



**RIVER VALLEY WAYFINDING
PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS
2016**

Integrated Strategic Development- Citizen Services- City of Edmonton

Introduction – Background and Objectives



- In 2013, the City of Edmonton initiated a new project to enhance River Valley Wayfinding throughout the City. The new Wayfinding signage will help visitors find their way around Edmonton's River Valley park and trail system.
- The first phase is a pilot project located in Gold Bar Park. The new family of signs includes identification, directional, informational, interpretive and regulatory signs.
- This survey is to collect feedback from the public and the results will be used to inform any changes that may need to be made to new signs before they are installed throughout the River Valley.

Introduction – Methodology

- The survey was developed by the City of Edmonton. It was made available online for public input from June 10 to July 22, 2016.
- Staff from the City of Edmonton attended a number of community events during this period. In total 40 of in-person surveys were conducted. Responses from these participants were also incorporated in this report.
- 487 citizens participated and 327 completed the survey. This report is based on responses from the 327 completed surveys.
- In addition to the full survey, four questions were asked to the City's Insight Community members in the July 2016 Mixed Topic Survey. A total of 2533 responses were collected. The results are included in the last part of this report as well.

Executive Summary

- ❑ Overall, majority of the respondents are satisfied with the new signs. All overall evaluation indicators are above 80%.
- ❑ On each of the signs shown in the survey, the feedback was positive as well. 80%+ are satisfied with the information, the look and feel, and ease of read. The only exception is the “look” of the Park Identification sign (72%)
- ❑ Respondents provided valuable suggestions to the design and the information included, both overall and each individual sign.
 - Maps should have consistent orientations
 - Design could be better blended with the environment and nature
 - Smaller maps need to be readable
 - More information needs to be included where appropriate. i.e. user rules/dog off leash, more information on trails, amenities, public transit, etc.
 - Signs need to be readable during low light times, in winter time, and for faster movers, i.e. skiers or bikers.
 - Materials should be easy to maintain and vandalism proof



Current Use of Gold Bar Park

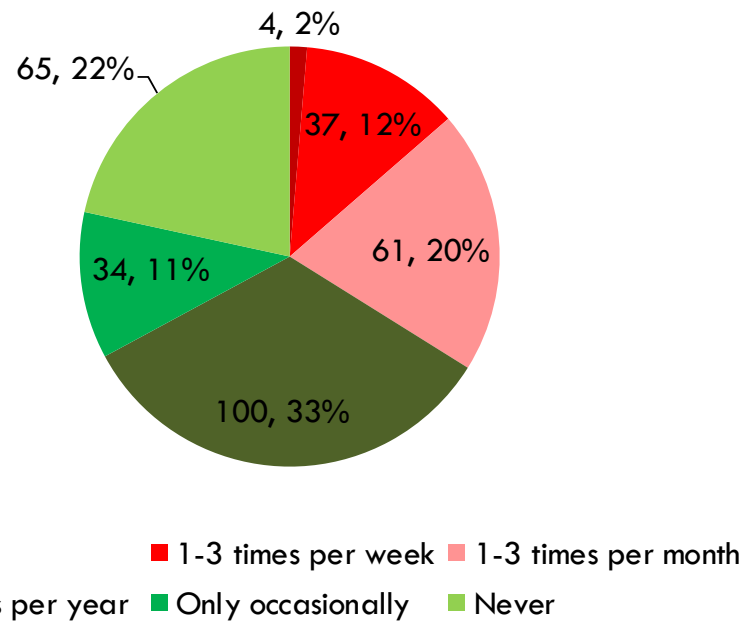
Park Visitation- Frequency

Majority of the respondents have been to Gold Bar Park.

1/3 are frequent visitors who visit the park at least once per month.

1/3 visit the park a few times per year.

1/3 seldom or never visited the park.



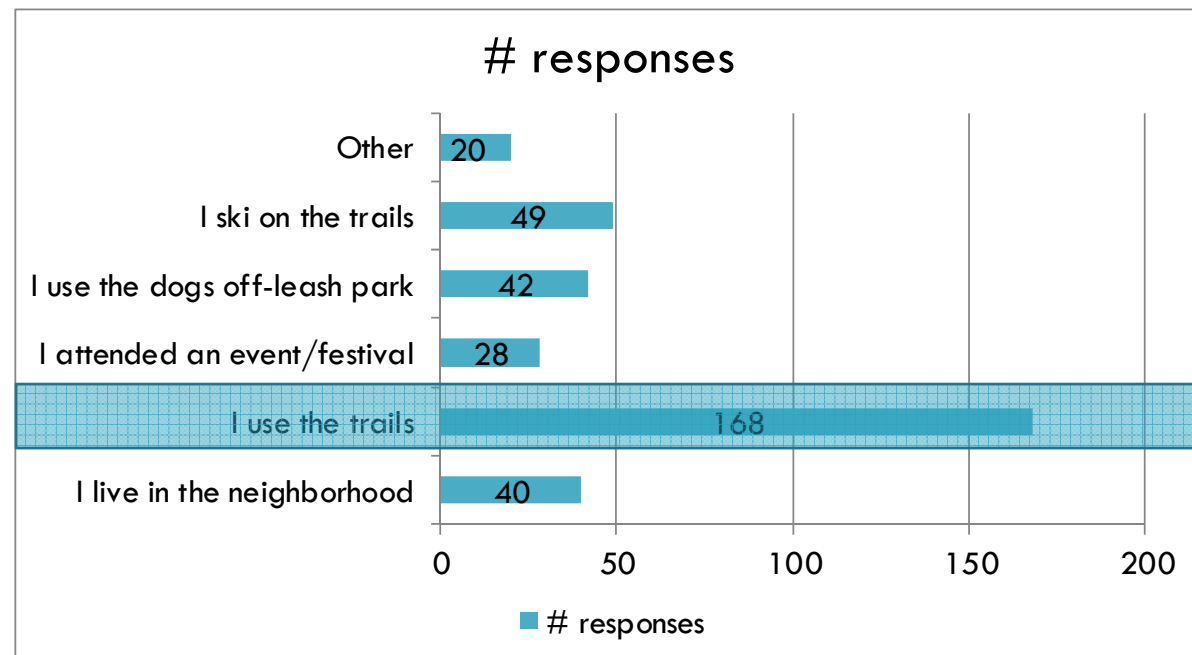
Q1: Have you ever been to Gold Bar Park?

Q2: How often have you visited Gold Bar Park in the past 12 months ?

Park Visitation- Reasons

About a half (168 out of the 327) are trail users.

Other people came to Gold Bar Park ski on the trails, use the dog off-leash area, attend an event/festival, or simply live in the neighborhood.

