



**WALK EDMONTON**

# Wayfinding Surveys Summary Report

May 2014



# Walk Edmonton - Wayfinding Surveys Summary Report

*Baseline Street Intercept Interviews - April 2 to 9, 2014*

*Prototype Sign Installation - April 10, 2014*

*Street Intercept Interviews - April 14 to May 2, 2014*

*Online Survey - April 11 to May 4, 2014*

## Background

Wayfinding encompasses all of the ways in which people orient themselves in physical space and navigate from place to place. This includes maps, signage, web applications, etc.

*Over the past several years, the City has been working to strive for a better coordinated and systemic approach to wayfinding with different departments and partner organizations. There are multiple opportunities for wayfinding to be created or improved in the near future, including: River Valley Parks & Trails; within the downtown CRL area; broad opportunities within Downtown Development which includes the R.A.M., Arena & Entertainment District and Galleria Project; Facility & Park development; streetscaping (Stony Plain Rd, 105 Ave/Columbia Blvd, Church Street); on-street bike lanes & shared use pathway development; and LRT development. Our intent is to provide consistent, coordinated, map-based wayfinding for citizens and visitors alike. The Great Neighbourhoods & Sustainable Transportation sectors have sponsored this work.*

The City engaged Applied Information Group North America to complete a system audit and provide recommendations on what a systematic approach should entail. Great Neighbourhoods engaged Community Initiatives, Community Strategies and Development to support research into the testing of prototype signs and an online survey. Prototype signs were installed in 5 locations: Churchill Square, 102 Avenue at 99 Street, by Stanley Milner Library (100 St. & 102 Ave), Jasper Avenue at 99 Street, and Jasper Avenue at the Edmonton Welcome Centre near the Shaw Conference Centre.

## Summary of Results

To provide for baseline information before the sign installation, street intercept interviews were conducted from April 2 to 9, 2014 with 223 people in the area near where the signs would be installed. On April 10, the prototype signs were installed at 5 locations in the downtown core. A media launch on April 14 with Councillor Scott McKeen garnered a lot of coverage in the news for the wayfinding project. Following the prototype sign installation, street intercept interviews were conducted near to the sign locations from April 14 to May 2 with 175 people. From April 11 to May 4, an online survey was available on [edmonton.ca/wayfinding](http://edmonton.ca/wayfinding) and 559 surveys were

received, including responses that were data entered from paper surveys available at City Hall, the Downtown Business Association Office, and the Edmonton Welcome Centre. Street intercept interviewers also handed out bookmarks that directed people who were not able to complete the interview to the City of Edmonton wayfinding website where they could provide their input on the survey. On the installed signs, there was also information directing people to the website to provide their input on the signs.

Throughout this report, the street intercept interviews conducted prior to the prototype sign installation will be referred to as “baseline”, the street intercept interviews conducted after the prototype signs were installed will be referred to as “street intercepts”, and the survey available on the City of Edmonton website will be referred to as “online survey”.

- From all three surveys, most of the respondents live in Edmonton, but there were also some responses received from people who work in Edmonton but live elsewhere, as well as from visitors from other parts of Alberta and from outside of Alberta.

From the street intercept interviews:

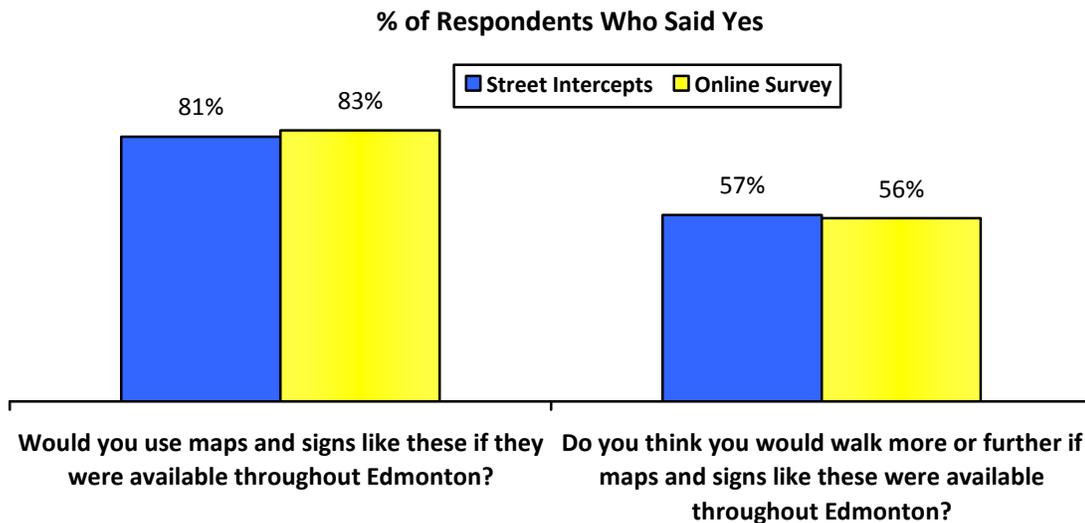
- The majority of respondents could not name the part of Edmonton that they were in, they just referred to it as “downtown”.
- The most frequently mentioned methods of transportation for how they arrived downtown were: driving, bus, walking and LRT.
- The most frequently mentioned reasons for walking downtown that day were: just going for a walk, business (in the course of work) or personal business (e.g., doctor visit, banking, etc.).
- Most knew exactly where they were. Most also had a destination in mind and knew exactly how to get there, but noted they would use maps and signs (like the prototype signs) if they were available. The respondents were also frequently downtown, from once or twice a week to everyday or every weekday.

From all 3 surveys:

- In comparison to the street intercept interviews, less respondents from the online survey agreed that “I know my way around downtown Edmonton”, and only half from this group agreed that “When walking, I find it easy to find my way around downtown Edmonton” (whereas near to three-quarters or more of the respondents from the street intercept interviews agreed that it was easy to find their way around downtown). In the street intercept interviews, 59% to 77% knew how long it would take to get to their destination.
- From the street intercept interviews, over half said that they didn’t need any wayfinding information to help them find their way, as compared to the online survey where only one in five said that they didn’t need any information to find their way around downtown. Respondents from the online survey used many more types of information sources to find their way around downtown, including: places they knew, street name signs, smartphone/mobile apps, signs in the LRT/pedway, referring to maps before they leave and directional signs/way-markers. When asked what was the most important source of information, the most frequent mentions were: none needed (only for respondents from

the street intercepts), smartphone/mobile apps, street name signs and directional signs/way-markers.

