

Yukon Citizens' Assembly on
Electoral Reform Final Report 2024

Appendix B:
Public Submissions

Text submissions to YCAER Website

<https://www.yukoncitizensassembly.ca/submissions/>

Floyd McCormick

Aug 13, 2024 | Submission

Summary: I believe

- Yukon's electoral system should emphasize local representation in the Legislative Assembly rather than the proportional representation of political parties.
- The Yukon should adopt a single-member majority electoral system using a ranked ballot.
- Electing MLAs by majority, rather than by plurality, would strengthen the members mandate and increase the overall legitimacy of the Legislative Assembly.
- A ranked ballot would give candidates an incentive to moderate their platform and approach in order to appeal as the second-choice candidate to supporters of other candidates or parties. This could lead to less partisan politics.
- Implementing a proportional representation system would reduce the number of electoral districts, meaning districts outside Whitehorse would be too large.
- Electoral systems offer different ways of representing people in their legislative Assembly. We should not expect an electoral system to solve all the behavioral or policy problems in our politics.

Gerald Haase

Aug 13, 2024 | Submission

Collaboration rather than confrontation in governance would be a welcome shift in values. Please see my attached submission on how I feel we could achieve this in the Yukon.

Thanks,

Gerald Haase

Marsh Lake

Kim Melton

Aug 13, 2024 | Submission

Collaboration and representation are two key values I would like to see in our electoral system. Collaboration by those elected to govern requires removal of incentives to be working towards the next election and responding to financial pressure (eg: donors who support campaigns) to allow for honest work across either party or individual perspectives. Proportional representation systems would be a step in the right direction; removing parties would also help, so that we could vote for individuals instead of feeling torn about voting 'strategically'. It's probably wise to not choose an overly complicated voting system, in order to not discourage voting, however I think we are all better able to adapt and learn than we give ourselves credit for sometimes. Ensuring that marginalized and underrepresented groups have their voices heard is also important to me.

Lenore Morris

Aug 12, 2024 | Submission

I want Yukon to have an electoral system that includes and gives voice to a diverse range of views, and in which all votes cast help someone be elected. The current first past the post system not only means that, typically, fewer than 50% of votes cast go to electing anyone, it results in the middle-of-the-road views being over-represented, and the less centrist views either under-represented or not represented at all.

A modern democracy needs some form of proportional representation. Not having it has led to apathy and cynicism about our democracy, and to citizens feeling they need to vote "strategically" – making election results almost meaningless. I want to see young people engaged and I want to see elected politicians work together. Both are more likely with proportional representation.

Geographical representation by riding is important in a place as large as Yukon and with communities as diverse, but representatives could also act for Yukoners as a group and I believe our legislature would be better and stronger for it. The range of political viewpoints, e.g. between conservative and socialistic politicians, is far more significant than e.g. the South Riverdale – North Riverdale divide. The interests of those two neighbourhood halves are virtually identical, meanwhile whole swathes of the population see no one in the legislature advocating for issues that are important to them.

Yukoners would be better served with a legislature that reflects not merely geographic divisions but the range of political views within our territory – proportionately. I advocate a system that would have some MLA's represent particular ridings but with other MLA's who do not – with the 2nd set of spots filled in the way that best balances party votes cast.

(On the matter of political parties, while I the idea of non-party politics, as with municipal councils, has some appeal, there are many reasons why the party system developed and they have not gone away.)

Globally, countries with proportional representation systems have better quality of life and are able to take stronger, more progressive positions because their governments have stronger mandates. I am a voter whose top priority is the environment, and I know there are many like-minded Yukoners. I do not see my priorities reflected in any Yukon government elected to date, and I believe that I would be more likely to under a PR system.

The Yukon has the opportunity to create a modern electoral system that could be a model for the rest of Canada. Let's do it.

Brigitte Parker

Aug 12, 2024 | Submission

Trust in our electoral systems are eroding. People do not feel represented. They don't feel heard. They feel that elected officials are tending to the needs of their campaign funders instead of using taxpayer dollars to improve our collective lives. A clear way to rebuild and foster trust is to make changes to our electoral system. As someone who has participated directly in election cycles, I see how broken the system is. It gives advantages to some over others. The first past the post voting system does not match how people vote thus breeding more apathy and frustration. Electoral reform is something I support. True and big changes. Not watered-down compromises to appease everyone... no performative "we tried" changes, but real significant changes are what I support. A new electoral system like proportional representation would bring forward better choices for candidates, fairly reflect results and foster cooperative politics. It would also mean that my vote counts. That every vote counts. To me, these factors directly reflect and benefit the people... as democracy is meant to be. While I support proportional representation, I am calling on the Citizen's Assembly on Electoral Reform to make recommend serious changes that create and centre a vibrant, inclusive and accountable democracy. Again, that would go a long, long way to repairing the current broken system. Thanks.

Murray Munn

Aug 12, 2024 | Submission

I'd like to see the guesswork taken out of elections. I believe here I'm thinking mostly of recent *federal* elections, when we were being 'whipped' and cajoled into strategic voting, free of course to vote how we felt most comfortable, but with the risk that the other side would prevail, because one could not decide if one's preference would split the vote or not. Holding one's nose to vote for the biggest 'white hat' flock when one preferred a smaller one is not fun, though I believe I decided to vote for my preferred party in the end. But the party system is overly tribal, and the mockery from the big tent toward the helping ones makes it an unsavoury gamble.

First-past-the-post systems are fundamentally unfair ... one must vote for a particular person and hope that, if elected, that person will represent their concerns. Further, the voter hopes but can never be certain that the voted-for person doesn't flip and opt for another direction—for example, the way previous Premier of the BC NDP, John Horgan, did regarding Site C.

Proportional rep sends votes directly to the party one chooses. Mind you, the then-leader of the BC Green Party also chose to support Horgan, and thus went against his party's stated position. Also, recent editions of The Guardian Weekly about the win by Labour in the UK tell us that Fair Vote methods can also lead to misrepresentation (numbers for Labour were very low, yet

Labour won the election); however, I think that comes down to the fair vote system employed in the UK.

Locally, the way in which the Yukon's current environment minister has jumped from the Greens to the Liberals (and the way he, despite being a 'green'-signalling chameleon, told me once that, although his diesel VW car had been a part of the lying Volkswagen campaign, and was thus a polluter, he was not going to get rid of the car), kept rather quiet and in the background about the horrific spill of cyanide at the Victoria Gold heap leach minesite is just the sort of self-important tomfoolery misrepresentation we do not need.

A voted-in party must adhere to its stated, pre-election positions. A party is more stable than an individual, as my above examples show.

Also, I would like to see certain names disallowed. If I say I'm a greenie, an environmental-minded person, that's a fair self-description; if a party is allowed to call itself the Green Party, that means all other parties are not, in the average voter's mind, environment-minded. I think it's unfair, even if I'm environmentally concerned. It's misleading—just as the chemical poison that is called Simple Green is anything but 'green'; not saying that the Green Party is or is not 'green,' but it's a name that cheats.

To sum up, I'm not politically knowledgeable enough to figure out why the UK's system led to a Labour result when too few voted for that party (though I like the result), so if that can be studied so that that cannot happen here, that would be excellent. At least Canada and the Yukon by extension are not plagued by the electoral college built-in sneakiness, but we still need to bring in proportional representation.

Thanks. Hope this makes vague sense.

Ella Bradford

Aug 11, 2024 | Submission

A strong democracy listens to all voices and is able to include respectful collaboration between parties. Our current system of winner takes all / first past the post eliminates a lot of this collaboration. A first past the post system would bring more diversity into our legislative assembly by including independent and minority party candidates. This would allow us to hear more voices and reach more creative solutions that benefit the everyone and make us a leader.

Ella Bradford

Aug 11, 2024 | Submission

A first past the post system suppresses many minority voices.

Having a system of proportional representation would allow parties to be more accurately represented in the legislative assembly, and actually speak on behalf of their constituents.

A system where some votes are for regions and some votes are proportional would include the two most important aspects in our democracy; having someone to represent regions and representing all voices.

Stuart Clark

Aug 11, 2024 | Submission

The credibility of democracy is under threat as increasing numbers of (mostly younger) Yukoners feel shutout by the current FPP system. Recent voting patterns reflect the desire to have a more collaborative approach to democratic governance (e.g. CASA type arrangements needed to ensure workable majorities). Proportional voting systems require the collaboration that recent voting patterns have effectively asked for. Let's make that part of the system in Yukon and bring back the interest of younger Yukoners.

Mary Amerongen

Aug 11, 2024 | Submission

Proportional representation is necessary for every vote to count. The proportion of votes for a party should be reflected in the proportion of seats that result. That is only fair. *

There are different kinds of PR. Whatever is the simplest would work best I think.

If PR is indicated by the survey, I request that you go ahead and try it for a couple of years. THEN ask people what they think, whether it should continue. A referendum would be subject to all sorts of advertising, some misleading. Whoever has the most money would be likely to have their choice prevail. But if everyone sees PR in action, then they would choose our future system from actual knowledge.

The countries with fair voting systems tend to have the most equitable societies, a smaller gap between rich and poor. They tend to avoid extremes of poverty and wealth.

*Our current system was set up in Britain by the aristocracy, whose interests were not in the general populace having full fair say in governance.

Keith Tegart

Aug 11, 2024 | Submission

I do not want to change from our current system. There are many, many unforeseen risks associated with the various proportional systems. If everyone that is working so hard to undo our current system would instead get involved in our current electoral system we would then improve our democracy. Just about all of the complaints about our current system mostly relate

to voter turn-outs which can be addressed by some educational communications about the importance of each person getting out to vote.

If the system gets changed after an election or 2 voter apathy would likely return. Proportional systems create a venue for fringe parties to get seats and a voice and there will be real danger that a fringe party can hold the balance of power.

Please do not change from our current system, instead please recommend measures that will promote voter participation and individual involvement in all levels of government. A citizens panel to recommend how to build up our current system would be the best outcome to this exercise.

Thank-you

Tanya Handley

Aug 10, 2024 | Submission

I am very concerned about the effects of climate change and the dire consequences of not changing the path we are on. The countries that have been most effective at taking climate action use proportional voting systems. Even better, those countries tend to perform better on quality of life issues and economic growth.

Not only can a different voting system help us make more effective climate change policies, they can also make our democracy stronger. For instance, with proportional systems, there are no “lost votes”— people get to vote for things, not against them — as every vote counts and you get what you vote for. Politics would shift to being more cooperative and more fair to all citizens so there is more agreement and buy in on the difficult decisions we have before us.

We need to take the opportunity to change our voting system when it comes up here in the Yukon. It is a crucial step forward to start dealing effectively with climate change and creating different and better lives for Yukoners.

Thank you for doing this.

Daniel Sokolov

Aug 10, 2024 | Submission

Proportional Representation means fairness. Every voter's vote would have equal weight. However, ballots must be simple, otherwise they frustrate voters. So a ranking system is not a good choice.

Two options are viable to upgrade our current system: Proportional Open Party List or Mixed Member Proportional.

A second chamber in the legislature would further (re)conciliation and guarantee regional representation.

Thank you for reading my submission, which is attached.

Colleen McCarthy

Aug 10, 2024 | Submission

I want to be able to vote for whom I believe to be the best person for the job, rather than being forced to vote strategically to keep the extremes of the right and left from getting into power. I also want the percentage of votes to reflect the percentage of seats won.

Terry Wilkinson

Aug 10, 2024 | Submission

Leave as is, the system is working, maybe not the best for some people but better than what could come out of a change

Karen Mckenna

Aug 9, 2024 | Submission

I would like to see more collaboration between different parties to address issues of common interest. I would like to see more parties and more interests represented in our legislative assembly, that would be possible with proportional representation.

First past the post seems to create winners and the losers who spend their time attacking everything the winning party presents, instead of trying to find some common ground to help make good changes happen in the Yukon.

Judy Harwood Dabbs

Aug 9, 2024 | Submission

Please find attached a letter to the editor submitted to the Yukon News and Yukon Star that appeared last week in both papers. It outlines my hopes for a more representative voting system for the Yukon. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Judy Harwood Dabbs

Tagish

Jean-Paul Pinard

Aug 9, 2024 | Submission

We live in a world with more choices in products and services. Even the political parties in Canada offer more choices to their members during their elections for leadership. We should

have more choices when we vote for our politicians. We should have the ability to rank our candidates and to vote for a party separate from the candidate.

Eleanor Millard

Aug 9, 2024 | Submission

Proportional representation gives minority parties and independent candidates a better chance of winning seats which means the legislature would explore the views of all voters, not just the First Past the Post winner. The FPTP system is unrepresentative, as candidates can be elected with a very small share of the votes while all other votes cast in the constituency are wasted. Under PR fewer votes are wasted as more people's preferences are taken into account, giving voters more of a sense of participation in the democratic system. With PR, the legislature would have to deliver fairer treatment of minority parties and independent candidates. It would have to appeal to core supporters, rather than a small number of so called 'swing voters' in marginal seats. It would encourage turn-out and reduce apathy. The responsibility of all MLAs is to work toward a consensus for the good of all voters. rather than the adversarial approach of FPTP, which makes a mockery of working for the good of all citizens, The way to do that is to change the electoral system to respond to voters as a whole.

David Whiteside

Aug 9, 2024 | Submission

I think all votes should count equally. There is currently a very uneven system in place, that being first past the post.

In first past the post representatives are regularly elected with a fraction of a majority of voices. The elected representatives then proclaim that the voices of the electorate have been heard and that they have a mandate, when this is not at all true. A minority, even if a relatively strong(er) minority of voices are being listened to.

Another poor system is the system where people can choose a first and then a second place candidate (Single transferable vote). The vote is then transferred from their desired candidate, the person who best represents their views to another candidate who may, or who may not represent their views. This person is simply better than the person who least well represents their views. Run-offs work in the same manner.

The only viable system of which I am aware that represents people's voices through a voting system is a mixed-member voting system. In that system people's votes are represented proportionally in any legislature.

In a small jurisdiction like the Yukon there is no perfect system, other than direct democracy, which is unwieldy and difficult for those with less time to devote to governance to attend to. So we go with solutions that are less than ideal. MMP is the best compromise I know.

Tanya Handley

Aug 8, 2024 | Submission

I want to see an electoral system that is capable of representing as much as possible the diverse interests of Yukon citizens so that the representatives can work together to govern our territory in a way that benefits all of us. I value consensus-building and cooperation.

Thanks for doing this!

Jennifer B

Aug 6, 2024 | Submission

By changing the boundaries, 2 rural MLAs will be lost.

This will reduce the representation to the already struggling communities.

This will reduce services to the communities.

Most of the residents in the communities are FN.

Reducing FN representation in the Yukon Government is opposite of what Truth and Reconciliation is trying to accomplish.

Stop trying to hide the boundary changes behind election reform. The Boundary Change is what is really important.

Sue Greetham

Jul 31, 2024 | Submission

Any system selected by the CA except FPTP

Christine Doerr

Jul 30, 2024 | Submission

Until the the pamphlet I received in my mailbox recently from Yukon's Citizen's Assembly, I was not fully aware of the current Yukon electoral process. The current "First-Past-The-Post" does not appear to me, to be in keeping with a Democracy.

Proportional Representation is more close to a Democracy, in my opinion. Isn't that what our Canadian Father's of Confederation in 1867 tried to achieve along with the BNA Act for solidarity? I could be wrong in my comprehension.

Stay Strong In Adversity and Stand Your Ground for the well-being of the majority of the people. (The majority of the people, in today's population, went from Ape to Sheep in the last 5 years.)

Vince Slotte

Jul 27, 2024 | Submission

I am writing to express my gratitude to the YCA. I believe it is important to approach life with a view to constant improvement. There is always room for a tweak here and there. Is there a need for big change or small change in our electoral process? I have my opinion but it is based on my own limited and incomplete research. Therefore I reserve my opinion. Thank You all for taking the time and having the openness to consider change for the better. This process and your conclusion has my full support.

Nicolas Thivierge

Jul 26, 2024 | Submission

Cost.

BC has 100 times the population but only 18 times more the MPs. Our politicians cost too much and do nothing but create more red tape. The budget and costs should be at the forefront.

Other than that... Nothing else should change. First Past the Post is the only fair option. Proportional Representation looks good on paper but it has never worked and will never work.

In the last two federal elections, the conservatives beat the liberals with the popular vote. I wonder if we should go with popular vote instead! If you don't think the conservatives should have won even with the popular vote, there is no reason to ever change any voting system before this unfairness gets fixed.

Chris Caldwell

Jul 24, 2024 | Submission

1) The most important and potentially destructive issue to date is Elections Yukon's plan for the removal of community representation from territorial governance in favor adding more electoral districts to the City of Whitehorse in an unfair numbers game that will place sole power and decision making for the entire territory into the hands of one community that holds little interest in rural Yukon except as a playground.

2) First past the post election method is the only viable method of voting within the Yukon's small populations, only Whitehorse has the population and cashflow capable of producing a roster of multiple candidates for each party as proposed by "Fair Vote Yukon's" proportional representation idea. The Yukon's current experience with coalition governance has been a prime example of catastrophic Whitehorse-centric decision-making that effectively blocks any and all opposition to YG's incompetence. Our current Liberal/ NDP coalition has cancelled democracy in the Yukon while creating unnecessary hardship for our rural citizens and communities. Whitehorse has become a huge bloated urban center of uncaring metropolitan elitist ideals that tacitly consider all jurisdictions and citizens outside it's city boundaries to be inconsequential subordinates of little value as aptly illustrated by the closure of rural garbage transfer stations, removal of civic fire-suppression equipment, refusal to exempt rural

communities from the abusive federal carbon tax while providing no public transit infrastructure to offset the necessities of driving and safe reliable oil home heating, plus the current Victoria mine disaster facilitated by a deliberate lack of enforcement by YG's environmental officers (if there are any).

Ralph Fitzsimmons

Jul 23, 2024 | Submission

Please stay with the current system

AL ALCOCK

Jul 22, 2024 | Submission

Fairness and confidence in the electoral process. I am satisfied with first past post. Having seen compromise governments at work I find they do not reflect what most in the electorate would like to see – instead it is party politics at it's worse.

NICK LOENEN

Jul 18, 2024 | Submission

Members of the Yukon Citizens Assembly:

It is difficult to overstate the significance of your assignment. You have been given the assignment to dream big dreams about the promise of democracy, a legislature that mirrors the political diversity of Yukon where cooperation is the norm, not the exception.

I ardently support the Irish Single Transferable Vote (STV). What distinguishes STV from all other systems is this: it places voters in the driver's seat.

Current system

Voting systems rest on presuppositions about what it is that needs to be represented in the legislature. Our current system represents geographic areas, ridings, postal codes. But many of the big public questions are not restricted to a geographic are. Issues such as health care, education, trade and business, climate change, affordable housing, transportation, etc. are not merely local. They demand all of Yukon work together. The current system is 200 years out of touch with the times. It assumes public policy issues are local. They are not.

Proportional representation

PR assumes that what needs representing is political parties, partisan differences. Representing political principles, platforms, programs is an improvement over what we have. And it may perfectly suit European countries, but how well does that fit with Yukon's political culture? Canadians have always been more practical than ideological. We are not fond of political parties, in fact, if we could, we would do without them. Partisanship may suit Italians, but not

us, we're Canadian. Why highlight our divisions? Proportional representation, unmodified, cannot be sold anywhere in Canada. It is too foreign to our culture.

Single Transferable Vote

The genius of STV is that it makes no assumptions about representation, no assumptions about what is most important to voters. It leaves those decisions to the voters themselves.

STV gives more choice to voters than any other system. People can choose to support a party, they can choose to spread their support among several parties, they can choose to not support any party. They can choose to support their geographic area through a local candidate, an independent, or support a particular project, they can vote for any diversity, they can vote exclusively for diversity.

STV aims to empower people. JS Mill, the great 19th century political theorist, who was an early and ardent supporter of STV, called STV personal representation. Mill understood that proportional representation is about parties, but STV is about persons. It places voters and their wishes in the driver's seat.

In the current system you have one vote, that vote must express your choice of local candidate, your choice of political party, your choice of premier and your choice of public policies. Giving an X to one candidate is to express total, complete agreement with that candidate, that party, that platform, that premier. That is completely unrealistic. That is not how people feel, ever. In contrast, STV allows voters to rank candidates, parties, leaders, platforms. It registers voter preferences across a wide assortment of politically significant questions.

STV does not aim to be proportional. Any proportionality is a happy, incidental by-product. Its aim is to give voice to voters and let them decide. That is the essence of democracy.

