

Community Engagement Sessions: Learning Together

SPRING/SUMMER 2022





Community Visits

March 24, 2022: Aklavik

May 24, 2022: Teet'it Zheh

May 26, 2022: Inuvik

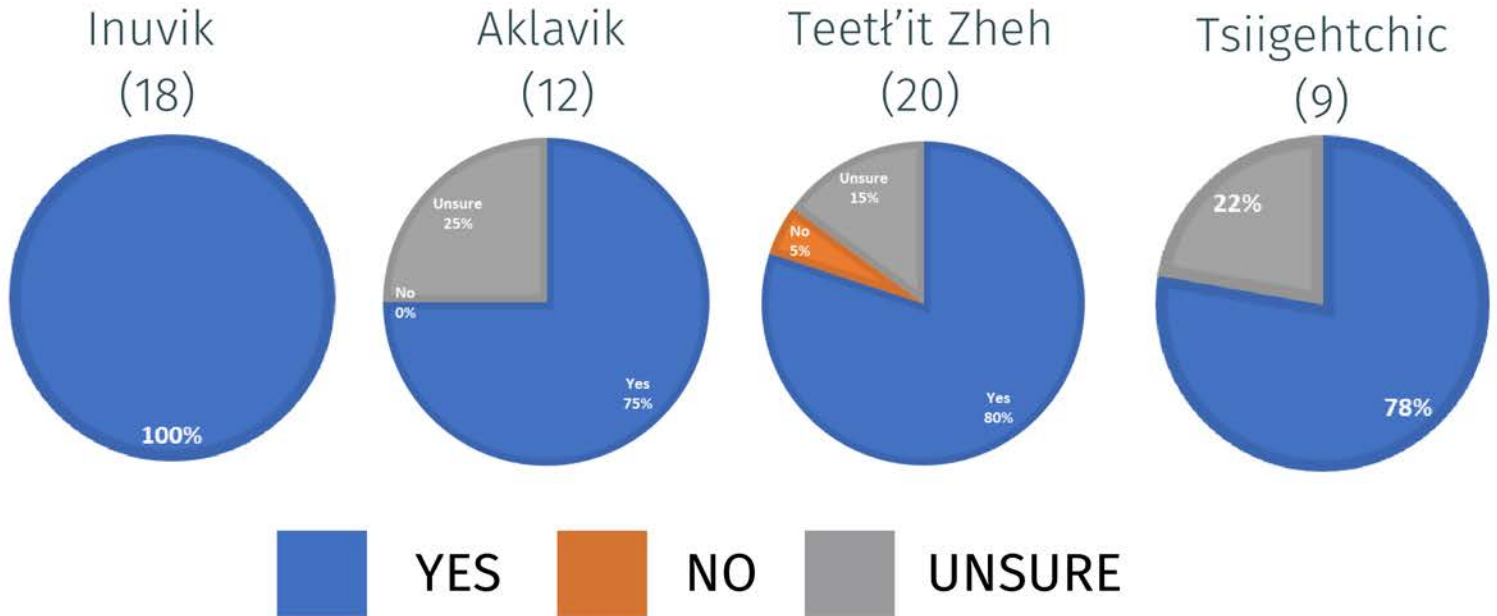
June 28, 2022: Tsiigehtchic

During each community visit we participated in:

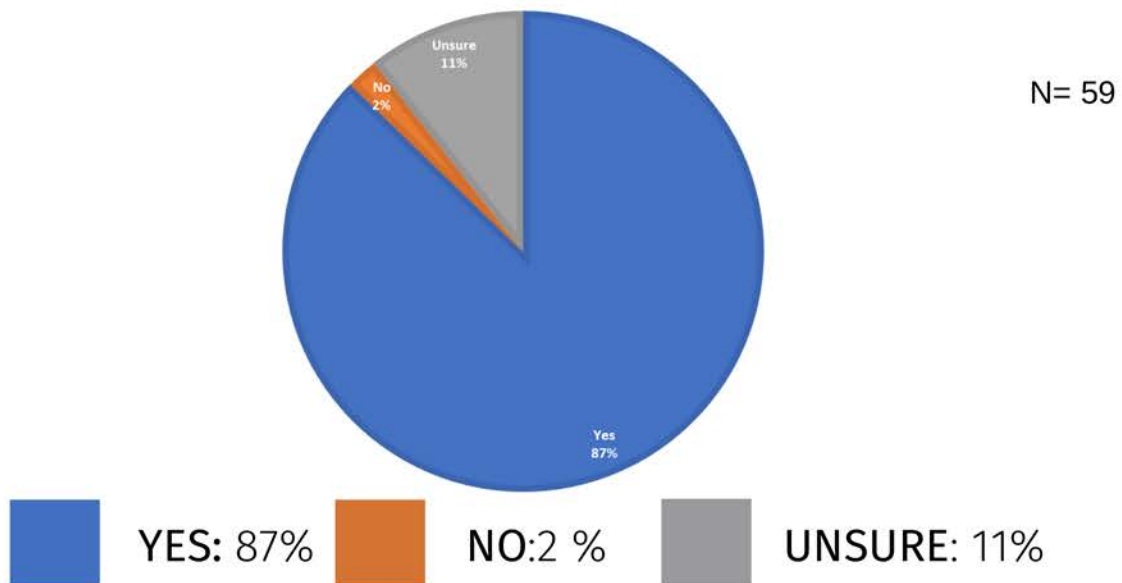
- A radio show call-in Q&A
- In person community presentations and school visits led by the Grand Chief/ Lead negotiator and community engagement team

