



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

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

*Communications & Engagement  
June 22 – August 5, 2022*

August 19, 2022



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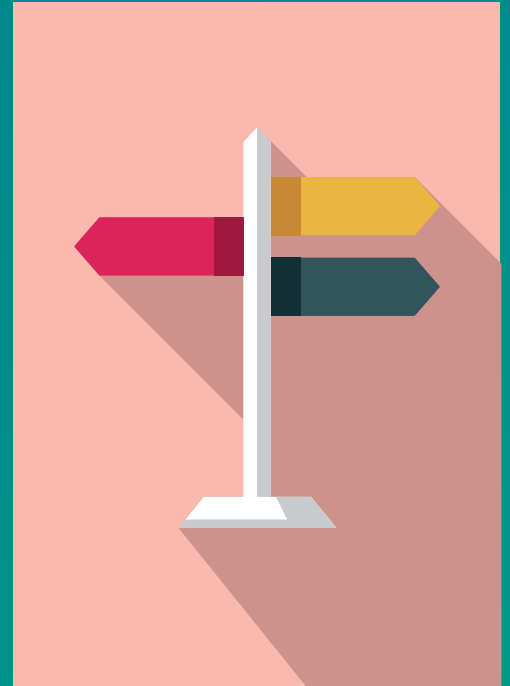
We humbly acknowledge that the land on which we live, learn, work and play is Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional and ancestral lands of the Cree, Dene, and unceded territory of the Métis.

## 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. Establishing a Regional Strategy will support navigational needs, community identity, and tourism.

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 (WBDRAC) 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.

As part of the development of the Regional Strategy and Downtown Plan, Communications & Engagement is working with other internal groups to gather feedback from all regional residents. Community feedback is vital in creating a community-focused wayfinding system. Understanding perspectives, priorities, and experiences will support wayfinding that works for our unique community. Input will be acknowledged and considered for both the Regional Strategy and Downtown Plan.



## STAKEHOLDER LIST







- Residents of Wood Buffalo
- Mayor and Councillors
- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Internal Stakeholders
- Downtown businesses
- Royal Canadian Legion
- Council-appointed Committee
- Keyano College
- 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 a lunch and go engagement session held on July 6, 2022 at Jubilee Centre. The project was discussed at Community Coffee Chats, and a virtual open house was held on July 19, 2022.



# ENGAGEMENT TACTICS

	In-person Lunch and Go Engagement at Jubilee Centre		Online Survey
	Idea Widget on PWB		Online Stakeholder Workshops
	Mapping Tool on PWB		Virtual Open House

# ENGAGEMENTS

393

Online Visits to Participate Wood Buffalo Project Page

~25

In-person Lunch and Go Participants

247

Online Survey Respondents

1

Paper Survey Completed

27

Attendees at Online Stakeholder Workshops

1

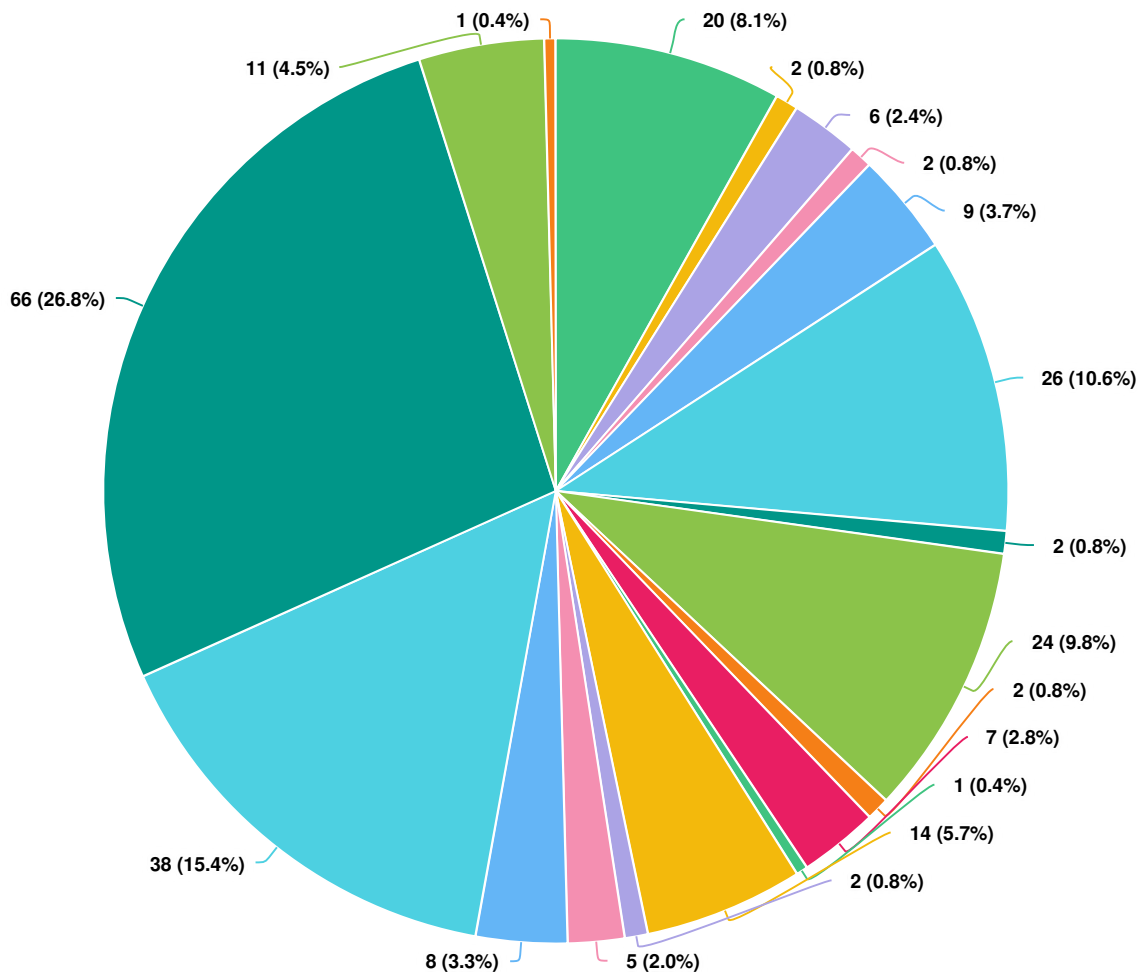
Virtual Open House



# ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

It was important to get input from people who live across the region, since the Regional Strategy will support wayfinding programs in communities throughout the region.