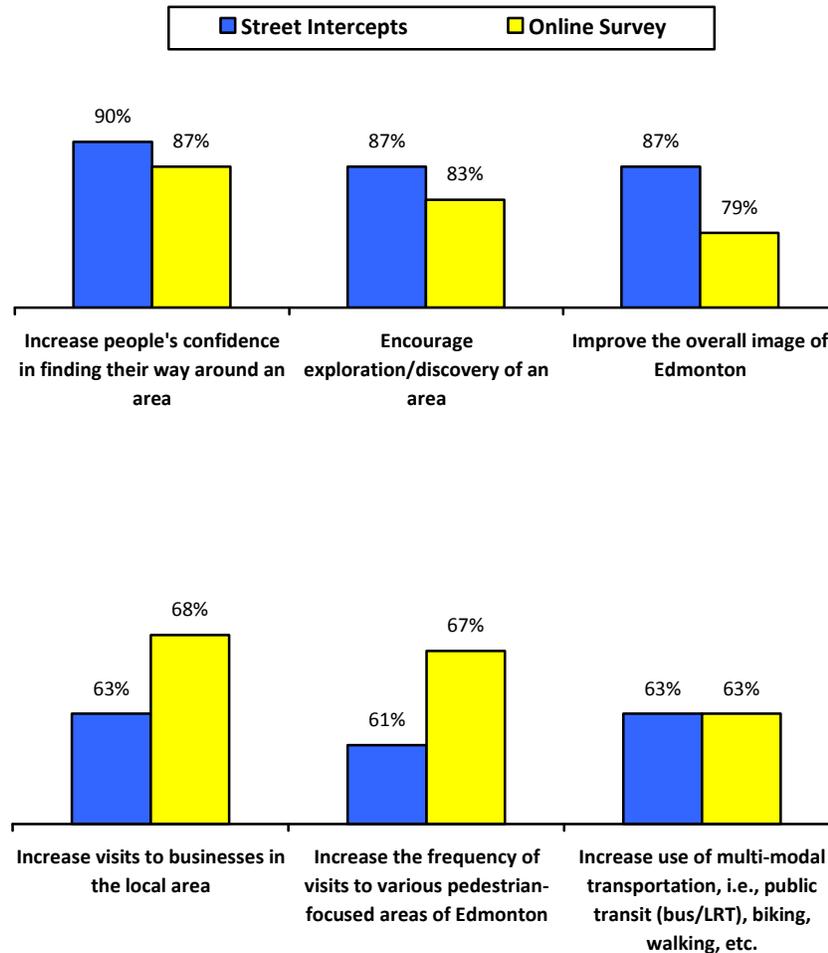
- From the street intercepts interviews, more than half of the respondents noticed the prototype signs, and less than a third of the online survey respondents had noticed the signs downtown (but an additional 15% had not been downtown recently).
- The majority of respondents from the street intercepts and the online survey said that it was either “Very easy” or “Easy” to understand a map/sign like this, with a higher proportion of the street intercept respondents saying it was “Very easy”, likely because they were able to see the full-size signs in front of them.
- Respondents to the street intercept interviews were evaluated on some of their experiences with using the signs. The majority of respondents took less than 30 seconds to find some places that were tested on the map, and to say which way north is on the map. Based on the experiential evaluations the map/signs functioned reasonably well as people were able to understand the information displayed.
- Over eight in ten respondents said that they would use maps/signs like these if they were available throughout Edmonton. Over half of the respondents said they thought that they would walk more or further if maps and signs like these were available throughout Edmonton.



- Respondents were asked for their agreement with statements about wayfinding. Of the six statements, the following reflects the order of highest to lowest agreement (using combined agreement ratings of “4” and “5= Strongly Agree”):

Do you think that a wayfinding system will...

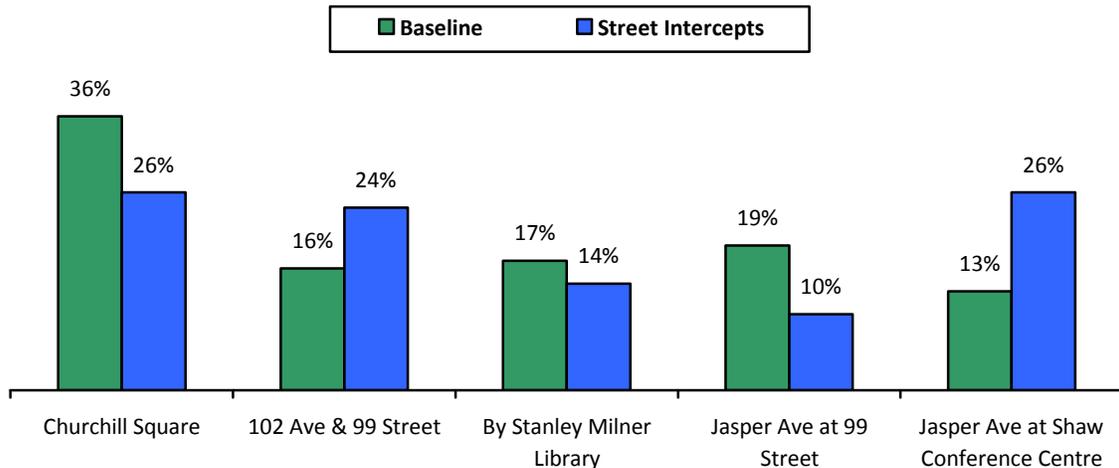
- Increase people’s confidence in finding their way around an area
- Encourage exploration/discovery of an area
- Improve the overall image of Edmonton
- Increase visits to businesses in the local area
- Increase the frequency of visits to various pedestrian focused areas of Edmonton
- Increase use of multi-modal transportation, i.e. public transit (Bus/LRT) biking, walking etc.



