

MONTGOMERY-SMITHERS

WEST VIRGINIA



COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS | 2023

At a Glance

The City of Montgomery and City of Smithers, with support from the West Virginia Community Development Hub's Communities of Achievement Program (HubCAP), are working to support local businesses and entrepreneurs, and to foster business opportunities and growth.

This document summarizes community survey results in a quick look format. The results are being used to help profile business and development opportunities, and to help inform, introduce, or fine-tune market-driven community enhancement strategies that could make the Montgomery-Smithers area an even better place to visit, live, work, do business, and invest.



Montgomery and Smithers are West Virginia Community Development Hub HubCAP Communities.

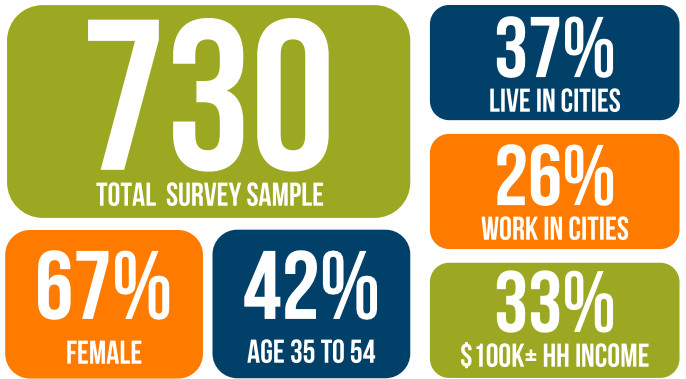
The Hub's Communities of Achievement Program (HubCAP) offers participating communities a time-tested curriculum to accelerate their community-led economic development and revitalization efforts. Coaches support community teams over a multi-year period to help increase their leadership and move forward clearly defined community development projects from initial idea to planning for long-term implementation and financing. This program sparks the change communities want to see through activities such as building redevelopment, increasing business opportunities, and improving community engagement practices.

The fifth round of HubCAP, launched in 2023, is focused on efforts to help communities build thriving local economies, respond to Covid-19, and develop sustainable projects that will lead to impact and transformation.



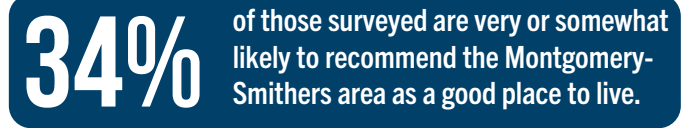
wvhub.org/hub-communities-of-achievement

SURVEY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Survey respondents' takes on the Montgomery-Smithers area as a place to live and characteristics that contribute to the area's appeal and attraction can provide direction for community enhancement, marketing, and economic development strategies.



Q: How likely are you to recommend the Montgomery-Smithers area to friends and family as a good place to live?

Likelihood	Percent
Very likely	10.2%
Somewhat likely	23.3%
Neither likely nor unlikely	24.2%
Somewhat unlikely	15.5%
Very unlikely	24.2%
Don't know	2.5%

“The Montgomery-Smithers area is a good place to invest.”
— Top ranked statement based on weighted average of survey responses

Q: Using a scale from 1 (Completely Disagree) to 5 (Completely Agree), please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about the Montgomery-Smithers area.

The Montgomery-Smithers area...	Avg. Weight
is a good place to invest.	2.87
is clean and attractive.	2.80
is inviting and welcoming.	2.76
presents a positive image to visitors.	2.67

Average Weight based on cumulative responses for frequency range.
Scale: 1 = Completely Disagree | 5 = Completely Agree

MARKET INSIGHTS

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS




The proliferation of social media platforms and applications—and the occurrence of their use by consumers in the local marketplace—demonstrate why it is important for businesses, local government, and economic development organizations to develop and maintain a strong online presence.

82% rely on social media as a source for Montgomery-Smithers area news and information.


Q: Of the following, which three (3) do you rely on most for Montgomery-Smithers area news and information?

Area News and Information Sources Top Eight	Percent
Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	82.0%
Local TV Stations	30.9%
Local Newspaper(s) – Online	13.4%
Mobile Apps from Local Sources	12.2%
Local Government or Community Websites	11.5%
Electronic Newsletters and Emails	10.5%
Local Radio Stations	10.5%
Local Newspaper(s) – Print	6.7%

Top eight shown. Up to three selections per respondent allowed.