Also this, some will urge you to adopt Mixed Member Proportional (MMP). It is said to combine the best of both. It also combines the worst of both. MMP aims to represent both geography and political party. Why select a system that makes the choice of what should be represented for you? Particularly, when it is possible to give people the opportunity to make such choices for themselves?

Single Transferable Vote will ...

- ♣ provide local representation
- ♣ yield near-proportional results
- ♣ waste fewer votes
- ♣ meet both rural and urban needs
- ♣ increase voter choice
- ♣ eliminate safe seats

Single Transferable Vote, more than any other system, has potential for:

- ♣ effective local representation
- ♣ less party discipline
- ♣ less polarization in Yukon politics
- ♣ fewer wild lurches in public policies

- ♣ enabling the legislative assembly to hold government accountable
- ♣ giving MLAs a legislative role
- ♣ electing independents
- ♣ cleaning up the nomination process

Because it addresses a broad range of governance problems, the 2005, BC Citizens Assembly, after meeting for a year almost unanimously recommended STV. In the subsequent referendum STV enjoyed fifty-eight percent support overall and majority support in all but two constituencies. Yet it failed because political interests had decreed the referendum would require sixty percent support.

A referendum is appropriate, but it should be a confirmation referendum after a test-run of two elections. That will give Yukon voters a clear, unambiguous understanding of what the referendum is about. New Zealand did it that way, so should the Yukon.

Nick Loenen, former Richmond, BC City Councillor and MLA has written extensively on electoral reform including his 1997 Citizenship and Democracy, a case for Proportional Representation. Nick can be reached at nloenen76@gmail.com

Susan Greetham

Jun 28, 2024 | Submission

More choice in candidates not connected to a party in the outcome. More chance of either the candidate or the party of choice.

Not winner take all partisan politics. More collaboration and much closer to a consensus leadership.

R M

Jun 18, 2024 | Submission

Proportional representation undermines democracy. It is a poison that paralyzes representative democratic governments as legislatures are reduced to amateur hour and a crowd of boutique lobbyist parties. European countries that have adopted PR have little to show for it and indeed in many cases this method opens the door to other actors that can bend and shape public policy but with no account to the electorate. In this regard, PR is a useful tool to various parties that crave power but have nothing but enmity for the people and democratic checks and balances. In short this "citizens assembly" seeks to recentre power away from the electorate and in the hands of an anointed few. The name on the tin says citizens assembly but the contents are anything but.

Sue Greetham

Jun 15, 2024 | Submission

Every ballot cast should count towards representation. Partisanship must be balanced with common sense. Opposition must translate into collaboration.

Randy Clarkson

Jun 14, 2024 | Submission

I am against changes to the current electoral system except that the boundaries of ridings could be changed to more fairly represent the majority of Yukoners who live in or near Whitehorse.

I am against your vision of proportional representation which I expect gets its greatest support from fringe political groups on the far left, far right and far green spectrums. The political parties from these fringe groups will never be elected to form a government but in a proportional system can exert undue (and disproportional) influence on mainstream political parties who will have to form a coalition with them. We can see results this process in the government of Italy in which diverse political parties negotiate a coalition which falls apart every 6 months, or in Israel where fringe extremist political parties can force the governing party to follow the extremist agenda which is contrary to the mainstream public agenda and the country's interest.

It is better that the party with the most votes gets to be the government whether they have greater than 50% of the vote or not. Then they can govern and operate without having to negotiate deals with fringe interests which would otherwise hold the balance of power. I don't want Canada or the Yukon to follow the examples of Italy and Israel.

Murray Arsenault

Jun 11, 2024 | Submission

I want to provide my support for the existing system. My support stems from a couple of bullets I want to highlight.

To call the existing system "first past the post", is a poor descriptor, and a targeted mischaracterization by its opponents. I prefer to call it the "got the most votes" system. I think that in the context of the better name, the reasons to support the system are self-explanatory. The candidate who gets the most votes wins.

Proportional Representation (PR) leads to mandates that make it difficult for any party to advance its platform. No one can move forward on their agenda until after the election, and they can determine if they can create a coalition to advance some part of their platform.

PR creates broad coalitions that its proponents claim are beneficial, however I submit that they create deadlock. I'm sure YCA ER has studied many examples, such as Japan's last 19 Prime

Ministers lasting an average of less than 1 year and 10 months or the coalitions that rise and fall in PR adhering governments.

One of the benefits of the Westminster system, using the "got the most votes" system, is that when we have a majority government, we effectively elect a dictatorship for four years, allowing a government time to implement a platform and drive progress. I think that benefit is underappreciated when the prospect of PR is discussed.

I could support a trial of weighted preferential ballots (heavily weighted to the highest vote getter), or a system of rounds of voting (i.e. top two candidates face off in a second round), when we lack a majority winner,

Thanks for the opportunity to weigh in.
Murray Arsenault

Neil Salvin

Jun 10, 2024 | Submission

Most important is that more voters turn out on election day. Any system won't be representative unless everyone votes.

I vote for the person in my riding that will best represent my values in the LA. I do not vote based on parties or leaders. That is not how the current system was designed to work. Too many voters don't know a thing about their candidate other than the party that they are tied to. I would not want to see a change to the electoral system that would have my vote count for any candidate that I did not want to win – in other words, forcing me to pick a second or third choice if my candidate doesn't get the majority of votes. That would infuriate me. If my candidate does not win it does not mean that my vote was wasted. That is a ridiculous assertion and contrary to the democratic system of government.

I would prefer a legislative assembly that is non-partisan. If all candidates were independent of a party, then voters would have to determine who in their riding to vote for based on their values, work ethic and honesty. I have little hope that Yukon is progressive enough to even consider scrapping partisan politics, and I am betting that the citizens assembly is not going to suggest it as an option.

Russell Radwanski

Jun 5, 2024 | Submission

I would like to advocate for the development of a system aimed at empowering citizens by facilitating their direct involvement in decision-making processes, thereby fostering a more participatory democracy. While acknowledging the inherent complexity of such an endeavor, I

propose leveraging technology to enable voters to engage with proposed legislation and policies prior to their consideration by elected representatives.

My vision entails the creation of a government-sanctioned application, bolstered by robust security measures, through which Canadians can access and review proposed bills and policies. This platform would provide comprehensive texts, supplemented by AI-generated summaries to enhance accessibility, particularly for individuals facing comprehension barriers. Furthermore, to ensure informed participation, users would be required to demonstrate their understanding through security protocols before casting their votes on proposed measures. To incentivize citizen engagement, I suggest exploring mechanisms akin to Australia's tax rebate system, wherein active participation in democratic processes could render individuals eligible for tax benefits. While acknowledging potential challenges such as technological accessibility and safeguarding against foreign interference, I am confident that these hurdles can be addressed through diligent consideration and innovation.

I am advocating for serious deliberation and exploration of the feasibility of such a system, underscoring its potential to foster a more inclusive and responsive democratic framework. Despite the absence of similar proposals from governmental bodies to date, I remain steadfast in my belief that we possess the requisite technological prowess and ingenuity to realize a more empowered and efficient governance model for Canadians.

Introduction to Preferential Ridings Proportional with Second- choice Vote Electoral System - PRP2

*developed with the feedback of many
interested Yukoners*

for Yukon Citizens Assembly on Electoral Reform

Overall Goals of System

- Second-choice votes make it possible for all voters to be able to discuss their concerns with an MLA that their vote elected, leading to more democratic engagement of constituents.
- Simple system to vote and implement
- Ballot allows voters more choice in candidates plus party choice
- Paired-ridings avoid additional seats: one riding seat plus one proportional seat.

Eg. Riverdale North and Riverdale South become one Riverdale riding seat plus one proportional seat for Whitehorse.

Paired Ridings Grouped Into Electoral Areas

- Each Riding has one Geographical MLA elected from preferential ballot using points from first and second choices on ballots.
 - Point System described later
- Ridings grouped into 3 electoral areas or regions for proportional MLAs:
 - Whitehorse (10MLAs)
 - Yukon West and North (5MLAs)
 - Yukon South Centre and East (4MLAs)
- MLAs for Proportional Party Seats are elected based on highest percentage of points in their riding (but did not win the riding seat).

Whitehorse Electoral Area

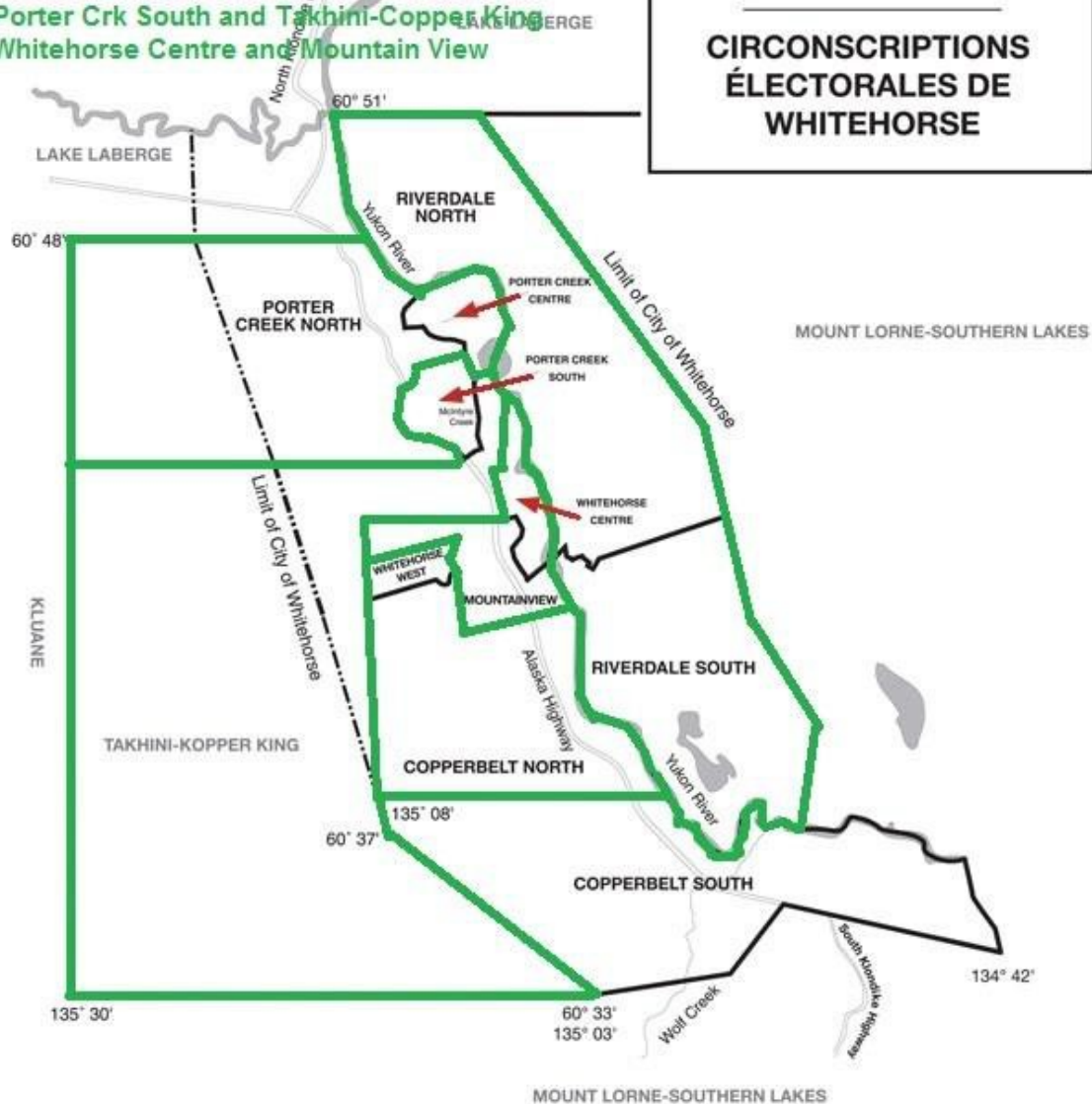
- 5 Paired Riding Seats PLUS 5 Proportional Seats
 - Riverdale South and Riverdale North
 - Copperbelt North and Whitehorse West
 - Porter Creek North and Porter Creek Centre
 - Porter Creek South and Takhini – Copper King
 - Whitehorse Centre and Mountain View

Whitehorse Area:

Riverdale South and Riverdale North
Copperbelt North and Whitehorse West
Porter Crk North and Porter Crk Centre
Porter Crk South and Takhini-Copper King
Whitehorse Centre and Mountain View

WHITEHORSE ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

CIRCONSCRIPTIONS ÉLECTORALES DE WHITEHORSE



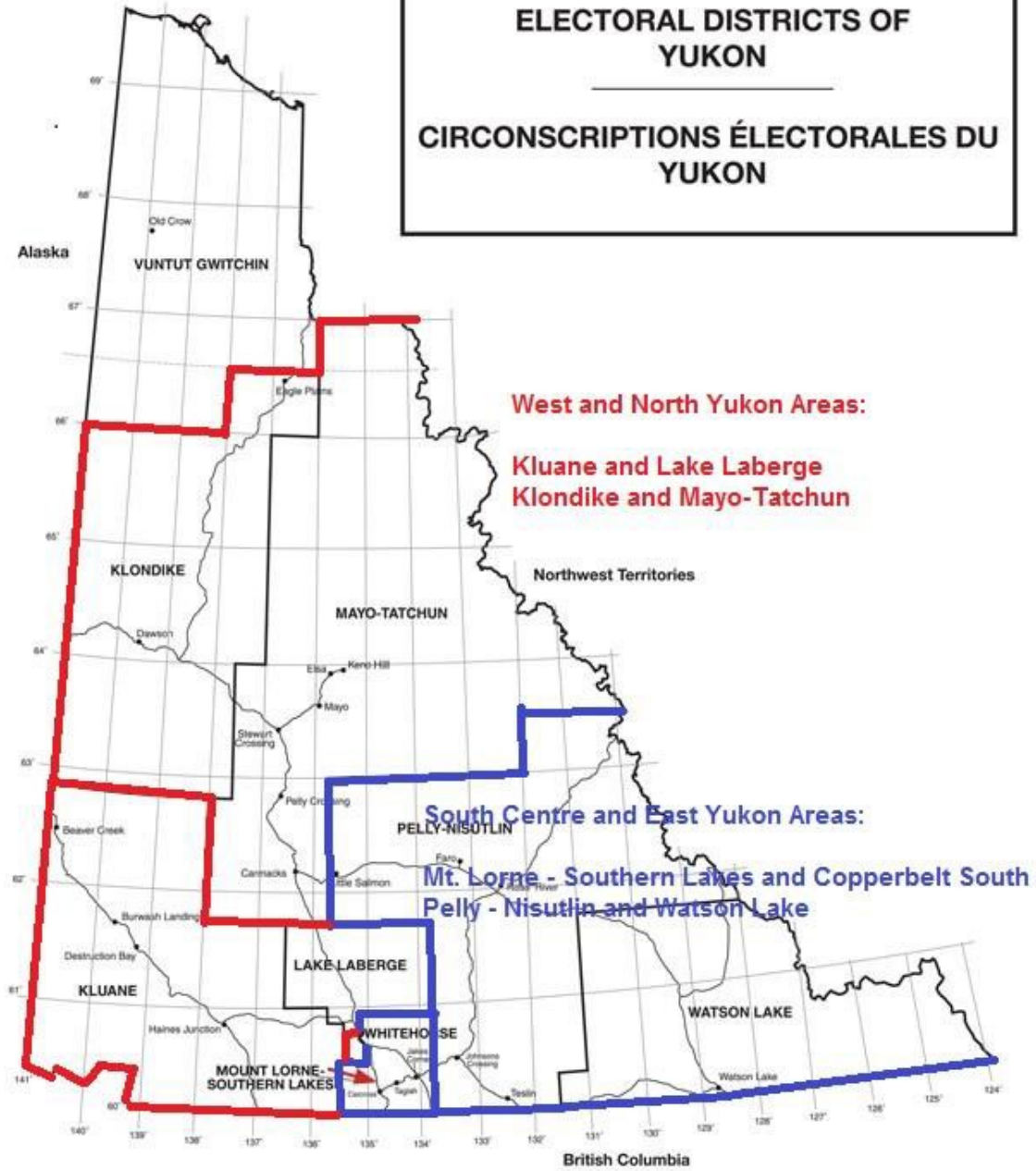
South Centre and East Yukon Electoral Area

- 2 Paired Riding Seats PLUS 2 Proportional Seats
 - Mount Lorne – Southern Lakes and Copperbelt South
 - Pelly – Nisutlin and Watson Lake

West and North Yukon Area

- 2 Paired Riding Seats PLUS 2 Proportional Seats *PLUS* Vuntut Gwitchin as an Individual Riding
 - Kluane and Lake Laberge
 - Klondike and Mayo-Tatchun
 - Party Votes from Vuntut Gwitchin for Proportional Seats of this Area
 - Non-winning Old Crow candidates are not eligible as a Proportional Candidate

**ELECTORAL DISTRICTS OF
YUKON**
**CIRCONSCRIPTIONS ÉLECTORALES DU
YUKON**



Point System to Elect Paired-riding MLAs

- 2 Examples:
 - 5 Candidates Running in a Riding
 - First Choice Vote provides 4 Points
 - Second Choice Vote provides 3 Points
 - 8 Candidates Running in a Riding
 - First Choice Vote provides 7 Points
 - Second Choice Vote provides 6 Points
- Candidate with the highest number of points in each riding is elected
 - Candidate with lower number of First-choice votes can win the seat from second choice vote points
NOTE: Effectiveness of MLAs elected by FPTP, and overall governance, are greatly affected by the voters who did not vote for the MLA. Whether second-choice or last-choice has an effect.

Election of Proportional Candidates

- Overall Party Preference Based on *Percentage of Party Points* totaled within each of the 3 Geographic areas
- Each Party's Proportional Seats are awarded to the Party's Candidates that were not elected as a Riding MLA with the highest *Percentage of Paired-riding Points*

Preferential Ridings Proportional with second-choice vote PRP2 system
BALLOT

You have 3 votes
Mark one x under each Choice

CANDIDATE	1st CHOICE	2nd CHOICE	PARTY	Party CHOICE
Candidate name			Party A	
Candidate name			Party B	
Candidate name	X		Party C	
Candidate name		X	Party D	X
Candidate name			Independent	

The maximum size of electoral areas is ten MLAs. If there are more than ten MLAs in a region, two electoral areas will be formed.

In past FPTP elections, using present boundaries, the new system without second-choice votes, has taken vote representation in elections from less than 50% to more than 90%. Second-choice votes make 100% vote representation possible.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES AND PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION 2024 08 12

Electoral Boundaries and Proportional Representations are related in that they both affect how votes translate into seats in a legislature, but they influence the system in different ways:

1. Electoral boundaries are the geographic divisions within a region used to allocate representation. The way boundaries are drawn can impact the fairness and effectiveness of representation. If boundaries are drawn in favor of one group over another it can distort the democratic process.
2. Proportional representation (PR) is a system where seats in a legislature are allocated to parties or candidates in proportion to the number of votes they receive. PR aims to reflect the overall vote distribution more accurately in the composition of the legislature, leading to fairer representation of diverse political views.

While electoral boundaries influence the geographic distribution of representatives, proportional representation focuses on ensuring that the share of seats reflects the share of votes. We propose that these two groups collaborate to develop the most effective electoral system with boundaries that result in more truly representative democracy. We are confident that when almost all (if not all) votes are represented in our legislature, all people in Yukon will have a stronger feeling of belonging to our communities and regions.

Under our present First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system, all voters who do not vote for the elected MLA in their riding, are not represented in their (our) Legislature. Under FPTP, when a majority government is elected by 40% of the votes cast, Opposition MLAs who represent 60% of votes cast have zero power in their votes. We end up with is a full term of dysfunctional democracy.

To have more truly inclusive and representative democracy, resulting in almost assured minority governments whose political parties can learn to work together collaboratively, we need to look at New Zealand whose history is similar to Canada.

New Zealand, who changed to a Mixed-Member-Proportional (MMP) system in 1996 showed that all political parties can learn to respectfully work together on issues, instead of disrespectful behavior that we presently see in our Legislature elected under FPTP.

