



**Economic Impact Study:**  
**Minerals North Conference BC**  
**Quesnel 2023**

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## 1. Executive Summary

The annual Minerals North Conference took place in Quesnel from May 31 to June 2, 2023, and was attended by 310 delegates. One of the largest mining conferences in Western Canada, Minerals North is renowned for taking pride in its involvement with its host communities, and based on feedback from both organizers and attendees, the conference was considered a resounding success.

From a numerical perspective, there was \$610,000 of Economic Impact from Attendee spend in the City of Quesnel (\$1,968 per delegate based on 310 attendees), and 32 metric tons of CO2 emissions from travel to the destination (0.1 metric tons per delegate). With no prior reference, these numbers provide a baseline against which to measure future events hosted in the city. In addition, this report includes recommendations to help increase efficiency and improve the delegate experience, with the intention of improving both economic and environmental impact going forward.

Based on the findings of this report, there is realistic potential for Quesnel to engage in an events strategy targeting medium-sized conferences & events with a maximum of 500 and a 'sweet-spot' of 100-300 attendees.

## 2. Introduction

### Background: Minerals North Conference BC, and the 2023 Quesnel Conference

The Minerals North Conference is held annually and hosted by communities across northern British Columbia. It is one of the largest northern mining conferences in Western Canada and is distinct due to the warm hospitality derived from community involvement. The event provides an opportunity for local communities to showcase their capacity to service the mineral industry, for community leaders to learn about economic and policy issues that affect the minerals sector, and for the industry to be informed of local issues and community goals.

Having started in 1989, the conference also helps put destinations on the map with the minerals industry, and in some cases, there has been spin-off value to host communities through development of new mineral-based business or infrastructure in the local area. This, combined with the tourism generated by bringing delegates from around the province and the country, means that the conference is a genuine opportunity to generate long-term economic benefit for communities that are proactive and successful in their hosting.

Quesnel is outside of usual catchment area for host locations (considered to be Highway 16 and north) but was deemed a good option due to its good facilities. Having used destinations including Ft St James, Prince George, Stewart, Burns Lake, Terrace, Vanderhoof, Smithers, Houston and Chetwynd in recent years, the organizers were looking for a strong turnout following the multi-year hiatus caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and Quesnel offered an accessible location.

The 2023 conference took place in Quesnel from May 31 to June 2, and attended by 310 visitors split between exhibitors (~40%) and delegates (~60%). The dates of the conference were driven by the organizer's midweek requirement together with availability of accommodation and meeting space. Based on operations and delegate feedback, the 2023 Minerals North Conference in Quesnel was deemed a success.

### Objectives of this study

The City of Quesnel requires an assessment which:

1. summarizes the economic, social, and environmental impacts of Minerals North on the City,
2. summarizes advantages and concerns around the City's capacity to host larger events, and
3. outlines actions the City of Quesnel can take locally to address these concerns

### **3. Economic Impact**

*Objective: Outline the direct economic impact of Minerals North within Quesnel.*

#### Economic Impact Model

The Economic Impact model in this report is based on the B.C. Input-Output Model (BCIOM), which is used to generate regional economic dependency figures, as well as employment and revenue multipliers. It is also used to assess the regional impact of various projects and economic events, and is made up of four components: Direct effects, Indirect effects, Induced effects and Net effects:

DIRECT EFFECTS measure the actual expenditures directly generated by the conference organizers and attendees within the community.

INDIRECT EFFECTS measure expenditures that occur subsequent to direct spending; this category includes companies that supply goods and services to the accommodation sector, restaurant suppliers, etc.

INDUCED EFFECTS measure the impact created by additional income accruing to individuals whose work was created by the direct and indirect activities described above being spent within the community.

NET EFFECTS estimate the expenditures lost from business that would otherwise come to the community but was displaced because of the presence of the event.

The result of these effects results in TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT (the result of all spending attributable to the event), and TAX REVENUE accruing to municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government. It should be stated that BCIOM uses several assumptions about BC's economy:

- models are linear – and assumes production changes in proportion to demand;
- change is immediate – and the time taken for changes to happen are not considered;
- there are no capacity constraints – and an increase in demand can be satisfied;
- personal income is spent – at a rate of 95% of disposable income; and
- there is stability of relationships between industries.

Source: [www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/statistics/economy/input-output-model](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/statistics/economy/input-output-model)

## Methodology, Data sources & Assumptions

The model above has been used to generate the economic impact information below, with Attendee and Organizer direct spend being calculated and then used to apply Indirect, Induced and Net effect criteria.

### Expenditure Data Sources:

- Extrapolation of survey reporting by 89/310 conference attendees.
- Average room rate based on average of attendee-reported room rate of \$142.24, validated by cross-referencing sweep of online hotel aggregator sites (Expedia, Hotels.com etc.).
- Average hotel stay of 2.58 nights based on survey data.
- Average F&B costs of \$20/breakfast, \$30/lunch, \$40/dinner and \$20 for drinks/entertainment, assuming 1 breakfast, 2 lunches and 1 dinner included in conference package.
- Shopping spend of \$15/day in sundries/souvenirs.
- Gas purchases based on 50% of the 77% of self-drive attendees.
- **'Conference Spend' (community spend required in the delivery of the event) has been calculated at \$123,577.20, based on \$128,577.20 total spend per the City of Quesnel final budget, less \$5,000 payment to Minerals North.**

### Assumptions

- Attendee survey is statistically viable at 26% reporting.
- Net Economic effect set at zero due to the event taking place at shoulder season in midweek, meaning it is unlikely that much (if any) business was displaced.

### Conference Expenditure

	Guests	Uptake	Days	Average Rate	DIRECT SPEND
Accommodation	310	89%	2.58	\$ 142.24	\$ 101,249.56
Breakfasts	310	100%	1.58	\$ 20.00	\$ 9,796.00
Lunch	310	100%	0.58	\$ 30.00	\$ 5,394.00
Dinner	310	100%	1.58	\$ 40.00	\$ 19,592.00
Entertainment	310	100%	2.58	\$ 20.00	\$ 15,996.00
Shopping	310	100%	2.58	\$ 15.00	\$ 11,997.00
Gas	310	77%	50%*	\$ 75.00	\$ 8,951.25
				Subtotal	\$ 172,975.81
				Conference Spend	\$ 123,577.20
				TOTAL DIRECT SPEND	\$ 296,553

### Overall Economic Impact

	Direct Spend	Multiplier	TOTAL
Direct Economic Impact	\$ 296,553	1	\$ 296,553
Indirect Economic Impact	\$ 296,553	0.94	\$ 278,760
Induced Economic Impact	\$ 296,553	0.12	\$ 35,586
Net Economic Impact*	\$ 296,553	0	\$ -
			\$ 610,899
		Taxes	\$ 66,576

## Feedback and Observations

While the overall economic impact of this 3-day conference is strong, there were likely additional opportunities missed in terms of generating additional spend.

While some businesses were visibly benefitting by visitation from conference attendees, many were unaware of the conference taking place, and there appeared to be very little in place to offer information or incentives about what was available.

In addition, while it is always difficult to measure the exact amount of direct spend and assumptions will always be relied upon, there are potential reporting mechanisms that could be put in place to offer greater insight. Please see the recommendations section below for details.

