

Survey Report on the proposal to form a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

Prepared for the Special Committee on Electoral Reform
of the 35th Yukon Legislative Assembly
by Yukon Bureau of Statistics

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Survey Report on the proposal to form a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

Introduction and Methodology

The Survey on the proposal to form a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform was conducted by Yukon Bureau of Statistics (YBS) on behalf of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform of the 35th Yukon Legislative Assembly. This survey was a follow-up survey based on the results of the Yukon Electoral Reform Survey and Yukoners' feedback in the hearings and submissions. The survey sought input from Yukoners on the formation of a Citizens' Assembly to assess electoral systems and recommend whether the current system should be retained or another system should be adopted.

The survey was a census of all Yukon residents aged 16 years and over. YBS started sending invitations to all eligible individuals in the Bureau's Household Survey Frame on January 12, 2023, and the process was completed in a week. Each eligible person received either an email invitation with a unique and non-shareable link or a letter invitation with a unique PIN and a simplified URL. Individuals in the 65 years and older age group, whose email addresses were not available in the survey frame, received a letter invitation along with a printed copy of the questionnaire. The initial invitation was followed by reminders, and the survey was closed on March 5, 2023.

Out of 36,288 eligible individuals, 6,354 completed the survey with a response rate of 17.5%. The percentage distribution of responses by stratum (i.e., electoral district, age group, and gender) was compared with that of the eligible population. The difference between the two distributions by stratum ranged from -0.3 to +0.5 percentage points. Calibration factors were derived for each stratum to minimize the distributional differences and to better represent the electoral districts and demographics. The distribution of the calibration factors was compared with the distributions of the population and responses to validate their alignments, and then the calibration factors were applied to responses.

In most surveys of the general population without any non-response follow-up, older adults and women tend to respond in a relatively higher proportion than other demographic groups, and this survey was no exception. Therefore, calibration of responses was necessary to minimize any participation bias and to improve the distributional balance of responses. The results presented in this report reflect the responses of the survey participants without unreasonably under- or over-representing any groups based on geography, age group, or gender. The application of the calibration factors helped reduce the participation bias and improve the survey results. However, the results may not be representative of the eligible population, as those with a particular interest in the survey topic may have been more likely than others to participate in the survey.

