DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA®

COVID-19 Research Roundup

February 8, 2021

Cranbrook, Kootenay Rockies

BC's Restart Plan

The phased approach to BC's Restart Plan is on pause for the duration of province-wide restrictions, as noted below.

Province-wide restrictions

To get COVID-19 transmission under control, the Province is urging all British Columbians to press pause on all non-essential travel and stay in their local community. Some insights noted in this Research Roundup were gathered prior to this announcement by BC's Provincial Health Officer, Dr Bonnie Henry, originally given on November 19 and reinforced on December 7, 2020, January 7, 2021, and February 5.

On January 12, 2021, Canadian and US officials agreed to extend the closure of the border between the two countries to non-essential travel until at least February 21, 2021.

Information provided in this Research Roundup Report highlights not only local insights, but global insights which may be applicable to BC now.

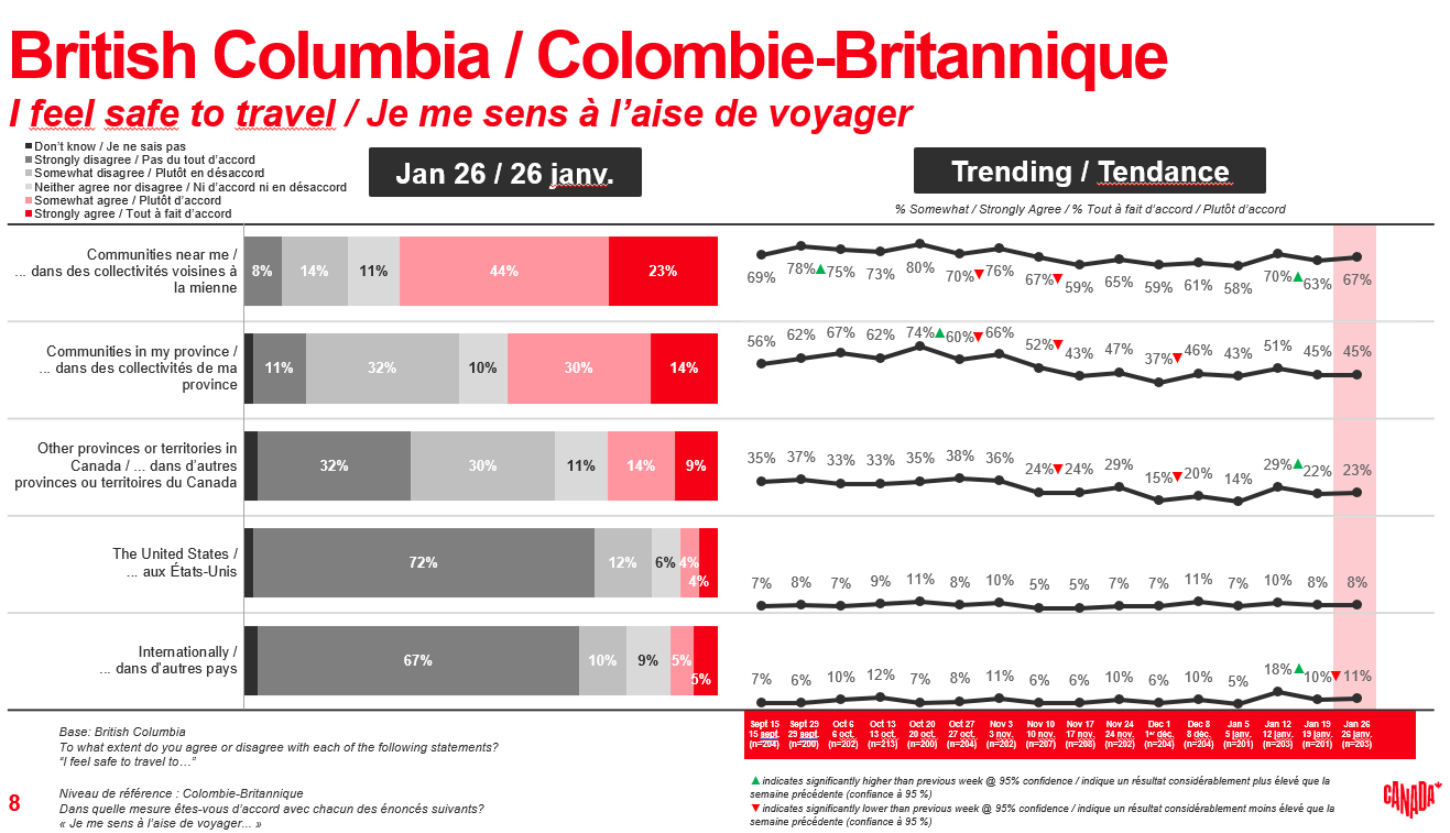
Destination BC is rounding up relevant research and articles each week related to the travel and tourism industry and COVID-19.

Last week in brief:

- 67% of BC residents feel safe to travel to nearby communities
- BC residents' concern to welcome visitors from BC resembles level of concern seen in early November 2020
- BC sees a decrease of -1.3% in weekly domestic overnight visitation compared to previous week
- BC sees a decrease of -37% in weekly domestic overnight visitation compared to same period last year
- BC's occupancy rate (30.0%) up +0.5% from the previous week
- BC's average daily rate ($118.44) down -0.8% from the previous week
- BC's revenue per available room (RevPAR) ($35.57) up +0.7% from the previous week
- In BC Hotel Association survey, 49% of BC hotels indicate permanent closure by April without financial aid
- Effects of COVID-19 taking a toll on BC residents' mental health
- 86% of Canadians support the new safety measures for international travel
- Conference Board of Canada forecasts GDP growth of +5.3% in 2021
- 56.5% of American travellers are ready to travel
- Travellers are using Expedia sites primarily for "dreaming"
- Tourism and COVID-19 dashboard and reporting resources