OUR PROPOSAL:

- A. THE YUKON BOUNDARIES COMMISSION and THE YUKON CITIZENS ASSEMBLY ON ELECTORAL CHANGE, WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO ESTABLISH MORE TRULY REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY IN YUKON.
- B. USE THE PREFERENTIAL RIDINGS WITH SECOND-CHOICE VOTE SYSTEM IN THE REFERENDUM

Due to the change from 19 to 22 MLAs, this is a new proposal. Following are some concerns for the Yukon Boundaries Commission and Yukon Citizens Assembly on Electoral Reform we have heard from interested people that we hope you act upon. Along with the other considerations you have, we hope that you give serious consideration to adding three seats, pairing ridings, and grouping ridings into proportional areas (regions) as suggested here (four electoral areas instead of three):

- Add two seats for Whistlebend and make Ross River and Faro into an additional riding separate from Southern Lakes.
- Keep the Vuntut Gwitch'in riding as a single riding.

Group the 22 ridings into four proportional electoral areas:

1. South Centre and East Yukon Area

Two Paired-riding seats plus two Proportional seats plus Ross River/Faro party votes

- a. Mount Lorne + Southern Lakes/Copper Belt South

- b. Pelly-Nisutlin + Watson Lake PLUS party votes from Ross River/Faro. The candidates from Ross River/Faro (RRF) will not be eligible for proportional seats, RRF not having been paired.

2. West and North Yukon Area

Two Paired-riding seats plus two Proportional seats plus Vuntut Guich'in party votes

- a. Kluane and Lake Laberge
- b. Klondike and Mayo/Tatchun) PLUS party votes from Vuntut Guich'in (VG) for proportional seats. VG candidates will not be eligible for proportional seats, VG not having been paired.

3. North Whitehorse Area

Three Paired-riding seats plus three Proportional seats

- a. Porter Creek North and Porter Creek Center
- b. Porter Creek South and Takhini/Copper King
- c. The additional two Whistle Bend seats

4. South Whitehorse Area

Three Paired-riding seats plus three Proportional seats

- a. Riverdale North and Riverdale South
- b. Copperbelt North and Whitehorse West
- c. Whitehorse Center and Mountain View

I'm sorry that I do not have maps. I personally do not have the skills and my past technical expert was not available.

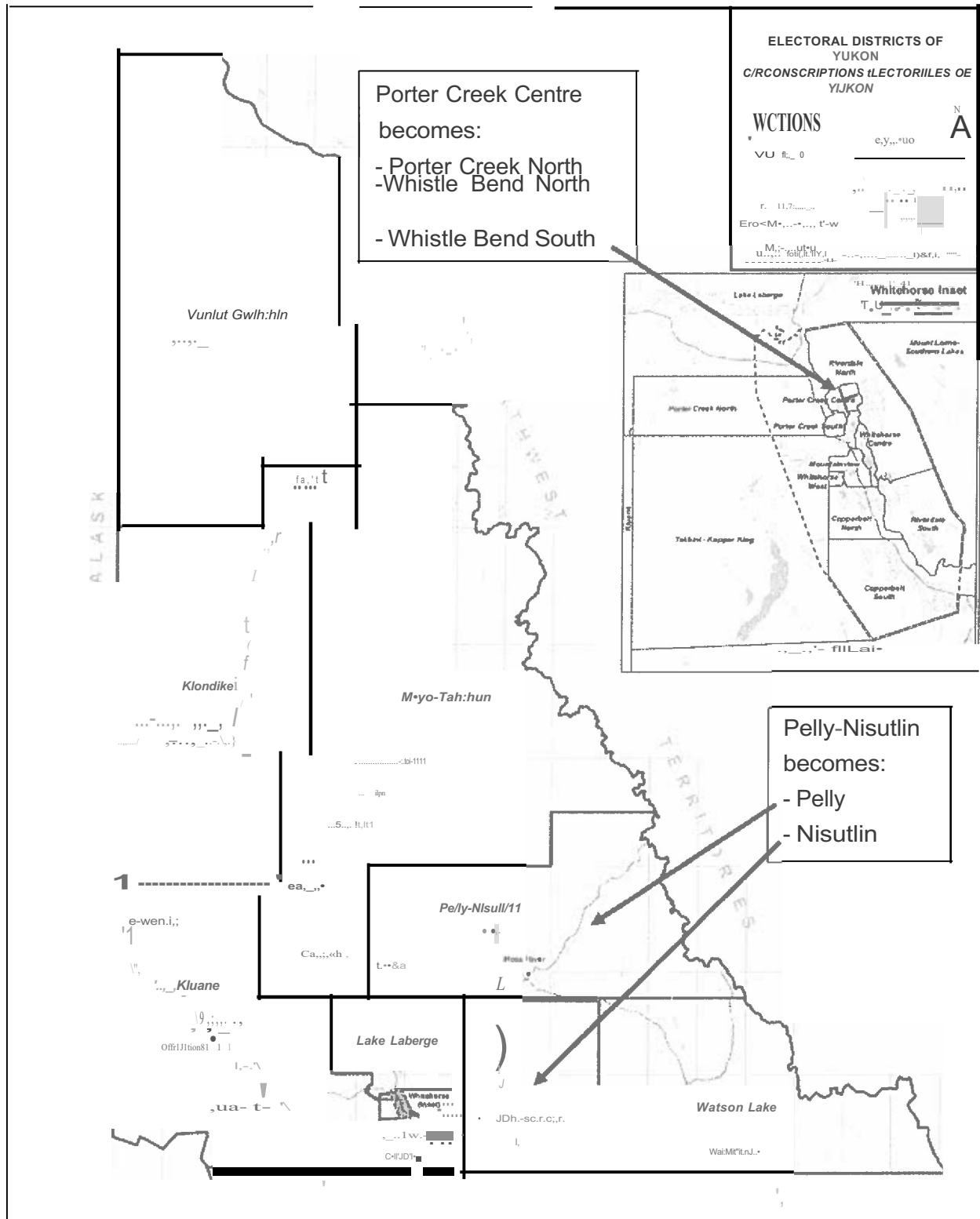
Looking forward,

Dave Brekke

Fair Vote Yukon

867-633-4418

Add 3 new Ridings to Yukon Electoral boundaries



FairVotee
YUKON

fairvoteyukon.ca

August 13, 2024



P.O. Box 580, Faro, Yukon, Y0B 1K0

Phone: (867) 994-2728 • Fax: (867) 994-3154 • cao-faro@faroyukon.ca •
www.faro.ca

Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

July 31, 2024

Chair Sara McPhee-Knowles, PH.D.

Dear Ms McPhee-Knowles,

Thank you for your letter to Faro Town Council dated July 10, 2024. Council for the Town of Faro appreciates and respects the challenge being undertaken by the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform.

It was indeed unfortunate that your scheduled ZOOM meeting was offered at the same time that we had a scheduled a Regular Council Meeting, as several of us would have liked to virtually attend. We do understand, though, that there is no 'good time' on everyone's calendar. Therefore, I offer this written response as my opportunity to provide my comments about the Electoral Reform initiative.

Electoral Reform in any region or country is a challenge, so I can appreciate the challenges that the Yukon Citizens' Assembly must be facing in the Yukon. Certainly, we understand the reasoning of creating a working committee of 38 members from the 19 electoral ridings to review the various options open for the Yukon to introduce Electoral Reform.

Speaking as the Mayor for the Town of Faro, I have learned first-hand that it is difficult to create cross-sectional representation for controversial topics ... and our controversial topics are limited to boundaries of our little community. I cannot fathom the challenge of selecting only two people, from each electoral district in the Yukon, who could provide clear cross-sectional representation of that each district.

Of course, one of the main criticisms that the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform will probably face will be that the committee members were appointed, not elected. As such, whatever findings that the Yukon Citizens' Assembly proposes to the Legislative Assembly will be subject to criticism of having a biased committee composition.

Given this reality, I strongly encourage you to consider putting the question to a Referendum. Whatever the decision by the full population of the Yukon, it will be the decision that the majority will be prepared to support. Otherwise, I fear that any solution

proposed will be questioned and be subjected to significant opposition. As you note in your letter, the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform is proceeding "... *with the assumption that the public is a resource ...*". Keeping this in mind, calling for a Territorial Referendum will address those concerns and taps into that acknowledged resource.

I would also be interested in learning who the two committee members that the Yukon Citizens' Assembly selected from our electoral district, as I would like to have a conversation with them to glean their perspective on this initiative. As these 38 committee members were appointed, not elected, I fear that the Yukon Citizens' Assembly could be unintentionally setting these committee members up for criticism and failure.

Please feel free to share my comments and concerns with all Assembly members as I believe they should understand that the Town of Faro has a sincere interest in this project.

Kindest regards,



Mayor Jack Bowers
Town of Faro

cc: Premier Ranj Pillai
Stacey Hassard, MLA Pelly Nisultlin
Kate White, NDP Leader
Amanda Janssens, CS Municipal Advisor
Lauren Hanchar, AYC President



**Fair Représentation
Vote équitable
Canada au Canada**

Submission to the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

June 7, 2024

Introduction

We appreciate the Citizens' Assembly's time and consideration on the important issue of electoral reform.

As Canada's largest organisation dedicated to the cause of electoral reform, we would like to address three primary issues:

- *Process*. Areas for improvement or special attention that may affect the outcome of the Citizens' Assembly's work.
- *Principles*. Relating the principles of democracy to voting reform.
- *Systems*. Some illustrative example reforms to provide inspiration in the Citizens' Assembly's work.

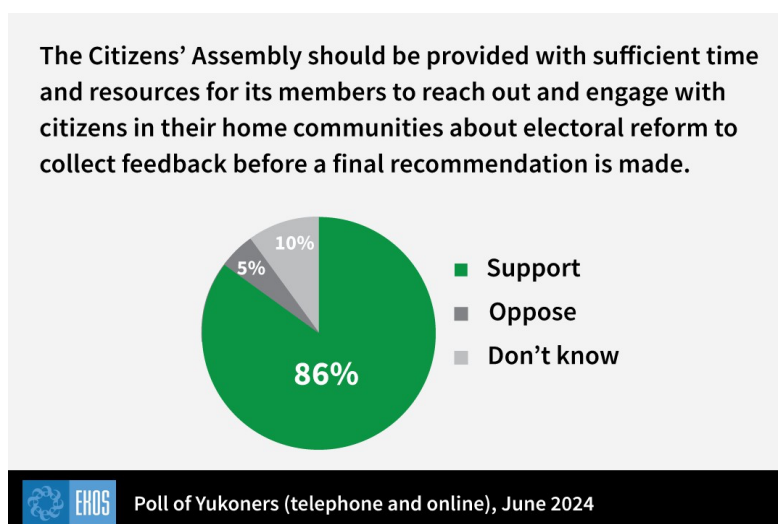
Process Recommendations

In our experience, the public cares as much if not more about the process behind democratic reform as they do about the reform itself.

To that end, we make the following three recommendations:

That the Citizens' Assembly request that the government provide you with the opportunity to collect feedback in your home communities about draft recommendations prior to their finalisation.

We firmly believe that greater community engagement will both improve the quality of recommendations and give the public a greater sense of ownership over the Citizens' Assembly's recommendation. In an [EKOS poll](#) conducted May 24 - June 5, 86% of Yukoners supported this additional phase compared to 5% opposed.

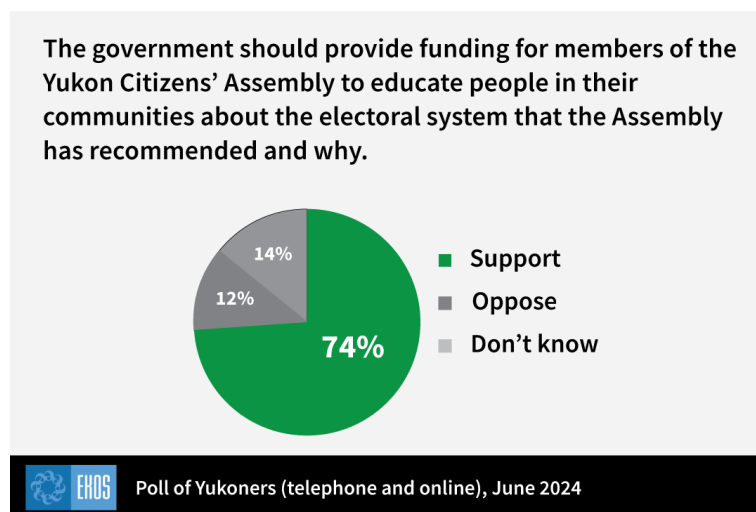


That the Citizens' Assembly request that the government empower and provide resources and a mandate to your members to explain your recommendation to the public.

As in BC and unlike in Ontario, we suggest that a hard copy of the Yukon Citizens' Assembly's final report be sent to all households. We further suggest that that recommendation be given proper context by focusing first on the composition of the assembly as a body of ordinary citizens, next on the motives behind the recommendation, before finally moving to the details of the recommended changes themselves.

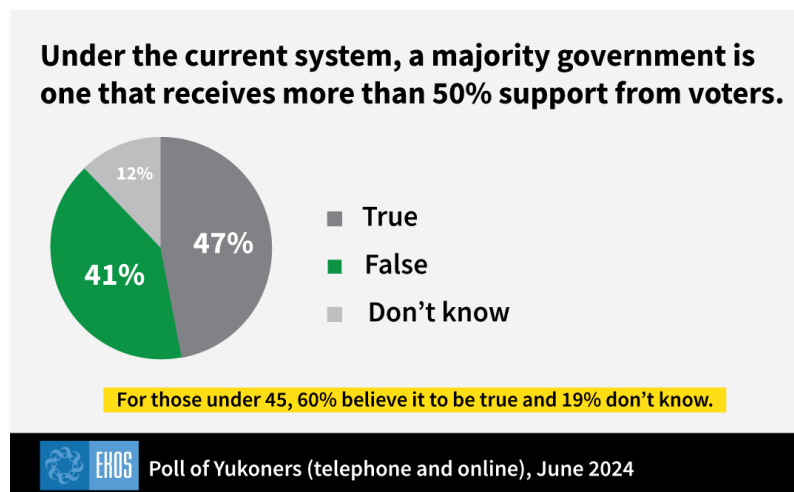
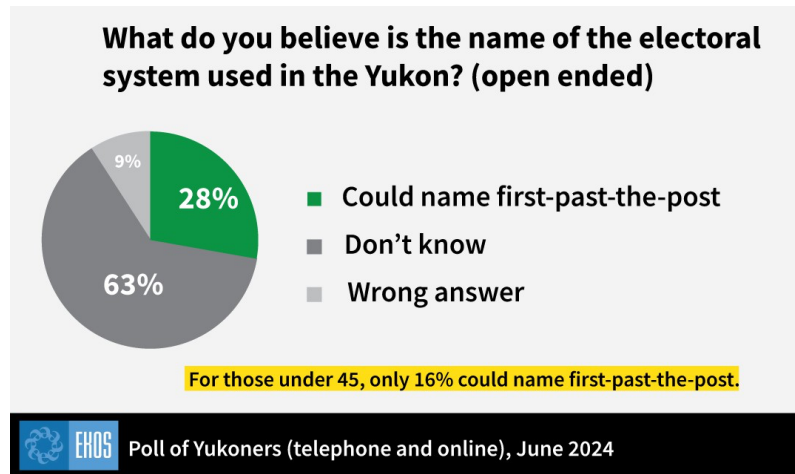
Following the conclusion of their work, the members of BC Citizens' Assembly formed an alumni group where they provided education resources and speakers to interested parties. This work was not supported by resources from the BC government, which we feel was an error. We recommend that the Citizens' Assembly include a fully funded Phase Two, where Assembly members who are able to participate in public engagement are provided with resources for outreach in communities to talk about their recommendations prior to any referendum.

74% of Yukoners polled supported this approach compared to just 12% opposed.



That the Citizens' Assembly request that the government fund education and meaningful community engagement rather than for/against campaigns.

The level of public knowledge surrounding issues of electoral reform is low. Based on the polling results from EKOS, most Yukoners either incorrectly believe (47%) or are unsure (12%) that a majority of the vote is necessary to produce a majority government under the current system. Most Yukoners also either incorrectly believe (32%) or are unsure (22%) that the current system is a form of proportional representation. Only a mere 28% can correctly name first-past-the-post as the current voting system.



This issue is not unique to the Yukon, and polls have found similarly low levels of awareness of electoral systems at a national level. This does underline the need for a strong, factual, and unbiased education campaign to inform the public prior to any referendum.

Because yes and no campaigns are not typically bound to be truthful, funding these interested third party organisations presents a risk of further misinforming the public.

We recommend that this public education work be undertaken by both the Citizens' Assembly itself, as described above, and by Elections Yukon. When polled, 83% of the public supported such a role for Elections Yukon, compared to 9% opposed.

That the Citizens' Assembly request that the referendum question be worded similarly to the 2005 referendum question in British Columbia, which was:

Should British Columbia change to the BC-STV electoral system as recommended by the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform? (Yes/No)

We feel that this wording reduced the bias associated with pitting an unknown acronym against an identified status quo. Directly stating the status quo in the referendum question is intended to improve voter knowledge, but does not provide a similar level of detail and knowledge for the alternative proposed. Worse, much of that voter knowledge of the status quo may in fact be incorrect.

Status quo bias could be further reduced by replacing the word “changed” with more neutral language such as “adopt.”

By referring to the alternative and the recommendation for it, voters are encouraged to inform themselves by reading the detailed report this Citizens’ Assembly will produce. We note that incumbent MLAs do not have their incumbency identified on the ballot for fear of bias, and would apply the same logic to this situation.

Additionally, we note that Statistics Yukon’s attempt to describe potential electoral systems included substantial factual errors in the descriptions, and caution against relying on accurate descriptions of voting systems being included in the referendum question itself.

Principles of Electoral Systems

We understand that, like British Columbia’s Citizens’ Assembly, the Yukon Citizens’ Assembly is free to choose the guiding principles that will be used to evaluate both alternative electoral systems and the status quo. We would highlight their three primary principles as deserving strong consideration by the Yukon Citizens’ Assembly: fair election results, effective local representation, and greater voter choice. We suggest the possible inclusion of a fourth principle: effective government.

Fair election results that reflect voter intention

The BC Citizens’ Assembly, like Fair Vote Canada, believed strongly in equality between voters of all partisan persuasions. Supporters of minority viewpoints in a given area are deserving of representation in proportion to their numbers. More popular viewpoints deserve more representation, but not in excess of their share of the vote.

According to the Yukon Electoral Reform Survey Report, “71.6% agreed or strongly agreed that Yukon’s electoral system should ensure that the number of seats held by a party in the Legislative Assembly reflects the proportion of votes it received across the territory, and 10.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this outcome.” Only proportional representation systems reflect this value.

Effective local representation

Voters want MLAs who represent specific geographic areas so that they may champion local issues. Effective local representation is the intent of first-past-the-post; however, that intent is undermined by the reality that most (52.3% in 2021) Yukon voters are not represented by someone they voted for. Worse, as put by the BC Citizens' Assembly, "party discipline quickly turns members of the Legislative Assembly into party advocates rather than local advocates."

Proportional representation can enhance local representation in two ways:

1. Proportional representation substantially decreases the share of voters that fail to elect a representative. In elections for a single-member riding, whether by first-past-the-post or using a ranked ballot, up to 50% of voters can vote for the same candidate or party without seeing that candidate elected (as was the case in Vuntut Gwitchin in 2021). This is referred to as the *threshold of exclusion*. Under proportional representation, in a two-member riding that figure drops to 33%. In a three-member riding, this threshold drops again to 25%, with continuing but diminishing improvements as the number of representatives in a given riding increases. These improvements in the share of voters represented by someone of their choice are reflected in the real-world examples of countries using proportional representation, where typically 80-95% of votes contribute to electing a representative.
2. Proportional representation when properly implemented can reduce party control, by:
 - a. Reducing the power of parties to hand-pick candidates for safe seats. In an open-list or ranked implementation of proportional representation, parties must present multiple candidates for the seats available. Voters can reject a party's hand-picked insider by simply choosing someone else from within their preferred party's list.
 - b. Giving dissenting MLAs a realistic hope of re-election as members of a new party or as an independent. If independent candidates are treated as simply a party of one, then those independents can more easily win re-election by appealing to a smaller but still significant share of the vote. For example, as mentioned above, in a three-seat riding an independent could guarantee their re-election with 25% of the vote, compared to 50% under single-winner methods such as first-past-the-post. Real-world examples of this would include independent MSP Margo MacDonald in Scotland, or the large contingent of independent Irish MPs (22 out of 160), or the success of the Free Voters movement in Bavaria.