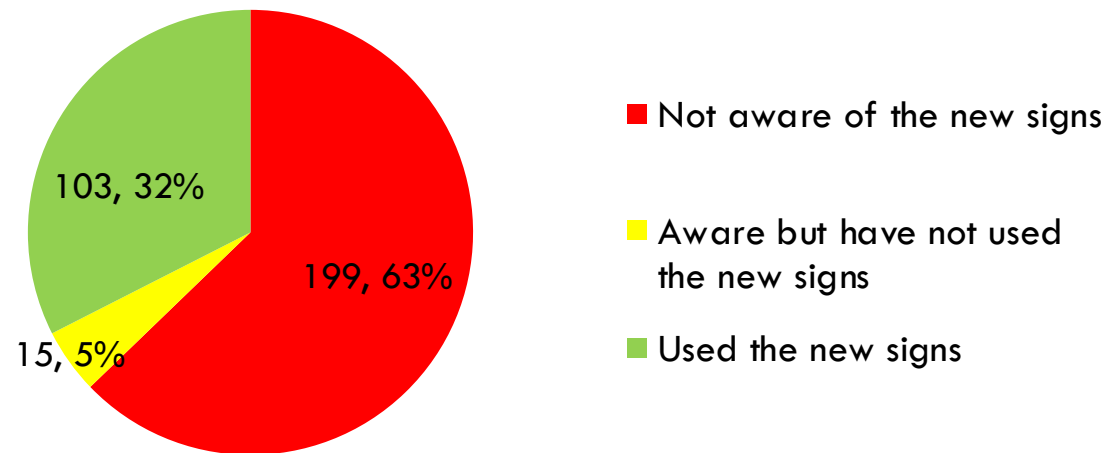


Q3: What brought you to Gold Bar park in the past 12 months? (multiple choice)

Awareness and use of the new signs

As some surveys were taken face-to-face by the COE staff members in the park, 1/3 have used the new signs despite the fact that the signs were installed very recently.

Responses



Q22: Were you aware of the new signs in the park before taking this survey?

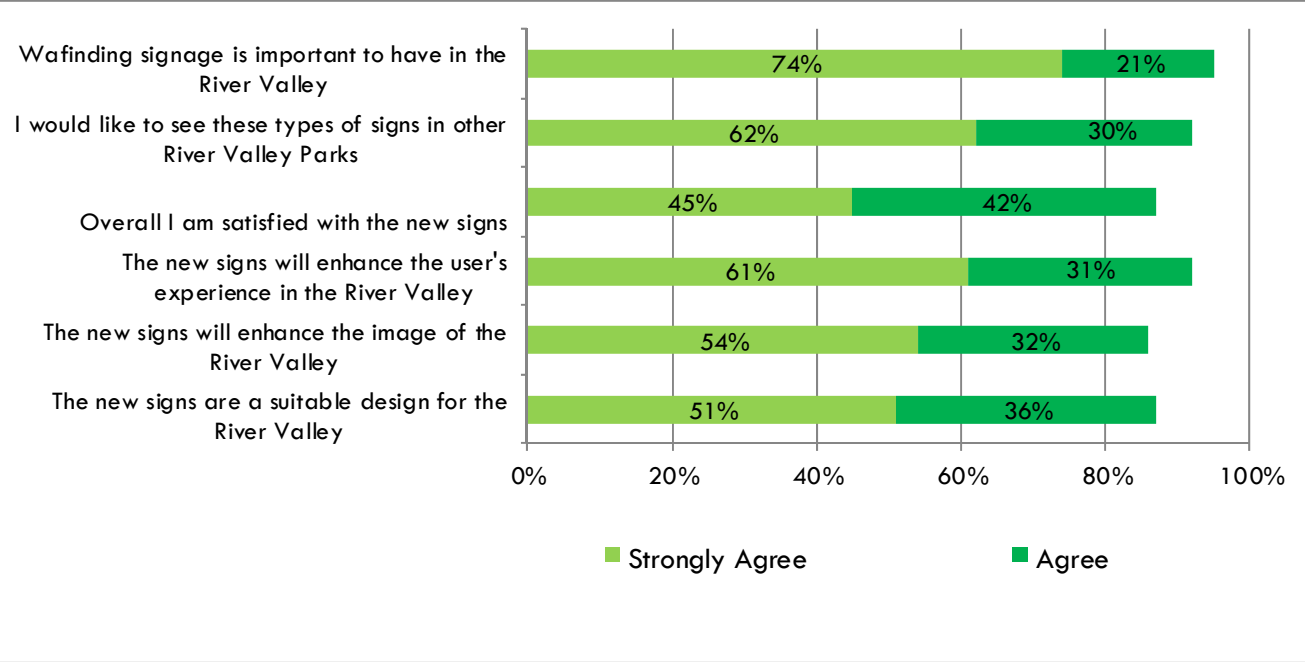
Q23: Did you use the new signs in the park?



General Feedback- Gold Bar Park Wayfinding Signs

General Feedback

Very positive feedback from the respondents with all evaluation indicators above 80%.



Q24: Now that you have seen the new signs that have been installed in Gold Bar park, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Comments and Suggestions- 93 in total

Majority indicated the refreshed River Valley Wayfinding is a great initiative.

Lots of suggestions were provided regarding the design and information included.

Some expressed concerns regarding vandalism and maintenance

- Positive, i.e. great initiative, found the signs helpful, or would like to see similar signs installed throughout all the parks (50)

"I am a retired graphic designer. I designed way finding systems for historic sites including ... I think the system you have introduced is beautifully designed, fits well into the environment and seems to be constructed strongly to deal with vandalism. Both my wife and I are extremely impressed."

"Signage is terribly important in the winter, it's not just a pretty decoration. There have been times skiing with my young child, with the weather turning bad, not knowing at all how long the trail ahead is, and with both of us losing steam. It's scary... the proper infrastructure is critical and responsible"

"i can not stress my comments over again but, i hope they will be seriously considered for improvement of the signage in ALL the parks throughout Edmonton as I consider Edmonton my home city. To me, it is imperative we have signage everywhere possible to gain as much visitors and patronage to parks and recreational areas as we can. Parks have played a major role in my family since i was a young child and continue to do so as a older adult now at 51 years old."

Q25: Please share any comments you may have regarding the new signs.

Comments and Suggestions – 93 in total

Majority indicated the refreshed River Valley Wayfinding is a great initiative.

Lots of suggested were provided regarding the design and information included.

Some expressed concerns regarding vandalism and maintenance

- Suggestions regarding design, i.e. more natural, suit night time and winter use, larger fonts for fast moving bikers/skiers (19)

“Should be a more natural post with a simple map on it... Use a wooden sign in the River Valley that is more natural looking. This post belongs in a parking lot downtown...Perhaps basic wooden ones would be cheaper and more realistic”

“i think that this has been a long time coming and I am so pleased to see that we now have directional signage. We are a few hundred years behind on having signposts for pedestrians! Overall I don't mind the look of them but if they are a pilot for the whole river valley they could look a little more clean and vibrant. Don't be afraid of colour to make them eye catching. In the winter we have no colour. Refer to the winter city design guidelines. Consider also using colour to define modes/path ways. Everything is just so navy blue!”

“lighting on some signs would be useful.”

“The new signs will ONLY enhance my experience in the River Valley if they are re-designed to have large font for the trail names and distances. I primarily use such information while running and found the signs to be too small to read while running.”

Q25: Please share any comments you may have regarding the new signs.

Comments and Suggestions- 93 in total

Majority indicated the refreshed River Valley Wayfinding is a great initiative.

Lots of suggested were provided regarding the design and information included.

Some expressed concerns regarding vandalism and maintenance

- More information to be included, i.e. walk time, user rules, history and culture, TCT logo, etc. (11)

"Trail markers should provide distances to washrooms and river crossings."

"...One more thing I would want on the maps is the closest bus stops at street level. Very important for a quick escape or you are just too tired to go on."

"Post more explicit rules regarding off-leash areas. I run/bike/ski 2-6 times a week in the river valley and often have dogs running at and jumping on me. Multiple owners have expressed belief that they are not responsible for keeping dogs from bothering other trail users on off-leash trails. As someone allergic to dogs, this is incredibly frustrating given the high number of off-leash areas."