## Survey Results

### Location of Street Intercept Interviews

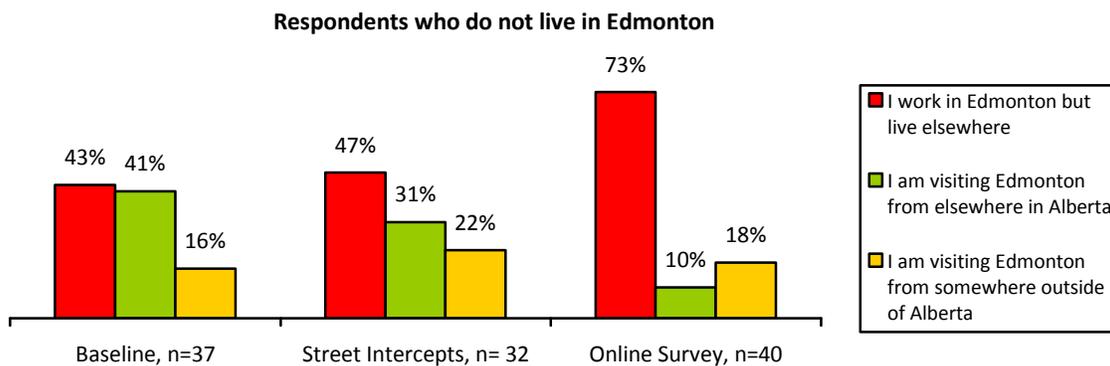
The breakdown of where the street intercept interviews were conducted is as follows:



In the post-sign installation interviews, 54% tested the north facing side of the map, and 46% tested the south side face of the map.

### Residence of the Respondents

The majority of the respondents live in Edmonton (baseline: 83%, street intercepts: 80% and online survey: 93%). Of the respondents that do not live in Edmonton, the largest number of respondents from each of the 3 surveys work in Edmonton but live elsewhere (baseline: 43%, street intercepts: 47% and online survey: 73%). There was also representation on each of the 3 surveys from visitors from elsewhere in Alberta and from outside of Alberta.



### Knowledge of the Name of the Downtown Area/District

In the street intercepts, when respondents were asked “What part of Edmonton are we in at the moment?”, the majority of respondents just said “downtown” (baseline: 66%, street intercepts: 69%). This was an unaided question to test whether respondents would answer with mentions of area names such as: Civic Precinct, Arts Precinct, Arts District or Churchill Square. The only area that received notable top-of-mind mentions was Churchill Square (baseline: 18%, street intercepts: 12%).

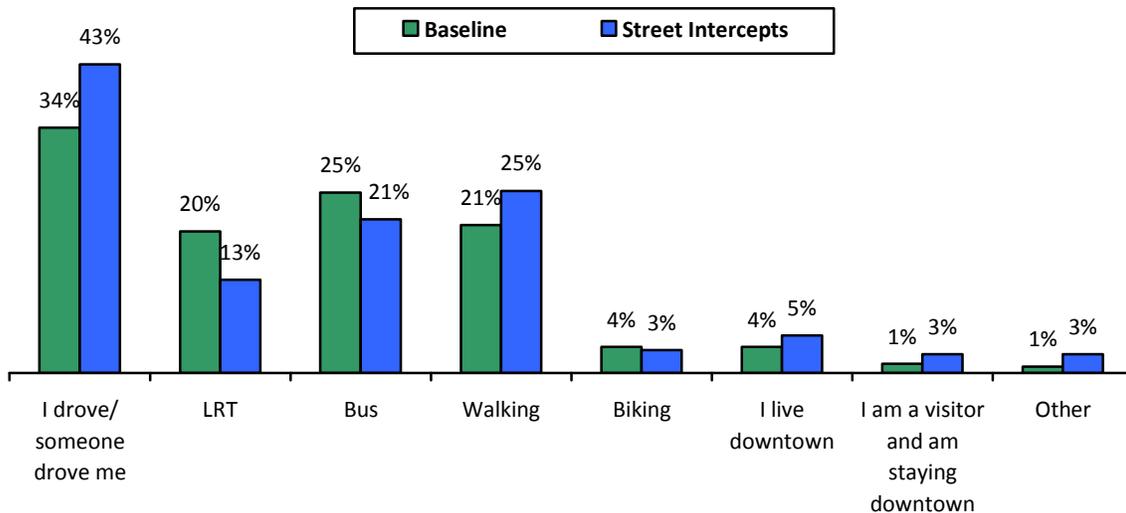
### Where They Walked From

Respondents were asked where they had walked from. These responses can be found in the individual detailed reports for each of the 3 surveys, but generally reflect an array of downtown buildings or the mode of transportation used to get to the downtown, such as parking lots or LRT Stations.

### Method of Transportation to the Downtown Area

When asked how they arrived downtown today, the largest group of respondents arrived by either driving or by having someone drive them (baseline: 34%, street intercepts: 43%). Of note, however, 59% of people in the street intercepts traveled by active modes of transportation or transit with the breakdown being as follows: bus (baseline: 25%, street intercepts: 21%), LRT (baseline: 20%, street intercepts: 13%) and walking (baseline: 21%, street intercepts: 25%).

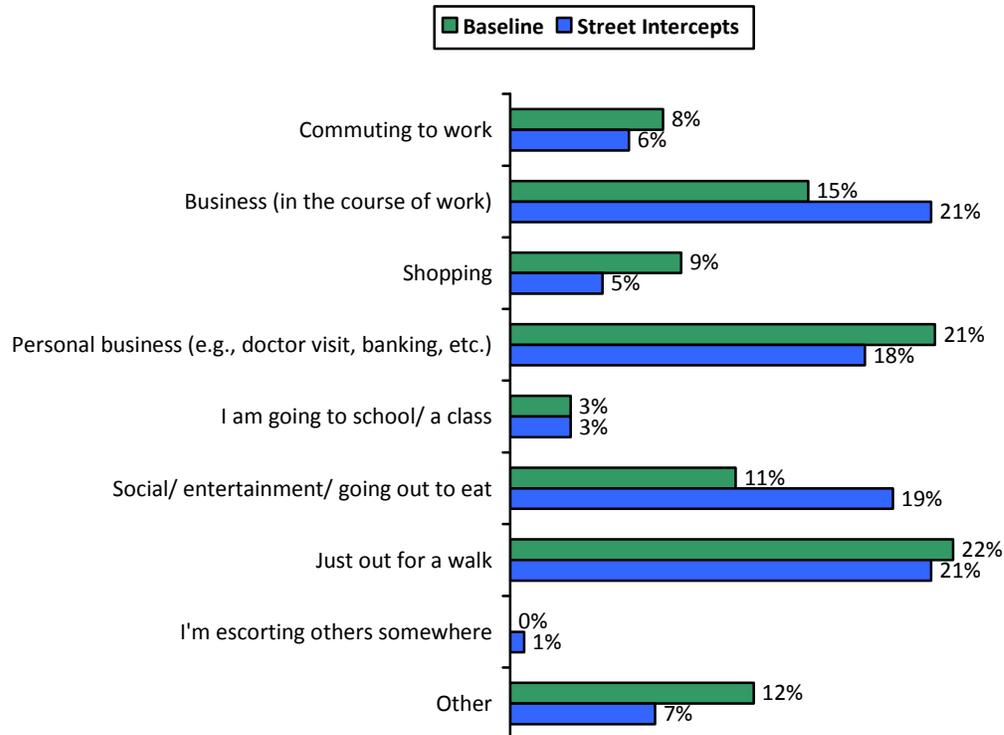
How did you get to the downtown area today?



