Dear reviewers and editors,

Thank you for reviewing our draft originally titled “What you see is what you get? Rural place marketing and transient populations in northern Sweden”. Please find below a response table specifying reviewer comments and how we addressed them during revision. In brief, we have focused on the main points indicated by the guest editors:

* We have changed the aims and research questions and made sure they are actually addressed in the revised case study findings.
* We have not developed a more robust theoretical framework, but we rather opted for reducing the focus on theory. Instead, we now provide more empirical material to strengthen the value of the paper as a shorter community case study (reviewer 2).
* We have clarified the concerns around the methodology (e.g. research design, data analysis).
* We have taken the smaller changes suggested by reviewer 2 into account, to improve the structure of the findings.

For more specific considerations, please see the response table below.

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| **Comments by reviewer 1 and 2 alike** | **How we addressed these issues** |
| R1: First, what they describe as the **theoretical framework** is not really a theoretical framework. In this section they provide some context and a brief review of existing literature.  R2: As the paper is submitted as a research note, it could benefit from having less “**theory**” and a more straightforward focus on the empirical analysis on the place marketing strategies and conclusions related to this. Some of the theories/frameworks presented in the theory section could be rather left as remarks or suggestions for future research on the topic (e.g. McManus 2011, Åkerlund (2013). | This section is now called literature review.  We have reduced the focus on ‘theory’, but kept references to Connell & McManus as well as Åkerlund since they have now become a more prominent part of the study. |
| R1: The **research design** is inadequate, particularly the description of the “workshops”. […] I am unclear if the author(s) are talking about focus groups, group interviews and are they conflating these forms of data collection in some cases with individual interviews as they reported having a workshop with one individual.  R2: **Research design**:  - dataset 2 (workshops) seem to be group interviews with some of them including only very few or only one respondent. Please clarify why they are not described as interviews. What was the purpose of the workshops, how was interaction and problem solving facilitated?  - dataset 3 (observations) seems to be more a desktop document analysis than analysis of field observations. Please clarify why examination of documents is presented here as field observations? | We have revised the research design so that it now only includes different types of interviews.  Focus groups took place in municipal meeting rooms, which facilitated open discussions of current concerns rather than direct problem solving techniques.  We have omitted this part of the method section as it was more indirect data gathering. |
| R1: Also there is no mention of **how they actually analyzed** the data collected. The design and methodology lack adequate transparency.  R2: There are no details on **how** the various types of data was **analysed**, and how the theoretical frameworks was used in the analysis. | We have more clearly indicated data analysis to improve transparency.  The literature review is now more clearly linked to the data and analysis. |
| R1: The **results** are limited, […][which] leads to a questioning of the results and **conclusions**.  R2: **Results**: in general, it is a bit confusing if the paper analyses the marketing strategies of the whole municipalities or certain areas of them. On page 10, first sentence in Discussion and **conclusions** it is said: The aim of this paper was to discuss …. in small villages and towns within Åsele and Storuman. However, in the research design or results it is not specified what these villages were and how the analysis focused on specific villages instead of the whole municipality. | The results section now provides a broader spectrum of data (from production and performance perspectives).  We think the aim now better fits the results and it is clearer that the analysis concerns the municipalities as a whole, concentrating on particular villages in the municipalities. |
| *Comments by reviewer 1 specifically* |  |
| …if the author wishes to re-submit the article it would require additional empirical work and a much more rigorous research design and explanation of analysis. | Additional empirical work was unfortunately not possible since the pilot study is finalized. Yet, we have improved the research design and analysis explanation. |
| The author(s) sets out to examine the extent to which “municipalities engage in rural-marketing efforts, what target groups do they envisage, and what results are expected and experienced?” The real issue is whether they actually answer the question(s) they set out to answer. I’d suggest they do not. | Thank you for this insight, we have now amended the research questions and aim. |
| They also stated in this section that “These measures will be compared with our findings in northern Sweden in this paper.” The use of these measures to analyze their data does not answer the questions they set out to answer as quoted above in the second paragraph. | The measures (Connell & McManus) now better fit the data, analysis and discussion. |
| Also implicit within the question cited above is the idea that the expected and experienced results of a rural-marketing effort would be assessed. Yet what they actually did was compare one community with a marketing strategy with a community that did not have a marketing strategy. Their research goal and objectives should reflect this type of comparison. | Thank you for this insight, we have now amended the research questions and aim. |
| *Comments by reviewer 2 specifically* |  |
| **Introduction** needs a complete rewrite so that the motivation (why the study is important, why the paper has been written) is clearly presented. […]. I would suggest placing the paragraph on the Swedish SPAs (in the beginning of theory) already to the introduction. | Introduction is now rewritten in accordance with this reviewer’s comments. The indicated paragraph is moved from the theory to the introduction. |
| The paper aims to make a connection between transient populations, lifestyle mobility and place marketing, but the linkages between these theoretical concepts/frameworks are confusing and it remains unclear how these concepts/frameworks are used in the analysis:  Why the concept of transient populations is not presented in the theory, but e.g. the measures by Connell and McManus (2011) and Åkerlund’s (2013) aspects of mobility are? What exactly is meant by transient populations and how lifestyle mobilities are related to them? Are all transient populations also lifestyle movers? Which groups are included and what are their potential benefits for the municipalities (why do the municipalities want to attract these groups)? | We have narrowed the focus from all transient populations to only lifestyle movers.  We have now explained briefly what we mean by lifestyle movers and why we refer to them as movers rather than migrants.  Benefits are now specified in the literature review |
| **Results**: The descriptions of the two municipalities would be better placed as part of the research design, as the background information of the research sites. | We made the changes as suggested by the reviewer |
| **Results**: To make it easier to read, the chapter could be split into two separate chapters, one for each municipality. | We made the changes as suggested by the reviewer |
| **Results**: Åsele: on page 7 it is said that the municipality is attempting to stimulate e-commerce with a local base, related to berry picking and dog-sledging. Why does the municipality consider these two activities as e-commerce?  On page 8 it is mentioned that the municipality has been housing asylum seekers, but that asylum seekers will not be included in the paper. Why are asylum seekers not relevant to the study of transient populations? | We understood that the munic. aimed at marketing these activities via the internet to enlarge their target group. Yet, we have now removed this part.  We have reformulated the focus to include lifestyle movers only, and therefore we removed the sentence about asylum seekers. |
| **Results**: Storuman: The municipality hosts a large tourism centre Hemavan Tärnaby, which brings growth to the area. Could one of the reasons for the less aggressive marketing strategies of the municipality be related to the fact that they already manage to attract a considerable number of tourists and even new residents? The impact of the tourism centre to the rest of the municipality’s place marketing strategies should be better opened up. | We have included these valuable reflections in the revised version of the manuscript. |

To reflect these changes, we changed the title to “Recognising opportunities? Rural place marketing and lifestyle movers in northern Sweden”. We think that these changes have improved the quality and focus of the paper.

Kind regards, the authors