93%



34%



34%

MOST POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA SITES AND APPS

Q: Which social media sites and apps do you most frequently use?

Top Social Media Sites and Apps Top Eight	Percent
Facebook	92.9%
Instagram	33.6%
YouTube	33.6%
TikTok	28.7%
Snapchat	13.8%
Pinterest	11.1%
X (formerly Twitter)	9.9%
LinkedIn	5.0%

Top eight shown. Up to three selections per respondent allowed.

CONSUMER TRENDS

Products most frequently purchased online or in other locales could provide additional cues for community and business marketing efforts, business expansion prospects, and business recruitment targets.

41% frequently purchase groceries online or in other locales.

Q: Which of the following types of products do you most frequently purchase online and/or leave the Montgomery-Smithers area to purchase elsewhere?

Groceries	41.4%	Pet Supplies	19.8%
Women's Clothing	30.6%	Meats/Specialty Foods	19.1%
Electronics	28.0%	Men's Clothing	16.5%
Children's Clothing	21.3%	Furniture	14.7%
Shoes	20.8%	Home Furnishings	14.2%

Ten most frequent selections shown. Up to three selections per respondent allowed

Some small businesses have yet to tap into or fully capitalize on consumer online shopping patterns. Amazon, Walmart, Etsy, eBay, and other highly recognizable retailers and sites offer opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs to list and sell products on their well established platforms.

MOST POPULAR SHOPPING SITES AND APPS



92%



70%



29%

Q: From which of the following online shopping sites or apps have you made a purchase within the past year?

Top Online Shopping Sites and Apps Top Six	Percent
Amazon	92.2%
Walmart.com	70.2%
Etsy	29.3%
eBay	26.4%
Facebook Marketplace	25.3%
A local business' website or app	15.4%

Top six shown. More than one selection per respondent allowed.

From a business development perspective, online shopping and retailing trends have opened the doors of many small communities to “location neutral” businesses that are not solely dependent on the local market but often rely, primarily, on sales transacted through Ecommerce channels.

BUSINESS INSIGHTS

ANCHORS AND ATTRACTIONS



Q: What is the name of the business or place in Montgomery or Smithers that you visit most often?

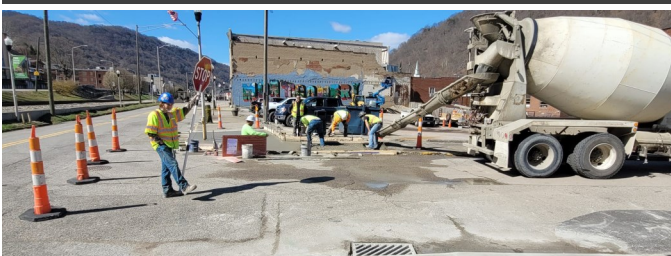
Businesses or Places Visited Most Often (Top 10)

1. El Jalisco (13.0%)	6. Dairy Queen (4.0%)
2. Dollar General (12.0%)	7. Go Mart (3.6%)
3. Grant's Supermarket (8.2%)	8. D&J's (3.5%)
4. Frank's Pizza (5.7%)	9. McDonald's (3.3%)
5. CVS (4.2%)	10. Montgomery General (2.7%)

The identification of businesses and places visited most often can provide direction for strategies and activities that:

- Capitalize on existing facilities, anchor businesses, and activity generators—including opportunities for complementary businesses, entrepreneurs, and attractions; and
- Work to heighten awareness for the local and eclectic nature of the business mix and the full range of products, services, and experiences offered by Montgomery-Smithers area businesses.

LOCAL BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC TRENDS



51% say recent business and economic trends in the Montgomery-Smithers area are "Improving" or "Steady."

Q: Which of the following best describes recent business and economic trends in the Montgomery-Smithers area?

Recent Business and Economic Trends	Percent
Improving or making progress	20.0%
Steady or holding its own	31.2%
Declining or losing ground	48.8%

Perspectives on local business and economic trends can positively—or adversely— influence business development and investor recruitment efforts. The current score can also serve as a benchmark for gauging community awareness and the impacts of local community enhancement, marketing, and economic development efforts.

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

Input from twenty-eight Montgomery and Smithers business owners responding to the survey provides direction for current and possible business support and technical assistance programming.

33% of business owners plan to increase marketing and/or advertising within the next year or two.

Q: In which of the following ways do you plan to change or modify your business within the next year or two?