## **4. Environmental Impact**

*Objective: Outline the direct environmental impact of Minerals North within Quesnel.*

### Methodology, Data sources & Assumptions

Due to time constraints leading into the conference, measuring waste and other onsite environmental impacts was not practical. It is recommended below that a mechanism is in place to do so prior to future events. For this report only the impact of travel has been considered and is intended to be used as a benchmark against which to measure future conferences

### Environmental Impact Model

Based on the data below, each attendee visit resulted in **~0.1 metric tons** of CO2 emissions.

<b>Travel</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>% of Visitors</b>	<b># of Visitors</b>	<b>Avg Distance</b>	<b>CO2e/km</b>	<b>TOTAL CO2e (metric tons)</b>
<b>Other</b>	Local	1%	3	0	0	<b>0.00</b>
<b>By Car</b>	Local	12%	38	20	0.0002	<b>0.15</b>
<b>By Car</b>	Northern BC	31%	98	400	0.0002	<b>7.80</b>
<b>By Car</b>	Other BC	29%	91	600	0.0002	<b>10.87</b>
<b>By Car</b>	Other Canada	2%	7	1200	0.0002	<b>1.67</b>
<b>By Car</b>	Elsewhere	2%	7	1500	0.0002	<b>2.09</b>
<b>By Plane</b>	Northern BC	2%	7	1000	0.00008	<b>0.56</b>
<b>By Plane</b>	Other BC	13%	42	1400	0.00008	<b>4.68</b>
<b>By Plane</b>	Other Canada	6%	17	3000	0.00008	<b>4.18</b>
						<b>32.00</b>

Data Sources:

- Extrapolation of survey reporting by 89/310 conference attendees.
- Carbon footprint generated at <https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>

## Assumptions

- Attendee survey is statistically viable at 26% reporting.
- Average distances use midpoints within regions based on 1.3 visitors sharing a vehicle for travel by car, traveling in a 2015 gas-powered Ford Escape Semi Auto-6 2WD vehicle (or similar).
- Flight distances are based on airport locations in each region.
- Equivalent measures should be used for future surveys.

## 5. Conference Management Analysis (based on Feedback, Observations & Interviews)

*Objectives: Outline operations, impact of new skills or experiences acquired through working/volunteering at the event and community impact including educational opportunities, reception of visitors and other social aspects.*

### Planning and Operations

Minerals North provides an operating manual with instructions for operating the conference in any destination – this is built upon having an organizing committee consisting of a designated event lead, plus representation from the municipality, local council, local businesses, and the conference organizers. The system is well tried and appears to work well with adaptations in each community. It was noted multiple times that the designated event lead (who oversees all logistics PLUS sponsorships) was key to the success of the event and did an outstanding job, but there were concerns about back-up or succession.

Conference registration was completed using Civic Info – the system preferred by Minerals North. This system received negative feedback from the City as being ‘not easy to use’. Beyond conference registration, there was no central coordination of hotel reservations or arrival transfers, with only hotel transfers from a remote hotel property and a safe-ride-home program after the main dinner event being the only transportation offered.

Through on-site interviews, concerns were raised about the lack of an existing ‘how-to’ manual for potential conference organizers that details available venues, accommodators, F&B providers etc., as well as customer service issues in town (‘needs improving’).

Communication between committee members was primarily by email which was described as ‘somewhat overwhelming’, and there appeared to be insufficient communication with and awareness within the local business community, though this appears to be a two-way issue.

### Venues and Facilities

The conference used the West Fraser Centre as its primary venue (trade show component of the event plus F&B delivery), and Arena 2 for the plenary sessions and keynote address. Catering is the responsibility of the host city and was delivered through local restaurants. According to the organizers it was the capacity for meal delivery that restricted the overall conference maximum attendance, and the main dinner event was sold out and could have easily sold more tickets.

As there are currently no covers in place for the ice surfaces, the facilities are currently restricted to hosting summer only unless rentals are brought in (currently from Vernon). Tables, chairs, pipe and drape for the conference was rented in form Prince George, along with sound equipment for the presentations and entertainment.

Sense of Arrival

‘Sense of Arrival’ appeared to be a significant miss at the conference. Other than a banner hanging on the front of the West Fraser Centre, and a pop-up display in one hotel lobby, there appeared to be little visual evidence that a conference was taking place. While not a significant detriment in this specific case, it should be considered as a missed opportunity – not only to make conference attendees feel especially welcome but also to generate awareness within the community – which can be highly valuable for attracting volunteers and engaging local businesses. Recommendations are included below for future events.

The most negative comment heard about the event both on-site and in post-event feedback was about people being stranded at the airport on arrival with no taxis available and no other form of transport. It was noted that this was rectified for the departure but should not be underestimated as a future risk area.

Organizer Input and Overall Assessment

Overall, the feedback from the organizers was very positive, with in-town transportation the only real issue raised. When asked if they would consider returning to Quesnel, the response was YES because the venues work well, and the location of community is an asset. Their biggest challenge had been restoring confidence with potential delegates as Covid had been a massive blow to holding in person events, and the smooth operation in Quesnel was extremely important. A summary of organizer feedback is provided here:

<b>Conference Criteria</b>	<b>Rank: 1=Terrible 10=Excellent</b>
Working with the City	9
Quesnel as a host city in comparison with other locations	8
Engagement of local committee members	8
Quality of conference venues	8
Size of conference venues	9
Meal venues	8
Quality of meals	9
Evening entertainment	8
Pre/Post Activities	9
Sound system for presentations	7
Trade show set-up	9
Availability of accommodation for delegates	8
Availability of transportation for delegates	7
<b>Organizer comments</b>	
Very welcoming attitude of host community, and it all looked professional.	
Wonderful to work with employees whose first responsibility is event organization. We sensed a reasonable amount of support from Council too.	

Only limitation was Quesnel staff lack of familiarity with northern BC's minerals sector. But we worked around that

It was realized early that arriving delegates could not find transportation from airport into town (with only one taxi and limited car rental services). Departing delegates seem all to have had needs met.

Other feedback received from delegates and via interviews was mostly positive, with some obvious areas of learning for future conferences that are highlighted here:

- Hotel availability was a significant challenge.
- No apparent awareness of the conference by local businesses.
- Some hotels knew the conference was in town, but most front-end staff were unaware.
- Minimal information about what to do while in town – icons not to be missed.
- There needed to be more ambassadors; hotel staff were not helpful in providing input about where to stay, where to eat, or what to do.
- Attendee booking (incl. hotels and activities) could have been more centralized.
- Excellent pre-conference tours.
- City staff and volunteers all presented exceptionally well, were really appreciated, and any issues were managed well.

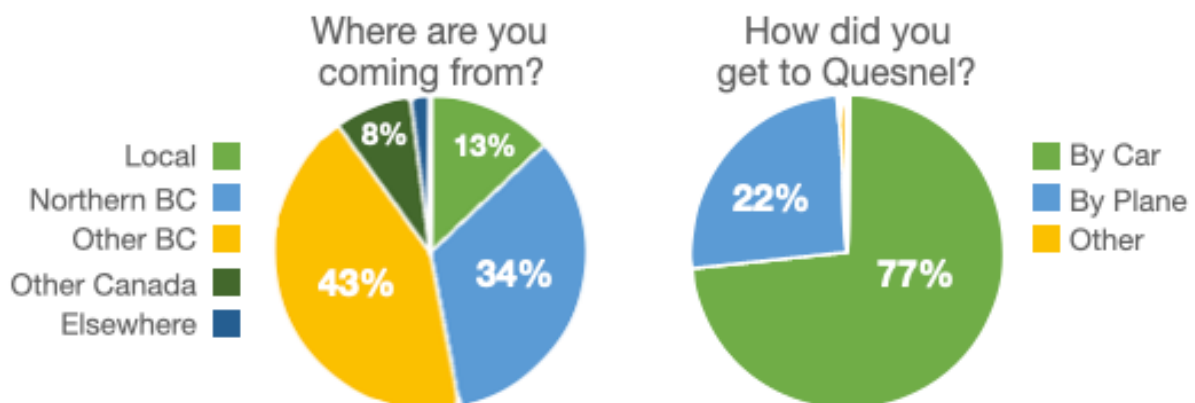
## 6. Delegate Experience

*Objective: Outline event attendee's experience of the event.*

### Attendee Data

The following information was extracted from an on-site survey completed by 89 of the 310 delegates (26%) – See Appendix A for additional details.