According to the Yukon Electoral Reform Survey Report, "78.4% agreed or strongly agreed that Yukon's electoral system should ensure that voters elect local candidates to represent them in the Legislative Assembly, while 4.8% disagreed or strongly

disagreed.” We recommend reflecting this value by proposing a form of proportional representation that elects candidates from local ridings using open lists or a ranked ballot. This could include a mixed-member proportional system using open lists.

This electoral system should be designed to ensure accessibility to independent candidates.

Greater voter choice

In the most recent election, voters had the choice among one candidate from each party and no more than one independent per riding. If a voter does not like the candidate offered by their preferred party, they are left to choose between holding their nose and voting for a candidate they dislike, holding their nose and voting for a party they dislike, or not voting at all.

We suggest improving choice by recommending systems that elect multiple candidates per riding or region, thereby encouraging parties to run multiple candidates. We further suggest that voters should be able to choose from among those multiple candidates directly, rather than rely on a party-ordered list.

With parties putting forward multiple candidates in each contest, this provides an incentive for parties to recruit a diverse set of qualified candidates for their slate in order to maximise their appeal. Studies show that this mechanism has improved the diversity of legislatures in terms of gender, ethnicity, and geography.

Effective government

Studies have shown that countries using proportional representation outperform their peers on a host of issues, including (but not limited to):

- Less concentration of power, and therefore less risk that any single party can unilaterally change the rules to suit themselves
- More stability: Parliaments elected by PR are more likely to last a full term; policy swings when governments change are less extreme
- Higher citizen satisfaction with the performance of their country’s democratic institutions (even when the party they voted for was not in power)
- Lower levels of partisan polarisation among the electorate
- More fiscal responsibility, including less debt, and more likelihood of fiscal surpluses (the latter applying to moderately proportional systems)

- Higher economic growth
- Lower corporate tax rates
- Lower tariffs
- Lower income inequality
- More diversity in the legislature, including more women (8 percentage points higher) and youth (PR countries elect twice as many MPs under 30)
- Higher quality of policy making
- High level of civil liberties and privacy
- Better environmental protection, including higher scores on the Yale Environmental Protection Index (EPI), more effective environmental policies, and more use of renewable energy
- Higher scores on the United Nations Index of Human Development, which incorporates health, education, and standard of living indicators.
- Better population health, including higher life expectancy
- Higher quality and independence of the public service
- Higher level of adherence to the rule of law
- Lower level of corruption and state capture by elite interests
- Higher voter turnout (7.5 percentage points, and 12% among youth)

For a summary of research on improved outcomes under proportional representation, please refer to <https://www.fairvote.ca/a-look-at-the-evidence/>

Possible Models

We believe any system that meets the above criteria is worth supporting. In that context, we offer four example systems to consider; however, this list is by no means meant to be exhaustive.

We have included for your review rough simulations of how different systems would have translated votes from the 2021 territorial election to results. We note that while the NDP is the primary beneficiary in these simulations, in 2011 proportional representation would have most benefited the Liberals, and in 2002 the primary beneficiary was the Yukon Party.

These simulations are very approximate and include rough riding/district/region boundaries that would need further refinement, likely by the Boundaries Commission. This includes some boundary choices that straddle the rural/urban divide that were made for expediency.

No allowances were made for changes in voting behaviour due to the change in voting system, though we suggest based on the experiences of past reforms in British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba that these changes may be smaller than some might expect.

In the case of the tie in Vuntut Gwitchin, we showed this seat as split between the Liberals and NDP because the results were a tie and the seat could have gone either way, affecting the proportionality of the overall outcome. For the MMP and DMP simulations, an extra local seat for either party is compensated by the loss of a balancing seat for that party.

The spreadsheets used to calculate these results are available [here](#). Please feel free to make your own copy and make any changes you would like to explore. We are happy to explain these simulations in greater detail as well.

Open-List Proportional Representation (Local Choice Voting)

This video shows how OLPR could work in the Yukon (modelling based on the 2021 election):



Open List Proportional Representation combines proportional representation of parties with direct voter influence over which candidates within those parties are elected, ensuring both fair party representation and voter choice.

Features:

1. **Party slates:** Political parties present multiple candidates to voters before the election.
2. **Voter choice:** Voters cast their vote for a specific candidate within a party slate, not just for the party itself. This means voters have a say in which individuals from the slate should be elected.
3. **Proportional allocation:** The number of seats each party wins is determined by the total number of votes the party's candidates receive. This ensures that the proportion of seats a party gets matches its share of the overall vote.

4. **Candidate selection:** The candidates from each party slate who receive the most individual votes are elected to fill the seats won by their party. This allows popular candidates within the party to be prioritised.

Advantages:

- Local accountability. All MLAs are directly accountable to their local community.
- Voter choice. Choose between not only parties but also candidates of the same party.
- Familiar voting experience. Mark an X next to your preferred candidate.
- Ballot format is familiar to voters.
- Easy, simple to describe.

Use:

- Most common electoral system internationally, including all Nordic countries.

Additional Video:

[Electoral Reform Option Two - List Proportional Representation](#)

Sample Ballot:

Open List Ballot

Mark an X beside one candidate from the party of your choice. A vote for a candidate also counts as a vote for the candidate's party.

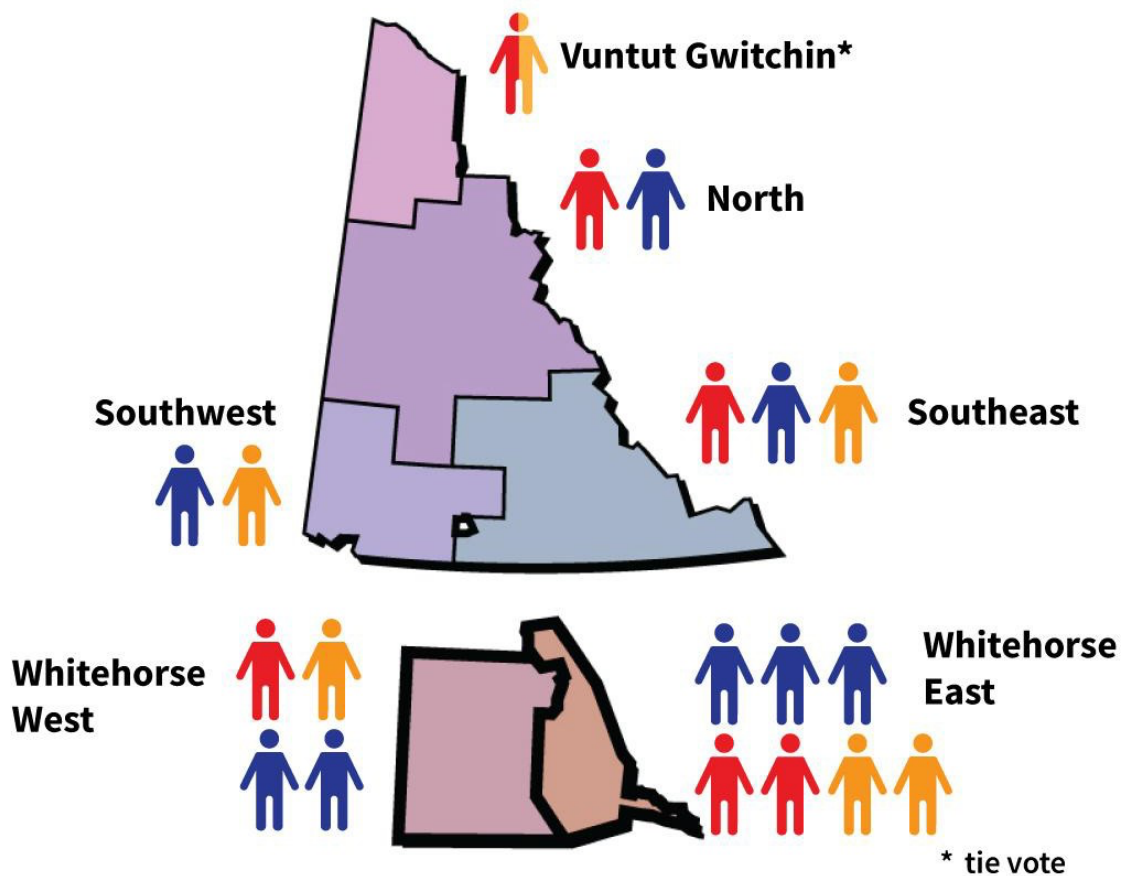
PARTY A	PARTY B	PARTY C	PARTY D	INDEPENDENT
<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate
<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	
<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	
<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	

Sample Results:

Open List PR, 2021

Party	% Vote	% Seats	# Seats
Yukon Party	39.3%	42.1%	8
Liberal	32.4%	28.9%	5.5
NDP	28.2%	28.9%	5.5

Open List Proportional



Single Transferable Vote

This video shows how STV could work in the Yukon (modelling based on the 2021 election):



Single Transferable Vote combines proportional results with direct voter influence over which candidates are elected, ensuring both fair party representation and voter choice.

Voters can rank candidates within and between parties. The most popular candidates are elected.

Features:

1. **Party Slates:** Political parties typically present multiple candidates to voters before the election.
2. **Voter Choice:** Voters rank candidates in order of preference.
3. **Proportional Allocation:** If a candidate meets the required threshold (a quota), they are declared elected.
4. **Vote Transfers:** Excess votes above the quota are transferred to voters' next highest choice. The worst performing candidate is eliminated, and their votes are transferred to voters' next highest choice. This process repeats until all seats are filled.

Advantages:

- Local Accountability. All MLAs are directly accountable to their local community.
- Voter Choice. Choose between not only parties but also candidates of the same party. Mix and match candidates from different parties if desired.
- Simple to use. Rank as few or as many as you like.
- Accessible to independents. STV has among the strongest track records for electing independents of any voting system.

Use:

- Ireland, lower houses in Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania, upper houses in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria, all

municipal elections in Scotland, some municipal elections in New Zealand and the US. Previously used at times for municipal elections in western Canada and for provincial elections in Edmonton, Calgary and Winnipeg.

Additional Videos:

[How does Single Transferable Vote work in Portland, Oregon?](#)

[How do we elect MLAs? \(Northern Ireland\)](#)

[Politics in the Animal Kingdom: Single Transferable Vote](#)

Sample Ballot:

STV Ballot

Rank as few or as many candidates as you wish.
1 for your first choice, 2 for your second choice and so on.

PARTY A	PARTY B	PARTY C	PARTY D	INDEPENDENT
<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 2 Candidate	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 Candidate
<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1 Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	
<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 4 Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	

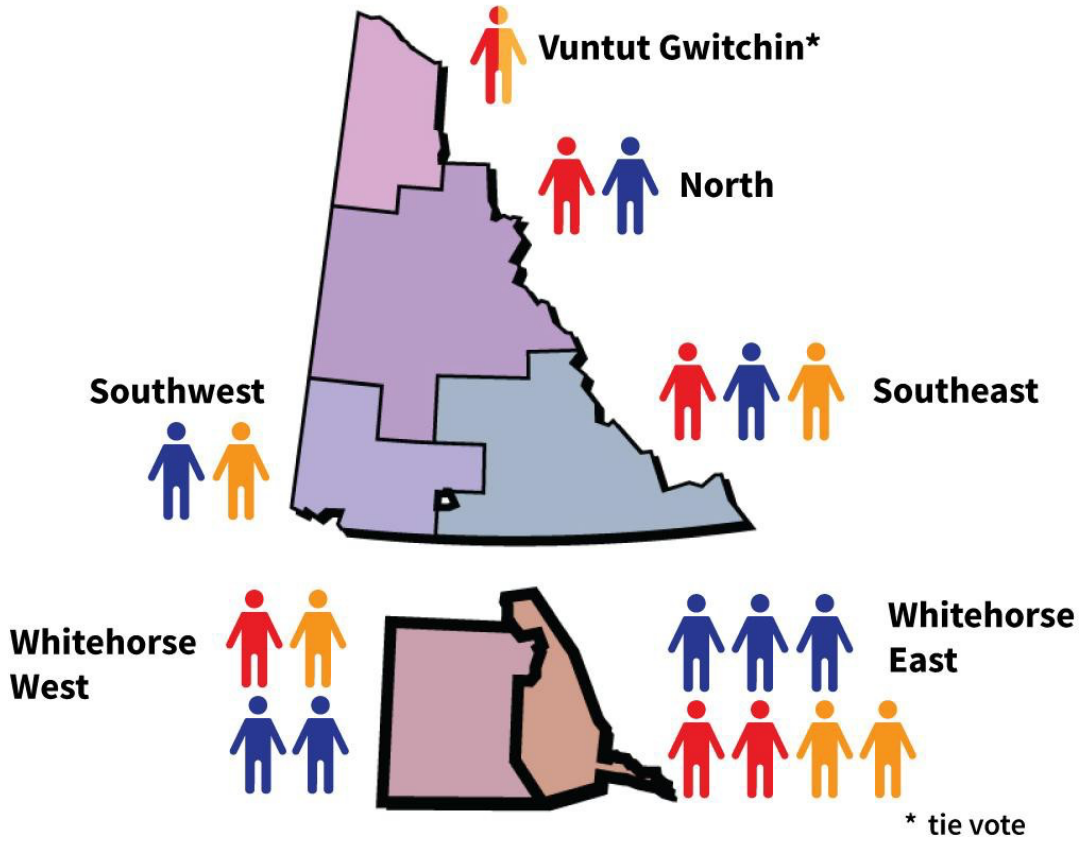
Sample Results:

STV, 2021

Party	% Vote	% Seats	# Seats
Yukon Party	39.3%	42.1%	8
Liberal	32.4%	28.9%	5.5
NDP	28.2%	28.9%	5.5

Single Transferable Vote

(Proportional ranked choice voting)



Mixed-Member Proportional Representation

This video shows how MMP could work in the Yukon (modelling based on the 2021 election):

Fair Representation
Vote Équitable
Canada au Canada

Mixed Member Proportional Representation

This video accompanies Fair Vote Canada's submission to the Yukon Citizens' Assembly

YUKON CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

The voice of a vibrant and diverse community.

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting is an electoral system that combines two methods of electing representatives to provide a more balanced and proportional representation in the legislature.

Features:

1. **Two Votes Per Voter:** Each voter has two votes. The first vote is for a candidate to represent their local district (much like in traditional systems). The second vote is for a candidate from a party slate.
2. **District Representatives:** The first vote elects representatives in single-member districts. The candidate with the most votes in each district wins a seat in the legislature.
3. **Party Seats:** The second vote determines the overall proportion of seats each party should have in the legislature. These seats are filled from party slates, with the seats filled by the candidates with the most personal votes from that slate.
4. **Balancing Seats:** After the district seats are allocated, additional seats are given to parties to ensure the overall proportion of seats in the legislature matches the proportion of party votes. This corrects any disproportionality from the district elections.

The aim of MMP is to combine the direct accountability of district representatives with the fairness of proportional representation, ensuring that the number of seats each party has closely matches its share of the vote.

Advantages:

- Ballot format allows voters to distinguish between party and candidate support.
- Mitigates increases in riding sizes while maintaining proportionality.
- Voter Choice. For regional seats, choose between not only parties but also candidates of the same party.
- Allows Vuntut Gwitchin to maintain dedicated representation without risk of distortion to territory-wide partisan results.
- Gives popular independent candidates a reasonable chance of being elected.

Use:

- New Zealand, Germany, Scotland

Additional Videos:

[Mixed-Member Proportional Representation Explained](#)

[MMP \(Mixed Member Proportional\)](#)

[FVC Mixed Member Proportional](#)

Sample Ballot:

MMP Ballot

Riding vote

Please mark one X beside one candidate for your local MLA.

Candidate Party A Candidate Party B Candidate Party C Candidate Party D Candidate Independent

Party vote

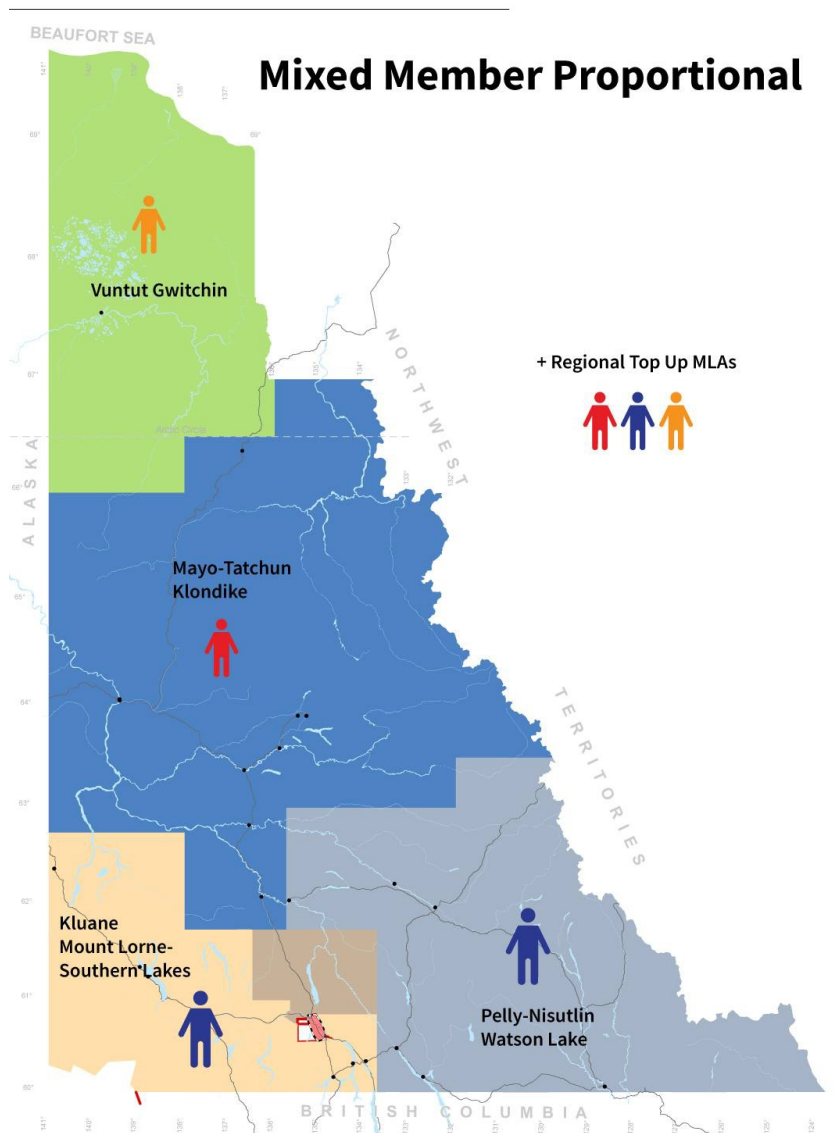
Please mark one X beside one candidate for a regional MLA.
A vote for a candidate counts as a vote for that candidate's party.

