

Citizen's Assembly Potential Makeup

There has been a lot of discussion around the idea of establishing a Citizen's Assembly to review electoral issues within Yukon including but not limited to how we vote be it the current First Past the Post (FPTP) system or through some other voting options. This could be ranked ballots, some form of Proportional Representation or a Mixed Member system or some other system. Should the decision of the Citizen's Assembly be final or be approved or rejected through a referendum. A number of the experts that presented to the Yukon Select Committee on Electoral Reform felt that if the electoral process was going to be changed that a referendum should be conducted to allow electors the opportunity to approve or reject the proposed changes. Some presenters are opposed to a referendum as they feel it makes it harder to make changes to the system of electing our government. Some think a referendum should be held following two elections with the new system asking electors if they want to continue with the new system or go back to the previous system. If a referendum were to be held, what constitutes approval, should it be a straight up vote with 50% plus 1 being the final decision, should it require to be approved by the majority of people in Whitehorse and the majority of people in rural Yukon as certain options could negatively affect the split of representation of MLAs throughout Yukon, should it require 55% instead of 50% plus 1 or some other level of support? Currently there are 19 MLA in Yukon, should that number stay the same or should there be a change in the number of MLAs elected to the Yukon Legislature. Some of the other election related topics that could be review is who gets to vote, currently you need to be 18 years of age, a Canadian Citizen, and a resident of Yukon for 1 year as of polling day. Some people think the voting age should be change, some think non-Canadians should be able to vote and some think a shorter residency requirement should be considered. Should every Electoral District be represented by a Male and a Female MLA to ensure Gender Parity, should there be some First Nation MLAs to ensure indigenous representation? There are like other issues around our election process that could be considered and proposed by the Citizen's Assembly.

The purpose of this submission is to look at some of the potential issues around a Citizen's Assembly and its possible makeup and issues around such an assembly.

General discussion around the makeup of a Citizen's Assembly is that it should be representative of Yukon, should not be through some type of a self-selection process but through a random selection. Also, to ensure that the majority of Yukoner's could participate in the process which will be time consuming that the members of the Assembly should be compensated to allow for all Yukoner's the ability to participate. One thing that was not mentioned was gender equity of the Citizen's Assembly which I am assumed will generally be equal with selections being made based on one self-described male and one self-described female per area. The 2021 Canadian Census asked two questions around sex/gender, the first was sex at birth and the second was current gender which allowed for Male, Female, and Other which was a write in option. Of those that identified as neither male or female represented 0.1% of the population, whether this is underrepresented or not we do not know but we do know that this is what was identified. In addition to those identifying as Male or Female, I have also included one non-binary in my calculations of the total number of Yukoners that could be on the Citizen's Assembly to ensure that demographic is represented. This person could be selected from a list of non-binary Yukoners as identified from Queer Yukon's membership list given the desire not to have individuals self-select for the Citizen's Assembly.

Selection of Citizen's Assembly members:

For the selection process to be random selection, likely the best way to do this would be in a similar manner to jury selection with people being randomly selected from the current voters list as the starting point would help with a general representation of the Yukon's population. Not all Yukoners are on the voter's list but most Yukoners who are Canadian Citizens and who qualified to vote at the time of the last election would be included as well as those new individuals who now qualify to vote in Yukon and have added themselves to the voter's list. As part of the communications prior to the selection of the Citizen's Assembly, new electors who were not on the last voter's list could be encouraged to register to ensure that they are part of the pool of potential Citizens Assembly members. There could be other processes used to add some members to the Assembly to represent other groups such as Youth or the non-binary community. The voter's list could be subdivided to help with some of the community selections which I will discuss below.