"There are seldom signs indicating the end of an off leash park. It would be useful to add that for those of us who use the parks for that purpose. Also adding better signage when an off leash park starts (at both ends) would help people who enter an off leash area from the trail system. In that they would understand that they might encounter dogs."

"There is a need for enhanced signage in other River Valley Parks regarding expectations for off-leash sections of the trails. Being a frequent user of the Hawrelak, Capilano and Dawson trails for many years, it is apparent that many dog owners do not understand the difference between an Off-Leash DOG PARK vs. the Off-Leash sections of the MULTI-USE TRAILS. It needs to be made clearer to dog owners that they Must Keep Their Dogs Under Control At All Times. So please get rid of the tiny, barely visible signage that vaguely mentions dogs should be kept under control. Make the signage larger, more strongly worded, and you might even want to add that people are not to bring their dogs into the Dawson Park washrooms!"

Q25: Please share any comments you may have regarding the new signs.

Comments and Suggestions- 93 in total

Majority indicated the refreshed River Valley Wayfinding is a great initiative.

Lots of suggested were provided regarding the design and information included.

Some expressed concerns regarding vandalism and maintenance

□ Maps need to be consistent with north on top (5)

"It is a long standing convention in cartography to have north at the top of maps. It is highly confusing to people who have any trouble at all with direction to vary this guideline."

"Make sure there is consistency on the maps with North direction"

□ Concerned regarding vandalism and maintenance (2)

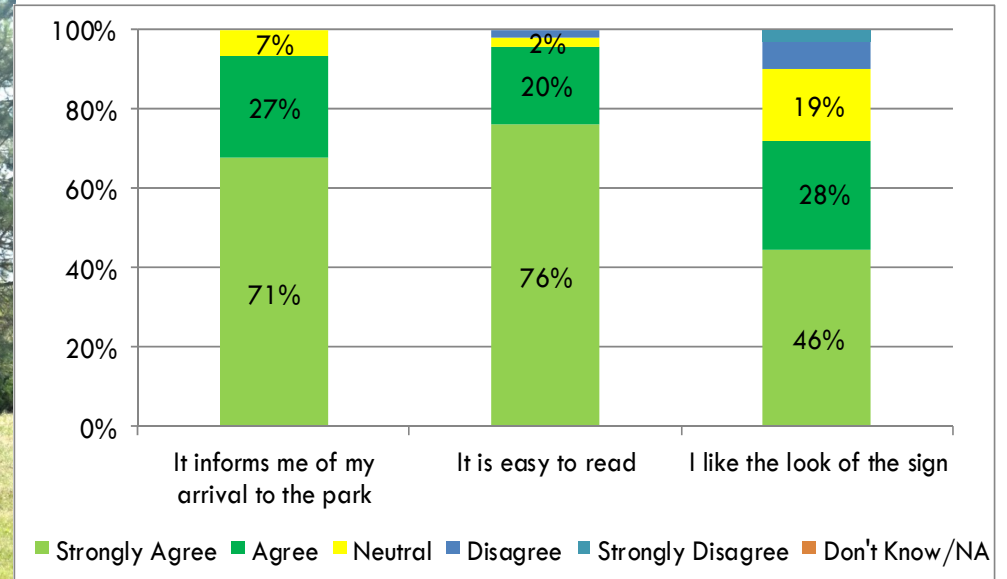
"..Are the signs durable/ unbreakable/ vandalism proof? How long will the words stay clear without fading?..."

"Will graffiti be easy to clean off ? (Hopefully yes) will they rust/weather? (Hopefully no) ..."

Q25: Please share any comments you may have regarding the new signs.

Feedback- Gold Bar Park Wayfinding Signs

Park Identification Sign



Q4: Thinking of the "Park Identification" sign shown above, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Comments and Suggestions- 93 in total



- Like it (20)
- Suggestion regarding information, i.e. more info re activities, arrow for direction, address too small, etc. (29)

"I would like an arrow pointing to the parking lot as it is far from the sign and you have to drive past the water treatment plant."

"... it would be nice to have information about the activities that happen in the park. For example, Gold bar is a huge x-country skiing park and many people don't know that."
- Prefers more natural look (23)

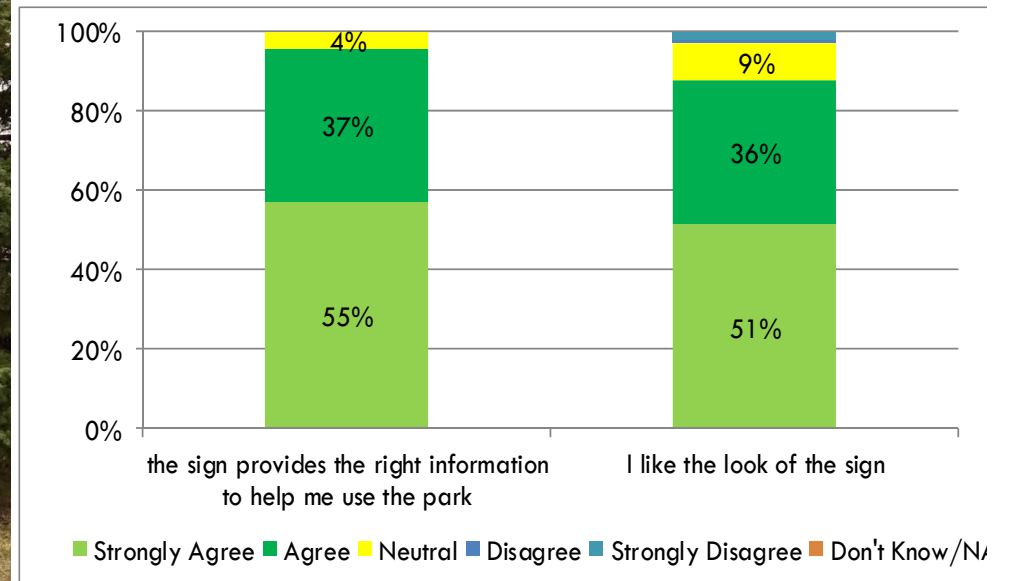
"I feel the sign could have a "greener" look it. It's something I'd expect to see entering a government building, not a nice green park."

"It's alright. I tend to like the look of the current signs with the wood feel. I like that they blend with the outdoor look"
- Suggestion regarding the material: reflective, readability in the dark, resistant to graffiti (8)

"... will the sign be easily read in the winter months when the sun goes down early?"

Q5: Please share any comments you may have about the "Park Identification" sign.

Park Information Sign



Q6: Thinking of the "Park Information" sign shown above, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Park Information Sign- Information/Text

Welcome to Gold Bar Park

In the late 1800s, prospectors panned for gold on the gravel bars that extended into the North Saskatchewan River in this area. The community built nearby was named Gold Bar and the park later took the neighbourhood's name. The park officially opened in July 1978, when it became part of the Capital City Recreation Park system.

Gold Bar Park is home to Edmonton's largest nordic ski trail system.

Dog Etiquette

Always have your dog on a leash except when using the off-leash trail.

Keep dogs 10 metres away from picnic sites, buildings and playgrounds.

Control and pick up after your dog.



Park & Trail Use

All picnic sites are available unless a reserved sign is posted.

Keep noise to a reasonable level.

Please pick up after yourself.

Park and trails are shared. Please be courteous.

If travelling in a group, please leave room for others to pass.

Stay right, pass left.

Bikers:
Downhill yields to uphill.
Faster users yield to slower users.



