



WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT CONSTRUCTION COMMUNICATION 2023

*Communications & Engagement Department
October 4 – November 3, 2023*

By Will Collins | will.collins@rmwb.ca
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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

Every year, construction season runs from approximately May until October. During this period, various forms of construction communication is distributed to inform residents and businesses about work happening across the region.

The purpose of construction communication is to share information about work happening, highlight projects, notify residents of any changes or impacts, and share safety reminders.

Construction communication tactics include the municipal website, online construction map, hand-delivered construction notices, social media, signs, radio ads, and more. These tactics are tailored for each construction project and each community across the region based on needs of residents and businesses.

At the end of the 2023 construction season, residents and businesses were invited to share their feedback on how well they were informed about construction. In addition, contractors and consultants working on municipal construction projects in 2023 were invited to share their feedback on processes and expectations for communication about construction projects.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From October 4 until November 3, 2023, targeted audiences were invited to share their feedback on how well they were informed about construction projects underway in 2023. This online engagement was hosted on [Participate Wood Buffalo](#), the Municipality's engagement portal page. It included a short survey, a quick poll, and the map tool, which allows participants to point out specific locations and provide comments.

Feedback from this engagement will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of current practices and help identify areas for improving and enhancing construction communication. Effective construction communication will help raise awareness for residents, increase transparency of the construction activities, help to minimize impacts to residents and businesses, and support project teams as they build and maintain infrastructure and assets across the region.

ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPANTS

1. Residents
2. Businesses
3. Contractors working with the RMWB in 2023
4. Consultants working with the RMWB in 2023

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The following is a list of ways that this engagement opportunity was advertised to raise awareness and encourage participation:

- ✓ Construction notice inclusions
- ✓ Digital ads
- ✓ Electronic message boards
- ✓ Email invitations to stakeholders
- ✓ In-person conversations
- ✓ Mac Calendar
- ✓ Municipal website
- ✓ Neighbourhood Engagement Series
- ✓ News Release
- ✓ Online meetings
- ✓ Post cards
- ✓ Posters
- ✓ Printed invitations dropped off at businesses
- ✓ Participate Wood Buffalo newsletter
- ✓ Radio ads
- ✓ Rural newsletters
- ✓ Social media



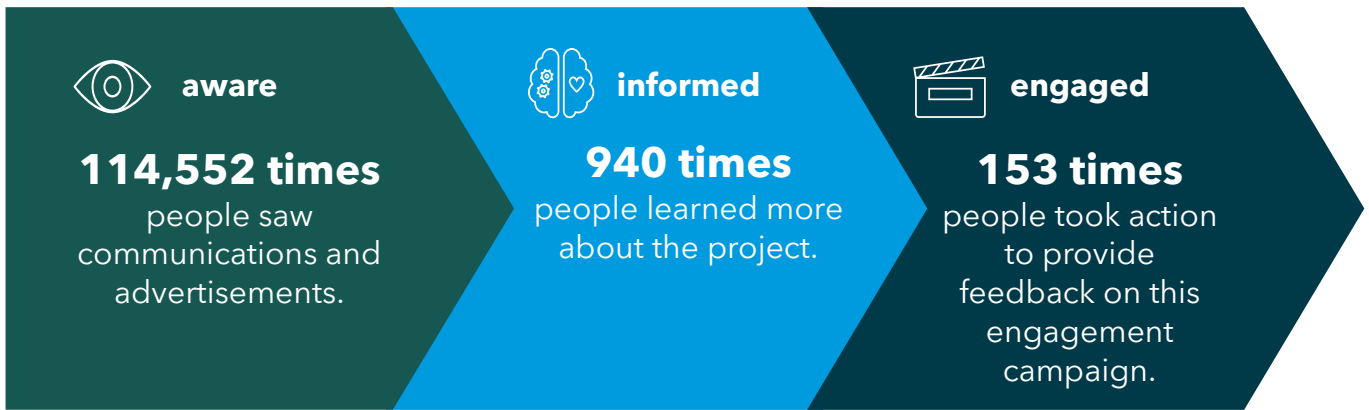
ENGAGEMENT TACTICS

The primary mode of engaging with participants was through the Participate Wood Buffalo online engagement portal page. Tactics available through Participate Wood Buffalo include:



- Quick poll
- Survey (available online, as well as in print or through Pulse phone support)
- Online Map Tool to point out specific locations for feedback
- One-on-one dialogue at neighbourhood engagement events

ENGAGEMENT IN NUMBERS



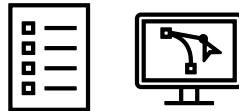
KEY FINDINGS/THEMES

Results from this engagement highlighted themes that are important to residents and businesses about construction communication. Those themes are outlined below and are later described in further detail.

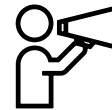
Additional feedback was also captured about specific projects. However, this feedback didn't fall within the objectives of this survey (construction communication), so feedback about specific projects has not been included in the themes below.