## What community do you call home?



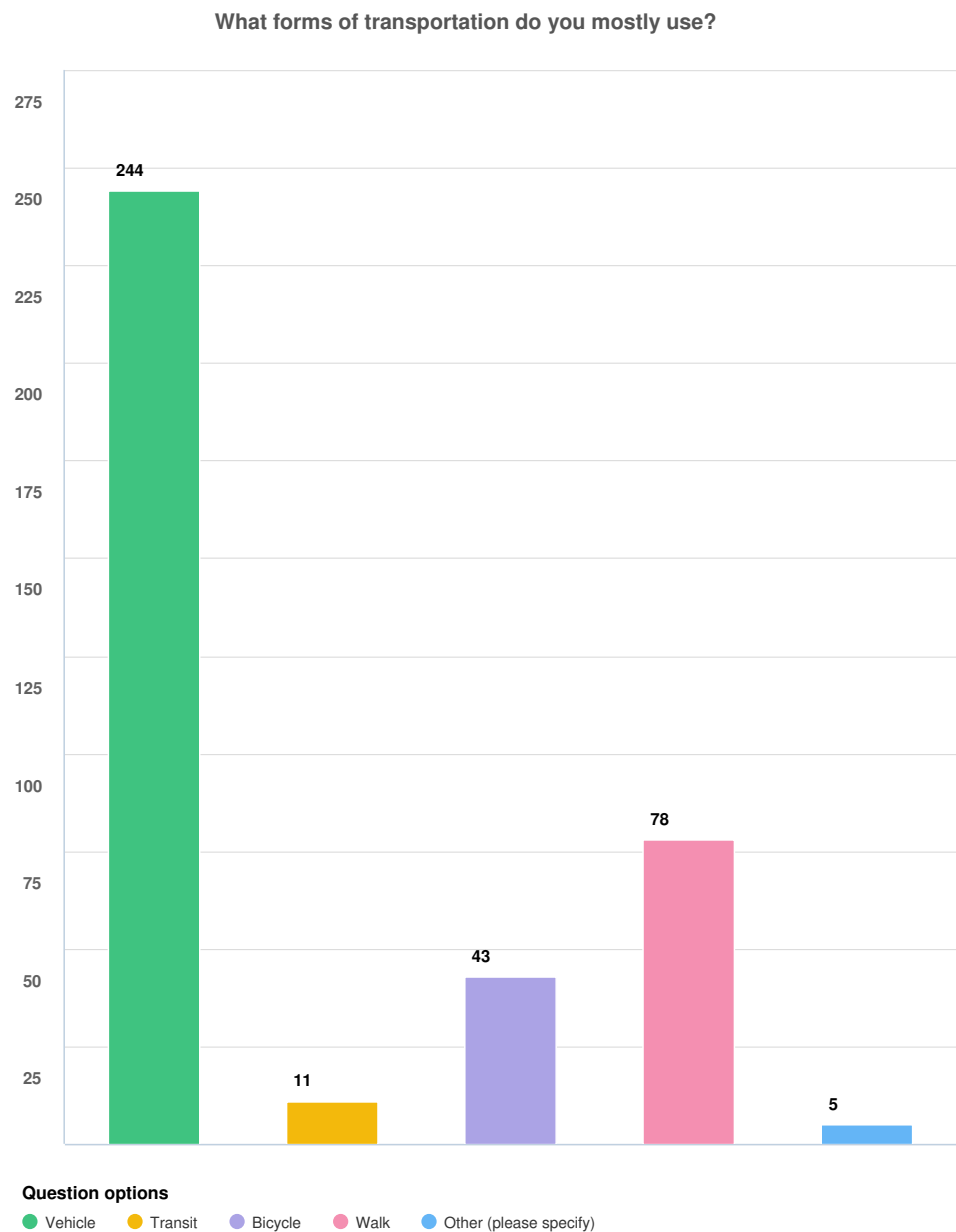
### Question options

- Abasand
- Anzac
- Beacon Hill
- Conklin
- Dickinsfield
- Downtown
- Draper
- Eagle Ridge
- Grayling Terrace
- Gregoire
- Gregoire Lake Estates
- Parsons Creek
- Prairie Creek
- Saprae Creek
- Stone Creek
- Thickwood
- Timberlea
- Wood Buffalo
- Other

About one quarter of the survey responses were from Timberlea residents, and another 15% were from Thickwood. About 10% of respondents live downtown. Response rates across the region indicate you are part of a very active community who truly cares about what happens in your neighbourhood.



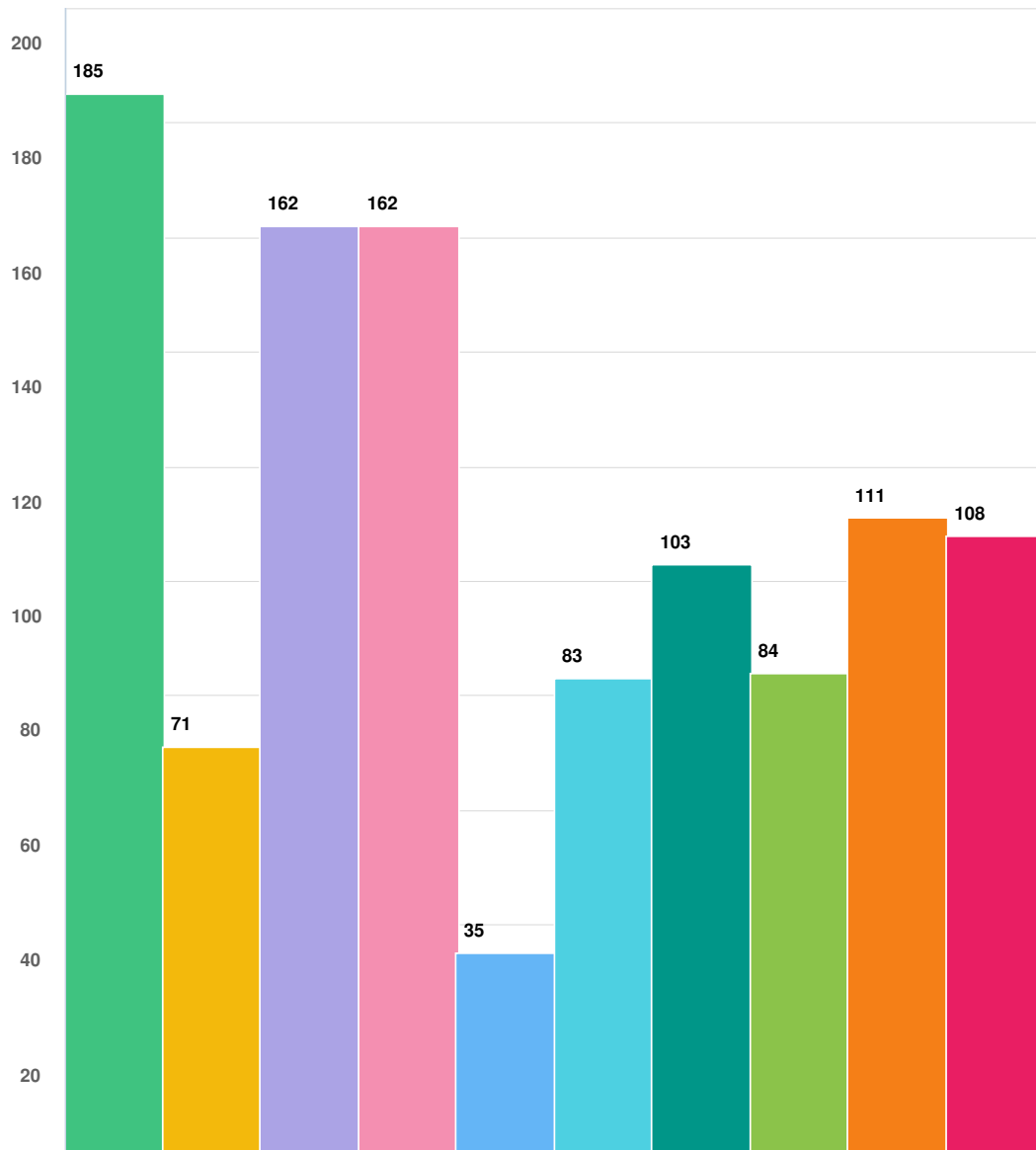
By asking you about the mode of transportation you normally use, you are helping us understand how residents get around and what types of signage might be needed. In addition to the options provided, you told us you get around by cross country skiing and snowshoeing, jogging, roller skating, ATV, and electric scooter!