Winter Use

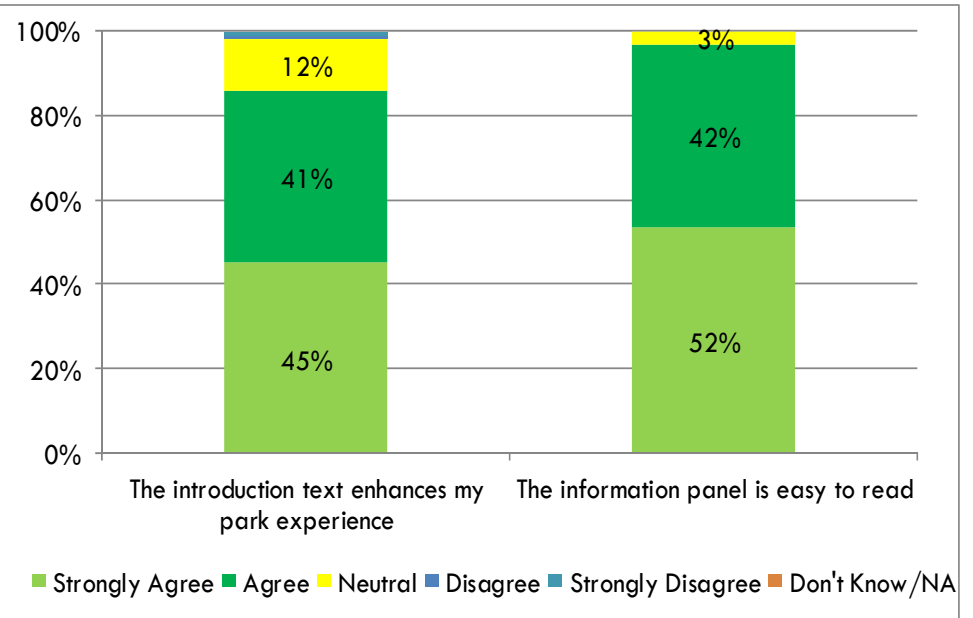
Skiers: Stay on left side of trail. Downhill has the right-of-way to uphill.

Other Users: Please stay off the ski tracks.

Ski trail maps are posted inside Gold Bar Pavilion.

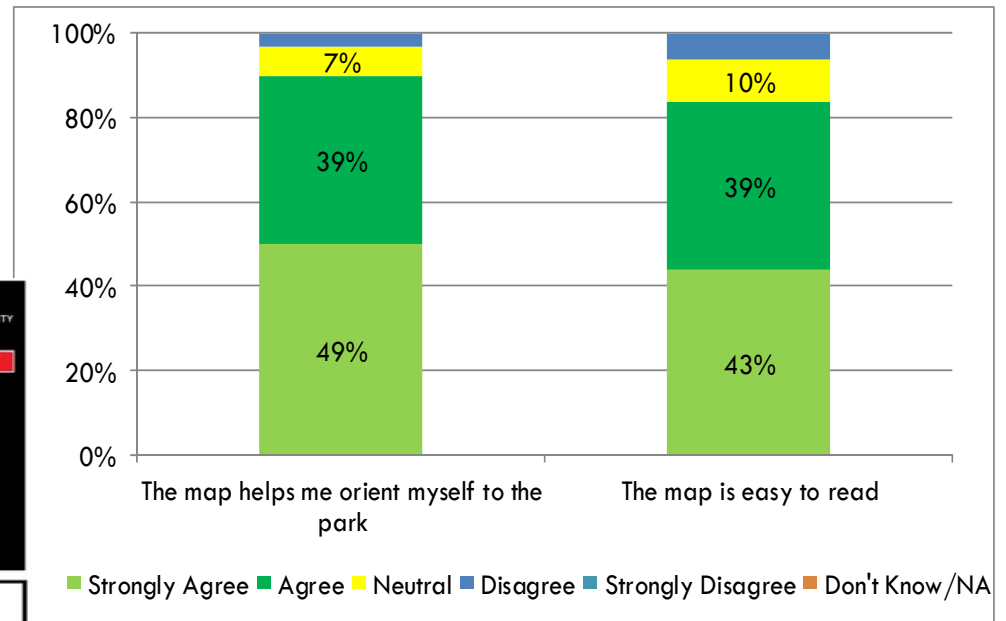
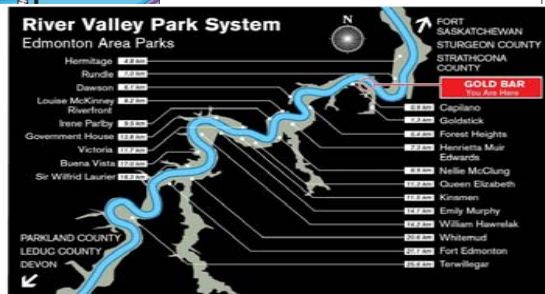


To book picnic sites or report concerns, call 311
For more information visit edmonton.ca



Q7: Thinking of the information shown above, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Park Information Sign- Map



Q8: Thinking of the map shown above, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Comments and Suggestions- 106 in total



Q9: Please share any comments you may have about the “Park Information” sign.

- Very helpful, i.e. the directions, distance, etc. (18)

“These orientation signs desperately need updating in all parks and I can’t wait for them to be in each river valley park. It is such a barrier when you don’t know where you are, or where the trail will lead.”

- Suggestions to include more information, i.e. rules, hours, trail names, QR code, public transit, etc. (44)

“...to include some way of direction to catch or use public transportation to get to and from the park area from various locations. it is rather large and many people visiting the park may not always have access to a vehicle. Isn’t this part of the mayor’s wish to make it easier for pedestrians and low-income individuals using park/s areas?”

“...1) Signage needs to be worded more strongly regarding dogs, such as “Dogs on the off-leash trail must be kept under control at all times”. (This is an ongoing problem throughout the trail system, so please take this opportunity to do something with this new signage.) 2) Cyclists - Use your bell when approaching other trail users.”

“I would love for the map to also indicate how long it would be to get to Rundle Park, GoldstickPark and Downtown Edmonton instead of just pointing in the general direction they are. It would also help if it was clear if I can walk to those points using the trail system or not. It would also be nice to know of any amenities near the park that might meet some needs not met in the park (specifically food and drink services)”

Comments and Suggestions- 106 in total



- Map orientation is confusing, prefers north on top (22)

"It is confusing that the first map, North is 'down' and on the second map, North is 'up'. Also, the direction of North is not immediately clear."

"Why is the top map oriented opposite to the correctly oriented second map? Please be consistent with where North is on the maps!"

"North should be at the top. I looked at this and was confused immediately since gold bar is 'below' the river to me...the map should have north at the top, the same as your paper trail maps are (you have 3, east, central & west)..."