COMMUNICATION
SUGGESTIONS



CONSTRUCTION WEB
PAGE & NOTICES



PREFERRED METHOD OF
COMMUNICATION



SAFETY



TIMING





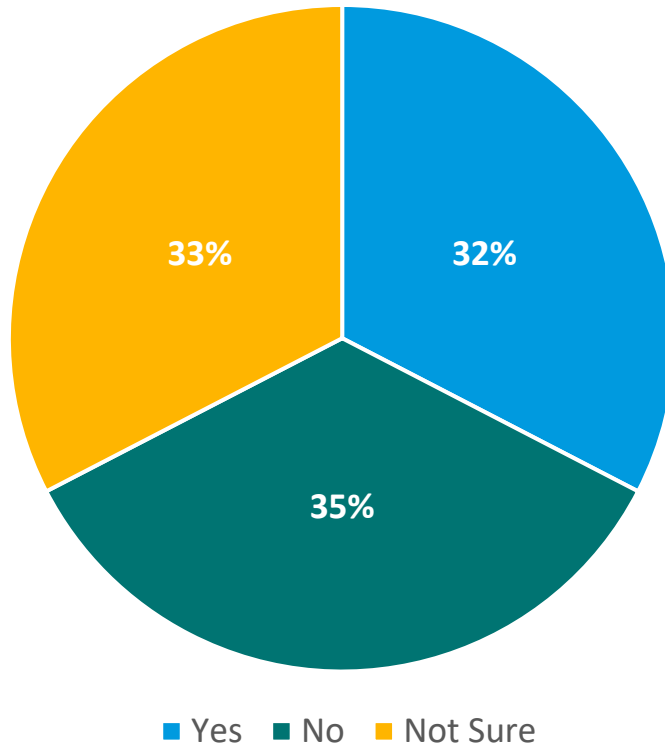
DETAILED ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

Following a four-week online engagement about construction communication, feedback has been gathered and reviewed below in detail. This information includes feedback from the quick poll, map tool, and online survey, all of which were hosted on [Participate Wood Buffalo](#), the Municipality’s Engagement Portal Page, from October 4 until November 3, 2023.

ABOUT THE QUICK POLL

The following is a summary of responses to the quick poll. There were two reasons for using a quick poll for this project: 1) to get a high-level idea indication of how respondents feel about the question asked, and 2) to make the engagement more accessible to those respondents who are busy but still wish to participate. For this quick poll, 46 responses were submitted.

QP: Are you satisfied with municipal construction communication this year?



ABOUT THE MAP TOOL

The Map Tool allows respondents to point out a specific area on a map and provide comments about that location.

For this tool, one (1) respondent pointed out a specific location and provided comments about construction signage, speed limits, and traffic safety. Comment from respondent is provided below:

“Are the construction signs necessary to be left out when construction has stopped? There was also no law enforcement during construction so when some follow the law and slow down to the posted limit. We have to endure a pickup truck going at highway speeds nearly rear end us to get to the stop sign/red light first and proceed to tailgate the rest of the way through.”

