



# **PARTICIPATE** **WOOD BUFFALO**

## ***WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT WAYFINDING***

*Communications & Engagement  
September 12 – October 9, 2022*

November 4, 2022

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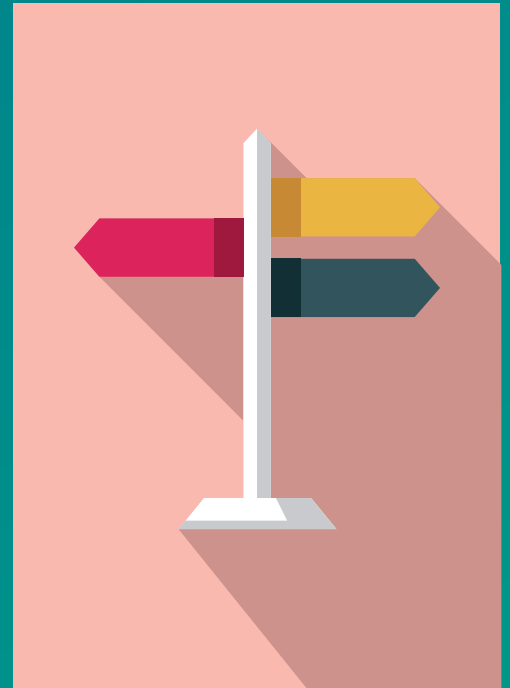
We humbly acknowledge that the land on which we live, learn, work and play is Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional and ancestral lands of the Cree, Dene, and unceded territory of the Métis.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Currently the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo does not have a wayfinding strategy that provides guidelines for directional signage. The Regional Strategy will establish foundational elements for wayfinding in the region including a definition; themes and designs; and principles, objectives, and goals.

Downtown revitalization was a focus of Council's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. On November 10, 2020, Council with support from the Wood Buffalo Downtown Revitalization Advisory Committee (WBDRAAC) and Wood Buffalo Waterfront Advisory Committee (WBWAC) directed Administration to implement the actions and priorities as recommended by these Council-appointed committees, including support for the creation of a Downtown Plan for wayfinding. The Downtown Plan will support navigational needs, community identity, and tourism in Fort McMurray's downtown and waterfront area.

Input gathered during Phase 1 engagement (June 20 – July 22, 2022) provided the framework for developing a preliminary sign family design. Prototypes of some of the signs were manufactured and installed in the downtown during Phase 2 engagement (September 9 – October 12, 2022). Feedback on the designs and prototypes was gathered online as well as through meetings and in-person at the Fort McMurray Fall Trade Show & Market. Communications & Engagement worked with internal stakeholders to gather feedback from regional residents. Input will be acknowledged and considered for both the Regional Strategy and Downtown Plan.



## STAKEHOLDER LIST



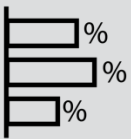



- Residents of Wood Buffalo
- Mayor and Councillors
- Indigenous and Rural Organizations
- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Internal Stakeholders
- Downtown businesses
- Advisory Committee on Aging
- Keyano College
- Heritage Resources Management Plan Project Team
- Wood Buffalo Downtown Revitalization Advisory Committee
- Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development

## COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The project was promoted through the project's Participate Wood Buffalo (PWB) page and in-person during the Fort McMurray Fall Trade Show & Market, September 24-26, 2022. The project was discussed with stakeholder groups during video conference calls. Extensive communications occurred through social media, radio, news releases, community posters, and numerous forms of advertising.



# ENGAGEMENT TACTICS

	In-person Conversations at the Fall Trade Show		Online Survey
	Quick Poll on PWB		Online Stakeholder Workshops
	Mapping Tool on PWB		Social Media Posts

