

MAPPING THE CIVIC LANDSCAPE

REPORT ON
LOCAL
GOVERNANCE
STRUCTURES
IN CANADA

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ABOUT GLOCAL FOUNDATION OF CANADA

GLOCAL Foundation of Canada is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the health, strength, and vitality of Canadian democracy. Our primary objective is to promote civic participation and digital citizenship within our nation, aiming to strengthen both global understanding and local engagement. Our flagship website, YouCount.ca, is dedicated to offering a one-stop digital platform for interactive civic information, training programs and activities, in the hope of inspiring Canadians to understand the basis of how our country is governed and readying them for effective civic engagement.

Our research endeavours are centred around providing reliable, relevant, and timely information and analyses pertaining to six key governance and policy areas in Canada. These areas encompass local governance, digital civic engagement, refugees, homelessness, public health, and public education. Providing Canadians with the foundational information on our country's multi-layered democratic governance system, our work includes Governance Reports, Policy Reviews and Local Case Highlights that together support these thematic areas. We also convert much of our research into “bite-size” digital nuggets, including social media and games, to reach a wider audience, especially youth and immigrants.

GLOCAL Foundation of Canada also actively collaborates with government entities, academic institutions, and civic organizations that share a common interest in community outreach and local public service. Through these partnerships, we provide customized research, data, outreach initiatives, and educational training, all of which contribute to the strengthening of civic engagement within their respective communities.

For further information about the GLOCAL Foundation of Canada, we invite you to visit our official website at <https://glocalfoundation.ca>.

MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GLOCAL FOUNDATION OF CANADA

The mission of GLOCAL is to promote digital civic engagement with strengthened global understanding and local participation. Our flagship website, YouCount.ca, aims to offer Canadians a one-stop digital platform for interactive civic information, training programs and fun activities. Since 2019, our dedicated youth researchers have been collating foundational and reliable information on domestic institutions and political representatives at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. Our goal is to help Canadians—especially youth and newcomers—better understand the basics of how our country is governed, creating a more inclusive and resilient digital civic engagement infrastructure.

One of the most complicated features of our federal system is local governance. As we began compiling information on political representatives at the sub-provincial level, we soon learned that local governments operate under a diverse set of structures across the country. It was not long before we realized that it was important for Canadians to not only learn about the people who represent them at the local level, but to also understand the unique governance model adopted in the localities where they live.

Local governance has the most profound and intimate effects on people's lives, but can be the most poorly understood, as reflected in the paucity of scholarship on the topic and the typical low-information environment of municipal politics. This knowledge gap remains a significant obstacle for Canadians to access information and engage effectively at the local level, which became the impetus for GLOCAL's multi-year research plan. The ultimate objective of this local governance project is to facilitate evidence-based mapping of one of the most intricate features of our federal system and to raise public awareness of its challenges.

This report summarizes the key findings obtained by our researcher regarding the governance models operating under diverse local structures across Canada. It also presents a timely analysis of their implications for effective civic engagement at the local level. We hope readers will be inspired to dig deeper into the particularities of their community so that they can be better informed about civic engagement opportunities at the local level.

This report is a companion to another GLOCAL publication on federalism in Canada. Together, they provide foundational information on Canada's multi-layered governance system and are part of the knowledge infrastructure that is necessary for effective civic engagement. We intend to convert much of the information in this report into "bite-size" digital nuggets for broader consumption through YouCount.ca, games and our social media channels. We hope other organizations with an interest in community outreach and local public service will consider using our materials for their own outreach and education efforts, or partnering with us to strengthen civic engagement in their communities.

On behalf of the GLOCAL Foundation of Canada, I would like to express my gratitude to all of those involved in producing this report. I extend special appreciation to Prof. Fred Cutler at the University of British Columbia for his guidance throughout this project and to Mitacs for providing the necessary funding for our research. I am deeply grateful to the members of our GLOCAL research team who were responsible for editing and finalizing this report: Yingqiu Kuang, Program Manager, Research; Carla Caruana, Program Manager, Public Education; Jia Yue He, Research Associate; and our Mitacs fellow and Junior researchers for data compilation, Navneet Bhangu, Alexia Chambers, Nehal Gupta, Yongzheng (Parker) Li, Maira Malik, Andreas Petersen, Rohil Sharma, Hannah Stojicevic, Ruby Taylor, Karley Woodson, and Yang (Louis) Zheng. Our team demonstrated great resourcefulness and diligence in sourcing the material for this report.

I also appreciate the time and thoughtful feedback provided by our dedicated advisors and reviewers. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the Digital and Communications team at GLOCAL Canada for their editing and design work in finalizing this publication. All team

members—myself included—have come away from the project with a much-enhanced understanding of and appreciation for local governance—and that alone has made the effort worthwhile. We hope our readers will feel the same way.

Sincerely,
Faye Ying
Founder and Executive Director
GLOCAL Foundation of Canada

LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER ON RESEARCH, GLOCAL FOUNDATION OF CANADA

As a team of young Canadians, we are genuinely concerned about the importance of local political institutions to safeguard the prosperity of our governance and democracy at its core. This has sparked several pivotal practical inquiries: How resilient and sustainable is our local governance system currently? How should we reform local political and government institutions to maximize the potential of good governance, citizenship, and communities? And how can we revitalize the local sphere as the most immediate and critical arena for civic participation in people's democratic life?

A common starting point to address these questions is the availability of comprehensive, reliable, and timely information about the nature of local governance across Canada. However, to the best of our knowledge, there is no comprehensive dataset or publicly accessible documents on this crucial issue. While Statistics Canada, the national statistical agency, has made efforts to provide municipal and local information through census data and standard indicators measuring economic, socioeconomic, and health impacts on communities, it has not been able to offer the public a complete understanding of the governance structures and models operating at the local level. Some resources in textbook format have attempted to assemble a diverse and complex picture of local governance environments, but their data is not accessible to the public.

In an effort to fill this gap, GLOCAL Foundation of Canada, guided by its mission to promote civic participation and digital citizenship with enhanced global understanding and local engagement, has embarked on a multi-year research project since 2019. The aim of this project is to develop a digital platform, YouCount.ca, that provides the public with data on Canada's democratic institutions and political representatives at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. Our goal is to contribute to an accessible information infrastructure that empowers the public to comprehend the fundamentals of local governance in Canada,

appreciate the unique characteristics of their communities, and actively participate in civic engagement at the local level.

This report presents the findings of our research over the past four years. To ensure the reliability of information and research results, we have aggregated raw data primarily from the relevant Acts and regulations of each province and territory. We have also examined other official sources, including provincial government websites, individual municipality websites, as well as provincial and municipal associations. In the coming years, our focus will be on keeping our findings up-to-date and addressing any emerging gaps in the data.

While we have made every effort to ensure the accuracy and currency of the collected information, we acknowledge that, due to resource constraints, this report may not be comprehensive. Given the substantial variations and complexities inherent in all aspects of local governance, our researchers have encountered challenges in collecting reliable and relevant information for this level of governance compared to others in Canada. Some information and data may be outdated, incorrect, or unavailable. We welcome feedback and advice on the project and report, and we aim to expand our network of legislators, civil servants, community members, and academic stakeholders to continuously enhance our database, qualitative analysis, and knowledge mobilization. Our goal is to achieve a more profound and comprehensive understanding of the local order of governance in Canada.

I would also like to thank our team at GLOCAL, which made this report a reality—our Program Manager in Public Education, Carla Caruana; our researchers, Danielle Jbeili, Alexia Chambers, Daniel Schaefer, and Ben Knoll; and especially our Communications Manager, Harriet Chiu.