67% of BC residents feel safe to travel to nearby communities

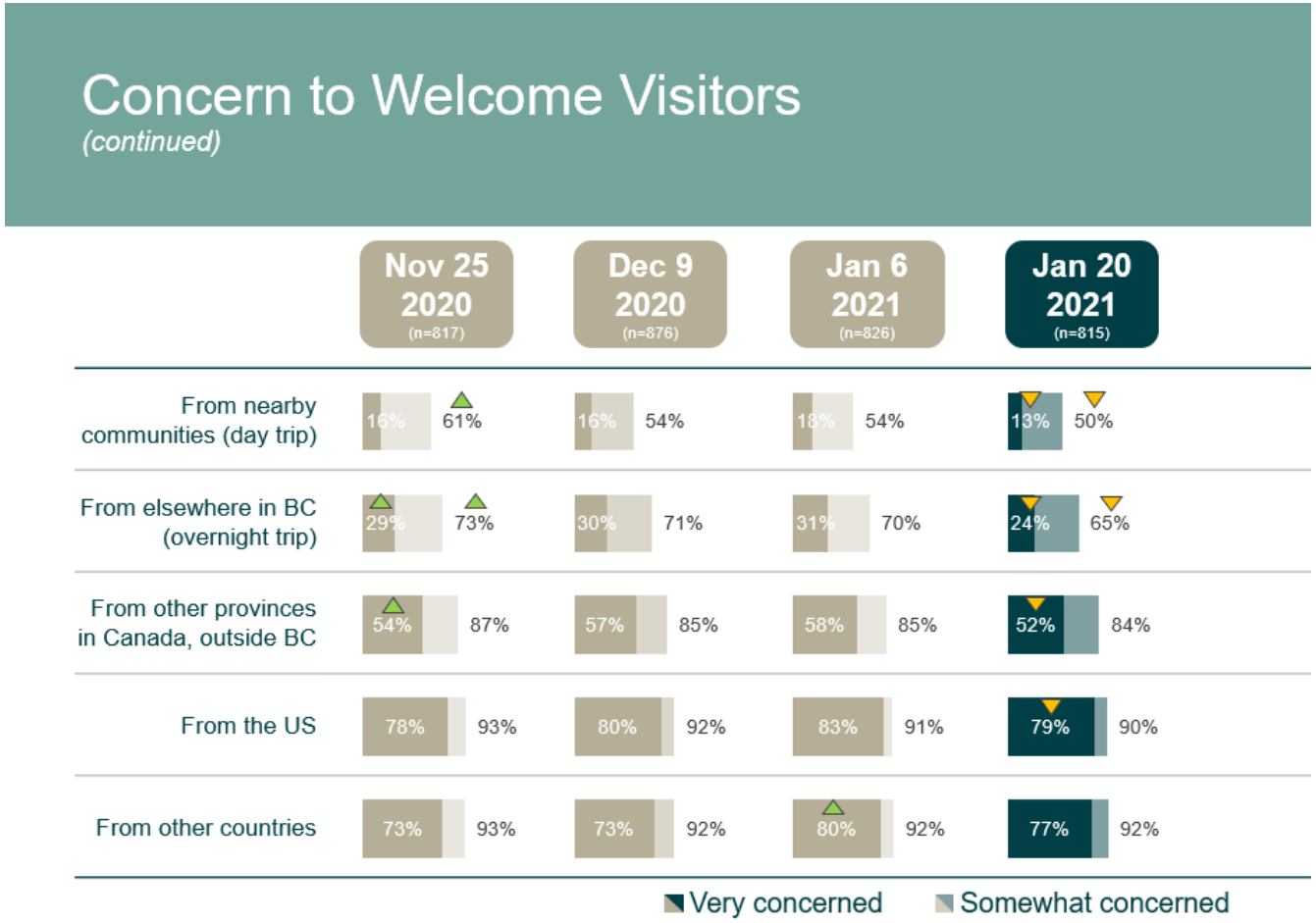
- In Destination Canada's Wave 31 (January 26, 2021) report, 67% British Columbians stated they feel safe to travel to nearby communities, whereas 22% of BC residents expressed an opposing view, stating they do not feel safe, resulting in a net score of +45.
- British Columbians reported a +2 net score of feeling safe to travel to communities in the rest of the province (45% stated they feel safe, while 43% stated they feel unsafe).
- A -39 net score was reported by BC residents who feel safe to travel to provinces or territories in Canada, a -76 net score to the US, and a -66 net score to other countries.



Source: [Destination Canada's Weekly Resident Sentiment, Wave 31, Leger, January 26, 2021]

BC residents' concern to welcome visitors from BC resembles level of concern seen in early November 2020

- In Wave 18 (January 20, 2021) of Destination BC's BC Residents' Public Perceptions survey, 50% of BC residents said they are concerned to welcome visitors from nearby communities, with the remaining 50% stating they are not concerned. Level of concerns has been decreasing over the past few waves, now resembling the level of concern seen in early November 2020.
- 65% of BC residents said they are concerned to welcome visitors from elsewhere in BC, with the remaining respondents (35%) stating they are not concerned.
- 84% are concerned to welcome visitors from other provinces in Canada, 90% from the US, and 92% from other countries.



Source: Destination BC's BC Residents' Public Perceptions: COVID-19 Travel and Tourism Wave 18, Insights West, January 20, 2021

BC sees a decrease of -1.3% in weekly domestic overnight visitation compared to previous week

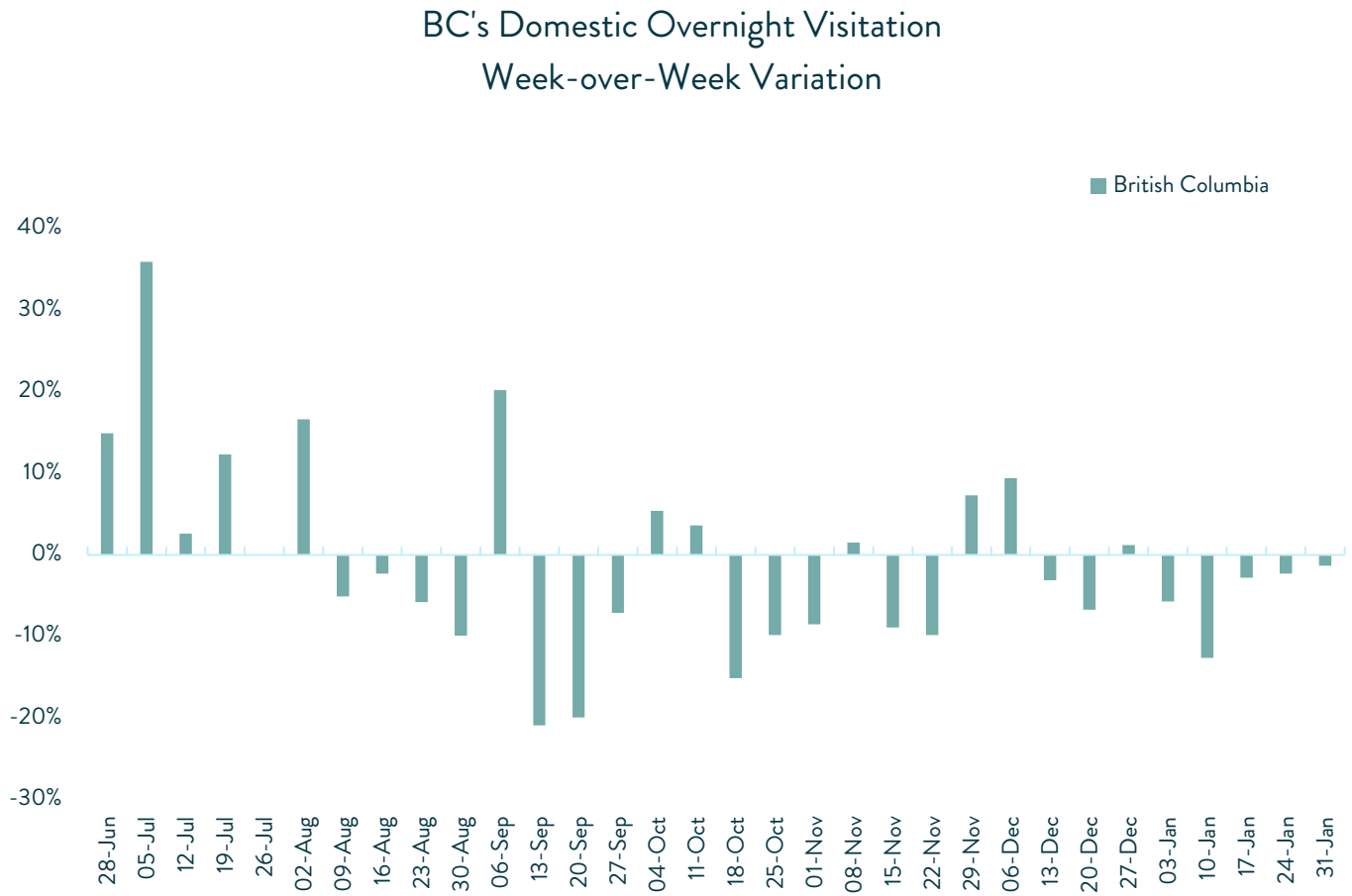
- According to Environics Analytics Weekly COVID Tracker Report, during the week ending January 31, 2021, BC experienced a week-over-week decrease (-1.3%) in weekly domestic overnight visitation.