## ENGAGEMENTS

2,400

Online Visits to Participate Wood Buffalo  
Project Page

344

In-person Trade Show Visitors

122

Online Survey Respondents

48

Quick Polls Completed

42

Attendees at Online Stakeholder  
Workshops

52,102

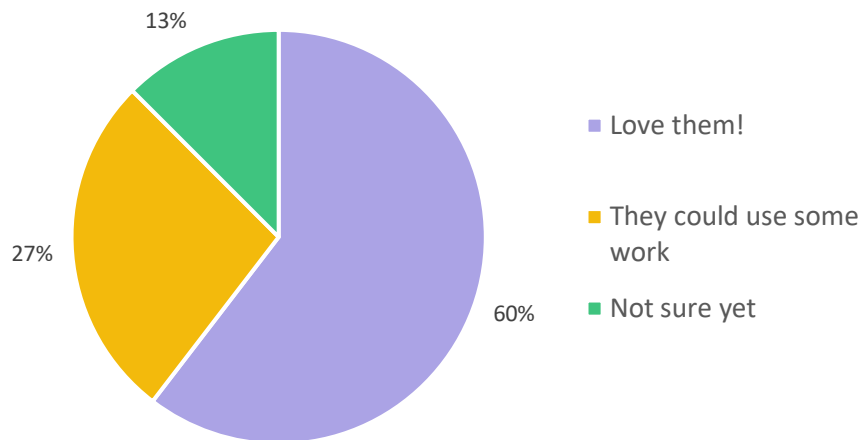
Impressions on Social Media



# ONLINE POLL RESULTS

The quick poll asked visitors what they thought about the proposed sign prototype designs.

What do you think of the overall proposed sign prototypes?

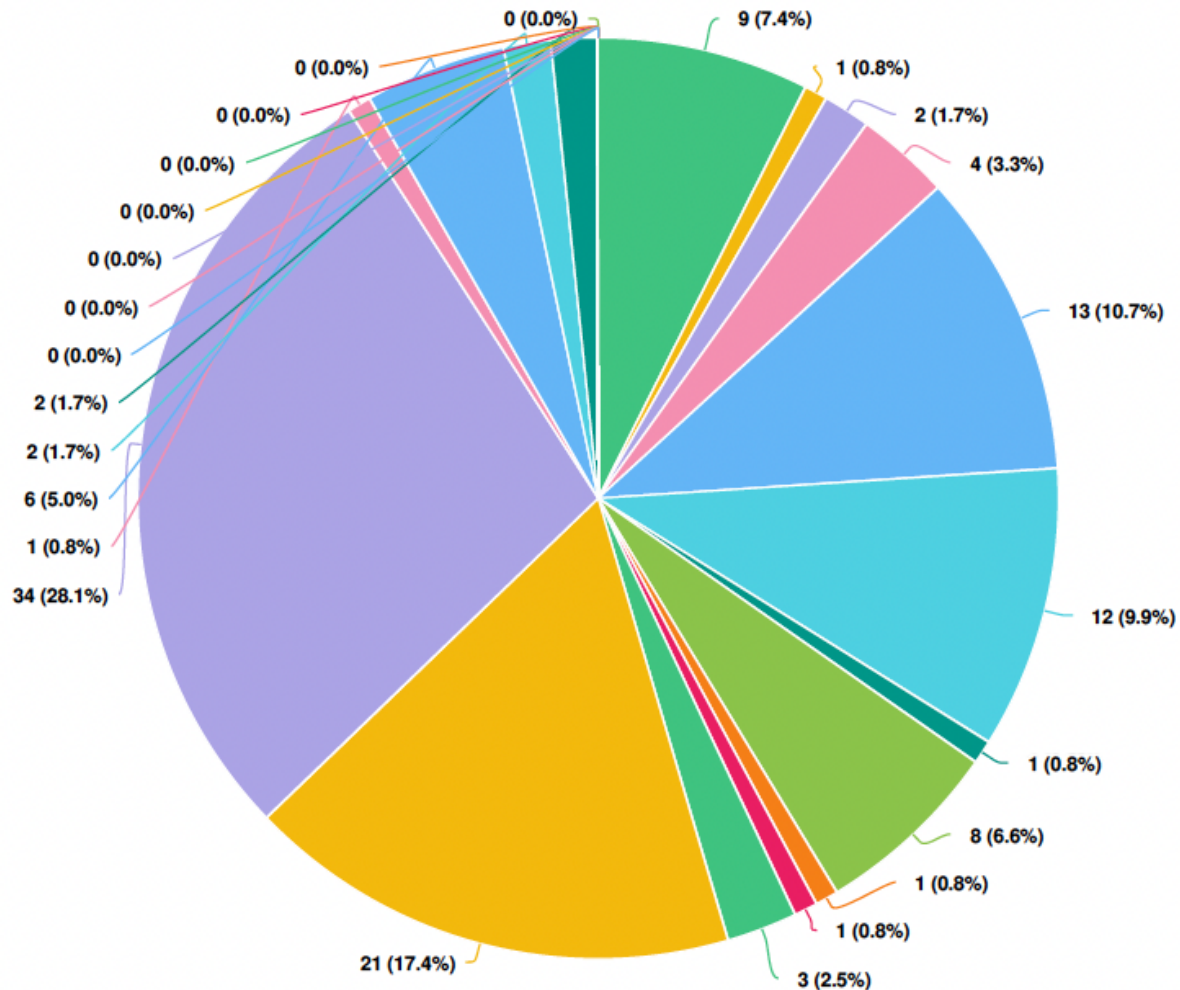


The responses indicate that most people like the proposed sign family, but it could use a bit of work to make it reflect the region's uniqueness. Through conversations and written feedback, we learned that many residents who picked "they could use some work" liked the design, but had minor changes related to the size and colors of the signs.



# ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

It was important to get input from people who live across the region, since the wayfinding sign designs will be used in communities throughout the region.



Which community do you call home?

## Question options

- Abasand
- Anzac
- Beacon Hill
- Dickinsfield
- Downtown
- Eagle Ridge
- Fort Chipewyan
- Parsons Creek
- Prairie Creek
- Saprae Creek
- Stone Creek
- Thickwood
- Timberlea
- Waterways
- Wood Buffalo
- Other
- Visitor
- Conklin
- Draper
- Fort McKay
- Fort Fitzgerald
- Grayling Terrace
- Gregoire
- Gregoire Lake Estates
- Janvier

Almost 30% of the survey responses were from Timberlea residents, and 17% were from Thickwood. About 11% of respondents live downtown, and another 10% live in Eagle Ridge. Responses were provided from numerous rural communities.

Many people visited the PWB project page to gain information, but many did not participate in the survey. Perhaps they were happy with the designs and did not have specific comments.



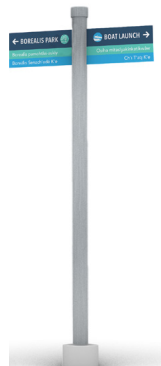
The next few questions asked about the wayfinding family concept. In July we asked what wayfinding means to you, and how it could help residents and visitors travel through the region and the downtown. The overall sign family was designed based on community input. The family of signs creates a sense of place and provides direction to pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. The questions asked about the sign family shown here (which is conceptual only, and subject to change).

The materials used for the prototypes were based on what you told us you liked in Phase 1. Based on your input, we will modify the sign family to make it more reflective of local cultures and context.

The gateway sign was designed specifically for the downtown. There is no intent to replace any existing gateway signs that are still in good condition. The Regional Strategy will support the updating of gateway signs when necessary.



**Gateway signs** are usually placed at main entry points in cities, districts, or neighbourhoods. They welcome people into the area, and help communicate a unique identity.



**Pedestrian directional signs** orient and guide people moving at slower speeds. Destination names are written in English, Cree, and Dene.



**Vehicular directional signs** provide directions to destinations for people in vehicles. These signs are large so they can be read from traveling vehicles.



**Park identification signs** announce arrival and can convey information such as regulations. They reinforce sense of place and visual identity through visual cues such as colours, materials, and logos.



**Trail signs** identify important connections and destinations for trail users and are usually placed at intersections and access points. Trail interpretive signage provides information on nature, local history, and noteworthy places.

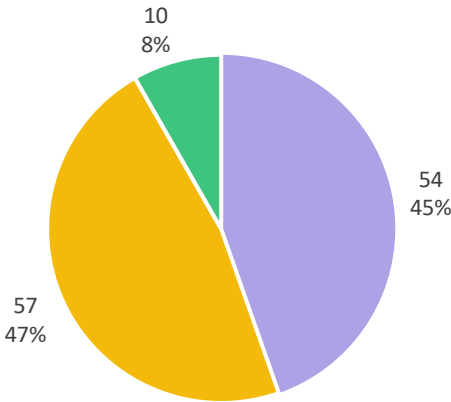
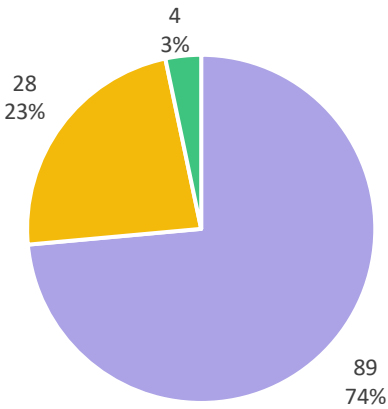
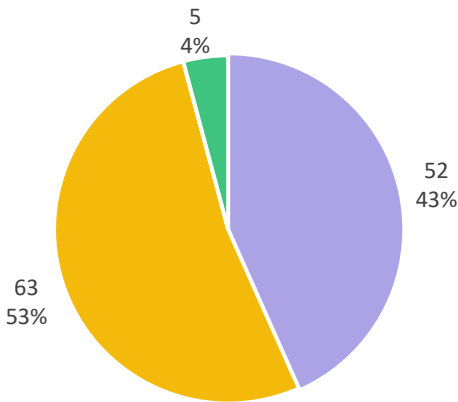
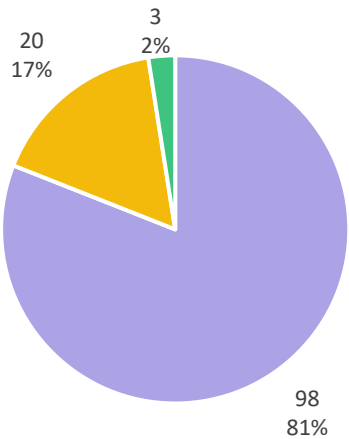
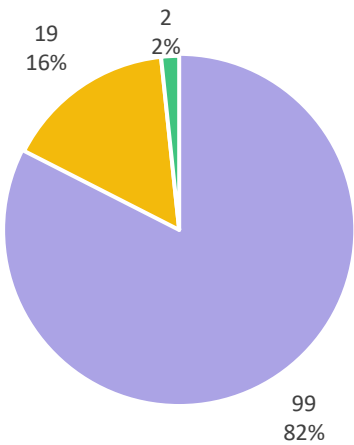
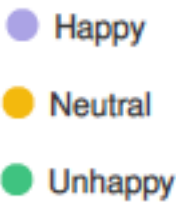