Sincerely,
Yingqiu Kuang, Ph.D.
Program Manager, Research
GLOCAL Foundation of Canada

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Local governance plays a vital role in the daily lives of all Canadians, serving as the foundation for the resilience and sustainability of Canadian democracy. Despite its significance, there is a notable absence of reliable and comprehensive public data and analysis on local democracy in our country. As a result, local governance remains poorly understood by both academics and the public at large. GLOCAL Foundation of Canada aims to bridge this gap by undertaking extensive research that delves deep into the complexity and diversity of local governance structures and systems across the country. Our research draws data primarily from the relevant Acts and regulations of each province and territory, supplemented by official sources such as provincial government websites, individual municipality websites, and provincial and municipal associations.

This report provides a comprehensive overview of local governance structures in Canada. It presents the following:

1. An overview highlighting the significance of local governance in Canadian democracy.
2. Identification of three major types of models in local governance systems in Canada—incorporated communities/municipalities, unincorporated communities, and Indigenous communities—while also exploring other special arrangements observed in local governance structures.
3. A national comparison of local governance systems across Canadian provinces and territories.
4. Detailed examination of the unique characteristics of local governance models within each province and territory.

INTRODUCTION

The significance of strong local democracy cannot be overstated for the overall health, strength, and vitality of Canadian democracy. Existing literature recognizes the importance of local governance for democracy and democratic representation. However, the complex nature of local governance structures across Canada, coupled with the limited availability of accessible and curated data resources documenting the diverse range of local governance models, has constrained the scope of research in this area.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE AS THE CORNERSTONE OF DEMOCRACY

Local governance plays a vital role in everyday life. In chapter V of *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville (1835) emphasized the importance of local governance, noting that “Municipal institutions are to liberty what primary schools are to science: they bring it within the people’s reach; they teach people to appreciate its peaceful enjoyment and accustom them to make use of it. A nation may establish a system of free government, but without the spirit of municipal institutions, it cannot have the spirit of liberty.”

Throughout history, local governments have served as rare islands of stability amidst turbulence. The remarkable political, economic, and technological changes of recent centuries have transformed many political and social institutions beyond recognition, with kingdoms and colonies giving way to nation-states and power shifting from palaces to parliaments. Nevertheless, local institutions have displayed notable resilience and enduring influence (Sellers, Lidström & Bae, 2020). While independent city-states, particularly in ancient Greece, have mostly ceased to exist, a few exceptional cases like Singapore continue as surviving city-states. Most cities worldwide, including London, England, and London, Ontario, predate the founding of the nations they currently belong to and are likely to outlive them as well.

Although municipalities are commonly perceived as subordinate to larger governments, the reality is more nuanced. Some cities possess founding documents such as city charters or incorporation legislation that precede the existence of their respective countries. In some cases, a city's charter may even predate the constitution of the country. It also predates the division of legislative powers that would otherwise have given a provincial or state government power over it. For instance, Montreal (1865) and Saint John (1785) in Canada have founding charters predating Confederation and the Constitution of Canada (City of Saint John, n.d.; Charter of the City of Montreal, 1865). These examples demonstrate that historical disruptions, such as war, regime change, revolution, industrialization, and urbanization, have seldom eradicated local institutions. Instead, they have often strengthened the enduring significance and autonomy of local governments within the broader political landscape.

Today, local governance serves as the foundational system of organizations connecting local authorities with the people they represent, playing a crucial role in Canadian democracy. Municipal councils and regional district boards of directors organize, operate, provide services, and remain accountable to their communities, as emphasized by the British Columbia government ("Regional Districts in BC," n.d.). Local institutions effectively support their communities due to their familiarity and expertise in addressing local needs and priorities. In Canada, local governance is responsible for providing essential daily services such as water, electricity, roads, street lighting, and waste management. These local solutions, according to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (2019), are instrumental in addressing national and global challenges.

According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' 2019 polling data, municipal governments are viewed as the most trusted level of government in Canada when it comes to improving the quality of life in communities. However, the significance of city councils often gets overshadowed by national elections and complex party politics. Voter turnout in municipal elections across Canada between 2004 and 2014 averaged 36.42% (Breux, Couture, & Koop, 2017), significantly lower than the average voter turnout of 61.38% in

federal elections during the same period (Elections Canada, n.d.). Despite their pivotal role in governance, local institutions receive comparatively less attention and participation.

VARIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE MODELS

Although there is a general consensus on the importance of local governance in democratic countries, local governance exhibits a wide range of governance patterns. Scholars and policymakers have consistently shown that there is no singular pattern of local governance in Canada and the United States. For instance, Taylor (2014) has shown that the political development of local governance in these two countries is the result of different historical institutional developments. Their city-level governance styles, according to Goldberg and Mercer (1986), demonstrate different political cultures in these two countries. In contrast to the U.S. and other countries, Canada's largest cities have comparatively restrictive legislative frameworks (Lidstone, 2004; Siegel, 1997). Additionally, city charters in Canada may have been introduced to intentionally grant more power and policy responsibilities to large cities¹ (Sancton, 2009; Broadbent, 2009; Sewell, 2021).

Within Canada, no nationwide pattern exists in its local governance systems. Different local governments exhibit varied planning cultures. For example, Darchen and Tremblay (2013) compare the specific planning cultures of Montreal and Toronto in their application of the “creative city” concept. The creative city concept emphasizes the role of culture in delivering economic benefits and improving quality of life in urban areas (Evans, 2005; Stern & Seifert, 2010). In Toronto, the idea of a creative city is driven by the interests of stakeholders in the private sector, such as Business Improvement Areas (BIAs)². However, for Montreal, economic competitiveness means attracting both investments and social inclusiveness to satisfy civil actors and residents. Smith and Spicer (2018) employ quantitative methods and construct a Canadian-tailored index to compare and measure the

¹ For instance, the *Municipal Corporations Act* was published in 1849 while the *Constitution Act* was published in 1867. For more, see Section 2.1 of this report: The Municipal Corporation.

² A Business Improvement Area (BIA) is a designated area where local business people, commercial property owners, and tenants can join together to discuss and implement physical improvements and promote economic development in their district. During this process, the municipality government is in a supportive role (Government of Ontario, “Introduction to Business Improvement Areas,” accessed August 25, 2022, <https://www.ontario.ca/document/business-improvement-area-handbook/introduction-business-improvement-areas>).

level of local autonomy across 10 large Canadian cities. Their research reveals noticeable differences in local governance across three dimensions of autonomy: legal-administrative autonomy, fiscal autonomy, and political autonomy.

Moreover, the uniqueness and complexity of Indigenous local governance in the political context of Canada have attracted considerable attention. Abele and Prince (2006), for example, summarize four major models of Indigenous governance in Canada: mini-municipalities, a third order of government institutions, the public government federal option, and nation-to-nation relations. Meanwhile, they emphasize the need to utilize different models in different contexts to gain a better understanding of Indigenous governance. Similarly, Coates (2008) highlights the importance of understanding federal governance on this topic in order to comprehend Indigenous local governance. This is particularly relevant as many Indigenous communities are part of unincorporated areas, suggesting that local governance may be a responsibility of the provincial and even federal government. Furthermore, most literature in this field is criticized for being written by non-Indigenous scholars, while Indigenous voices are often disregarded or suppressed. Cardinal's (1969) influential book, *The Unjust Society*, serves as a direct call for Indigenous self-governance and reaffirms the ongoing relevance of Indigenous voices in this issue.

The diversity observed in the field of local governance prompts scholars to explore the sources of such internal inconsistency. One important contributing factor is Canada's federal system. Given that provinces set their own rules by constitutional design, some degree of internal inconsistency is expected. Especially since the municipal government is not an order of government under Canada's constitution, the types and structures of municipalities vary from province to province. In addition, some differences are deeply rooted in local history. For example, the multilevel governance structure of Québec is heavily influenced by its French history and background. The historical geography of the Calgary region, as studied by Ghitter and Smart (2009), has shaped the trajectory of the Rancier's Beef land-use dispute. Moreover, political actors can also shape local governance. Compiling a dataset of political actors from Kitchener, Ontario, Lucas (2015) examines how

the interaction between local political careers and (in)formal local institutions influences local governance.