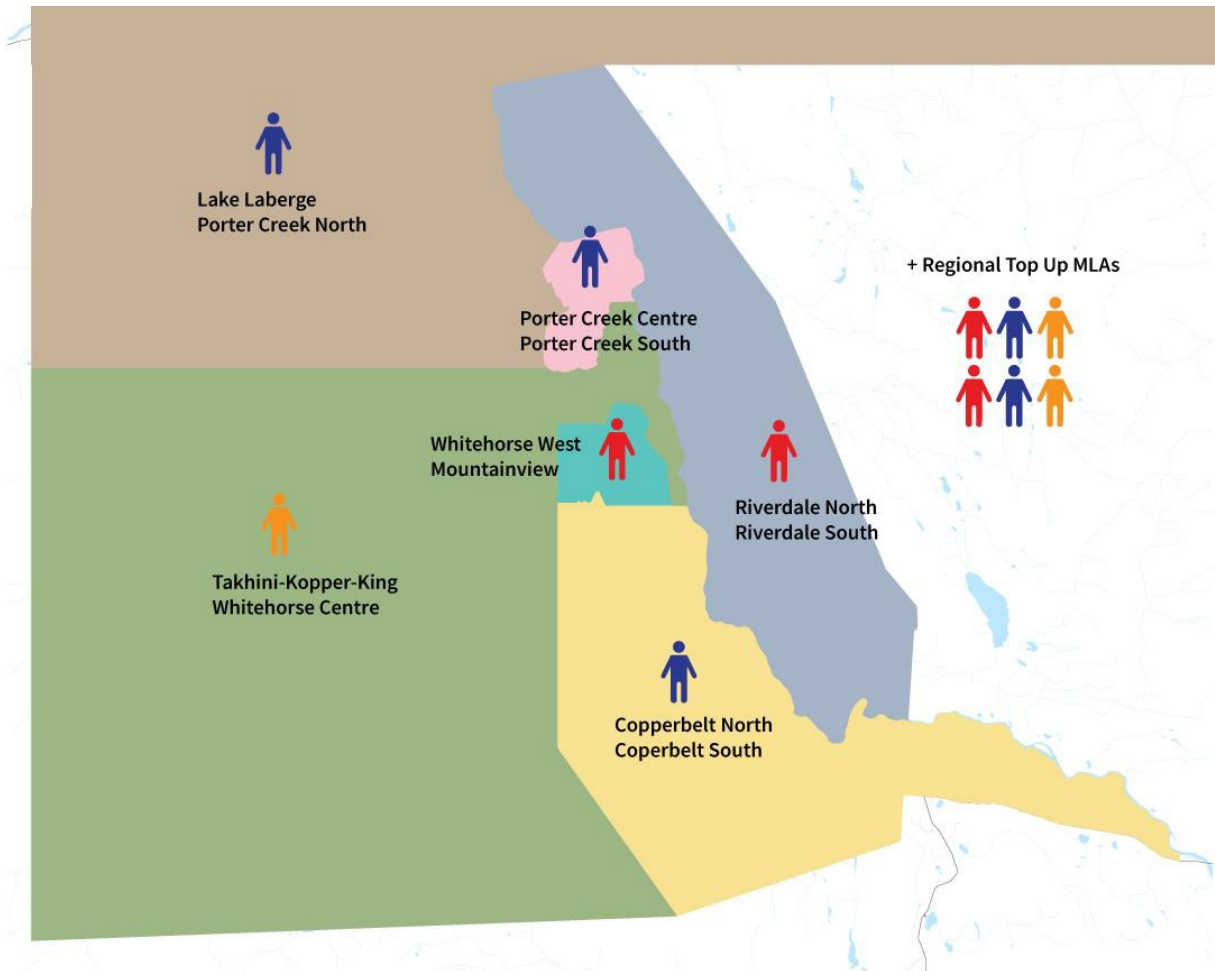
PARTY A	PARTY B	PARTY C	PARTY D
<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate
<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate
<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate
<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate
<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate
<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate	<input type="radio"/> Candidate

Sample Results:

MMP, 2021

Party	% Vote	% Seats	# Seats
Yukon Party	39.3%	42.1%	8
Liberal	32.4%	31.6%	6
NDP	28.2%	26.3%	5





Dual Member Proportional

This video shows how DMP could work in the Yukon (modelling based on the 2021 election):



Dual Member Proportional Representation

This video accompanies Fair Vote Canada's submission to the Yukon Citizens' Assembly



Dual Member Proportional voting is an electoral system designed to achieve proportional representation while retaining local district representation.

Features:

1. **Two representatives per district:** Except for Vuntut Gwitchin, each electoral district elects two representatives.
2. **One vote per voter:** Voters cast a single combined vote for a pair of candidates from the same party or as independents. This vote counts both for the specific candidates and for the party.
3. **First seat - direct election:** The first seat in each district is won by the candidate with the most votes, similar to a traditional first-past-the-post system. Independents are elected if they place first or second.
4. **Balancing seats:** After the district seats are allocated, additional seats are given to parties to ensure the overall proportion of seats in the legislature matches the proportion of party votes. This corrects any disproportionality from the district elections. These seats are allocated based on the candidates' relative strength in each district.

Dual Member Proportional uses a simple ballot, provides high proportionality, 100% local representation, and better rural inclusion. Additional information can be found at <https://dmpforcanada.com>

Advantages:

- Minimal change to the voting experience.
- Mitigates increases in riding sizes while maintaining high proportionality.
- Allows Vuntut Gwitchin to maintain dedicated representation without risk of distortion to territory-wide partisan results.

Use:

- Dual member proportional representation was designed for a Canadian context, but similar systems are in use in select German states.

Additional Video:

[Electoral Reform: Dual Member Proportional Explained](#)

Sample Ballot:

DMP Ballot

Mark one X. Your vote will count for the first and second candidates listed, and for their party.

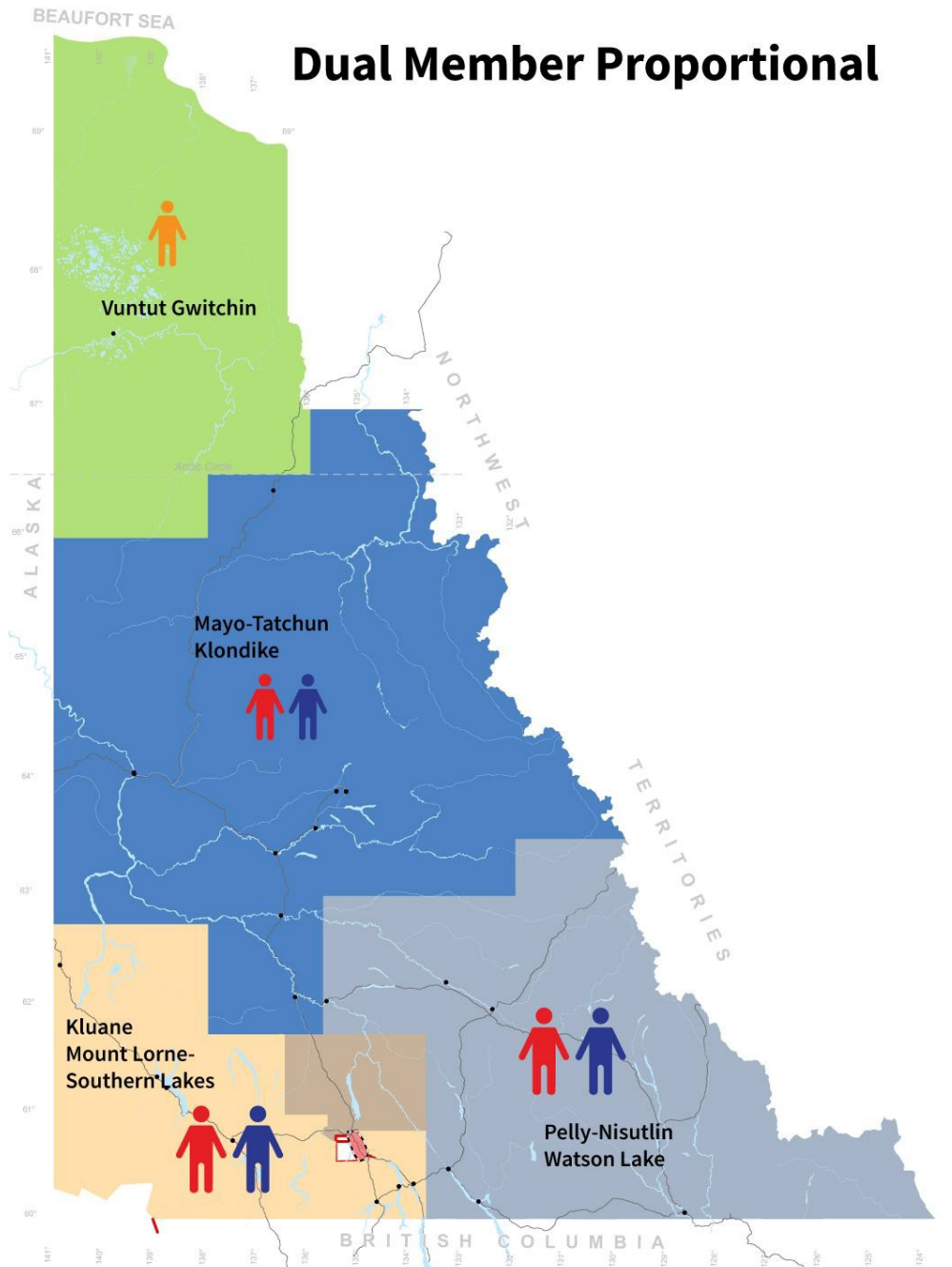
PARTY A	PARTY B	PARTY C	PARTY D	INDEPENDENT
<input type="radio"/> Candidate A Candidate B	<input type="radio"/> Candidate A Candidate B	<input type="radio"/> Candidate A Candidate B	<input type="radio"/> Candidate A Candidate B	<input type="radio"/> Candidate

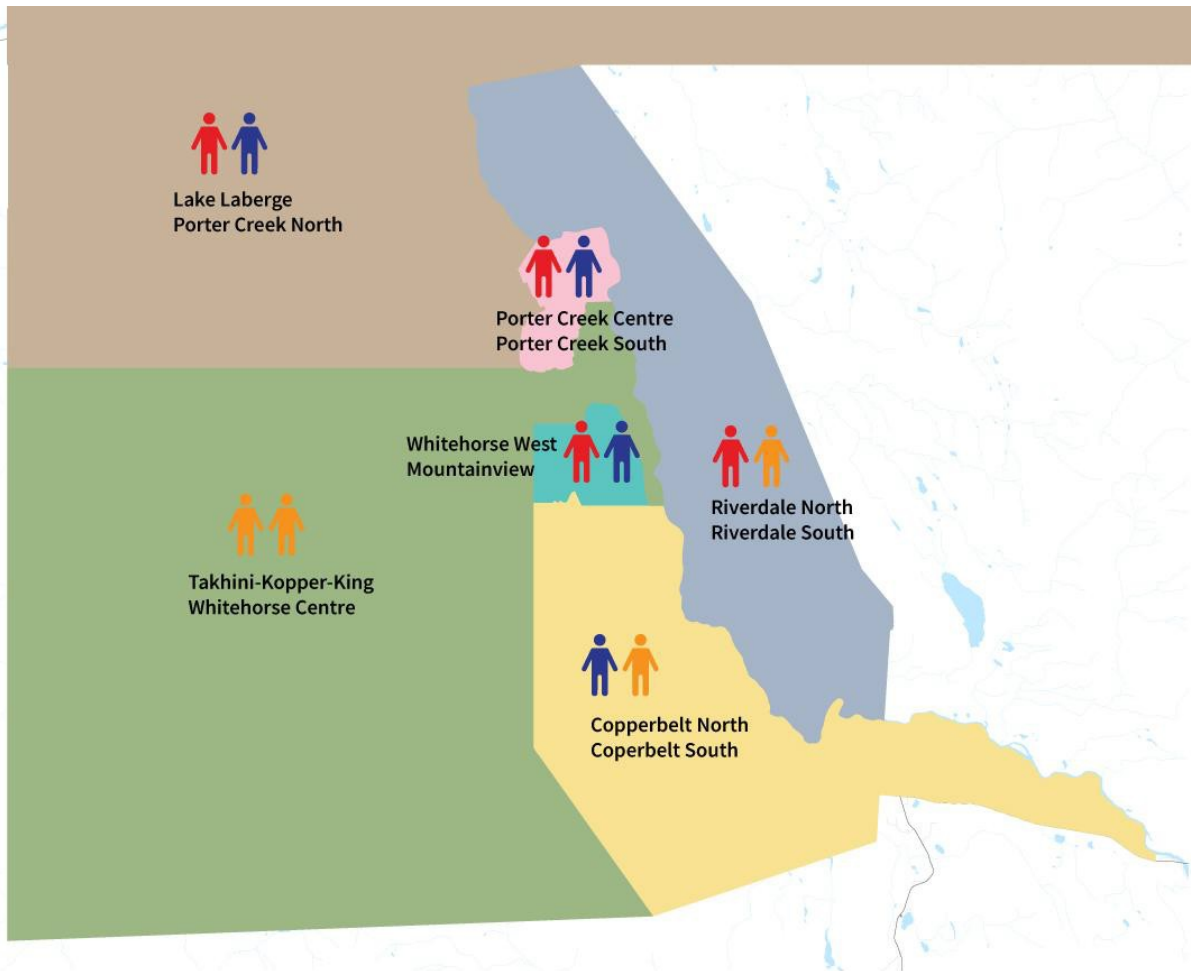
Sample Results:

DMP, 2021

Party	% Vote	% Seats	# Seats
Yukon Party	39.3%	42.1%	8
Liberal	32.4%	31.6%	6
NDP	28.2%	26.3%	5

Dual Member Proportional





Models Not Recommended

Instant Run-Off Voting / Alternative Vote / Single-Winner Ranked Ballots

We will not delve deep into the mechanics, but simply say we oppose such a reform for the fundamental reason that it can often lead to even less proportional results than first-past-the-post.

As shown in our [simulation spreadsheet](#), if we assume a roughly 2:1 preference flow between the NDP and Liberals, then the Liberals could have potentially formed a majority government in 2021 under such a system had they won the draw for the seat of Vuntut Gwitchin. We do not feel it is appropriate for a party with less than a third of voter support to be empowered to govern alone.

We encourage the Citizens' Assembly or other interested parties to enter their own assumptions for preference flows to see for themselves how single-winner ranked ballots would behave under a variety of circumstances.

Alternative Vote, 2021

Party	% Vote	% Seats	# Seats
Yukon Party	39.3%	36.8%	7
Liberal	32.4%	50.0%	9.5
NDP	28.2%	13.2%	2.5

Conclusion

The success of the Citizens' Assembly is largely dependent on the level of public awareness and trust in the process and how well the people of the Yukon understand the reasons for its recommendations. It is clear from both EKOS and Statistics Yukon's polling that there is strong support for greater resources for the Citizens' Assembly, and for the application of principles that provide fair results, effective local representation, greater voter choice, and effective government.

We urge you to recommend government action that will maximize the chances that Yukoners will be aware of the Citizens' Assembly, feel connected to its work, and understand how your recommendations reflect the values of Yukoners.

Fair Vote Canada has expertise in system design options, models used around the world, and the history of past assemblies & commissions. Please do not hesitate to reach out for clarifications on polling results, Yukon-specific simulations of any model/design or other resources.

We can be reached at office@fairvote.ca.

We thank you for your consideration in taking the time to read our report.



Public Views on the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

REPORT

Submitted to:

Fair Vote Canada

EKOS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES INC.

June 2024

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Appendix: Questionnaire

Key Findings

Survey results reveal some confusion about how the Yukon's current electoral system works. A plurality of Yukon residents mistakenly believes that a majority government requires the support of more than half of voters, and a substantial minority believe that the composition of the Yukon Legislature roughly matches the popular vote. Just one-quarter can correctly name the electoral system currently used in the Yukon.

Results also reveal that a majority of Yukon residents say they have heard of the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform, however, awareness is considerably lower among young people and high school graduates.

Results further reveal strong support for giving the Assembly the resources necessary to fulfill its mandate. Fully 86 per cent support giving the Assembly adequate time and resources to engage with citizens and collect feedback before issuing its final recommendations. Likewise, most Yukon residents support allocating public funds to public awareness campaigns to inform citizens about the electoral system recommended by the Assembly, and providing information to citizens about options.

Support for funding opponent and proponent organizations is more mixed; however, a large proportion of respondents did not provide a response this question, suggesting some uncertainty about this issue.

1. Methodology

This survey was conducted by telephone with live interviewers using both random digit dialing (RDD) and EKOS' probability-based panel, *Probit*. *Probit* offers complete coverage of the Canadian population (i.e., Internet, phone, cell phone), random recruitment (in other words, participants are recruited randomly, they do not opt themselves into our panel), and equal probability sampling. All respondents to our panel are recruited by telephone using random digit dialling and are confirmed by live interviews. Survey results from our panel are generalizable to the broader Canadian population and allow for margins of error to be associated with results.

The field dates for this survey were May 24 to June 5, 2024. In total, a random sample of 350 residents of the Yukon aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/- 5.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., for sub-groups such as region, gender, and age). All the data have been statistically weighted by age, gender, region, and education to ensure the sample's composition reflects that of the actual population of the Yukon according to Census data.

2. Detailed results

2.1 UNDERSTANDING OF YUKON ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Survey results reveal some confusion about how the Yukon's current electoral system works. Almost half of Yukon residents (47 per cent) erroneously believe that in order to achieve a majority victory, a government must have received more than 50 per cent support from voters. Just four in ten (41 per cent) correctly rate this statement as false.

Yukon residents are somewhat more likely to provide a correct response when the question is framed in the context of how the composition of the Yukon Legislature reflects the popular vote. Just one in three (32 per cent) believe the percentage of seats each party receives roughly matches the percentage of Yukoners who voted for that party, while just under half (46 per cent) correctly rate this statement as false. One in five (22 per cent) did not provide a response to this question, suggesting some uncertainty on the matter.

- Those under 45 are more likely to believe that a majority of popular support is a prerequisite for a majority government (60 per cent, compared to 47 per cent overall) or that the percentage of seats a party receives is directly proportional to its share of the popular vote (40 per cent versus 32 per cent).
- Men are more likely to reject the erroneous notion that the composition of the Yukon Legislature reflects the popular vote (53 per cent, compared to 39 per cent among women).
- Those who reside in areas of the territory other than Whitehorse are more likely to say seat counts are a function of the percentage of votes each party receives (45 per cent, compared to 26 per cent of Whitehorse residents).

Understanding of Yukon electoral system

Q. Please indicate whether you believe the following statements are true or false:

Under the current system, a majority government is one that receives more than 50% support from voters



The percentage of seats each party receives in the Yukon Legislature roughly matches the percentage of Yukoners who voted for that party



Don't know/Prefer not to answer False True

BASE: Yukon residents; May 24-June 5, 2024, n=350, MOE +/- 5.2%, 19 times out of 20

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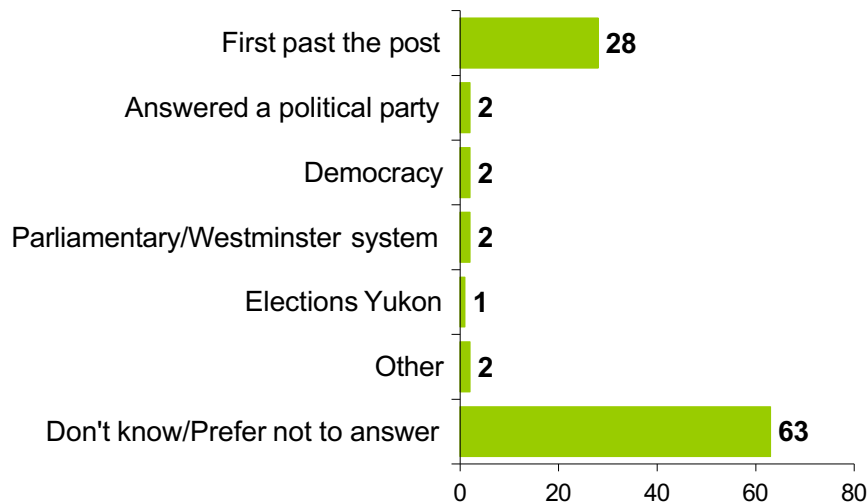
2.2 UNPROMPTED RECALL OF TYPE OF ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Respondents were asked, unprompted, what they believe is the name of the electoral system used in the Yukon. Six in ten (63 per cent) did not offer a response, suggesting a great deal of uncertainty on the matter. Fewer than three in ten (28 per cent) correctly categorized the Yukon's electoral system as first past the post. Common wrong answers include the names of various political parties (two per cent), some general mention of democracy (two per cent), a Parliamentary or Westminster system (two per cent), and Elections Yukon (one per cent).

- Those aged 55 to 64 and men are more likely to recognize the Yukon's electoral system as first past the post (49 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively, compared to 28 per cent overall), while those with a high school education are the least likely to do so (nine per cent).

Unprompted recall of electoral system

Q. *What do you believe is the name of the electoral system that is used in the Yukon? [OPEN]*



BASE: Yukon residents; May 24-June 5, 2024, n=350, MOE +/- 5.2%, 19 times out of 20

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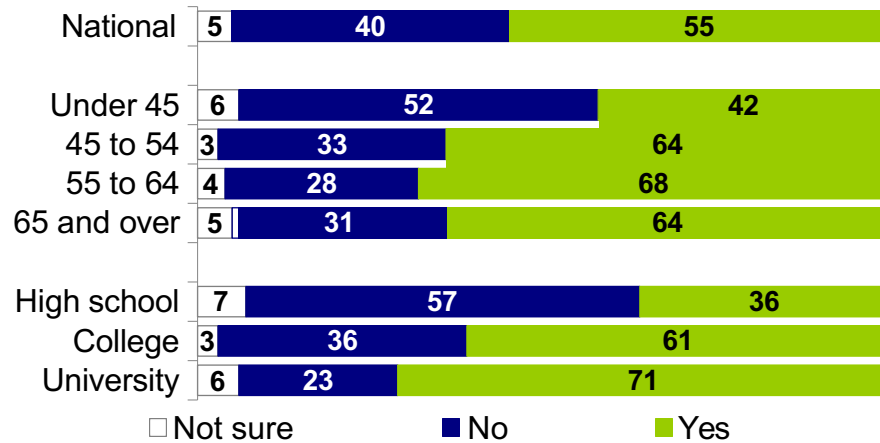
2.3 FAMILIARITY WITH YUKON CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

Results reveal that a narrow majority of Yukon residents say they are familiar with the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. Just over half (55 per cent) say they have heard of the Assembly, compared to four in ten (40 per cent) who say they have not. Of those who have heard of the Assembly, more than half (57 per cent) heard of it through the news. Other common sources of awareness include word of mouth (19 per cent) and the Internet (10 per cent).