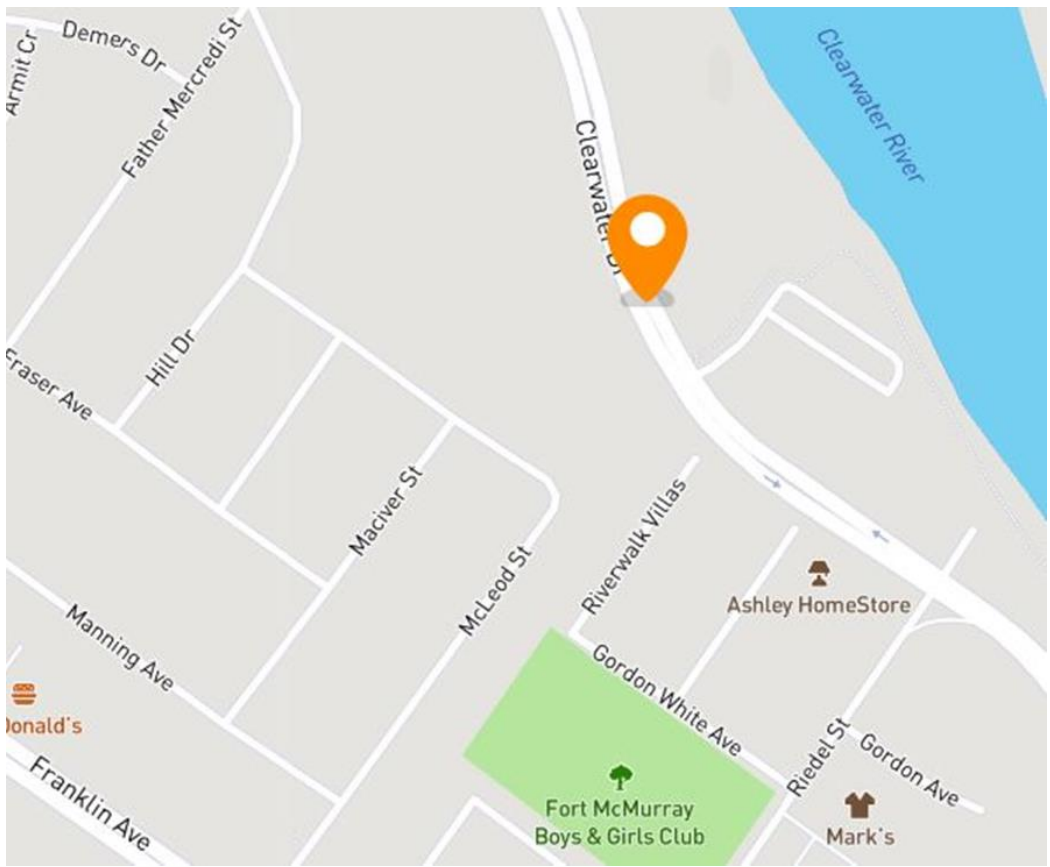









Figure 1 – Screen capture of Map Tool. Respondent’s comment indicated by pin in map.

COMMON THEMES WE HEARD

As part of the survey, respondents were invited to share additional feedback. Fifty-eight respondents shared additional feedback. The following is a summary of the common themes found in their feedback:






COMMUNICATION SUGGESTIONS

In this survey, respondents were asked about how they get construction information. As part of their feedback, respondents also provided suggestions to improve construction communication. The following is a summary of their suggestions for sharing information about construction projects:

-  Phone app
-  Text notifications
-  More opportunities for engagement and feedback early in the project
-  Clearer information needed, more information about parking impacts
-  GPS mapping of construction work
-  More communication needed about transit changes
-  Need to enhance interaction between the parties affected by construction.

CONSTRUCTION WEBSITE & NOTICES

When a project is under construction, information is posted on the [construction web page](#) on the municipal website. In addition, printed notices may also be hand-delivered to residences in the project area. The following is a summary of what respondents had to say about the construction web page and notices:

-  Noticed many improvements to construction notice process over time
-  Some residents missed notices
-  Information on the website is not up to date
-  Project introduction notices are appreciated before construction work begins,
-  Suggest including more information about project completion status in the notices to better understand timelines of construction impacts.



Some respondents thought there could be more frequent updates, while others noted that too many notices will cause residents/businesses to be desensitized and miss important information about project impacts.



One respondent noted that while they had gotten notification about a project, their neighbour didn't get notification and had been impacted by construction.

PREFERRED METHOD OF COMMUNICATION

Respondents were asked about their preferred way to get information about construction projects. Feedback highlighted respondents' experiences with specific methods of communication. The following is a summary of their feedback:



Email notifications – Some residents did not get email notification (this may be because they have not subscribed for updates, or the emails had been missed or went to junk folder). Other respondents appreciated the email notifications provided through the [online subscription service](#).



Pulse – Many respondents shared their experiences with Pulse. Some respondents have had positive experiences and quickly received responses to their inquiries, while others weren't satisfied with the information they received.



Social media – Some respondents noted that social media was their preferred method of getting updates. They shared that updates were timely and informative. Other respondents said that they learned about projects in community social media groups instead of through the Municipality's social media.



Website – The Municipality hosts all construction notices on the [construction web page](#). Notices are listed by community and neighbourhood. Some respondents noted their satisfaction with the level of detail on specific projects. Other respondents were concerned that information is not up to date and that the notices do not reflect the current state of projects.






Interactions – Some respondents noted their experiences interacting with municipal employees, who helped them get information about various projects. Respondents highlighted their positive interactions with municipal staff and construction supervisors to get information about projects.








SAFETY

Safety is an important part of any construction project. Some respondents felt that construction communication could improve by enhancing safety messaging and by giving more consideration to safety around project areas. They suggested more messaging to highlight the following safety considerations during construction:

-  Improve signage for changes in speed limits and lane closures.
-  Concerns about traffic signal lights not working in construction areas.
-  Need better signage to highlight hazards for residents in proximity to construction areas.

TIMING

Some respondents highlighted positive experiences, and others highlighted dissatisfaction with the timing of construction communication. The following is a summary of what we heard about the timing of construction communication:

-  Need better timing of notices – sometimes notice is shared with residents after work has already begun. Would like to see more advance notice of work.
-  Other respondents noted their satisfaction with notices being shared well in advance of work beginning.
-  Some respondents requested for ongoing updates throughout the project as construction progresses.
-  One respondent said that frequent notices can be confusing if they only cover minor changes and impacts. This can cause confusion and desensitize residents and businesses to future updates.
-  Some respondents noted that they want more opportunities to engage and share feedback before construction work begins.

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

One survey question invited respondents to share any additional feedback. Listed above are some of the common themes we heard. In addition, we also heard feedback that was NOT related to the objective of this survey – how well were respondents informed about communication.

From a high level, additional themes we heard were related to specific construction projects, construction equipment and personnel, and the impacts of construction. While these themes are important, they are not related to construction communication – the objective of this engagement – so these themes are not included in this report.



SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

For this survey, 147 responses were submitted:

- ✓ 140 residents and property owners
- ✓ 6 contractors and consultants
- ✓ 1 other (not wishing to be identified)
- ✓ 58 – additional feedback submissions (as highlighted in “Common Themes We Heard”)

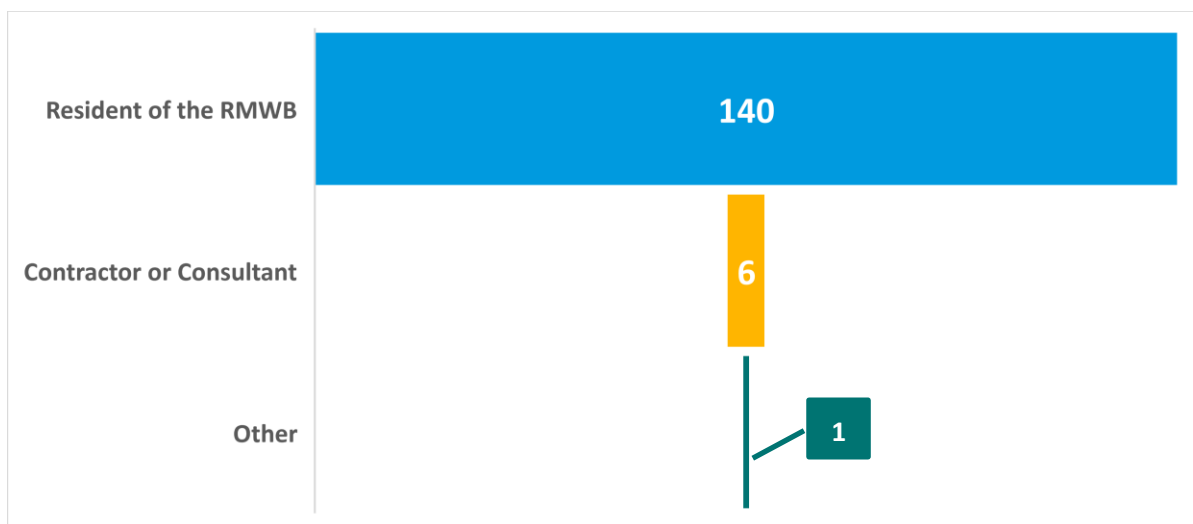
The survey was designed to allow for participants to share their experiences with construction communication – how well were they informed about construction projects, and where were they getting information. This feedback will help the communications team understand what is working, what is helpful for residents and business owners, where there may be some gaps in communication, and where there is opportunity for improvement.

The survey was designed to be inclusive of urban residents and businesses in Fort McMurray. In addition, the survey was tailored for those in the rural communities to share feedback about specific communication tactics like the rural newsletter, which is not distributed in Fort McMurray. Contractors and consultants who worked with the Municipality in the 2023 construction season were also invited to participate. The survey questions changed slightly depending for each of these three audiences: urban, rural, and contractors/consultants.

Response rates and themes from urban and rural residents and businesses have been included in this report. Response rates for contractors and consultants are included in this report, but themes have not been included; however, feedback from contractors and consultants will be reviewed by the communications team to look for challenges and opportunities for improvement.

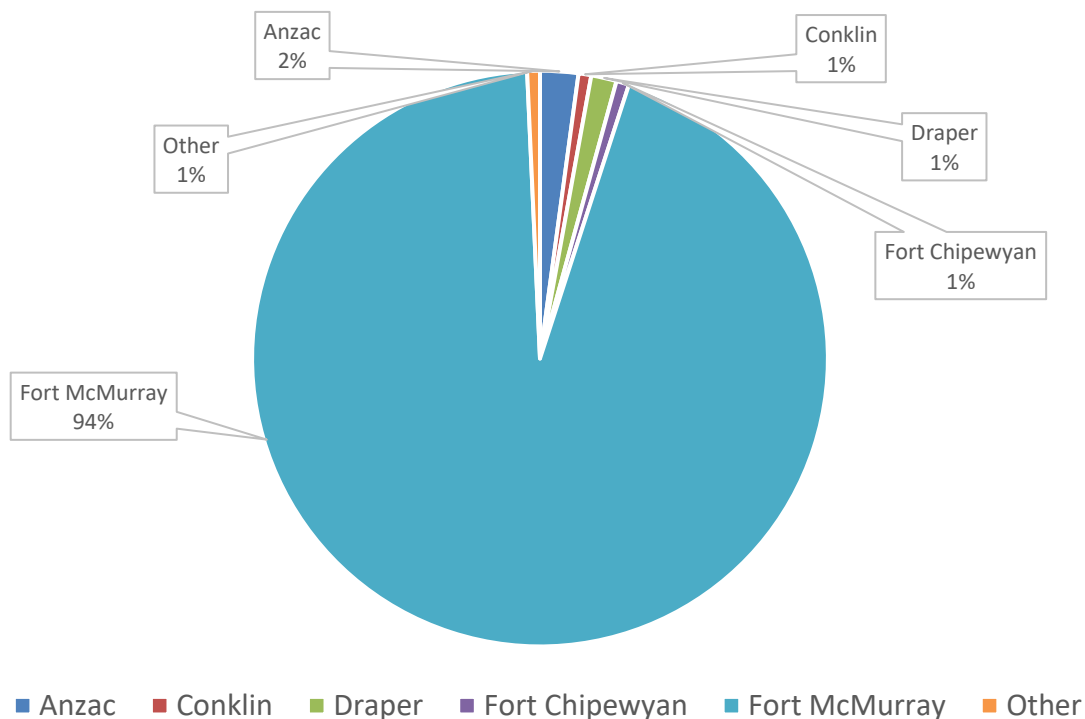
As part of the survey, an open question was asked to see if the respondent had any additional feedback to share. Out of 147 respondents, 58 provided additional feedback. This feedback is captured above in the section titled “Common Themes We Heard.” The following is a summary of survey responses received during the engagement.

