

Community Perceptions of the RCMP

A Report on the Survey

Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Yukon Police Council, I would like to offer my sincere appreciation to everyone who participated in this survey, particularly during these difficult times.

What we heard is that while the RCMP has demonstrated success in certain areas, there are also opportunities for systemic improvement. There continues to be opportunity for change, including continued efforts in providing service to marginalized groups, a need for increased awareness around mental wellness, and to meaningfully and proactively engage with communities. There were many positive comments about RCMP members – mostly recognizing that they provide invaluable service and face difficult situations. In the interest of transparency, we have provided a website link with more information about what Yukoners contributed.

We value the input of Yukoners. This critical feedback will guide our policing priorities over the coming years, and we look forward to working with all Yukoners on this journey toward effective policing and safe communities.

John Phelps, Chair, Yukon Police Council

To see more results from the survey, please visit:

yukon.ca/yukon-police-council



Photo courtesy of Government of Yukon

2020-21

Yukon Police Council Members

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Rob Schneider
Marsh Lake

Dr. Janet Welch
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John Phelps, Chair
Whitehorse



Your community voice.

Yukon Police Council

Serving Yukoners by promoting ongoing dialogue to foster positive relationships between Yukon citizens, the Yukon RCMP ("M" Division) and the Department of Justice.

Note: The Community Perceptions of the RCMP survey was primarily conducted online due to COVID-19 in the fall of 2020. Nearly 2,000 respondents participated from every community and representative of many demographics.

Building Relationships of Trust

Public messages to the RCMP

- ▶ **Promote safer communities.** Strengthen efforts to combat crime associated with gangs and drug dealers operating in our communities, property theft and damage, domestic violence, alcohol and drugs, and greater enforcement of the rules that govern traffic safety.
- ▶ **Increase inclusivity.** Continue efforts to understand and support the policing needs of youth, Elders, Indigenous people, visible minorities and the LGBTQ2S+ community.
- ▶ **Focus on client service.** Demonstrate greater consistency in showing patience, courtesy and respect when dealing with the public, particularly the victims of crime and their families.



Photo courtesy of Government of Yukon

- ▶ **Improve approach to dealing with mental health challenges.** Ensure members are better trained and more appropriately equipped to deal with the mental health and wellness of those they serve.
- ▶ **Address racism.** Acknowledge and reduce systemic factors that contribute to racism while making sure all Yukoners receive culturally-sensitive and appropriate policing services.
- ▶ **Increase visibility and presence.** Enhance public visibility by increasing foot patrols and in person attendance so that members connect with Yukoners more frequently and in more meaningful ways.
- ▶ **Promote traffic and pedestrian safety.** Increase initiatives that keep our roadways safe by enforcing traffic laws, and cracking down on distracted and impaired driving.
- ▶ **Demonstrate greater accountability.** Ensure that members are held accountable for their actions and for the level of service they provide. This is a key step in building and maintaining relationships of trust with all Yukon communities.

For more information,
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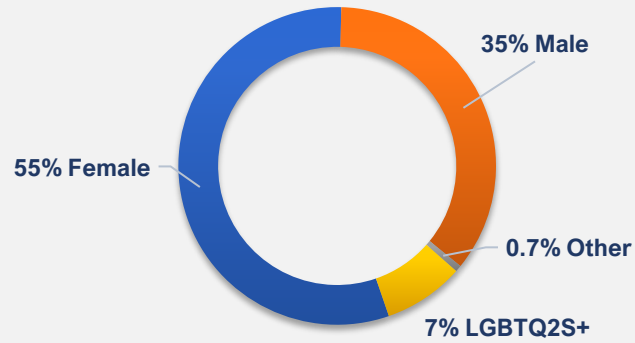
Community Perceptions of the RCMP in Yukon: Themes and Charts

