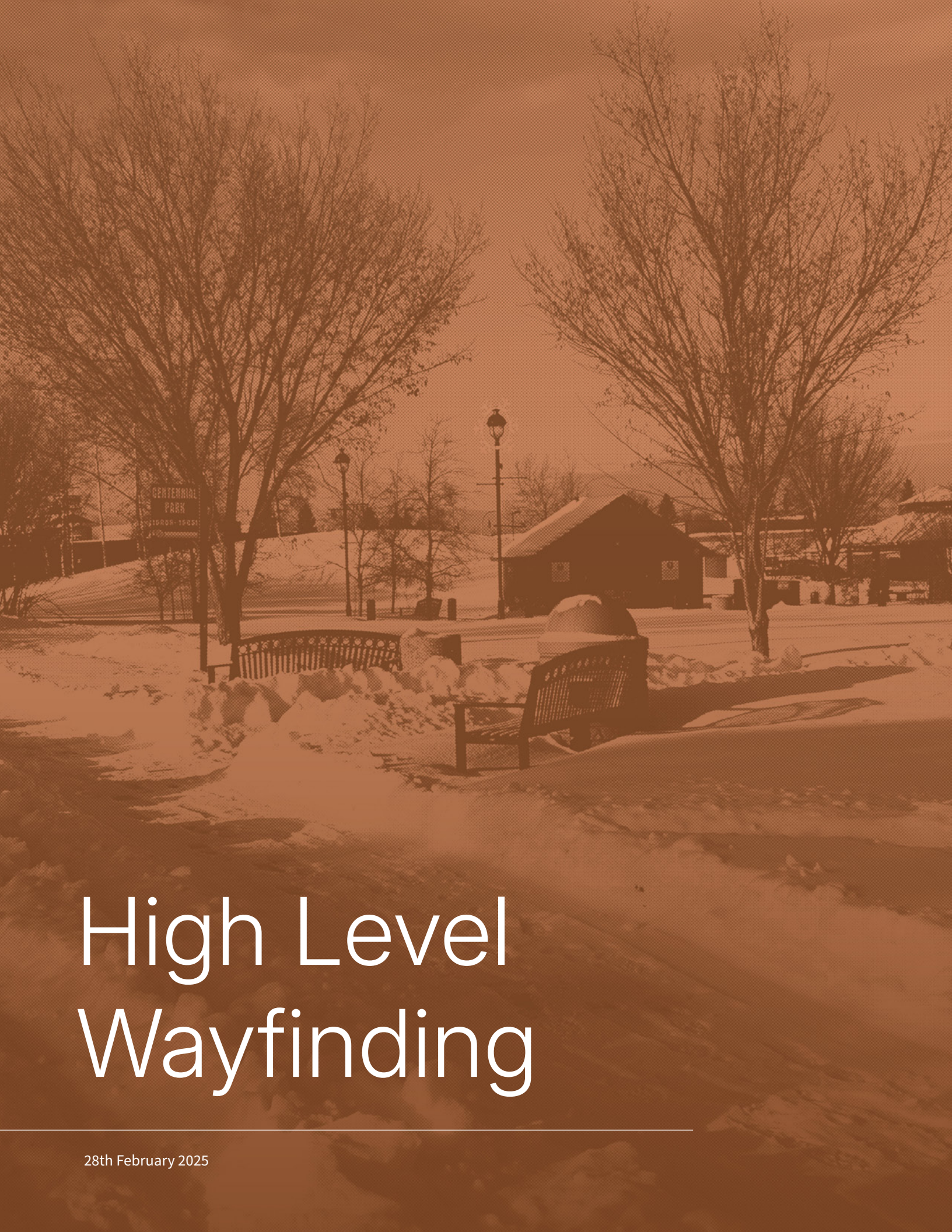




High Level Wayfinding

28th February 2025

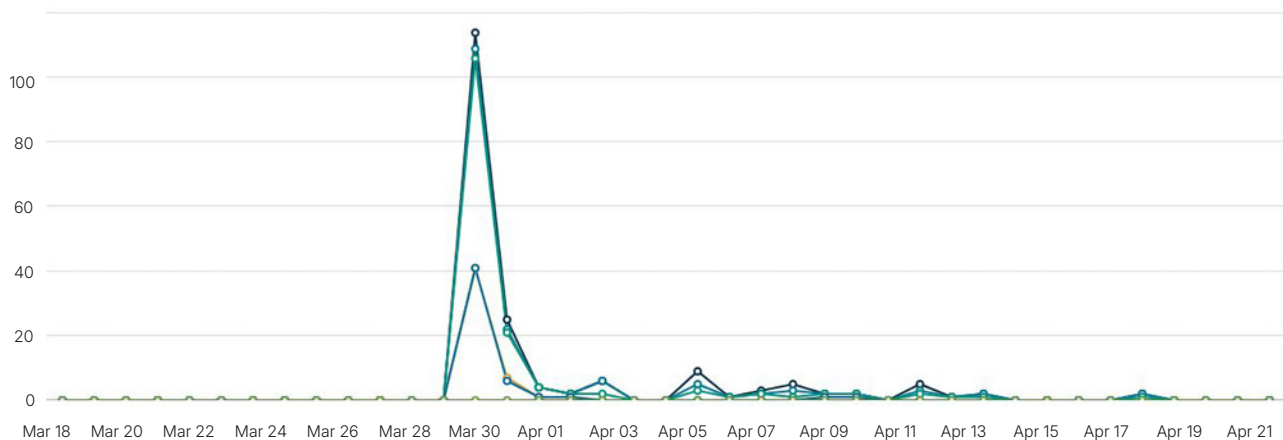
Public Survey Summary

The Town of High Level conducted a public engagement survey for the Wayfinding Strategy Implementation Plan between March 17, 2025 and April 21, 2025. The survey was hosted on the ShapeHighLevel.ca platform and gathered community input to inform the development of the town's wayfinding system.

Engagement Overview

- **Survey Duration:** 36 days
- **Platform:** ShapeHighLevel.ca
- **Total Views:** 181
- **Total Visits:** 164
- **Unique Visitors:** 140
- **Total Contributions:** 52
- **Number of Contributors:** 49
- **Participation Rate:** 31.1% (contributors as percentage of visits)

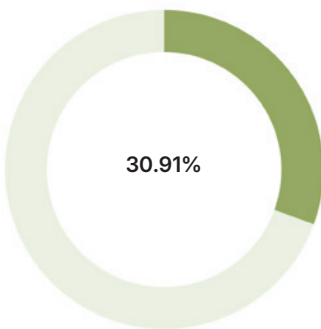