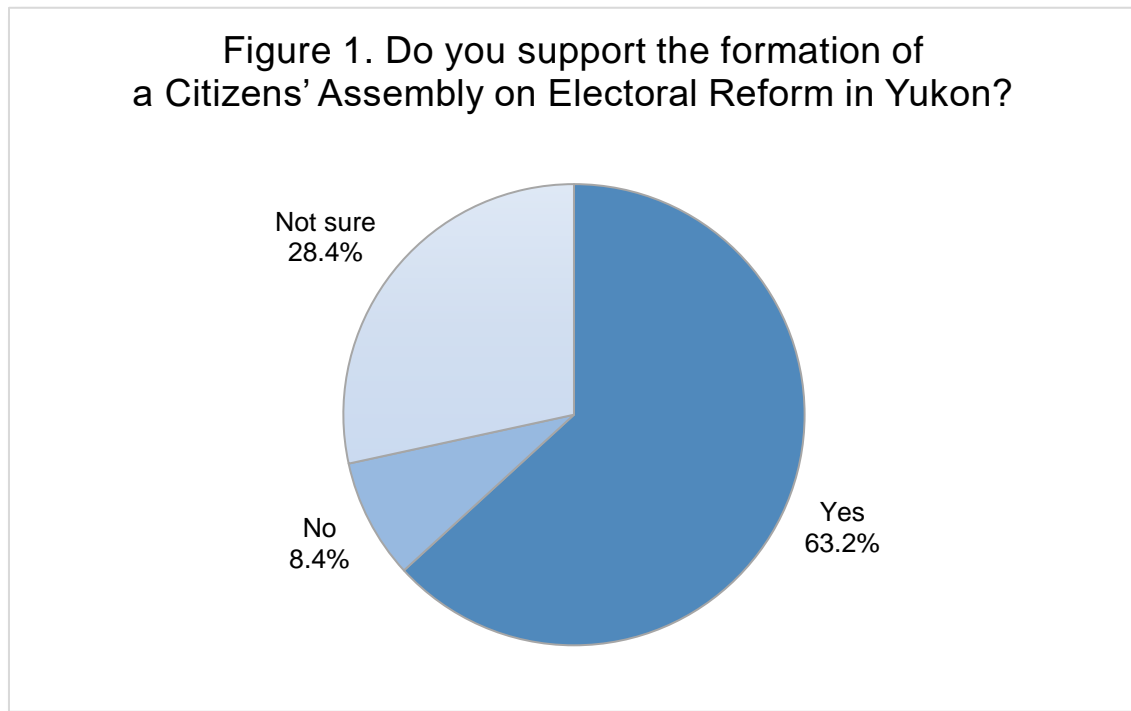
Results

The survey questionnaire contained five questions. The first question asked respondents if they supported the formation of a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform in Yukon. The remaining questions, in order, were about the size of the Citizens' Assembly, other considerations for the makeup of an Assembly, preferred methods for providing input to an Assembly, and respondents' interest in participating as a member of a Citizens' Assembly.

Results of the analysis of responses to each question are presented below.

Support for the formation of a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

The majority (63.2%) of respondents supported the formation of a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform in Yukon, while 8.2% did not. Slightly over a quarter (28.4%) of respondents said they were not sure (Figure 1).¹

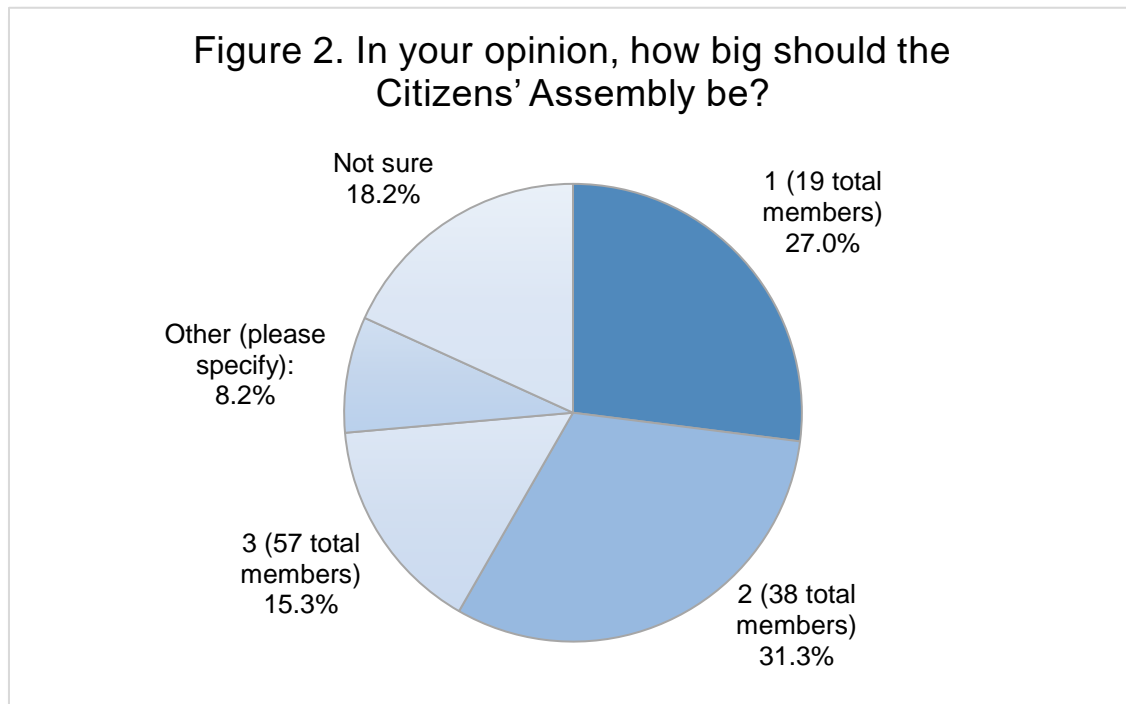


¹ In the Yukon Electoral Reform Survey (2022), 33.1% agreed or strongly agreed that broad public support for changes to the electoral system should be gauged through the creation of a citizen's assembly; 33.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. It is likely that the concept of a Citizens' Assembly was not clear to the respondents of the Yukon Electoral Reform Survey.

