cancelled will wait to see what happens, travel when it's safe, or just stay home and go on daytrips.
 - Huntsville travellers, however, are hesitant about keeping fall and winter travel plans outside of Ontario and are likely to cancel destinations to other parts of Canada and abroad.
- Covid-19 is changing the priorities of Ontarian travelers and most are thinking about staying safe and taking precautions when travelling including ensuring that accommodations are following COVID-19 safety protocols and limiting plane travel. And only half of Ontarians feel safe travelling within the province.
- Huntsville travellers, although slightly more cautious, feel safer travelling within the province compared to other travellers.

Huntsville is popular for their outdoor activities, but less for cultural experiences

- For the general population, the Muskoka region is the most popular travel destination in the summer and is also popular in the fall. Huntsville is the second most popular destination within this region (behind Algonquin Park). As the winter months approach, Ontarians begin gravitating toward cities such as Toronto and Ottawa as travel destinations.
- Huntsville is a competitive destination with many other areas of the province. While it's the preferred destination for the Huntsville visitors, the general population who are less familiar with Huntsville are just as likely to consider travel to other regions.
- Despite the fact that more than half of the general population has been to Huntsville, most have a low familiarity with the area. It is best known for its scenic views, tranquility and outdoor activities. However, travellers are less aware of a different side of Huntsville, that offers different experiences for families or adults, culture or even shopping. Outside of Algonquin Park and, to a lesser degree, Arrowhead Park, travellers are unfamiliar with Huntsville attractions.
 - As well, frequent travellers to the area are not that familiar with some of the local activities in Huntsville including some nature spots and cultural activities but would be interested in learning more.
- Hearing about the Huntsville offerings, even in the confines of the survey, increased interest in visiting the area among the general population of Ontarians in all season with the largest increase in the fall.
 - Huntsville travellers are sold on Huntsville and consider it a preferred provincial destination, so hearing about the Huntsville offerings did not encourage them to consider a visit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- COVID offers a unique opportunity to encourage more Ontarians to stay in the province when travelling and Huntsville offers activities, attractions and beautiful scenery year-round that attracts visitors.
- Huntsville does not need to fight against any negative impressions among Ontario travellers. It is a popular area of Muskoka and would be a travel consideration compared to most other areas of Ontario.
- Huntsville's primary draw is its beautiful scenery and tranquil nature along with its close proximity to Algonquin Park, one of Ontario's better known outdoor attractions.
- While the scenery and Algonquin are reasons that Ontarians consider Huntsville, they also **need to know more about what Huntsville has to offer** to encourage travel to the area in the summer and other seasons. Increasing awareness in other sides of Huntsville, such as cultural activities dining/patio options or shopping, could increase interest and competitiveness. This could also differentiate it from other areas of Muskoka, increase the lengths of stay to the area and provide more reasons to travel through winter months.
- Frequent Huntsville travellers are very satisfied with their experiences and are likely to be frequent visitors and travel in multiple seasons, highlighting the importance of attracting first-time visitors and promoting seasonal activities.
- Safety is a consideration for travellers and stressing safety measures and in-province travel as a safer alternative for holidays could alleviate some of the fears of travelling.
- Increasing awareness presents a challenge. Key messages that resonate with travellers include:
 - Huntsville offers tranquility and beautiful scenery and is close to Algonquin
 - Huntsville offers a wide variety of activities that includes outdoor and cultural activities
 - Travellers to Huntsville are more than satisfied with what the area has to offer
 - In-province travel is a safe alternative for holidays



Lesli Martin, Vice President

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