**Banners** are often installed on light posts along important streets. Their designs and colours help you know where you are. Wayfinding banners would use local and regional artwork, similar to the existing RMWB banner program.



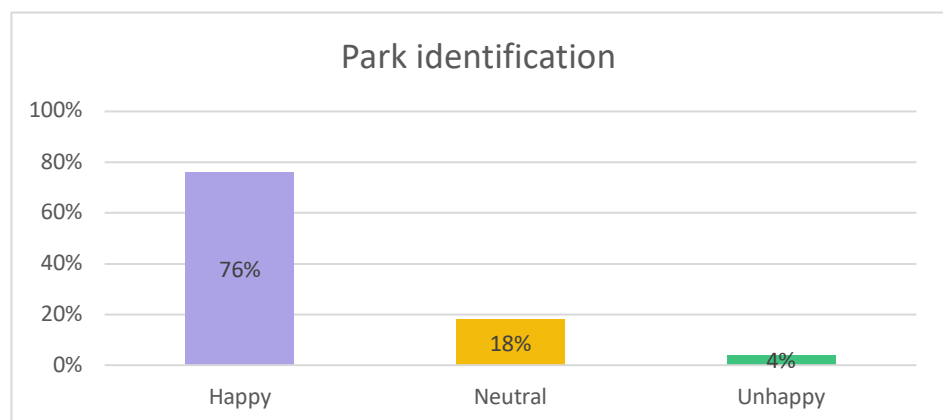
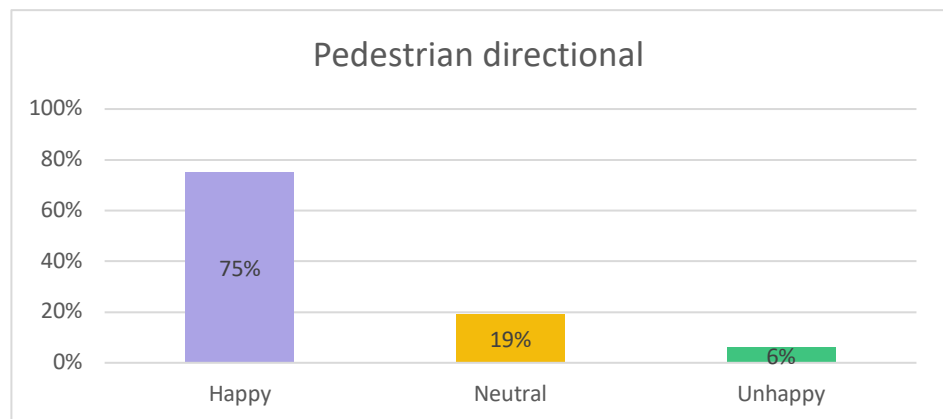
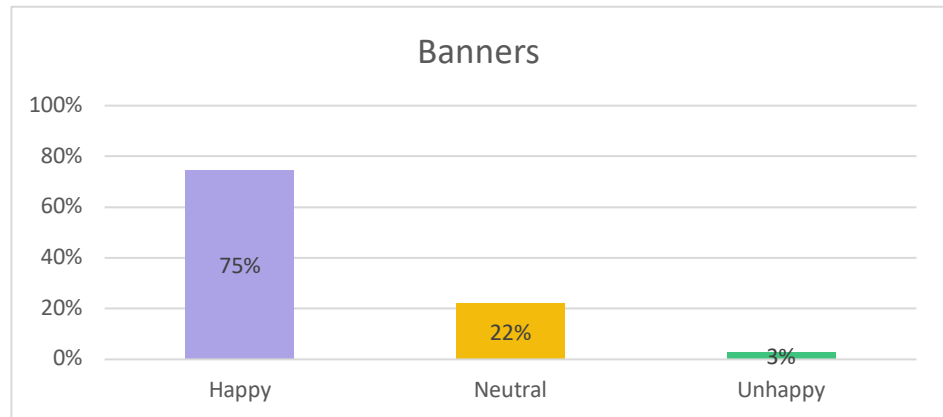