- Those under 45 and those with a high school education are less likely to say they have heard of the Assembly (42 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively, compared to 55 per cent overall).

Familiarity with Yukon Citizens' Assembly

Q. *The Yukon government has commissioned a non-partisan Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. Have you heard about the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform?*

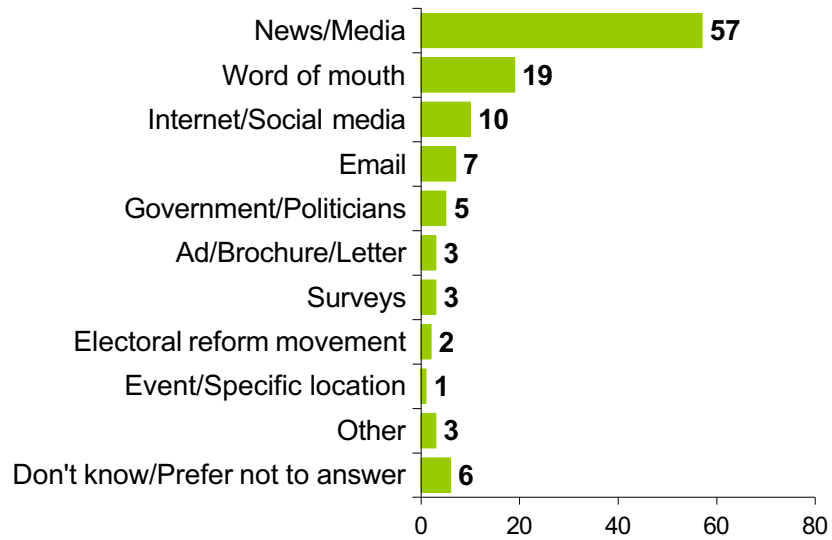


BASE: Yukon residents; May 24-June 5, 2024, n=350, MOE +/- 5.2%, 19 times out of 20

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Sources of news on YCA

Q. Where did you hear about it? [OPEN]



BASE: Has heard of assembly; May 24-June 5, 2024, n=230, MOE +/- 6.5%, 19 times out of 20

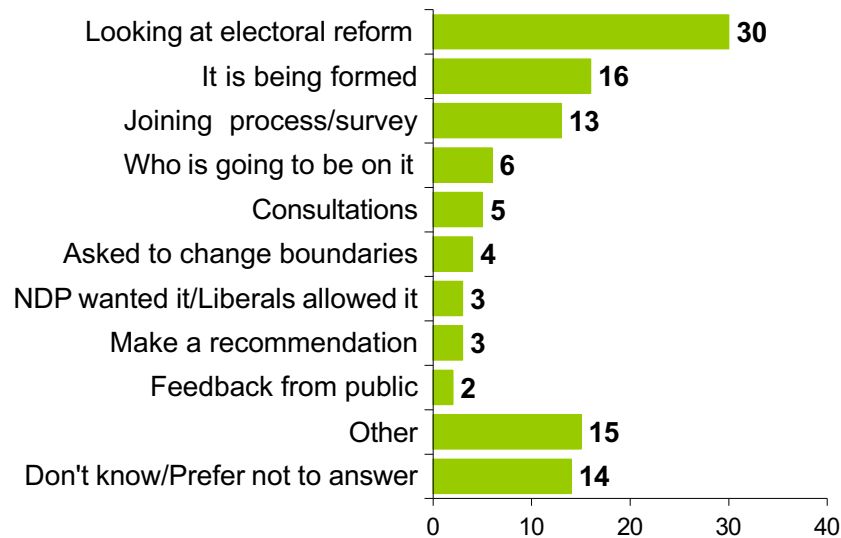
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2.4 SPECIFIC NEWS RECALLED

Those who recall hearing about the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform were asked, unprompted, to elaborate on what they had heard. Three in ten of these respondents (30 per cent) indicated hearing that the Assembly is studying the issue of electoral reform. One in six (16 per cent) said they heard about the Assembly's formation, and one in eight (13 per cent) recall hearing about a joining process or survey.

Specific news recalled

Q. *And what did you hear? [OPEN]*



BASE: Has heard of assembly; May 24-June 5, 2024, n=230, MOE +/- 6.5%, 19 times out of 20

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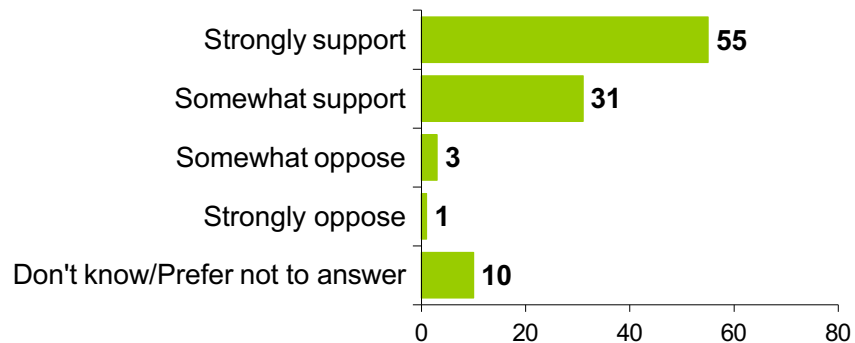
2.5 SUPPORT FOR GIVING ASSEMBLY ADEQUATE TIME

Results reveal strong support for giving the Yukon Citizens' Assembly the time and resources it needs to reach out and engage with citizens about electoral reform before making a final recommendation. Fully 86 per cent support giving the Assembly sufficient time and resources (including 55 per cent who *strongly* support allocating enough time and resources), compared to just four per cent who disagree.

Support for giving assembly adequate time

Q. By Oct. 31, the [Yukon Citizens' Assembly] will make a recommendation about electoral reform. To what extent do you support or oppose the following statement:

The Citizens' Assembly should be provided with sufficient time and resources for its members to reach out and engage with citizens in their home communities about electoral reform to collect feedback before a final recommendation is made



BASE: Yukon residents; May 24-June 5, 2024, n=350, MOE +/- 5.2%, 19 times out of 20

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2.6 SUPPORT FOR FUNDING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Results also reveal broad support for funding public awareness campaigns should the Yukon Citizens' Assembly recommend switching electoral systems and holding a referendum. Fully eight in ten Yukon residents (83 per cent) say the government should fund Elections Yukon to provide information to citizens about the options (compared to just nine per cent who are opposed), while three-quarters (74 per cent) believe the government should provide funding to members of the Assembly to educate people in their communities about the electoral system that the Assembly has recommended (versus 12 per cent who oppose this idea).

- Supporters of the Yukon Liberal Party and the Yukon Party are somewhat more supportive of funding the Yukon Citizens' Assembly to educate people about their recommendations (88 per cent and 82 per cent, respectively, compared to 74 per cent overall).

Support is more mixed when it comes to funding opponent and proponent organizations. Just under half (46 per cent) would support funding these types of organizations, while a sizeable minority (28 per cent) are opposed. One-quarter (26 per cent) did not provide a response to this question, suggesting some uncertainty regarding the issue.

- Supporters of the Yukon Liberal Party and men are comparatively more supportive of using public funds to support these organizations (62 per cent and 52 per cent, respectively, compared to 46 per cent overall). Those under 45 are least likely to say they support this funding (38 per cent).

Support for funding public awareness

Q. *If the Citizens' Assembly recommends changing to a different electoral system and the government holds a referendum on it, to what extent would you support or oppose the following statements?*

The government should fund Elections Yukon to provide information to citizens about the options



The government should provide funding for the members of the Yukon Citizens' Assembly to educate people in their communities about the electoral system that the Assembly has recommended and why



The government should provide funding to opponent and proponent organizations



Neutral/Don't know Oppose (3-4) Support (1-2)

BASE: Yukon residents; May 24-June 5, 2024, n=350, MOE +/- 5.2%, 19 times out of 20

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APPENDIX QUESTIONNAIRE

WINTRO

RDD INTRO

Hello, my name is ... and I'm calling from EKOS Research Associates. We would like to invite you to participate in a short survey that we are doing with residents of the Yukon. Would you be able to help us out?

Survey takes 7 to 8 minutes

PINTRO

PANEL INTRO

Contact		info
Name:		_____
Gender:		_____
Age	Group:	_____

Hello, may I speak with _____?

Hello, my name is ... and I'm calling from EKOS Research Associates. As a member of the Probit panel, we would like to invite you to participate in a survey that we are doing with residents of the Yukon. Would you be able to help us out?

Survey takes 7 to 8 minutes

QCELL

CELL ONLY

Do you live in the Yukon?

Yes.....	1	
No.....	2	->THNK2

PRIV

This call may be recorded for quality control or training purposes.

PREQ1

Please indicate whether you believe the following statements are true or false:

Q1A

Under the current system, a majority government is one that receives more than 50% support from voters.

- True 1
- False 2
- Don't know / Prefer not to answer 9 S

Q1B

The percentage of seats each party receives in the Yukon Legislature roughly matches the percentage of Yukoners who voted for that party.

- True 1
- False 2
- Don't know / Prefer not to answer 9 S

Q2

What do you believe is the name of the electoral system that is used in the Yukon?

- 77..... 77
- Don't know / Prefer not to answer 99

Q3

The Yukon government has commissioned a non-partisan Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. **Have you heard about the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform?**

- Yes..... 1
- No..... 2
- Not sure 9

Q4A

YES

If... Q3 = 1

Where did you hear about it?

- 77..... 77
- Don't know / Prefer not to answer 99

Q4B

YES

If... Q3 = 1

And what did you hear?

77.....	77
Don't know / Prefer not to answer	99

Q5

The Yukon Citizens' Assembly is independent of the government and political parties. It is made up of everyday citizens. The Citizens' Assembly includes two people from each riding in the Yukon and is representative by age, gender and Indigenous ancestry.

By Oct. 31, the Assembly will make a recommendation about electoral reform.

To what extent do you support or oppose the following statement:

The Citizens' Assembly should be provided with sufficient time and resources for its members to reach out and engage with citizens in their home communities about electoral reform to collect feedback before a final recommendation is made.

Strongly support	1	
Somewhat support	2	
Somewhat oppose.....	3	
Strongly oppose.....	4	
Neutral/ Don't know	99	S

PREQ6

If the Citizens' Assembly recommends changing to a different electoral system and the government holds a referendum on it, to what extent would you support or oppose the following statements?

Q6A

The government should provide funding for the members of the Yukon Citizens' Assembly to educate people in their communities about the electoral system that the Assembly has recommended and why.

Strongly support.....	1	
Somewhat support	2	
Somewhat oppose.....	3	
Strongly oppose.....	4	
Neutral/ Don't know	99	S

Q6B

The government should fund Elections Yukon to provide information to citizens about the options.

Strongly support	1	
Somewhat support	2	
Somewhat oppose.....	3	
Strongly oppose.....	4	
Neutral/ Don't know	99	S

Q6C

The government should provide funding to opponent and proponent organizations.

Strongly support	1	
Somewhat support	2	
Somewhat oppose.....	3	
Strongly oppose.....	4	
Neutral/ Don't know	99	S

QPOL

If a territorial election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

Yukon Party led by Currie Dixon.....	1	
Yukon Liberal Party led by Ranj Pillai (pronounced RANJ pil-LAY)	2	
Yukon New Democratic Party led by Kate White.....	3	
Another party not listed here	77	B
Don't know/Undecided	97	B
Not eligible to vote.....	98	B
No response	99	B

QPOLB

If... QPOL = 97

Even if you do not have a firm idea, are you leaning towards a party?

Yes.....	1	
No.....	2	
Don't know/No response.....	9	B

QPOLC

If... QPOLB = 1

As it stands, towards which party are you leaning?

Yukon Party led by Currie Dixon.....	1	
Yukon Liberal Party led by Ranj Pillai (pronounced RANJ pil-LAY)	2	
Yukon New Democratic Party led by Kate White.....	3	
Another party not listed here	77	B
Undecided.....	97	B
Don't know/No response.....	99	B

QGENDR

We'd just like to ask a few questions that will be used for statistical purposes only.

Record gender of respondent (DO NOT ASK)

Male.....	1	
Female.....	2	
A transgender male.....	4	B
A transgender female.....	5	B
Non-binary.....	6	B
No response.....	99	B

QAGE

What is your age?

18-34	1
35-44	2
45-54	3
55-64	4
65 or greater	5
No response.....	99

QEDUC

What is the highest level of schooling that you have completed?

Grade 8 or less.....	1
Some high school	2
High School diploma or equivalent.....	3
Registered Apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma	4
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	5
University certificate or diploma below bachelor's level.....	6
Bachelor's degree	7
Post graduate degree above bachelor's level.....	8
No response.....	99

QCOMM

What community do you live in?

Beaver Creek.....	1
Burwash Landing	2
Carcross.....	3
Carmacks.....	4
Champagne Landing	5
Dawson.....	6
Destruction Bay.....	7
Faro	8
Haines Junction	9
Ibex Valley.....	10
Johnsons Crossing.....	11
Keno Hill.....	12
Mayo	13
Mt. Lorne	14
Old Crow.....	15
Pelly Crossing	16
Ross River.....	17
Stewart Crossing	18
Swift River	19
Tagish.....	20
Teslin.....	21
Upper Liard	22
Watson Lake.....	23
Whitehorse	24
Other (please specify).....	77
Don't know/ No response	99

THNKP

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey.

Do we need a new voting system?

I will take a social justice and environmental view in my letter. My hope is for a kinder, gentler society supportive of everyone in it. There would be far less inequality and much more acceptance of differences. If we look after each other we will all have more energy to make the changes that are desperately needed to deal with our biggest threat ever - global climate change. This may sound naive but it is possible, it has to be! Proportional Representation could help bring about the society I am hoping for.

Currently, our First Past the Post (FPTP) voting system rewards those with the most money and concentrated regional support and the best organizing and advertising. The insecurity caused by national and global issues and the sense of the individual citizen that they are not being heard has resulted in very polarized politics with a great deal of anger that discourages any respectful dialogue.

What is the purpose of elections? Elected politicians are to be the voice of the population that votes. However, with First Past the Post, our current system, the party with the most votes gets the seat. Given that we have more than two parties the losing parties can split the vote. This can result in a party being elected with less than the majority of votes. As a result many voters nationally will not be represented in Parliament; their vote didn't count. This can lead to disillusionment and possible abstention from voting. People will look elsewhere to get their issues addressed as we lose trust in our institutions and sometimes methods chosen can be very harmful. The ridicule and personal attacks on politicians and others with differing opinions is demeaning and silencing. The word Democracy comes from the Greek, demos for people and kratos for rule. Frankly, with the current system it is hard to see how the people are truly being served as climate change and inequality march on, unrelenting.

Proportional Representation (PR) comes in various forms that are used in many countries worldwide with significant success. With a PR system every vote counts. It is not without issues and difficulties but overall provides support for communities and leads to more equal and engaged societies. My hope for PR is that we will start listening, respectfully, to each other, find compromises and guide our country with our votes.

Since there will undoubtedly be many misgivings about such a significant change I would recommend a trial of at least two Territorial elections. This would allow us to see how a PR system would work. We are familiar with the current method of voting and may need practice to work out any issues that may arise. They always do! This is a long process but we will have a much better result if we take our time. Our Citizens' Assembly is working hard to prepare their report due at the end of October, 2024. As citizens we need to inform ourselves on PR in preparation for their recommendations. The resources below provide background information.

We have a singular opportunity to make a real change for our Territory that can serve as an example of what is possible when we work together.

Resources:

Yukon Citizens Assembly - <https://www.yukoncitizensassembly.ca>

Fair Vote Yukon - <https://fairvoteyukon.ca>

Fair Vote Canada - <https://www.fairvote.ca>

Democracy May Not Exist, but We'll Miss it When it's Gone.

The Age of Insecurity: Coming Together as Things Fall Apart. Books by Astra Taylor

Thank you for reading.

Judy Harwood Dabbs, Fair Vote Yukon and Fair Vote Canada Member, Tagish, Yukon

Submission to Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

Thank you to the members of the Yukon Citizens' Assembly for your time and energy addressing a vital part of our democracy, thus also a vital part of our social fabric.

I feel strongly that some alternate system of choosing our government representatives be tried. Some people obviously feel that the current plurality system (first past the post) serves us well, but I beg to differ. The plurality system essentially locks out views from other citizens, and creates an "us vs them" dynamic that we see in North America. Since the 1970s when I started voting, I was proud of our democratic system but still felt that improvement was possible. I feel much more strongly now that, to protect our democratic system, we absolutely need to improve it. The FPTP system worked in 1867 when there were two political parties; it simply does not work any more.

If evidence-based decision-making is important, then we should be paying close attention to the evidence. "Proportional" systems have been shown, via social science research, to outperform winner-take-all systems on a wide range of measures, including:

- higher quality of democratic life itself
- prudent fiscal management
- higher economic growth
- better environmental management
- reduced income inequality
- higher levels of human development
- greater tolerance of diversity
- a less punitive approach to law enforcement
- greater respect for privacy
- lower levels of conflict and militarism.

The higher quality of democratic life is largely manifested by collaborative decision-making processes, as opposed to the combative "us vs them" jousting for immediate political points. I can forward the references for the above statements; you probably have them already via Fair Vote Canada or other submissions.

Some may claim that proportional representation hasn't worked elsewhere, and never will work, or that Canadians would find proportional systems too much of a challenge to navigate. There are over 100 countries which use either PR or a mixed system to elect their primary chamber across the world. Among these are Algeria, Angola, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czechia, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Israel, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkiye, Germany, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and Uruguay. Are Canadians not smart enough to figure out how to vote under these systems, when Moroccans and Kiwis can figure it out just fine?

I will note that countries like Italy and Israel are often brought up as countries where proportional representation has led to unstable coalitions, or unfair influence by "fringe"

parties. The simple answer to this potential problem lies in setting threshold limits to parliamentary seats, eg 2.5% or 5% of popular vote needed to gain seats in government. As far as “fringe” parties go, I would posit that even plurality-chosen governments are subject to undue influence by fringe parties.

I understand that the CA will recommend to either keep our current voting system or adopt a different one. I urge the CA, and Yukoners, to adopt a different one. We have many models to follow, yet we can come up with something made in the Yukon! Open-list PR, Mixed Member, or STV voting systems all out-perform FPTP systems, according to the social science. Concurrent to this CA’s work, the work by the commission on Electoral Boundaries is relevant. We don’t need double the number of MLAs to fairly represent Yukoners, but surely it’s no big deal to add a couple of MLAs to ensure that Vuntut Gwitchin interests, and those of other rural ridings are fairly represented, should we need to ensure this. I favour some form of mixed-member representation, but others could work in the Yukon. Dave Brekke has designed a voting system that could work as well.

I’m not sure if the Special Committee on Electoral Reform, or another party recommended that a referendum be conducted. However, I caution the CA to approach referenda with caution. Although referenda on the surface seem democratic (the will of the masses), previous referendum campaigns have been shown to include disproportionate advertising monies by “no” campaigns, and downright lies in advertising. A far better idea would be to enact a form of proportional representation, use it for two election cycles, and then vote on the choice between that system and FPTP, once citizens are familiar with the differences in outcomes. This actually happened in New Zealand, and it could happen here. Just two election cycles to get it right! That’s a pittance of time to spend to ensure fair and sustainable governance.

As for voting age, I support lowering the voting age to 16 years. A 16-year-old is just as capable of making intelligent voting decisions as a typical “19+-year-old,” given adequate education opportunities by Elections Yukon.