The engagement data shows a significant peak in participation around March 31, with smaller spikes of activity around April 7 and April 15. This pattern suggests that promotional efforts or reminders during these periods effectively drove survey participation.



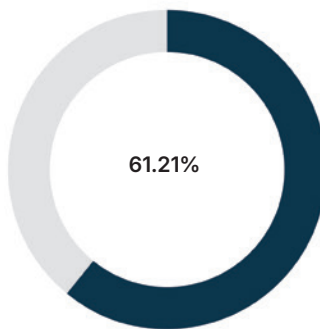
Engagement Quality

The following metrics demonstrate the quality of engagement:

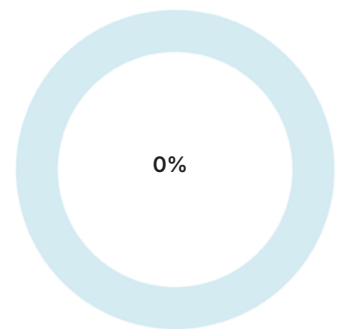
- 30.91% of visits resulted in at least one contribution, showing good conversion from visitors to active participants
- 61.21% of visits lasted at least 1 active minute, indicating participants took time to carefully review and respond to the survey
- The Wayfinding Strategy & Implementation Plan was the only active project during this period, receiving 100% of the engagement focus



Percentage of visits where at least 1 contribution was made.



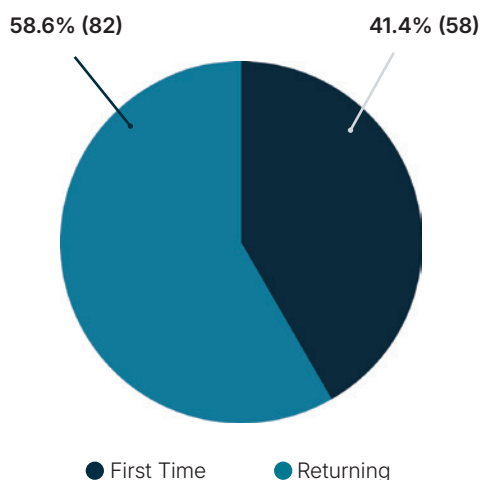
Percentage of visits that lasted at least 1 active minute.