LIMITED SCOPE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE RESEARCH

Due to the complex nature of local governance, the current academic literature mostly chooses to focus on specific issues. Meanwhile, these studies also heavily rely on qualitative case studies, making it imprudent to generalize findings from one case to another. A stream of literature, for instance, concentrates on municipal elections. Lucas et al. (2021) examines the backgrounds of candidates. Nakhaie (2006) investigates regulations in the act, electoral participation, while Kushner et al. (1997) and Lucas and McGregor (2021) explore municipal politics. Apart from electoral studies, local governance scholarship in Canada also examines how it influences disparities in the region. For instance, Slack (2013) studies the impact of municipal finance and governance on urban sprawl. Roy (2005) goes beyond the conventional definition of government and explores four dimensions of change for local governance: service delivery, security, transparency, and trust.

Many of these studies typically employ data from large cities to demonstrate how different factors contribute to varying local governance styles. This is primarily due to the fact that the majority of Canada's population resides in its largest cities. As of 2019, over 85% of the country's population was concentrated in areas close to the Canada-US border and within the provinces of Ontario, Québec, British Columbia, and Alberta. This proportion is expected to continue growing (Statistics Canada, 2019). For example, Stewart and Smith (2007) examine eight of Canada's largest cities (Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver) and study the relationship between civil

servants and local policy analysis. In their book, *Metropolitan Governing*, Razin and Smith (2006) compare 5 major Canadian cities—Toronto, Ottawa-Gatineau, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver—to foreign cities in the UK, Korea, and Israel, illustrating how urban governance and municipal reform may influence local governance. As a result, academic discussions on local governance in the Canadian context tend to predominantly focus on “urban governance” or large cities, while paying limited attention to the diversity of local governance in smaller and remote areas.

Furthermore, the current research heavily emphasizes the local governance of incorporated communities, often overlooking unincorporated and Indigenous communities. Although Buckland and Rahman’s (1999) study delves into the significance of certain unincorporated communities in disaster management, particularly during the 1997 Red River Flood, there is a lack of research on unincorporated communities in Canada. This gap in the municipal political landscape could be mitigated by including the latter in comparative analyses.

GLOCAL CANADA LOCAL GOVERNANCE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA

Local governance plays a crucial role in shaping the lives of individuals, yet official statistics often fail to provide Canadians with a comprehensive understanding of the complex local governance systems in the country. Recognizing this significant knowledge gap, GLOCAL Foundation of Canada undertakes a research initiative to systematically examine the shape, structure, and nature of local governance across the country.

To gather data that accurately reflects the reality of local governance and the facts on the ground, our work primarily relies on information derived from the relevant Acts and regulations of each province and territory. Additionally, we aggregate data obtained from other official sources, including provincial government websites, as well as the websites of individual municipalities and provincial municipal associations. Through GLOCAL’s Local Governance Dataset, we provide information and statistics pertaining to various local

governance models across the provinces and territories of Canada. This report, “Mapping of the Civic Landscape,” represents our effort to offer in-depth analysis and insights into the diversity and entirety of local governance in Canada. Our aim is to provide valuable comparisons and valuable lessons for future researchers, and anyone interested in understanding how local government operates.

Box 1. Terminology

Incorporated Communities

When examining incorporated communities in Canada, GLOCAL tracks specific information for each community in various aspects. This includes the incorporation date and population of the incorporated community, as well as key contact information such as governmental addresses and councillors’ names. Furthermore, we collect information related to their municipal elections, such as the length of the term, the date of the election, and pertinent election legislation. All this information is recorded, cataloged, and added to our Local Governance Database.

However, it is important to note that ground-level data may be subject to change at any time, particularly in accordance with the electoral cycle. Moreover, several provincial legal frameworks governing local governance are currently undergoing reforms, adding further complexities to the landscape. Therefore, our research effort represents a snapshot in time, and the temporal aspect should be considered accordingly.

Unincorporated Communities

When it comes to unincorporated communities, there are also important caveats to consider. While our work highlights the sheer complexity of local governance, it is crucial to acknowledge the scarcity of easily accessible data and the dearth of research, particularly in unincorporated areas. The different definitions of unincorporated areas across provinces and territories further contribute to spatial and temporal inconsistencies in data availability. Additionally, the data on the population and types of unincorporated communities do not align with consistent and precise sources like the census by Statistics Canada, as the census does not directly account for the specific characteristics of unincorporated communities in its data.

Furthermore, smaller communities may have limited online information available, and their systems may be less user-friendly compared to larger, well-funded urban centers. It is important to recognize that even when sufficient data is available to understand the governance landscape of unincorporated communities in a specific region, it does not necessarily generalize to other regions. The transferability of knowledge is challenging, making a comprehensive country-wide overview of local governance data an exercise in comparing notably distinct cases.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES: AN OVERVIEW

This report aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the diverse landscape of local governance in Canada. We identify three major local governance models operating in the country: (1) incorporated communities/municipalities, (2) unincorporated communities, and (3) Indigenous communities. According to the 2021 Census, it is estimated that approximately 90% of Canadians reside in incorporated communities, while Indigenous governments and unincorporated communities serve as vital institutions delivering essential local services to the remaining 10% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2022).

In addition to these three models, we also recognize the presence of various unique arrangements within local governance structures that warrant further attention. This section primarily offers a comparative analysis of the powers and responsibilities in incorporated, unincorporated, and Indigenous communities. In addition, it delves into the complexity of the entirety of local governance through the examination of: (1) ongoing reforms in provincial legal frameworks, (2) the role of local governments in intergovernmental relations, especially in towns and cities that straddle jurisdictional borders, (3) the intricacies of urban, rural, and regional governance, and (4) the electoral and partisan dynamics within municipalities.

INCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

An incorporated community, commonly referred to as a municipality or a municipal corporation, is a local community that is established as an independent legal entity separate from its population (Government of Canada, 2021). These entities possess natural-person powers, which grant them the authority to own property and enter into legal contracts. Meanwhile, they also possess legislative powers, which empowers municipal corporations to pass and enforce laws and resolutions within their jurisdictions. These laws and resolutions passed by municipal governments are commonly referred to as

bylaws and are applicable solely within the geographical boundaries of the respective municipality (Government of Canada, 2021).

However, it is important to recognize that municipal governments differ from provincial and federal levels of government in terms of legislative power. Contrary to the provincial and federal governments whose legislative powers are outlined in the Constitution and derive directly from the Crown, municipal governments possess only the legislative authority delegated to them by their respective provincial or territorial government. In cases of conflict between a municipality's bylaw and any federal or provincial/territorial statute, the federal or provincial/territorial law takes precedence (Government of Canada, 2022).

The History of Incorporated Communities

The origins of incorporated municipalities in Canada can be traced back to the British political system, much like other aspects of the Canadian regime (*East York (Borough) et al. v. Ontario (Attorney General)*, 2007). The earliest municipal corporations, such as Winchester and the City of London, had their rights, freedoms, and powers safeguarded in city charters and the Magna Carta, a foundational document that significantly influenced subsequent legal and constitutional developments in England and worldwide. In 1835, the *Municipal Corporations Act*³ (repealed and replaced by the *Municipal Corporations Act 1882*) established the fundamental framework for municipal government in the United Kingdom. This Act mandated that municipal councils hold public meetings, and it defined the municipal corporation as a legal entity acting on behalf of and being accountable to all residents of the municipal district.

³ This item of legislation isn't available on the UK legislation website (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1835/76>) as it isn't currently available in a web-publishable format. People can refer to H. T. Dickinson's edited book for the content of this legislation. Dickinson, Harry T., ed. *Constitutional Documents of the United Kingdom 1782–1835*. Vol. 1. Walter de Gruyter, 2006, 247–344.