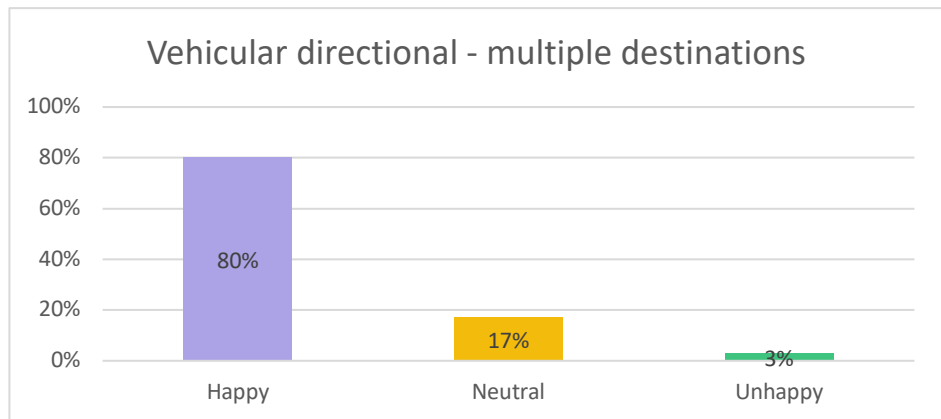
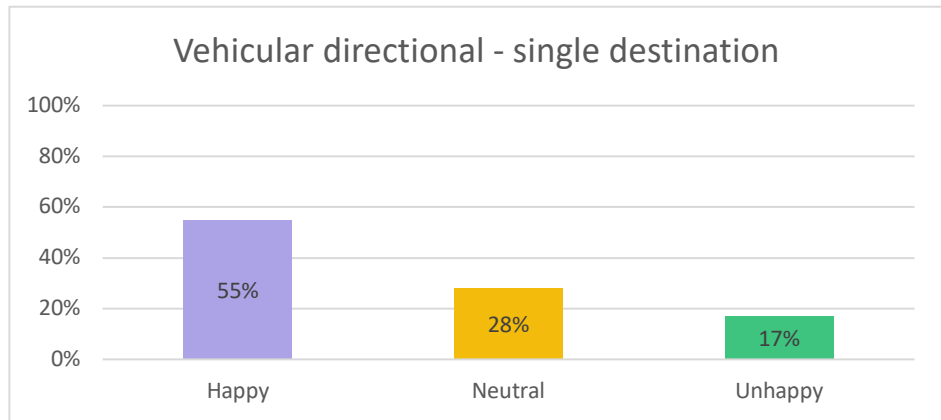
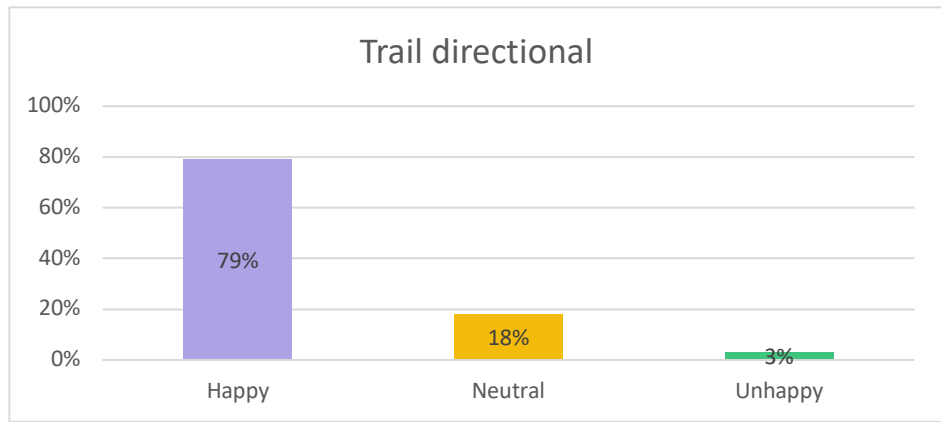
Gaining community feedback on the overall sign family concept supports understanding how well the designs reflect the region of Wood Buffalo. Feedback indicated the sign family was welcoming and attractive, but could use some work to make it unique to the RMWB and reflect local culture.

