

# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

## Executive Summary

From December 9 – January 31 the Okotoks community was invited to provide input on the Okotoks wayfinding project through an online survey. Creating an effective wayfinding system has been identified as a priority for several years. It is an important tool for inspiring and guiding people to discover areas of Okotoks away from the main routes and increase customer traffic. This has been identified as a key strategy to help local businesses recover as quickly as possible after the pandemic.

The survey included three concepts for participants to consider, including three potential gateway illustrations for the downtown. The concepts were intended to illustrate the types of forms, structures, materials and colours that could be incorporated into a finished design.

A total of 482 people participated in this phase of the wayfinding public participation. The results suggested that the purpose of the wayfinding program was not clearly expressed, and some respondents questioned whether this was the appropriate time to develop one for Okotoks.

## Key Results:

Through the comments and responses to the survey questions, the following key results were identified:

- ♦ Overall the comments suggested that none of the currently proposed concepts is perceived to be fully representative of Okotoks' character.
- ♦ For the wayfinding concepts, Concept B was the design that the majority of respondents thought would improve the feeling of the town, and Concept C received the highest number of positive comments.
- ♦ The materials and design for Concept C received the most positive feedback and could inform future design exploration.
- ♦ Many comments referenced a desire to have a design that reflects the "Old Town Okotoks" style, which is less modern, with a small town, rural aesthetic. This suggests taking a design approach that's more reflective of the history and architecture of the heritage downtown area. Further exploration of how the character of Okotoks overall is perceived by the community, for relevance and longevity of the wayfinding system, would be beneficial.
- ♦ Some of the comments also suggested that a more refined colour palette, which better reflects the heritage nature of the town, would better represent the community's character. This could include a more neutral or heritage colour palette with pops of bright

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colour to add appeal.

## Concept A

- ◆ Responses indicated that this concept had the least support for representing Okotoks. Respondents were split on their opinions about whether these concepts were clear and noticeable, distracting or could be missed. The colour palette was also not popular in this concept.
- ◆ Sign legibility was also divided, although most people indicated a degree of consistency with this concept.
- ◆ The sign's structure received the highest approval with the lettering style being well received.
- ◆ Consistency and lettering style were the most positive items for this concept. The results indicated that respondents were divided on the structure.
- ◆ Gateway signs stand out well during the day, but would require better illumination at night. The lettering style was well received, while the structure of this design was not well received.

## Concept B

- ◆ Most responses indicated that this concept would improve the feeling of the town, and although a majority also felt this concept was distracting, the response suggests the design would capture the attention of passersby. Sign legibility was divided, with many indicating that the design consistency across sign types included in the concept was disjointed.
- ◆ The lettering style, structure of design and colours were well received, while the structure of the gateway design was not popular.
- ◆ Gateway signs were perceived to stand out well during the day, and illumination was largely perceived to be obvious. Colours and lettering style were the most positive items for this concept. The structure and disjointed/distracting nature of the gateway signs were items that could be improved upon.

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## Concept C

- ♦ The majority of responses on the survey indicated this concept wasn't suitable for Okotoks, although the majority of comments were positive.
- ♦ Sign legibility and consistency were almost evenly split, with a slight majority indicating that it was noticeable or very clear.
- ♦ The majority liked the materials while the colours were least popular.
- ♦ Feedback on the gateway signs indicated that this concept had some elements that were working well.
- ♦ Gateway signs are perceived to stand out well during the day, and the illumination at night seems appropriate.
- ♦ Materials were the most positive item for this concept, while the approach to colour was negative.

## Conclusions

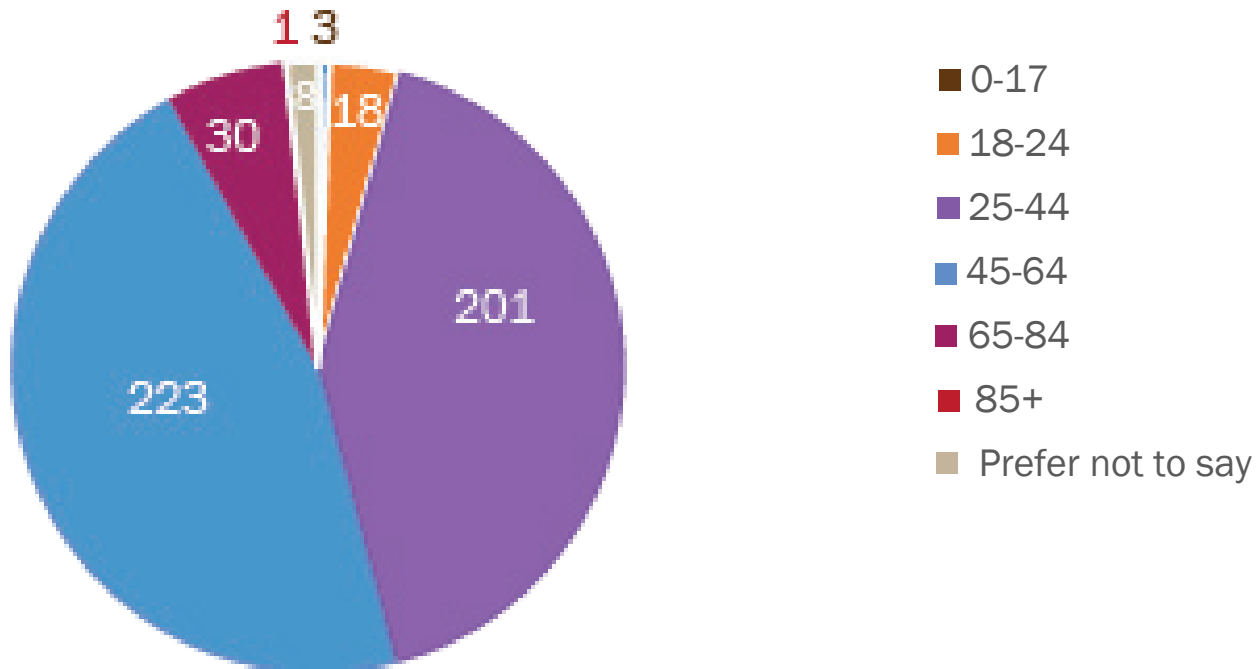
It is important that wayfinding systems are reflective of the character of the community, therefore the designs should represent the values that the residents and businesses feel best represent Okotoks now and well into the future. Using the values-based responses from previous public participation activities (e.g. Downtown Urban Design Master Plan; Okotoks Community Vision; Household Survey; Okotoks Culture, Heritage & Arts Master Plan, etc.) combined with the responses to wayfinding questions in the Downtown Vitalization Plan survey and the results from this survey, has helped to begin to identify elements to incorporate into the wayfinding designs.

## Key findings include:

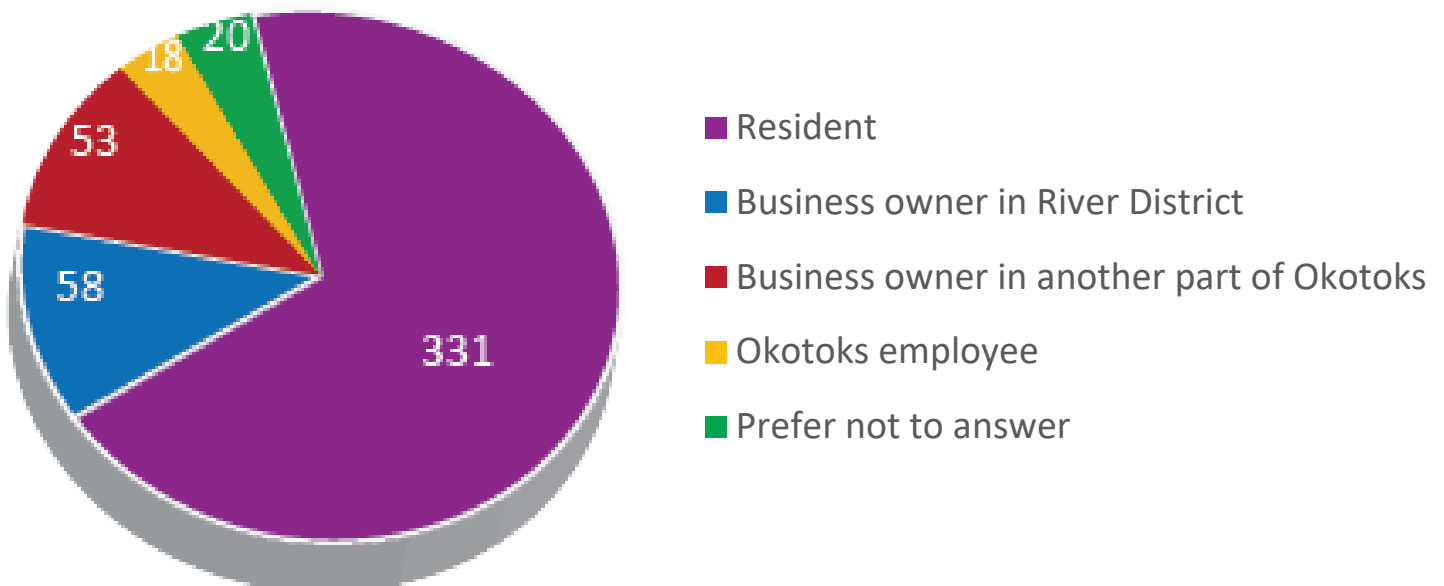
- ♦ Materials: A mix of natural elements such as stone, rock and wood is largely preferred (Concept C)
- ♦ Colour palette: Some would prefer to see incorporation of more heritage colours (greens, browns, neutral)
- ♦ Structure: A large number of comments suggest a desire to incorporate more heritage elements into the design that celebrate the small town atmosphere and river valley landscape (Concept C)
- ♦ Lettering style – Clean, modern, easy to read (Concept A)

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## Demographics- What age are you?

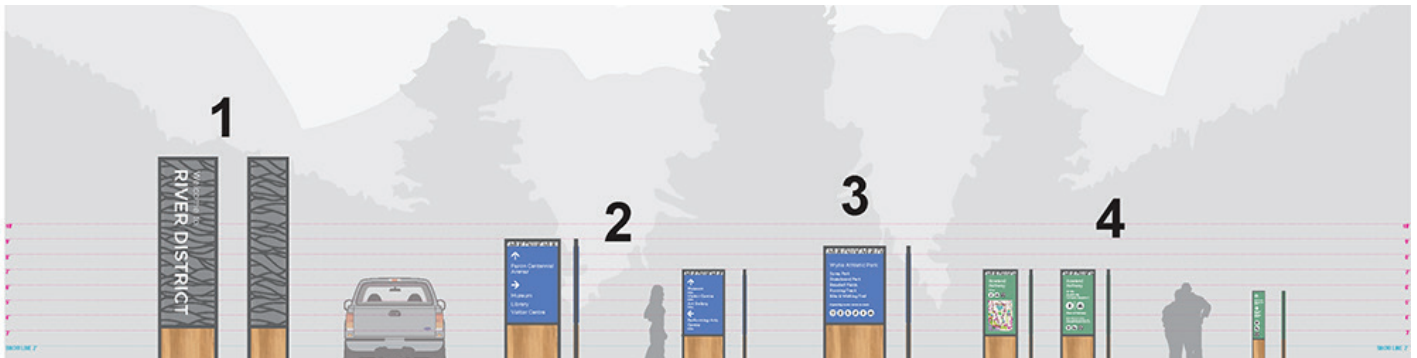


## What Best describes your Role?



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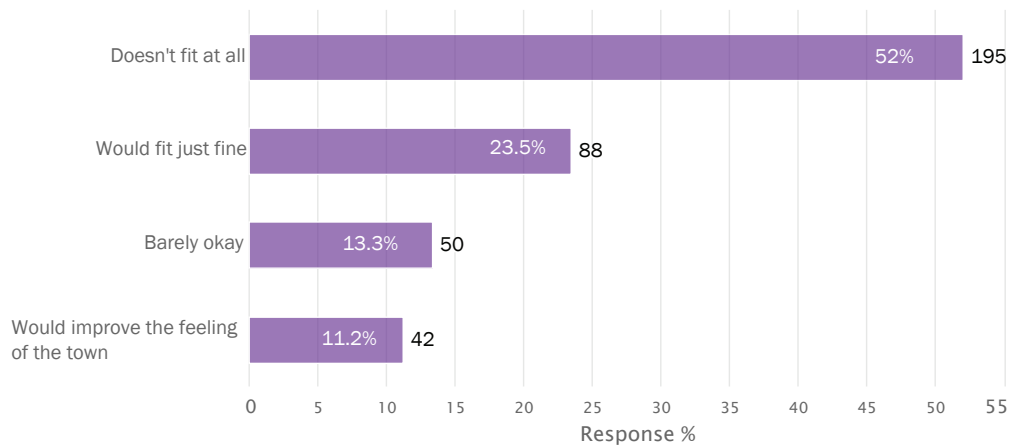
## Concept A



### Signage Elements

Does the signage fit your idea of what would look suitable in Okotoks?