- 310 attendees – mix of exhibitors, delegates, presenters, and organizers.
- 37% first-time attendees at the conference/63% returning.
- 33% first time visitors to Quesnel.
- 89% were staying in hotels.
- Average hotel stay was 2.58 nights (minimum 1, maximum 7 nights)
- Average room cost per night was \$142.24 (minimum \$100, maximum \$250)
- Three pre-activities organized – Mine Tour, Barkerville Tour and Golf, with ~20% take-up
- 90% of the delegates were from BC, with 77% driving to the conference



### Visitor Experience

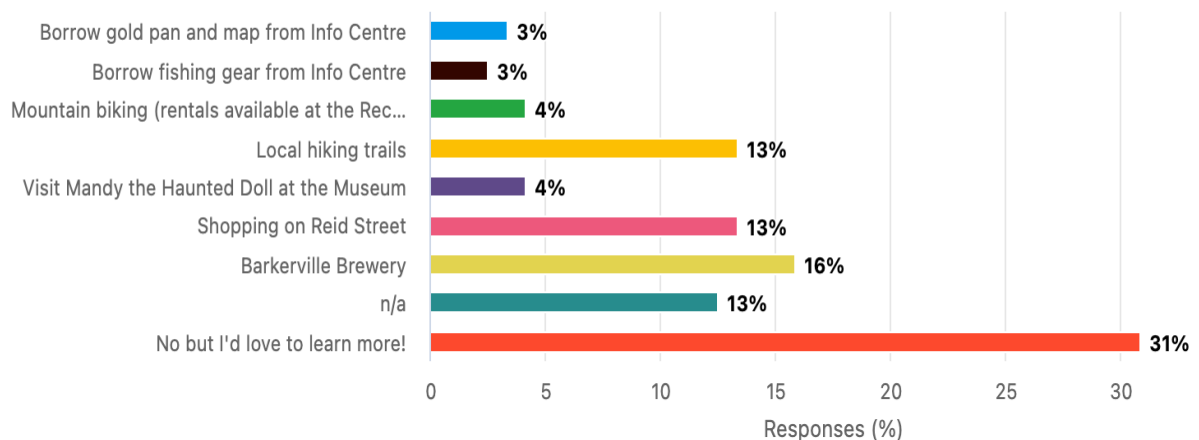
Again, the following information was extracted from an on-site survey completed by 89 of the 310 delegates (26%) – See Appendix A for additional details.

Overall, there was a very positive response to the conference activities, with only accommodation and transportation receiving multiple poor reviews:

	Conference Venue	Hotel	Transport	Meals	Activities	Restaurants & Bars
<b>Excellent</b>	59%	18%	20%	70%	26%	32%
<b>Good</b>	33%	28%	26%	22%	6%	24%
<b>Satisfactory</b>	7%	29%	2%	2%	1%	5%
<b>Poor</b>	1%	6%	9%	0%	0%	0%
<b>n/a</b>	0%	19%	43%	6%	67%	40%

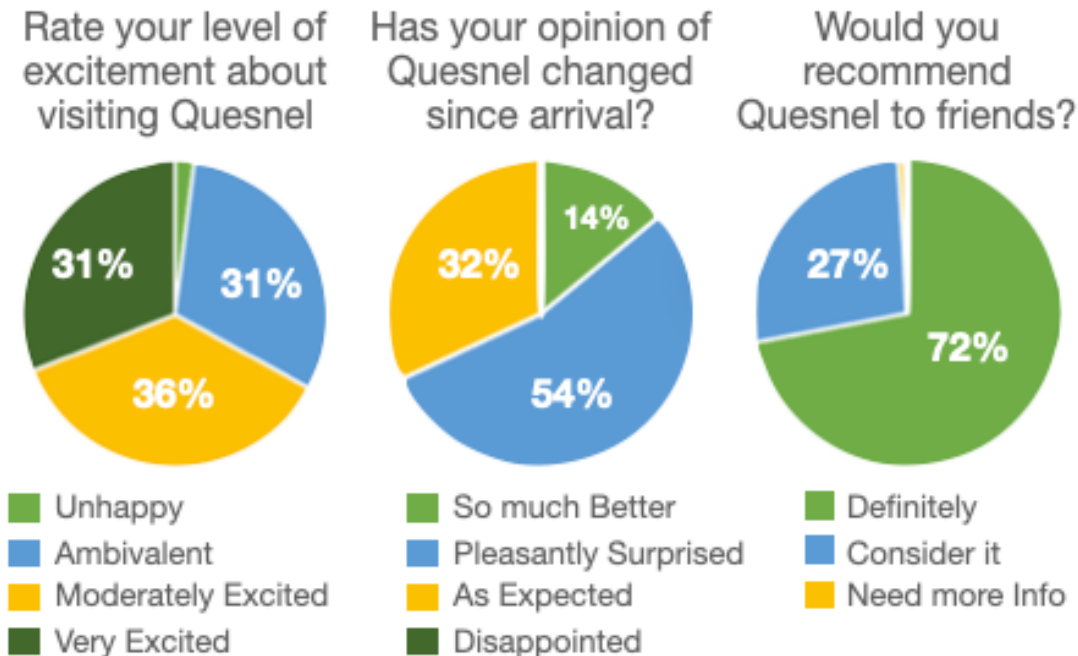
There appeared to be little knowledge about what was available to do in the city, despite the information centre being a very short walk away. There was a definitive appetite to learn more (this should be regarded as a missed opportunity):

### Will you be taking advantage of any other activities available in Quesnel?



## Perceived Impact

Finally, there was a positive response to the Quesnel experience, with 68% of attendees having their expectations exceeded and 72% being “definitely” willing to recommend the city to friends and/or relatives. It should be noted that there were several comments from delegates who said that people were expecting a rough town with a pulp mill smell and instead were surprised how nice, friendly and pretty the city is:



## **7. Conference and Event Capacity in Quesnel**

*Objective: Outline the City of Quesnel’s event hosting capacity including existing infrastructure to host out of town visitors and venues for conferences and events.*

### Facilities

While there are a number of municipally operated and private facilities listed in Appendix B that have potential to be used for breakout meetings and small event functions, there are only a handful of options for major event/conference space, and all except the two largest are likely to be too small for major events:

West Fraser Arena:	capacity 1845
Arena 2:	capacity 1265
Seniors Centre	capacity 450
College of New Caledonia	capacity 268
Quesnel Arts Centre:	capacity 237
Curling Rink:	capacity 170

The two arenas and the curling rink are limited by ice dates (Aug/Sep to late Mar), and commitment to minor hockey and curling schedules. The city has no flooring for any of the rinks (nearest rental option appears to be Vernon), meaning without a change in operating practices Quesnel is limited to hosting major events only during the months of April to August.