Percentage of visits where at least 2 actions were performed.

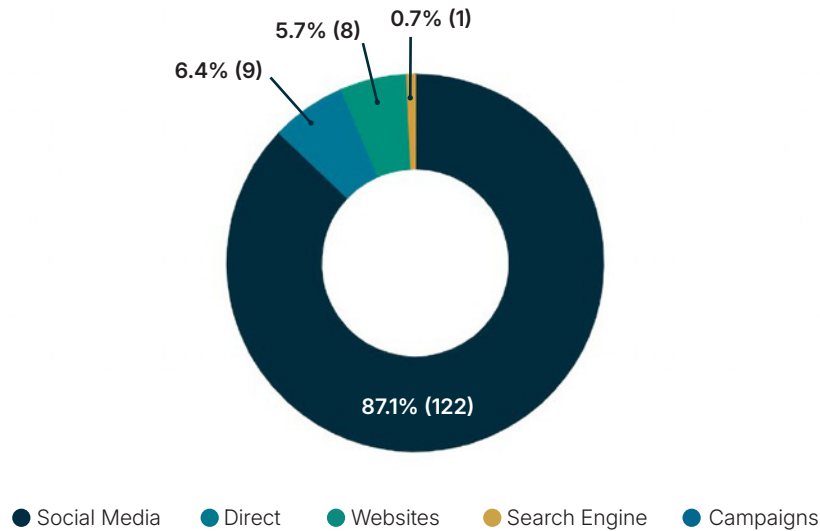
Visit Profile

The visitor profile data indicates a healthy mix of first-time (41.4%, 58 visitors) and returning visitors (58.6%, 82 visitors), demonstrating both new interest and sustained engagement throughout the survey period. This balanced participation suggests the survey successfully captured input from diverse community members, with a slight majority being repeat visitors who showed continued interest in the wayfinding project.



Traffic Sources

The referral data shows that the majority of visitors accessed the survey through social media (87.1%, 122 responses), with smaller portions coming from direct links (6.4%, 9 responses), the Town's website (5.7%, 8 responses), and search engines (0.7%, 1 response). This distribution highlights the effectiveness of the Town's social media strategy in driving community participation.

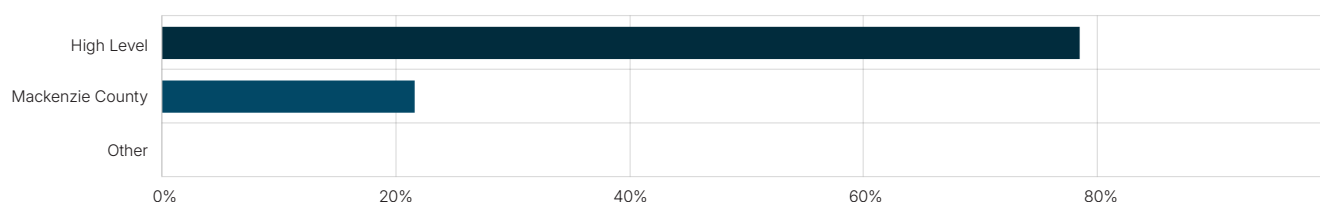


Public Survey Report

A total of 52 community members participated in the survey, providing valuable insights into how people navigate High Level and what improvements they would like to see. The feedback collected highlights key priorities, common challenges, and preferences that will help shape a more effective and welcoming wayfinding system for the town.

Who Responded to the Survey?

- 78% of respondents live in High Level
- 22% live in Mackenzie County



Visitation Frequency (for non-residents)

Of those who live outside of High Level, their visitation frequency was:

- 72.7% of non-residents visit daily
- 9.1% visit weekly
- 18.2% visit monthly

A strong majority of non-residents visit regularly, showing that signage impacts more than just town residents.

Transportation Habits

Respondents ranked how they usually travel around High Level. Driving was by far the most common method, followed by walking, biking, and other options.

- Driving – Average rank: 3.90 | Selected as top choice by 79% of respondents
- Walking – Average rank: 1.96 | Top choice for 15.8%
- Biking – Average rank: 0.83 | Top choice for 4.1%
- Other – Average rank: 0.22 | Top choice for 1%

While driving is clearly the most common way people get around, walking and biking still play a meaningful role in how some navigate the community. As a result, the wayfinding strategy will prioritize signage that is clear, legible, and easy to read at driving speeds, with large text and minimal clutter. At the same time, it will also consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists by ensuring signs are accessible and visible at a slower pace.