It was very important to understand who was answering the survey. While wayfinding is meant for pedestrians and non-motorized modes of transportation, it is important to also listen to those residents who drive the majority of the time.



### What important elements should be included in wayfinding?



#### Question options

- Directional
- Sense of belonging
- Consistency
- Readability
- Banners
- Crosswalk painting
- Gateway (entrance signage)
- Vehicular
- Pedestrian
- Interpretative (cultural and historical)

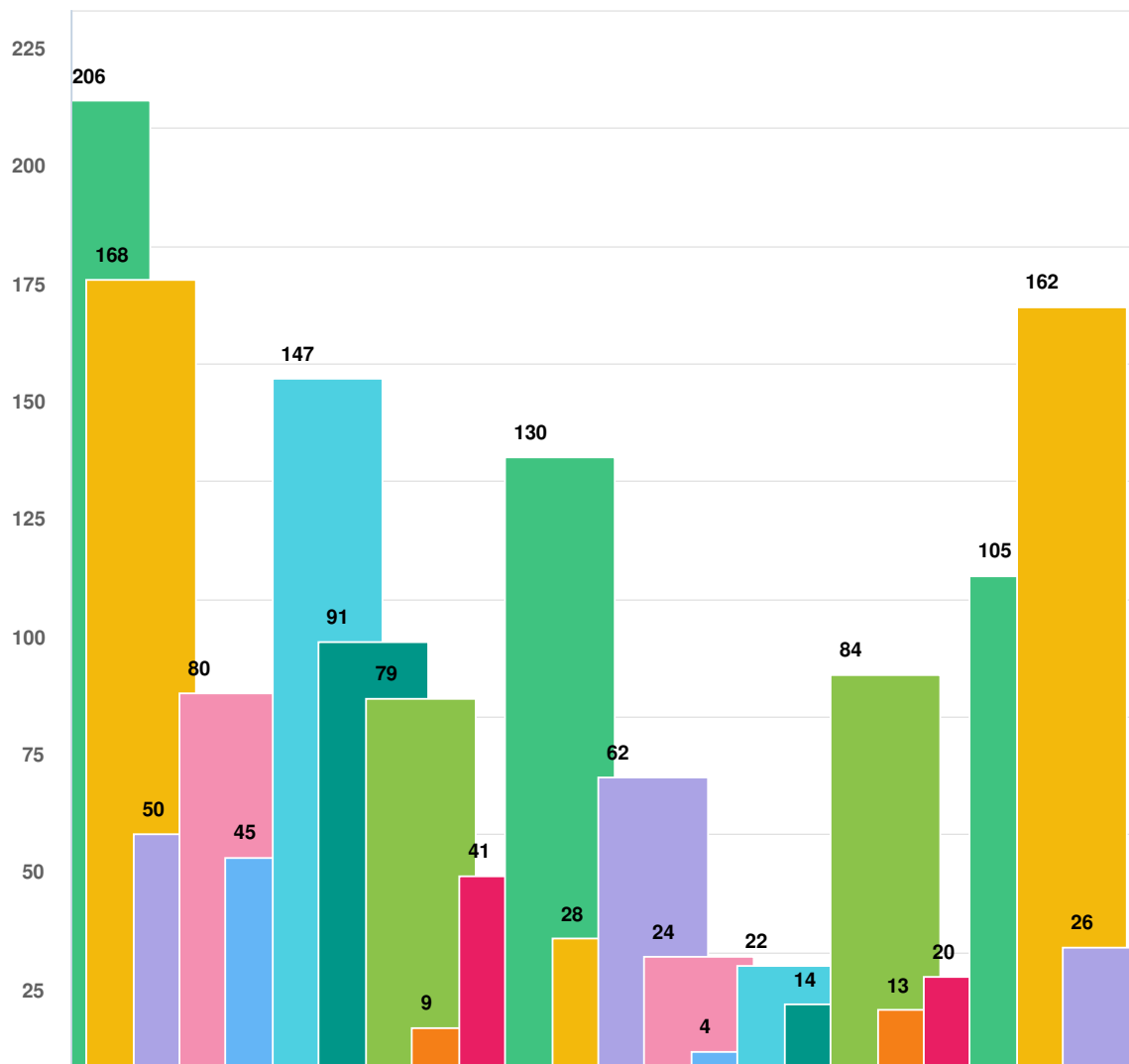
It was great to see consistency amongst the responses for identifying the most important aspects of a wayfinding system. The top three responses for important wayfinding elements were directional signs, consistency, and readability.





It will be important to include downtown's most important destinations on directional signage as part of the Downtown Plan. We heard that the seven most important destinations are McDonald Island Park, Snye Point Park, Northern Lights Regional Health Centre, Heritage Park, Keyano College and Theatre & Arts Centre, Peter Pond Shopping Mall, and Heritage Shipyard. Destinations in the written comments included waterfront trails, Métis Cultural Centre, Friendship Centre, festival sites, and the Urban Farmers' Market.