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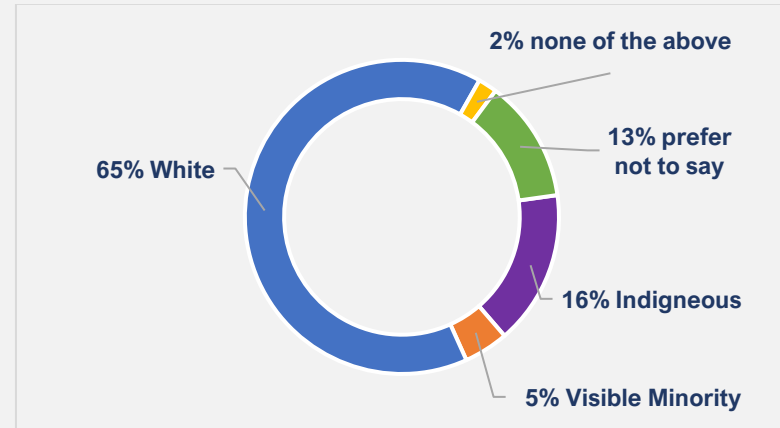
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About the Respondents: Key Demographic Information

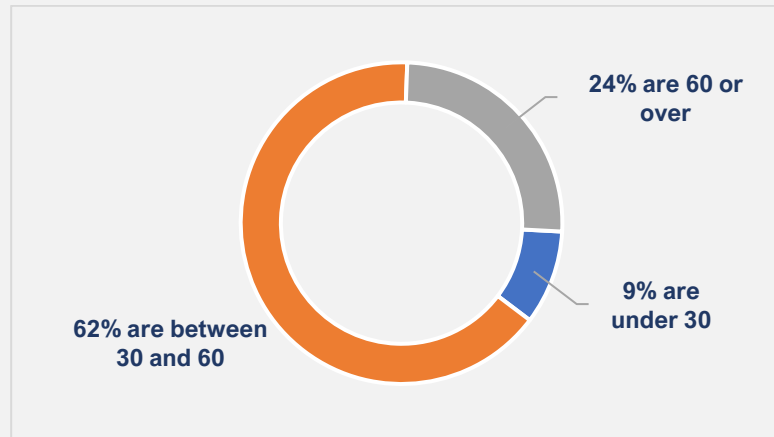
By Gender Identity



By How They Self-Identify

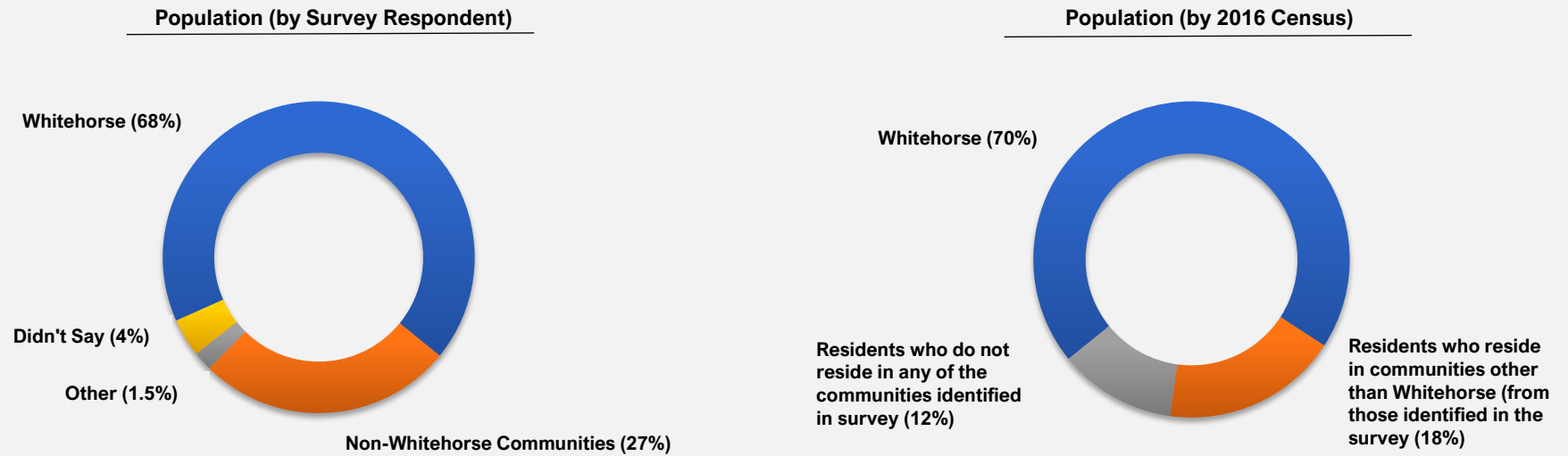


By Age Distribution



Population, by Region¹

This chart shows the population distribution of the survey relative to Yukon's population (as identified by the 2016 Census).