- Week-over-week decreases in domestic overnight visitation were seen in two tourism regions:

    - Vancouver, Coast & Mountains (-15.5%)
    - Vancouver Island (-4.1%)

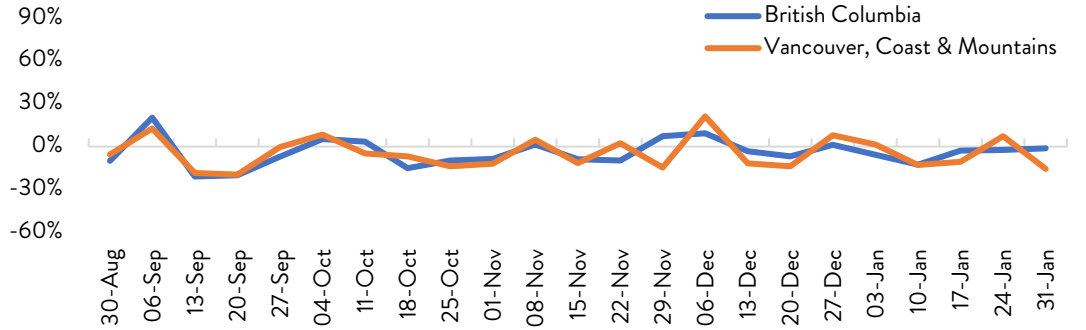
- However, week-over-week increases in domestic overnight visitation were seen in the remaining four tourism regions:

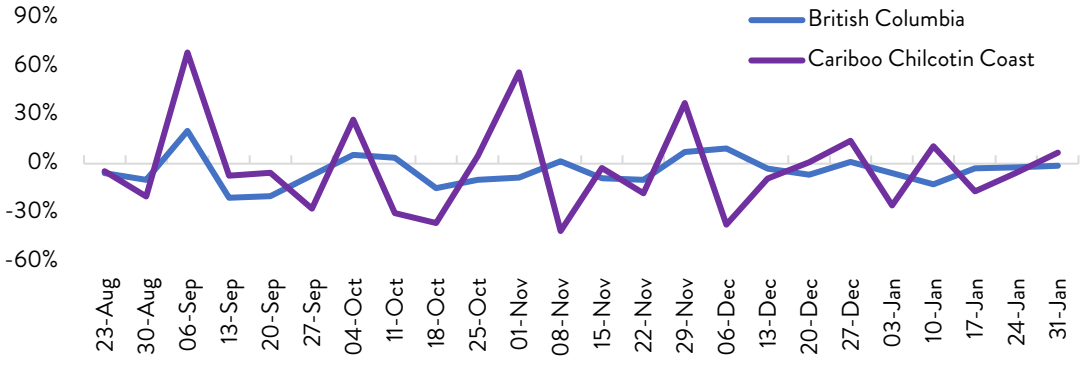
    - Kootenay Rockies (+27.2%)
    - Northern BC (+10.6%)
    - Cariboo Chilcotin Coast (+6.9%)
    - Thompson Okanagan (+5.7%)

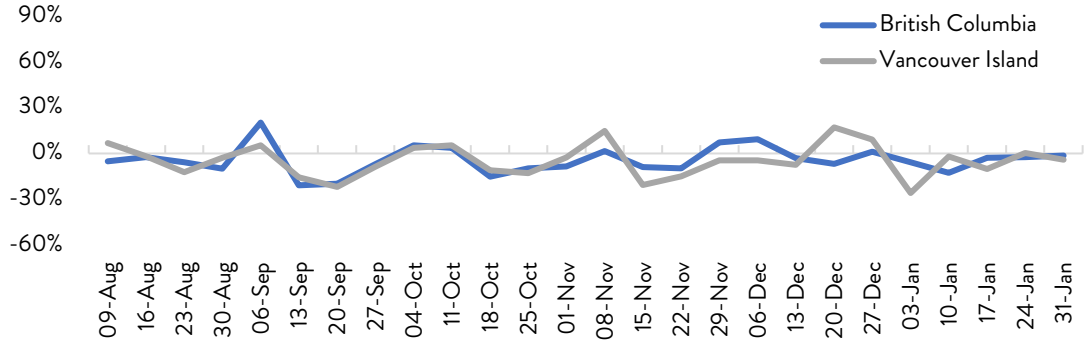


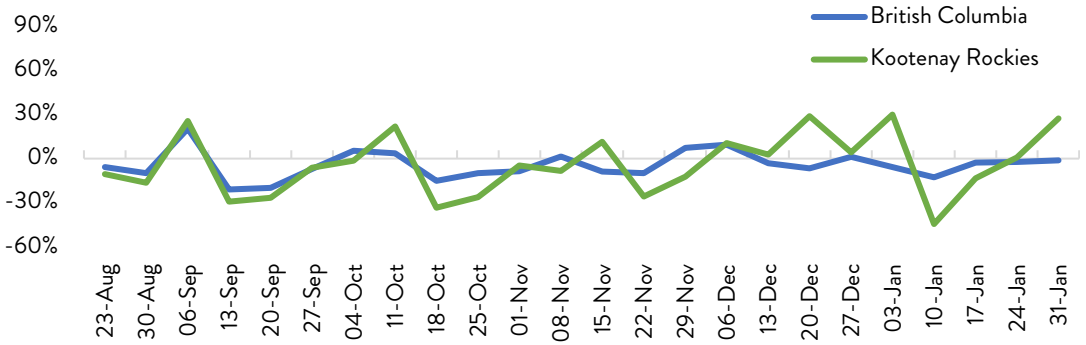
Source: Environics Analytics Weekly COVID Tracker Report, January 31, 2021

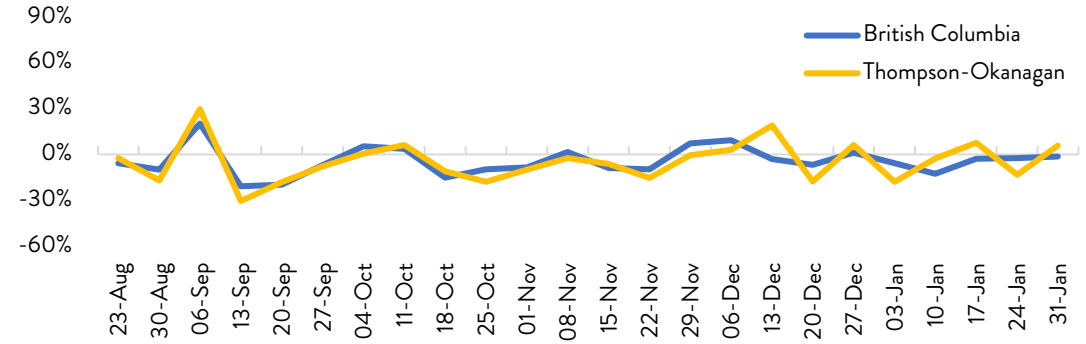
BC and Regional Domestic Overnight Visitation Week-over-Week Percent Change