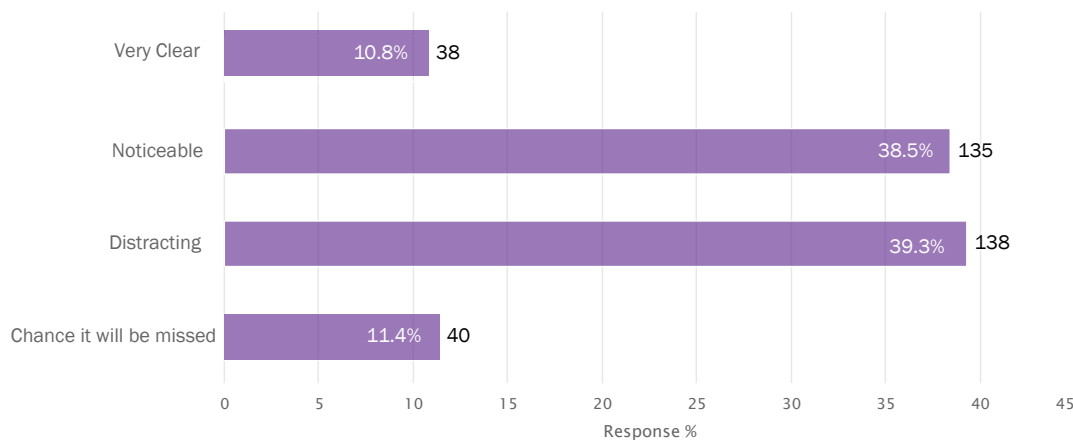
375 Answered



### Sign visibility

How well do you think the sign will show up on the street or pathway?

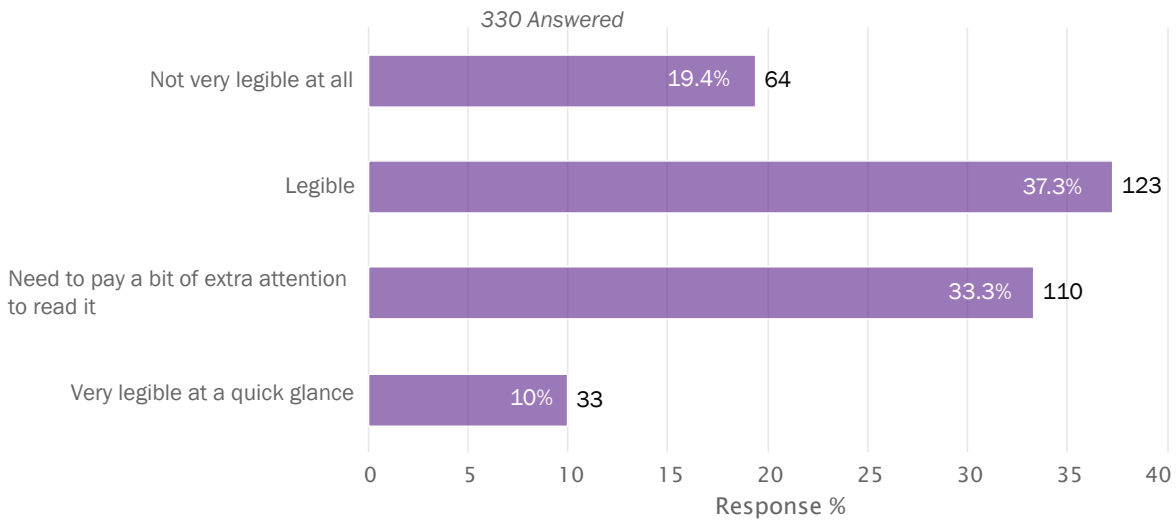
351 Answered



# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

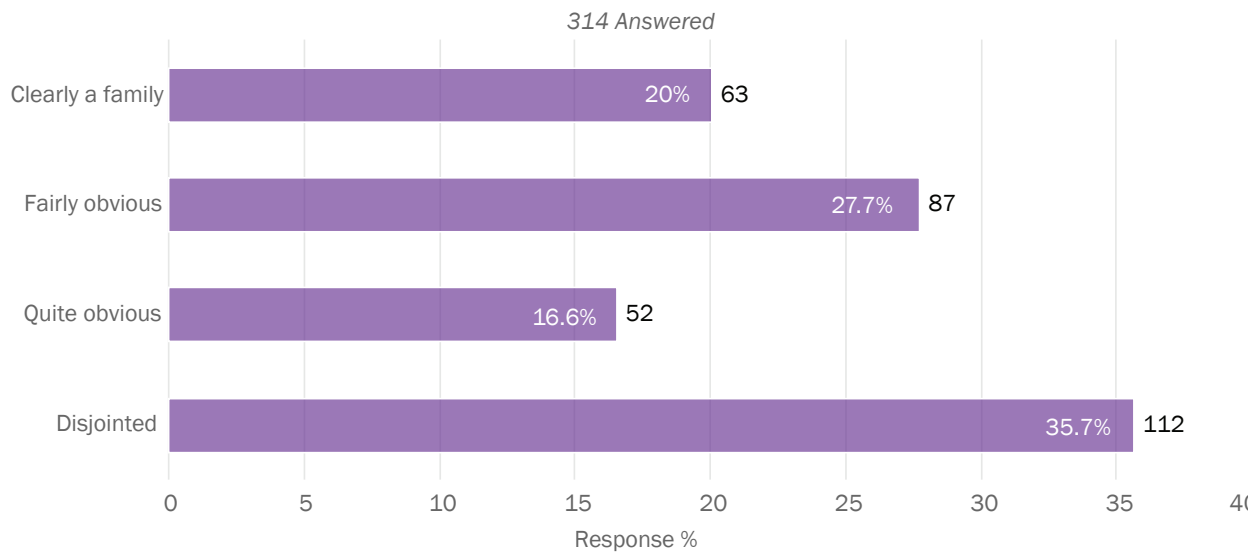
## Sign Legibility

How legible do you think the information on the sign will be?



## Sign consistency

How would you rate the consistency of the theme from one type of sign to another inside the family?

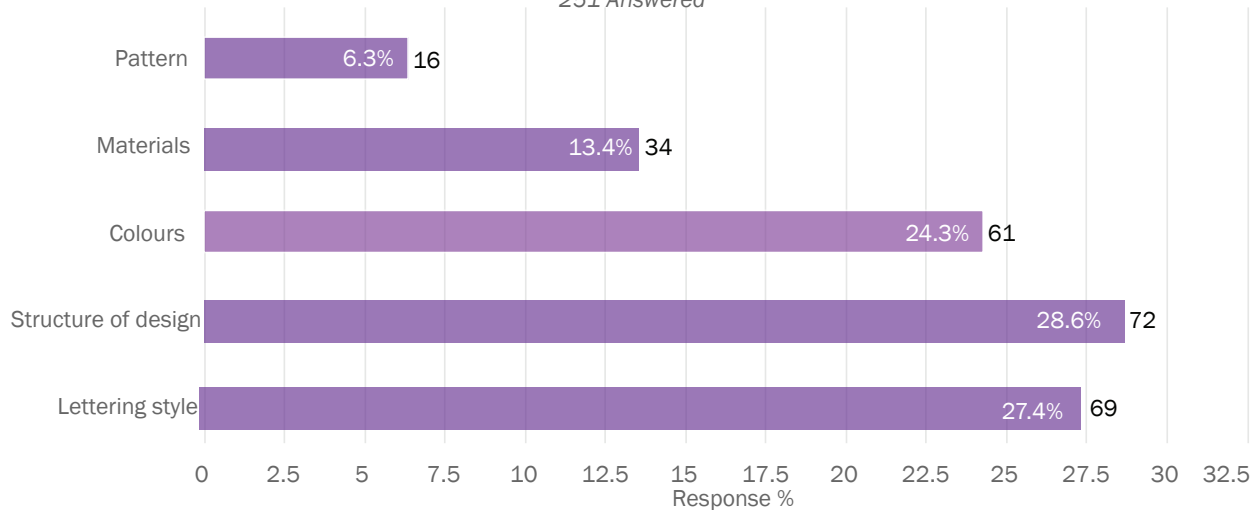


# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

## Preferred sign elements

If you had to pick one element of this sign family that you enjoyed the MOST, what would it be?

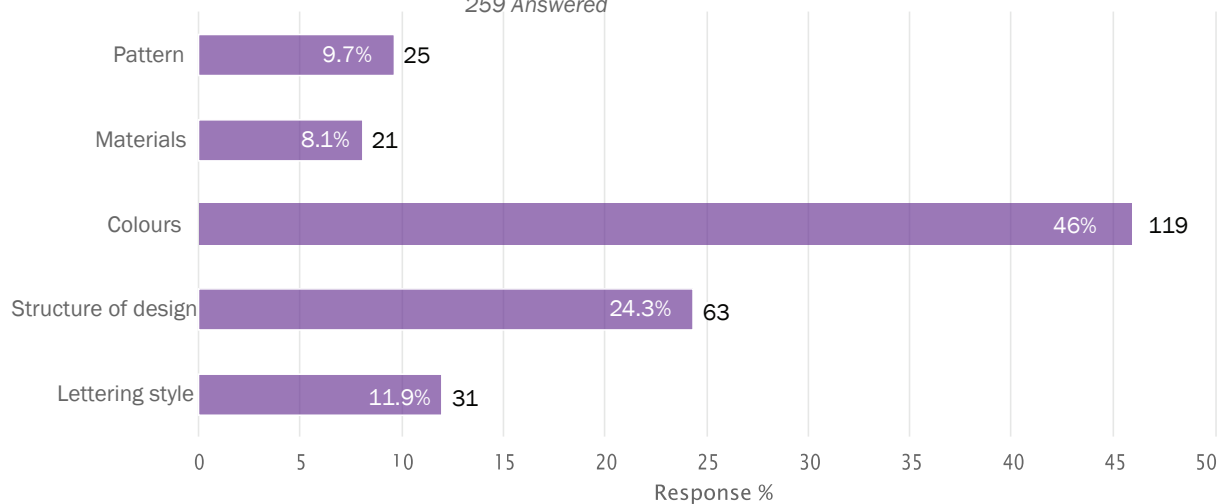
251 Answered



## Least liked elements of the sign family

If you had to pick one element of this sign family that you enjoyed the LEAST, what would it be?

259 Answered

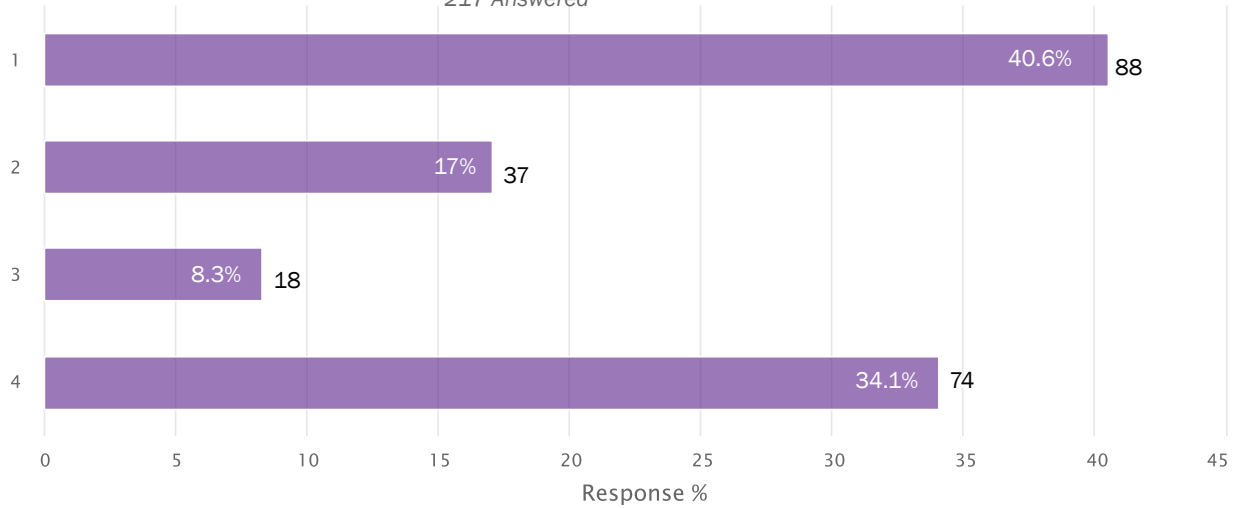


# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

## Preferred Sign

Is there one member of the sign family that you enjoy the MOST?