The proximity of the arenas and the rink mean there is high-potential for hosting medium-size, multi-format conferences of 100-300 attendees, as demonstrated with Minerals North, with a realistic maximum of 500 attendees. The municipality manages the two arenas.

According to organizers, Minerals North capacity was limited by the ability to deliver meal service – while ~300 attendees was managed successfully, this needs to be addressed to successfully deliver larger events. As the curling rink was not involved in Minerals North, this is a potential option for increasing dining capacity (assuming catering is available). Other options used in other locations include creating a temporary venue with tents, or engaging local restaurants with a dine-around, though this is currently limited by lack of both restaurant seats and transportation options.

Equipment rentals were required for the operation of Minerals North, including tables, chairs, pipe & drape, and audio visual. There appears to be a strong working relationship with Prince George-based providers, but consideration should be given to purchasing a stock if the City is committed to hosting events and there is sufficient storage when not being used. This equipment could be shared with/rented to any other event or wedding operators in the city.

#### Transportation and Accommodation

Transportation is a significant factor for Quesnel as a host venue for events both in terms of access and in-town movement due to the following (additional details in Appendix B):

- Small airport with limited service and no regular airport transfers.
- Insufficient regular bus (or rail) transportation to bring visitors.
- Self-drive traffic faces long driving distances from major hubs (except Prince George).
- There is minimal in-town transportation to move large numbers of people, exacerbated by the city's largest hotel being located a 10-minute drive from the city centre.
- There is minimal taxi service (reportedly one single taxi, but this is unverified)

Accommodation is another major consideration for event hosting. Using an average of 1.3 delegates per room, a 500-person conference would require 384 committed rooms. This presents several challenges:

- Quesnel has 423 rooms considered to be 'conference-standard.'
- There are another ~60 rooms or cabins that could be considered as potential, accepting they would be of a lower standard.
- Several hotels have longer-term commitments to resource industry or road/rail crews.
- Rocky Mountaineer strains hotel inventory two nights/week in the summer months.
- Other seasonal factors, including pulp-mill maintenance.
- Apparent lack of communication or engagement with hoteliers

While speakers for the Minerals North conference had pre-booked rooms, Delegates (310 people) were required to find their own accommodation, with no official partner hotel deals, discounted rates or hotel room block, and many subsequently reported challenges in accessing hotel rooms. To be successful, it would be recommended to engage with hotels early and establish a sufficient block of hotel rooms that would be held until a release date published to conference visitors.

## Event Management

Event attraction, promotion and management currently fall under the jurisdiction of Economic Development and Tourism at the City of Quesnel, and there is one specialized event coordinator role which is on contract to the department. Planners for potential events coming to Quesnel are able (through the city website) to access both a PDF events guide and a form-based planning tool. From this point they are directed to the events coordinator, who will answer questions, and the case of Minerals North, be the onsite coordinator for all event components. Feedback from the Minerals North team was extremely positive about the performance of the City's Event Coordinator specific to the event. Online links to the tools are below:

<https://www.tourismquesnel.com/sites/2/files/2021-11/Event%20Planning%20Guide.pdf>  
<https://www.tourismquesnel.com/plan-my-event>

Observations regarding efficiency and sustainability in terms of management are as follows:

- The events coordinator role is based on a single person, and reliant on that person's knowledge of all aspects of event planning in the city, which works well providing that the person stays in the role and can fully function for the duration of the event.
- There is no apparent succession plan for the role, and there was no apparent back-up plan for Minerals North if coordinator became incapacitated – both leave the City with a level of exposure regarding future events.
- Communications between the multiple people involved in operating the event (e.g., the event committee) are almost exclusively by email, rather than using an online communication tool where password-protected conversations and documentation are all stored and easily accessed in a single place.
- The online planning guide and tools are excellent compared to other similar-size destinations, but do not provide comprehensive, at-a-glance details regarding hotel room inventory, transportation options and venue capacities and layouts.
- There is a lack of successful communication with downtown businesses regarding incoming events, resulting in a lack of engagement and missed opportunity for driving additional spend within the community

## SWOT Analysis: Strengths and Opportunities as host for medium-sized events (150-500 attendees)

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>
--Recent experience/track record	--Develop a clear events/conference strategy
--Commitment to exploring a strategy	--Get buy-in from businesses/community
--Support from current council	--Leverage reference from Minerals North
--Appeal of activities and surrounding area	--Position Quesnel as unique location
--Current Event Contractor	--Implement communications tool
--Volunteers returning/re-engaging	--'OWN' the mid-size market in Northern BC
--Proximity of 3 large venues (West Fraser, Arena 2, Curling Rink)	--Leverage skills – e.g., ensure visiting experts are invited into schools for teaching
--Proximity of Information Centre to venues	--Make Quesnel 'easy to use' by enhancing existing promotional & operational manuals
--Proximity of venues to downtown core	--Launch Ambassador Program

SWOT Analysis: Weaknesses and Threats as host for medium-sized events (150-500 attendees)

<b>WEAKNESSES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
--No current aligned event strategy --Relatively remote location --Perception about Quesnel experience --Transportation infrastructure --Accommodations & F&B capacity --Lack of engagement from businesses --No front-end visitor ambassador program --Sense of arrival --Lack of communication	--Not developing a strategy with clearly defined and measurable outcomes --Staff departures --Change in council/loss of support --Lack of follow through --No buy-in from businesses --Environmental concerns about travel --Quesnel is not taken seriously

**8 Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Hosting (Becoming Event-Ready)**

*Objective: Make recommendations to improve future event impacts.*

Success Factors and Evaluation Tools

Based on the analysis above and the recent experience with Minerals North, there is realistic potential for Quesnel to engage in an events strategy targeting medium-sized conferences & events with a maximum of 500 attendees and a ‘sweet-spot’ of 200-300, providing the required pieces are in place to:

1. WIN THE BID
2. RECRUIT PARTNERS & BUSINESSES
3. COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY
4. ENSURE SEAMLESS OPERATIONS
5. DELIVER THE GUEST EXPERIENCE
6. EVALUATE AND LEARN

Recommended actions for each of these are listed in the sections below and prioritized based on cost and ease of implementation. **HOWEVER...**

**Per the above SWOT, the biggest threat is NOT developing a strategy with clearly defined and measurable outcomes, behind which all the required partners can be aligned...**

It is essential to answer the following questions:

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ‘EVENT’ or ‘CONFERENCE’?

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

HOW WILL WE MEASURE IT?

WHAT DO WE NEED TO ACHIEVE IT?

It is then essential for business and the community to adopt the plan and

**The most important recommendation of this report is therefore to develop an event and/or conference strategy that answers these questions and can easily be shared with and bought into by key members of Quesnel’s’ community.**

Once success has been defined, the following measurement tools are recommended:

- Data collection model for partner businesses (for example, inviting a critical mass of key businesses within the hotel, F&B and Retail sectors to participate in a self-reported revenue program administered by a 3<sup>rd</sup>-party trustee who ensures anonymity and confidentiality. Benefits to the City would be to see the impact of events).
- Consistent ECONOMIC impact model into which data from each event can be dropped and compared to previous events without requiring a full Impact Report.
- Consistent ENVIRONMENTAL impact model into which data from each event can be dropped and compared to previous events without requiring a full Impact Report.
- Checklist for potential spin-off benefits (economic or social) – for example:
  - Does the conference provide business attraction opportunities?
  - Are there other events or conferences that naturally dovetail?
  - Can attendees with knowledge/skills be invited to present in schools?