### Main Reason For Walking Downtown Today

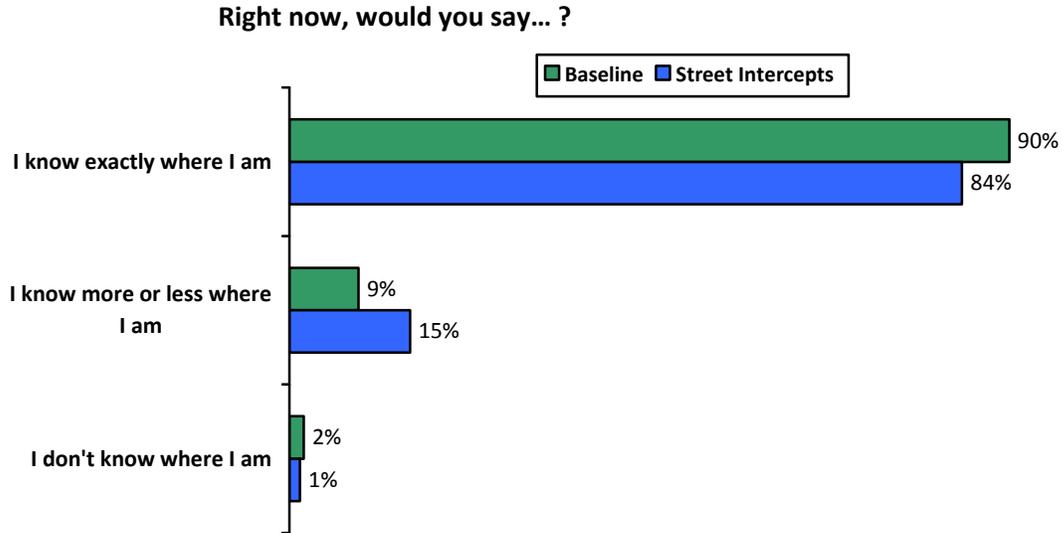
When asked for the main reason that they are out walking downtown today, in both the baseline and the street intercepts, over one in five were “just out for a walk” (baseline: 22%, street intercepts: 21%). Additionally, over one in five in the baseline interviews were walking downtown for personal business such as a doctor visit, banking, etc. (21%), and in the regular street intercepts, over one in five were walking for business in the course of their work (21%).

#### What is the main reason you are walking downtown today?

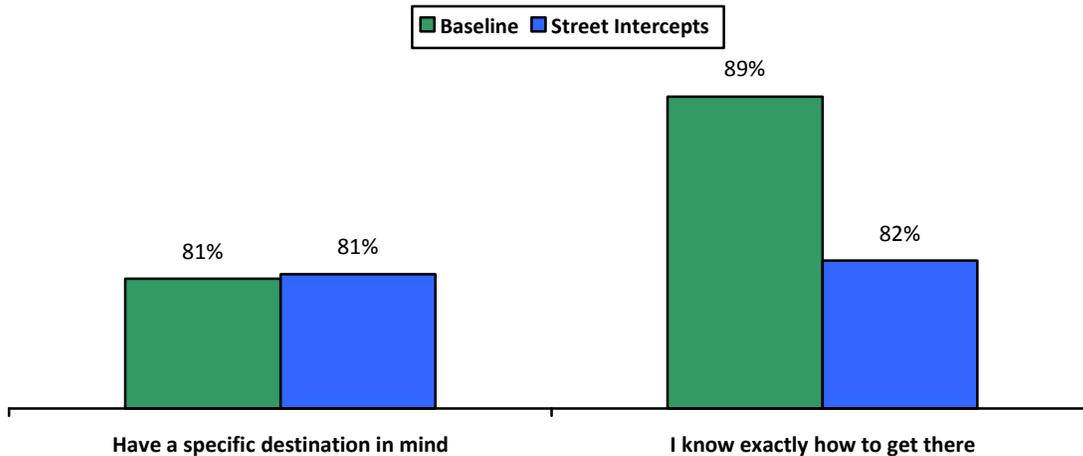


### Awareness of Where They Are and Navigating Around Downtown

In the street intercept interviews, when asked to choose a statement about where they are right now, in both the baseline and the street intercepts, the vast majority of respondents knew exactly where they were (baseline: 90%, street intercepts: 84%).

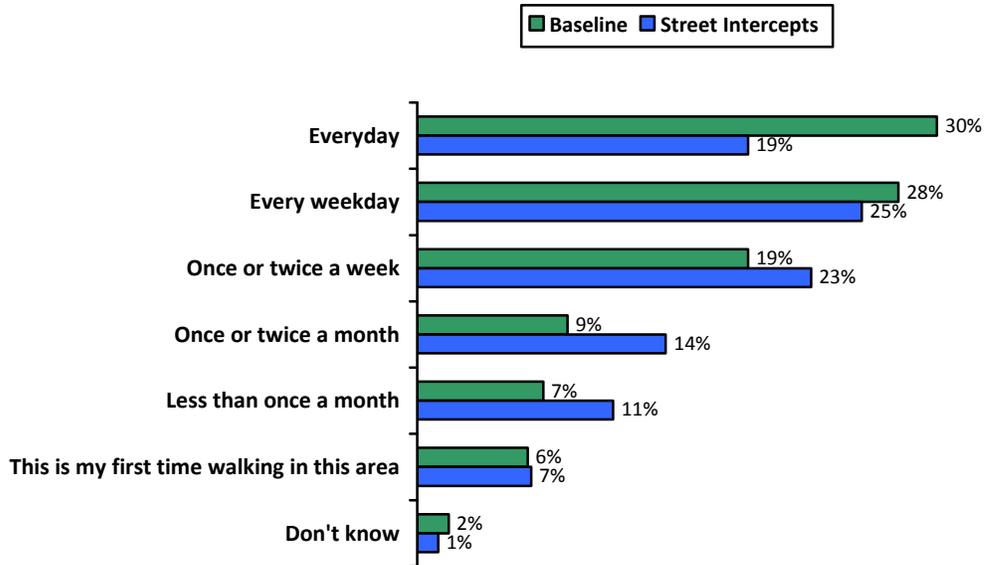


In the street intercepts, most of the respondents interviewed had a specific destination where they were walking to (baseline: 81%, street intercepts: 81%) and most knew exactly how to get there (baseline: 89%, street intercepts: 82%).