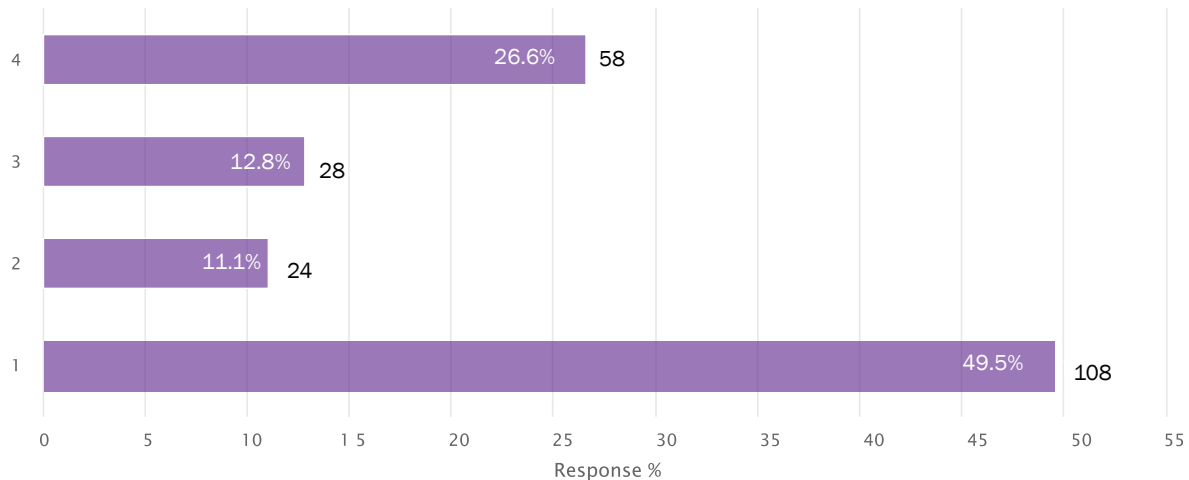
217 Answered



## Least Preferred Sign Family

Is there one member of the sign family thta you enjoy the LEAST?

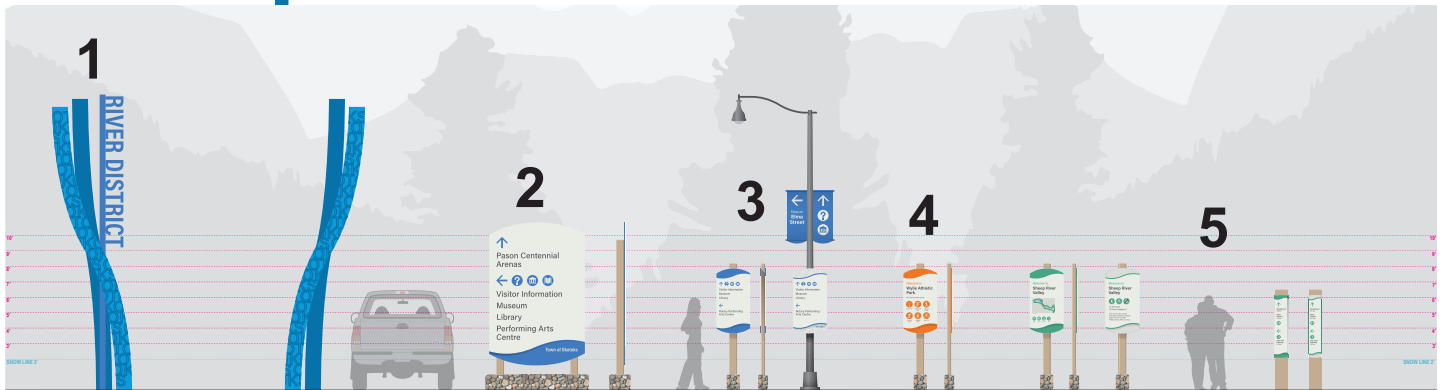
218 Answered





# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

## Concept B



1 Sign Family  
Scale 1/70

Gateway Sign

Vehicle Directional

Pedestrian Directional

Park Signage

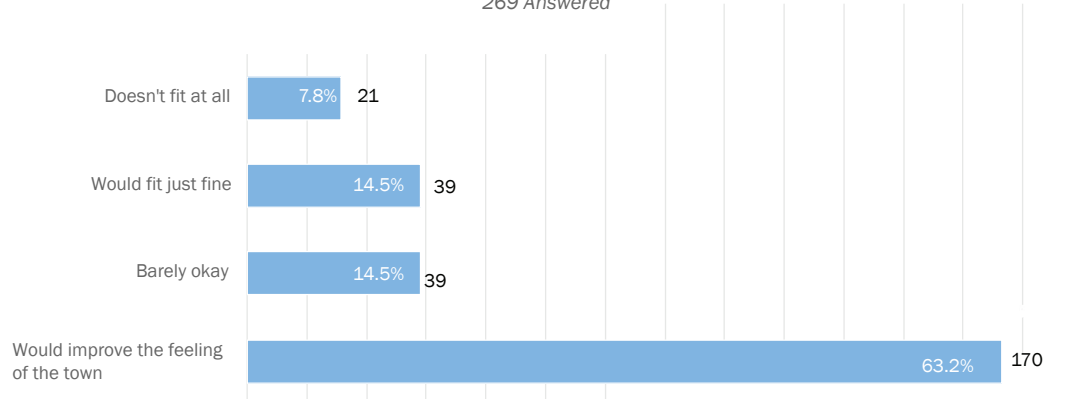
Trail Head

Trail Marker

### Signage Elements

Does the signage fit your idea of what would look suitable in Okotoks?

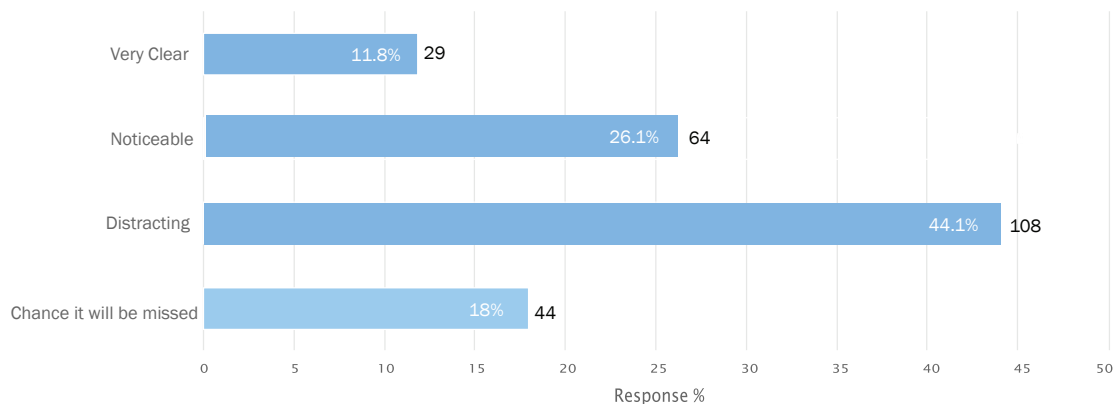
269 Answered



### Sign visibility

How well do you think the sign will show up on the street or pathway?

245 Answered

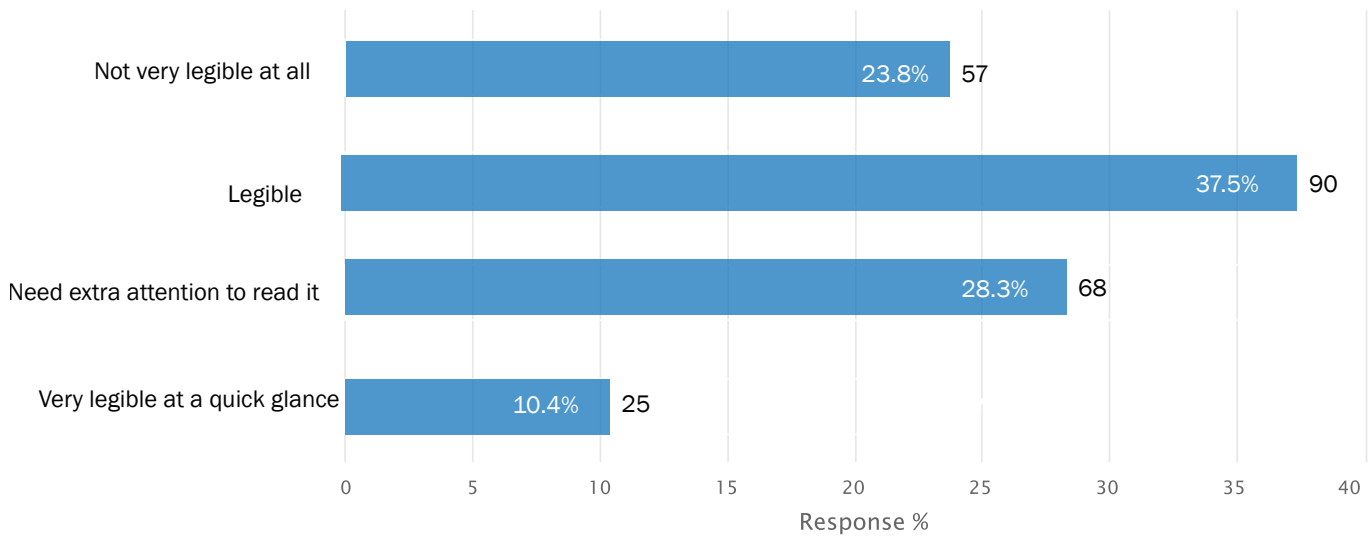


# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

## Sign Legibility

How legible do you think the information on the sign will be?

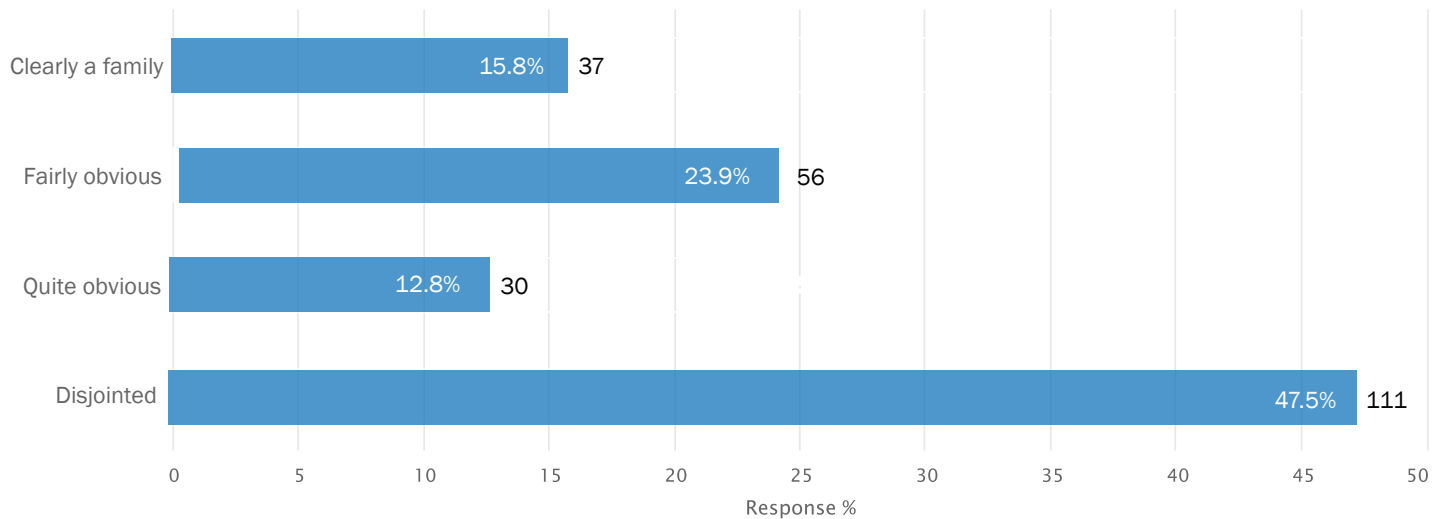
240 Answered



## Sign consistency

How would you rate the consistency of the theme from one type of sign to another inside the family?