Planned Business Changes or Modifications	Percent
Increase marketing and/or advertising	33.3%
Complete building improvements	14.8%
Increase number of employees	14.8%
Sell your business	14.8%
Begin using and/or add remote employees or workers	7.4%
Expand your business or building	7.4%

Most frequent responses shown. More than one selection per respondent allowed.

Q: Of the following, which pose the greatest challenge to sustaining or growing your business?

Business Challenges	Percent
Complying with local licensing/regulatory requirements	16.7%
Finding a larger space to expand my business	16.7%
Complying with county, state, and/or federal regulations	12.5%
Hiring and/or retaining quality employees	12.5%
Working through supply chain or vendor issues	12.5%

Most frequent responses shown. More than one selection per respondent allowed.

Q: Which of the following types of technical assistance and incentives, if available, would you be most likely to use?

Technical Assistance and Incentives	Percent
Low interest building improvement loans	20.8%
Free or low-cost building improvement design services	16.7%
Help to market your building or space	16.7%
Low-interest loans for business expansion	16.7%
Help to create a succession plan or to sell your business	8.3%
One-on-one business counseling or coaching	4.2%

More than one selection per respondent allowed.

OPPORTUNITIES AND TARGETS

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Business types identified by locals as most wanted or needed and likely to be frequented could provide opportunities for existing businesses to reposition or expand to capture demand, or for new businesses to enter the Montgomery-Smithers area market.

Q: Which of the following types of expanded or new establishments in Montgomery or Smithers would you be most likely to frequent on a consistent basis?

Eating and Drinking Places

45 PERCENT

Selected **Family Restaurant** as one of their top choices.

Top eight selections shown. Up to three selections per respondent allowed.

Family Restaurant	44.8%
Chinese Restaurant	35.9%
Steakhouse	31.9%
Family Arcade & Eatery	23.5%
Brewpub	23.2%
Italian Restaurant	21.4%
Ice Cream & Sweets Shop	15.7%
Coffee Shop	14.9%

Retail Establishments

46 PERCENT

Selected **Grocery Store** as one of their top choices.

Top eight selections shown. Up to three selections per respondent allowed.

Grocery Store	46.4%
Bakery	41.1%
Butcher & Specialty Foods	40.4%
Family Clothing Store	30.7%
Sporting Goods Store	19.3%
Consignment Boutique	19.1%
Convenience Store	11.4%
Home Furnishings Store	9.5%

Services



Which of the following services are most needed or lacking in the Montgomery-Smithers area?

Top eight selections shown. Up to three selections per respondent allowed.

Physical Fitness and Training	43.8%
Pet Care and Veterinary	40.4%
Childcare and Daycare Services	33.3%
Home Repair and Maintenance	25.8%
Auto Care, Repair and Detailing	24.4%
Transportation and Delivery	21.7%
Beauty and Hair Care Services	13.3%
Healthcare Services/Specialists	13.0%

BUSINESS AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Respondents placed the highest priority on possible efforts to demolish buildings that are dilapidated and beyond repair.

Q: On a scale of 1 (Lowest) to 5 (Highest), what level of priority would you place on possible Montgomery-Smithers area business and real estate development efforts to:

Priorities: Business and Real Estate Development	Avg. Weight
Demolish commercial buildings that are dilapidated and beyond repair	4.16
Demolish homes and residential buildings that are dilapidated and beyond repair	4.16
Redevelop vacant and underutilized buildings and sites	3.91
Attract new retail and eating places to expand options	3.75
Create spaces or a marketplace to incubate start-up businesses	3.40

Average Weight based on cumulative responses for frequency range. Scale: 1 = Lowest | 5 = Highest

BUSINESS AND INVESTOR PROSPECTS

45 survey respondents expressed interest in moving to, expanding, or opening a new business in the Montgomery-Smithers area.

Q: Are you interested in expanding your business, in moving your business to the area, in opening a new business, in investing in a new or expanding business, or in getting help to evaluate options for repairing, redeveloping, or expanding a commercial building you own?

Respondents interested in...	Count
Expanding my existing Montgomery-Smithers business	14
Moving my business to Montgomery or Smithers	2
Opening a new business in Montgomery or Smithers	29
Connecting with entrepreneurs to fund or invest	25
Learning about free building evaluation services	27

Learn more about Montgomery and Smithers business and investment opportunities. Contact:



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