### Bid Materials

'Winning the bid' is essential to success and making it easy for conference organizers to imagine their event in Quesnel is the first step. Recommended actions:

#### SHORT TERM (lower cost, low-hanging fruit)

- Enhance and maintain the online and PDF prospectus for event attraction (this information should all be easy for the event organizers to find), including:
  - List of partner contacts within the city and key partner businesses.
  - Maps, images layouts, and capacities for all facilities when used in different formats, with rate/rental info.
  - Complete list of partner hotels with room inventories, locations, parking, and transport options
  - List of catering options and capacities
  - Inventory of event equipment that is available for rent locally or outsourced.
- PDF instruction manual for event hosting in Quesnel – based on the instruction manual provided by Minerals North, but reverse engineered to provide drag-and-drop information to conferences or events that don't already have their own book.

#### MEDIUM TERM (cost or time commitments required)

- Glossy print version of the online
- Subscribe to a booking platform which links live to hotel inventory, and into which conference registration and information, plus activities (pre-, post-, and in-conference) can be loaded live, creating a one-stop shop for conference delegates.
- Develop an Event App that holds all conference information and promotes travel and activity opportunities around the community, as well as offering discounts for local shops and restaurants.

## Infrastructure

In this section 'infrastructure' includes not just facilities but also equipment, staff and volunteers that are essential to event delivery. Recommended actions:

### SHORT TERM (lower cost, low-hanging fruit)

- Ensure that there is a permanent event management role within the municipality, together with a back-up who knows the operating systems and a succession plan.
- Create a database of volunteers, together with a volunteer appreciation program.

### MEDIUM TERM (cost or time commitments required)

- Acquire inventory of tables, chairs, pipe & drape, audio/visual etc. that removes the requirement to outsource, and that in turn can become a community resource for the not-for-profit sector (free or discounted) and the private sector (at rental rates)

### LONGER TERM (significant cost, but high potential return)

- Purchase covers for one or more of the rinks to allow for events to occur in the winter – potentially offset costs by renting to other communities.

## Community Partnerships & Support

Essential partners for events are hotels, transportation providers, other host facilities, F&B providers, and activity partners – essentially everyone who provides services to the conference or interacts with the delegates. Recommended actions:

### SHORT TERM (lower cost, low-hanging fruit)

- Implement a communications tool that eliminates the need for email but can be used in either desktop or App form and can be set to whatever prompt the user prefers – examples would include *SLACK* or *BASECAMP* where different groups can be set up with access to different channels, but all information is stored and can be accessed at any time. Perhaps incentivise businesses to use it (monthly competition or similar...).
- Bring the hotel group together, explain the strategy, and secure hotel blocks for events that can have a group rate until a set release date, giving delegates easy access.
- Bring the F&B group together to explain the strategy and create plans based on 100/200/300 guests.
- Set up an incentive program that drives delegates downtown into local businesses – could be coupon-based, app-based, offer booklet or web-based.

### MEDIUM TERM (cost or time commitments required)

- Look at options for shared kitchen space that can be used for food provision for events, and also day-to-day use by catering companies etc.

### LONGER TERM (significant cost, but high potential return)

- Find a solution to the transportation issues – e.g., set-date airline charters; bus infrastructure etc.

### Visitor Experience: General

There is a great opportunity to create a buzz around events, make visitors feel extra-welcome, and also to generate additional spend in the community. Recommended actions:

#### SHORT TERM (lower cost, low-hanging fruit)

- Phase I of a pageantry program that starts with welcome posters being distributed to shops, restaurants and hotels so that delegates are always aware they are welcome.
- Create an incentivized in-conference survey that promotes activities and entertainment opportunities by asking which ones the guest plans to visit.
- Develop friends and family opportunities for activities to encourage longer stays, more spend, and attraction of partners/families during the conference.
- Develop 'welcome back' packages that can be sold during the conference that offer incentive to return with friends and family later.
- Get the Info Centre more engaged with the delegates. There was a limited amount of onsite presence of staff from the nearby Visitor Information Centre at the Minerals North Conference providing information about sightseeing/activity/dining options for delegates. The staff that were onsite blended in with the registration desk and effectively became 'part of the conference.' Two immediate opportunities:
  - Create an incentive for visitors to walk the short distance from the venue to the Info Centre to engage, learn more about the community, or stimulate spend – this incentive could be through prize draw, scavenger hunt or other mechanism.
  - Have a separate information desk onsite offering local knowledge and booking support for experiences at partner businesses.

#### MEDIUM TERM (cost or time commitments required)

- Phase II of a pageantry program that includes pop-up banners in all hotel lobbies and at the airport, together with street banners downtown.
- Implement an ambassador program for front-line staff in all visitor-facing businesses – a 60-minute program teaching about interesting history, local things to do etc. SEE BELOW

#### LONGER TERM (significant cost, but high potential return)

- Phase III of the pageantry program including replaceable banner handing signs at the road-entrances to town, and in front of all major facilities.