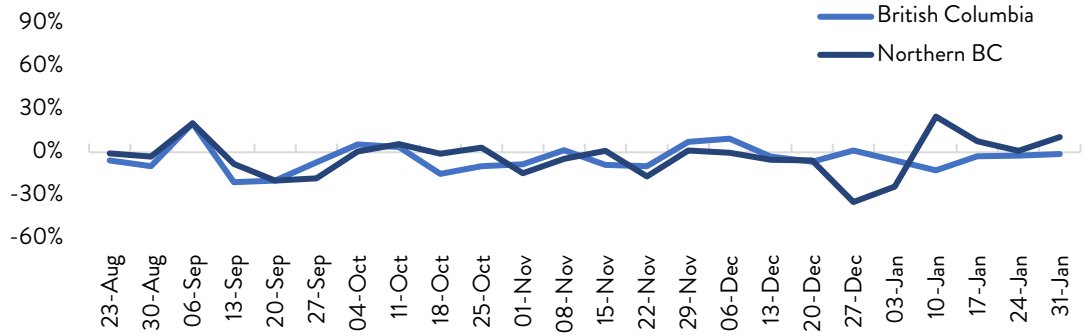








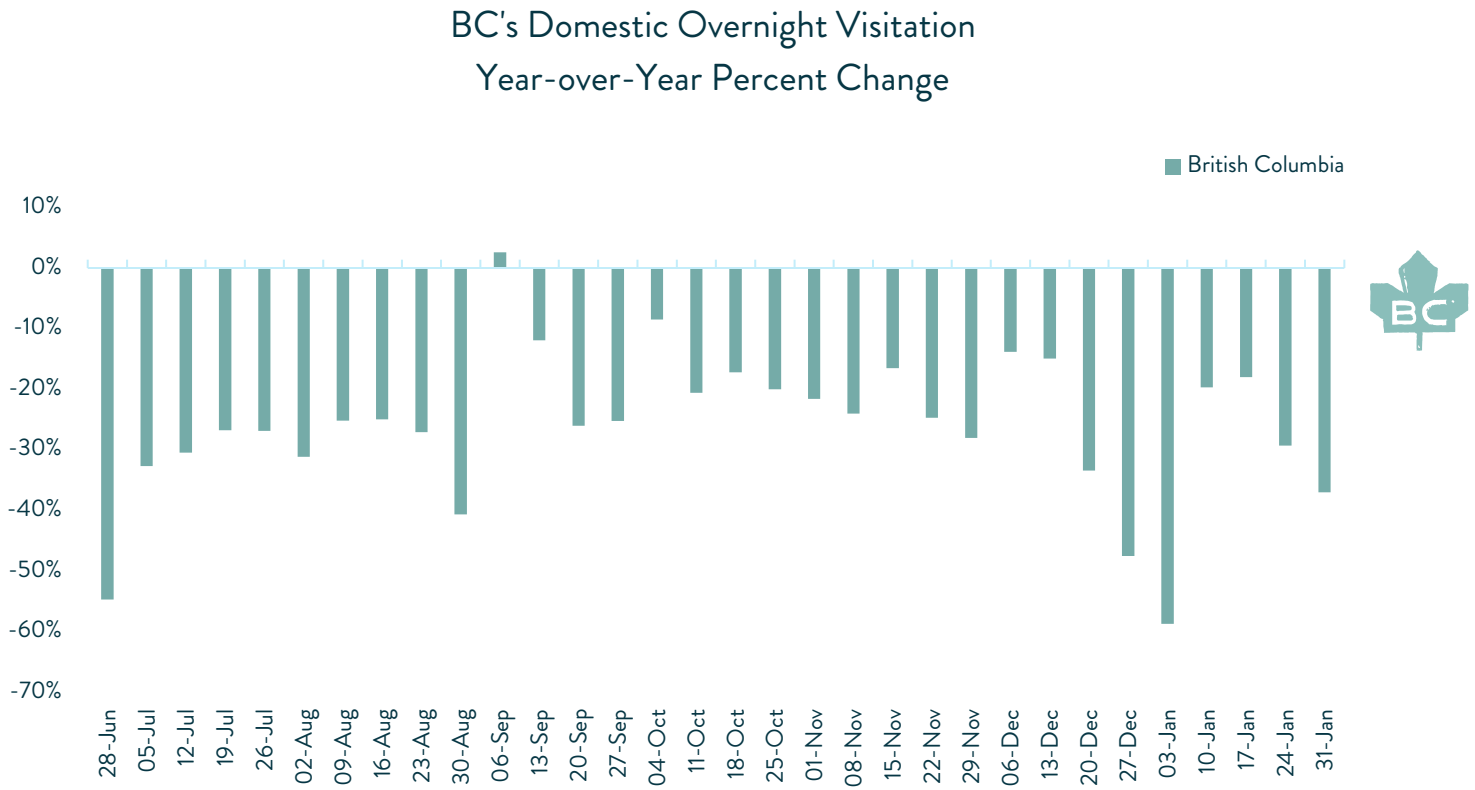




Source: Environics Analytics Weekly COVID Tracker Report, January 31, 2021

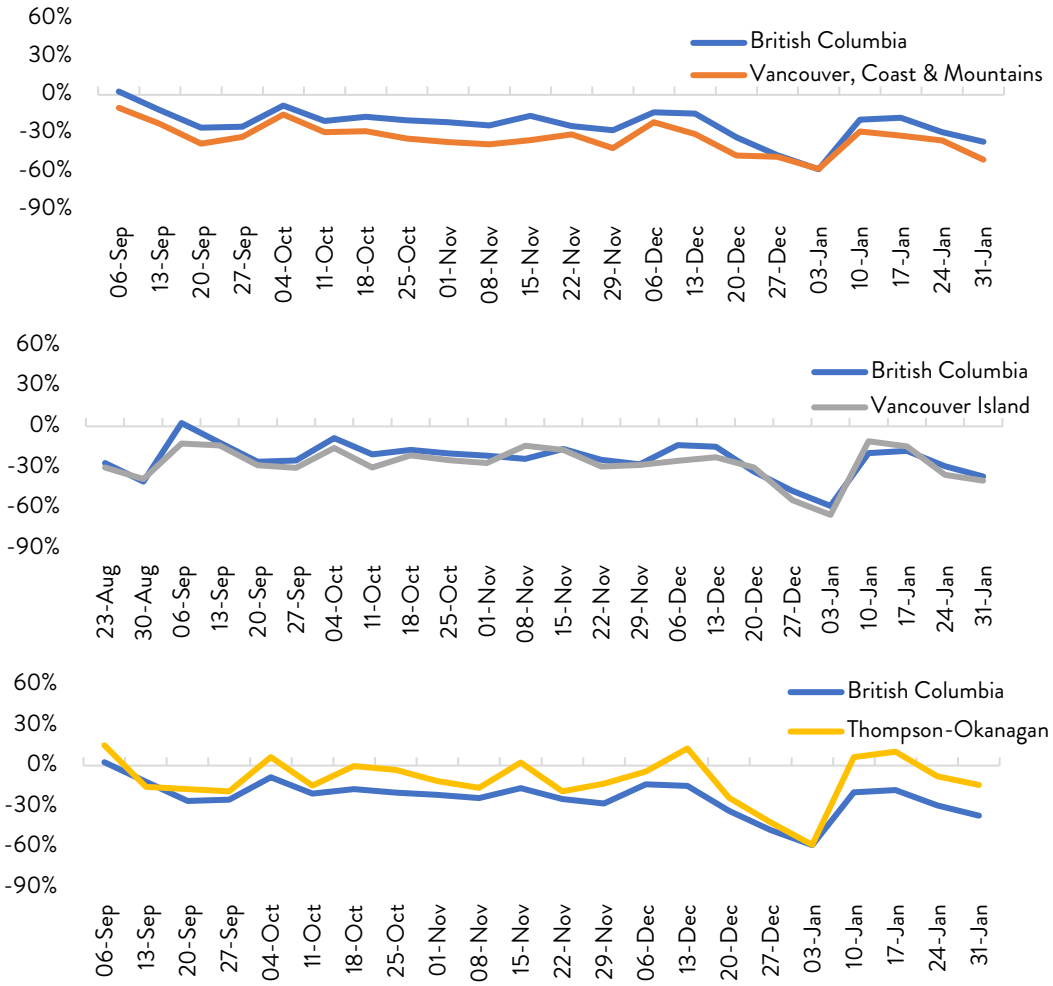
BC sees a decrease of -37% in weekly domestic overnight visitation compared to same period last year