Size of the Citizens' Assembly

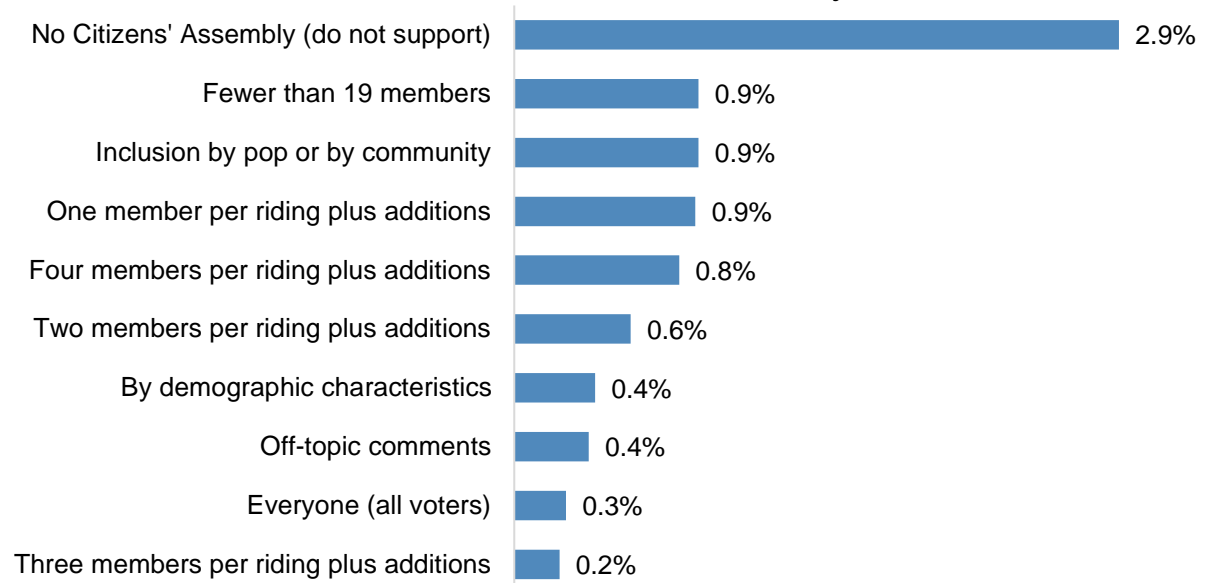
The question presented several response options for the size of the Citizens' Assembly: one, two, or three members per riding, or respondents could select "Other" and type in a comment.

The most popular option was two members per riding (31.3%), followed closely by one member per riding (27.0%). While 15.3% of respondents said they preferred the option for three members per riding, 18.2% said they were not sure, and 8.2% selected "Other" (Figure 2).



Comments provided under "Other" were thematically analyzed, and ten themes emerged from the data (Figure 3). Some respondents who had selected "No" in response to Question 1 used the comment field to reiterate and explain their position on the topic. Their explanations included concerns that the process would be inefficient, costly, or unlikely to be successful. Some said they favoured a referendum instead of a Citizens' Assembly, while others said they wished to see elected officials do the work or they preferred the current electoral system. Other common responses included a desire to see a Citizens' Assembly with fewer than 19 members; selection of members by population or community rather than by riding; and inclusion of additional members to represent specific groups such as Yukon First Nations or youth.

Figure 3. Other considerations specified for the size of a Citizens' Assembly



Other considerations for the makeup of a Citizens' Assembly

About a third (32.5%) of the respondents opined that there should be other considerations for the makeup of a Citizens' Assembly (Figure 4). Their comments were coded into eleven themes (Figure 5). In some cases, a comment fell under several themes. Many respondents wrote about the need for diversity and inclusion amongst the members of the Assembly, while others raised issues such as the need for political neutrality, skills and experience of the members. Some respondents wrote about the need for the Assembly members to be representative of the Yukon's population as a whole.