234 Answered

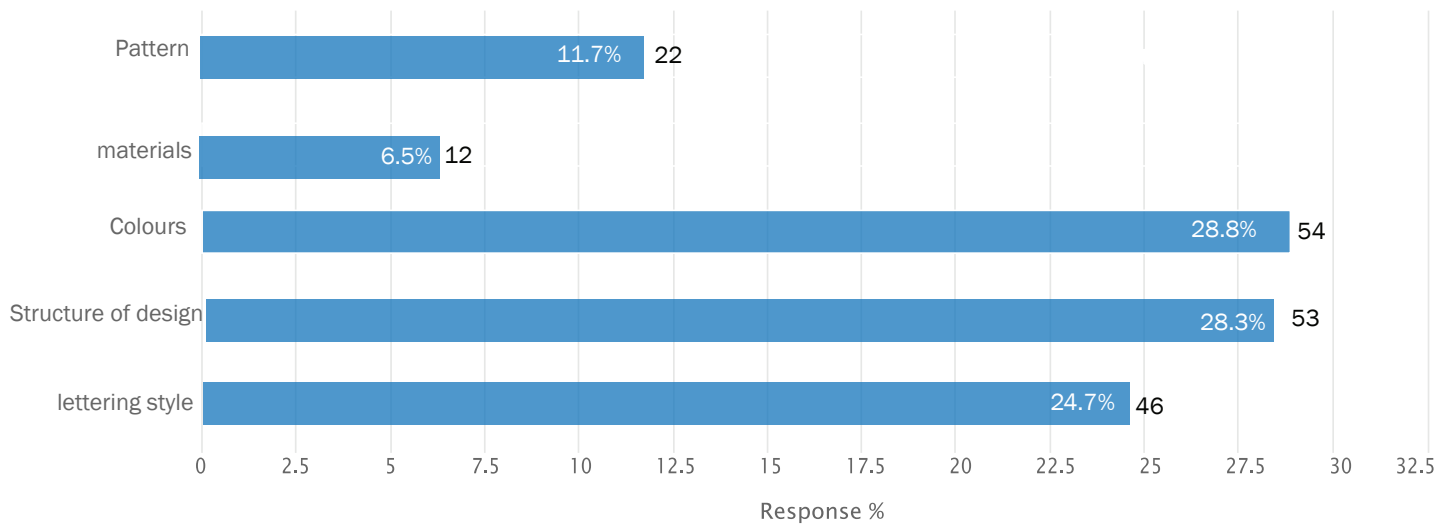


# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

## Preferred sign elements

If you had to pick one element of this sign family that you enjoyed the MOST, what would it be?

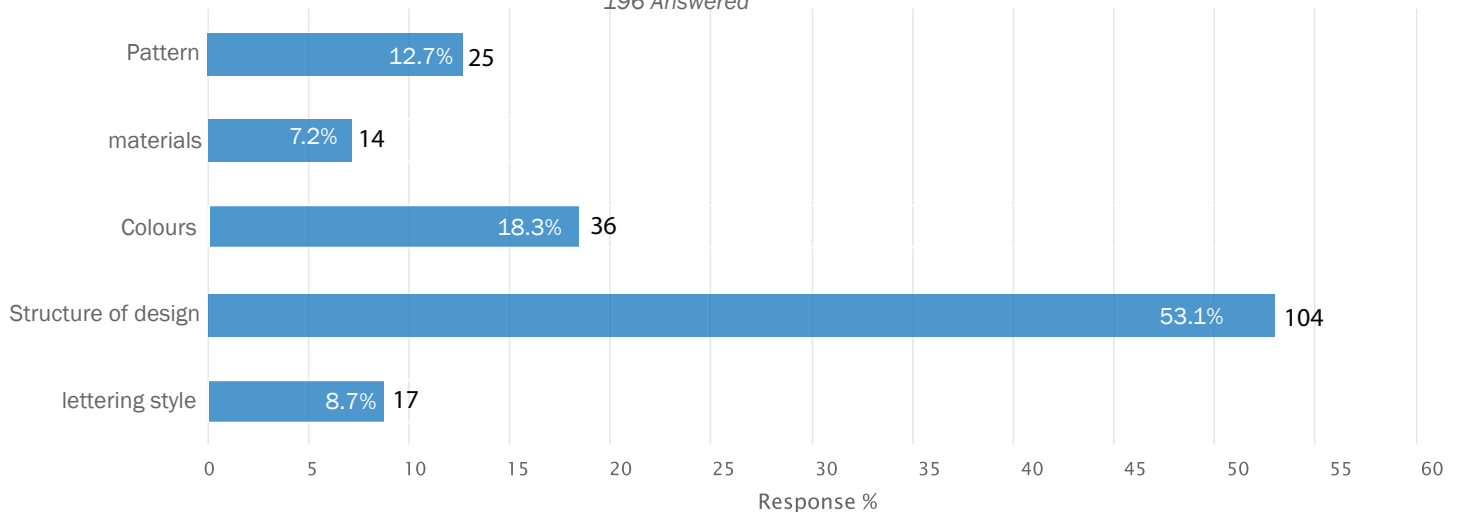
187 Answered



## Least liked elements of the sign family

If you had to pick one element of this sign family that you enjoyed the LEAST, what would it be?

196 Answered

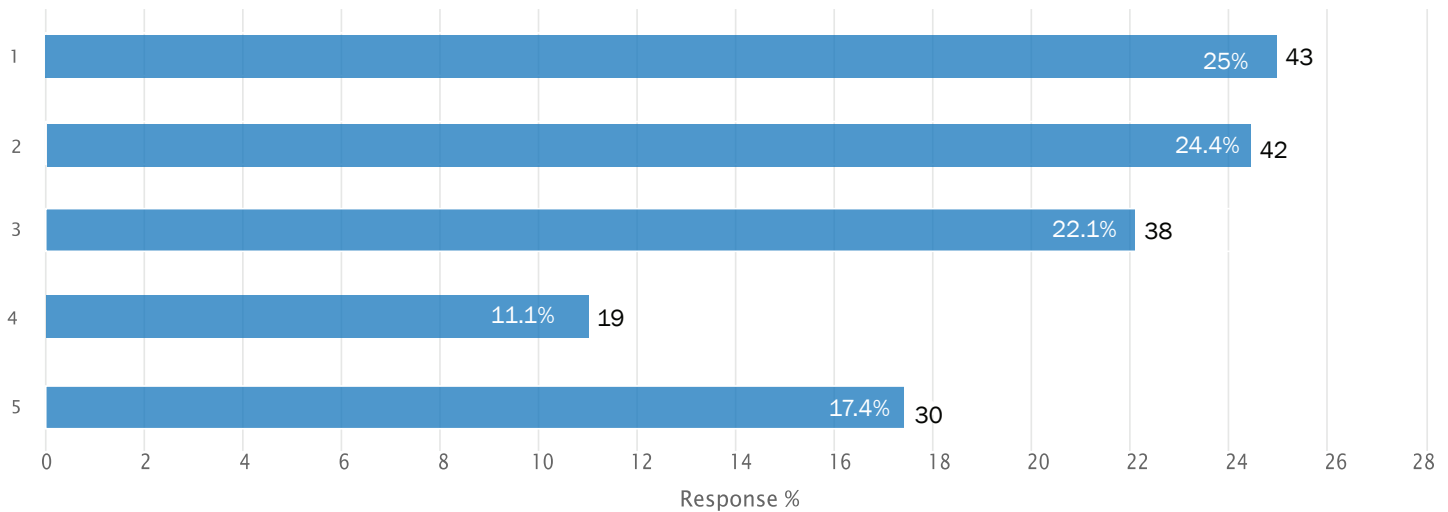


# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

## Preferred Sign

Is there one member of the sign family that you enjoy the MOST?

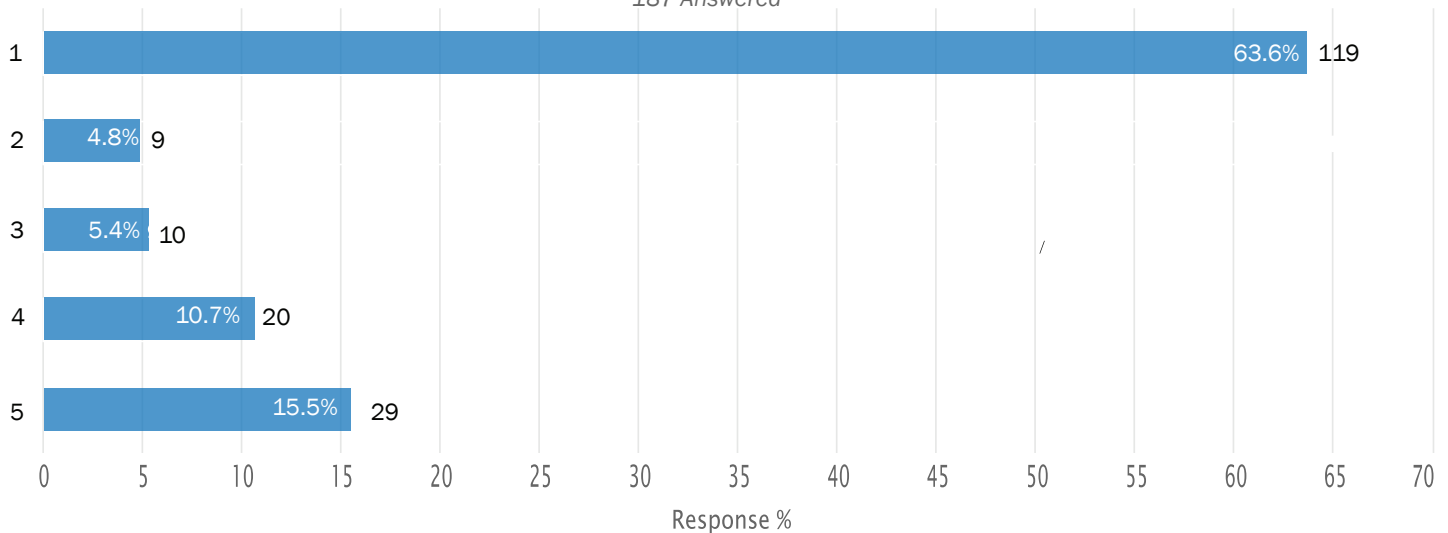
172 Answered



## Least Preferred Sign Family

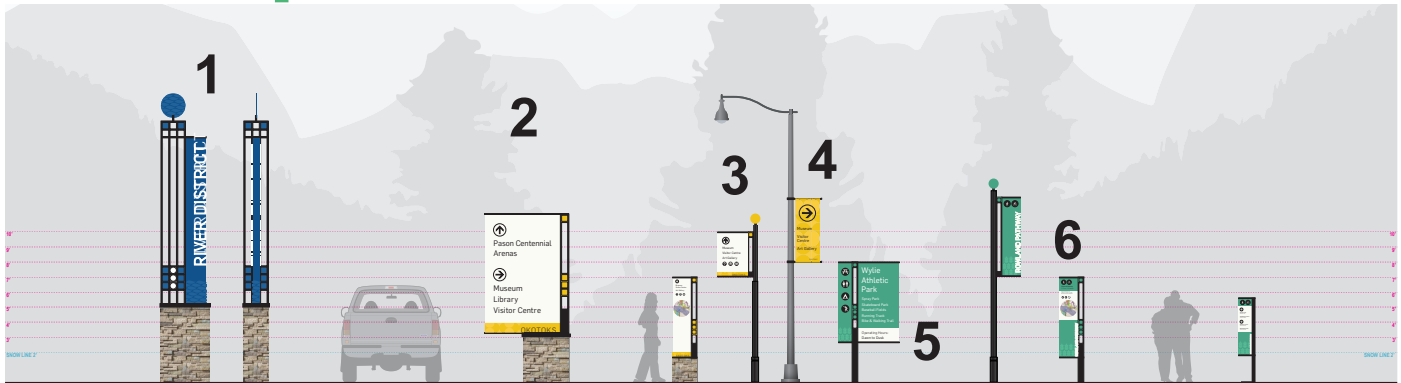
Is there one member of the sign family that you enjoy the LEAST?