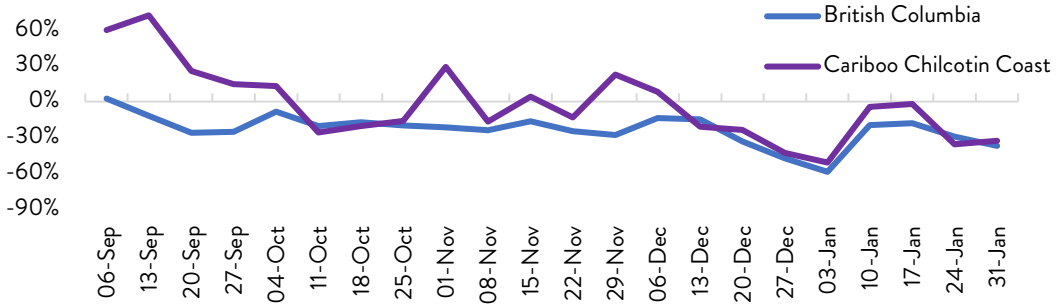
- Environics Analytics also reports year-over-year analysis in the Weekly COVID Tracker Report.
- For the week ending January 31, 2021, weekly domestic overnight visitation was down (-37.0%) compared to the same week in 2020.
- A year-over-year decrease in weekly visitation was seen across the province in all tourism regions:
    - Vancouver, Coast & Mountains (-51.1%)
    - Vancouver Island (-39.9%)
    - Cariboo Chilcotin Coast (-32.8%)
    - Northern BC (-31.8%)
    - Kootenay Rockies (-30.8%)
    - Thompson Okanagan (-14.2%)

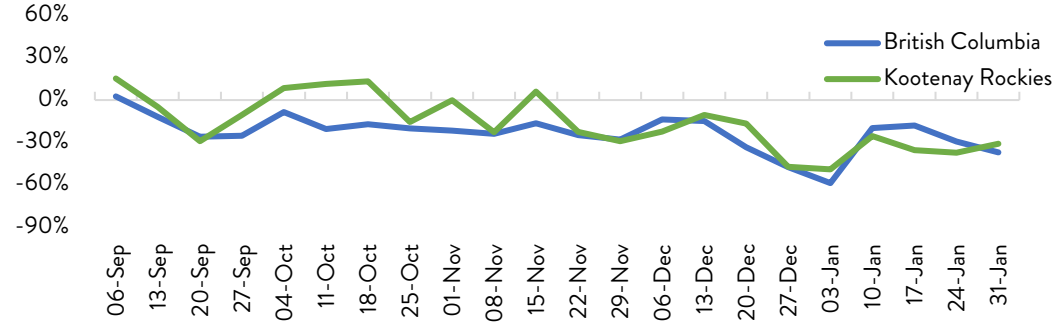


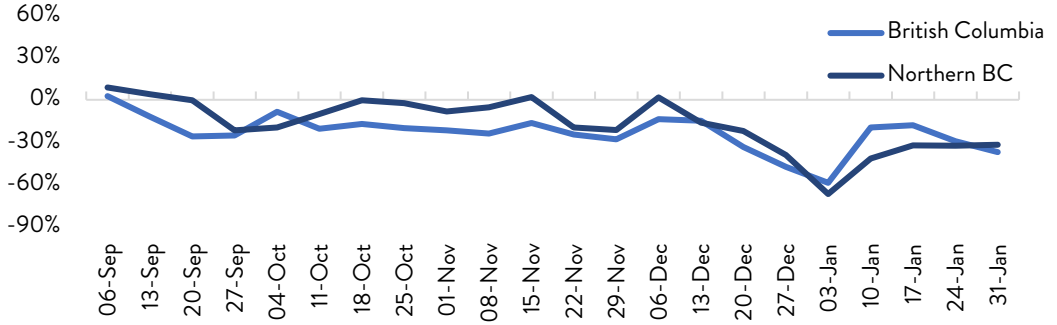
Source: Environics Analytics Weekly COVID Tracker Report, January 31, 2021