### What are the top seven priority destinations in the downtown?



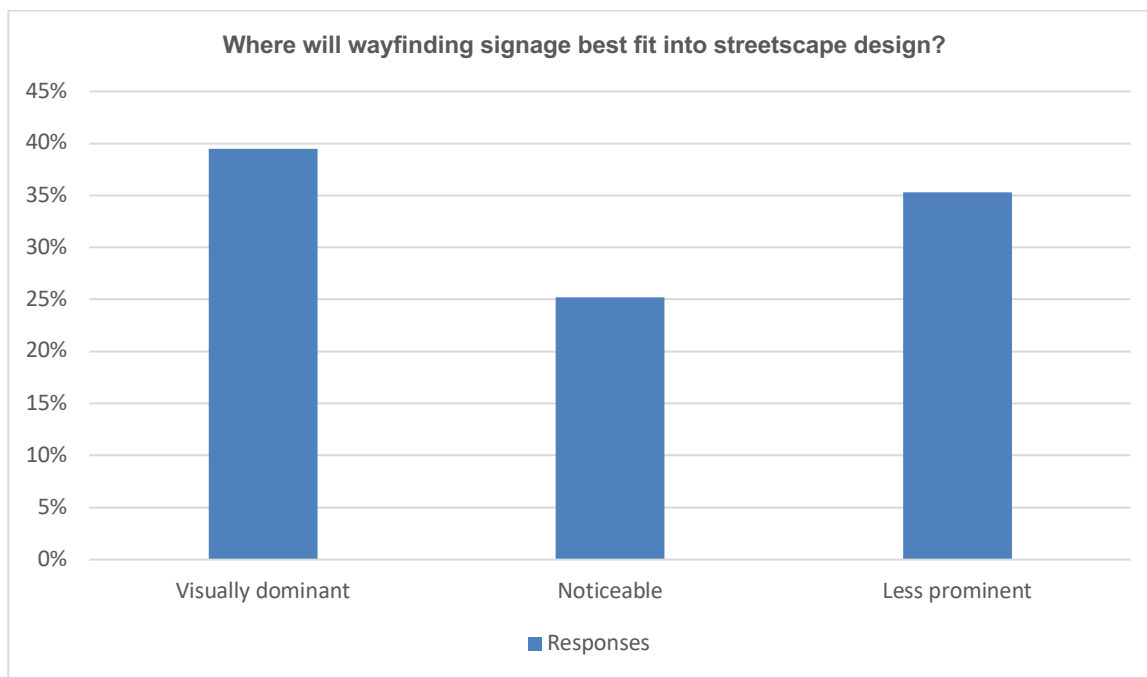
#### Question options

- MacDonald Island Park
 ● Snye Point
 ● Borealis Park
 ● Lion Park
- Kiyâm Community Park (formerly Franklin and Main Park Project)
 ● Heritage Park
 ● Heritage Shipyard
- Wood Buffalo Regional Library
 ● Casselman Lush Memorial Skate Park
 ● Miskanaw Golf Club
- Keyano College and Theatre & Arts Centre
 ● Jubilee Centre
 ● Provincial Building
 ● Provincial Courts
- Pioneer Cemetery
 ● Saline Creek Foot Bridge
 ● Jubilee Plaza
 ● Syncrude Sport & Wellness Centre
- Rotary House
 ● Golden Years Society
 ● Peter Pond Shopping Mall
 ● Northern Lights Regional Health Centre
- Rivers Casino & Entertainment Centre



We asked you to look at some examples of different sign types and let us know how you would prefer the signs to fit with existing streetscapes. The feedback on this question will help guide the overall design of signage.