### Visitor Experience: Ambassador Program

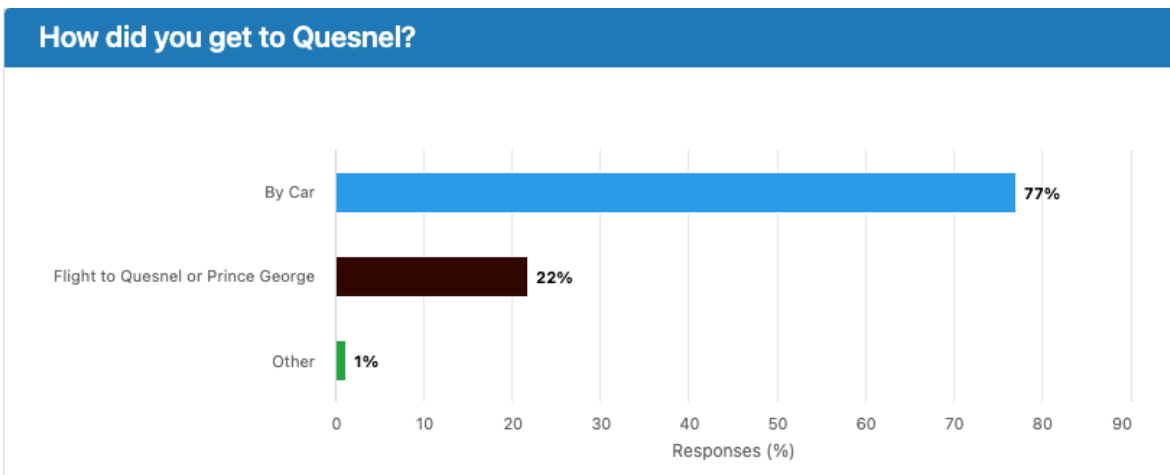
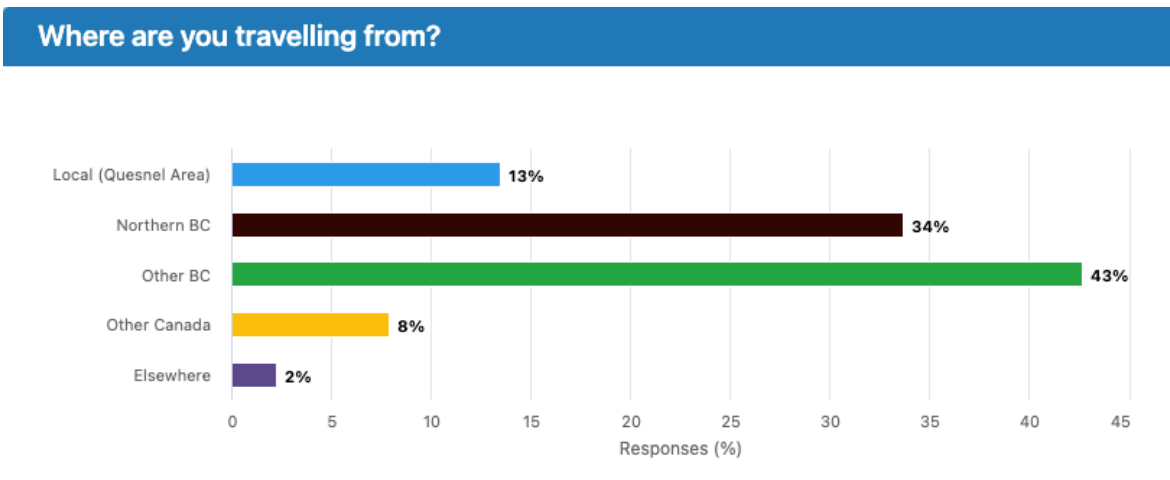
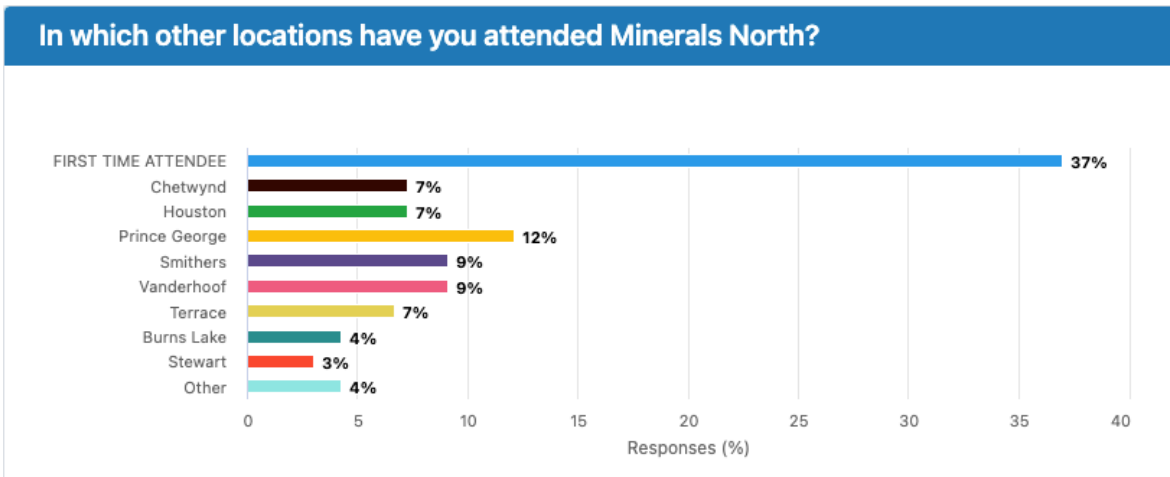
A successful tourism ambassador program is a strategic initiative designed to stimulate additional tourism spend within a destination by leveraging the enthusiasm and knowledge of passionate locals, and concurrently training those individuals, as well as permanent or temporary/transient staff at local businesses, about all the opportunities available within the community to ensure an ENGAGING and CONSISTENT message is presented to the visitor. The program should be 'owned' by the municipality or a designated affiliate. Core components are:

- Up to date information: Keep an accurate and up to date inventory of food & beverage providers, activity providers and general sightseeing/things to do.
- Easily memorable list: Create a 'top 5' or 'top 10' list of things that all participants will remember – could be as simple as HIKING, BIKING, HYDRANTS, RESTAURANTS, BREWERY – and then provide secondary information such as where...

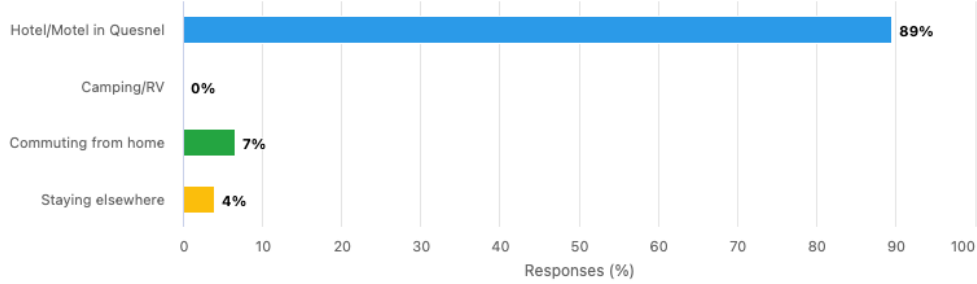
- Short and entertaining training program: Offer a 45–60-minute training program that teaches the basic top 5 list, along with examples. Offer the program to anyone in the community who is public facing (e.g., front line staff in hotels, restaurants etc.), and provide incentive or reward for participation (gift certificate, prize draw, official designation etc.).
- Local champions: Identify enthusiastic and knowledgeable locals who are passionate about their community and its attractions. These individuals should have good communication skills. Provide them with comprehensive training on the destination's history, culture, attractions, and tourism industry. They could then be deployed (ideally as volunteers) to be visible in key locations close to event venues – ideally dressed in ASK ME uniforms.
- Local businesses: Work with local business associations and professional groups, and create incentive for them to send staff to the ambassador training programs.
- Resources and Support: Provide ambassadors with the necessary resources, such as maps, brochures, and uniforms, to assist them in their roles. Offer ongoing support and a dedicated point of contact for questions and concerns.
- Digital Presence: Develop a digital presence for the program through a website, social media profiles, and mobile apps. Ambassadors can share content, stories, and tips to engage with a broader audience and provide virtual assistance to potential visitors.
- Collaboration: Encourage collaboration with local businesses, tourism agencies, and government entities to enhance the program's effectiveness. Partnerships can lead to special discounts, promotions, and joint marketing efforts.
- Evaluation and Feedback: Regularly evaluate the program's performance by measuring key performance indicators such as visitor satisfaction, increased tourism revenue, and social media engagement. Collect feedback from tourists and ambassadors to make improvements.

Recognition and Rewards: Recognize and reward ambassadors for their contributions, whether through incentives, awards, or public recognition. This will motivate them to remain enthusiastic and committed to the program.

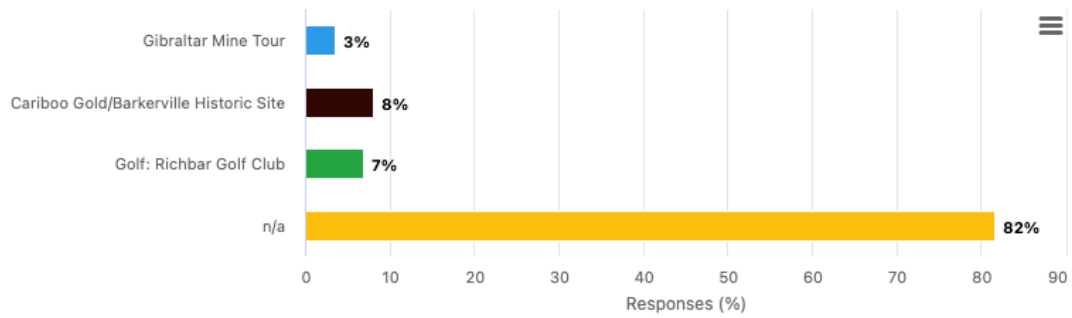
## Appendix A: Visitor Experience Data (Survey Results)