Thanks,
Gerald Haase
Marsh Lake

Submission to the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

By

Floyd McCormick

August 12, 2024

Summary

- Yukon's electoral system should emphasize local representation in the Legislative Assembly rather than the proportional representation of political parties.
- The Yukon should adopt a single-member majority electoral system using a ranked ballot.
- Electing MLAs by majority, rather than by plurality, would strengthen the members mandate and increase the overall legitimacy of the Legislative Assembly.
- A ranked ballot would give candidates an incentive to moderate their platform and approach in order to appeal as the second-choice candidate to supporters of other candidates or parties. This could lead to less partisan politics.
- Implementing a proportional representation system would reduce the number of electoral districts, meaning districts outside Whitehorse would be too large.
- Electoral systems offer different ways of representing people in their legislative Assembly. We should not expect an electoral system to solve all the behavioral or policy problems in our politics.

Introduction

I believe that the Yukon should change the system it uses for electing members to the Yukon Legislative Assembly. The change should be to cease using the single-member plurality, first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system and adopt a single-member majority system such as the Alternative Vote (AV) system described by

Keith Archer in *Options for Yukon's Electoral System: A Report prepared for the Special Committee on Electoral Reform, Yukon*.¹

I will proceed in this submission by explaining why I believe an AV system would serve the Yukon better than FPTP. I will also explain why I favour an AV system over proportional representation systems, referring specifically to the proportional representation options provided by Fair Vote Canada (FVC) in their submission of June 7, 2024.

I will not try to provide a comprehensive overview of all the strengths and weaknesses of all these electoral systems. They are all, in my view, legitimate approaches to addressing the question of how to best represent people in a legislative assembly. At issue is which system would best serve the Yukon, given its particular circumstances. So I will focus on discussing those features that I think are most important in explaining my support for an AV electoral system.

Contextual Comments

Before I get into that discussion, however, I will make some general contextual comments.

First, I believe that the most important issue facing the Yukon Legislative Assembly is not the way in which its members are elected; it is improving the Legislative Assembly's ability to scrutinize and hold to account the cabinet and the executive branch of government. I will not go further into this subject in this submission. I mention it to highlight its importance and make the point that it is pure fallacy to suggest that any electoral system can, on its own, guarantee high levels of openness, accountability, transparency and scrutiny. Improving the Legislative Assembly's ability to hold the government accountable will require continued effort whether or not the Yukon adopts a new electoral system.

¹ <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/2021-11/SCER-35-Options-for-Electoral-Reform-research-report.pdf> pages 27-29.

Second, I believe that the Yukon is the most challenging jurisdiction in Canada when it comes to matters regarding the conduct of elections. As Archer notes in his report “the Yukon...covers 482,000 square kilometres”² making it larger than Newfoundland and Labrador and larger than Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island combined.³ Also,

According to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, the population of the Yukon in March 2020 was 42,152 and the population of Whitehorse (within the municipal boundary) was 30,025. Therefore 71.2% of the residents of the Yukon reside in Whitehorse. Thus, from a population distribution perspective, the Yukon is a highly urbanized territory combined with areas of expansive land with low population density.⁴

The Northwest Territories and Nunavut also have vast geography and low populations but neither of those territories (or any province) have such a large proportion of their population living in one community. This combination of factors makes it more difficult to provide effective representation to all Yukoners while ensuring that electoral districts are not prohibitively large and that there is some measure of parity in terms of the number of voters in each electoral district.

Third, if there were an electoral system that could be all things to all people at all times it would already be in use in the Yukon and elsewhere. No such system exists. Furthermore, the Yukon’s options for electoral systems are limited by our geographic and demographic realities and the small size of our legislative assembly. So options that might be viable elsewhere will not be viable here. And no electoral system, current or proposed, including my proposal, will be able to yield all of the results that we might want.

² <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/2021-11/SCER-35-Options-for-Electoral-Reform-research-report.pdf> page 53.

³ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-402-x/2010000/chap/geo/tbl/tbl07-eng.htm>

⁴ <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/2021-11/SCER-35-Options-for-Electoral-Reform-research-report.pdf> page 17.

So there will be trade-offs whether we choose to keep the existing FPTP electoral system or adopt a different one. So, in choosing the right electoral system for the Yukon, we need to decide which characteristic we want at the core of our electoral system and then flesh out the rest of the system's features from there.

Finally, no electoral system can take the politics out of politics. Politics in a democracy is a form of competition that is born out of conflicting ideas and ambitions. Individuals compete against each other for party nominations. Candidates from different parties compete against one another to get elected. Parties compete against one another to win seats and form government. Different electoral systems propose different ways of representing Yukoners in the Legislative Assembly. But we should not expect any electoral system to replace all conflict and competition with universal consensus and harmony. That is asking too much.

Local Representation

I believe that the idea that should be at the core of our electoral system is local representation. This is especially important because of the vast geography and sparse population that exists outside Whitehorse. Not only are most of these communities distant from Whitehorse, they are also distant from one another. The legitimacy of the Yukon Legislative Assembly as a representative institution rests, in part, on its ability to provide effective representation to Yukoners within the geographic and demographic constraints mentioned above and the comparatively small size of the legislative assembly.

I agree with Archer that one of the advantages of constituency-based electoral systems like FPTP and AV is the

Direct connection between voters and representative in their community... This means that each elector has his or her representative, who is responsible for providing a constituency service function within the constituency. The member of the legislature can serve as a conduit between electors and the more general system of government, and therefore

provides an important liaison function.⁵

The final report of the 2018 Electoral District Boundaries Commission (EDBC) addressed local representation in the Yukon. The section entitled “Providing reasonable and effective representation for electors in Pelly-Nisutlin” provides a concise description of the difficulties involved in providing effective representation for communities within the same electoral district that have small populations, are far from Whitehorse, are distant from one another and, in some cases, have little interaction with one another.⁶ This is why the EDBC recommended creating a new electoral district outside Whitehorse even though the number of voters in the proposed electoral district would fall below the +/- 25% variance from the average elector population per electoral district that the EDBC tried to follow.

The point is that maximizing the number of electoral districts provides for more local representation. An electoral system that reduces the number of electoral districts will do the opposite.

Alternative Vote

Adopting a single-member majority AV voting system will, I believe, help improve the ability of the Legislative Assembly to provide effective, local representation. As Archer describes it, “The Alternative Vote electoral system...Like the FPTP system...is based on single member constituencies.”⁷ So, like FPTP, an AV electoral system provides the direct connection described above and maximizes the number of electoral districts thereby maximizing local representation.

However, an AV electoral system improves upon our current FPTP system because “a candidate is required to receive a majority of votes in order to win the

⁵ <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/2021-11/SCER-35-Options-for-Electoral-Reform-research-report.pdf> page 25.

⁶ <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/sp-34-2-58.pdf> pages 28-31.

⁷ <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/2021-11/SCER-35-Options-for-Electoral-Reform-research-report.pdf> page 28.

election”⁸ rather than just a plurality of votes. This is done by having voters rank the candidates on their ballot, rather than just choosing one, as is the case with FPTP. If one candidate is the first choice of a majority of voters, that candidate is elected.⁹ If no candidate secures a majority of the votes, the lowest ranked candidate is eliminated. The “first choice” votes they received are then redistributed to the candidate identified as the “second-choice” on the ballot of each voter who voted for the now-eliminated candidate. This process should produce a candidate with majority support rather quickly since there are rarely more than three candidates in an electoral district in the Yukon.

With some exceptions, the Yukon Liberal Party, the Yukon Party and the Yukon NDP field candidates in all electoral districts during a general election. In electoral districts where the race is highly competitive a candidate can be elected with less, sometimes much less, than a majority of votes cast.¹⁰ According to Archer

Where a concern with FPTP is that in a multi-candidate contest it takes less than a majority vote to win, the Alternative Vote system solves this problem. Winning candidates, by definition, won with a majority. This has the practical effect of indicating that most voters indicated more support for the winning candidate than for the losing candidate, notwithstanding the fact that the winner may not have been their first choice. For most voters, the winning candidate was more preferred than the candidate finishing second.¹¹

I think it is generally accepted that in a democracy decisions should be made by a majority. Yet that has never been the practice when it comes to electing members to our legislative assemblies. Adopting a single-member majority electoral system will change that.

⁸ <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/2021-11/SCER-35-Options-for-Electoral-Reform-research-report.pdf> page 28.

⁹ In the 2021 general election six of the 19 winning candidates drew more than 50% of the votes cast in their electoral district. https://electionsyukon.ca/sites/elections/files/ge_2021_ceo_report_to_leg_assembly.pdf

¹⁰ In the 2021 general election five of the 19 winning candidates drew fewer than 40% of the votes cast in their electoral district. https://electionsyukon.ca/sites/elections/files/ge_2021_ceo_report_to_leg_assembly.pdf

¹¹ <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/2021-11/SCER-35-Options-for-Electoral-Reform-research-report.pdf> pages 27-28.

A candidate elected by a majority receives a stronger mandate from their constituents than one elected by a minority. This, in turn, would increase the legitimacy of the Legislative Assembly, as a whole.

There is also a second, less obvious, but potentially more profound advantage that Archer attributes to an AV voting system over an FPTP system:

Since it is possible, and in fact probable in many instances, that no candidate will win a majority of first preference votes, this system encourages parties and candidates to court one another and their supporters as possible second, third or fourth alternatives. In doing so, the system encourages parties to cooperate.¹²

Giving parties and candidates incentives to co-operate *during* an election campaign is important. One of the greatest current threats to democracy is hyper-partisanship and the polarization and divisiveness that result from it. In Canadian federal elections we see that hyper-partisanship and polarization are not just unfortunate outcomes but are increasingly used as campaign tactics. Divisiveness can be an effective campaign tactic in an electoral system where a candidate needs fewer than a majority of votes in their electoral district to get elected. Divisive tactics are less likely to be successful where a majority of votes is required. A voting system that encourages co-operation amongst those involved (even if the co-operation is based on political self-interest) has a chance of improving political behaviour during, and after, elections.

Moderation of behaviour may also have a positive effect on the policies offered by political parties. An electoral system that encourages political parties and candidates to solicit support (even if it is second-choice support) from the supporters of other candidates and political parties is more likely to produce policy proposals that are designed to appeal to a broader range of voters, rather than just those who share a political party's philosophy or ideology. This means

¹² <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/2021-11/SCER-35-Options-for-Electoral-Reform-research-report.pdf> page 28.

that parties have an incentive to move to where the voters are on matters of policy, rather than forcing voters to move to where the parties want them to be.

I say all this knowing that trying to forecast future political behaviour based on electoral system change is always speculative no matter what system one prefers. We can't predict with 100% certainty how voters, candidates and parties will react to a new political environment. However, we can improve our odds of improved behaviour by adopting an electoral system whose built-in incentives encourage co-operation, rather than divisiveness, during election campaigns. That may sound idealistic, but I'd rather be an idealist than an ideologue.

Proportional Representation

According to Archer "Proportional representation electoral systems have a single overarching rationale – to ensure that the seats in the legislative assembly are generally at or near the same proportion as the popular vote obtained by the parties."¹³ Achieving proportionality between votes and seats is not a bad thing. The questions to ask are, what features does a PR voting system have to have in order to achieve proportionality? And, how would these features fit into the Yukon's unique political context?

Again, quoting Archer, "To accomplish this, parliamentary seats must have multiple members, and the degree of proportionality can increase as the number of seats in the district increases."¹⁴ In other words, fewer electoral districts and more members to be elected in each district.

In its submission to the Citizens' Assembly of June 7, 2024, Fair Vote Canada (FVC) offered four proposed PR electoral systems for the Yukon.¹⁵ They are: Open-List Proportional Representation (Local Choice Voting), Single Transferable Vote, Mixed-Member Proportional Representation, and Dual Member Proportional.

¹³ <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/2021-11/SCER-35-Options-for-Electoral-Reform-research-report.pdf> page 33.

¹⁴ <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/2021-11/SCER-35-Options-for-Electoral-Reform-research-report.pdf> page 33.

¹⁵ [FVC Yukon Submission \(yukoncitizensassembly.ca\)](https://yukoncitizensassembly.ca)

Any of these systems would, I don't doubt, yield a greater proportionality between votes and seats than a single-member constituency system. However, in order to accomplish this, the Yukon would have to reduce the number of electoral districts to 10 (for Mixed-Member Proportional Representation and Dual Member Proportional) or six (for Open-List Proportional Representation (Local Choice Voting) or Single Transferable Vote).

Reducing the number of electoral districts means larger electoral districts. This risks worsening the difficulties involved in representing rural communities, as highlighted in the 2018 EDBC report:

Travel to rural communities is time-consuming and, for much of the year, is dependent on weather. Both are factors that affect the ability of MLAs to serve electors in the various communities.

Most of the electoral districts contain a number of small communities, increasing the likelihood that an MLA will struggle with competing interests for assistance and resources. These communities have varying degrees of dependence on territorial governance. While some have access to services and facilities provided by municipal or First Nations governance, others rely more on their MLA for assistance in identifying and accessing services.¹⁶

The fact that rural electoral districts would have multiple members (or a single MLA with regional top-up members under MMP) would not improve this situation since each MLA would have to serve the entire electoral district.

There is also a risk that all the members elected for a given electoral district could come from the same community. Something similar to this occurred during the 1974 general election.

In 1974 the electoral district of Ogilvie included part of Dawson City, Clinton Creek, Eagle Plains and Old Crow. The electoral district of Klondike included part of Dawson City, Stewart Crossing, Pelly Crossing and Carmacks. The result of the election was that both electoral districts were won by candidates from Dawson

¹⁶ <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/sp-34-2-58.pdf> page 27.

City. So the entire central and northern part of the Yukon was served by two members from the same community. At least in this case they were separate electoral districts so each candidate was only responsible for serving their part of central and north Yukon.¹⁷

Adding regional top-up MLAs under the MMP proposal would also mean that, for the first time, the Legislative Assembly would have two classes of MLAs: those responsible for a particular electoral district and those who are not.

So while PR systems promise greater proportionality they also require large electoral districts and present the risk that large areas of the territory could be represented by multiple members from one community.

Conclusion

As previously stated, my preference is for an AV electoral system that improves representation in the Yukon Legislative Assembly by prioritizing local representation and ensuring that those elected to the Legislative Assembly do so on the basis of majority support in their electoral district. I believe that such a system could help prevent the hyper-partisanship, polarization and divisiveness we see elsewhere. Such a system could also provide a stronger mandate for individual MLAs and strengthen the legitimacy of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Floyd McCormick

¹⁷ Report of the Chief Electoral Officer (Canada), Yukon Territory Elections Held During The Year 1974. https://electionsyukon.ca/sites/elections/files/1974_general_election_0.pdf

To the Yukon Citizen's Assembly

Respectfully submitted by

Daniel Sokolov
of Whitehorse

Dear Members of the Yukon Citizen's Assembly,

thank you for your work, the time and effort you have been investing. Thank you for stepping up to this important task.

Is it high time to **improve our democratic system** in the Yukon. In many aspects, it has yielded good results, but it frustrates and excludes a significant number of Yukoners. In the current system, too many votes do not count; in most electoral districts, more than half of votes do not elect anyone, while individual electors in other districts may wield a lot of power, simply by residing in a specific edifice. The first-past-the-post system is also unfair to candidates and MLAs. That must not continue. We need and **deserve proportional representation**.

My submission consists of the following compact chapters:

- KISS – Front Line Experiences
- Upgrade to Fair Results
 - Proportional Representation – Open Party List
 - Mixed Member Proportional
- No Online Voting
- No Voting Machines or Scanners
- No Forced Voting
- Let's Vote on Weekends
- Add More Members
- (Re)Conciliation & Regional Representation

KISS – Keep It a Simple System

I have had the privilege to serve as an **election officer in numerous elections** on all levels (local, regional, provincial, territorial, federal, First Nations) from Coast to Coast in a range of roles. I do not represent or speak for any election authority I have worked for. My submission sums up my personal point of view, informed by my own, first hand experience. Also, I have no membership with or allegiance to any political party.

The most important lesson I have learned from serving tens of Thousands of voters as an election officer over many years is this: Keep It a Simple System. That is: **Keep It a Simple System from the point of view of the voter** arriving at the polling station.

Hence, I strongly **advise against any voting system that involves the ranking of candidates**. While such systems have their advantages on paper, those are mostly academic exercises. They do not lead to fairer results in real life.

For large parts of the electorate, a ranking system would be **too complicated** and may even lead to unintended results. For many voters, especially seniors and voters with disabilities, it is already a physical challenge to place a single correct check mark on any given ballot. If they had to rank candidates, they would be prone to mistakes, or might even **abstain from voting out of intimidation or frustration**. Which would be a very sad outcome of this election reform.

An even larger number of electors would simply be **overwhelmed by the task** of deciding which party or candidate they oppose more than the next, so that they could rank them correctly. That, again, leads to frustration and eventual elector apathy.

Nobody wants to feel like an idiot. If that happens to a voter at the polls, they will likely stay home the next time. Any ranking system increases that risk.

Please remember that we have a considerable number of electors who can not functionally read and write. Also, there is always a number of voters who are not sober. The best way to prevent random rankings is to not have rankings.

Fringe parties, unknown to most electors, might be ranked in the middle repeatedly, giving them more weight than voters actually had in mind.

At the same time, some more involved voters might try to game the system, or rank some fringe candidates on second and third place, in an attempt to strengthen their first vote in comparison to a strong competitor, although they don't actually regard the fringe parties as their second or third best choice. Such "strategic voting" could lead to the unintended (!) election of candidates.

Worse yet, many voters would never find out how exactly their vote influenced the result, i.e. what party or candidate(s) their ballot ended up being counted for at what stage of the counting process. That is highly **unsatisfactory** for any voter.

The concept of "Reduce to the max" applies perfectly to our elections.

Having said that, KISS does not mean that the Yukon has to stick to the current first-past-the-post system. **Simple and fairer options are available**.

Upgrade to Fair Results – Proportional Representation

The **first-past-the-post system is unfair**. It is not only unfair to electors who can not influence the composition of the legislature because they live in the wrong electoral district, it is also unfair to candidates and MLAs.

In the most recent territorial election, the distribution of votes between the three political parties was vastly different from the distribution of seats. Yukon-wide, one party received more than 28% of the votes, but ended up with less than 16% of the seats – and if not for the luck at a draw of lots, may have had only a bit over 10% of the seats. Another party, which had merely 4 percentage points more vote share, received more than double the seats. And if not for their misfortune at a draw of lots, may have had four times (!) the number of seats. And the party with the highest vote share was not even given the chance to form a government.

Looking at individual electoral districts, one MLA was elected with 37.65% of valid votes in their electoral district. That means 62.35% of voters did not want that person to represent them. However, these 62.35% of votes did not count. At the same time, in four other electoral districts, candidates who received more than 37.65% were not elected. That is unfair to electors and candidates alike.

Similar issues arise when we look at absolute numbers of votes in different districts in the 2021 Yukon election. I am sure you have studied those closely.

We can conclude: **While all votes matter in our current system, too many votes do not count.**

This is undemocratic – less because a small number of voters can make a huge difference, but more so because it depends on where you happen to live if your vote is one of those that can make an outsize difference.

That element of chance frustrates electors, but also citizens who consider running in an election. With the current first-past-the-post system, it is almost impossible for new political parties to enter the legislature, even when they have sizable support from Yukoners. As a result, fewer political movements or parties come into formal existence. To wit, there was only a single independent candidate in our most recent territorial election, Jan Prieditis.

That results in less competition in the political sphere. And competition would have many benefits. In a political context, competition makes most parties and politicians work harder and try harder to come up with the better ideas and proposals. As a society, we are at a loss if we do not have those smaller political forces to question the political mainstream, and to drive established parties to improve.

I urge you to move democracy ahead and **bring us Proportional Representation.**

Proportional Representation – Open Party List

I prefer an open party list system where voters pick one party. Additionally, they would have the option (not the requirement) to express their preference for a particular candidate from a party list; candidates receiving a defined number of preferential votes would move to the top of their party's list, securing them a seat.

In order to keep fringe or "jocular" parties out and enable efficiency in the legislature, lists that receive less than 5% of the total number of valid votes cast should not win any seats (**5% threshold**).

The Open Party List system has many advantages: Every Yukoner's vote will have the same weight. Similarly, the number of votes required to win a seat would be more uniform, and, in any case, not depend on the voter's or candidate's address.

While we have not had by-elections in the Yukon, they may happen any time under our current system. A party list system removes that costly risk. If a seat becomes vacant, the next candidate on their party's list from the most recent election would be sworn in.

That way, the legislature would always be fully "staffed", as no seats would be vacant for months at a time. In other words, electors would not miss out on representation just because an MLA passes away or resigns.