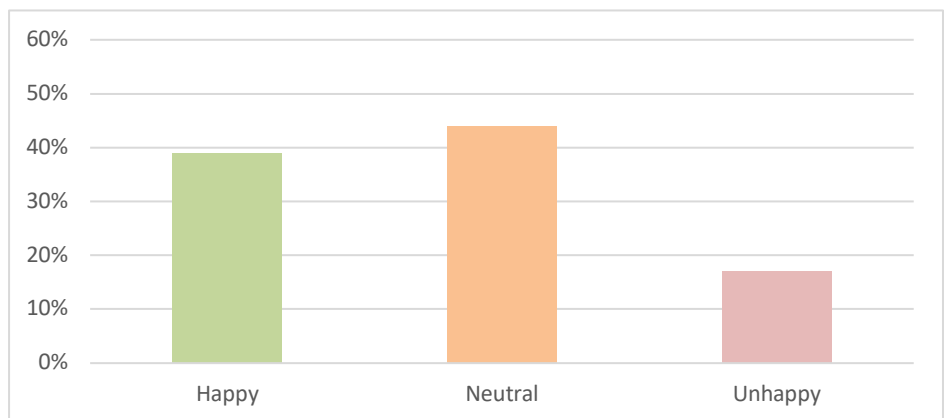
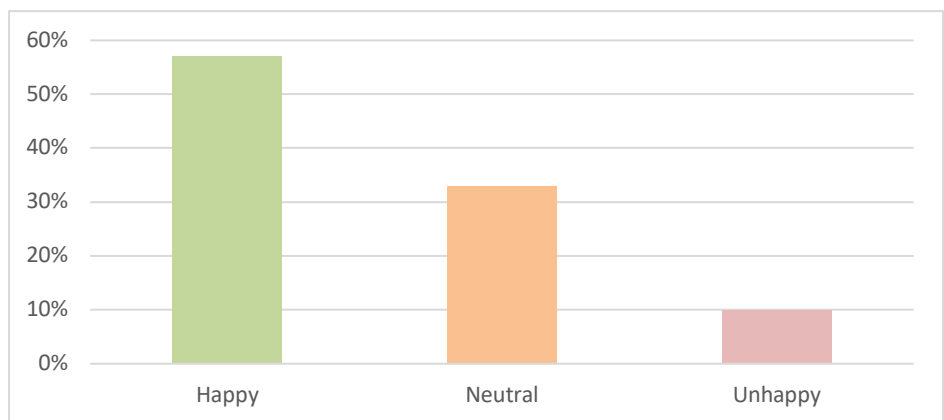
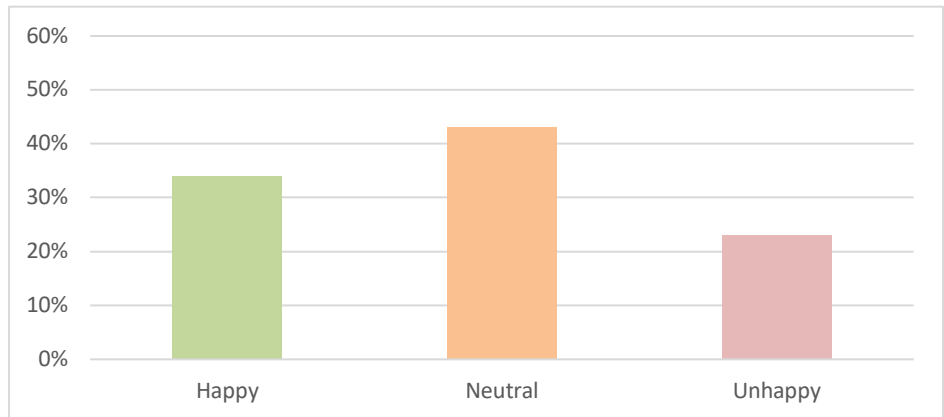
 <p>Visually dominant focal point</p>	 <p>Noticeable but not a focus</p>	 <p>Less prominent but there when needed</p>
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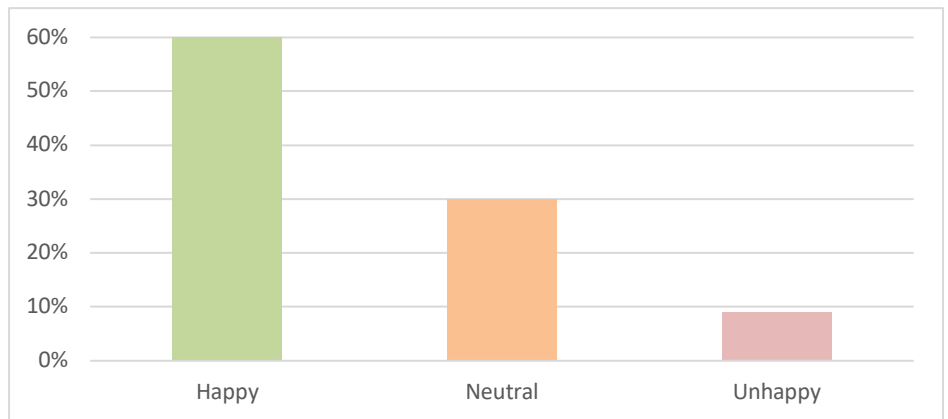
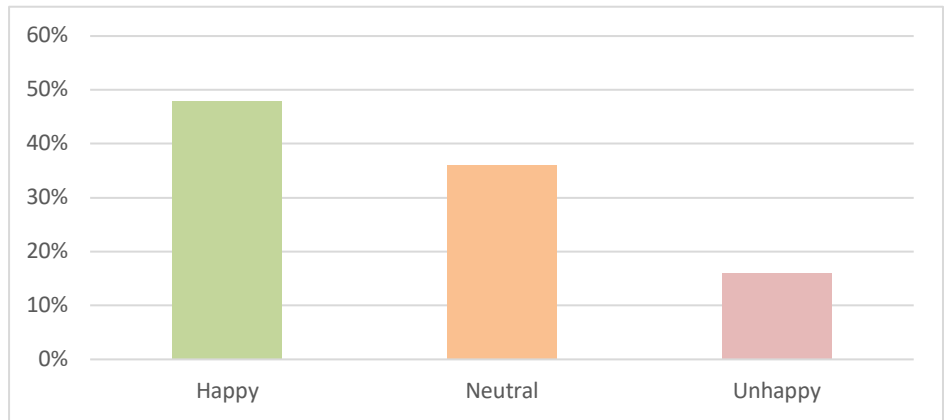
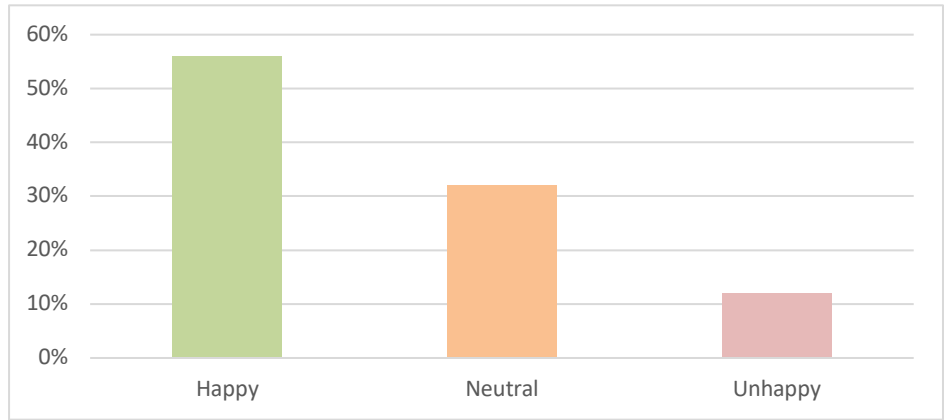


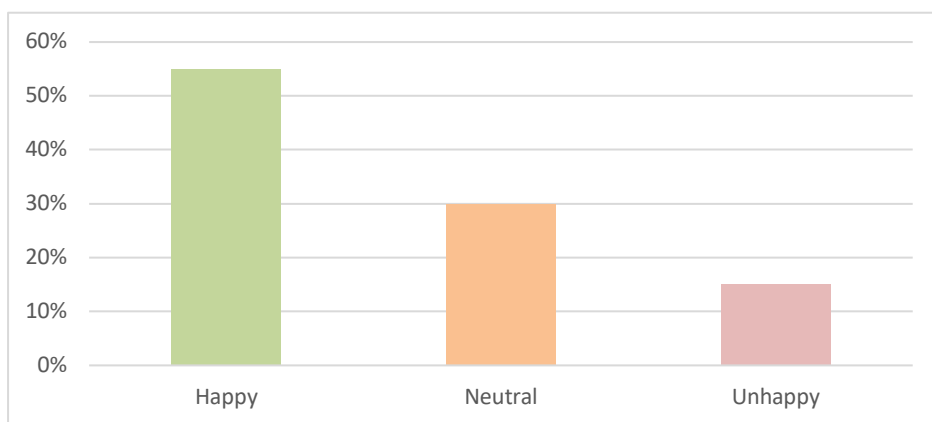
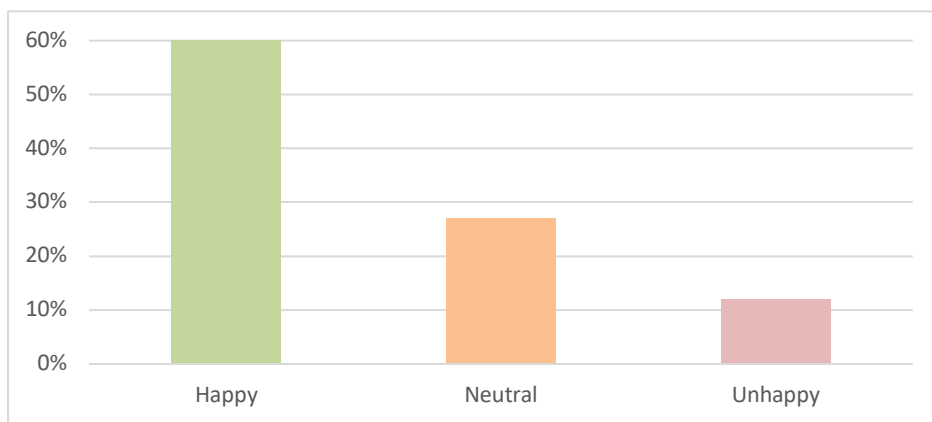
Stakeholders who participated in the online workshops noted that each sign type has a different purpose. The Regional Strategy as well as the Downtown Plan will contain different types of signage to meet the needs of users at different locations.