Support for Gwich'in Government

Are you in support of the Gwich'in Government?



Total number of attendees: 80 people
Total responses to question: 59 people



Summary of Engagement Sessions

- I'm hoping and wishing after 2027, there'll be self government for me and my fellow Gwich'in in every community-
Engagement Participant

The community engagement team completed a round of community meetings during the Spring and early Summer of 2022. Feedback from the sessions has been positive and supportive of the work of the Gwich'in Collaborative Government team.

The team traveled to each of the four Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA) communities, with a total of 80 Participants during the in-person engagement sessions.

Feedback gathered during sessions highlighted:

- the need for unity across the four GSA communities leadership and Participants;
- the need for ongoing engagement with community members and updates on the negotiation and final agreement process;
- the need for a process to ensure the Gwich'in Government work continues independent of political changes and transitions;
- the need for more information about important historical documents, processes, context, land claims, treaty rights;
- the need for more information that is written in plain language for community members;
- the need to engage youth in the Gwich'in Government process.

Unity

A common theme identified by Participants was the need for unity within each community, across the GSA region and with the Gwich'in Participant community outside the GSA. There was much discussion about the roles and responsibilities of the DGO, Band Council and GTC and how the three organizations should work together to move forward with the common objectives of the Gwich'in Collaborative Government. A few Participants also asked if there was a possibility of combining the Band Council and DGO before the Final Agreement is completed.

A Participant noted there is confusion with the GCLCA:

"Ever since the land claim everyone is confused at who runs what. It's like the GTC, DGO and Bands are all in this one pot together and we just keep stirring it up and stirring and not getting anywhere. It's up to the people to ask ourselves, where are we? Where do we want to go? We need to be a big part of where we are and where we want to go. What do we want?"

Consistently Participants stated their wishes for a unified approach:

"like to see more working together in the community and less divide between band and DGO."

"We are all people and need to diminish the confusion and set a path towards one government system and in the meantime develop the infrastructure so we are ready."

Participants would like to see band councils and the DGOs combine—"We are all the same people anyways."



Youth Involvement

A common theme voiced by Participants was the importance of involving youth in the Gwich'in Collaborative Government process. This is one of the shared objectives of the Gwich'in Government. We are involving youth in the engagement and Gwich'in Government process more.

The Gwich'in Collaborative Government team visited Chief Julius School and East Three High School to speak directly with Youth.

Youth reported the need for improved infrastructure (housing, recreational facilities, etc), career opportunities and healing in their communities.

When we asked about support for a Gwich'in Government we heard:

"This will give the opportunity for Gwich'in to build for future generations. A government that works for the Gwich'in."

"A Government that is run by Gwich'in and where Gwich'in have the authority to make laws and decisions. Where they have the last say."

"For a better future for our youth and younger generation."