Box 2. British Tradition and Its Impacts on Canadian Incorporated Communities

The practice of municipal incorporation in Canada originated from the legal structures and political struggles during the pre-Confederation period when Canada was composed of separate British colonies and territories rather than a unified modern state. Local affairs during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were primarily managed at higher levels of colonial government rather than at the local level. This resulted in public dissatisfaction with the lack of “home rule” or local autonomy, which eventually led to rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada (present-day Ontario and Québec) in the late 1830s. In response to these rebellions, Lord Durham’s 1839 report recommended political reforms, including the unification of the two colonies into the Province of Canada and the establishment of legislation for a municipal government system. The *Municipal Corporations Act* of 1849, commonly known as the *Baldwin Act* due to its association with politician and reformer Robert Baldwin, introduced a set of regulations for the incorporation of municipalities in the new Province of Canada. This Act can be considered the precursor to all post-Confederation legislation governing municipal incorporation.

In the *British North America Act* (now known as the *Constitution Act*, 1867), which laid the foundation for the creation of Canada as it exists today, legislative powers were divided between provincial and federal governments. Municipal corporations were placed under the exclusive jurisdiction of provincial governments, while territorial governments later received similar powers from the federal government to ensure a rough balance with provincial autonomy. This division of powers also established that each province/ territory currently possesses its own legislation and framework for local governance (*East York (Borough) et al. v. Ontario (Attorney General)*, 2007).

Types of Incorporated Communities

Incorporated communities, also known as municipalities or municipal corporations, are established through a formal process of incorporation. Each province has its own set of specific Acts that grant these incorporated communities both natural-person powers, such

as the ability to own property and enter into legal contracts, and legislative powers to enact and enforce laws. These Acts also determine the different types of municipalities that can be incorporated. The majority of Canadians reside in incorporated communities, commonly known as cities, towns, villages, districts, or counties. However, it is important to acknowledge that the names and definitions of incorporated communities can vary depending on the governing Act specific to each province. Each province applies different criteria to determine the type of municipality a community will become, often based on factors such as population size and tax base (Statistics Canada, “Census Subdivision,” 2021). In certain cases, the names and types of these municipalities are also a reflection of their historical origins rooted in the British political system.

Two Organizational Structures of Incorporated Communities

Incorporated municipalities in Canada are organized into two distinct structures across provinces and territories: a single-tier system or a two-tier system. This organizational structure plays a crucial role in determining the administrative framework and distribution of responsibilities within the local governance system. Under the single-tier system, all local public services for the community are provided by a single municipal government. On the other hand, the two-tier system involves the division of responsibilities for service provision between “lower-tier” and “upper-tier” municipalities. Lower-tier municipalities, which maintain closer connections with their communities, typically provide services tailored to the specific needs of their respective localities. Upper-tier municipalities, often referred to as regional governments, offer region-wide services and administrative support to two or more lower-tier municipalities.

Currently, only three provinces—Ontario, British Columbia, and Québec—employ two-tier systems of governance (Bow, 2005). Even within these provinces, there exist multiple variations that are further addressed in the following sections. Additionally, three other provinces—New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador—are considering the establishment of some form of regional governance. The new local governance reform in New Brunswick, implemented in January 2023, has resulted in a reduction of local entities from 340 (comprising 104 incorporated communities and 236 unincorporated communities) to 89, including 77 local governments and 12 rural districts (Government of New Brunswick, “Local Governance Reform,” n.d.). The remaining four provinces and three territories adhere to a single-tier system of local governance.

Box 3. The Debate over Regional Governance

Regional districts form part of the provincial and territorial governance systems in Canada, adding an additional layer to the existing local governance infrastructure. The purpose and role of regional districts have evolved over time, reflecting the needs of governments, residents, cost reduction considerations, and gaps in service provision. Today, regional

districts are not merely intermediaries for higher levels of government but rather entities responsible for fulfilling service responsibilities offered to residents (Cullingworth, 1987).

However, the effectiveness of the two-tier system has been a subject of debate. Critics argue that dividing responsibilities between regional and local level governments can lead to duplications in services and increased bureaucratization, rendering it no more effective than the single-tier system. They also contend that this arrangement can be paternalistic and imposing on localities (Krushelnicki, 1994; Hasen, 2007). In particular, in Ontario, regional governments consist of councillors who solely sit on the regional council, detached from the municipalities. This setup raises concerns about the neglect of smaller municipalities and contributes to a perceived paternalistic relationship. However, it is important to note that these issues vary across provinces. In Québec, for instance, regional councils consist entirely of councillors from the local level, typically mayors, mitigating such concerns.

On the other hand, proponents argue that certain governance functions can only be effectively carried out by regional governments. This is particularly evident in areas with complex interdependencies among municipalities, where an overarching governing body becomes necessary. For example, individuals residing in one municipality and commuting to work in another have a vested interest in the road conditions and public infrastructure of their neighboring city. The interdependence of municipalities, extensive transportation networks, cultural services, and urban planning make the two-tier system effective in managing established and emerging metropolitan areas. The role of regional governments is also considered more prominent in implementation rather than in the planning of policies and legislation.

The Governance of Incorporated Communities

In incorporated communities, the exercise of municipal corporation powers and decision-making is entrusted to an elected municipal council. The structure and functioning of these councils are governed by the relevant legislation enacted by their

respective legislatures. Generally, a council is composed of an even number of members who are elected through one of two methods. They are either elected at large, representing all eligible voters within the municipality, or elected from specific local electoral districts known as wards.

The individual elected at large assumes the role of the head of the council, commonly known as the mayor or reeve, and serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the municipal corporation. However, there are also some exceptions. In certain provinces, such as Alberta, certain types of municipalities allow for the selection of the head of council by the council members themselves rather than through a popular vote. The head of council presides over council meetings and represents the municipality at formal events, but typically does not possess additional powers beyond those of a regular councillor. Additionally, councils also appoint a Chief Administrative Officer who oversees the activities of all other municipal employees and implements the policies and decisions of the council. This position is sometimes referred to as the City Manager or Administrator.

Councils exercise their decision-making authority by passing bylaws, which are local laws applicable solely within the jurisdiction of the municipality. They often establish appointed committees of experts and community members to provide recommendations on specific policy matters, such as transportation, waste management, and zoning. Municipal councils also commonly foster opportunities for youth participation in politics. For instance, several provinces permit the appointment of a non-voting youth member to the council, and many municipalities establish youth advisory councils to engage young individuals in the decision-making process.

Electoral Politics in Incorporated Communities

Elections at the local level in incorporated municipalities in Canada differ significantly from those at the federal and provincial levels. One prominent difference lies in the terminology used. In local elections, the term “ward” is used to describe a geographically defined electoral district that elects councillors of the municipality. In contrast, the term “riding” is

equivalent to the basic unit for elections and representation at the federal and provincial levels.

More importantly, local elections are often non-partisan, with political parties generally not permitted to participate. In cases where parties are allowed, they may bear little resemblance to the familiar parties seen in the federal and provincial party systems. In local elections, the issues at stake are typically focused more locally compared to elections at other levels. Therefore, local elections in Canada are unique as they feature directly elected executives. While Canadians do not directly vote for a prime minister or premier, they do vote directly for a mayor or reeve. Other local offices, such as school board trustees, are often filled in these elections as well, with concurrent voting on the same ballot.

However, there are also a couple of important variations in local elections. Depending on the municipality, elections are held using either wards (geographically defined districts representing a part of the municipality) or an at-large district encompassing the entire geographical area of the municipality, where all candidates run at the same time. In the meantime, while non-partisan governments dominate most Canadian municipal politics, local political parties still exist in two major cities in the country—Vancouver and Montreal.

Box 4. The Debate over Local Elections

The use of wards or at-large districts has significant implications for the structure of the vote and its impact on local politics. Existing literature focuses on three aspects: democratic representation, democratic participation/turnout, and policy responsiveness.