Non-Whitehorse Communities (from Survey):

West Region (5% response rate, but 2% of Yukon population)

Haines Junction, Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing

North Region (13% response rate, but 10% of population)

Carmacks, Dawson, Faro, Ross River, Mayo, Old Crow, Pelly Crossing

Southern Lakes Region (9% response rate, but 8% of population)

Marsh Lake, Carcross, Tagish, Mt. Lorne, Watson Lake, Teslin

¹ The population percentage for each community is based on Census 2016 statistics. While the Yukon Stats Bureau has 2019 population figures, these are actually estimates based on the Census, and for which the populations of Marsh Lake and Mt. Lorne were included in Whitehorse's numbers, which is not conducive for this study.

What We Heard: Charts and Key Themes

A. What should the RCMP focus on in terms of community policing priorities?

(by Selected Demographic Groups)

RANK		All Yukoners	LGBTQ2S+	Females	Males	Vis. Minorities	Indigenous	White
1	gangs/drug-dealers	68%	56%	69%	65%	63%	72%	68%
2	property theft/B&E	54%	45%	53%	56%	65%	51%	54%
3	domestic violence	47%	54%	51%	42%	40%	56%	46%
4	alcohol/drug offences	46%	47%	49%	48%	48%	55%	44%
5	speeding/traffic safety	43%	37%	38%	45%	40%	37%	45%
6	violence against Indigenous Women and Girls	40%	66%	43%	31%	42%	56%	38%
7	sexual violence	39%	54%	41%	35%	42%	56%	37%
8	working with children/youth	33%	19%	38%	31%	35%	40%	31%
9	needs of vulnerable populations	31%	47%	34%	25%	30%	46%	29%
10	local gov't/NGOs partnerships	28%	42%	32%	25%	32%	37%	27%
11	Indigenous approaches	27%	52%	31%	21%	26%	49%	24%
12	people/sex trafficking	22%	24%	23%	18%	25%	28%	23%

B. How the RCMP fares at building relationships of trust and engagement with Yukoners.

		Excellent Job	Reasonable Job	Poor Job	
Excellent Job, Ranked	All Respondents	16%	39%	36%	Poor Job, Ranked
1. Males (23%)	Females	15%	39%	36%	1. LGBTQ2S+ (55%)
2. Non-Whitehorse (22%)	Males	23%	39%	32%	2. Indigenous (48%)
3. White (16%)	LGBTQ2S+	5%	32%	55%	3. Visible Minority (42%)
4. ALL (16%)	White	16%	41%	34%	4. Whitehorse (38%)
5. Females (15%)	Indigenous	14%	30%	48%	5. Females (36%)
6. Visible Minority (15%)	Visible Minority	15%	33%	42%	6. ALL (36%)
7. Indigenous (14%)					7. Non-Whitehorse (35%)
8. Whitehorse (13%)	Whitehorse	13%	41%	38%	8. White (34%)
9. LGBTQ2S+ (5%)	Non-Whitehorse	22%	36%	35%	9. Males (32%)

Requested Analysis:

LGBTQ2S+ Whitehorse	13%	41%	38%
LGBTQ2S+ Non-Whitehorse	22%	36%	35%
Indigenous Females	16%	41%	34%
Non-Indigenous Females	14%	30%	48%

C. How the RCMP fares at enforcing laws equally and fairly.

	race and/or culture	income level	gender identity	age	sexual orientation
Excellent Job	26%	27%	29%	30%	28%
Reasonable Job	35%	29%	32%	35%	30%
Poor Job	27%	27%	19%	17%	15%
Don't Know/No Opinion	12%	17%	21%	18%	27%