The next eight questions asked you to respond to an image of a sign and indicate whether you liked it (happy), disliked it (unhappy), or were neutral about it. We will use your input when making decisions about signage design and materials.





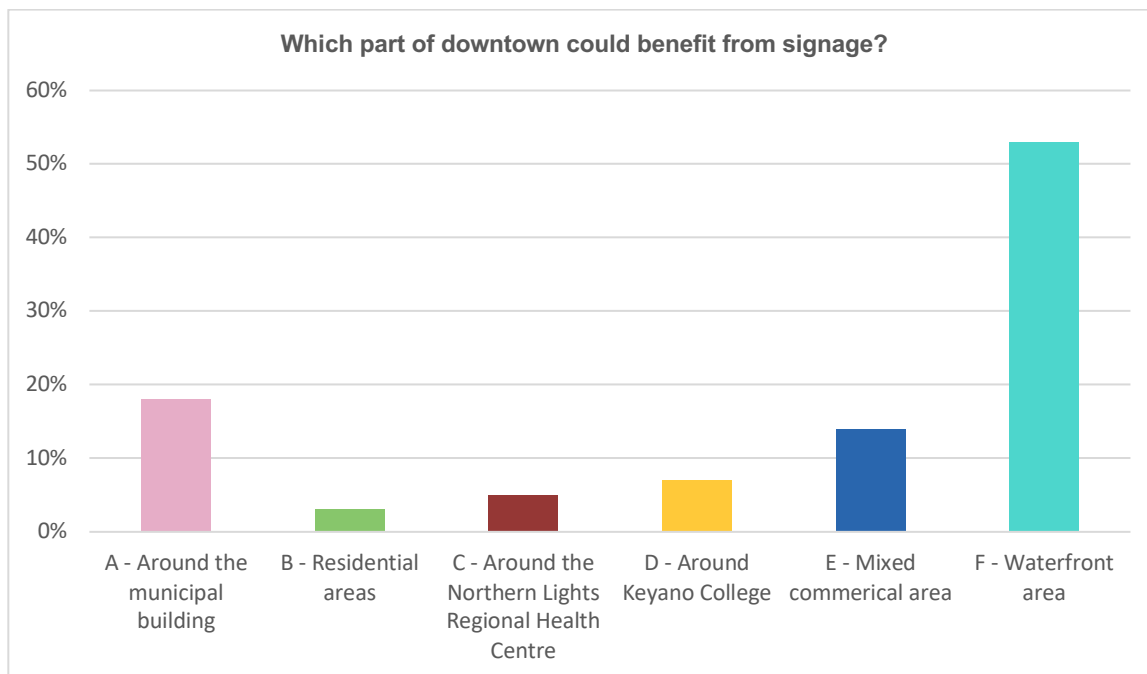
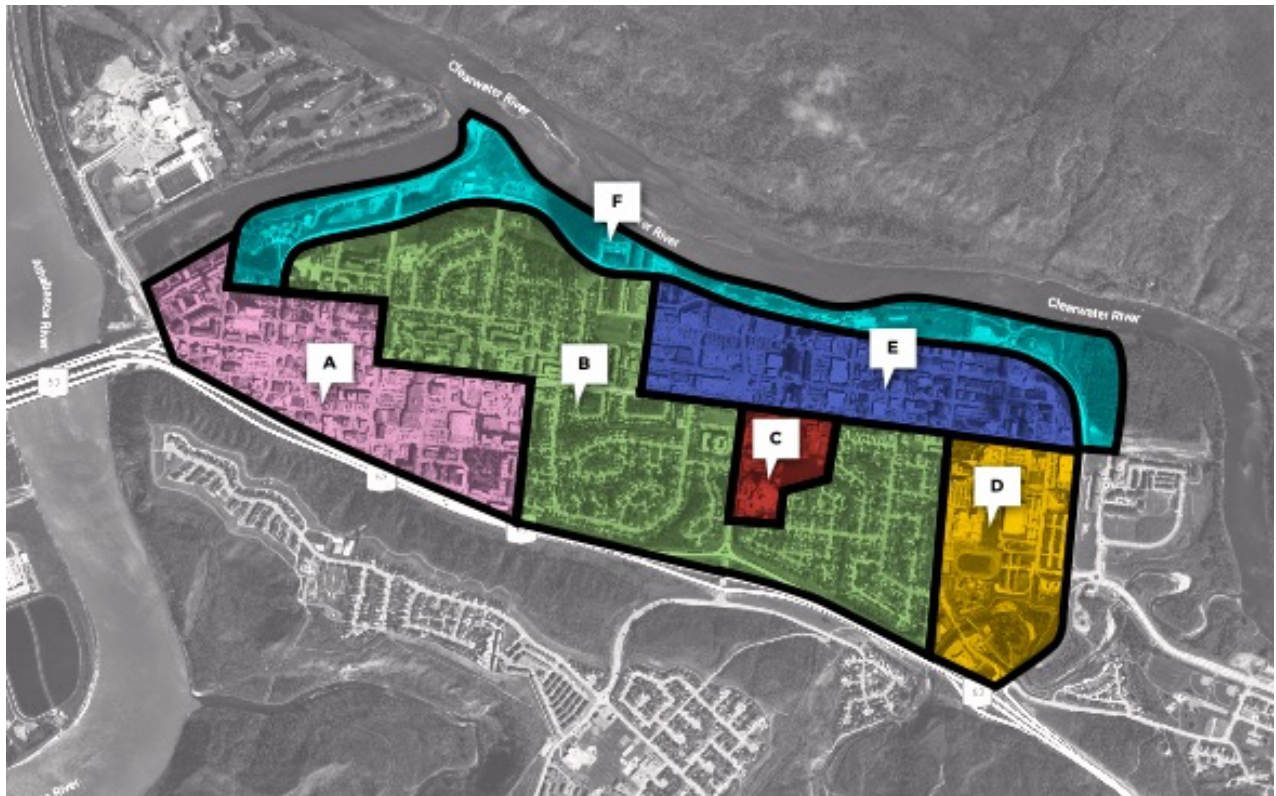


Survey responses indicate a preference for natural materials like wood and stone, as well as signs that have a mix of materials to provide visual interest.