Figure 4. In your opinion, are there other considerations for the makeup of a Citizens' Assembly?

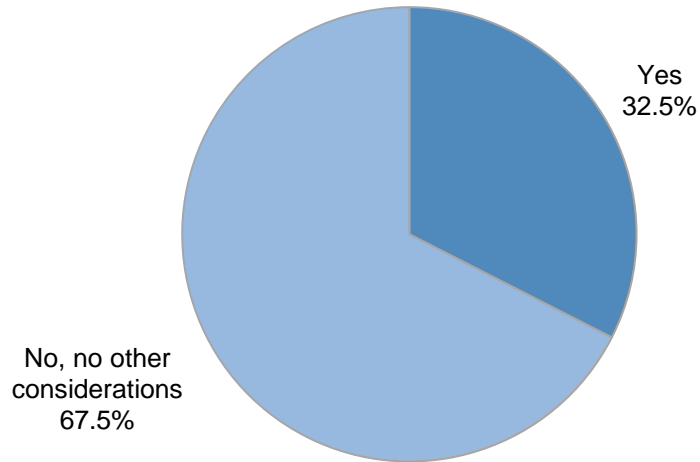
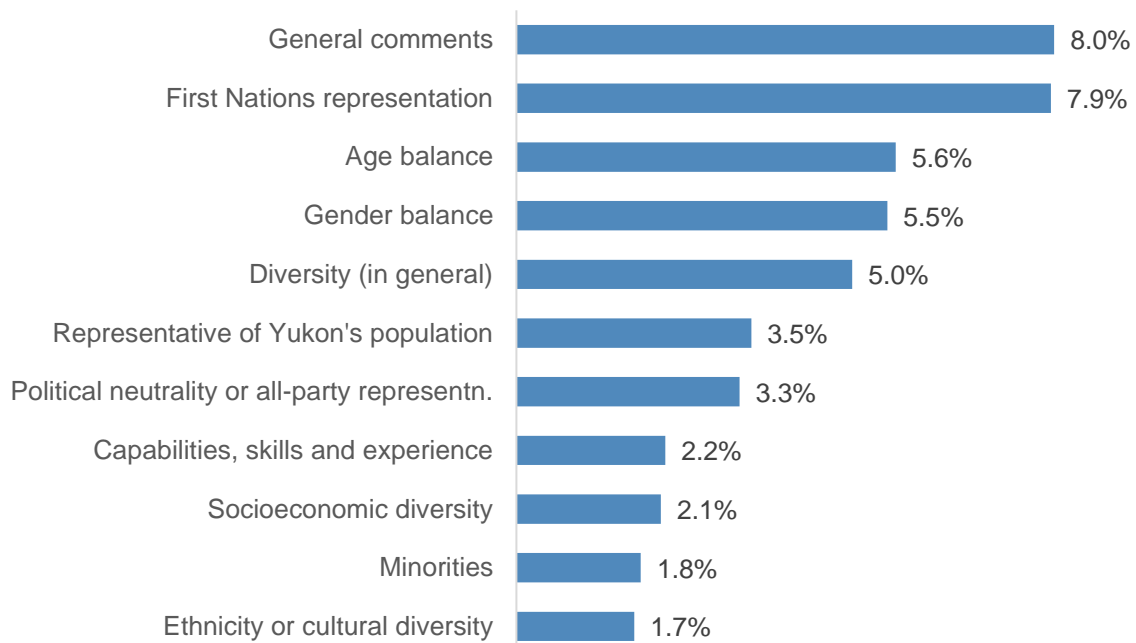