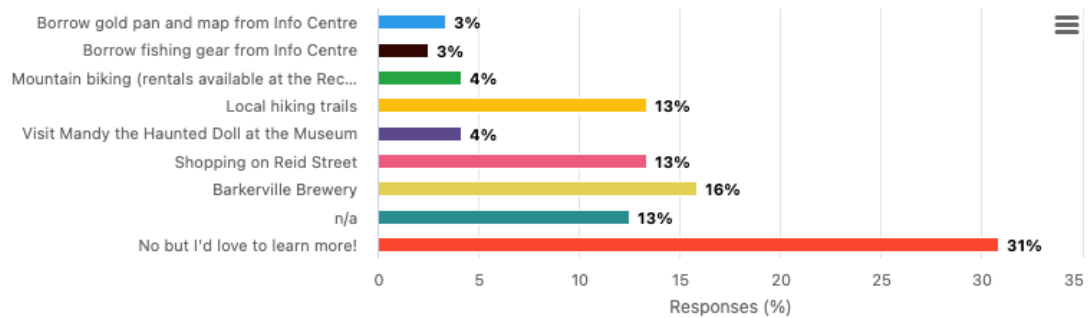
## Where are you staying?



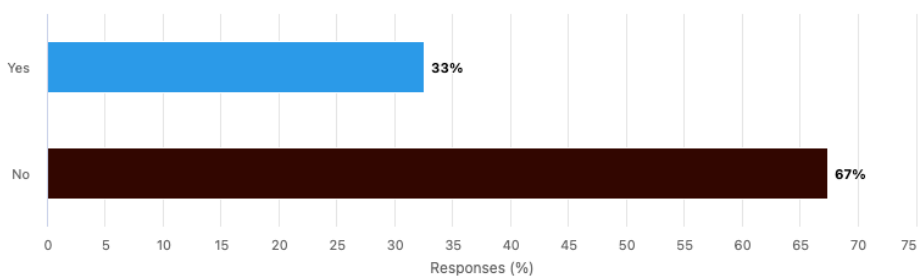
## Did you join a pre-conference activity?



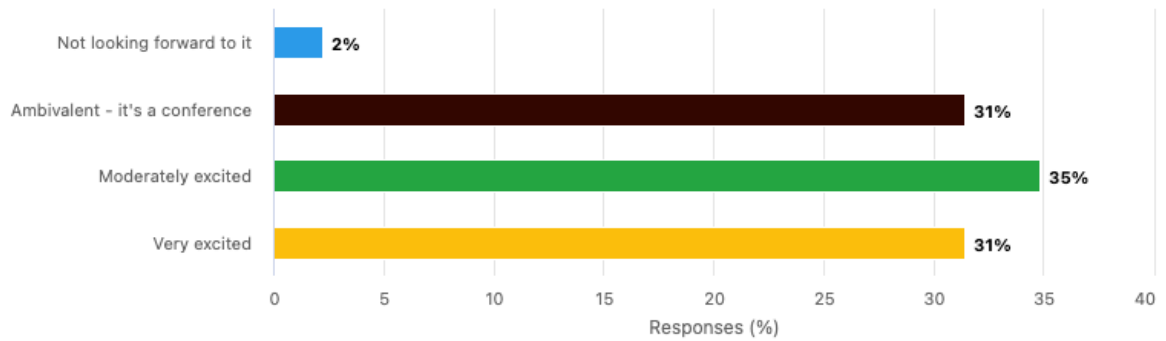
## Will you be taking advantage of any other activities available in Quesnel?



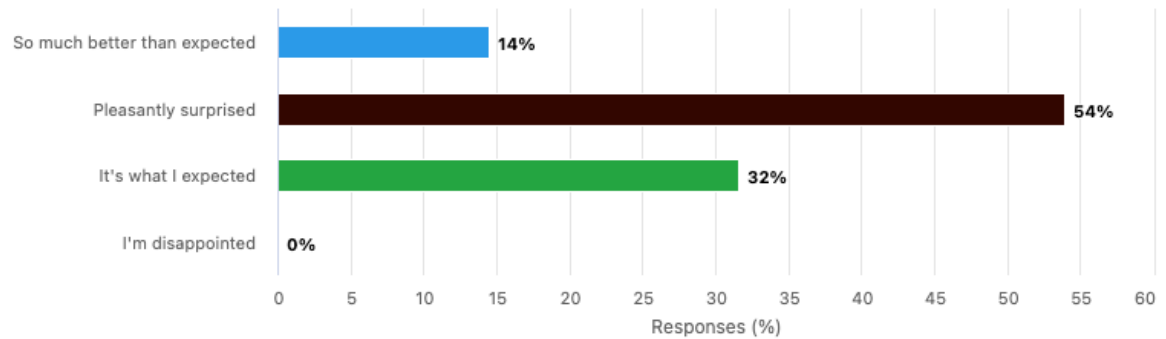
## Are you visiting Quesnel for the first time?



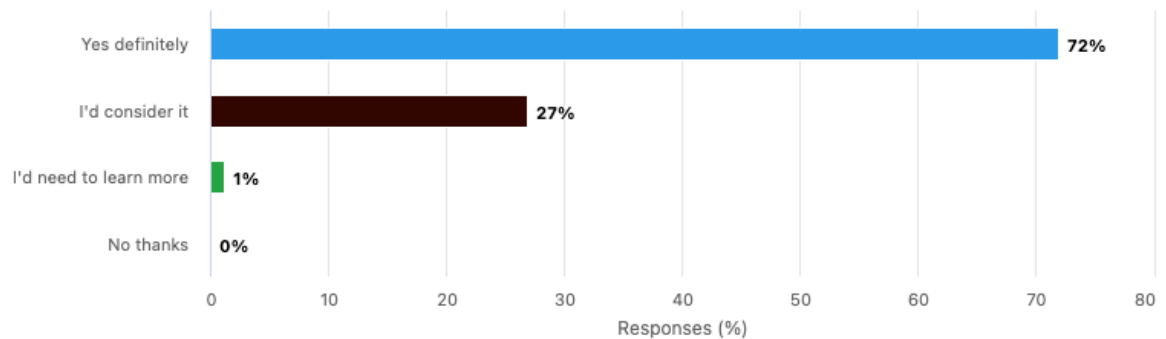
### Please rate your level of anticipation about visiting the City of Quesnel:



### Has your opinion of Quesnel changed since you arrived?



### And lastly... Would you come visit again and/or recommend Quesnel to friends and ...



## Appendix B: Event Capacity Data

### Potential Meeting Facilities

Combination of municipal and private facilities:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Capacity (standing)</b>	<b>Capacity (Seated)</b>
West Fraser Centre	1845	
Arena 2	1265	
Curling Rink	170	140
Quesnel Arts & Recreation Centre	237	175
College of New Caledonia	268	167
Sandman Hotel	50	50
Quesnel Visitor Centre	20	20
Quality Inn & Suites	12	12
Quesnel Art Gallery	10	10
Billy Barker Casino Hotel	410	284
Tower Inn & Suites		
Quesnel ARTrium (UNNBC Venue)		
Seniors Centre	450	250
Curling Rink, Upstairs room		
North Star Church		
Chuck Mobley Theatre		
West Fraser Centre (Dunkley room, Upstairs)		
West Fraser Centre (Observer room, Main floor)		
The Forge (was Pen Y Bryn - outside town)	1200	1200

### F&B Facilities

Currently operating F&B Businesses (approx. 500 total seats):