Q1: Which of the following best describes you?



The one response of “Other” was from someone that is “self-employed to improve appearance of Fort McMurray.” Those who selected “Other” were asked to complete the same survey question as residents and businesses. Survey responses for residents and businesses are outlined below. Survey responses for contractors and consultants are not included in this report.

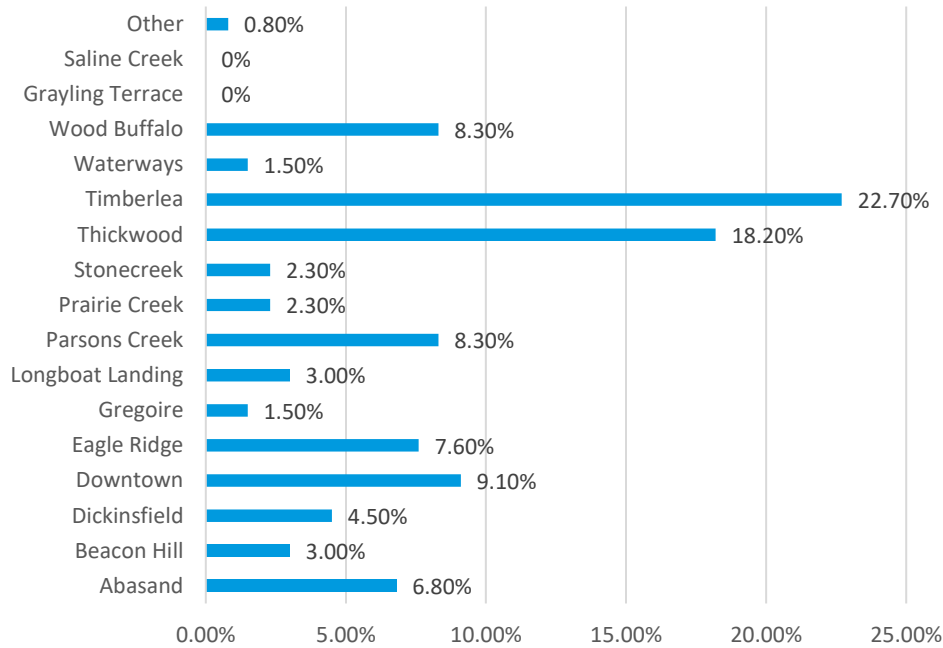
Q2: What community do you live in?



For those communities of the RMWB that are not included the chart above, there were zero respondents who identified as being from those communities.

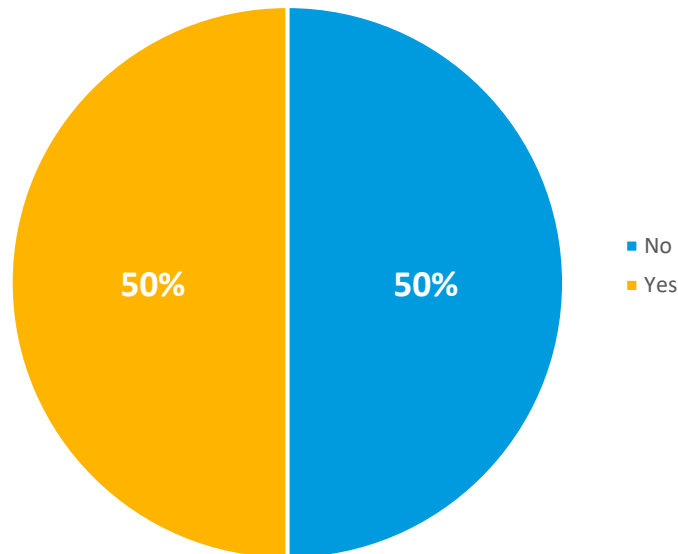


Q3: What neighbourhood in Fort McMurray do you live in?



One respondent who checked “Other” made a note that they live in Lakewood, which is a neighbourhood in Timberlea.