187 Answered



# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

## Concept C



1 Sign Family  
Scale 1:70

Gateway Sign

Vehicle Directional

Pedestrian Directional

Park Signage

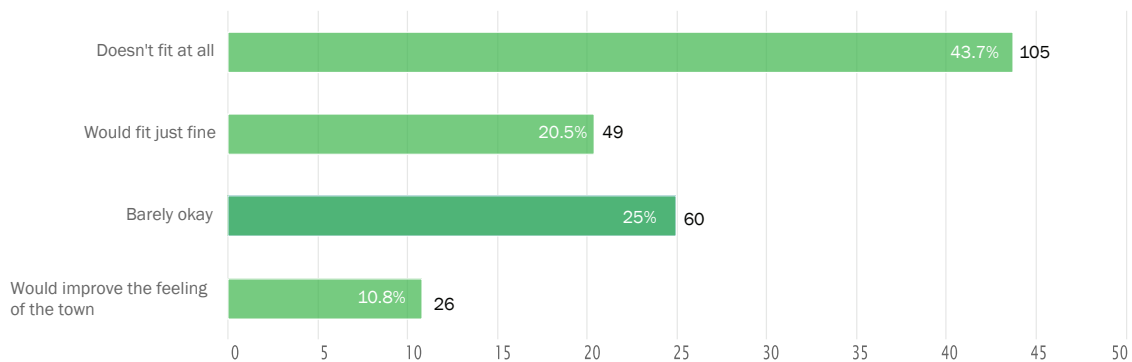
Trail Head

Trail Marker

### Signage Elements

Does the signage fit your idea of what would look suitable in Okotoks?

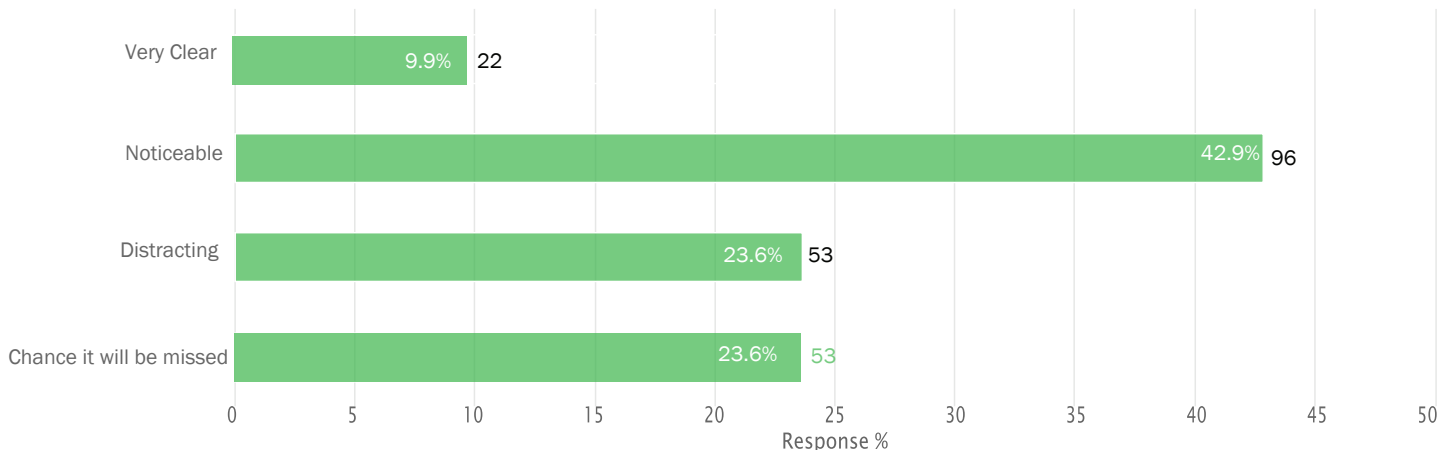
240 Answered



### Sign visibility

How well do you think the sign will show up on the street or pathway?

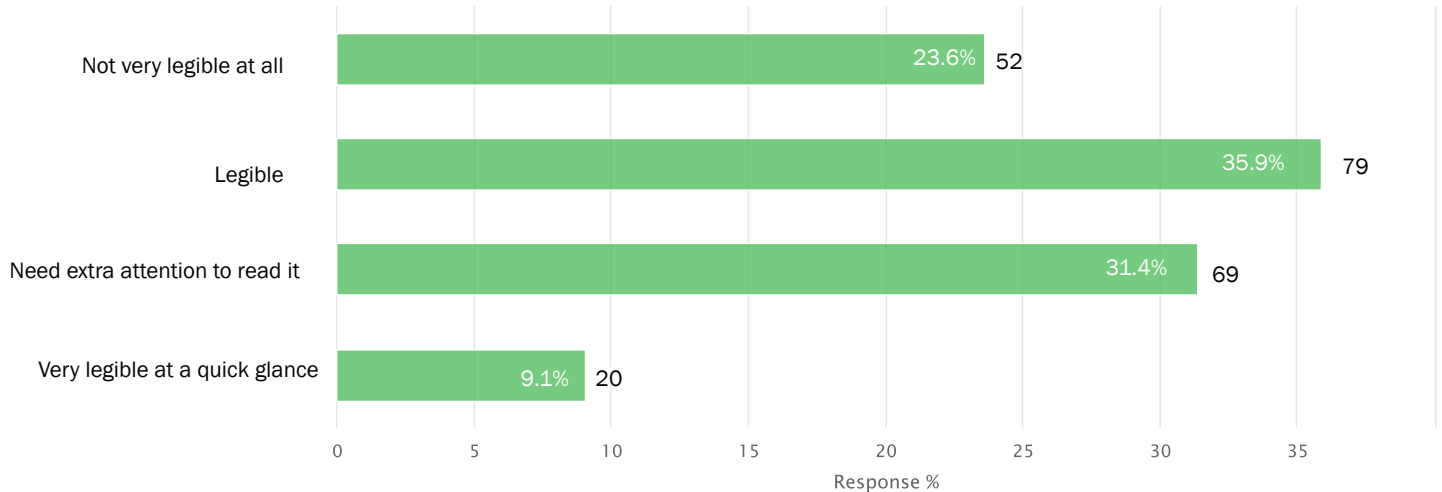
224 Answered



# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

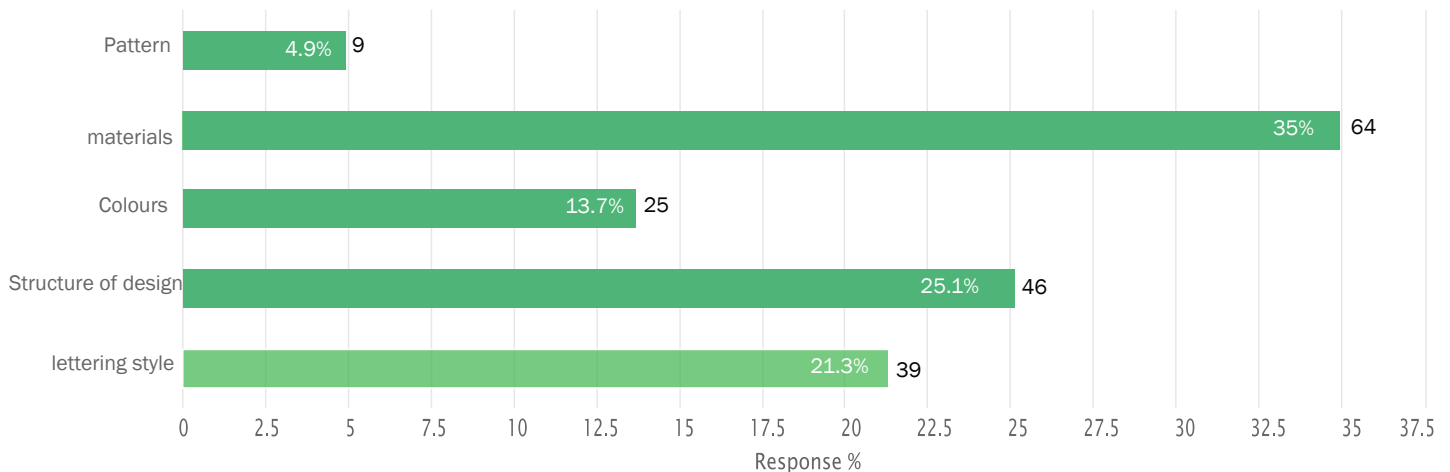
## Sign Legibility

How legible do you think the information on the sign will be?  
220 Answered



## Preferred sign elements

If you had to pick one element of this sign family that you enjoyed the MOST, what would it be?  
183 Answered

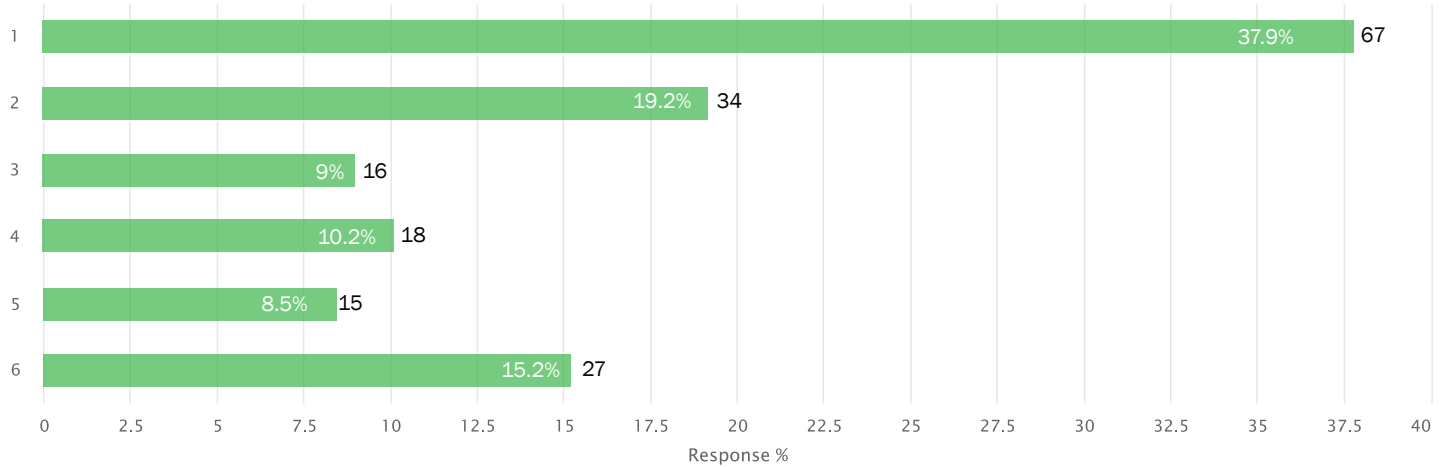


# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

## Preferred Sign

Is there one member of the sign family that you enjoy the MOST?

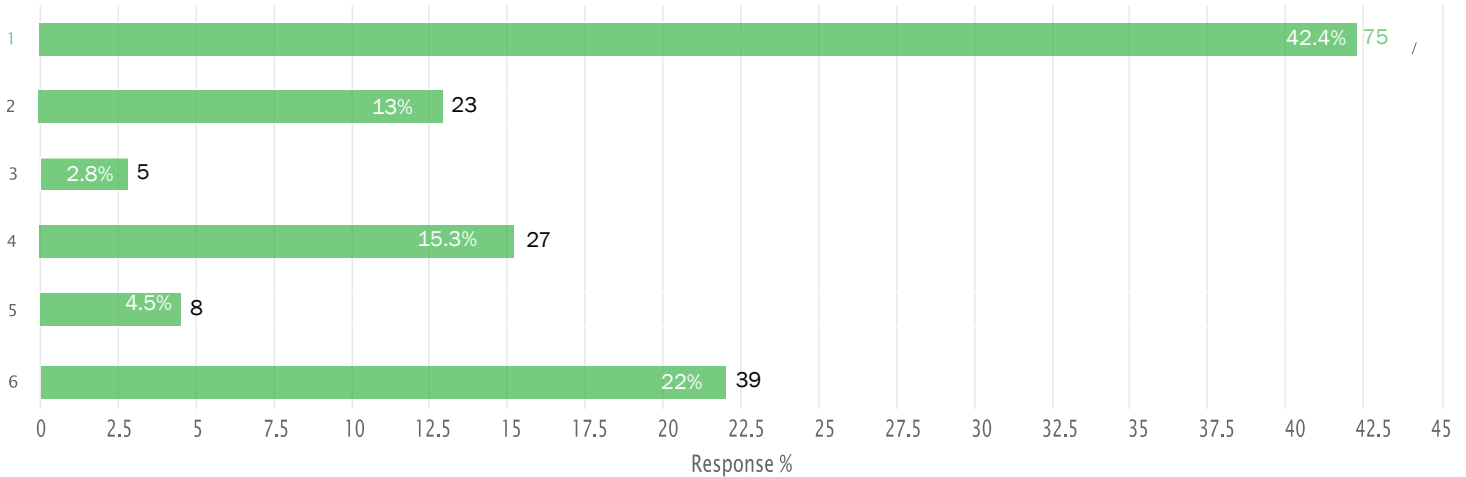
177 Answered



## Least Preferred Sign

Is there one member of the sign family that you enjoy the LEAST?