BC and Regional Domestic Overnight Visitation Year-over-Year Percent Change





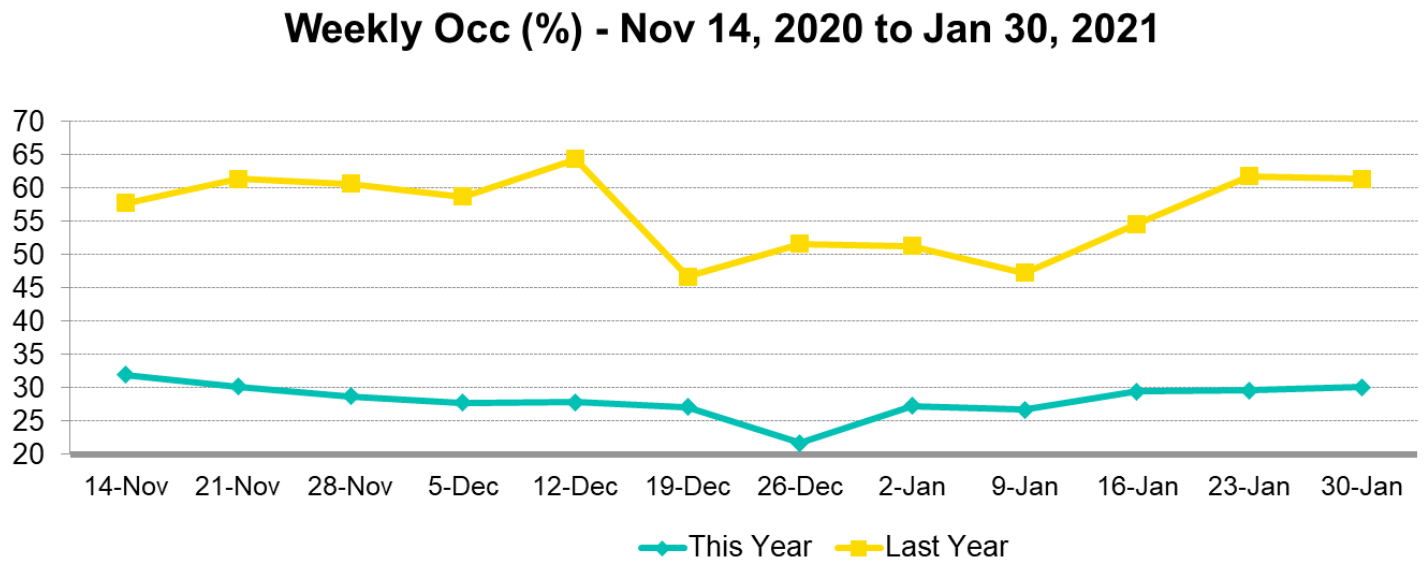




Source: Environics Analytics Weekly COVID Tracker Report, January 31, 2021

BC's occupancy rate (30.0%) up +0.5% from the previous week

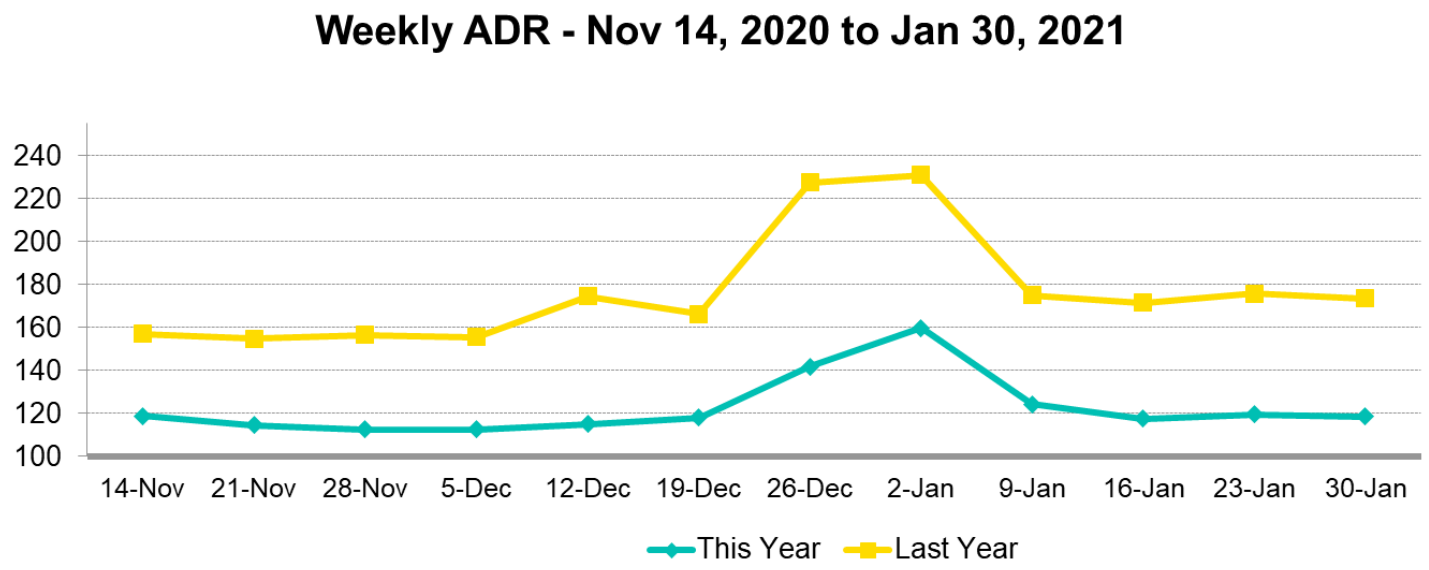
- STR, an agency which reports BC's hotel performance, shows the average weekly occupancy for BC was 30.0% for the week of January 24 – 30, 2021. This represents an increase of +0.5 points from the previous week and a decrease of -31.3 points compared to a similar period in 2020.



Source: 2021 STR, STR Global Ltd - STR Jan. 24 - 30, 2021

BC's average daily rate ($118.44) down -0.8% from the previous week

- STR, an agency which reports BC's hotel performance, shows BC's average daily rate (ADR) was $118.44 for the week of January 24 – 30, 2021. This represents a decrease of -0.8% from the previous week and a decrease of -31.7% compared to a similar period in 2020.



Source: 2021 STR, STR Global Ltd - STR Jan. 24 - 30, 2021

British Columbia's Hotel Occupancy Rate and Average Daily Room Rate (ADR)

	Jan. 24 - 30, 2021 Occupancy Rate	Week-over-Week Jan. 24 - 30, 2021 vs. Jan. 17 - 23, 2021 Occupancy Point Change	Year-over-Year Jan. 24 - 30, 2021 vs. Jan. 26 - Feb. 1, 2020 Occupancy Point Change	Jan. 24 - 30, 2021 ADR	Week-over-Week Jan. 24 - 30, 2021 vs. Jan. 17 - 23, 2021 ADR Percent Change	Year-over Year Jan. 24 - 30, 2021 vs. Jan. 26 - Feb. 1, 2020 ADR Percent Change
British Columbia	**30.0%**	**+0.5**	**-31.3**	**$118.44**	**-0.8%**	**-31.7%**
Vancouver (City of)	17.5%	-1.2	-53.0	$141.01	+2.3%	-28.9%
Whistler	23.8%	-0.3	-58.7	$266.65	+1.1%	-43.2%
Victoria	36.3%	+7.8	-12.5	$102.75	-6.7%	-20.2%
Kelowna	23.2%	-0.1	-26.2	$99.13	+0.6%	-19.1%
Kamloops	31.7%	-0.2	-9.9	$90.79	+0.5%	-5.4%
Richmond	34.8%	-4.1	-40.3	$117.95	+1.0%	-26.7%

Source: 2021 STR, STR Global Ltd - STR Jan. 24 - 30, 2021

BC's revenue per available room (RevPAR) ($35.57) up +0.7% from the previous week

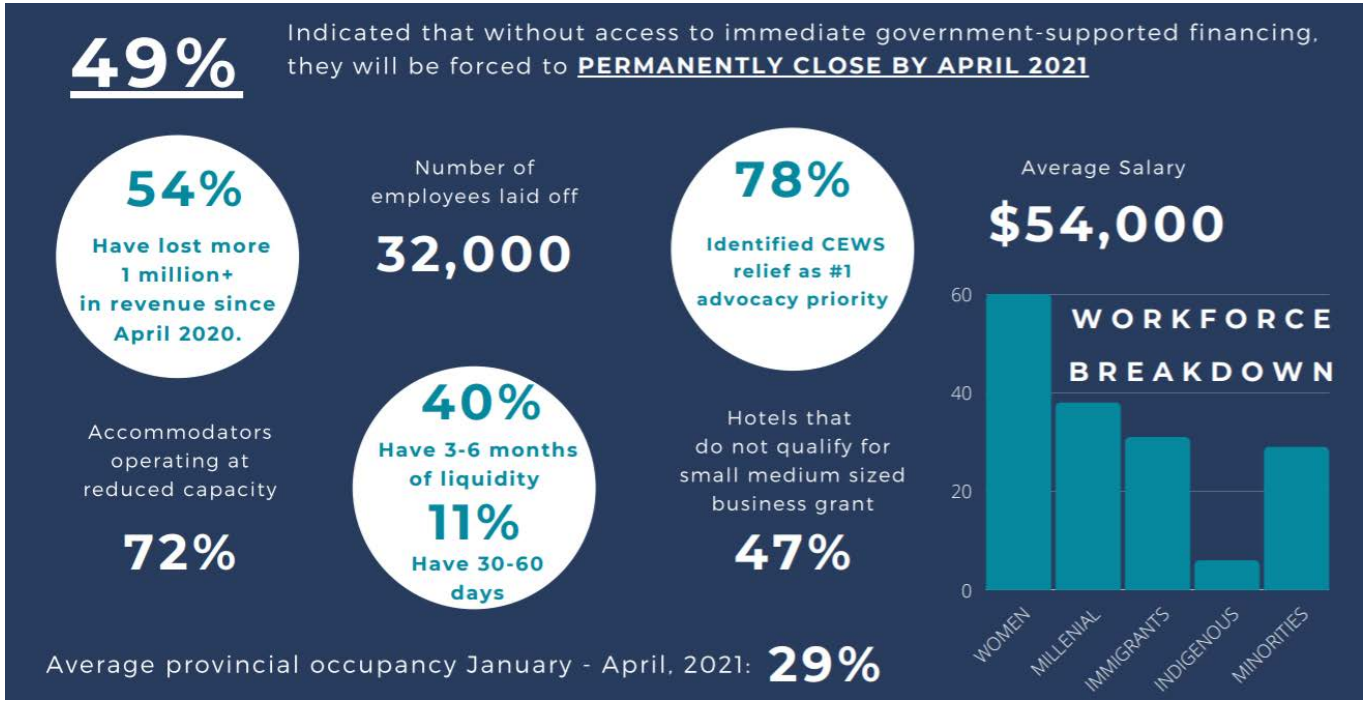
- STR, an agency which reports BC's hotel performance, shows BC's revenue per available room (revPAR) was $35.57 for the week of January 24 – 30, 2021. This represents an increase of +0.7% from the previous week and a decrease of -66.5% compared to a similar period in 2020.