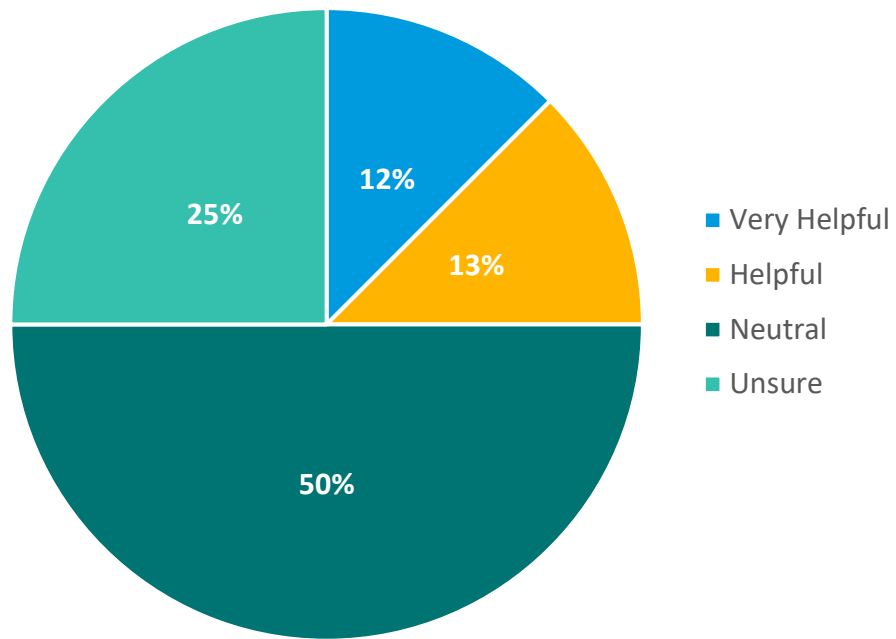
Q4: Do you review the Construction Update in the Rural Newsletter?



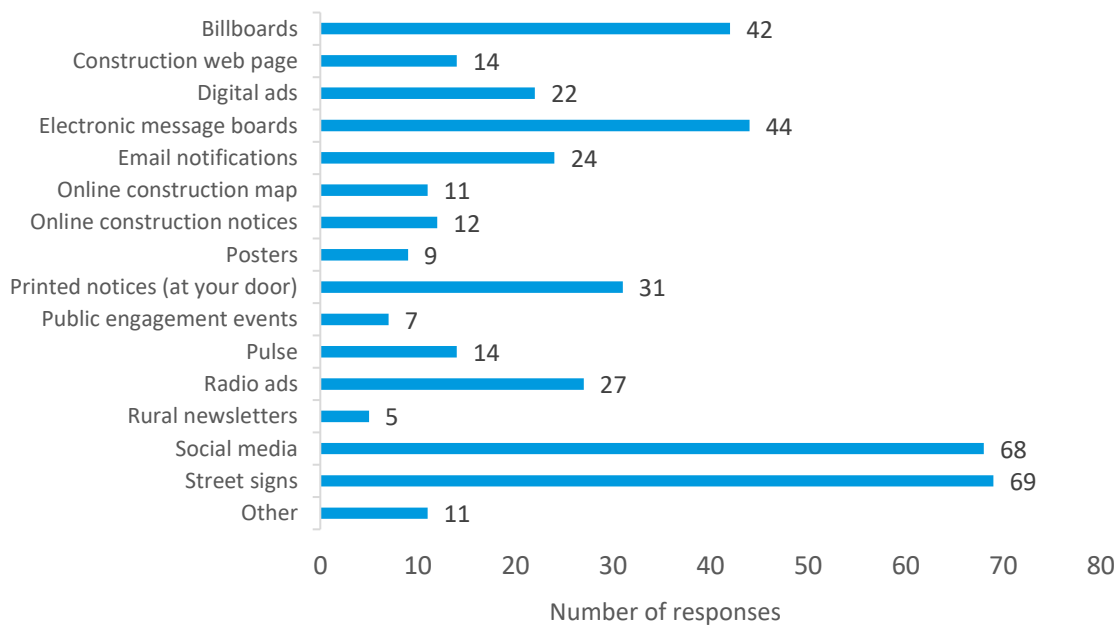
This question was tailored for rural residents only, as the rural newsletter is not distributed in Fort McMurray. Those respondents who indicated that they live in Fort McMurray would not have been asked the question above.



Q5: How helpful is the Construction update in the Rural Newsletter?



Q6: Where do you get news and information about municipal construction? Choose all the apply:

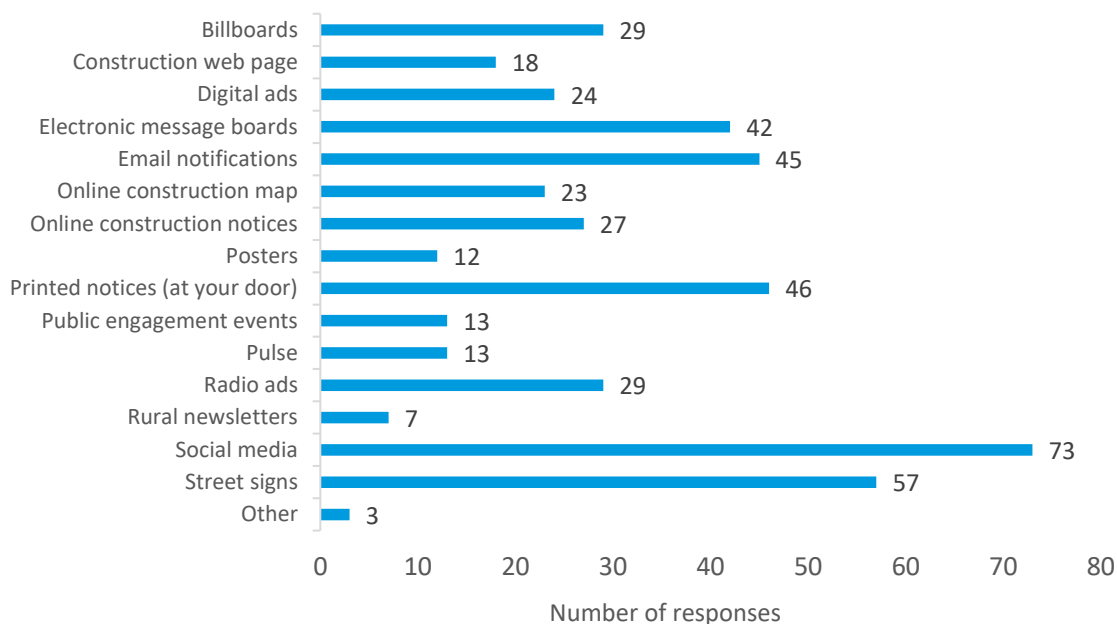


Those who selected “Other” described their means of getting construction information:

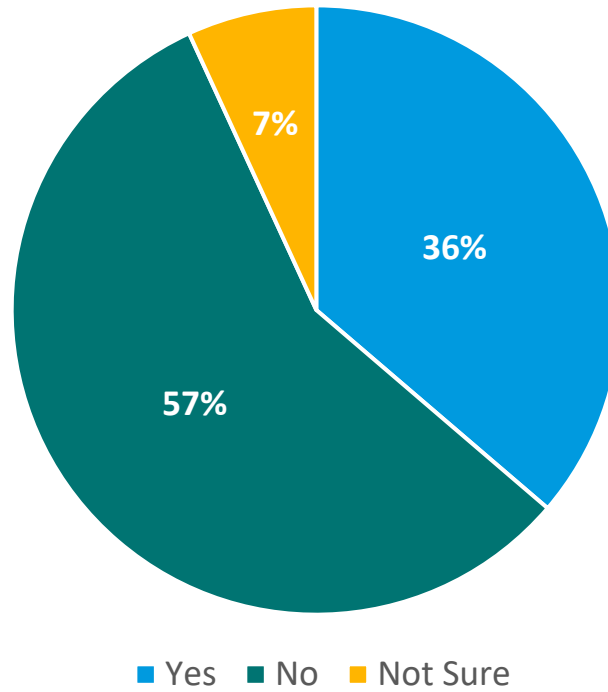
- Signs at the project site
- Speaking with contractors
- Friends
- While driving in the community
- Planning & Development
- Would like to receive text message notifications

Q7: What is your preferred way to get construction information? Choose all that apply:

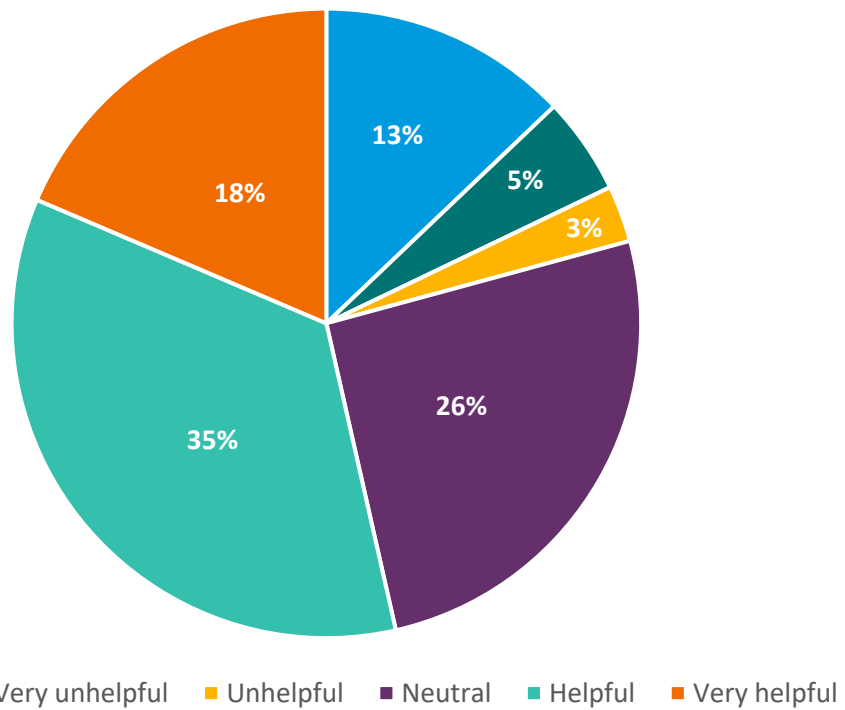
Those who selected “Other” described their preferred way to get construction information that had not been listed in the options provided. Each respondent suggested “text messages” as their preference.