177 Answered

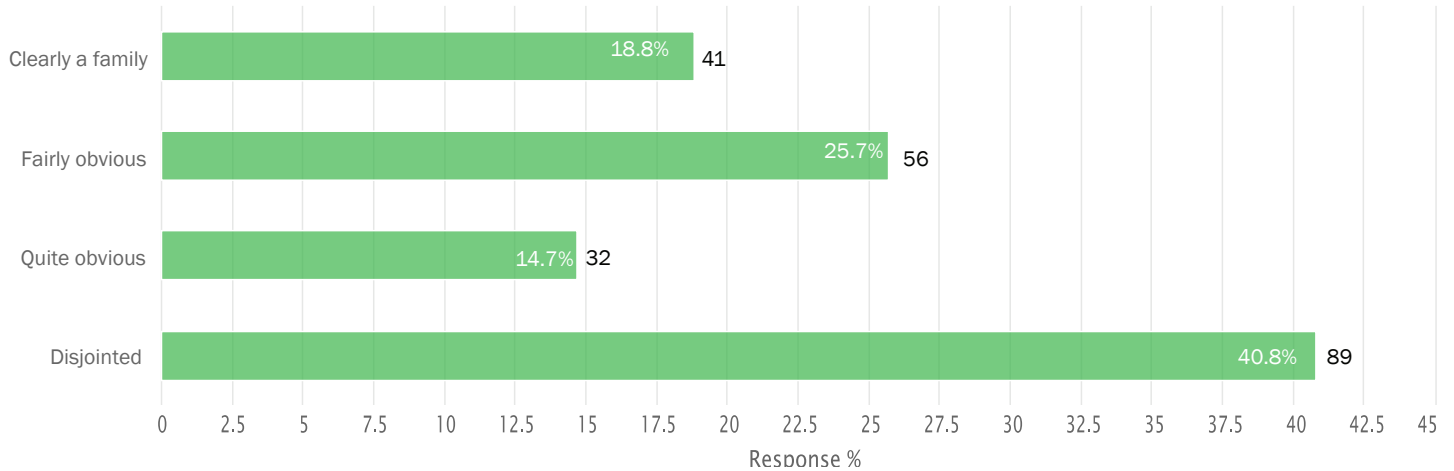


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## Sign consistency

How would you rate the consistency of the theme from one type of sign to another inside the family?

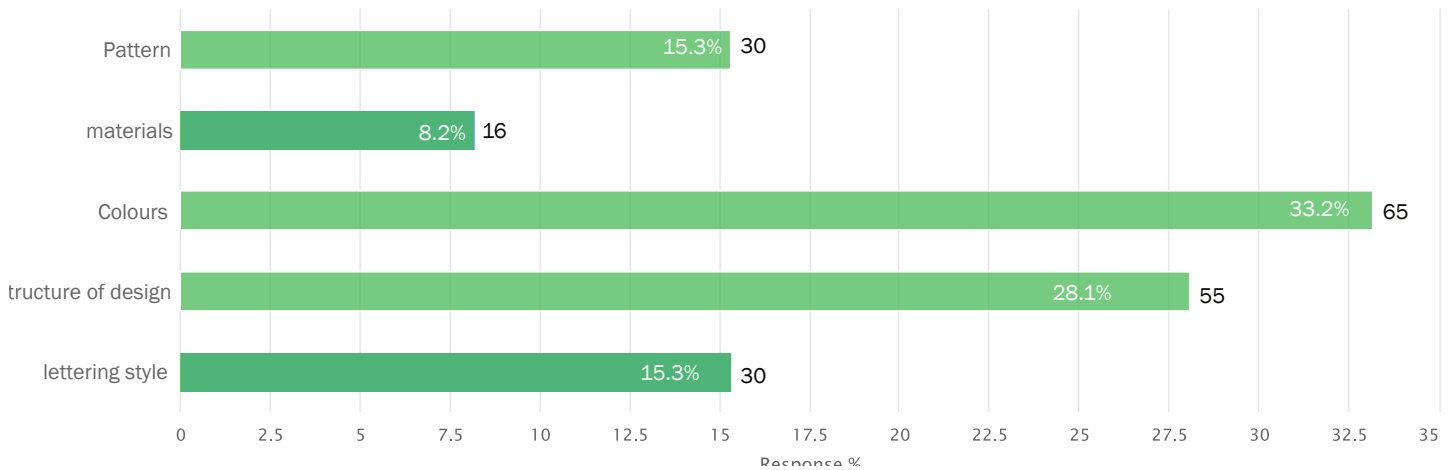
218 Answered



## Least liked elements of the sign family

If you had to pick one element of this sign family that you enjoyed the LEAST, what would it be?

196 Answered





# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

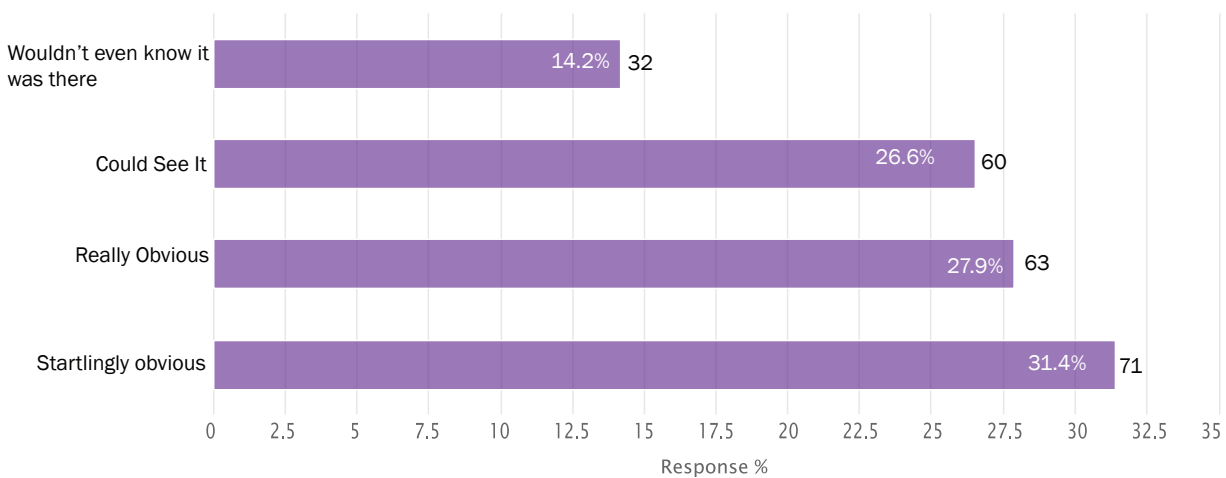
## Gateway Signage Concept A



### Gateway A

How well do you think this gateway treatment will stand out during the day?

226 Answered



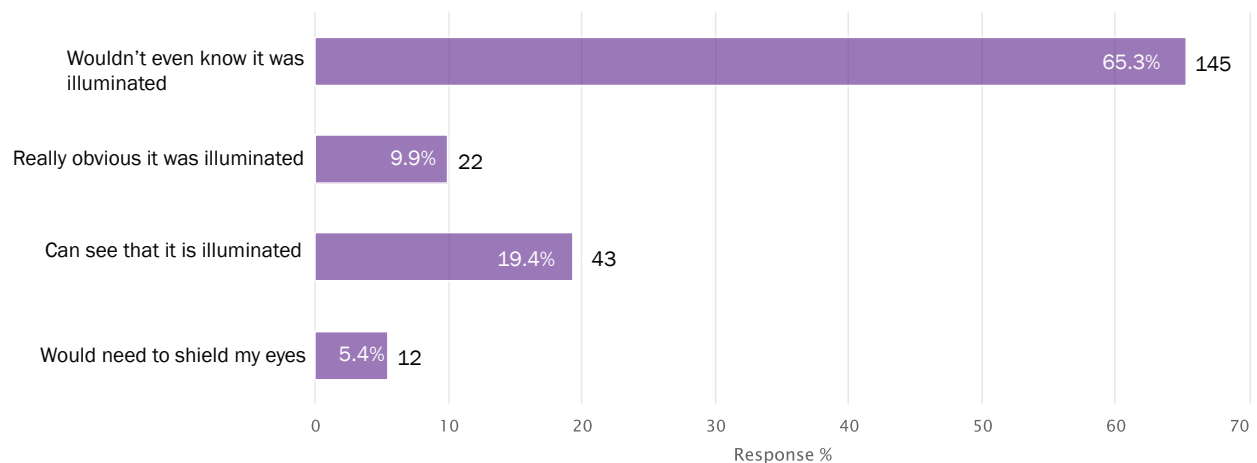
# WAYFINDING - What We Heard



## Gateway A

How well do you think this gateway treatment will stand out during the night?

222 Answered

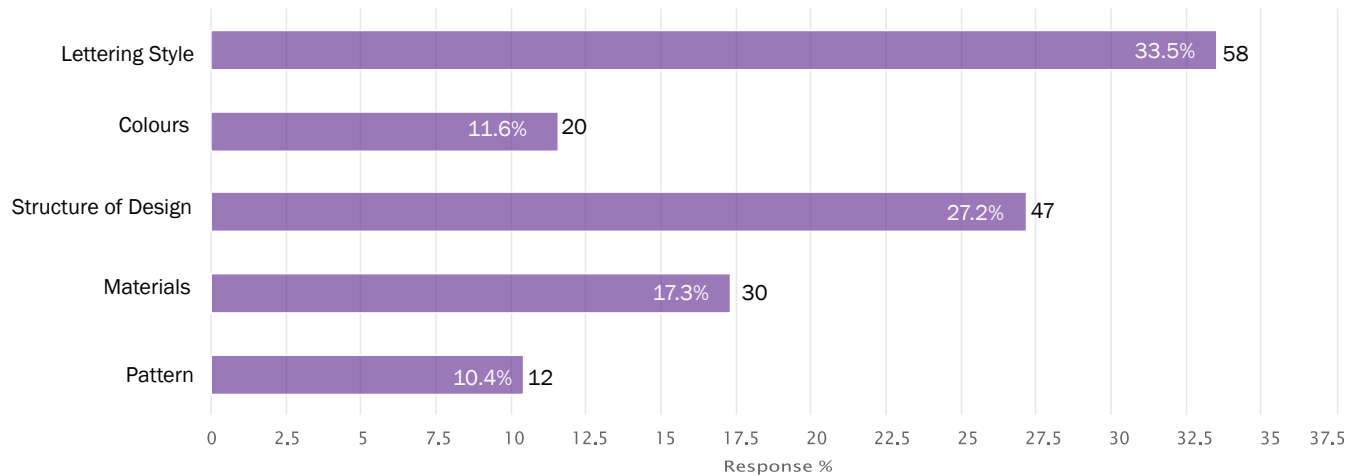


# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

## Gateway A

If you had to pick one element of the gateway concept that you enjoyed the MOST, what would it be?

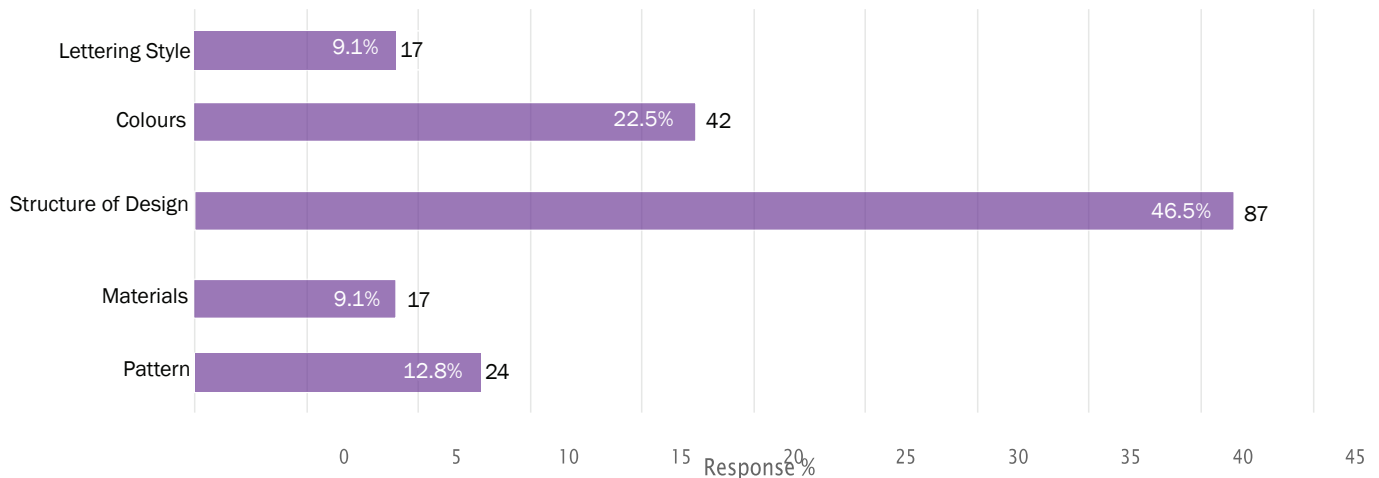
173 Answered



## Gateway A

If you had to pick one element of the gateway concept that you enjoyed the LEAST, what would it be?