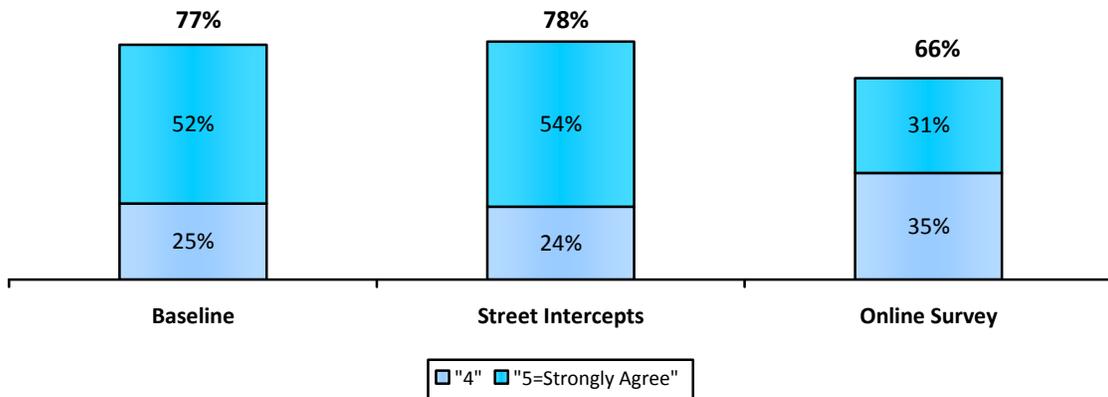
In the street intercepts, most came to or walked through the area of downtown they were interviewed at on a frequent basis, from once or twice a week to every weekday or everyday.

**How often do you come to or walk through this area?**

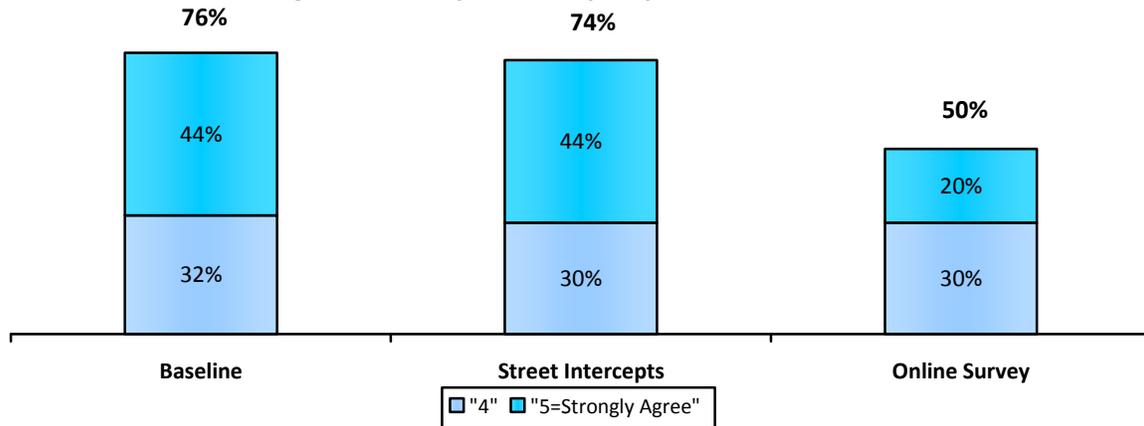


In comparison to respondents from the street intercepts, significantly less respondents from the online survey agreed (by giving a rating of either “4” or “5=Strongly Agree”) that “I know my way around downtown Edmonton” (baseline: 77%, street intercepts: 78% and online survey: 66%) and “When walking, I find it easy to find my way around downtown Edmonton” (baseline: 76%, street intercepts: 74% and online survey: 50%). These results suggest there are a portion of people (22% - 50%) who do not know their way around the downtown to some degree and could benefit from more directional information.

**I know my way around downtown Edmonton.**

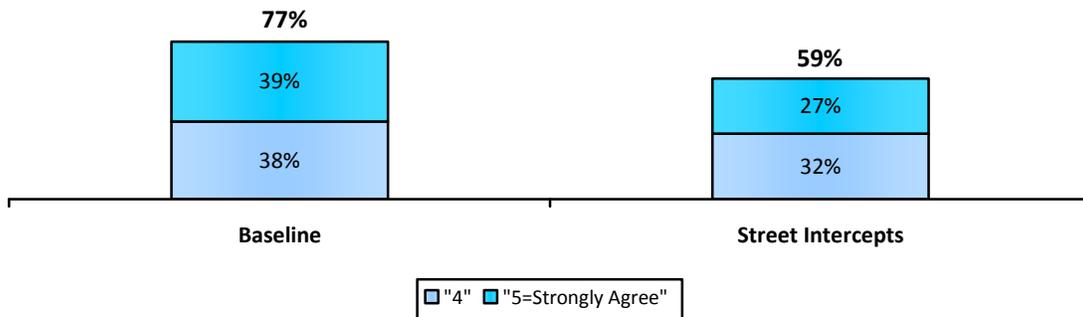


**When walking, I find it easy to find my way around downtown Edmonton.**



In the street intercepts, if the respondent said that they had a destination in mind, after the prototype sign installation, less of the respondents said that “I know how long it will take me to walk to my destination from here.” (baseline: 77%, street intercepts: 59%).