In terms of democratic representation, it is commonly believed that using wards leads to a focus on geographical regions, while at-large constituencies tend to promote a “whole-city” approach to representation (Koop & Kraemer, 2016). However, the latter may result in certain parts of the municipality being overlooked if their issues are not as prominent, potentially marginalizing underrepresented communities and sociodemographic groups. At-large districts also tend to result in less-diverse councils,

whereas smaller districts offer greater opportunities for marginalized candidates to be elected. However, scholars caution that wards can also lead to narrowly focused politics and competition between different regions of the city (Koop & Kraemer, 2016; Macmanus, 1978).

Regarding electoral turnout, research suggests that using at-large districts decreases municipal voter turnout somewhat compared to wards in Canada (Breaux, Couture, & Koop, 2017). However, when considering provincial variations, this effect becomes negligible, indicating that provincial political culture may be the underlying cause. Particularly in British Columbia, municipal voter turnout tends to be lower.

The impact on policy responsiveness, influenced by whether at-large districts or wards are used, is another aspect of debate in municipal politics. However, our survey of existing literature on this topic suggests that the effect is not particularly noticeable or consistent (Tausanovitch & Warshaw, 2014). Policy responsiveness could also be influenced by geographically based coalitions of council members, which may prioritize issues in their wards at the expense of others and impact overall municipal spending priorities (Southwick Jr., 1997).

To summarize the key points:

	At-large	Wards
Representation	Worse for racialized people, women, underrepresented communities in general	Somewhat better for marginalized representation (but no guarantee)
Participation	Some evidence of depressed turnout relative to wards	Somewhat higher turnout than at-large
Policy Responsiveness	Small, inconsistent effect	Small, inconsistent effect

UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

According to the most recent census data from 2021, over 90% of Canadians reside in incorporated communities such as villages, towns, and municipalities (Statistics Canada, 2021). The remaining population resides in unincorporated communities or unorganized areas⁴ which lack a municipal corporation. In contrast to incorporated communities, where municipal governments in Canada are responsible for providing local services and governance, unincorporated communities do not have such conventional local governance structures. The absence of incorporation can be attributed to various factors, with size in terms of population or economic activity often being the determining criterion. In other cases, there may be no specific reason why incorporation has not yet occurred.

One challenge in comprehensively understanding unincorporated communities is the variation in how they are defined, classified, and managed across Canada. Each government unit has different responsibilities, and their definitions are established by provincial or territorial governments in alignment with their official duties. Hence, the term “unincorporated communities” does not hold synonymous meaning across jurisdictions.

The federal government faces the same challenge of devising a definition that encompasses this variation. An example of a federal definition is provided by the Canada Revenue Agency (2023), which classifies unincorporated communities as Unincorporated Municipal Government Units resembling municipalities but lacking incorporation. Nevertheless, such definitions primarily serve the purpose of data collection.

Statistics Canada, through the Census Profile of 2021, also collects data on unincorporated communities. A relevant concept for our research is the designation of places. Designated places generally refer to small communities that do not meet the criteria for municipal or population center classification (areas with a population of at least 1,000 and a density of

⁴ Other names include “unorganized territory,” “unincorporated area,” “unorganized community,” and other similar variations.

400 persons per square kilometer). Provinces and territories collaborate with Statistics Canada to establish designated places, providing data for sub-municipal areas. The concept of designated places was introduced in 1996 as a new geographic area for data dissemination, addressing the growing demand for population counts and census data pertaining to sub-municipal or unincorporated areas (Statistics Canada, “Designated Place,” 2021). While this terminology is primarily utilized for statistical analysis and data representation, it may differ from the definitions employed by individual provinces or territories⁵.

As no single provincial or territorial definition holds authority beyond its jurisdiction, it is crucial to study unincorporated communities on a province-by-province basis. It is worth noting that the asymmetry of information provided by respective jurisdictions is reflected in the depth of our own coverage. Some provinces offer extensive information on the setup of unincorporated communities and their interactions with other governing structures, while others provide more concise information. This asymmetry poses challenges when conducting primary research. To bridge the gap between government information dissemination and public awareness, our report compares the population of unincorporated communities and the number of designated places provided by Statistics Canada for each province or territory.

The Provision of Local Services

The provision of services to unincorporated communities varies primarily based on whether the government responsible for municipalities utilizes a single-tier or two-tier municipal system. In a single-tier system, the responsibility for local services in unincorporated communities usually rests with the provincial or territorial government or is managed through ad-hoc arrangements, often coordinated by the residents. This is the default arrangement unless otherwise specified. On the other hand, in a two-tier system

⁵ For the list of designated place types by province and territory, see Statistics Canada, “Table 1.6 Designated place types by province and territory, 2021 Census,” updated February 9, 2022, accessed June 25, 2023, https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/dict/tab/index-eng.cfm?ID=T1_6.

with two layers of local government, the upper-tier municipality is typically responsible for service provision, unless otherwise specified. In cases where smaller unincorporated communities fall within the boundaries of a larger municipality, they may be absorbed into the larger governing structure, such as a regional district (as seen in British Columbia) (Noga, 2021). However, these absorptions are primarily for logistical and administrative purposes and do not confer legal incorporation upon the absorbed communities.

Due to significant variations in the local governance systems of unincorporated communities across the country, exceptions are common. It is, therefore, crucial to exercise caution when comparing service provision in unincorporated communities across jurisdictions. Moreover, given this level of inconsistency, reform is a recurring topic, particularly in provinces with a two-tier system. Discussions revolve around developing approaches to simplify and systematize the provision of services to unincorporated communities.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

In addition to municipal corporations and unincorporated communities, Indigenous forms of governance also play a direct role in local matters in Canada. When discussing Indigenous governance, it is essential to differentiate between traditional systems of government and the apparatus of the Canadian settler state⁶. The sovereignty and title of Indigenous nations, predating Canada's claim to sovereignty and the concept of Canada itself, continue to exist today under Canadian, international, and Indigenous law (Ladner, 2001). However, the complexity of this subject extends beyond the scope of this report and the expertise of the authors. Therefore, this report focuses exclusively on forms of Indigenous government within the settler state, rather than beyond it.

⁶ The settler state refers to the Canadian state created by colonial settlers, which constitutes an alien sovereignty imposed on areas that were already under the sovereignty and title of various Indigenous nations and peoples. Please see Adam J. Barker, "The Contemporary Reality of Canadian Imperialism: Settler Colonialism and the Hybrid Colonial State," *American Indian Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (2009), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40388468>.

Indigenous governance finds its historical origins in treaties that were signed between Canada or Britain and pre-colonial sovereign Indigenous nations. However, in the present context, these governing structures are fully incorporated within the colonial system of the settler state. Despite being primarily limited by legislation to local matters, they should not be classified as a form of municipality. As per the Constitution of Canada, both municipalities and reserves are recognized as local entities within the settler state. However, there is a distinct division of authority: provincial governments possess exclusive jurisdiction over municipal affairs, while Indigenous relations fall under the sole purview of the federal government. Indigenous governments predominantly derive their powers through delegation or assignment by the federal government, which effectively places them under federal jurisdiction. This is because federal law or bilateral agreements with the federal government determine crucial aspects such as their powers, boundaries, and other relevant considerations.

Reserves under the *Indian Act*

The *Indian Act*, a piece of federally imposed legislation, plays a crucial role in the governance of Indigenous communities, outlining the structure of governments on reserves and the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the federal government.

The *Indian Act*, first passed in 1876 and most recently amended in 2019, bestowed upon the federal government extensive authority to exert control over various aspects of Indigenous life on reserves. This Act was designed with the explicit aim of eradicating Indigenous culture and traditional practices, while forcibly assimilating Indigenous individuals into Euro-Canadian society. Throughout Canadian history, the *Indian Act* has facilitated the implementation of numerous discriminatory policies that continue to have profound and enduring impacts on Indigenous communities. Examples of such policies include the pass system, which imposed restrictions on the mobility of Status Indians by requiring written permission to leave reserves, as well as the compulsory attendance of Indigenous children at residential schools. The consequences of these policies, among many others enabled by

the *Indian Act*, have been devastating for Indigenous communities, and their effects persist to this day.