Figure 5. Other considerations specified for the makeup of a Citizens' Assembly



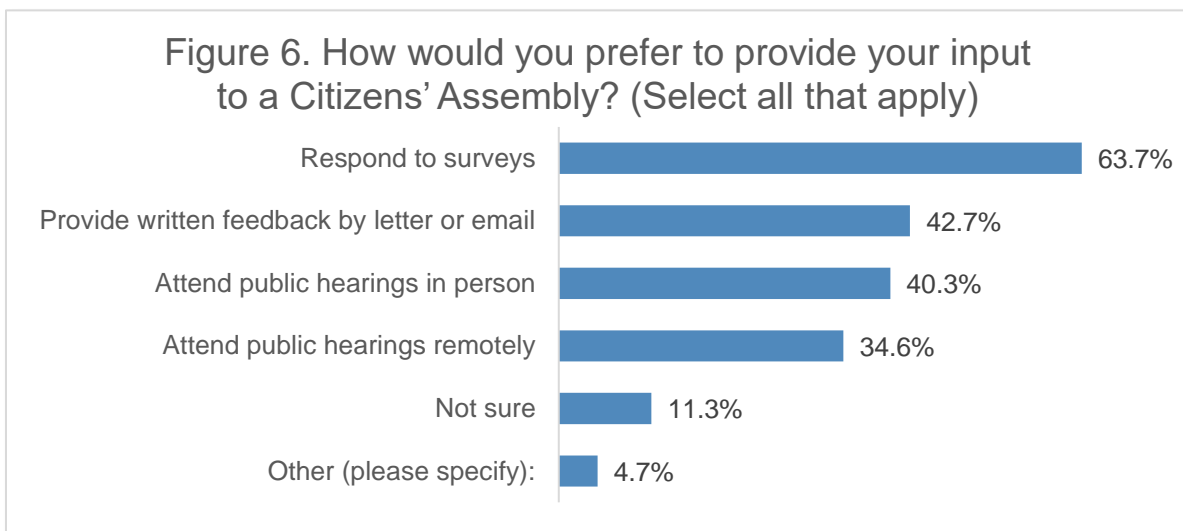
Preferred methods of providing input to a Citizens' Assembly

A Citizens' Assembly could engage with the public to gather feedback on potential options for electoral reform. The question presented several response options for how the public could provide their input to the Assembly; respondents could select as many options as they wished.

Surveys were the most popular option (63.7%)², followed by provisions for written feedback by letter or email (42.7%), attending public hearings in person (40.3%), and attending public hearings by teleconference or video conference (34.6%) (Figure 6). While 4.7% of the respondents provided comments via the "Other" category, many of those comments were general in nature. Some respondents who had selected "No" in response to Question 1 used the comment field to reiterate their position on the topic.

Other suggestions included:

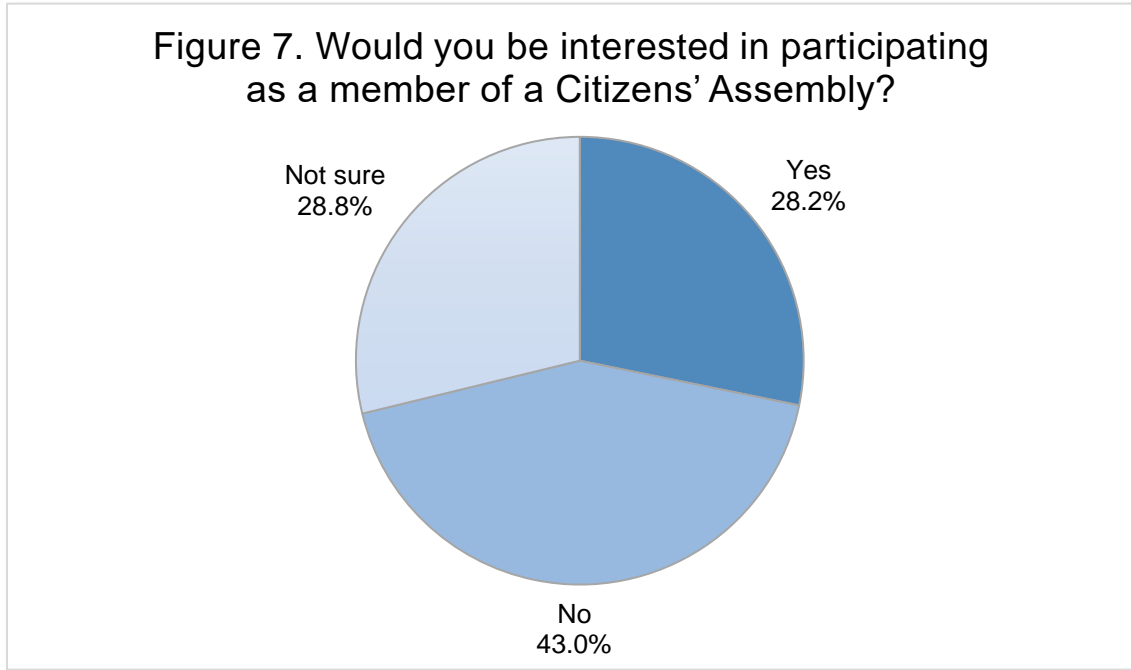
- Online discussion forums and social media engagements;
- Workshops, meetings, focus groups and town hall discussions;
- In-person and online educational sessions;
- Targeted engagement with specific audiences such as First Nation governments and schools;
- Personal outreach (telephone, mail, and door-to-door);
- A referendum; and
- Mock trials of different voting systems to demonstrate how they work.