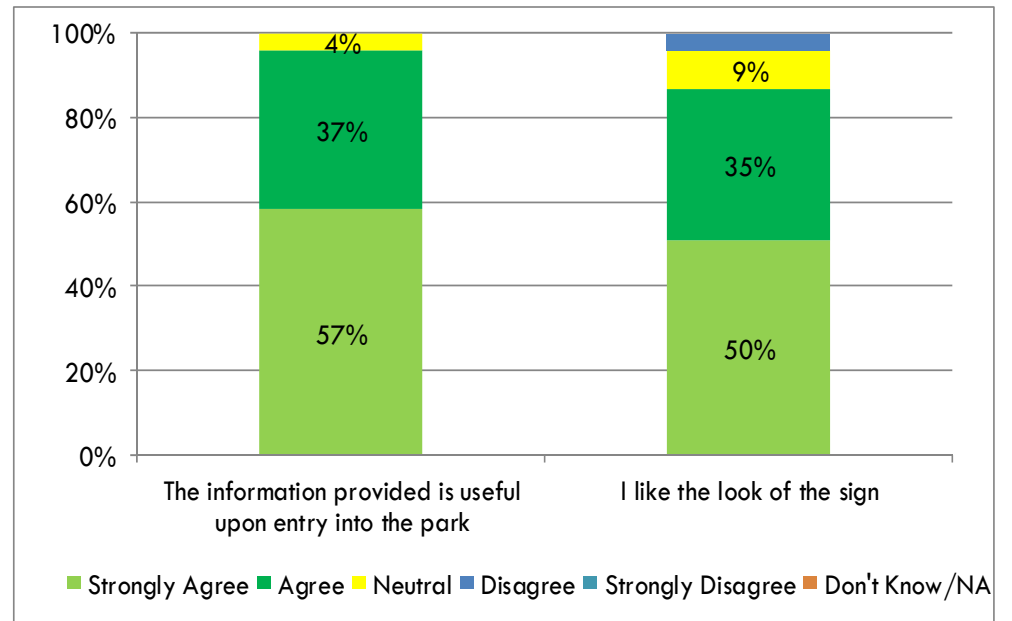
- Too busy, i.e. smaller map is hard to read, etc. (16)

"The "Park System" map with distances is far too small and difficult to read...It is key information in a patrons interaction with the trails and should be far more prominent."

"...the small "River Valley Park System Map" is too small to be of real use. The information it contains is excellent and interesting, but IMHO it either needs to be larger or omitted."

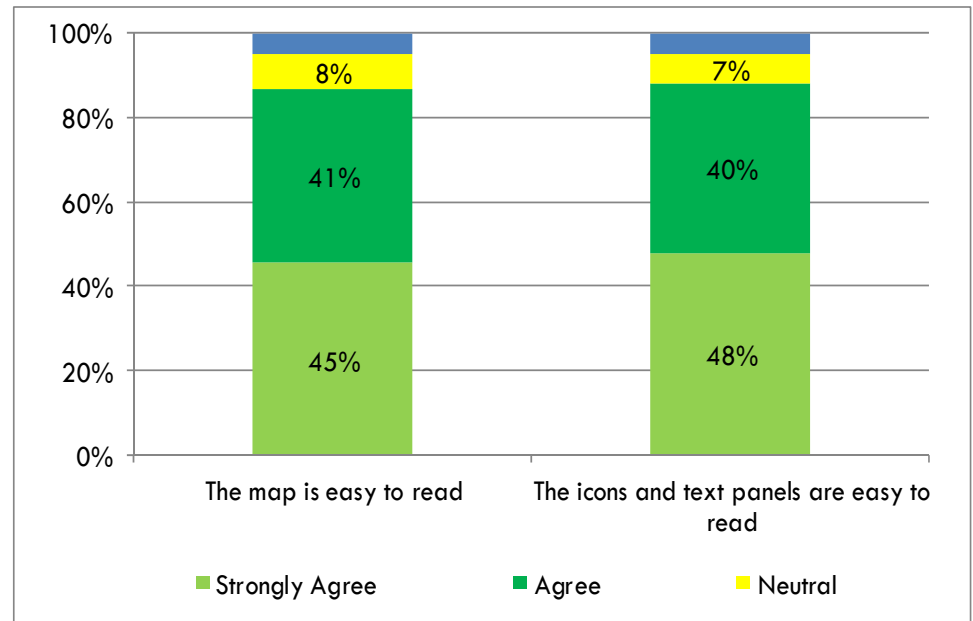
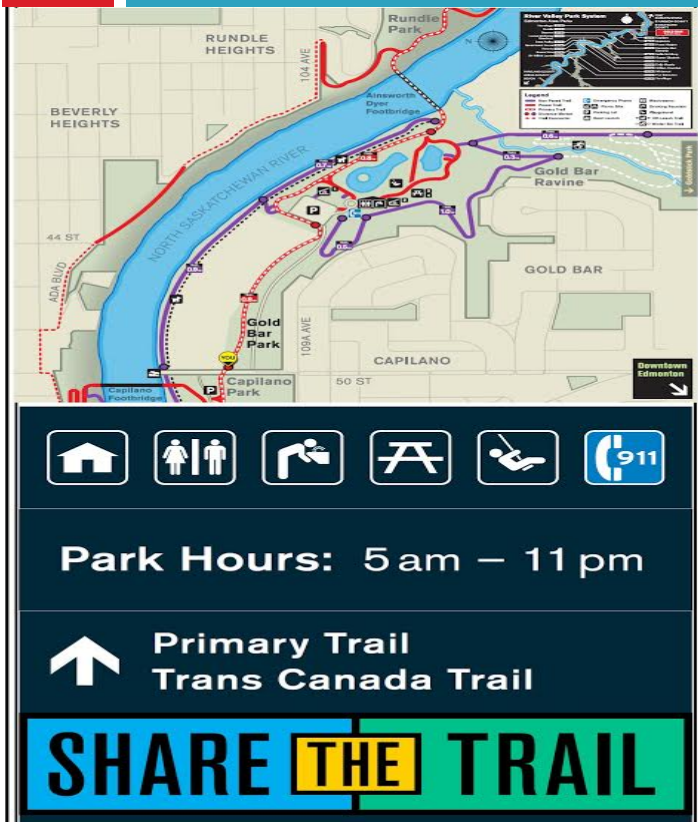
Q9: Please share any comments you may have about the "Park Information" sign.

Park Entry Sign



Q10: Thinking of the "Park Entry" sign shown above, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Park Entry Sign- Map



Q11: Thinking of the map shown above, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Comments and Suggestions- 70 in total



- Very helpful (10)
- Suggestions, i.e. more info for trail use (25)

"I think the "you are here" needs to be more obvious. Does this map show all the trails or just the main paved and gravel ones?"

"I'm curious as to the choice of red and purple as trail markers. Was this choice due to increasing readability?"

"Look at marking the 3 different entrance points as entrance #1, #2 and #3 for easy reference to the map locations"

"Was there consideration to show any slope/stair information on the trail maps so mobility reduced and elderly can plan accordingly? I don't think info needs to be super detailed, just an indication that some portions of the trail may be challenging."

"The " SHARE - THE - TRAIL " Logo is jarring and aggressive, and leads to questions with "like who?" and " what is happening on these trails that they need to 'yell' at me about it?"

Q12: Please share any comments you may have regarding the above "Park Entry" sign.

Comments and Suggestions- 70 in total



□ Map orientation confusing, prefers north on top (15)

“Now the map has north at the top which is opposite of the large map - why the switch? All the maps should be like this one, north to the top :) I like the look and the friendly tone”

“As with the previous map sign, I believe the map orientation may be confusing, though the “up is forward” orientation may make sense here. However, I don’t think it is reasonable for the main map and the inset park system map to be oriented differently.”