	Jan. 24 - 30, 2021 RevPAR	Week-over-Week Jan. 24 - 30, 2021 vs. Jan. 17 - 23, 2021 RevPAR Percent Change	Year-over-Year Jan. 24 - 30, 2021 vs. Jan. 26 - Feb. 1, 2020 RevPAR Percent Change
British Columbia	**$35.57**	**0.7%**	**-66.5%**
Vancouver (City of)	$24.70	-4.4%	-82.3%
Whistler	$63.36	-0.2%	-83.6%
Victoria	$37.32	18.6%	-40.6%
Kelowna	$22.98	0.3%	-62.0%
Kamloops	$28.80	-0.1%	-28.0%
Richmond	$41.06	-9.6%	-66.0%

Source: 2021 STR, STR Global Ltd - STR Jan. 24 - 30, 2021

In BC Hotel Association survey, 49% of BC hotels indicate permanent closures by April without financial aid

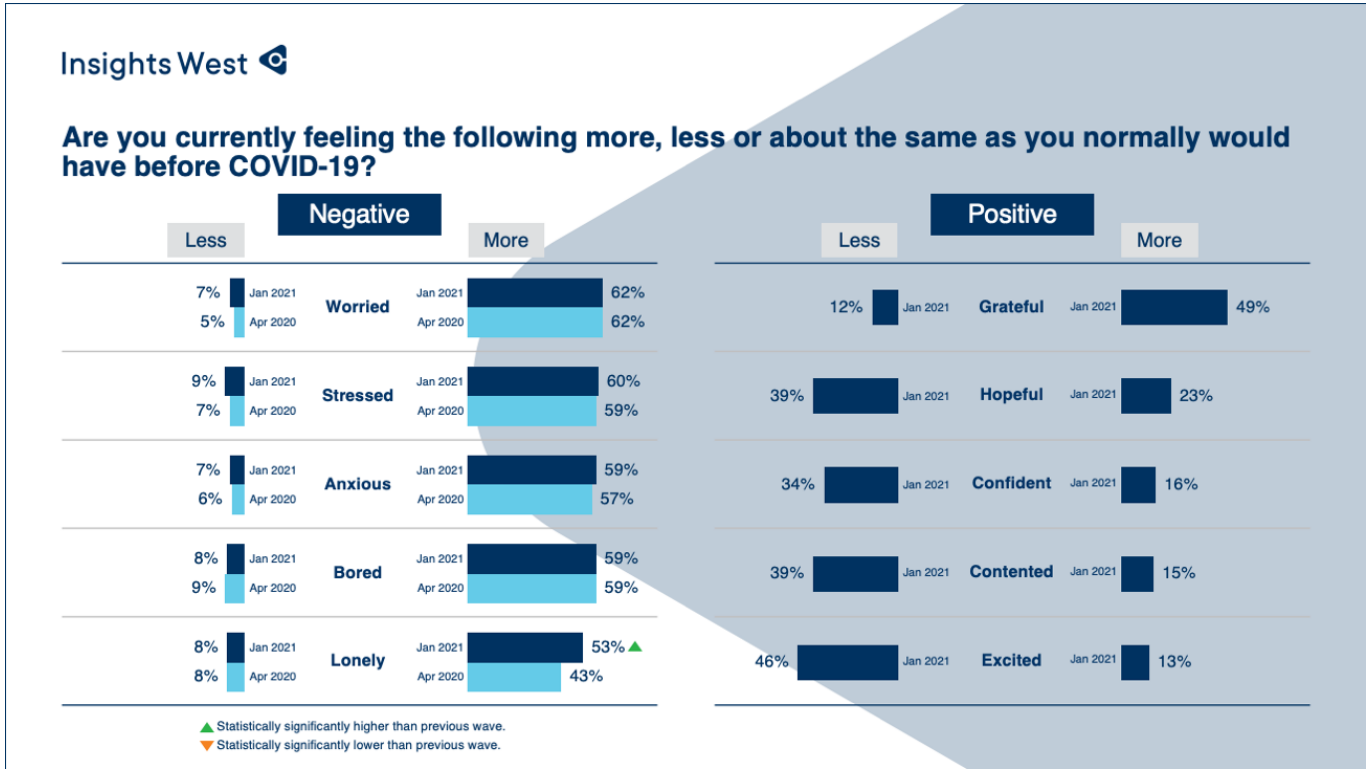
- The results of a recent pulse survey by the BC Hotel Association showed that 49% of hotels indicated that they will be forced to permanently close by April 2021 if they do not receive immediate government funding.
- 72% of accommodators reported that they were operating at reduced capacity.



Source: BC Hotel Association, February 2021

Effects of COVID-19 taking a toll on BC residents' mental health

- A research study in January 2021 by the Pacific Blue Cross and Insights West shows that many BC residents are experiencing more worry (62%), stress (60%), anxiety (59%), and boredom (59%), compared to pre-pandemic levels, and those experiencing more loneliness has increased +10 percentage points since September 2020 (up to 53%).
- 49% of respondents are feeling more grateful than pre-pandemic levels.



Source: Insights West, January 29, 2021

86% of Canadians support the new safety measures for international travel

- A recent survey by Leger showed that 86% of Canadians agree with the new safety measures that have been implemented for travellers coming to or returning to Canada.
- 87% of Canadians think the government should ban international travel until the number of COVID-19 cases has decreased for several consecutive days.

Source: [Leger, February 2, 2021]

Conference Board of Canada forecasts GDP growth of +5.3% in 2021

- In its two-year economic outlook, the Conference Board of Canada forecasts that real gross domestic product (GDP) will grow +5.3% in 2021 and +3.5% in 2022.
- The Board suggests a successful rollout of vaccines will encourage households to spend some of the $200 billion that have been aggregately amassed in savings. The significant increase in savings from $18 billion in 2019 is attributed to government support and travel bans that have cut foreign travel spending.

The Conference Board of Canada Forecasts Economic Growth In 2021 And 2022

Key findings

Canada's economy rebounded through the summer, but **rising COVID-19 cases** – both at home and south of the border – will **slow the pace of recovery**. Many businesses in Canada face dim prospects over the first half of 2021.

A successful rollout of vaccines will **encourage households to spend** some of what they've amassed in savings. Household balance sheets are in great shape thanks to government support and travel bans that have cut spending on foreign travel to almost nothing.

The federal and provincial governments are pledging continued support to businesses and households. The pandemic will **drive up public debt to record levels**, putting a strain on government finances and public spending once the crisis is past.