² This response is not generalizable, as survey respondents are more likely than non-respondents to indicate their preference for surveys.

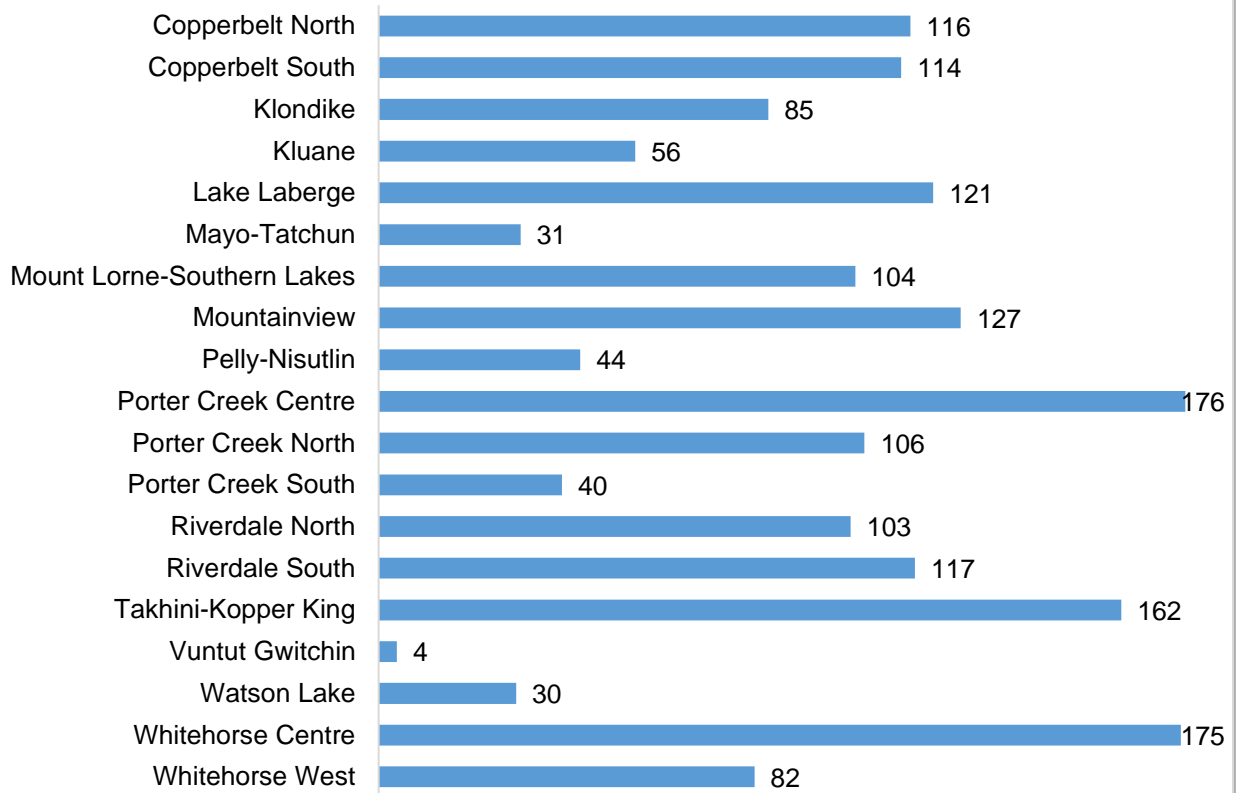
Respondents' interest in participating as a member of a Citizens' Assembly