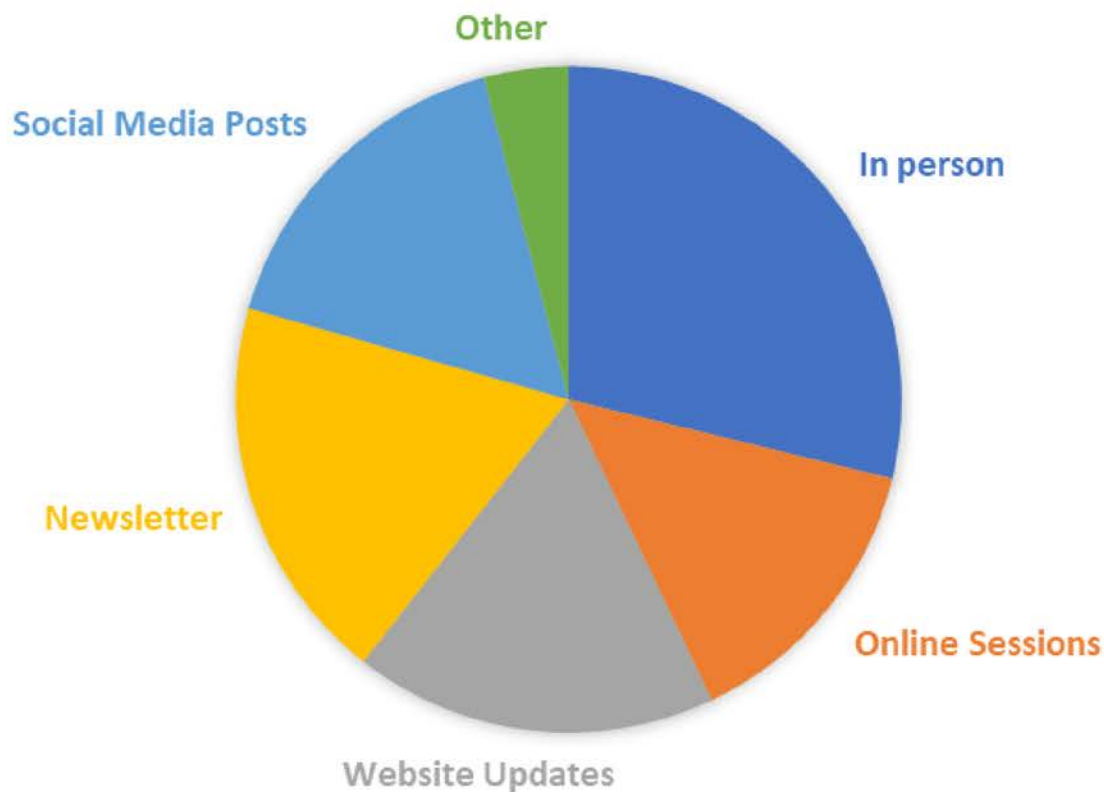
Ongoing Engagement

Participants reported in all communities their need for regular communication and engagement, and ongoing updates on the status of the Gwich'in Government file and the negotiations. They wish for opportunities to provide feedback and input about the draft final agreement.

Participants would like:

- *More educational materials*
- *More opportunities to hear about the progress*
- *Engagement that includes all members of the community including community leadership, Elders and youth*
- *Home visits and fieldworkers doing door to door visits*

How Participants reported they would like to be informed:



Understanding the past and future

A common theme discussed in the engagement sessions was the importance of understanding how the Gwich'in Government Final Agreement would impact Treaty Rights, Inherent Rights, Land Claim and current governance structures, for example, Band Council and DGO structures.

"There is a lot of confusion in the process and all those in leadership roles need to understand things clearly, be healthy and outspoken and be able to explain things to the people. They need to understand the process very well."

The engagement sessions provided information to Participants about how past negotiations and agreements impact the current state, and future negotiations.



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Moving Forward

A common theme shared by Participants was the importance of moving forward as a collective Gwich'in Government.

There was discussion about the importance of continuity, despite election cycles, within the negotiation team to support forward momentum of the negotiation process.

Notably, there were not questions, comments or discussion brought forward by Participants about separate negotiation processes. Collectively, Participants support a unified Gwich'in Collaborative Government.



Next Steps

Outside GSA Participant Consultation Meetings

Timeline: Fall 2022-Winter 2023

The Gwich'in Collaborative Government communications team will travel to meet with Gwich'in Participants and community leadership this Fall and early Winter in:

- Yellowknife
- Hay River
- Fort Smith
- Whitehorse
- Edmonton
- Vancouver

Building our team: Community Advisor & Fieldworker Positions

Timeline: Fall 2022

We are looking for members of GSA communities who are interested in joining the Gwich'in Collaborative Government Team.

Interested Participants can check out the Gwich'in Collaborative Government Website: <https://www.gwichincollaborative.ca>

An aerial photograph of a winding river with vibrant blue water flowing through a lush green landscape. The river meanders through the terrain, creating several sharp curves and loops. The surrounding land is covered in dense, vibrant green vegetation, likely grass or low-lying shrubs. The overall scene is serene and natural.

Future Events

October, 2022:
Yellowknife, Hay River,
Fort Smith, NT

November, 2022: Edmonton, AB

December, 2022: Whitehorse, YK

January/ February, 2023:
Vancouver, BC



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