During the earlier years, the execution of the *Indian Act* and the management of daily affairs on reserves fell under the purview of Indian agents, who were non-Indigenous federal employees. Presently, the position of Indian agent no longer exists. However, the *Indian Act*, following significant amendments resulting from consultations with Indigenous groups in 1951, 1985, 2011, 2017, and 2019, continues to serve as the legislative framework governing reserves.

Under the *Indian Act*, traditional forms of government were replaced by elected councils. These councils comprise a chief and one councillor for every 100 people, with a minimum of 2 councillors (First Nations and Indigenous Studies: University of British Columbia, 2009). Initially, Indigenous women were not permitted to vote or hold office in these elections until 1951 when Elsie Knott became the first woman elected as a First Nations chief. Unlike municipalities, whose power is delegated by the provincial or territorial government, the power of a band council is delegated by the federal government. The Act does not recognize Hereditary Chiefs, a term referring to chiefs chosen through traditional methods without necessarily implying an inherited or familial line of succession.

It is important to note that while reserves handle local affairs and may engage in service-sharing agreements with settler municipal governments, they are distinct from municipalities and operate under an entirely different legislative and constitutional framework. Reserves hold a much broader significance than the provision of local government services as they serve as physical, cultural, and spiritual homes for their communities. Despite being designed as colonial tools of isolation and assimilation, reserves have, in some cases, become sites of solidarity, mutual protection, and cultural preservation for Indigenous communities (Hanson, 2009).

Box 5. The History of Indian Reserves

Prior to the 19th century, the control of the land that would become Canada was not a primary concern for Europeans. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 officially recognized the sovereignty of Indigenous nations, and a series of nation-to-nation treaties guaranteed Indigenous groups the right to their land. Instead, their primary focus was on the fur trade, where European-manufactured goods were exchanged with Indigenous traders for furs and meat. This era witnessed a “more or less equal and mutually beneficial interaction between Indigenous people in Canada and their European counterparts.” It is important to note that this does not imply that the history of violent colonialism did not commence until the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, during this period, most Indigenous nations retained complete sovereignty over their ancestral lands, with European presence primarily limited to trading posts. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 played a significant role in recognizing the sovereignty of Indigenous nations. Moreover, a series of nation-to-nation treaties further guaranteed various Indigenous groups the right to their land, emphasizing the perpetuity of this entitlement “as long as the sun shines, the river flows, and the grass grows.”

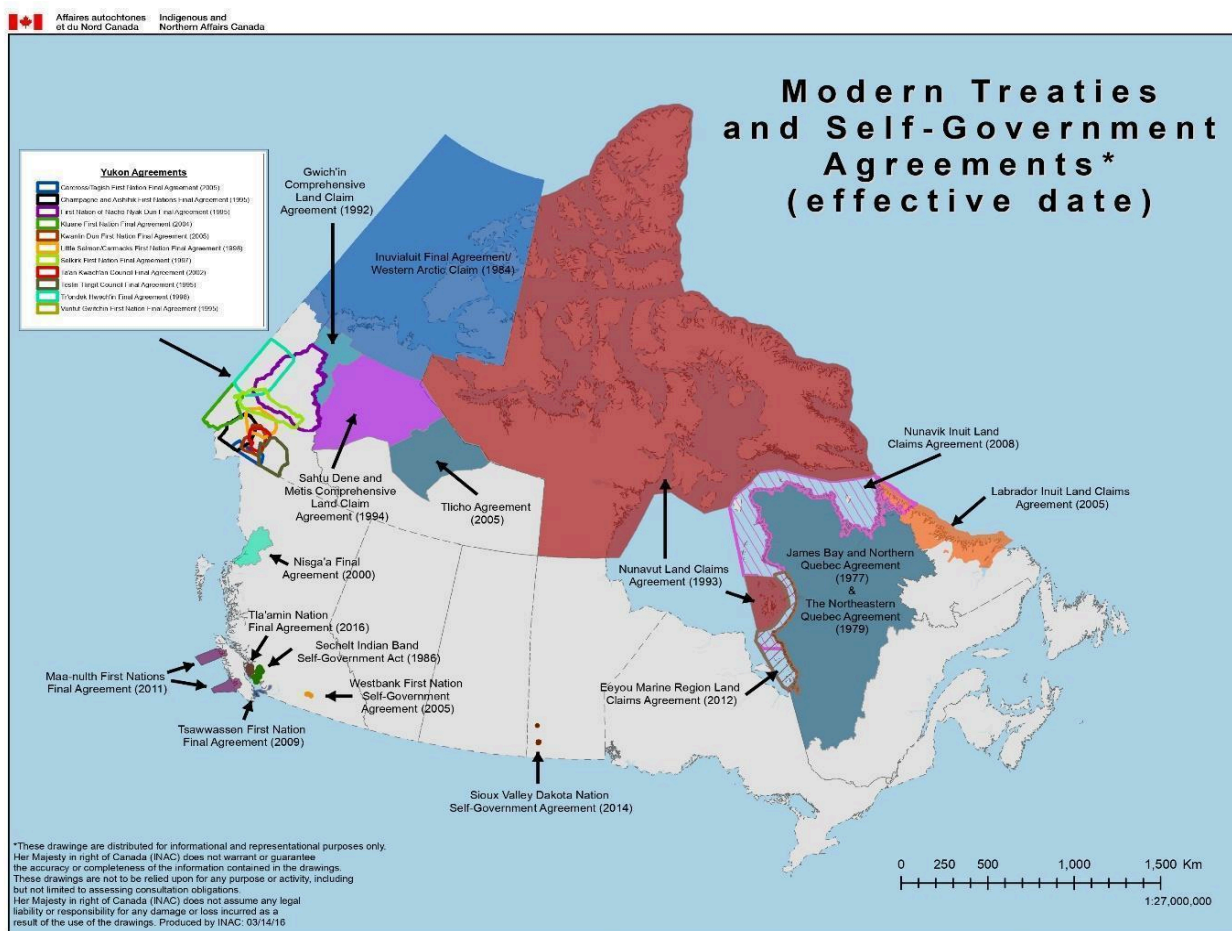
However, these promises were not upheld for long. European colonization accelerated in the mid-1800s, particularly with the decline of the fur trade. Policies implemented by Sir John A. Macdonald aimed to dispossess Indigenous lands for European settlement. 11 Numbered Treaties, signed between 1871 and 1921, transferred vast areas of land (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Northern Ontario, and parts of the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and British Columbia) to the Crown. These treaties employed confusing and deceptive language—with large inconsistencies between the verbal agreements and written treaties—intended to disadvantage Indigenous nations. They were a marked departure from the previous nation-to-nation treaties.

These numbered treaties also established Indian Reserves, which are areas of land held by the Crown for the use of an Indigenous group (legally, an “Indian band,” and usually a First Nation rather than an Inuit or Métis community). While they were not the first reserves to

be established in Canada, but the reserve system as we understand it today was enabled by the Numbered Treaties and is administered by the *Indian Act*, signed in 1876.

Indigenous Self-governing Bodies

Efforts to redefine the relationship between Indigenous groups and Canada have also resulted in the establishment of self-governing bodies. The Government of Canada is partnering with Indigenous peoples to support their rebuilding and reconstitution of nations, advance self-determination, and transition away from the Indian Act toward self-government (Government of Canada, 2020). Currently, 43 Indigenous communities have signed 25 self-government agreements across Canada.