Current Satisfaction with Signage

When asked to rate the current quality of signage in town, respondents answered:

- Excellent – 8%
- Good – 17%
- Fair – 48%
- Poor – 17%
- Very Poor – 8%
- Don't Know – 2%

Notably, 65% of respondents rated the signage as “Fair” or worse, highlighting a clear need for improvement. These results directly inform the development of the final wayfinding signage strategy. They indicate that existing signage may be lacking in visibility, clarity, consistency, or overall usability. As we move forward, the strategy will prioritize improving these areas by introducing a more cohesive visual system, clear messaging hierarchy, and consistent sign placement. We will also explore materials, colors, and typography that enhance readability and ensure the signs stand out in the environment.

Has Signage Caused Confusion?

- Yes – 32%
- No – 68%

While the majority of respondents indicated they have not experienced confusion due to town signage, nearly one-third (32%) reported that signage has caused difficulty in navigating High Level. This is a significant portion, and it signals that the current wayfinding system is not fully meeting the needs of all users. This feedback underscores the importance of improving both the clarity and usability of signage throughout town. Though the survey did not specifically identify which user groups are most affected, we believe that new residents, visitors, and those unfamiliar with local landmarks are likely experiencing the most difficulty. To address this, the final wayfinding strategy will prioritize intuitive navigation by enhancing sign placement, improving orientation cues, and designing signage that communicates direction and destination clearly and quickly.

Special attention will be paid to ensuring consistency in design language, logical sequencing of signage, and the strategic use of maps and symbols to support both vehicular and pedestrian navigation. The goal is to reduce ambiguity and make navigation seamless for all users, regardless of how familiar they are with the area.

Where Signage is most needed?

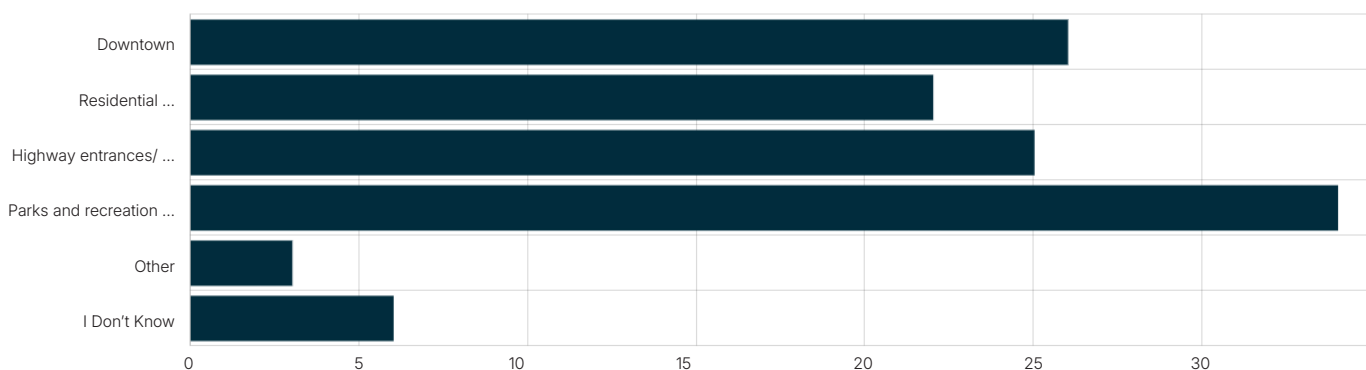
Respondents were asked to identify areas where additional signage is needed. These were the top choices (multiple selections allowed):

- Parks and Recreation – 67%
- Downtown – 51%
- Highway Entrances/Exits – 49%
- Residential Areas – 43%

These results point to a need for improved wayfinding in high-traffic, high-visibility locations—particularly in parks and recreation areas, the downtown core, and along major entry and exit points from the highway. These are key navigational touchpoints for both residents and visitors, where a lack of clear signage can lead to disorientation or missed destinations.

The final wayfinding signage strategy will use this input to prioritize signage placement in these critical zones. For parks and recreation, this could include trailhead signage, directional markers, and facility identifiers. In the downtown area, we will emphasize pedestrian-scale signage that supports walkability, while also introducing consistent branding elements that strengthen the district's identity. At highway entrances and exits, we will focus on clear, legible signs that provide early guidance for approaching destinations, helping drivers make informed navigation decisions at speed.