187 Answered



# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

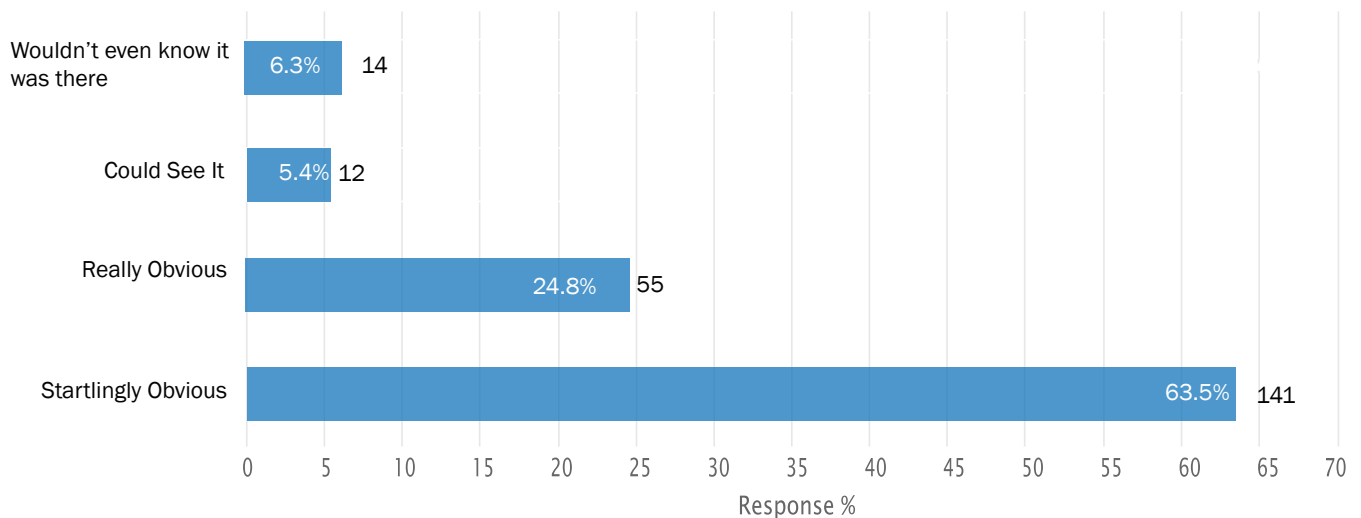
## Concept B



### Gateway B

How well do you think this gateway treatment will stand out during the day?

222 Answered



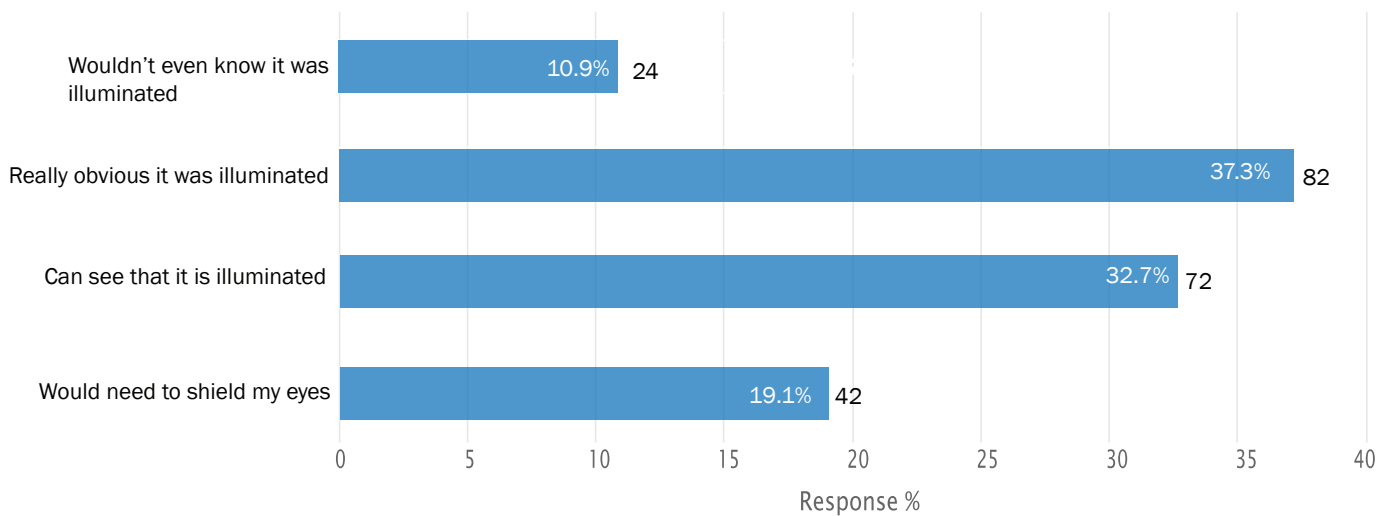
# WAYFINDING - What We Heard



## Gateway B

How well do you think this gateway treatment will stand out during the night?

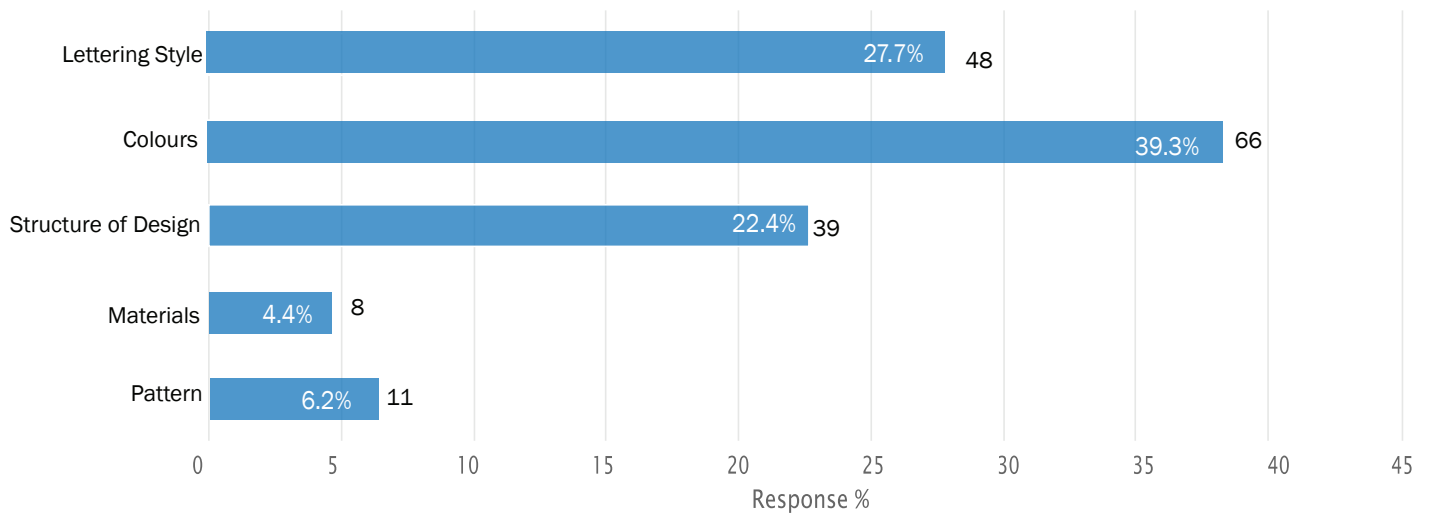
220 Answered



# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

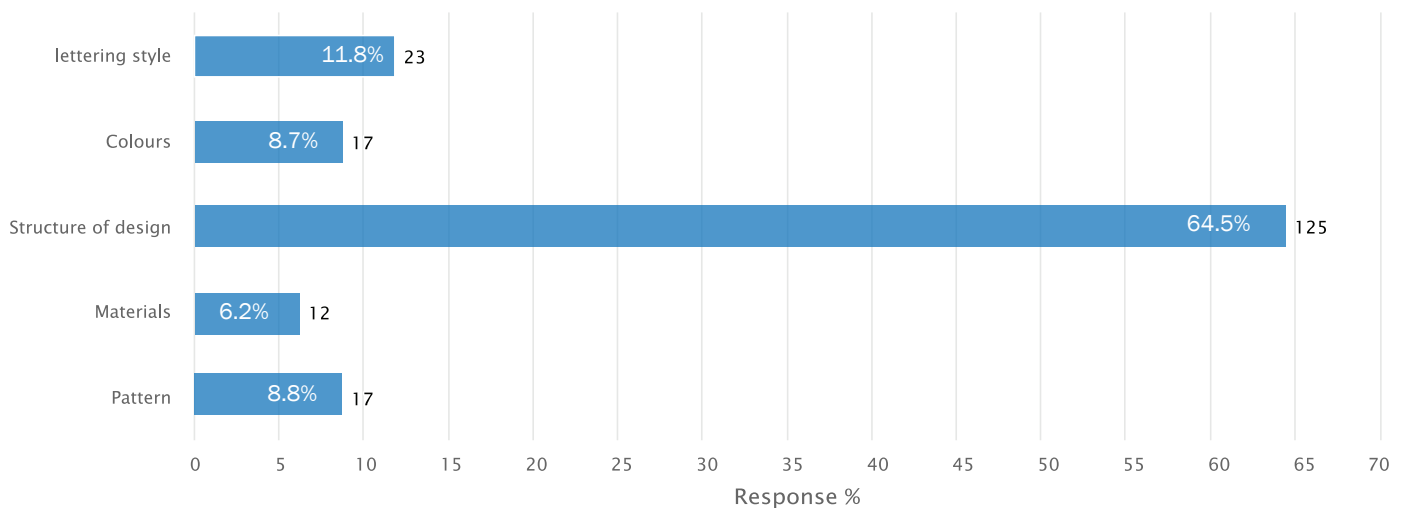
## Gateway B

If you had to pick one element of the gateway concept that you enjoyed the MOST, what would it be?  
172 Answered



## Gateway B

If you had to pick one element of the gateway concept that you enjoyed the LEAST, what would it be?  
194 Answered





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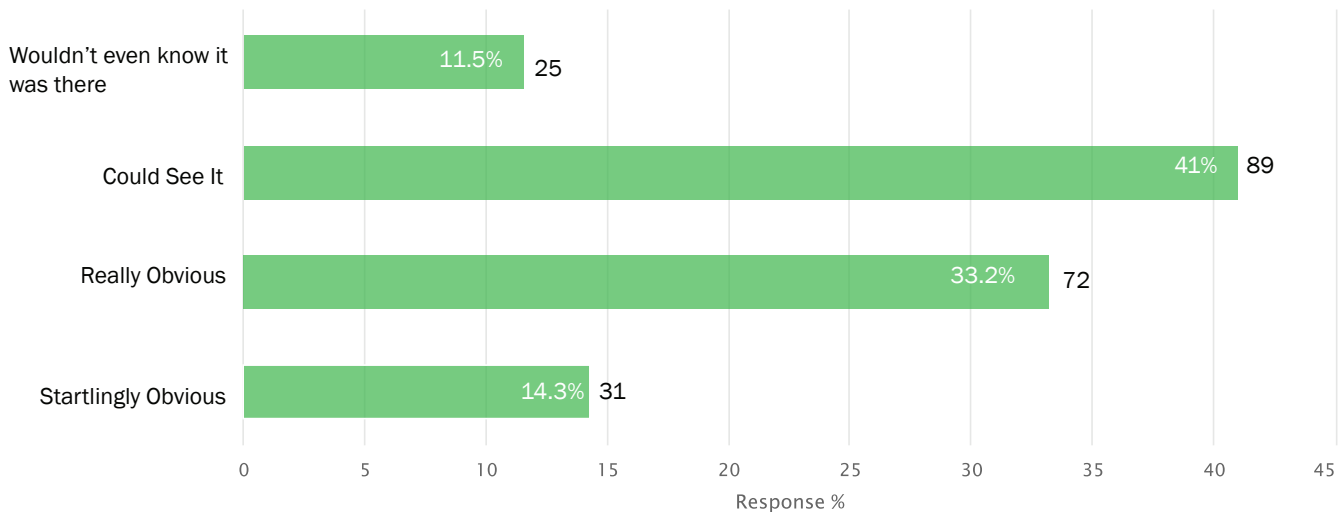
## Concept C



### Gateway C

How well do you think this gateway treatment will stand out during the day?