These self-governing bodies, as well as other Indigenous local governments, deal with local issues. However, it would be incorrect to classify Indigenous governments, whether in the form of reserves or self-governing bodies resulting from land claims, as a quasi-municipal fourth order of government. In reality, this type of delegated self-government has faced extensive criticism from Indigenous scholars, who highlight its departure from the original nation-to-nation model of Crown relations with Indigenous nations. For instance, one criticism raised against such agreements is that the resulting governing bodies may be treated by the state as if they were merely another type of municipality, rather than fostering a genuine nation-to-nation relationship (Cardinal, 1969; Ladner, 2001). While it is true that some self-governing bodies, alongside other examples of Indigenous local governments, share certain similarities with municipal governments due to their focus on geographically local issues, this report makes a deliberate effort to differentiate them more clearly from reserves and municipal governments. This report examines the similarities and differences these governing structures possess.

Specifically, this report focuses on specific Indigenous governance structures such as Inuit Community Governments (Newfoundland and Labrador), Northern, Cree, and Naskapi Villages (Québec), Metis Settlements (Alberta), and Charter Communities and the Tłıchǫ Community Governments (Northwest Territories). These examples demonstrate the complexity of Indigenous governance within the colonial framework of the settler state. While these governments handle local affairs, they are not municipal governments. It is also important to acknowledge that none of the authors of this report are Indigenous. We, therefore, highly welcome feedback, comments, and criticisms from Indigenous individuals to ensure the accuracy and inclusivity of our findings.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN FLEX

While the previous sections have delved into three primary forms of local governance in operation within Canada, the reality of local governance across the country is, in fact,

much more complex. Thus far, there has been limited room for contemplating the broader issues intertwined with this subject matter. This section aims to provide a reflective exploration of some of the intricate issues interwoven into local governance to foster a more comprehensive understanding. Our analysis will focus on four distinct arrangements of governance at the local level: the evolving influence of municipal incorporation in the global context, the opportunities and necessities arising from municipal relations with other levels of government, the significance of cities incorporated under multiple jurisdictions and governed by city charters, and lastly, the electoral dynamics and party politics at the local level.

The Evolution of Municipal Power in the Global Context

Municipalities or incorporated communities in Canada exhibit variations across provinces and territories concerning the powers delegated to them through municipal incorporation legislation. Generally, all municipal powers were explicitly listed in legislation, with anything not explicitly mentioned falling outside the jurisdiction of local governments (City Solicitor, City of Toronto, 2001).

However, the powers of these municipalities have undergone historical evolution. One significant change that has occurred in recent decades is the introduction of natural-person powers. This refers to the ability of municipalities to enter into contracts, borrow and repay money, and engage in similar activities. Previously, municipalities in Canada did not possess these powers unless specifically granted through an existing city charter that superseded relevant municipal incorporation legislation. The province of Alberta was the first to reform its incorporation legislation, granting default natural-person powers to incorporated municipalities (Government of Alberta, n.d.). Since then, other jurisdictions, including British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and the Yukon, have also granted municipalities these powers (Taylor & Dobson, 2021). Notably, cities like Winnipeg and Saint John possess natural-person powers due to their older charters, while other municipalities within the same jurisdictions do not. Even among the named provinces and territories, not all municipalities necessarily acquire these powers, and their

implementation and operation can vary. The process by which municipalities obtain their powers contributes to the unpredictability and diversity of the powers they possess.

The global experience regarding the evolution of municipal power showcases even greater diversity. Many American states allow or even require the use of city charters, which determine the powers and responsibilities of major cities in the United States (Ballotpedia, n.d.). In contrast, Dhaka, a massive global city in Bangladesh, has its powers defined by an Act of the national parliament, as the country operates under a unitary system – that is, with a single central government – rather than a federal one (Commonwealth Local Government Forum, 2018). Dhaka is incorporated twice, once for the northern portion of the city and once for the southern. The separation of jurisdictions took place in 2011 through a modification of the former Dhaka City Corporation, which was formally established by statute in 1983. Mayoral elections are now conducted based on this administrative division (Dhaka North City Corporation, 2022).

Box 6. Local Governance in Dhaka, Bangladesh

As a city corporation, Dhaka has jurisdiction over and is responsible for:

- Water, sanitation and drainage
- Refuse collection and disposal
- Births, deaths and marriages registration
- Public health, hospitals, health centres and medical aid
- Bathing places, dhobi ghats
- Fisheries, milk processing and markets
- Slaughterhouses, animal husbandry, stray animals, farms
- Building control and regulation, development plans and community development projects
- Public streets and traffic control
- Civil defence, flood, and fire services
- Burial and burning places
- Arboriculture, gardens, open spaces and forests
- Education and libraries
- Culture, fairs and shows
- Social welfare

Compared to the largest cities in Canada, Dhaka holds significantly more power in certain areas. Notably, responsibilities such as hospitals, healthcare, birth, marriage, death registration, and education fall under the jurisdiction of Dhaka city corporations, whereas in Canada, they are provincial responsibilities. Other powers, such as those related to fisheries and certain aspects of agriculture, are held by the federal government in Canada. This highlights that the city is an additional level of constitutionally ordained government in Canada, where provinces can choose to delegate such powers to municipalities.

Intergovernmental Relations

The ability of a city or municipality to engage in negotiations with different levels of government is contingent upon the constitution of the country in which it is situated. In unitary countries that lack a federal system, local governments primarily interact with the national government, which may delegate certain powers and responsibilities to specific municipalities. Conversely, in federations such as Canada and the United States, where constitutional responsibilities are divided among multiple levels of government, the allocation of responsibilities to municipalities depends on the specific constitutional arrangements of each country. However, it is most common for sub-federal governments, such as provincial or territorial governments in Canada, to assume these responsibilities.

In Canada, municipalities fall under the jurisdiction of the provinces, and as a result, they typically do not engage in direct interactions with the federal government. Nevertheless, the constitution does not entirely prohibit such interactions. The federal government often participates in trilateral agreements with provinces and municipalities to support major projects, such as infrastructure development, that require funding beyond what local governments can easily provide. In recent years, the federal government has extended funding to municipalities for infrastructure costs, pandemic economic recovery, and public transit systems (Prime Minister of Canada, 2019).

Canadian municipalities also possess the authority to engage in direct negotiations with one another and with First Nations Reserves. This can lead to the establishment of inter-municipal collaboration agreements, in which municipalities agree to share the responsibility of providing certain services. In certain cases, municipalities are even required to collaborate as part of a regional governance structure, as exemplified by the agglomeration councils in Québec. Provinces, territories, and regions across Canada have federations or associations that represent the collective interests of municipal governments, with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities serving as the national representative body.

Box 7. Intergovernmental Relations Case Study: The City of Lloydminster

Let us consider the exceptional case of the City of Lloydminster, which presents a unique situation in terms of intergovernmental relations. It is a city incorporated in Alberta. It is also a city incorporated in Saskatchewan. They're not twins, they're the same city, which straddles the border of the two provinces. This geographical arrangement poses significant challenges when it comes to establishing a coherent governance system, given the differing municipal systems of the two provinces.

The City of Lloydminster stands as an outlier, exempt from the standard municipal legislation of its home provinces. Instead, it operates under a power-sharing agreement known as the Lloydminster Charter, which clarifies the allocation of responsibilities between the two jurisdictions. Without this charter, each province would have complete legal jurisdiction over its respective half of the city, resulting in a fragmented and complex governance structure. The Lloydminster Charter, enacted as the *City of Lloydminster Act* in Alberta and *The City of Lloydminster Act* in Saskatchewan, addresses these challenges by harmonizing the application of Alberta and Saskatchewan law within the city.

According to the provisions of the Lloydminster Charter, each province has specific legislative jurisdictions that apply throughout the entire city. The city charter grants priority to Alberta legislation concerning pest control and emergency management, while

Saskatchewan law prevails in matters related to public health, residential services, and water infrastructure. Furthermore, Saskatchewan's legislation governing local elections applies across the entirety of Lloydminster. Since Alberta does not impose a sales tax, businesses located on the Saskatchewan side of Lloydminster are exempt from Saskatchewan's sales tax to ensure competitive parity.