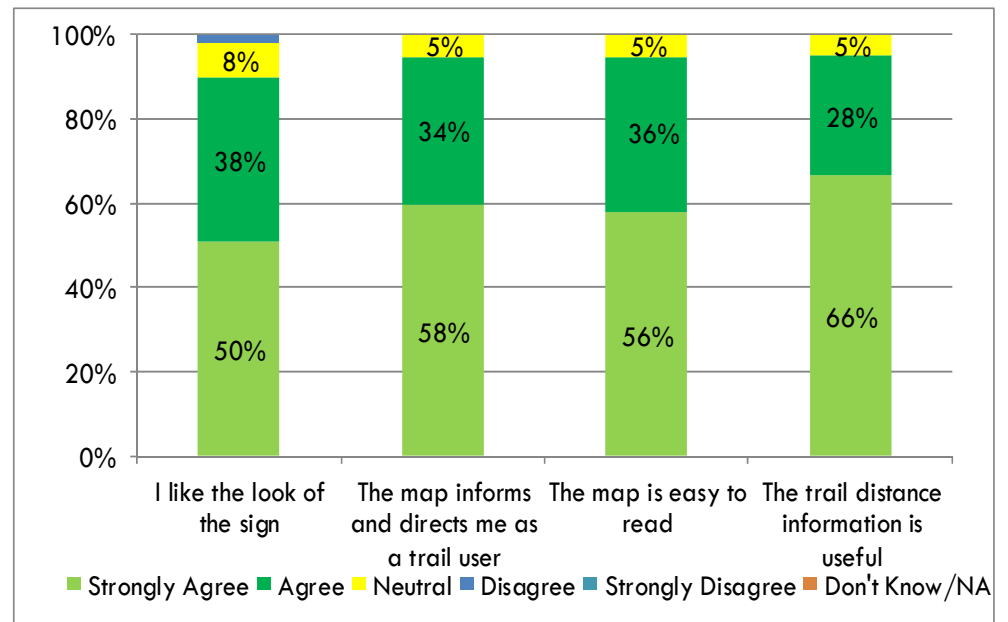
□ Too busy, i.e. smaller map is hard to read, etc. (17)

“The distance map is far too small. It is key information for trail users and should be larger...”

“The little inset map is almost impossible to read the distances to other parks in the river valley system because the fonts are so small, and the printer resolution isn’t that good. The same can be said of the legend, it’s hard to read because the text is so small.”

Q12: Please share any comments you may have regarding the above "Park Entry" sign.

Trail Head Sign



Q13: Thinking of the "Trail Head" sign shown above, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q14: Thinking of the map shown above, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Comments and Suggestions- 63 in total



- Suggestions for more trail information, i.e. surface, slope direction and difficulty rating, length, estimated walk times, names/numbers, etc. (31)

"I really like the trail distance markings. What qualifies as "difficult slope"? I really like that that's included but it's not clear whether the entire trail is difficult or if there is a small portion of the trail that could present some challenges."

"I love how the map shows the distance but I don't know which way the "difficult slope" is. Is it both ways? the shorter way? No clue.... Also, does this portion of the trail have a name?"

"The difficult slope icon - does it apply to both directions? ..."

"The 0.5km Trail distance sign is not clear - does this mean it is 0.5km across the river? Also, where does the 1.0km lead to?"

"...It would be helpful for the map to indicate the location and orientation of the difficult slope, especially as it is not clear whether the slope in question is in the portion of trail to the right or left of the sign."

"Trails should be named or numbered so that you can identify trails easily and communicate what trails you have been on."

Q15: Please share any comments you may have regarding the above "Trail Head" sign.

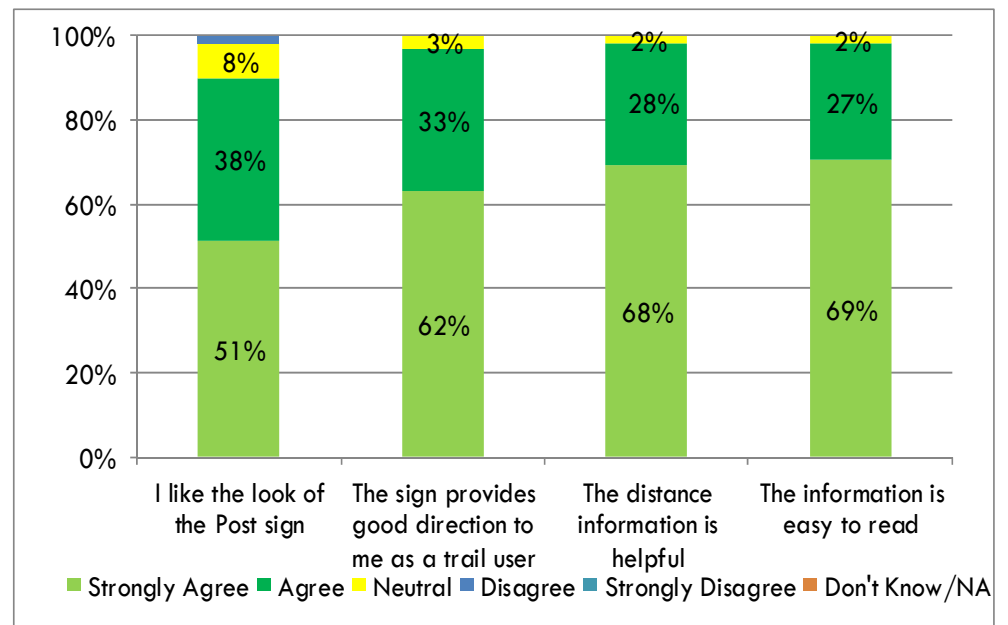
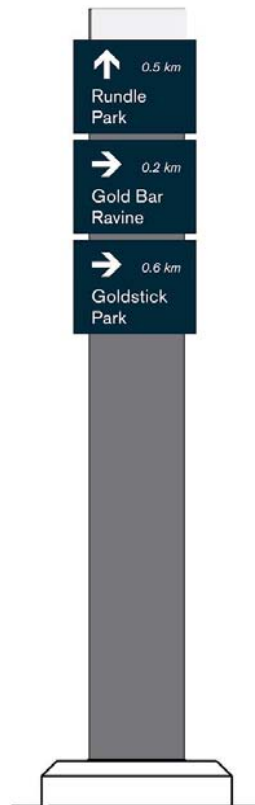
Comments and Suggestions- 63 in total



- Map orientation confusing, prefers north on top (6)
"North needs to be pointing up. Rotating it around various directions is confusing."
- Very helpful, i.e. trail distance info (17)
"I like the indication of on/off leash area and the slope level for users."
"I really appreciate the trail information (distance)."
"This is a good amount of detail for the size of the map. Simple and easy to read."

Q15: Please share any comments you may have regarding the above "Trail Head" sign.

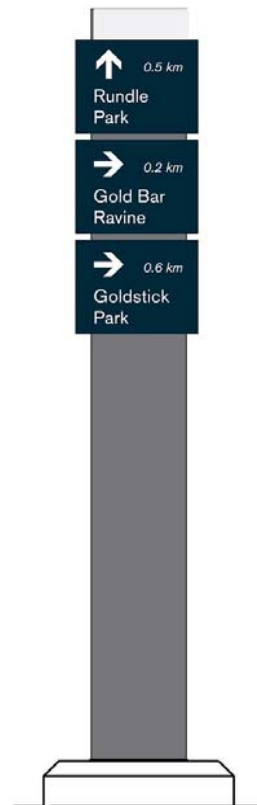
Trail Directional Sign- Post



Q16: Thinking of the Post signs shown above, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q17: Thinking of the information shown, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Comments and Suggestions- 47 in total



□ Like it, i.e. design, the distance shown, and would like to see more in the park (11)

□ Add a small map, a compass, or directions (11)

"Nice minimalist design. Perhaps consider adding general compass directions"

"It would be helpful to include a small map on at least one of the panels on these signs."