By Selected Demographic Groups	race and/or culture		income level		gender identity		age		sexual orientation	
	excellent	poor	excellent	poor	excellent	poor	excellent	poor	excellent	poor
Male	37%	23%	39%	23%	39%	16%	41%	15%	39%	13%
Female	24%	26%	23%	24%	26%	18%	27%	14%	25%	13%
LGBTQ2S+	10%	48%	13%	45%	13%	32%	16%	23%	15%	30%
Indigenous	19%	39%	19%	37%	19%	29%	20%	27%	20%	23%
White	27%	24%	27%	24%	29%	17%	31%	14%	28%	13%
Visible Minority	31%	31%	31%	33%	33%	25%	33%	22%	33%	16%
from Whitehorse	25%	27%	27%	27%	28%	19%	30%	16%	28%	14%
non-Whitehorse	29%	27%	27%	25%	30%	20%	30%	19%	29%	16%

D. Critical factors in establishing trust with Yukoners.

(out of 12 options, by Demographic Group)

	#1	#2	#3	#4
All Respondents	understand my community and its people (84%)	timely, sincere communication (80%)	seen as a partner in crime prevention/education (78%)	openness about their work in the community (73%)
Men	understand my community and its people (75%)	seen as a partner in crime prevention/education (74%)	timely, sincere communication (70%)	openness about their work in the community (68%)
Women	understand my community and its people (90%)	timely, sincere communication (86%)	seen as a partner in crime prevention/education (84%)	understanding Yukon history and Indigenous Relations (82%)
LGBTQ2S+	understanding Yukon history and Indigenous Relations (90%)	understand my community and its people (89%)	a clear process to address complaints (87%)	timely, sincere communication (82%)
	#1	#2	#3	#4
White	understand my community and its people (85%)	timely, sincere communication (82%)	seen as a partner in crime prevention/education (79%)	openness about their work in the community (76%)
Indigenous	understand my community and its people (89%)	understanding Yukon history and Indigenous Relations (86%)	a clear process to address complaints (79%)	timely, sincere communication (79%)
Visible Minority	timely, sincere communication (85%)	understand my community and its people (83%)	seen as a partner in crime prevention/education (76%)	openness about their work in the community (75%)
	#1	#2	#3	#4
Whitehorse	understand my community and its people (81%)	timely, sincere communication (80%)	seen as a partner in crime prevention/education (76%)	openness about their work in the community (73%)
Non-Whitehorse	understand my community and its people (89%)	timely, sincere communication (82%)	seen as a partner in crime prevention/education (82%)	understanding Yukon history and Indigenous Relations (79%)
West Region	understand my community and its people (83%)	openness about their work in the community (80%)	timely, sincere communication (79%)	seen as a partner in crime prevention/education (78%)
North Region	understand my community and its people (91%)	seen as a partner in crime prevention/education (85%)	timely, sincere communication (83%)	understanding Yukon history and Indigenous Relations (83%)
Southern Lakes	understand my community and its people (88%)	timely, sincere communication (82%)	seen as a partner in crime prevention/education (81%)	a clear process to address complaints (79%)

E. The extent to which the RCMP currently exhibits certain trust-building qualities.

Overall Ranking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	visible and present in the community	demonstrates integrity and honesty	understands the issues facing my community	involved in the social fabric of my community	understands my community and its people	provides timely and sincere communication	demonstrates transparency and openness	understands Yukon history and impact on Indigenous people
I agree	47%	44%	42%	39%	36%	36%	28%	26%
I'm neutral	27%	25%	26%	31%	31%	28%	29%	27%
I disagree	25%	27%	24%	18%	26%	30%	35%	28%

By Selected Demographic Groups	visible and present in the community		demonstrates integrity and honesty		understands the issues facing my community		involved in the social fabric of my community		understands my community and its people		provides timely and sincere communication		demonstrates transparency and openness		understands Yukon history and impact on Indigenous people	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
	Male	51%	23%	53%	24%	41%	22%	43%	15%	41%	22%	38%	27%	34%	32%	31%
Female	47%	25%	41%	26%	44%	25%	40%	18%	35%	27%	39%	27%	29%	34%	24%	30%
LGBTQ2S+	34%	24%	21%	48%	16%	55%	31%	29%	18%	53%	19%	44%	18%	61%	11%	55%
Indigenous	41%	28%	30%	39%	33%	43%	39%	26%	27%	45%	24%	42%	24%	48%	22%	49%
White	46%	25%	48%	24%	44%	20%	39%	15%	37%	21%	40%	26%	29%	32%	25%	23%
Visible Minority	54%	15%	39%	30%	42%	30%	34%	19%	34%	28%	24%	34%	27%	43%	22%	34%
in Whitehorse	44%	25%	46%	26%	43%	22%	34%	17%	35%	23%	39%	27%	29%	35%	25%	28%
non-Whitehorse	53%	22%	41%	30%	43%	31%	53%	19%	38%	31%	37%	31%	27%	36%	29%	28%