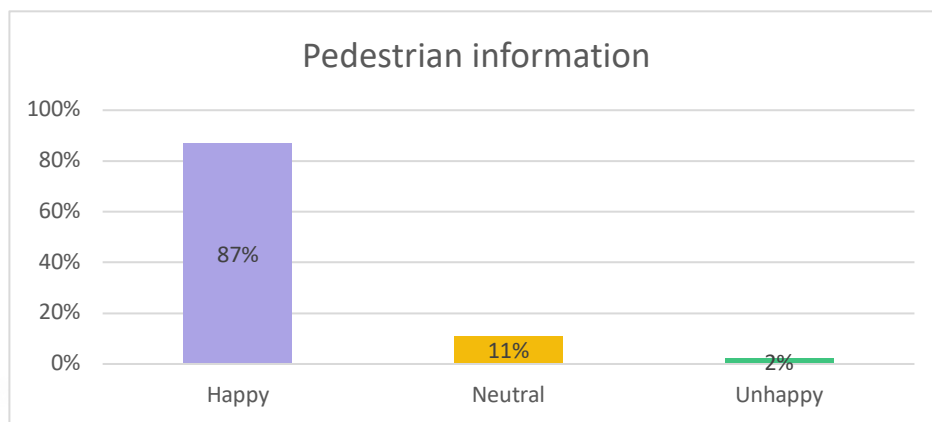


We also asked for your feedback on specific sign types, so that we can keep the designs that were well received, and modify the signs that didn't reflect the RMWB.

### Does the design reflect the RMWB?







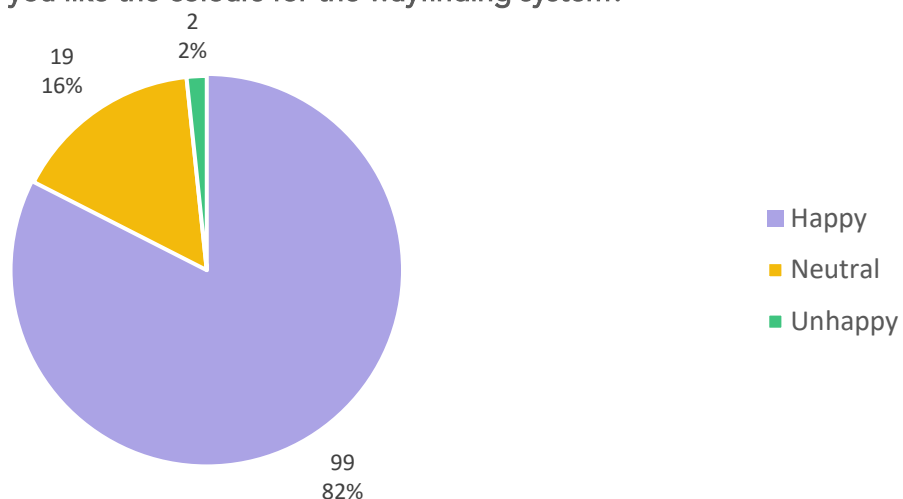
The results indicated the pedestrian information sign was most liked, and the "downtown" vehicular single destination sign was least liked. Comments expressed that the pedestrian signs should be visually and physically accessible and inclusive.

Within the survey it was explained the proposed sign family used Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo's Place Brand colors, inspired by the region's natural landscapes. Overall the colors were well received, however some of the color combinations made it difficult to read.