□ Suggestion for more information, i.e. amenities, washrooms, drinking water, and distance to those (9)

"It would also help to have amenities like bathrooms, water fountains and shelters listed."

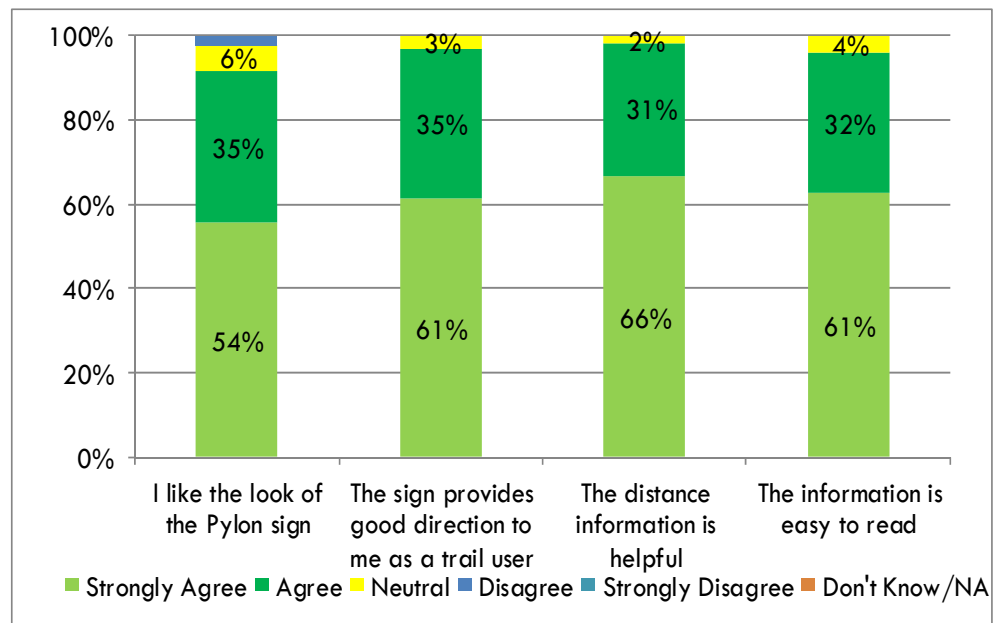
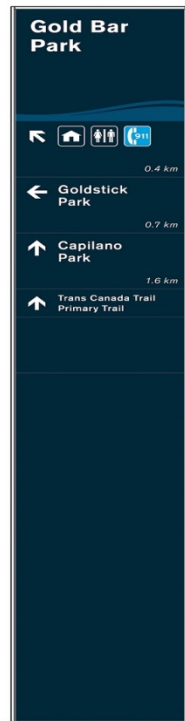
"...Should also provide distances to next washrooms, and to river crossings."

□ Font is too small (4)

"The font on this sign was too small to read while running or biking. I was annoyed by how difficult the signs were to read as I ran by."

Q18: Please share any comments you may have regarding the above "Post" sign

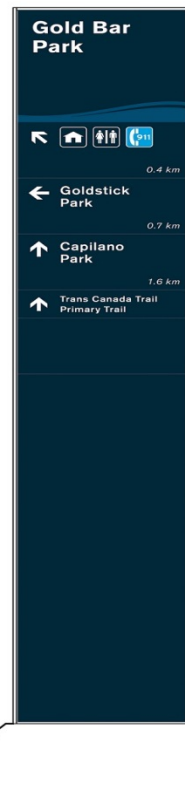
Trail Directional Sign- Pylon



Q19: Thinking of the Pylon sign shown above, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q20: Thinking of the information shown, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Comments and Suggestions- 56 in total



- Like it, i.e. washroom info, and would like to see more in the park (12)
- Suggestions for more information, i.e. TCT logo, surface, distance to amenities (12)

"We are requesting that the TCT logo be incorporated with the words 'Trans Canada Trail' (again - cyclists are not taking the time to read signs, they are looking for quick way finding. direction (ie the logo)..."

- Add a small map, a compass, or directions added (8)

"Requires knowledge of where the other parks are relative to where I am. If I want to go downtown I wouldn't know which trail to follow."

"Maps are very useful at important intersections. I believe "Pylon" trail direction sign is large enough accommodate a small map of the immediate area."

- Font is too small (8)
- Pylon be placed further away from the trail (3)

"Pylons should be farther off the trail, so they don't interfere with bikers/skiers."

Q21: Please share any comments you may have regarding the above "Pylon" sign.



Respondents Demographics

Age

	Survey Respondents		2014 COE Census	
	#	%	#	%
Under 24	31	9%	219,176	25%
25 - 34	100	32%	124,111	14%
35 - 44	83	26%	102,495	12%
45 - 54	56	18%	99,664	11%
55 - 64	23	7%	86,521	10%
65 and older	18	5%	89,860	10%
No Response	2	2%	156,099	18%
Total	323	100%	877,926	100%

25-54 over represented, under 24 and 55+ under represented.



Finding from the Insight Community

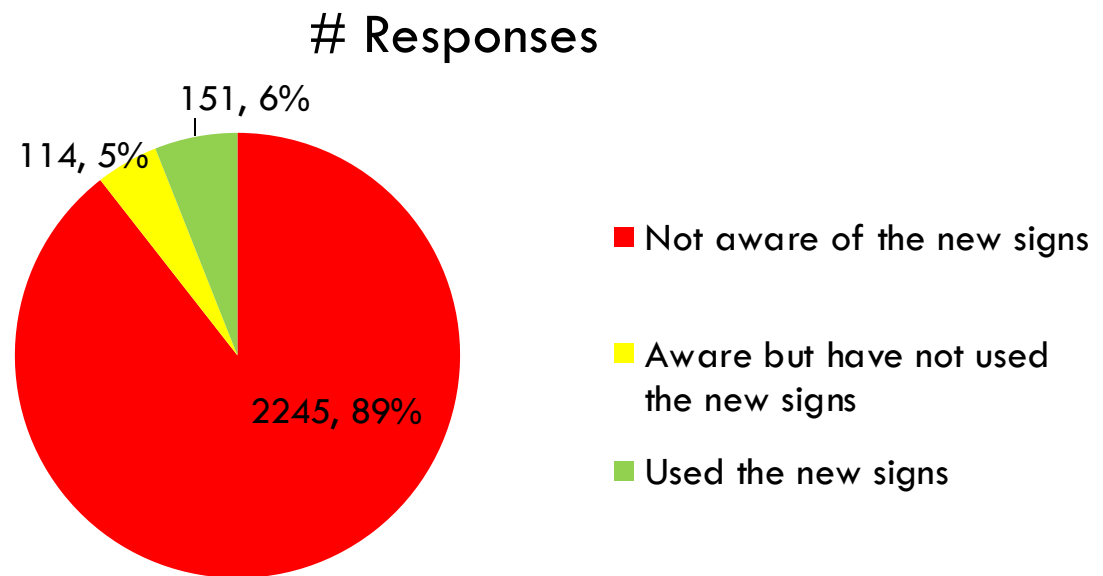
Introduction – Methodology



- A few pictures of the new signs were shown to the City's Insight Community Members in the July Mixed Topic Survey.
- 4 questions were asked
 - Awareness- Were you aware of the new signs in Gold Bar Park before taking this survey?
 - Usage of new signs- Did you use the new signs in Gold Bar Park
 - Attitude toward the new signs- Now that you have seen the new signs that have been installed in Gold Bar Park, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement
 - Additional comments- Please share any comments you may have regarding the new signs, if any.
- 2533 members responded to the questions.