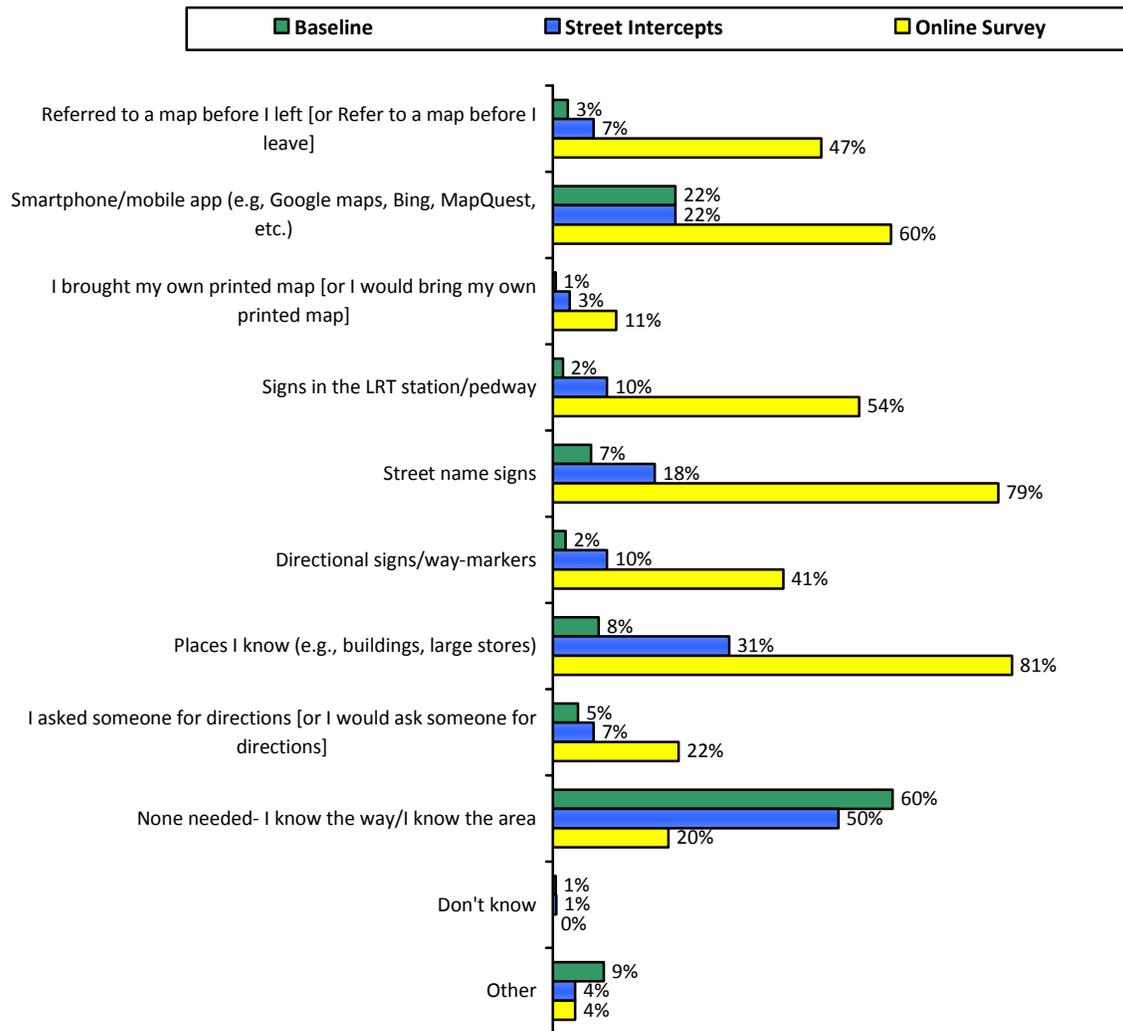
***[If you have a destination in mind] I know how long it will take me to walk to my destination.***



## Information Sources

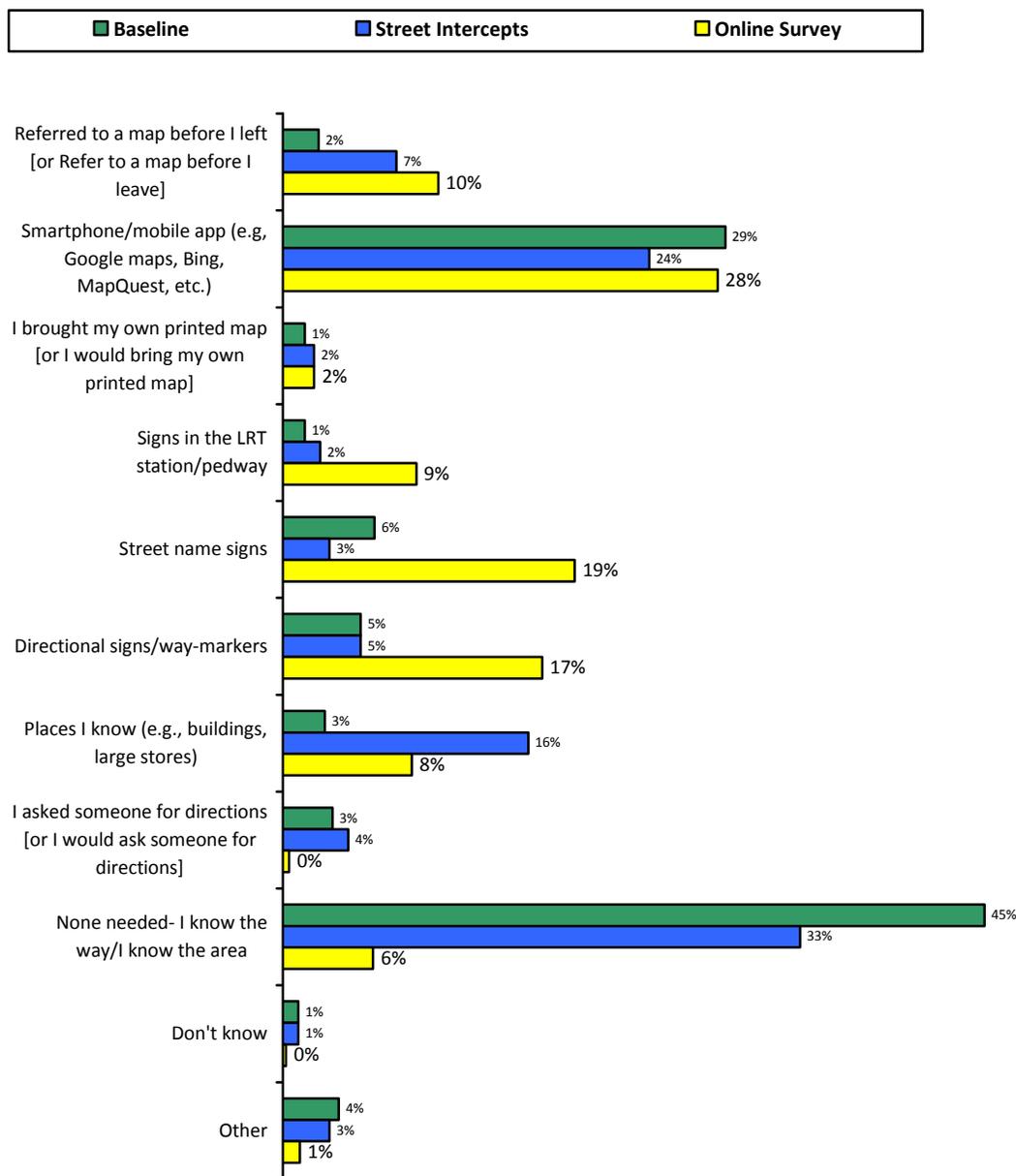
In the street intercepts, respondents were asked for the types of information that helped them find their way on their journey today, or in the online survey for what types of information they would normally use when they are walking around downtown Edmonton. In the street intercepts, half or more of the respondents said “None needed- I know the way/I know the area” (baseline: 60%, street intercepts: 50%). In contrast, on the online survey, only one in five respondents said that when walking around downtown Edmonton, no wayfinding information was needed/they knew the way/knew the area (20%). In the street intercepts, one in five of the people interviewed in the street intercepts said that they used a smartphone/mobile app such as Google maps, Bing, MapQuest, etc. to find their way for that journey (baseline: 22%, street intercepts: 22%), compared to 60% of the online survey respondents who used these apps. In the online survey, other wayfinding information sources that were mentioned frequently were: places I know, e.g., buildings, large stores (81%), street name signs (79%), signs in the LRT station/pedway (54%), referring to a map before they leave (47%) and directional signs/way-markers (41%).

