

NATIONAL RESIDENT SENTIMENT 2022

Introduction

For the U.S. travel and tourism industry, 2022 may well be remembered as the first year of the new, post-COVID 19 world. With the epidemic waning, and Americans eager to hit the road, it's important to understand how residents view the industry's place in the economy and their local communities.

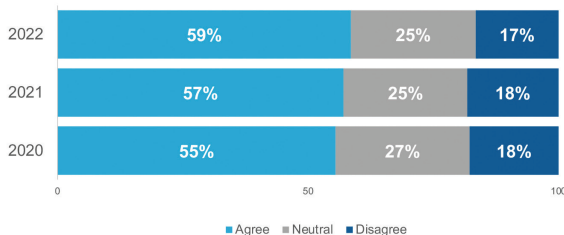
Longwoods International's Resident Sentiment research looks at public perceptions from all sides, including the positives and negatives of economic development, environmental impacts, over-tourism, quality of life and other areas. In the third year of this study, 4,000 American adults were surveyed, with the fieldwork completed in July 2022.

This type of research provides destinations with a unique opportunity to create a well-informed engagement strategy with local residents on the subject of tourism in their communities. By understanding where public opinion lies from both positive and negative perspectives, destinations can work more effectively with local partners to increase support for tourism development efforts.

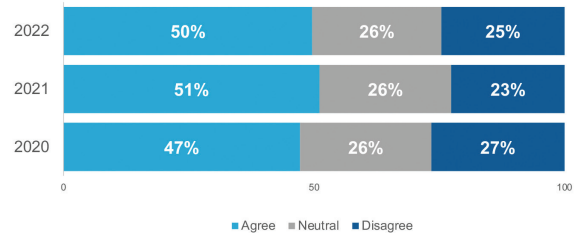
Key Findings

General support for the travel and tourism industry remains strong, with that support even stronger in 2022 than during the heart of the pandemic. And residents generally see growth in tourism as a plus for their communities.

In general, the positive benefits of tourism outweigh the negative impacts

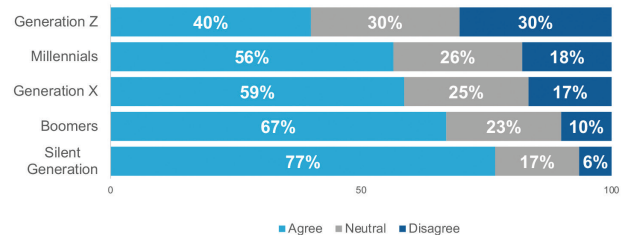


I would like to see more tourists coming to my area

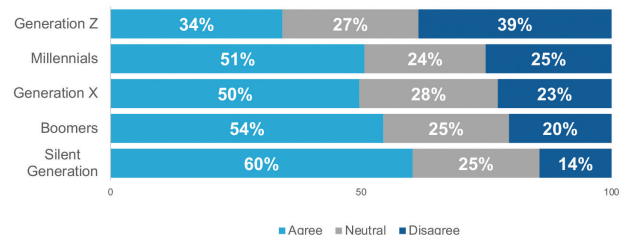


But there is a generational divide over the benefits of tourism, with older Americans generally more supportive than younger generations. The contrast is most pronounced with Generation Z, ages 18-25, with this age cohort the most skeptical about the value of tourism both broadly and locally.

In general, the positive benefits of tourism outweigh the negative impacts

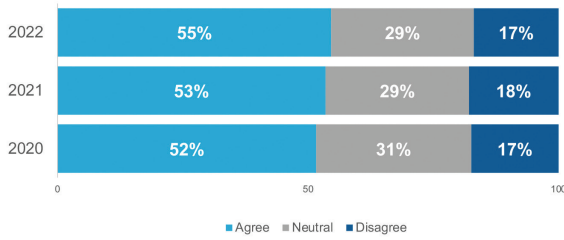


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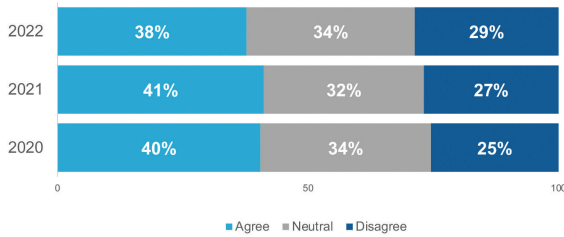


Residents voiced support for specific strategies to grow local tourism, such as hosting major events and building new tourism facilities. Respondents also demonstrated a strong belief in the need for planned and controlled tourism development, but were mixed in their assessment of government management of such development.