Additionally, the strategy will address signage needs in residential areas, especially those that may lack clear street identification or directional cues for community facilities, enhancing the overall ease of movement throughout town.



Most Important Types of Signage

Respondents selected the kinds of signage they believe are most valuable:

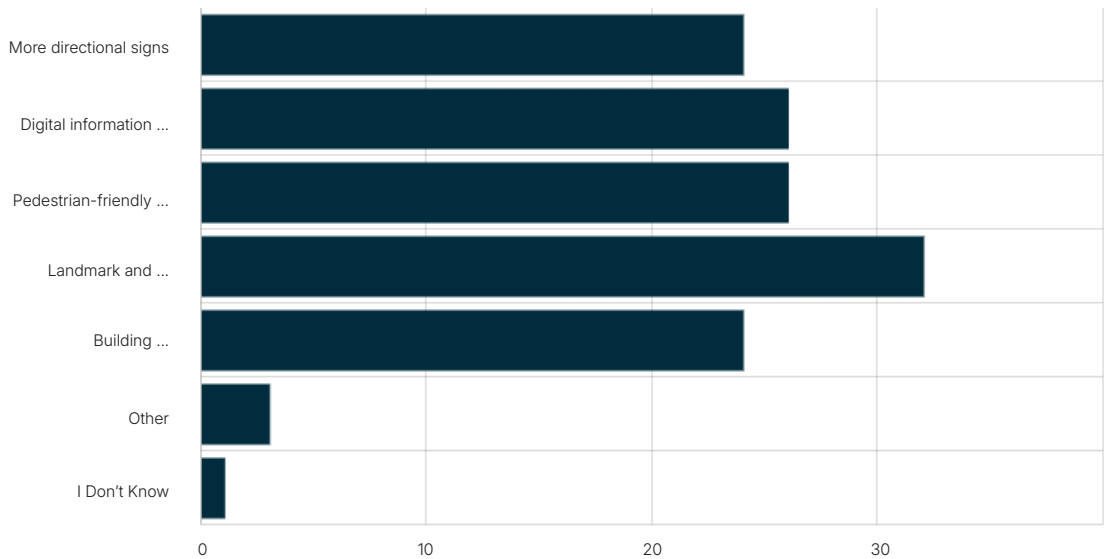
- Landmark/Historical Signs – 63%
- Pedestrian-Friendly Signs – 51%
- Digital Boards – 51%
- Directional Signs – 47%
- Building Identification Signs – 47%

Landmark and historical signage emerged as the top priority, underscoring the community’s strong interest in celebrating and interpreting local heritage. This includes both physical landmarks and narrative signage that tells the story of High Level’s history.

Pedestrian-friendly signage and digital boards were equally valued, even in a car-oriented town. This highlights the importance of designing a flexible system that supports all modes of movement. The final strategy will ensure that signage is legible and effective for both drivers and pedestrians, using appropriate scaling, placement, and messaging. Digital signage will be integrated into prominent locations, including the North and South highway gateways, to provide real-time updates, community information, and event promotion in a modern, engaging format.

Directional and building identification signage, though slightly lower in ranking, remain essential components of a complete wayfinding system. These elements will help people navigate efficiently to key destinations, such as public facilities, schools, and businesses, and reinforce consistency across the town’s signage network.

By aligning the final wayfinding signage strategy with these community priorities, we aim to create a system that is informative, inclusive, and reflective of High Level’s identity.



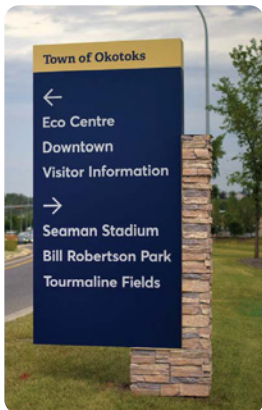
Preferred Visual Style

Participants were shown five different example sign styles and asked to select their favorite:

This feedback will directly inform the visual direction of the final wayfinding signage package. The system will embrace a contemporary, uncluttered design language that reflects the evolving identity of the Town of High Level, ensuring signs are not only functional but also visually appealing and cohesive across various locations and sign types.

Key design features will include strong typographic clarity, simplified icons, and high-contrast color schemes to maximize legibility. Accent colors will be used purposefully to draw attention to key messages or destinations, while maintaining a consistent visual tone across the network. This clean, modern approach will allow the signage to stand out without overwhelming the surrounding environment, supporting both quick recognition at driving speeds and ease of reading at pedestrian level.