A total of 1,793 respondents (28.2% of all respondents) said they would be interested in participating as a member of a Citizens' Assembly (Figure 7)³. By electoral district, interest in participating ranged from 4 to 176 (Figure 8).



³ Responses to the question about interest in participating in a Citizens' Assembly are not calibrated.

Figure 8. Number of respondents who expressed an interest in participating as a member of a Citizens' Assembly, by electoral district



Appendix 1. Data tables

Q1. Do you support the formation of a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform in Yukon?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4015	63.2
No	533	8.4
Not sure	1806	28.4
Total	6354	100

Q2. In your opinion, how big should the Citizens' Assembly be?

	Frequency	Percent
1 (19 total Citizens' Assembly members)	1714	27.0
2 (38 total Citizens' Assembly members)	1988	31.3
3 (57 total Citizens' Assembly members)	971	15.3
Other (please specify):	522	8.2
Not sure	1159	18.2
Total	6354	100

Q2. Other responses (only one category was applied to each comment):

	Frequency	Percent
No Citizens' Assembly (do not support)	187	2.9
Inclusion by population (not riding) or by community	57	0.9
Fewer than 19 members	57	0.9
One member per riding plus additions (e.g. First Nations, youth)	56	0.9
Four members per riding plus additions	51	0.8
Two members per riding plus additions	36	0.6
By demographic characteristics	25	0.4
Off-topic comments	23	0.4
Everyone (all voters)	16	0.3
Three members per riding plus additions	14	0.2
Total	522	8.2

Q3. In your opinion, are there other considerations for the makeup of a Citizens' Assembly?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes, please specify:	2064	32.5
No, no other considerations	4290	67.5
Total	6354	100

Q3. Other considerations specified (more than one category was applied to some comments):

	Frequency	Percent
General comments	506	8.0
First Nations representation	503	7.9
Age balance (e.g. youth, seniors)	357	5.6
Gender balance	349	5.5
Diversity (in general)	316	5.0
Representative of Yukon's population as a whole	221	3.5
Political neutrality of members, or representation from various political parties	210	3.3
Capabilities, skills and experience of members	140	2.2
Socioeconomic diversity	136	2.1
Minorities (e.g. Francophones, visible minorities, people with disabilities)	117	1.8
Ethnicity or cultural diversity	111	1.7

Q4. How would you prefer to provide your input to a Citizens' Assembly? Select all that apply:

	Frequency	Percent
Attend public hearings in person	2563	40.3
Attend public hearings by teleconference or video conference	2201	34.6
Provide written feedback by letter or email	2716	42.7
Respond to surveys	4044	63.7
Other (please specify):	301	4.7
Not sure	717	11.3

Q4. Other suggestions (only one category was applied to each comment):

	Frequency	Percent
No Citizens' Assembly (do not support)	121	1.9
General comment	51	0.8
Ideas for engagement	129	2.0
Total	301	4.7

Q5. Would you be interested in participating as a member of a Citizens' Assembly?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	1793	28.2
No	2730	43.0
Not sure	1831	28.8
Total	6354	100

**Q5. Would you be interested in participating as a member of a Citizens' Assembly?
 – by Electoral district
 (Note: results in this table are derived from uncalibrated data)**