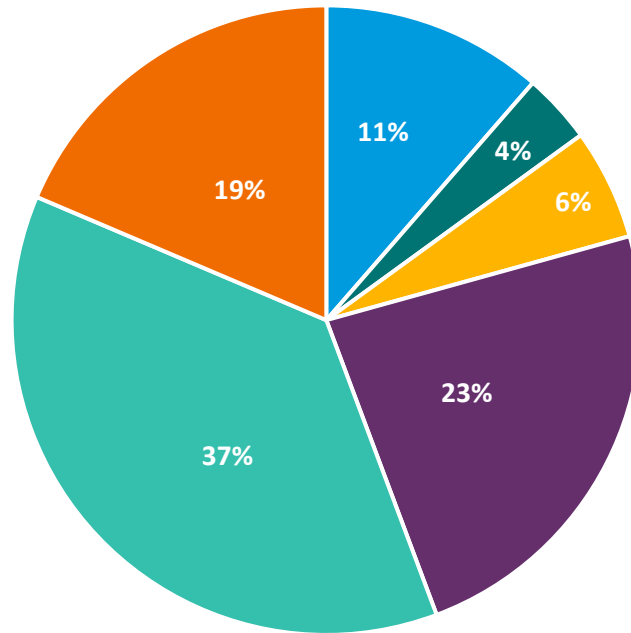
Q8: Have you received a printed or email construction notice for an RMWB project?



Q9: How helpful is the information in construction notices?

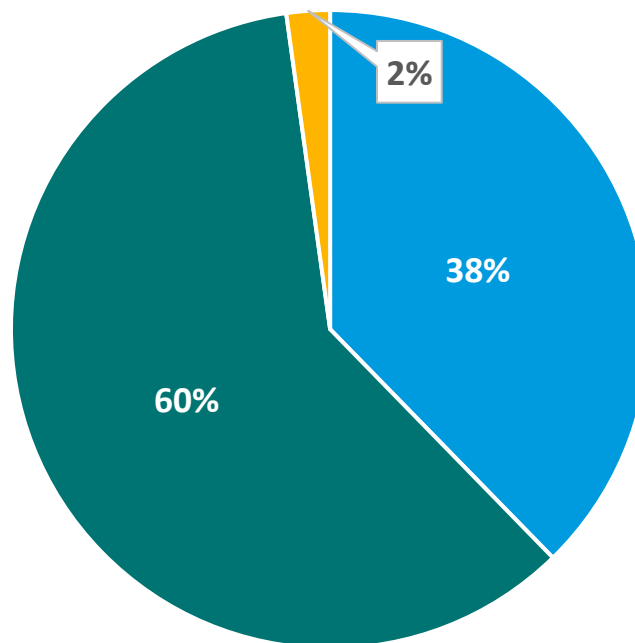


Q10: How easy is it to understand construction notices?



■ Unsure ■ Very unclear ■ Unclear ■ Neutral ■ Clear ■ Very clear

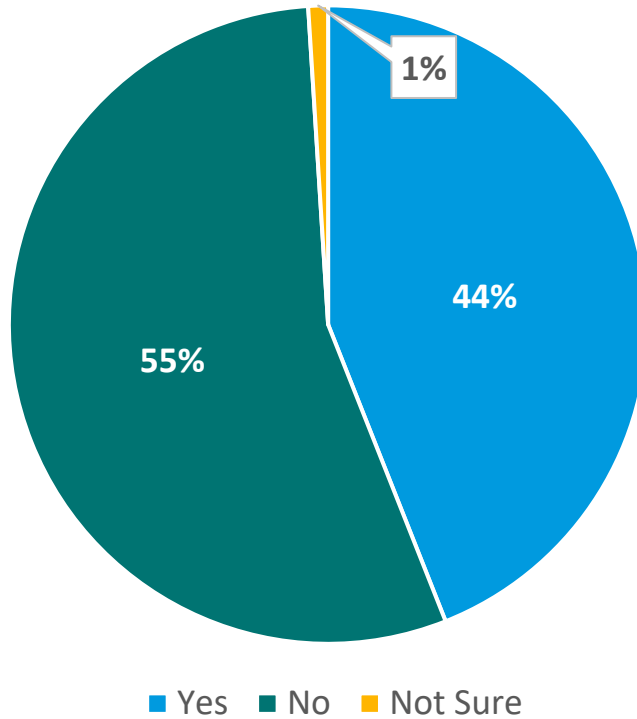
Q11: Did you know that you can subscribe for email construction updates at rmwb.ca/construction?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not Sure



Q12: Have you ever reviewed the online construction map at rmwb.ca/construction?



NEXT STEPS

Thank you to those who participated in the Construction Communications Survey, and for taking the time to review this What We Heard Report.

Engagement findings will be reviewed by the construction communication team. Feedback from this engagement will help identify areas of opportunity for improving and enhancing communication in upcoming construction seasons.

We encourage you to continue using your voice to make our region even better by learning about all public engagement opportunities. Visit participate.rmwb.ca to stay connected. Thank you for participating.





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