Yukon currently has 19 Electoral Districts, 11 of which are in greater Whitehorse and 8 of which are in rural Yukon, there are also 14 Yukon First Nations spread throughout Yukon. In addition to this, there are eight incorporated communities in Yukon as follows:

Carmacks
Dawson City
Faro
Haines Junction
Mayo
Teslin
Watson Lake
Whitehorse

In addition to the eight incorporated communities within Yukon, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics lists an additional ten communities in their population statistics for Yukon consisting of the following:

Beaver Creek
Burwash Landing
Carcross
Destruction Bay
Johnson's Crossing
Mendenhall
Old Crow
Pelly Crossing
Ross River
Tagish

There are also other communities within Yukon that should be considered communities as far as representation is concerned such as Marsh Lake, Ibx Valley, Lake Labarge, Hidden Valley, Hot Springs

Road, Lorne Mountain, as well as potentially several others with a number of these areas having populations larger than some of the above listed communities.

Some of the other communities within Yukon are likely too small for representation but that is a decision of the select committee. Communities such as Eagle Plains, Keno Hill, Elsa, and Stewart Crossing, there may also be several others that would fall into this category of being too small for representation directly on the Citizen's Assembly.

When dealing with Whitehorse which as of December 31st, 2021, had a population of 34,268 out of a total population of 43,575 or 86.64% of the total population of Yukon, Whitehorse should probably have 50% representation of the Citizen's Assembly.

The attached spreadsheet currently identifies a Citizen's Assembly made up of 107 Yukoners with 53 being male, 53 being female and 1 being non-binary. I have tried to ensure all communities of a reasonable size have been represented by a male and a female representative, some communities also identify a male and female first nations representative for communities. Communities that are mostly first nations would have two representatives who would likely be first nation members based on the size of their communities, larger communities with a mix of first nation and non-first nation have been allotted 4 members in my makeup. Communities that are primarily non first nation would have two members selected that would most likely be non-first nations. The communities listed with general Yukoners (not first nations or non-first nations would be comprised of the members from the community which could be either). I have tried to ensure reasonable representation from across the Yukon and based on my current proposed makeup of members on the Citizen's Assembly would have 60 rural Yukoners and 47 from Whitehorse for a total of 107 members. This also includes two Youth representatives that would randomly be selected from a list of grade 9 to 12 students in Whitehorse with one being male and one being female.

This makeup of the committee is less than the 50% for Whitehorse that I had originally proposed but is also trying to keep the size and cost of the committee reasonable. I would suggest that 107 people is too many for a committee to function properly but it is also a matter of trying to ensure representation from across the Yukon as well as cost of the committee and deciding who gets represented and who does not. We could select a smaller number of members for the committee and then randomly select from across Yukon to put on the committee but then we will not ensure representation from each community potentially but would allow for a more workable number of members on the Citizen's Assembly. As an example, if we decided that the committee would have 50 people being 25 male and 25 female and randomly selected from the voter's list, we could end up with 43 of those people being Whitehorse residents and 7 to represent all of rural Yukon which population wise may work but may not help to represent the views of those who could be most impacted by a change to the voting system.

If the committee members were to meet for 20 days with a daily per diem of \$200 per day which I believe is the current Yukon Government Boards and Committee Daily Rate, then those 20 days would incur a cost of \$428,000 in just per diem cost plus support costs, venue rentals, refreshments, Technology, and anything else needed by the committee. As close to 60% of these people would be from the communities there will also be costs to travel into Whitehorse as well as accommodations and meal costs. There may also be costs for childcare as well as some other unidentified costs to allow the Citizen's Assembly to function.

The committee or a portion of the committee will also be traveling around the Yukon to allow all Yukoners the opportunity to be heard in person on these important issues, this would incur additional costs relating to travel and additional days of per diem if beyond the initial 20 days.

The cost of the Citizen's Assembly could easily exceed \$1 million plus communications cost to communicate out whatever final decisions were made by the committee. If a referendum was held following the Assemblies work, then those costs to run the referendum as well as funds for the yes and no committees would be in addition to those costs identified above and could potentially add an additional million dollars to the cost of the committee. If the referendum was held in conjunction with a territorial or federal election, then some of the costs would be covered by the other election and bring this cost down.