Electoral District	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
Copperbelt North	116	221	120	457
Copperbelt South	114	170	126	410
Klondike	85	111	96	292
Kluane	56	91	64	211
Lake Laberge	121	189	104	414
Mayo-Tatchun	31	57	39	127
Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	104	171	102	377
Mountainview	127	157	123	407
Pelly-Nisutlin	44	57	30	131
Porter Creek Centre	176	277	192	645
Porter Creek North	106	181	145	432
Porter Creek South	40	101	57	198
Riverdale North	103	191	110	404
Riverdale South	117	173	92	382
Takhini-Kopper King	162	183	146	491
Vuntut Gwitchin	4	7	6	17
Watson Lake	30	65	46	141
Whitehorse Centre	175	186	144	505
Whitehorse West	82	142	89	313
Total	1793	2730	1831	6354

Appendix 2. Survey questionnaire

Survey on the proposal to form a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

On behalf of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform of the 35th Yukon Legislative Assembly, Yukon Bureau of Statistics conducted the Yukon Electoral Reform Survey last winter to collect Yukoners' input on electoral reform. The Committee also held public hearings with expert witnesses and community residents, and received written submissions from organizations and individuals.

This survey is a follow-up survey based on the results of the Yukon Electoral Reform Survey and Yukoners' feedback in the hearings and submissions. The survey is seeking input from Yukoners on the formation of a Citizens' Assembly to assess electoral systems and recommend whether the current system should be retained or another system should be adopted.

Your participation is important to ensure that the information collected in this survey is as comprehensive as possible.

Your response will remain confidential and protected according to the provisions of Yukon's *Statistics Act*. Non-identifiable and aggregated information will be used for reporting results to protect your privacy and data confidentiality.

The survey should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Survey on the proposal to form a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

What is a Citizens' Assembly?

- A Citizens' Assembly (also known as citizens' jury, citizens' panel, or policy jury) is an independent, non-partisan body formed of randomly selected individuals from a pool of interested citizens to deliberate on important issues.
- A Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform would assess systems for electing Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly and recommend a voting system (either the current system or a new system).
- Should the Citizens' Assembly recommend that a new system be adopted, the question of whether or not to adopt the new system would be put to Yukoners, through a referendum or plebiscite.
- [Click here](#) to read how a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform was formed in other provinces.

Q1. Do you support the formation of a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform in Yukon?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q2. In your opinion, how big should the Citizens' Assembly be?

Members of a Citizens' Assembly can be randomly selected from each of the 19 electoral districts (sometimes referred to as ridings or constituencies) to have representation from across the Yukon. Note, if there are not enough individuals interested in becoming a member within an electoral district, a completely uniform representation of all electoral districts may not be possible.

- 1 (19 total Citizens' Assembly members)
- 2 (38 total Citizens' Assembly members)
- 3 (57 total Citizens' Assembly members)
- Other (please specify): _____
- Not sure

Q3. In your opinion, are there other considerations for the makeup of a Citizens' Assembly?

- Yes, please specify: _____
- No, no other considerations

Q4. A Citizens' Assembly could engage with the public to gather feedback on potential options for electoral reform. How would you prefer to provide your input to a Citizens' Assembly? Select all that apply:

- Attend public hearings in person
- Attend public hearings by teleconference or video conference
- Provide written feedback by letter or email
- Respond to surveys
- Other (please specify): _____
- Not sure

Q5. Would you be interested in participating as a member of a Citizens' Assembly?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Citizens' Assembly in Canadian Provinces

The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform (2003) was formed of 161 randomly selected citizens — one female and one male member from each electoral district; two Indigenous members, and a chair. The selection process considered gender balance, age group representation, and geographical distribution of the population.

- Random invitations were mailed out (200 per riding);
- Those who were interested were entered into a draw;
- Information sessions were held for all those selected in the first draw;
- A final draw was held amongst those who were still interested;
- Two additional representatives from First Nation communities were added.

The Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform (2006) was formed of 103 randomly selected citizens — one from each electoral district of the province — controlling for age distribution of the province. Amongst the members, 52 were female and 51 were male.

- Random invitations were mailed out to a selection of potential candidates from the voter registry, excluding elected officials;
- Those who expressed interest in participating were entered into a draw, and those who were selected were invited to join selection meetings;
- At each selection meeting, candidates decided whether to put their names into a ballot box from which one member and two alternates were selected.