The final two sections provide a summary of key themes that were expressed as comments or narrative contributions as respondents completed the survey. This summary, presented alongside the preceding charts, offers qualitative data that lends context to the RCMP's ongoing efforts to build relationships of trust with Yukoners.

F. How the RCMP can continue to build relationships of trust: Key Themes

- ▶ **Promote Road and Pedestrian Safety.** Related to the above theme, many indicated that the RCMP should place significantly more focus on traffic safety, particularly in terms of consistent enforcement of traffic laws, particularly those related to impaired, dangerous and distracted driving. *[Note that 54 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Visibility and Presence.** A key theme expressed was the need for the RCMP to enhance its public visibility (for example, more foot patrols, more of a presence on highway system, etc.). Those who expressed this view suggested that people are much less likely to commit crimes if there is a consistent RCMP presence, especially in areas or at night where crime is more prevalent. Respondents also noted that RCMP officers need to connect better with Yukoners by being consistently friendly and helpful. *[Note that 34 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Cultural Training.** A number of respondents felt that RCMP service delivery would be significantly improved with more focus and effort placed on understanding Indigenous cultural protocols, traditional teachings and values, as well as ensuring appropriate and respectful interactions with Elders. These respondents also indicated that RCMP officers – particularly those new to the Yukon – need to be equipped with a better understanding of the historical relationship between the RCMP and First Nations in Yukon. *[Note that 23 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Resources.** Some respondents noted that the RCMP are under-resourced and under-supported, particularly given the number of priorities and expectations placed on the RCMP with respect to community policing. Improving service delivery likely means more policing resources, not less. *[Note that 19 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Property Theft.** Numerous respondents specifically identified property damage, thefts and break-ins as an area where the RCMP could be more responsive, as many believe that this type of crime is not taken as seriously as it should be. *[Note that 18 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Bootleggers and Drug Dealers.** Many respondents indicated that the RCMP need to do more to stem the tide of bootleggers in our communities, given the negative impact of drugs and alcohol on families and youth. *[Note that 15 respondents provided similar comments]*

- ▶ **More Focus on LGBTQ2S+/Visible Minority Community.** The RCMP need to build stronger relationships with certain groups, such as the LGBTQ2S+ community, visible minorities, Indigenous citizens and Elders. Some noted that they were disappointed that the RCMP did not respect requests to not wear their uniforms at a Pride event. Others noted that the RCMP need greater awareness of what is perceived to be a rise in the incidence of hate crimes, speech or language. *[Note that 11 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **RCMP in Schools.** A number of respondents indicated their concern that the RCMP not be more present and visible in schools, adding that it is 'not their place' to educate youth about crime, in part due to the RCMP's historical role in colonialism. *[Note that 9 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Focus on Internet Crime.** Numerous respondents indicated that the RCMP need to be more vigilant and responsive to internet scams, particularly those targeting seniors, and computer pornography in relation to minors. *[Note that 8 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Need for Community Liaisons.** Some respondents noted that each community should have an Indigenous liaison person (or an Indigenous community safety program) to facilitate interactions between the community and the RCMP. *[Note that 7 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Public Accountability and Transparency.** Respondents continue to note the importance of holding RCMP officers accountable for poor behaviour - criminal or otherwise – and being more transparent about how complaints from the public are addressed. *[Note that 6 respondents provided similar comments]*