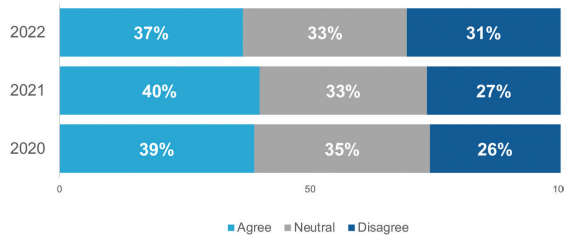
We need planned and controlled tourism development



My state government is doing a good job managing the pace of tourism development

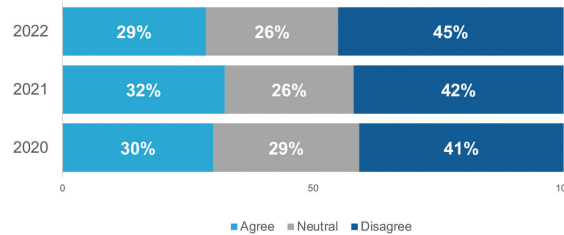


My local government is doing a good job managing the pace of tourism development



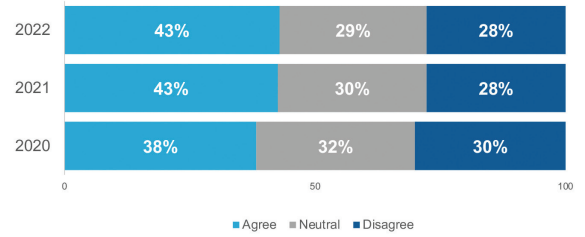
Despite their general support for tourism development, residents believe they do not have knowledge of or a voice in tourism development decisions taking place in their communities.

Residents are consulted when major tourism development takes place in this area

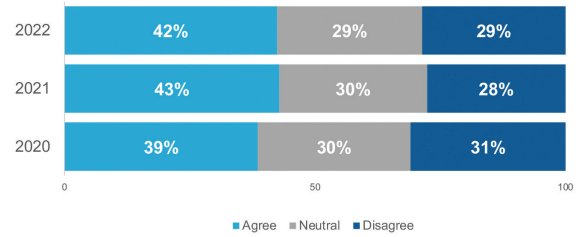


Resident attitudes about accommodation-sharing services such as Airbnb and Vrbo are mixed. While acknowledging that these types of accommodations provide economic opportunities for residents, respondents also blame them for raising the cost of living for local residents and disrupting neighborhoods.

Accommodation-sharing services like Airbnb, Vrbo, etc., can cause inflation in rents, raising the cost of living for locals

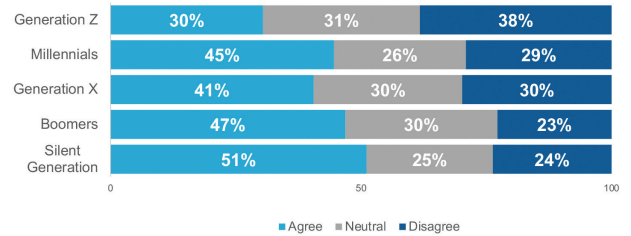


People who use accommodation-sharing services like Airbnb, Vrbo, etc., can be disruptive to local neighborhoods



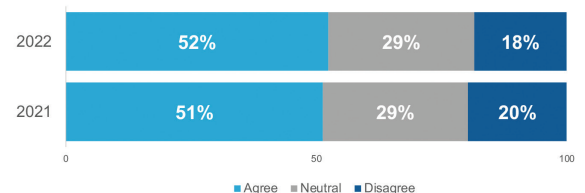
This is another case of generational differences in attitudes, with Generation Z less critical of negative impacts of accommodation-sharing services to local neighborhoods.