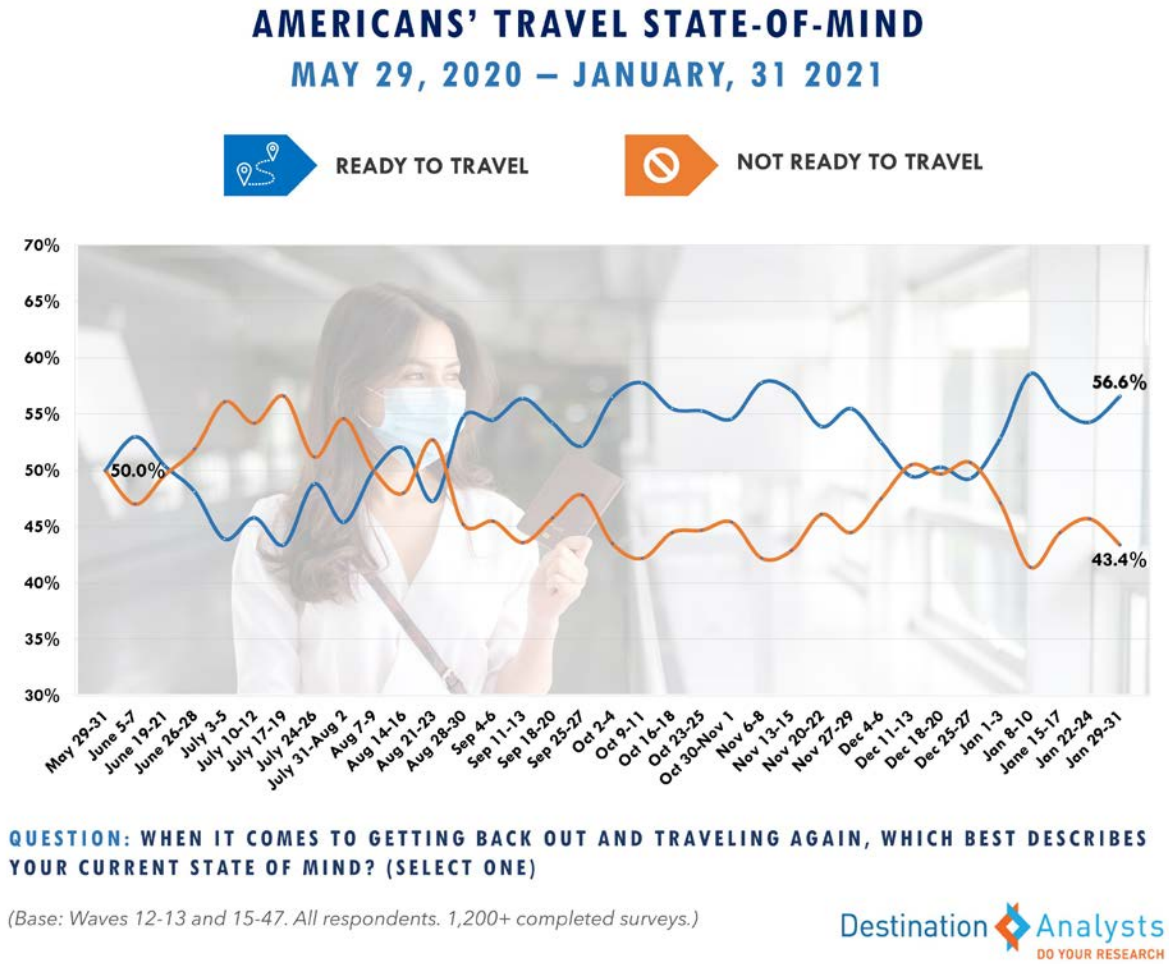
Real GDP is forecast to post growth of **5.3 per cent in 2021** and **3.5 per cent in 2022**. This follows the deepest recession in modern times. We estimate that economic activity dropped by 5.3 per cent in 2020.

Source: Conference Board of Canada, January 12, 2021

56.5% of American travellers are ready to travel

- Destination Analysts, a US-based tourism research company, found in a January 29-31 survey that 56.5% of American travellers are ready to travel. This represents a significant uptick from the previous week's survey, and among the highest levels of travel intent during the pandemic.

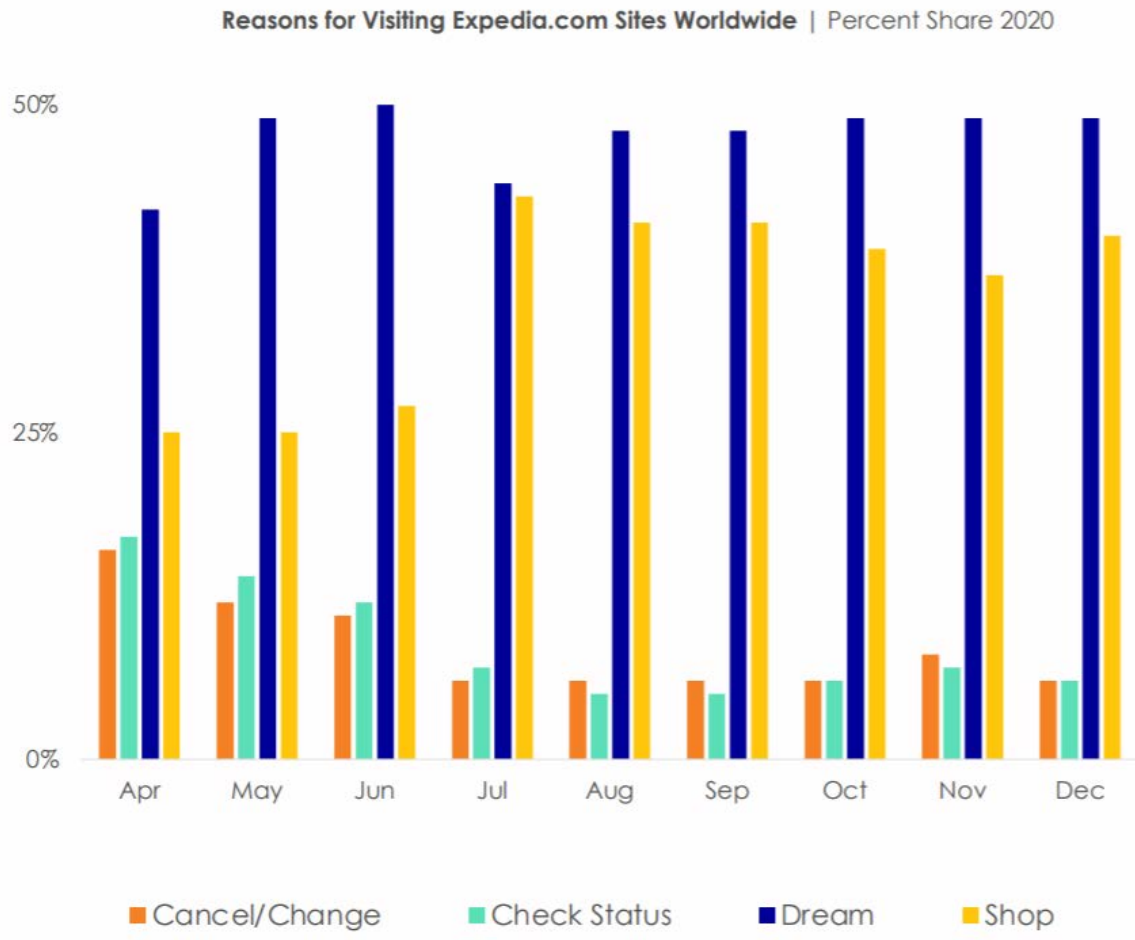
- Two-thirds of American travellers did some kind of travel planning activity in the last week: 11.2% made travel reservations, 27.6% researched travel ideas online, and 33.2% daydreamed about a vacation.



Source: Destination Analysts, February 1, 2021

Travellers are using Expedia sites primarily for "dreaming"

- According to Expedia Group, visits to Expedia sites worldwide have primarily been for "dreaming".
- In the early months of the pandemic, a huge surge in site visits were for cancelling or changing bookings, while shopping decreased. In July, shopping increased, with dreaming continuing to rise through December 2020.
- According to Expedia, this dreaming is a by-product of pandemic fatigue, and there is pent up demand in searchers who are ready to rejuvenate and recharge.



Source: Traveler Sentiment & Influences, Expedia Group, 2021

Tourism and COVID-19 dashboard and reporting resources

- Destination BC's new Tourism Industry Dashboard tracks statistics across tourism-related industries including accommodations, food & beverage, and transportation.
- Destination BC's Signals & Sentiment dashboard follows core markets through COVID-19. We also conduct and commission general research and insights related to travel and tourism in British Columbia, as well as COVID-19 Research and Insights.
- The UNWTO has a tourism recovery tracker, the most comprehensive tourism dashboard to date.
- The UNWTO has an online dashboard of international statistics on the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector.
- MPI has created a coronavirus resource page that compiles meetings and events information as well as links to several other resources helpful to the Business Events segment in our industry.
- The BC Tourism Resiliency Network hosts tourism impact reports and travel pattern studies.
- The Travel and Tourism Research Association links to many research & analytics companies on their COVID-19 Resource Centre.

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This report can be found online on the Destination BC Research & Insights COVID-19 webpage

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