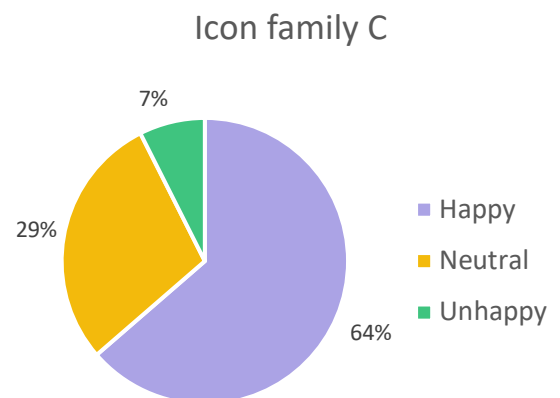
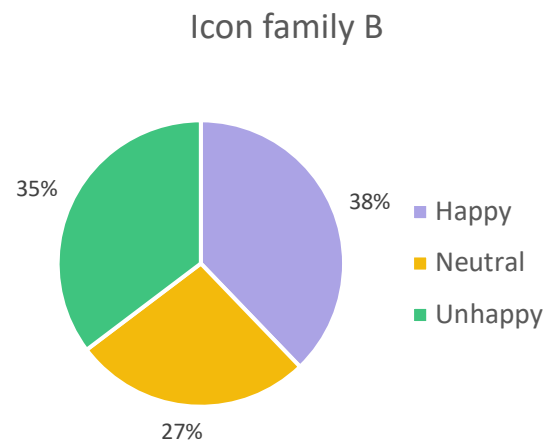
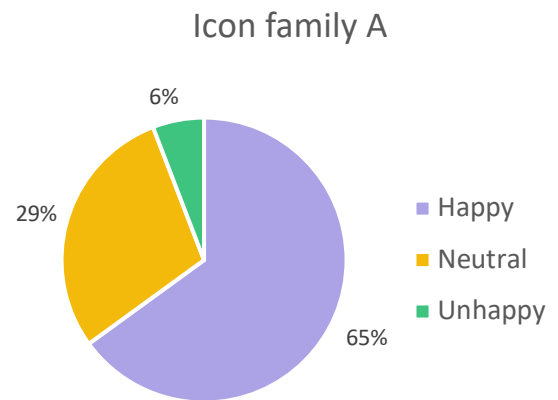
Place Brand colour palette

Do you like the colours for the wayfinding system?