People who use accommodation-sharing services like Airbnb, Vrbo, etc., can be disruptive to local neighborhoods



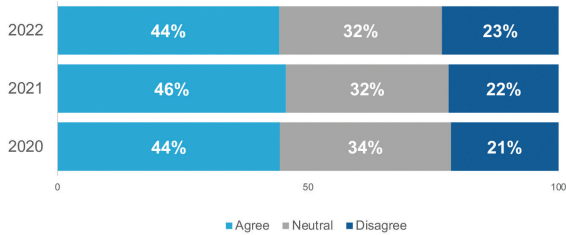
Some residents do support the use of public funds for tourism promotion, although Generation Z is slightly less supportive than older age cohorts. Nearly half of Americans believe hotel/lodging taxes should be used for local services, rather than just for marketing. Most respondents view tourism as a positive force for economic development, attracting investment, and businesses to their communities.

Tourism attracts new businesses to our local area



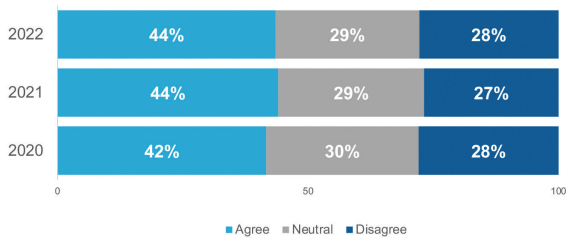
And while acknowledging that there are professional positions in the tourism industry with good pay and benefits and the opportunity for advancement, nearly half of Americans still view tourism jobs as low paying and seasonal.

Most jobs in the tourism industry are low-paying and seasonal

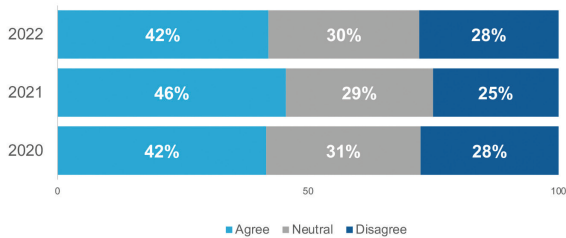


Residents do credit tourism with improving their quality of life. They point to increased recreational offerings and retail options as benefits of having visitors and tourism.

I have more recreational opportunities (places to go and things to do) because of tourism in this area

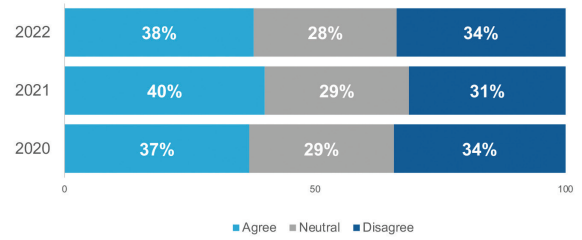


Shopping opportunities are better here as a result of tourism

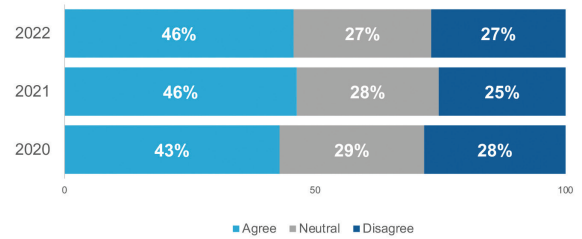


But some respondents also believe tourism produces negative local impacts. They blame tourism and visitors for overcrowding at attractions and other leisure venues, as well as parking woes and congestion.

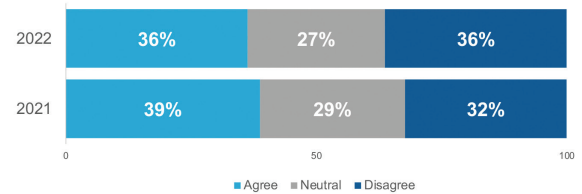
Attractions and leisure facilities are becoming overcrowded because of more tourists



Tourists add to traffic congestion and parking problems here



Overcrowding by tourists is spoiling our natural areas



Research Takeaways

- Support for tourism and the tourism industry has grown since the peak of the pandemic.
- There is a generational divide in this support, with Generation Z (18-25-year-olds) more skeptical of the benefits of the industry.
- Residents support public tourism promotion and new tourism development for their communities, but feel in the dark about such planning and development.
- Residents see expanding entertainment options as a positive of local tourism, while issues such as overcrowding and congestion are a concern for some residents.
- The view that tourism jobs are primarily seasonal and low-paying persists.