**Wayfinding Information Sources**



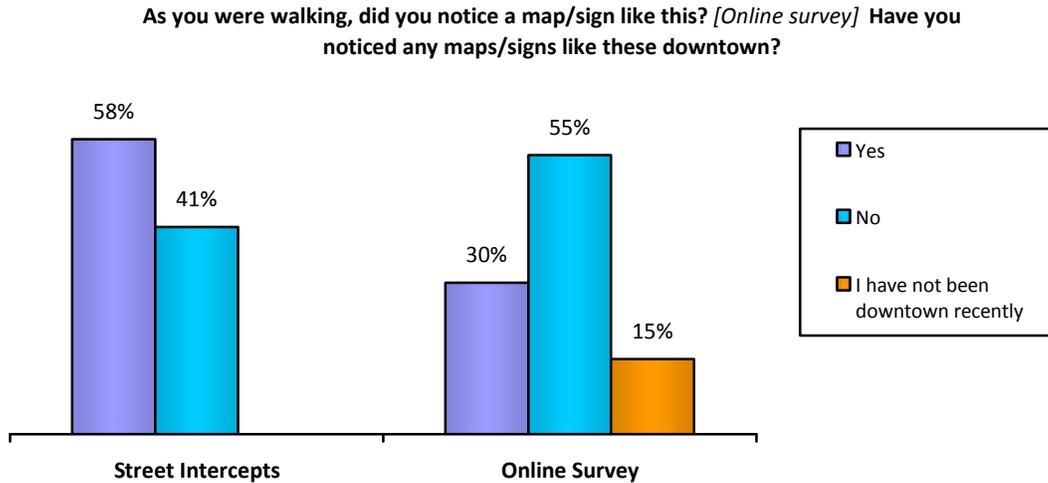
When asked for what was most important of those wayfinding sources, in the street intercepts, the most frequently mentioned response chosen was “None needed- I know the way/I know the area” (baseline: 45%, street intercepts: 33%); this is in contrast to the online survey where only 6% chose “None needed- I know the way/I know the area” when walking around downtown Edmonton. The next most frequently mentioned wayfinding information source was a smartphone/mobile app, where close to one quarter of respondents from each of the 3 surveys chose this source (baseline: 29%, street intercepts: 24% and online survey: 28%). On the online survey, close to one in five also mentioned street name signs (19%) and directional signs on the street/way-markers (17%) as important wayfinding sources.

### Most Important Wayfinding Information Source

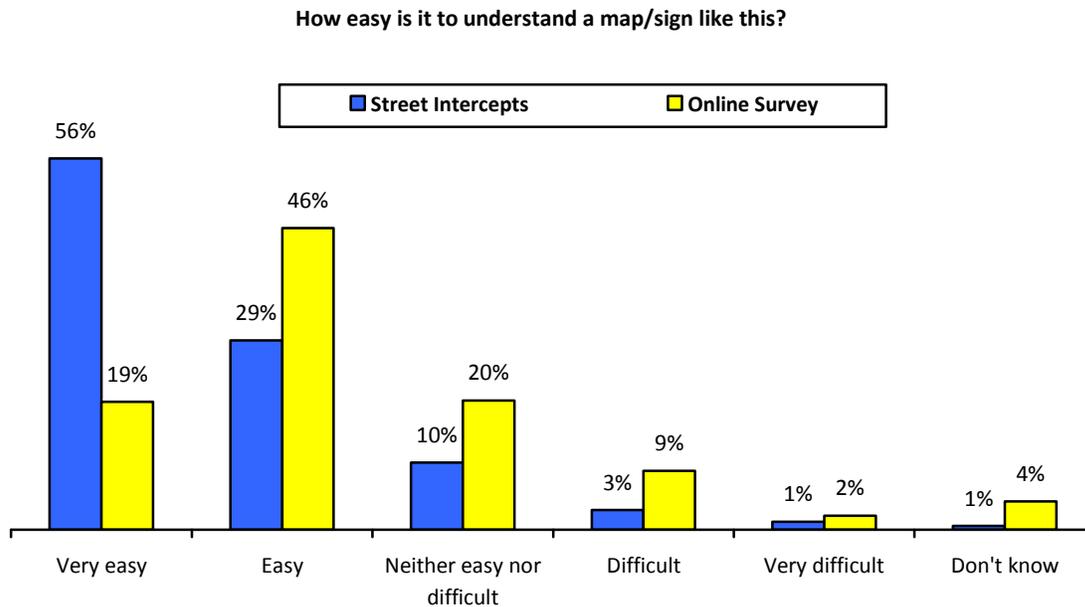


### Have They Noticed the Prototype Signs?

In the street intercepts, more than half of the respondents noticed the prototype signs as they were walking (58%). In the online survey, less than a third of respondents (30%) said that they noticed maps/signs like these (Note: A picture was shown on the online survey and on the paper copies, as well as a description was provided of some of the elements on the signs) and 15% said that they had not been downtown recently.