Mixed Member Proportional

A Mixed Member Proportional System would also be a good voting system. It is in use in Germany, for example. Every voter in the Yukon would receive two ballots to cast: Ballot A would constitute a vote for a party list, Ballot B would be a vote for an individual candidate from the voter's electoral district. Voters would tick one box on each of the two ballots and cast both. The candidate on Ballot B could be from a different party (or no party) than the party chosen by the voter on Ballot A.

Each electoral district would elect one MLA, according to the tally of all B-ballots cast in each district. That ensures regional representation.

The Yukon-wide tally of all A-ballots would ensure proportionality. A party which, for example, receives 20 percent of the A-votes, would "earn" about 20 percent of the seats, currently 4 seats. If candidates from that party have won 4 or more electoral districts on the B-votes, they would take those seats. If, however, they have won less than 4 districts, the party would send additional MLAs to the legislature for a total of

4 seats. These additional members would be "at large" or Yukon-wide, not for a specific electoral district only.

This way, **Yukon's legislature would proportionally represent Yukoner's party preference** (Ballot A), and **each Yukoner would still have their local representative** in the legislature (Ballot B). The exact number of seats in the legislature would fluctuate somewhat from election to election, but that is merely a problem of furnishing desks.

Each ballot would still be simple, with only a single choice to make: A for a party, B for a candidate. And we would reduce or eliminate the risk of costly by-elections.

Whichever of the two proportional representation systems you decide to suggest to the legislature, it will yield higher voter turnout in the long run compared to the current first-past-the-post system – simply because it then makes sense to vote even if your neighbours overwhelmingly vote differently.

No Online Voting, Please

Democracy is under assault. The last thing we must do is undermine trust in the electoral process. Trust in the outcome of elections is what makes or breaks any democracy.

Online voting would undermine that trust. Online, no one can observe people come and announce that they are allowed to vote. No one can watch the counting of the ballots. There is no meaningful judicial recount. There is no guarantee of secrecy of the vote.

Currently, we employ community members as election officers. They count the ballots; scrutineers watch, and, should they observe anything untoward, raise alarm. If we replace that transparent process with a digital black box, run by some company, we can not expect citizens to trust the announced results. It would be an open invitation to the enemies of democracy to spread doubt and disinformation.

The issue of online voting has been studied at length, for example by Canada's House of Commons, Elections Canada, and the BC Independent Panel on Internet Voting (chaired by their Chief Elections Officer), a panel not dissimilar to the Yukon Citizen's Assembly. None of them has recommended general online voting.

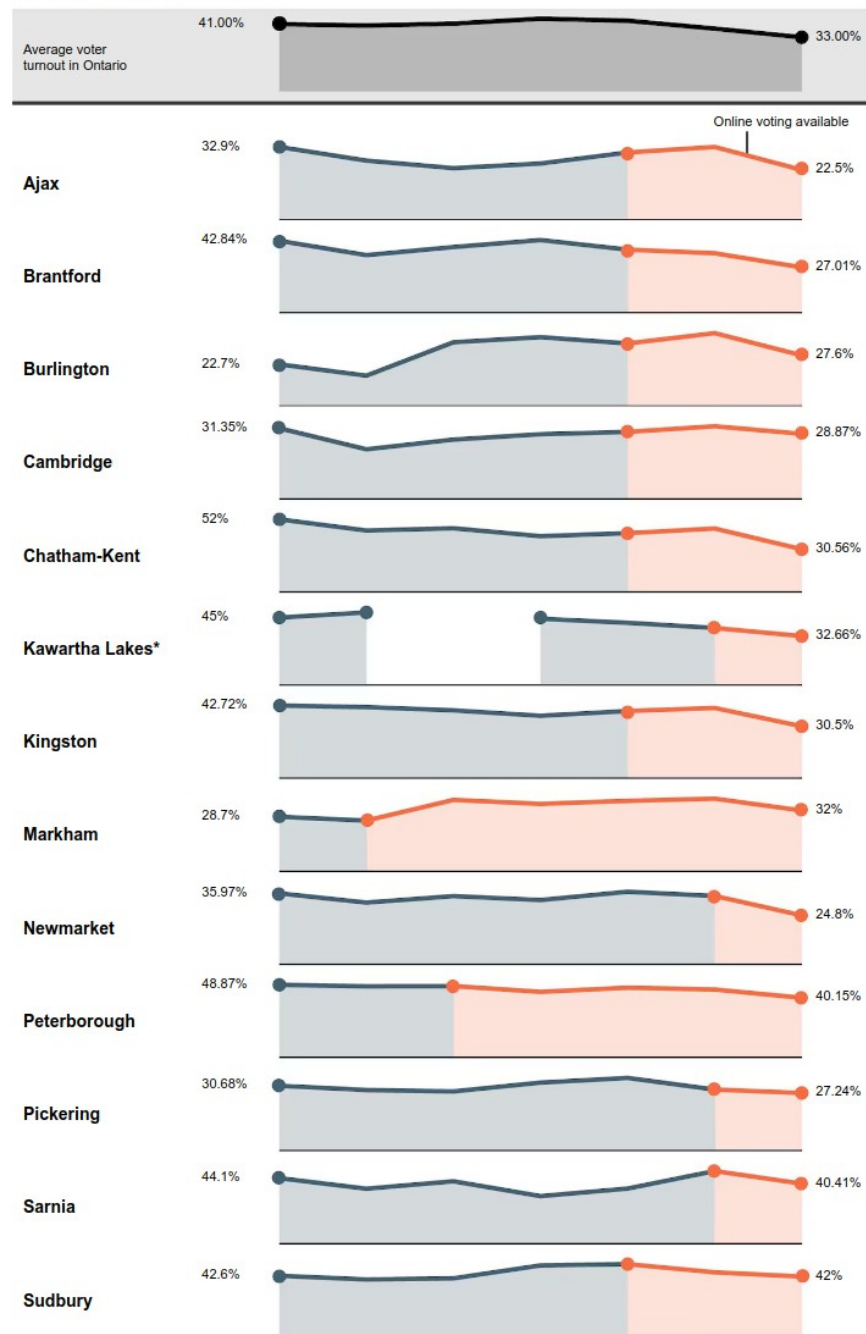
Earlier this year, the City Council of Whitehorse looked into online voting, hoping to find a way to increase voter turnout. However, as numerous studies have shown, online voting tends to reduce voter turnout.

For example, statistics from numerous municipalities in Ontario show that there was a modest increase in voter turnout at the first election with online voting, likely due to the novelty factor and media attention, but reduced voter turnout in subsequent elections, even below the baseline. See

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/online-voting-turnout-effect-1.6637975>

Voter turnout in areas with online voting

Per cent turnout, 2000-2022



* Data for 2000 in Kawartha Lakes only includes mayoral results and data for 2006 is not available.

Note: Overall average turnout is provisional. Thunder Bay did not provide turnout data before 2018.

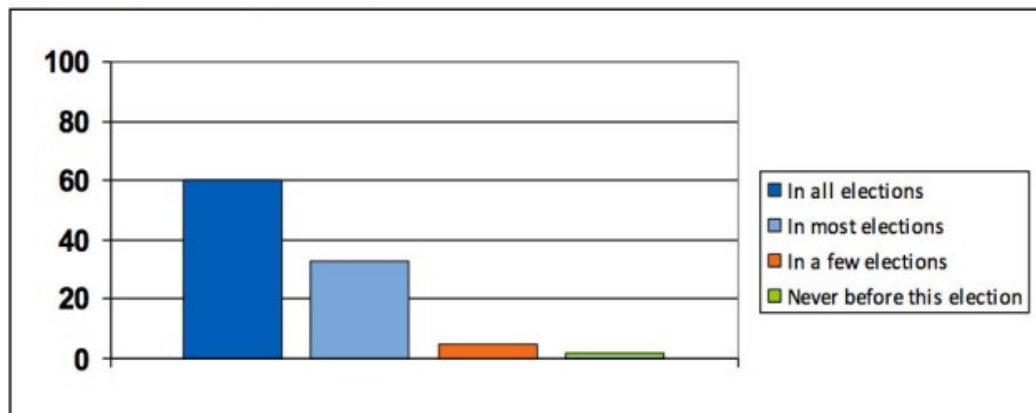
Source: Individual municipalities, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario • CBC News

Likewise, when Halifax, Nova Scotia, introduced Online Voting in 2008, turnout dropped by a quarter, from 48 to 36 percent, and never fully recovered. The reason is simple: Online Voting does not motivate citizens who have not been voting already to vote online. As the Internet Voting Project Report found, almost all voters who used Online Voting reported that they had voted in all or most previous elections. Hardly any online voter had not voted before.

4.4 Internet voter profiles: Past voting behaviour and digital literacy

To understand the online voting experience further, it is helpful to examine Internet voters' past voting behaviour, perceived computer and Internet literacy, and personal characteristics such as age, education and income.

Figure 8: Reported voting record in past elections



Source:

http://www.centreforedemocracy.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/IVP_Report.pdf

Furthermore, Online Voting fails to underscore the importance of the vote. Elections are community events. You get up, get dressed, and go to the polls. Although your choice is secret, the casting of your ballot is a public event with ceremonial aspects. When a vote is cast in the company of others, the act becomes **a community celebration of freedom and democracy.**

If voting becomes akin to liking something on Social Media, electors will, over time, perceive it as of similar significance.

Another benefit that is lost with online voting is the opportunity to teach children about voting by taking them along to a polling place. If voting becomes an "online

experience", we risk losing a significant part of the next generation of voters, because they will not have shared in that experience as children.

The counting of paper ballots, likewise, has many ceremonial aspects. Every ballot is taken, by hand, inspected, and counted. Every voter's expression is awarded the same attention. And, if shove comes to push, a judge can repeat the process to verify the result, or correct it, if necessary.

Moving to online voting would completely remove that ceremonial aspect, and the transparency it brings. Soon Yukoners would forget how important voting is.

As there would be no paper trail, no judge could undertake a meaningful verification of any online voting result. That would **undermine public trust** in the election system.

No Voting Machines or Scanners

Electronic voting machines or scanners come with challenges and very high cost. Today, "IT security" is a contradiction in terms. We must assume that any electronic system is insecure.

The cost of acquiring, verifying, installing, protecting and updating the required IT systems and data connections would be enormous. We would only use them every few years, and IT gets old very quickly. This is an inefficient use of tax payer's money.

Germany's Federal Constitutional Court has found that the use of machines violates their constitution because all electors have a right to examine all relevant steps of an election, without requiring special expertise. That transparency is not possible with voting machines or scanners. (March 3 2009, docket 2 BvC 3/07)
<https://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2009/bvg09-019.html>

As an election officer in Victoria, British Columbia, I experienced first hand that the use of ballot scanners lead to hours long lineups for thousands of voters. While the scanners delivered a quick result after the close of the polls, a traditional manual count would have meant a faster and vastly superior experience for voters, and less stress for election officers during the entire day.

Furthermore, some ballots were rejected by the ballot scanner as invalid although they would have been perfectly valid in a manual count. But when voters had used the wrong type of pen to mark the ballot, their votes did not count, because they failed the scanner.

The only advantage of an electronic system is a faster result at the end of the polling day. However, such **haste is unnecessary**. After months of campaigning, we can wait a

few hours for the result. It is not worth the huge effort, expense, and risk required to introduce voting machines, or scanners, let alone online voting. If the ballot is simple (KISS!), no scanners are necessary.

Let's Vote on Weekends

From my experience as a recruiter and instructor of election officers, I can say that the current requirement that polling be a Monday is unfortunate.

In fact, **a Sunday or holiday would be a much better polling day**. That would make it easier (and probably cheaper) to find suitable locations for polling stations. It would help significantly with finding qualified staff to work at the polling stations. In select locations, it would make it easier and cheaper to find parking, thus increasing accessibility. For most Yukoners, it would be easier to find the time to vote, and turnout would be more evenly distributed throughout the day, resulting in shorter lineups.

Election Canada's Chief Elections Officer already recommended in 2016 to move federal polling to Sunday:

(...) Having polling day on a weekday has a number of consequences. Polls must be open before and after work to give people sufficient time to vote. This means that, for long periods of the day, the poll may be nearly empty and then there is a large rush at the end of the day, which, given the inflexibility of the present process, leads to problems for poll workers and frustration and delays for electors. Having polling day on a weekday also greatly reduces the number of qualified personnel available to operate polling stations.

Australia, New Zealand and a number of European countries have their polling day on a weekend, and Canada should consider a similar move. Weekend polling may make the vote more accessible for some Canadian electors — although it should be noted that Elections Canada's consultation with electors with disabilities underlined the importance of para-transportation services being available on a weekend polling day, were this change to be made.

Weekend voting would also increase the availability of qualified personnel to operate polling stations and of accessible buildings, such as schools and municipal offices, for use as polling places. While schools can present ideal locations for voting, concerns about student safety make it increasingly difficult for ROs to obtain access to schools for voting while students are on the premises. For all these reasons, Elections Canada believes that having polling day on a weekend would better serve Canadians.

Quoted from: *An Electoral Framework for the 21st Century: Recommendations from the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada Following the 42nd General Election, Chapter 1*

https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rep/off/rec_2016&document=p3&lang=e#p3_d

While we already offer advance voting and special ballots in the Yukon, the official polling day still draws the largest turnout (**60.2% of all votes in 2021**). So the choice of day is important.

No Forced Voting

I oppose any fines for electors who do not vote. It is sad if a fellow citizen can not or does not want to vote. But there is no point in forcing them to do so. In the best of cases, they spoil a ballot. But they may vote for an extreme party they don't really support, simply out of anger about having to vote. This helps no-one and skews the election result.

In a free, democratic society, voting is a cherished right, not an imposed burden.

Add More Members

When the Yukon Legislative Assembly was created by passing the Yukon Elections Act in 1977, the Yukon had about 21,900 residents. The Legislative Assembly had 16 members, or 1 MLA per 1,369 Yukoners. Today, we have 46,259 residents (March 2024 according to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics). To keep the same level of representation, we should have 34 MLAs.

However, we only have 19 MLAs working for us, one per 2,435 Yukoners.

More members would provide for better connections between politicians and their constituents, more opportunity for political competition, and a chance for a more diverse range of MLAs. Not least, electoral district boundaries (if still necessary) would be less controversial.

There are two options: We could add seats to the existing Legislative Assembly. Or, we capture the moment and add a second chamber to further (Re)conciliation and Regional Representation.

(Re)conciliation and Regional Representation

The Yukon Citizen's Assembly should suggest that the Legislative Assembly studies the addition of a **second chamber to the Yukon legislature**. In that second chamber, **each Yukon First Nation would have a seat**.

Also, significant groups of settlers such as Anglophones, Francophones, Filipinos, Germanophones, visible minorities of a certain size, etc. could have a seat each. However, each citizen could only vote for one seat, even if they belonged to several of these groups. Such a **second chamber could be a significant step toward (re)conciliation** in the Yukon, while ensuring **representation for all Yukon regions**.

Alternatively, in addition to a seat for each Yukon First Nation, the mayor of each community plus the mayor of Whitehorse would be a member of the second chamber. That would bring a more regional focus, less party politics. And it would enhance the role of mayors, increasing voter turnout at municipal elections.

The exact composition and the specific powers of the second chamber would be explored in the necessary study combined with consultations with First Nations and all Yukon citizens. As the establishment of the second chamber would take some time, it should only happen after the Yukon moves to a proportional election system for the existing chamber.

Thank you for your attention and all the work you have put in over the recent months.

Please help the Yukon achieve proportional representation.

Daniel Sokolov



South Klondike Local Advisory Council

P.O. Box 4, Carcross, Yukon Y0B 1B0

CarcrossLAC@gmail.com

Yukon Citizen's Assembly on Electoral Reform
chair@yukoncitizensassembly.ca

Carcross district is represented by South Klondike Local Advisory Council. We are very concerned about the recent suggestion of reorganizing the electoral districts. More districts are necessary (MLA's) not reorganizing to form larger electoral districts outside of Whitehorse. Each area has specific needs and Carcross is unique in its needs.

Carcross has become a four-season destination for tourists and Whitehorse recreators. Our environment and infrastructure are not able to maintain themselves without intervention. This requires an MLA that is able to dedicate themselves to being able to help cope with this stress and make changes to support the community and surrounding lands and water.

Included in this letter is a letter that has been sent to the Electoral Reform Commission.

Marg Blewett
For
South Klondike Local Advisory Council



South Klondike Local Advisory Council

P.O. Box 4, Carcross, Yukon Y0B 1B0

CarcrossLAC@gmail.com

July 2,2024

Electoral District Boundaries Commission

After reviewing the commission's report on the proposed electoral boundaries, the South Klondike Local Advisory Council is pleased to see the accommodation taken for our First Nations groups. Keeping these language and culture groups together will create harmony within the districts.

One concern, however, is the large land areas within the districts outside of Whitehorse. It is felt that each small locality has a significant difference in its local needs in relation to the surrounding land area. Carcross, for example, is very unique in its needs from every other area in its district. The corridor from the intersection of the South Klondike and the Alaska Highway to the BC boarder is becoming a major four-season tourism and local outdoor activity area and as such requires special consideration from the government and its representation in this area.

Carcross like Dawson hosts thousands of tourists in a season on very limited infrastructure. Our surrounding land area has opportunities for a wide variety of activities. These attractions could be damaged with overuse and lack of control of how they are used. Government representation needs to be able to focus on this area for the protection of the people and the environment.

We feel that electoral boundaries should use a formula that recognizes land areas and their uses as well as population density.

The South Klondike Advisory Council would welcome representatives from the commission at our next public meeting held July 18th from 5-7pm. Our email is CarcrossLAC@gmail.com.

Marg Blewett
for South Klondike Local Advisory Council



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

May 15, 2024

Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform
c/o Sara McPhee-Knowles, Chair
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

Dear Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform,

I am writing in response to a request to provide opening remarks at your commencement dinner on Saturday May 25th in Whitehorse. In lieu of opening remarks, please accept this letter.

My name is Currie Dixon, and I am the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Leader of the Yukon Party, and the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Copperbelt North. My caucus represents 8 of the 19 seats in the 35th Legislative Assembly and we secured over 39% of the popular vote in the last territorial election. Recognizing what appears to be a general deference to academic credentials amongst the YCAER, I would also like to note that I hold a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Political Science from St. Francis Xavier University and a Master of Arts in Political Science from the University of Northern British Columbia.

As you may already know, our caucus did not support the creation of a Citizens' Assembly. We voted against the creation of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform (SCER) on May 26, 2021, and we subsequently voted against the creation of the Special Committee on the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform (SCYCAER) on April 25th, 2023. Since both motions passed despite our votes, we were compelled to participate in the work of both of these Special Committees, and did so in good faith throughout the existence of each. Furthermore, on November 7th, 2023, our caucus voted against the Motion Respecting Committee Reports No. 8, which concurred in the report and the terms of reference for the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform.

If you would like to understand the reasons behind these votes, I encourage you to review Hansard and the arguments made during the debates on each of the respective days. In particular, I would point you to my comments made on November 7th, 2023, which you will find on Hansard pages 4342-4343 on the Yukon Legislative Assembly website.

While I will not repeat all the arguments we have made in the Legislature, in short, our caucus does not feel that this Citizens' Assembly has legitimacy nor is it a "representative body of Yukoners." At the time of writing this letter, an announcement has been made that the Assembly members have been appointed, but we are still unaware of the names of the members. Our

understanding is that the members were chosen from a pool of 1,793 Yukoners who self-identified willingness to sit on this Assembly during the public consultation that occurred from January to March of 2023. It was never communicated to Yukoners at the time that it might be the only opportunity to identify oneself to participate in the future if an Assembly were formed someday.

As a result, once the public learned that the Legislative Assembly had voted by a relatively narrow margin to form a Citizens Assembly, literally tens of thousands of Yukoners were excluded from the process, and had no opportunity to ask for a chance to be part of a Citizens Assembly. Choosing this Assembly's membership from so limited a number of Yukoners is deeply problematic, especially since tens of thousands of other Yukon people were sidelined.

In the 2021 Election, none of the Yukon's three major political parties mentioned a Citizens Assembly in their respective platforms. None of those three parties has a mandate from voters to embark on this exercise.

As such, our caucus will not be participating in any of the functions of this Assembly as we feel that doing so would lend credence to an exercise that we believe lacks democratic legitimacy.

While I don't know who the members of the Citizens' Assembly are at this point, I expect it is made up of well-intentioned Yukoners, and I would extend my thanks for your willingness to participate. While we disagree with the process, we respect people who choose to get involved in discussions about the Yukon's future, and any person who tries to make a positive contribution of their own in any way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Currie Dixon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "D".

Currie Dixon
Leader of the Official Opposition