G. The RCMP and community perceptions of trust: Key Themes

- ▶ **Support for Policing.** There were many positive comments about the RCMP, mostly recognizing that they provide an invaluable service and do a 'tough, hard' job. *[Note that 78 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Policing and Marginalized Groups.** The RCMP need to enhance its ability to deal with those with mental health issues and other marginalized groups. Many respondents acknowledged that the issue may be less about the RCMP and more about the inadequacies of Yukon's mental health systems, and that the RCMP cannot be expected to 'be everything, to everyone'. Many of the 'defund the police' comments were in this vein, advocating that policing resources should be redirected to community supports. However, most respondents indicated that they believe that the RCMP need more training in dealing with individuals with FASD, and mental health and other challenges, particularly in Indigenous communities. Many also noted that when dealing with these individuals or situations, the primary focus should be on using de-escalation techniques first before a decision to use force is made. *[Note that 51 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Racism.** Many respondents raised the perception that the RCMP have a 'racism problem', both at the officer level and systemically. Some also noted that regardless of what the RCMP will do to address this perception, it will remain difficult for many Indigenous citizens and others to trust the RCMP, given historical incidents that they may have experienced earlier in their lives. *[Note that 48 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Accountability.** Some indicated that there must be greater consequence and accountability for RCMP officers who engage in bad behaviour. Ensuring that these instances are addressed appropriately - and with full transparency - is key to building relationships of trust, as is ensuring that how complaints are addressed is both transparent and effective. *[Note that 23 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Get Own House in Order First.** A number of respondents indicated that the RCMP need to do more to support its staff and officers, and to demonstrate diversity and inclusion in their hiring practices. Put another way, it is argued, having their own 'house in order' would demonstrate their commitment to representing and reflecting the communities they serve. *[Note that 14 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Community Posting Policy.** Some argued that the RCMP's community posting policy has resulted in a lack of RCMP integration into the community, at least over the long run - once trust with a particular officer is built within the community, the officer is typically reassigned elsewhere and the process begins anew. One suggestion was for the RCMP to do more to help new officers and their families understand what life is like in a small community before they are hired for that post. *[Note that 14 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Diversity.** The RCMP must do more to recruit and train Indigenous, visible minority and LGBTQ2S+ officers to reflect the Yukon's demographic make-up. More diversity would mean that more RCMP officers would better understand the needs and perspectives of various demographic groups, and act accordingly. *[Note that 13 respondents provided similar comments]*

- ▶ **Officer Supports.** Respondents also indicated concern that RCMP officers themselves need better access to mental health supports, given the difficult and dangerous nature of their job. *[Note that 9 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Don't Need a Military.** Some respondents noted that the RCMP must take care not to resemble a military force (for example, wearing bulletproof vests, wearing sidearms when at coffee shops or at schools, etc.), as this can be very intimidating and triggering for some citizens. *[Note that 8 respondents provided similar comments]*
- ▶ **Equal and Fair Treatment – No Place for Bias.** Some respondents noted the need for the RCMP to initially treat each situation and each individual with fairness and respect, and to not presume facts or adopt bias prior to the situation being fully assessed. *[Note that 5 respondents provided similar comments]*

Technical Difficulties Encountered.

1. Despite a number of pilot tests conducted prior to the survey's launch, two minor survey glitches went undiscovered until approximately 360 respondents had already completed the survey.

The first glitch was that the LGBTQ2S+ selection choice was initially left off Question 15. To ensure that the percentage of those who self-identified as LGBTQ2S+ was reflected in the final results, a correction was applied by calculating the percentage of those who responded after the glitch, and applying this ratio to the initial 360 respondents. This correction was intended to ensure that the survey, as a whole, was representative of the LGBTQ2S+ community's contribution to the survey.

The second glitch, again involving only 360 respondents, involved an error in which those respondents who indicated that they were not a victim of crime (Question #8) were unable to bypass Questions 9-12 (which related to the experiences of those who did report being a victim of crime). Fortunately, this error did not affect those who indicated that they were a victim of crime, as they were still able to respond to Questions 9-12. This did not significantly skew the overall results.

2. Despite a better-than-expected result in survey response, more effort will be required to ensure those who are unwilling or unable to respond to surveys (online or otherwise) – particularly those residing outside Whitehorse - have an opportunity to contribute their perspectives. Respondents recommended that the Yukon Police Council continue to employ surveys while also offering in-person community meetings (once COVID-19 ends) to ensure a balanced understanding of community perceptions with respect to Council outreach.