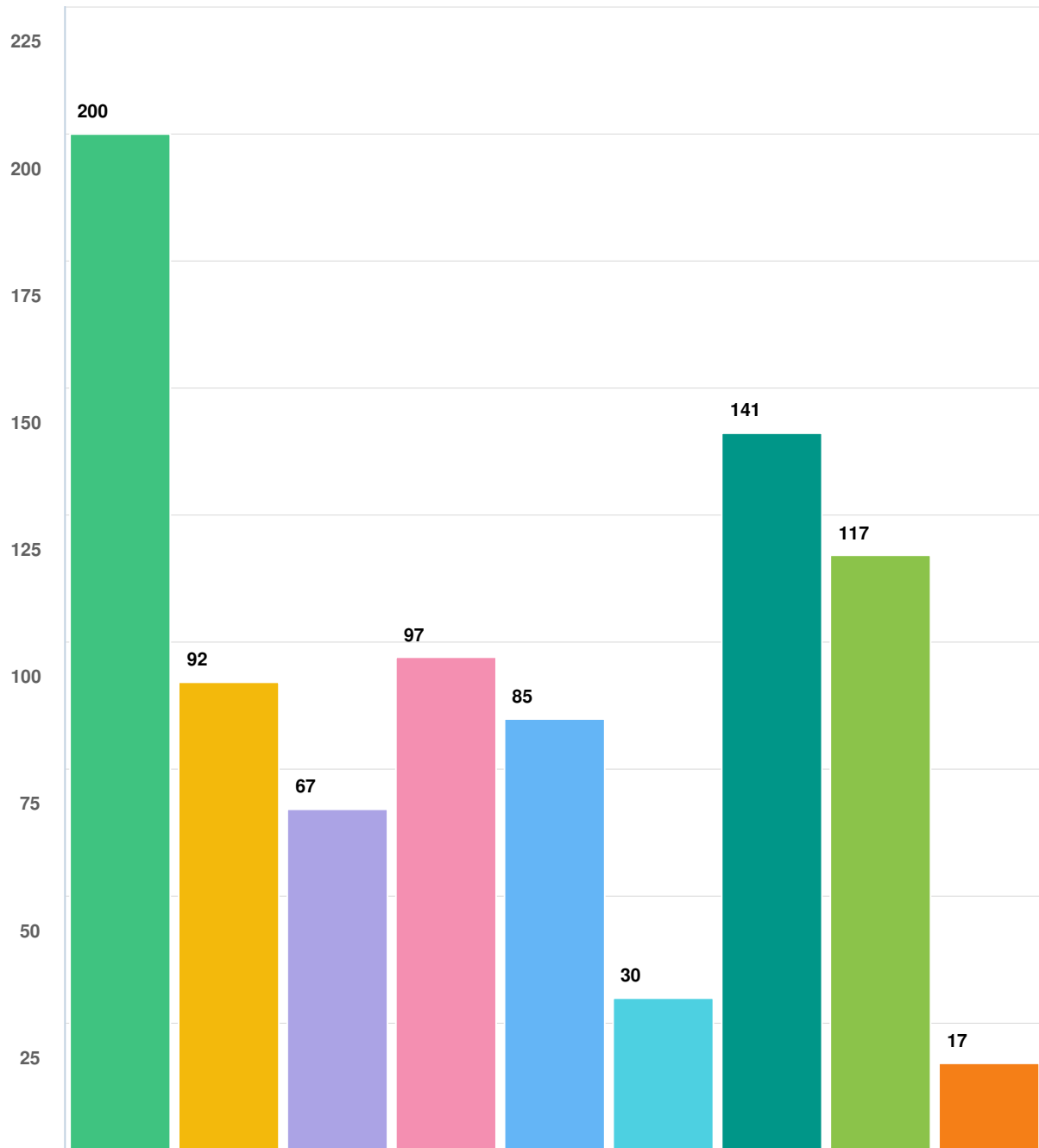


We asked you to identify any parts of downtown that could benefit from signage. More than half of responses indicated that the Waterfront area could use more signage.



To get a better idea of the destinations that would be useful to include in the Downtown Plan, we asked what brings residents downtown. The majority of visits are for shopping, dining out, and daytime appointments.