By aligning the visual style with community preferences, the final wayfinding system will offer a unified, recognizable presence that enhances navigation and reinforces civic identity.



31% (most popular)



29%



18%



13%



9%

Cultural Representation in Signage

Respondents were asked whether signage should reflect local cultural elements, including Indigenous heritage:

- Yes = 78%
- No = 22%

This response clearly signals a desire from the community to see High Level's cultural identity represented throughout its public spaces, particularly through the wayfinding system.

In response, the final signage strategy will be designed with flexibility in mind, creating space for the integration of Indigenous language, symbols, and cultural motifs. While this inclusion requires meaningful and respectful collaboration, we recognize that this cannot be done without direct input and leadership from local Indigenous communities.

A future project should be undertaken to incorporate leadership and guidance from local Indigenous communities. This should be done through a dedicated consultation process in partnership with Indigenous representatives to ensure that cultural elements—such as language, iconography, and design—are integrated in an authentic, respectful manner aligned with community goals.

In the meantime, the base signage design should be developed with flexibility in mind, allowing for the seamless addition of these cultural elements once consultation is complete.

This recommendation supports the broader goals of Truth and Reconciliation by embedding Indigenous perspectives and presence into the visual landscape of High Level in a meaningful and lasting way.

Wayfinding Goals – What Matters Most

Respondents ranked four major goals for a wayfinding system, from most to least important:

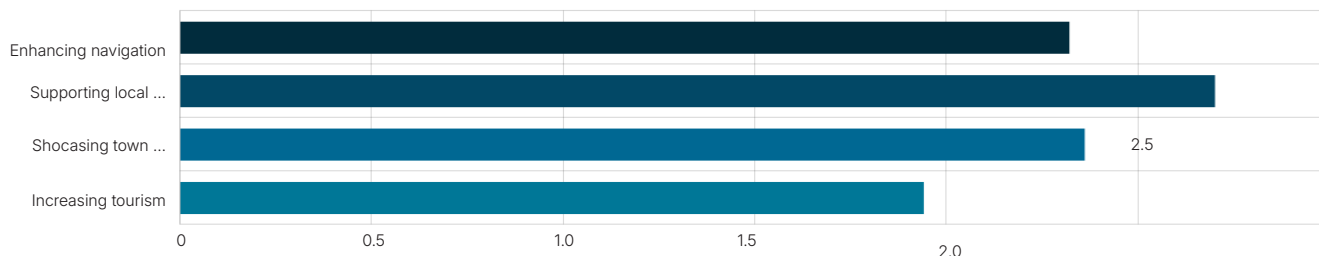
- Support Local Businesses – 2.7 → ~84%
- Showcase Town Identity – 2.36 → ~79%
- Improve Navigation – 2.40 → ~78%
- Increase Tourism Appeal – 1.95 → ~68%

The results show that the community sees wayfinding as more than just directional signage; it is also a tool for economic development and civic pride. Supporting local businesses and showcasing the town's unique identity emerged as the highest priorities, closely followed by improving navigation. Increasing tourism appeal, while still important, ranked slightly lower. These insights will shape the final wayfinding signage strategy in several key ways:

- First, signage will be designed to direct both residents and visitors to local businesses and commercial areas, especially the downtown core. This will include clear vehicular and pedestrian signage that highlights retail zones, dining options, and other points of interest, helping stimulate local commerce and foot traffic.

- Second, the system will intentionally reflect and reinforce the Town of High Level's identity through visual style, place names, and thematic consistency. This will create a sense of place and pride for residents, while helping newcomers and visitors connect with the town's character and story.
- Finally, navigation and tourism goals will be addressed through intuitive sign placement, inclusion of landmarks, and potential integration of maps or digital elements that enhance the visitor experience.

By balancing these goals, the final wayfinding system will do more than help people get from point A to B, it will actively support the vitality, visibility, and identity of the community.



Key Takeaways

- Most participants are residents of High Level, but even non-residents visit often and rely on town signage.
- Driving is the dominant travel method, but walking and biking are still important to accommodate.
- Most respondents believe current signage is only “fair” or “poor,” and a third have had trouble finding places.
- Signage improvements are most needed in parks, downtown, highways, and residential neighbourhoods.
- There is strong support for historic, pedestrian-friendly, and digital signs, with clear design preferences.
- Cultural representation and supporting local businesses are critical to the community's vision of wayfinding.