217 Answered



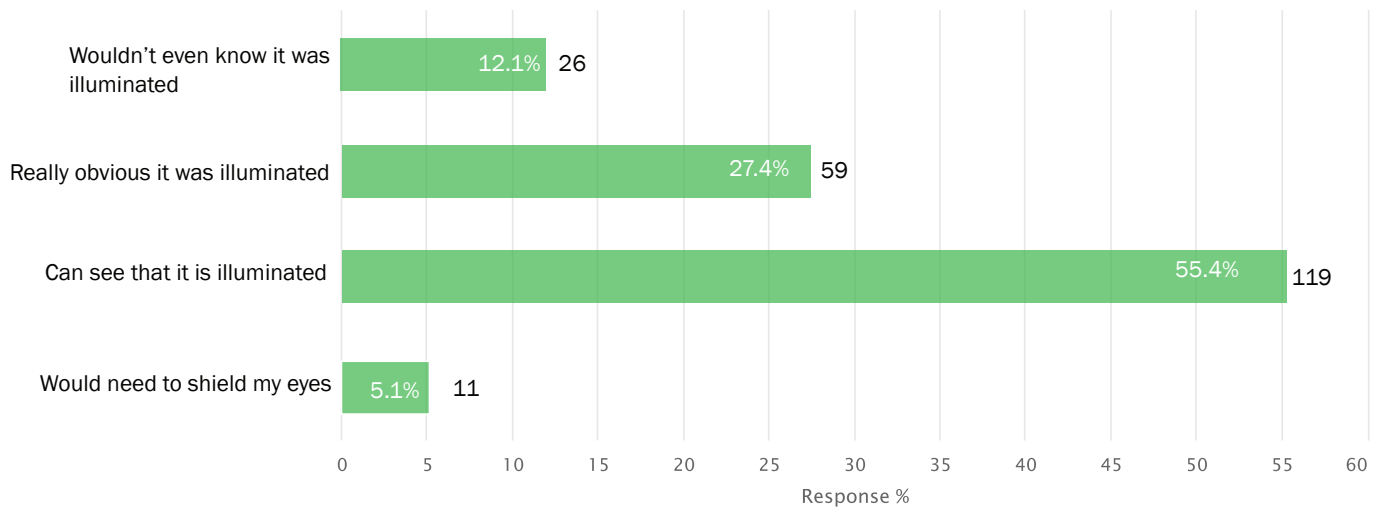
# WAYFINDING - What We Heard



## Gateway C

How well do you think this gateway treatment will stand out during the night?

215 Answered

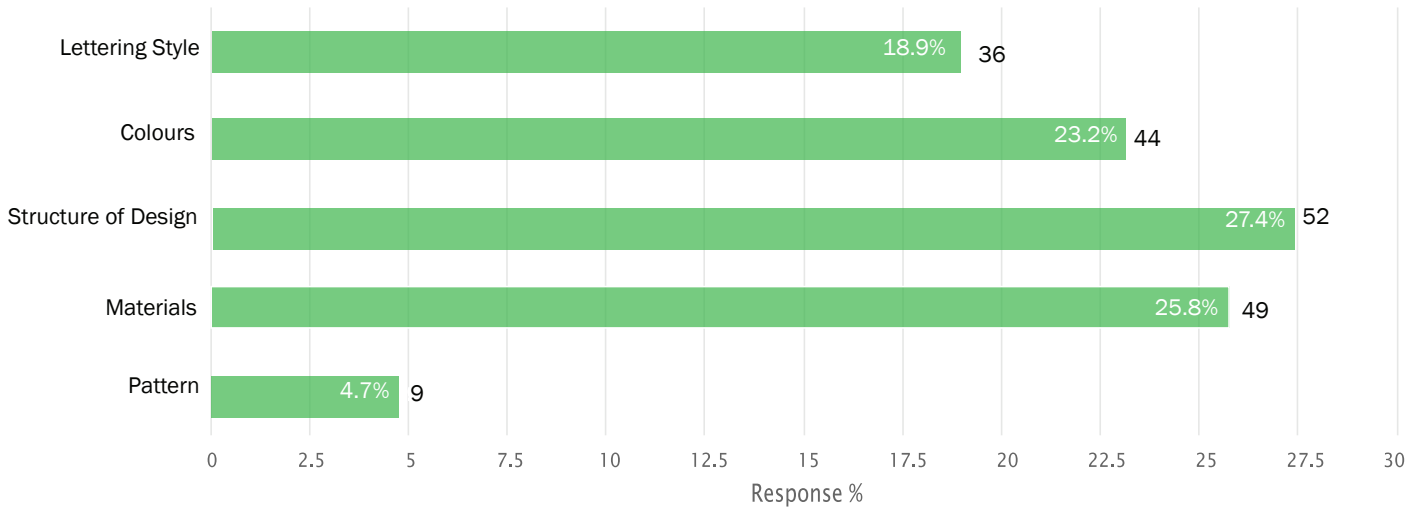




# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

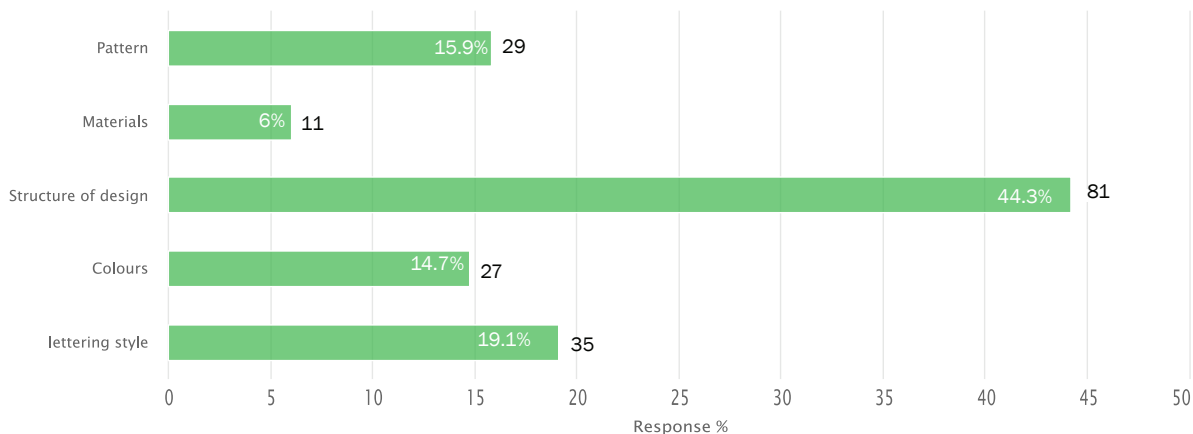
## Gateway C

If you had to pick one element of the gateway concept that you enjoyed the MOST, what would it be?  
190 Answered



## Gateway C

If you had to pick one element of the gateway concept that you enjoyed the LEAST, what would it be?  
183 Answered



# WAYFINDING - What We Heard

## Comment Summary

The following tags were used to group the comments under themes:

- ♦ Prefer Concept A
- ♦ Prefer Concept B
- ♦ Prefer Concept C
- ♦ Dislike all
- ♦ Don't fit character of Okotoks
- ♦ Not necessary at this time
- ♦ Support Project
- ♦ Other
- ♦ Not-relevant

There were a total of 207 comments; there was often more than one theme expressed in each comment. For example, many who disliked all the designs, also indicated they didn't fit the character but supported the project. Others who disliked all designs did indicate a preference for one of the designs. Because of this, some comments will be duplicated in the totals.

There were 21 comments that were not relevant to the survey and have not been included in the summary.

Tag	Total	Sample Comments
Dislike all	76	<p>These designs are seriously awful. Tacky, uninspiring, don't fit the design or feel of downtown at all. They are unnecessary. Something simple, locally created, old town feeling would be way better. These look like cheap garbage.</p> <p>These aren't good options. Please make them less modern to fit with the old towns okotoks style. They're too big and look too City, instead of the quaintness okotoks offers. A small discrete sign is fine.</p> <p>My immediate impression of #1 was Canmore, #2 was Busy &amp; Juvenile. I agrees with Lisa that it feels these 2 were designed to make #3 stand out as the "winner", however it still feels generic. The height of the signage was also bothering me, and Lisa hit that on the head - it is not reflective of the majority of the structures in the RD. I would also like more information on where signage will be placed. It is essential the entire River District is included - areas west of Southridge &amp; east of Lineham (poor choice as this excludes a large portion of RD) or 32st.</p>

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Did not support character of the downtown/ community (note that many also indicated that they disliked all designs)	75	<p>Please keep in mind that Okotoks is a rural town and not “big city”</p> <p>The designs should match the feel of the town, the ambiance and character of our older buildings on Elizabeth. These designs are tacky and colours are too bright. Might as well buy the blue circle from Calgary too if you go this route.</p> <p>These are pretty bland. They could be a lot more creative and interesting. There’s tons of artists and designers in town that could do a much better job than these. They’re okay, but they’re basic.</p> <p>Seems the first two concepts were created in hopes that the last concept would be chosen. It worked. The first two gateway signs were over blown for the size and feel of the River District, and would create a feeling of “misinformation” on what is to come on the rest of the drive East. The River District has primarily single level, “character” buildings and the design for wayfinding should reflect that character, not something “grandiose.” The first concept overall comes across like a mountain town like Banff or Canmore and doesn’t reflect Okotoks offerings at all nor it’s current design. The second concept focuses too much on the river and feels cartoony (gateway) and generic (other signs). The last is simple and the design feels natural.</p>
Not necessary at this time	69	<p>I appreciate that you want our input. I just think this is a project that needs to be tabled until our economy is back to a semi-normal state.</p> <p>Complete waste of money. I do not want to see this in town. Taxpayer money could be used in much better ways. This is ridiculous and unnecessary, most especially at a time that is so hard for people financially.</p> <p>The timing on this project is terrible and is an irresponsible use of tax payers’ money. We are in the middle of a pandemic and many businesses in this district are failing or struggling. Picking out decoration is in really poor taste. Council should know better and be more supportive of the tough times people are going through.</p>
Support project	11	<p>I feel that updating the signage, adding signage while providing a new fresh theme that could flow thru the downtown core and beyond would be a great addition to the town. A lot of the current signage is old worn and out of style. I am all for supporting our local businesses with a new brand for the town.</p> <p>Looking forward to how we take this concept and use it to link up the many connectors within each District... i.e. the History and shopping of Elam... the education and Arts of South Railway... and the blend of shopping, eating and services of Elizabeth</p>
Prefer concept A	3	<p>I would be supportive of Concept A with exploration of colours that better reflect and support the “heritage” aspect of Okotoks. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.</p>

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Prefer Concept B	3	Thank you for the opportunity to feedback. I surprised myself by finding option B most appealing in the real world examples. The blue colour is striking and the waves reminiscent of the town logo - good job!!!
Prefer Concept C	5	<p>Good luck with all the feedback and coming up with a final design. I love concept C the most, with the exception of the caution/poison shade of yellow and the ski hill dots, it's very Gatsby which suits the history of the district it would represent.</p> <p>I'd probably prefer concept C for 1 with some minor tweaks to the top of it and reducing the size slightly, combined with concept A for 2 to 5.</p>
Other	12	<p>I never knew there was something wrong with the signage we have now. How many times can you rebrand Mainstreet....what was wrong with Olde Towne Okotoks? Why sign something that people driving try to avoid? The reconfiguration that was done a few years back leaves downtown undesirable at best. Fix the parking issue, then maybe worry about fancy neon signs.</p> <p>Is this signage going to encourage residents to shop more? I am not sure it will. If we were a tourist town this might be different. Make downtown more easy to get around in via car. Parking lots are disjointed, small and parking on the street is just plain dangerous.</p>