Take Away and fast food	20
Restaurants	27
Bars & Pubs	9
Cafes	8
Caterer	2
Total	66

## Accommodations

Accommodations with sufficient quality to be used for conferences:

Name	Hotel Rooms
Billy Barker Casino Hotel	30
Gold Pan Motel	24
Quality Inn & Suites	83
Ramada Limited	46
Sandman Hotel	106
Super 8	41
The Cariboo Hotel	9
Tower Inn & Suites	50
Travelodge	34

Accommodations that could be used if required for larger events:

Name	Hotel Rooms
Airport Inn Motel & RV Park	20
Fraser Bridge Inn & RV Park	10
Lazy Daze Resort	13
Sylvan Motel	20
The Groom's Quarters	2

## Arrival Transportation

Most conferences and events will rely on self-drive – other options below:

Air	Very limited inventory: Six flights a week in small 18-seater aircraft by Central Mountain Air. No flights on Saturdays. CMA do have larger aircraft and do offer charter services which would likely be the easiest way to accommodate volume.
Bus	Schedule bus service offered by E Bus. Routes from Vancouver via Kamloops. Schedule from Vancouver, Wed, Fri, Sun Schedule to Vancouver, Mon, Thu, Sun Also scheduled service to/from Prince George. Coach chartering would be the best way to access high volume transfers
Rail	No passenger rail service. Rocky Mountaineer arrives Sundays and Tuesdays – could potentially be used for themed arrival as charter, but cost-prohibitive
Car	Most popular method of arrival. Driving time from major population centers is significant. Vancouver to Quesnel is 8 hours plus breaks. There is only 1 car rental company operating that can be booked online (Enterprise)
Coaching (transfers)	One local coach line. Will be busy with local work. May be necessary to station equipment from Vancouver or another centre.

## Activities

Several in-town options for activities, with multiple operators in region:

Scenic	39
In town Visit	11
Activity	23
Out of town Visit	1
Total	74

Scenic: Parks, Trails. Walkways: No charge for usage.

In town Visits: Museum, stores, Art Museums: **No charge for entry**

Activity: Raft Tours, Jet boats, Paintball, Golf. Curling. **Most charged activity.**

Out of town visit: Listed on Trip adviser but not included on Tourism Quesnel website.

Quesnel is blessed with a great deal of natural scenic locations and places to visit which have no charge. Of note are the painted Fire Hydrants & the Big Pan.

Also of note is the free loan for fishing equipment from the visitor centre, and its haunted doll.

INFORMATION CENTRE “Did you know...?”

- you don’t need anything - we can give it to you
- Gold pan and map loan
- fishing rod loan/ice fishing
- mountain biking green to black diamond. Pump track. Bike rentals at the rec centre.
- hiking trails for all abilities. hike to see hoodoos. Pinnacles.
- buy bear spray.
- Cariboo keepsakes. Mamma Cs. Mom and pop shops. Personal experience.
- quesnel bakery
- Museum Mandy the haunted doll. Paranormal investigations.
- Balcony at Barkerville Brewing. Bc Ale trail.
- Basecamp for Barkerville
- part of the Alaska trail

## Appendix C: City of Quesnel Event Report and Financials

### Minerals North at a glance:

#### West Fraser Centre

- Registration Desk
- Tradeshow
- Breakfast, Lunch, Refreshments and Sip n' Snack

#### Arena 2

- Plenary
- Banquet
  - 155 banquet tickets purchased
  - 95 extra banquet tickets purchased
  - 221 drink tickets were received

#### Hosting Precinct

- Welcome Reception
  - 187 yes to attend
  - 217 drink tickets were received
- Seating area
- Outdoor Tradeshow Booths

### Registration

- 234 delegates
- 78 indoor and 5 outdoor tradeshow booths
- 53 second tradeshow booth delegate
- 365 total delegates
- *382 registrations on Civic Info included all cancellations*

### Pre-conference activities

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| • Richbar Golf                           | 29        |
| • Gibraltar Mine                         | 30 (full) |
| • Cariboo Gold Project/Wells/Barkerville | 25 (full) |

### Sip N' Snack

- 206 drink tickets were received

Minerals North Dig Deep 2023 was very successful. We received plenty of emails complementing Quesnel on their hosting abilities and the general vibe of the entire event. The food was noted by many as being "the best conference food ever". Signage was great, pre-conference activities were enjoyed, trade-show set up was easy and accommodating.

Future Recommendations:

- On site registration was challenging. The venues could have accommodated more but catering was full and we ran out of name badges. Some kind of policy will have to be made in future.
- Extra banquet tickets were an issue. Although, everyone that wanted a banquet ticket received one, horse trading, selling and some attendees just giving theirs up.
- Attending Round-Up and Resource Forum is very beneficial for sponsorship and attendees.
- One person should monitor all registrations ensuring every one is correct. In the last two weeks there are an incredible number of registrations, name changes, cancellations etc, it was hard to keep up.
- Civic Info are very accommodating for all tasks but delegates found the program difficult to navigate sometimes.
- Stuffing the name badges will take more time than you expect. It would be helpful to have all tickets different colors.

<b>Revenue</b>	
<b>Sponsorship and Fundraising</b>	
Sponsorships and Fundraising	\$ 106,000.00
Big Country Printers (in-kind)	\$ 1,000.00
	<b>\$ 107,000.00</b>
<b>Registrations</b>	
Civicinfo - Delegates/Pre-conference/Extra Tickets	\$ 64,575.00
In-house - Delegates	\$ 2,518.75
Civic-info - Tradeshow	\$ 32,440.75
In-house - Tradeshow	\$ 6,775.00
	<b>\$ 106,309.50</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 213,309.50</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
<b>Venue and Furniture</b>	
Municipal Facilities	\$ 6,866.43
Rentals	\$ 2,074.00
Decorations and accessories	\$ 1,389.86
<b>Total Venue and Furniture</b>	<b>\$ 10,330.29</b>
<b>Entertainment</b>	
Welcome Reception Entertainment	\$ 400.00
Banquet Entertainment	\$ 4,380.00
Pre-conference Activities	\$ 1,130.68

<b>Total Entertainment</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>5,910.68</b>
<b>Catering</b>		
All meals	\$	37,665.32
Complimentary Beverages/Banquet Wine	\$	5,111.21
<b>Total Catering</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>42,776.53</b>
<b>Marketing and Communications</b>		
Garments for Committee	\$	1,228.63
Print Materials	\$	3,242.40
Name Wallets	\$	2,148.56
Social Media/Website	\$	1,000.00
Round-up/Resource Forum	\$	2,000.00
<b>Total Marketing and Communications</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>9,619.59</b>
<b>Tradeshow</b>		
Central Display	\$	16,898.20
<b>Total Tradeshow</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>16,898.20</b>
<b>Speakers and Program</b>		
Keynote Speaker	\$	9,532.82
Honorariums	\$	910.00
Speaker Gifts/Community Foundation	\$	3,500.00
Audio Visual Services	\$	15,000.00
<b>Total Speakers and Program</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>28,942.82</b>
<b>Delegate Services</b>		
Delegate Packages and Swag	\$	862.54
<b>Total Delegate Services</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>862.54</b>
<b>Other</b>		
Grand Prize	\$	2,690.00
Security	\$	652.50
Transportation	\$	3,725.00
Minerals North Association	\$	5,000.00
Hosting Gifts	\$	389.48
Misc. Supplies	\$	779.5
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>128,577.20</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>84,732.30</b>