Others may feel that the number of representatives and for the areas that I have identified is not enough representation or it is too much representation but is meant to be one potential makeup of a Yukon Citizen's Assembly to look at Electoral Reform ideas and could be used as a starting point.

I would be happy to discuss this further if you wish but I believe that this is a reasonable starting point and captures much of the sentiment that came out of the first public meeting held in Whitehorse.

Sincerely,

Michael Lauer
Whitehorse

Attachment (1)

Potential Makeup of Yukon Citizen's Assembly on Electoral Reform

Electoral District	Community	Population	First Nation	Comments	CA Members
Klondike	Dawson City	2327	Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation	2 FN and 2 non FN	4
Klondike	Eagle Plains			Too small of a community	0
Kluane	Beaver Creek	116	White River First Nation	Primarily Aboriginal Community	2
Kluane	Burwash Landing	101	Kluane First Nation	Primarily Aboriginal Community	2
Kluane	Champagne		Champagne and Aishihik First Nations		0
Kluane	Destruction Bay	56			2
Kluane	Haines Junction	995	Champagne and Aishihik First Nations	2 FN and 2 non FN	4
Lake Laberge	Braeburn			Too small of a community	0
Lake Laberge	Lake Laberge				2
Lake Laberge	Hot Springs Road				2
Lake Laberge	Ibex Valley	508			2
Lake Laberge	Mendenhall				2
Mayo-Tatchun	Carmacks	573	Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation	2 FN and 2 non FN	4
Mayo-Tatchun	Elsa			Too small of a community	0
Mayo-Tatchun	Keno Hill			Too small of a community	0
Mayo-Tatchun	Mayo	455	Na-Cho Nyak Dün First Nation	2 FN and 2 non FN	4
Mayo-Tatchun	Pelly Crossing	395	Selkirk First Nation	Primarily Aboriginal Community	2
Mayo-Tatchun	Stewart Crossing			Too small of a community	0
Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Carcross	464	Carcross Tagish First Nation	2 FN and 2 non FN	4
Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Jakes Corner			Too small of a community	0
Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Marsh Lake	721			2
Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Mount Lorne	462			2
Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Tagish	378			2
Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Annie Lake Road				2
Pelly-Nisutlin	Faro	476			2
Pelly-Nisutlin	Johnsons Crossing	54			2
Pelly-Nisutlin	Little Salmon		Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation	Too small of a community	0
Pelly-Nisutlin	Ross River	405	Ross River Dena Council	Primarily Aboriginal Community	2
Pelly-Nisutlin	Teslin	495	Teslin Tlingit Council	2 FN and 2 non FN	4
Vuntut Gwitchin	Old Crow	253	Vuntut Gwitchin	Primarily Aboriginal Community	2
Watson Lake	Swift River			Too small of a community	0
Watson Lake	Watson Lake	1522	Liard First Nation	2 FN and 2 non FN	4
Rural					60

Potential Makeup of Yukon Citizen's Assembly on Electoral Reform

Electoral District	Community	Population	First Nation	Comments	CA Members
WHSE - Porter Creek North					4
WHSE - Porter Creek South					4
WHSE - Porter Creek Centre					4
WHSE - Whitehorse Centre					4
WHSE - Mountainview					4
WHSE - Whitehorse West					4
WHSE - Copperbelt North					4
WHSE - Copperbelt South					4
WHSE - Riverdale North					4
WHSE - Riverdale South					4
WHSE - Takhini-Kopper King					4
Whitehorse					<u>44</u>
Others - Non Binary (if none already selected through random selection)					1
Others - Youth (Male and female from Whitehorse Highschools Grade 9 to 12)					<u>2</u>
Others					3
Total members					107
Government Board Daily Rate	\$	200.00	20 Days		\$ 428,000.00