Awareness and use of the new signs

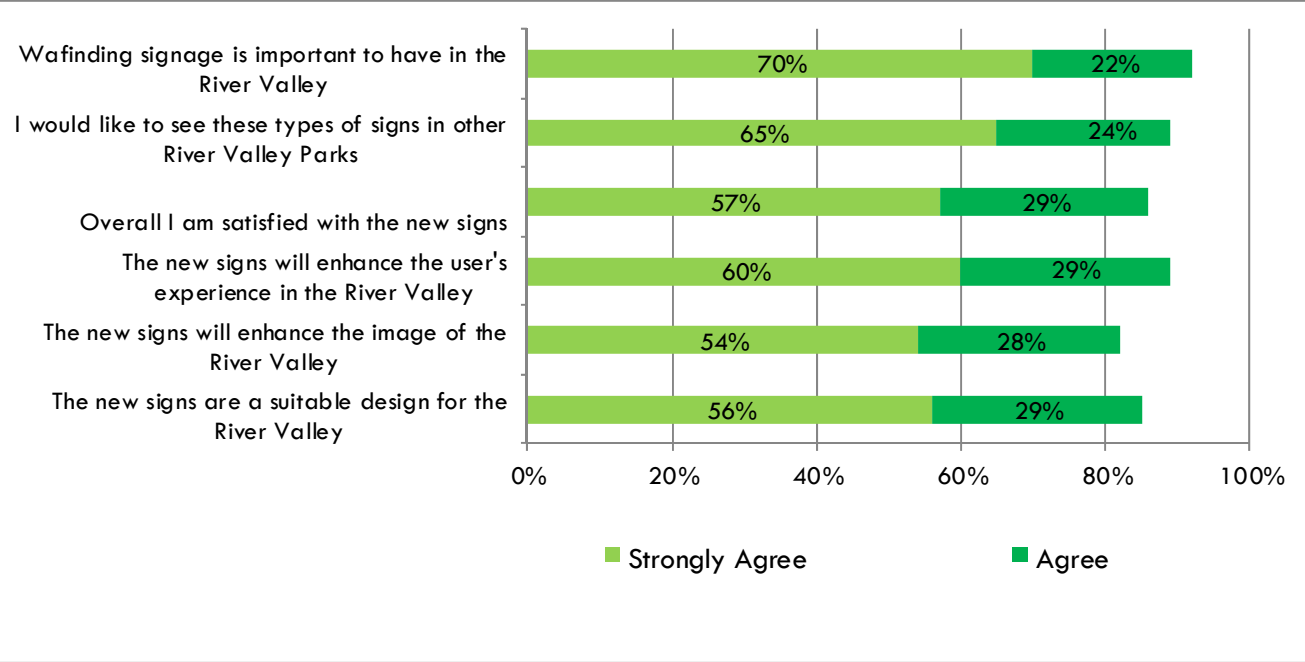
6% used the new signs and 5% more were aware of the new signs.



Q1. Were you aware of the new signs in the park before taking this survey?
Q. Did you use the new signs in the park?

General Feedback

Very positive feedback from the respondents with all evaluation indicators above 80%



Q3: Now that you have seen the new signs that have been installed in Gold Bar park, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? ?

Comments and Suggestions- 1082 in total

591 positive feedback.

- A great initiative, signs helpful, or would like to see similar signs installed throughout all the parks (591)

“they remind me of the signs in the National parks. I would like to see more of those because it would make me feel safe to know where I am on the trails in the valley”

“they look very modern, which brings a newer image to the more aging and dated looking wayfinding signage that currently exists in many of the core river valley parks”

“These signs are very impressive. I do think that they will prove to be quite purposeful to anyone who uses the park systems. They are easy to read / interpret as well as visually pleasing. Nicely done!”

Q4: Please share any comments you may have regarding the new signs.

Comments and Suggestions- 1082 in total

271 suggestions on design.

- Suggestions regarding the design, i.e. more natural, lighting, rustic material... larger fonts for fast moving bikers/skiers (271)

"I appreciate the apparent usefulness of them, but they seem very aesthetically abrasive. The blockish design and crude font choice makes it feel like a Windows 2000 wallpaper and removes from the natural feel of the park. Signs like the new one in Michael Phair Park do a better job of contributing to the feel of the area, I think, because of its natural wood aesthetic-- instead of sticking out like a sore thumb in a natural space."

"Be consistent in all of the River valley trails. Maybe some lighting using new Solar Technology. So in the low light times a person could still see the sign."

"...1. It does not look like there is any lighting on these signs. This would be a valuable addition. How about solar? 2. The signs are blue in colour, which can be very difficult to see against a backdrop of greenery, especially in less than optimal lighting conditions (i.e. in the rain and/or at dawn or dusk). Consider changing the colour to something the eye does not read as blending in to natural colours."

Q4: Please share any comments you may have regarding the new signs.

Comments and Suggestions- 1082 in total

184 suggestions on information.

- Suggestions regarding information included, i.e. public transit, GPS/QR code, walk time, user rules, history and culture, etc. (184)

"There should be a QR code or something that can link the user via smart phone to the web. Secondly is there any linkage between some of these key wayfinding signs and emergency phones? This would be a good location to offer that service as well. The signs are easy to spot from a distance so if you are in trouble it is easier to find than just a phone stand."

"having trail distances is very smart. i also recommend having some kind of interactive way to know if trails are closed BEFORE you get on them (e.g. scan a QR code with a smart phone or something)."

"...Especially as to whether dogs are allowed and if so whether off leash or not. I don't explore as much as would like as I am not sure where the trails lead and fear getting lost so these signs will help a lot. I would love to see an app that would be able to show us the trails and use GPS to show where we are on those trails and where the nearest toilets, refreshments, parking etc are"

"Trail signs are a great idea. I would like to see GPS markers or another type of flagging. I say this because more than once I have tried to assist EMS in locating an injured cyclist who reported their own accident but could not specify the exact location. If we had an accurate way to identify a locations response times will be significantly shorter. Thank you"

Q4: Please share any comments you may have regarding the new signs.

Comments and Suggestions- 1082 in total

Concerns regarding vandalism, cost, and priority.

❑ Concerned with possible vandalism/graffiti and maintenance. (117)

"Are the signs easily refreshed after they get sun damaged? Can this be done with a low cost? Are they damage resistant (i.e. vandalism)?"

"Concerned about vandalism & maintenance if more signs are erected than can be maintained well. The City's "image" is more negatively impacted if these signs fall into disrepair than if they'd not been put up to begin with."

❑ Concerns/questions regarding the cost (66)

"They are clear and attractive but you didn't mention if they are cost effective, which should be a consideration when asking taxpayers if the signs are a good idea. I answered based on an assumption that the City did their due diligence and found cost effective signage when they considered the options. We have limited funds as taxpayers and the City should always consider cost when selecting things like signage. The most durable option considering the costs."

❑ Not a priority, or just a waste of tax payer dollar (60)

"There are more important issues in the city than signs in the river valley. The only reason people think they need signs is that the younger set, ie 45 and under, were never taught anything about figuring out your bearings in the woods and living with nature and using good common sense."

"They may be nice features but there are far better ways to spend money on increasing the value of the river value parks. Not destroying them with construction projects is an example."

Q4: Please share any comments you may have regarding the new signs.

The End