### Why do you go downtown?



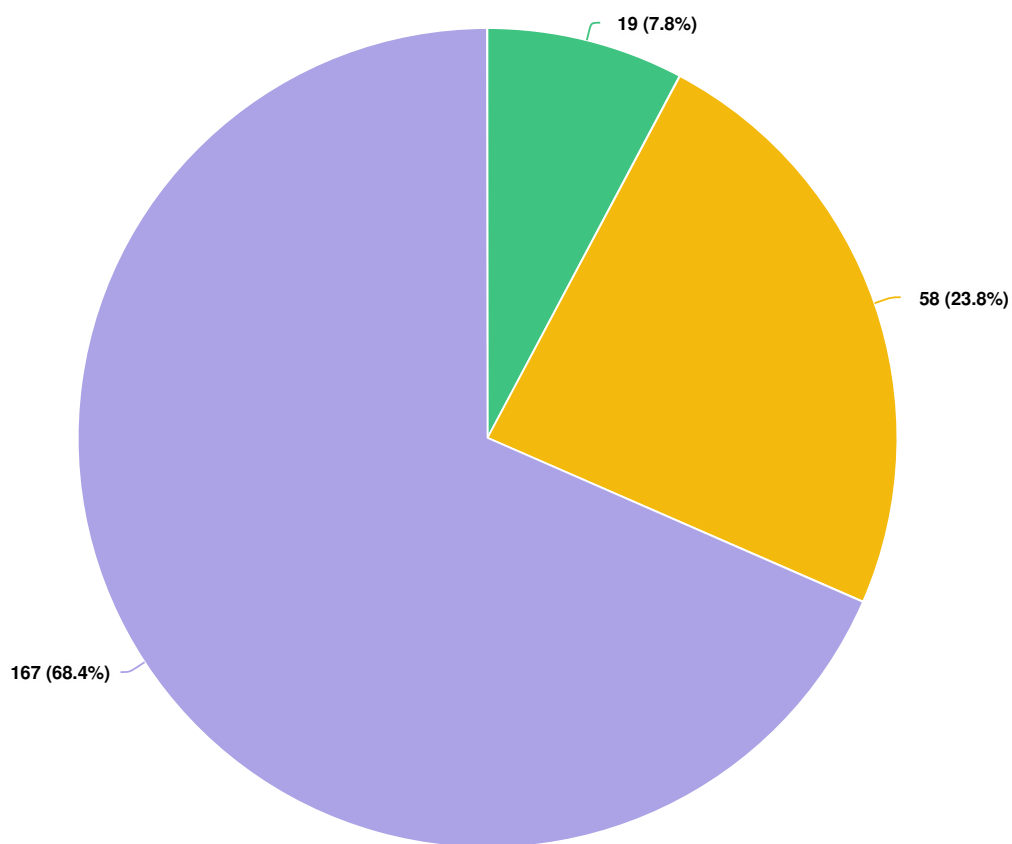
#### Question options

- Shopping
- Work
- Evening Entertainment
- Weekend Activities
- Outdoor Recreation
- I live here!
- Restaurants
- Daytime Appointments
- Other (please specify)



Most communities in Wood Buffalo have gateway signs that welcome visitors to the neighbourhood. The signs celebrate the uniqueness of each community and create a special feeling for residents. The majority of survey responses were happy with the existing styles of gateway signs.

**Many neighbourhoods have gateway signs. Are these signs effective at creating a neighbourhood identity?**



**Question options**

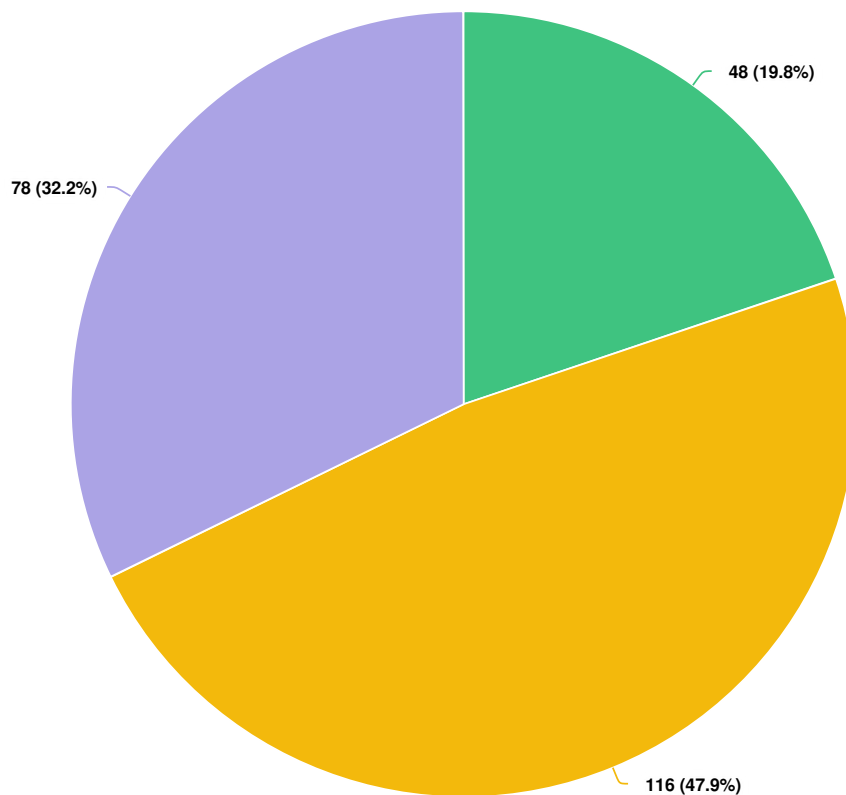
● Unhappy ● Neutral ● Happy





There are about 25 information signs in Wood Buffalo that include interesting cultural and historical stories. Maybe you have seen these signs around the downtown! Including these information signs in the wayfinding plan could mean that they look a little different. We heard from residents that these information signs aren't particularly effective at reflecting the culture and history of the area.

**There are several historical information signs in the downtown. Have you seen these signs and do you think they do a good job of reflecting the culture and history of the area?**



**Question options**

Unhappy Neutral Happy



You were asked how Indigenous storytelling and culture could be incorporated into wayfinding. This question was posed to everyone across Wood Buffalo. We asked this question to get your unique ideas and find out if you had seen some great examples in other places. We will continue to work with Indigenous and Rural Relations so that the signage reflects the Indigenous history and culture of the region.

You were invited to provide written responses to how Indigenous culture and storytelling could be recognized in wayfinding. The following is a summary of key themes.

**Ideas about incorporating Indigenous culture and storytelling:**

- Inclusion of Cree and Dene translations, names, and symbols
- Provide interpretive signage about current or prior Indigenous uses of the land, legends, and stories
- Explain the meaning behind traditional place names, and tell the stories in the specific place they are relevant
- Incorporate the names of significant Indigenous leaders
- Use Indigenous artwork
- Use local materials, colours, and patterns
- Include images or icons of regional plants and animals and provide information on their significance to the First Nations, for example the seven teachings



You were invited to provide ideas about what you would like to see in the signage system, including examples of places that do wayfinding well. Your ideas will provide inspiration for designs that reflect the unique character of the region. The following is a summary of key themes.

### **Ideas for wayfinding in Wood Buffalo:**

- Reflect our northern identity, outdoors, and history
- Incorporate public art
- Interactive (e.g., QR codes)
- Wayfinding should be accessible
- Include lighting, art, architecture, and landmarks
- Employ consistent colours and symbols

Survey responses included space for general feedback. Here are some of the great ideas you provided.

### **Ideas:**

- The existing information signs should be more noticeable.
- Use winter city design principles, including colour.
- Iconic landmarks would add character to the downtown.
- It would be great to make the downtown more beautiful and attractive to visitors and residents.
- Signs need to be durable and easy to maintain.
- Signs should be accessible; maybe include audio or braille for the visually impaired.



## NEXT STEPS

We thank you for your input and ideas on wayfinding during the first engagement phase of this project. Communications & Engagement are carefully reviewing all the information in conjunction with the wayfinding consultants. Your input and ideas provide a solid foundation for the development of a Regional Strategy and Downtown Plan.

When you are downtown in September, keep an eye out for signage prototypes! Examples of what the wayfinding signs could look like will be placed in a few spots downtown. Follow the displayed QR code link to provide your feedback on the designs.

The final engagement phase will be to verify that the Regional Strategy and Downtown Plan have captured key elements identified as important by regional residents.

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 [participate.rmwb.ca](https://participate.rmwb.ca) to stay connected!



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