Respondents were asked how easy it was to understand a map/sign like this. Respondents to the street intercept interviews were more likely to say that the map was “Very Easy” to understand compared to the online survey respondents, likely because they were able to see the full-scale map in front of them (street intercepts: 56% “Very easy” and 29% “Easy”, vs. online survey: 19% “Very easy” and 46% “Easy”).



### Experiential Evaluations in the Street Intercepts

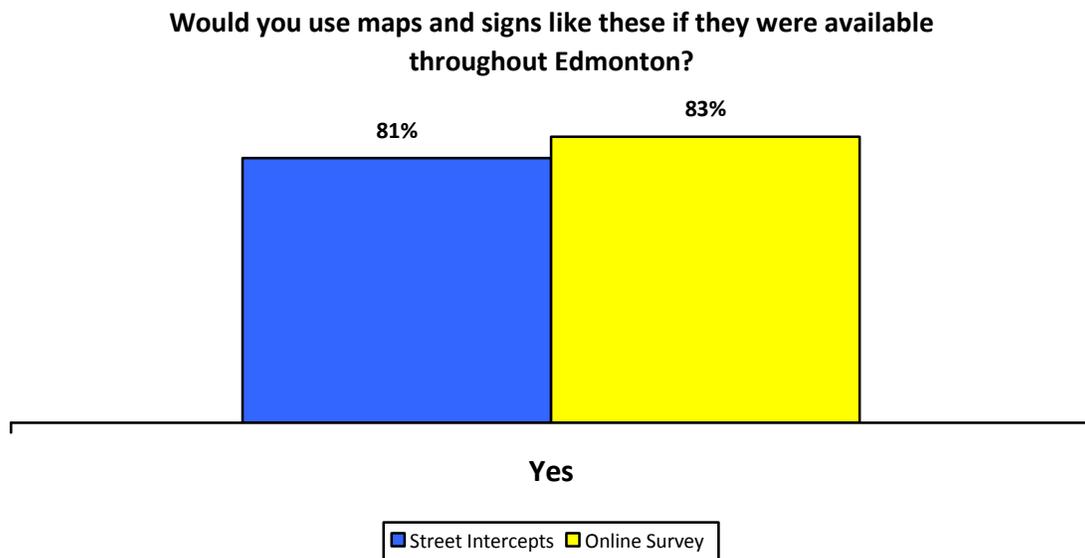
In the street intercepts, respondents were asked several questions to evaluate their experiences using and understanding the signs.

- Over half of the respondents (58%) said that it would take 5 minutes to under 10 minutes to walk to the Bay/Enterprise Square LRT station, and an additional 20% said it would take more than 10 minutes.
- For nearly half of the respondents (47%), it took them less than 5 seconds to say where Canada Place is on the map, and an additional 43% took between 5 and 30 seconds.
- For half of the respondents (50%), it took them less than 5 seconds to say where 103 Street is on the map, and an additional 42% took between 5 and 30 seconds.
- Almost all respondents were correct (91%) when asked to say which way north is on the map.

Based on the above experiential evaluations the map/sign functioned reasonably well as people were able to understand the information as it was displayed.

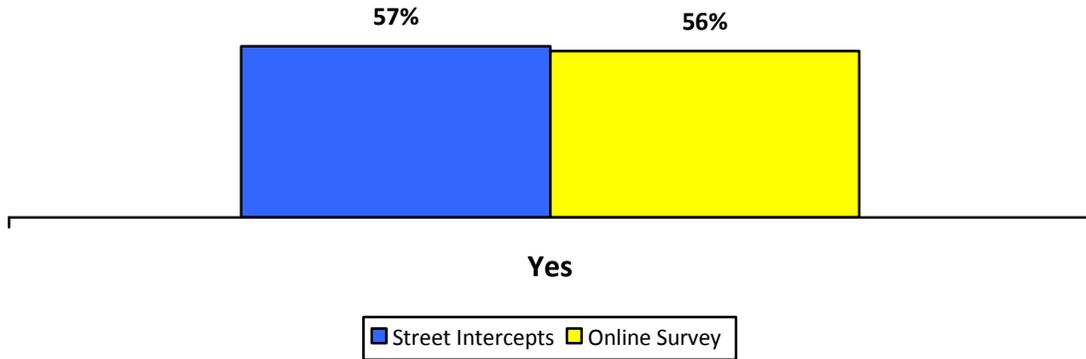
### Potential Use of Maps and Signs Like These

Over eight in ten of the respondents to the street intercept interviews and the online survey said that they would use maps and signs like these if they were available throughout Edmonton (street intercepts: 81% said “yes” and in the online survey, 83% said “yes”).



When asked if they thought they would walk more or further if maps and signs like these were available throughout Edmonton, more than half of the respondents said “yes” (street intercepts: 57%, online survey: 56%).

**Do you think you would walk more or further if maps and signs like these were available throughout Edmonton?**



## Agreement With Statements About the Benefits of Wayfinding

Respondents were asked to give ratings from 1 to 5 where “1=Strongly Disagree” and “5=Strongly Agree” about six statements that gave various benefits of wayfinding. When you look at the total agreement (combined ratings of “4” and “5”), a majority agreed with each of the statements. Looking at the benefit statements rated highest to lowest when asked for their agreement (combined ratings of “4” and “5”), “Do you think that a wayfinding system will...”:

- **Increase people’s confidence in finding their way around an area** (street intercepts: 90%, online survey: 87%)
- **Encourage exploration/discovery of an area** (street intercepts: 87%, online survey: 83%)
- **Improve the overall image of Edmonton** (street intercepts: 87%, online survey: 79%)
- **Increase visits to businesses in the local area** (street intercepts: 63%, online survey: 68%)
- **Increase the frequency of visits to various pedestrian-focused areas of Edmonton** (street intercepts: 61%, online survey: 67%)
- **Increase use of multi-modal transportation, i.e., public transit (bus/LRT), biking, walking, etc.** (street intercepts: 63%, online survey: 63%)

### Do you think that a wayfinding system will... ?