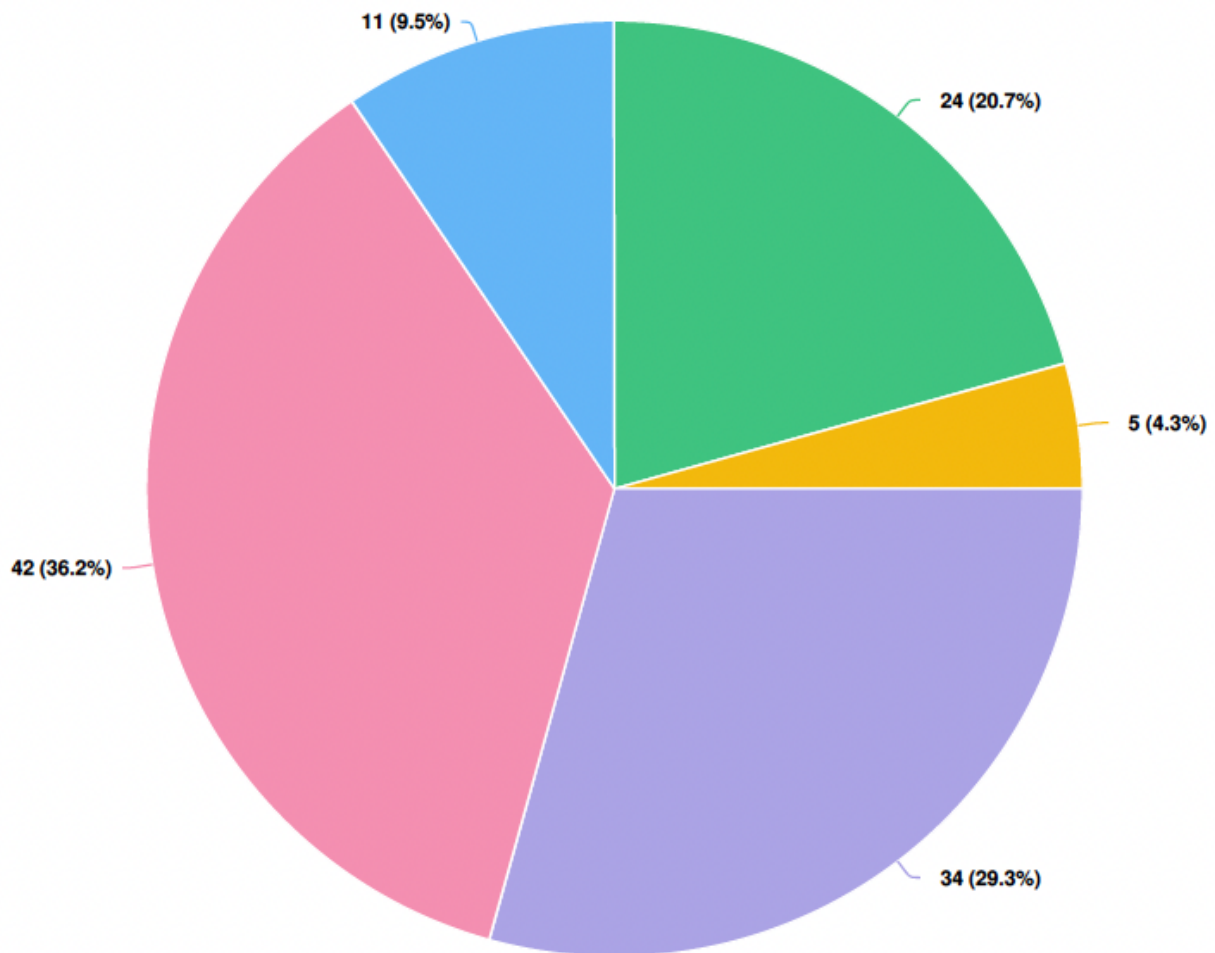


It's important to include icons on wayfinding signs to support the community's language diversity and easily identify destinations. We displayed three different icon families and the preferred options were A and C. There is opportunity to mix and match from the two preferred icon families to create a set that's specific to the region and all its destinations.

### Which of the following icon families do you prefer?



To get a better idea of the best location for downtown gateway signs, we asked you to identify downtown's main entrance. We will not be able to put a sign at every entrance, however your input will help identify where gateway signs will be most impactful.



What do you think is the main entrance to access downtown?

#### Question options

- Franklin Ave. and C.A. Knight Way
- Memorial Dr. and Morrison St.
- Memorial Dr. and Hardin St.
- Memorial Dr. and Hospital St.
- Memorial Dr. and Clearwater Dr.

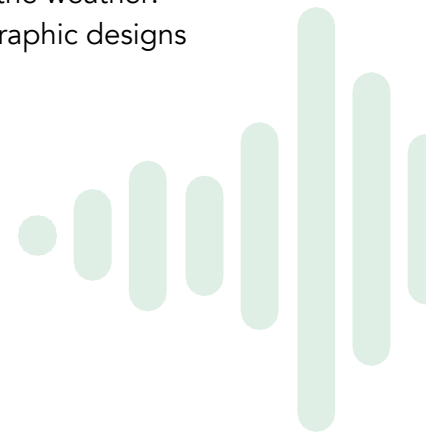


In Phase 1, community feedback communicated that Indigenous storytelling and culture should be incorporated into wayfinding. The proposed signs implemented feedback by including Indigenous languages Cree and Dene. Continued input from the Indigenous and Rural Relations department and Indigenous partners will ensure the designs reflect the Indigenous history and culture of the region.

Residents were invited to provide written responses about the proposed design for the wayfinding family. Some residents had seen the prototypes installed downtown and were able to provide feedback based on personal observation. The following is a summary of key themes we heard.

**Feedback on the wayfinding family design concept:**

- The colours are great and reflect our unique natural surroundings.
- Overall, the signs should be larger.
- The font size should be larger and easier to read
- The lighter background colours and the white font need to have more contrast.
- Incorporate some elements to make the signs accessible to people with vision deficits.
- Make sure the signs can resist graffiti and stand up to vandalism and the weather.
- Include more graphic designs on the signs.



Written responses identified key themes about wayfinding. These themes will guide the development of the Regional Strategy and Downtown Plan.

**Key themes for wayfinding in Wood Buffalo:**

- Wood Buffalo residents are excited about wayfinding!
- Wayfinding program should be fiscally responsible.
- Involve local artists where applicable for the graphic designs.
- Legibility of signs is key (colour, size, contrast).
- Include northern lights colours and images.





## NEXT STEPS

We thank residents, Indigenous partners, and stakeholders for input and ideas on wayfinding during the second engagement phase of this project. Communications & Engagement and the internal project team are carefully reviewing all the information in conjunction with the wayfinding consultants. Your input and ideas provided valuable insight for the refinement of the designs, and finalization of a Regional Strategy and Downtown Plan.

The Regional Strategy and Downtown Plan will be presented in a final engagement phase, with information about how residents' key themes were integrated.

Once the Regional Strategy and Downtown Plan have been finalized, Communications & Engagement will present them to Council and proceed as directed.

To stay informed about the project, or to receive project updates, visit [rmwb.ca/wayfinding](https://rmwb.ca/wayfinding).



We encourage you to continue using your voice to make our region even better by learning about all current projects. Visit [rmwb.ca/participate](https://rmwb.ca/participate) to stay connected!



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