Other urban communities facing similar, albeit not identical, situations include Ottawa-Gatineau and the City of Flin Flon in Manitoba. Ottawa and Gatineau are separate cities located in different provinces, situated adjacent to each other along the provincial border. Ontario law applies in Ottawa, while Québec law applies in Gatineau. This division aligns with the natural territorial separation created by the river that runs between the provinces in this area. On the other hand, the City of Flin Flon is primarily located in Manitoba, with a small portion extending across the provincial border into Saskatchewan. This area, known as the Flin Flon Boundary Area, is considered part of the Manitoba city and operates under Manitoba law. However, the Saskatchewan government provides some funding for residents in this area. Nevertheless, neither of these situations matches the unique legal and jurisdictional framework observed in Lloydminster.

City Charters in Population Centers

Although municipalities are often perceived as subordinate to larger governments worldwide, this perception can be misleading. In some cases, cities possess founding documents such as city charters or incorporation legislation that predate the establishment of the countries which they exist in. Similarly, in Canada, while municipalities are considered “creatures of the provinces,” governed by legislation that outlines powers, responsibilities, and governing structures applicable to most municipalities within a province or territory, larger cities often have their own specific legislation. This legislation grants them additional autonomy that the province has devolved to address specific challenges not adequately covered by the standard municipal legislative framework. These city-specific pieces of legislation are commonly referred to as “city charters.”

It is important to note that the level of government with jurisdiction over municipalities (in Canada, the provinces) cannot unilaterally amend a city charter. Amendments to a city charter require negotiation and agreement between the provincial government and the city's government, similar to how changes to the division of powers and responsibilities in a federal system require mutual consent. This arrangement grants cities a level of autonomy beyond that of regular municipalities and ensures stability, as the powers outlined in the city charter cannot be unilaterally changed. In some cases, this is because the city's charter predates the constitutional documents that granted the higher level of government jurisdiction over municipalities, and this arrangement was preserved when the country's constitution was drafted.

In Canada, there are five true charter cities: Saint John, Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Lloydminster (Kitchen, 2016). However, not all large cities in Canada possess city charters, and only a few have special legislation that delineates their powers and responsibilities.

Ideally, a city charter empowers the city's government to address these challenges without constantly seeking permission and funding from the constitutionally ordained level of government. In some cases, a city charter may even grant constitutional recognition to the city. However, the focus of the political discourse surrounding city charters often revolves around the perceived financial autonomy—with revenue tools and spending capacity—they can grant municipalities (although this autonomy varies in practice from charter to charter; Kitchen, 2016). This can include the granting of natural-person powers in cities where the relevant provincial or territorial government has not conferred such powers to municipalities in general (City Solicitor of Toronto, 2001). The financial autonomy is deemed necessary to address the substantial costs associated with infrastructure projects such as transit systems or environmental remediation in major cities. In essence, large cities face significant challenges that require substantial resources and tools to tackle effectively.

In a global context, city charters are more prevalent in the United States compared to Canada. 45 out of the 50 American states allow for some form of charter municipalities, with variations in establishing population thresholds and the ability for all incorporated municipalities to have a charter (Ballotpedia, n.d.). In contrast, in the United Kingdom, while some cities in Northern Ireland are established by royal charter, the designation of “city” by charter or other means holds no special legal significance and is purely aesthetic (Beckett, 2017).

Local Political Parties – Vancouver and Montreal

In the realm of Canadian municipal politics, non-partisan governments typically dominate. However, the cities of Vancouver and Montreal stand as exceptions, as they have political parties operating at the municipal level. The reasons behind the emergence of municipal political parties in these two major cities are primarily speculative, likely influenced by historical contingencies and a trickle-down effect from the politicization observed at the federal and provincial levels of government.

Throughout Vancouver’s history, the Non-Partisan Association (NPA) has held significant political sway. Formed in 1937, the NPA sought to unite liberals and conservatives within a “free enterprise coalition.” Initially, the group aimed to strike a balance between political perspectives while avoiding the semblance of a traditional party. Another notable municipal party is the Committee of Progressive Electors (COPE), which emerged in 1968 and received sponsorship from the Vancouver and District Labour Council. COPE aimed to unite various left-wing factions within civic politics (Miller, 1975).

In the most recent mayoral election in Vancouver, a total of 21 candidates participated. Fifteen candidates ran independently, while the remaining five represented the following parties: YES Vancouver, ProVancouver, IDEA Vancouver, VANCOUVER 1st, NPA, and Coalition Vancouver. Additionally, several municipal parties contested for positions on the

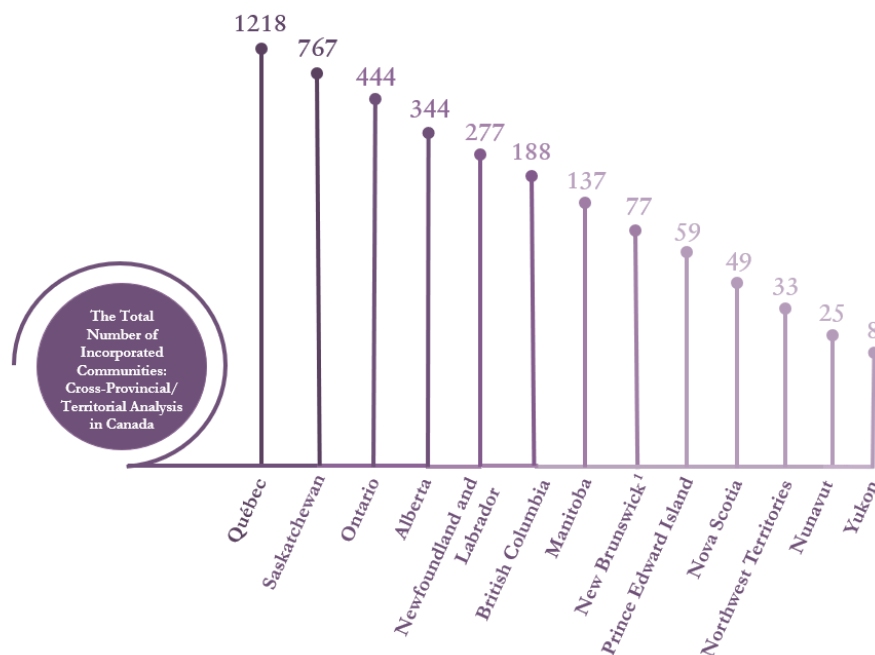
municipal council, including OneCity, Vision Vancouver, GREEN, and COPE, although they did not field a mayoral candidate (City of Vancouver, 2018).

According to Elections Québec (n.d.), there are currently 14 active political parties in Montreal. Among them, Projet Montréal, authorized in 2004, holds the distinction of being the oldest. Notably, Valérie Plante, the current mayor of Montreal, also serves as the leader of the Projet Montréal party.

THE NATIONAL PICTURE: COMPARING LOCAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES ACROSS PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

The previous section offers a brief overview of the three major local governance models operating in Canada. However, it is important to recognize that while these models offer a general framework for local governance, each province and territory in the country has its own unique local governance structures and systems. Building upon this understanding, this section aims to offer a comparative analysis of local governance structures across provinces and territories. By examining the similarities and differences among these systems, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the diverse approaches to local governance within Canada. In the following section, we will delve into the details of these varied local governance models within each province and territory, unraveling the intricacies that shape their governance landscapes.

Provinces and Territories Vary in the Total Number of Incorporated Communities



¹ Note: With the implementation of the new local governance reform in January 2023, New Brunswick underwent a transformational process in which the preexisting incorporated communities were replaced by local governments.

The comparison of the total number of incorporated communities reveals considerable variation across different provinces and territories. Québec stands out with the highest count of 1218 incorporated communities, demonstrating its robust local governance and administrative landscape (Gouvernement du Québec, n.d.). Saskatchewan follows closely with 767 incorporated communities, signifying a substantial presence of local municipalities (Government of Saskatchewan, n.d.). Ontario and Manitoba also exhibit notable numbers of incorporated communities, with values of 444 and 137 respectively, reflecting their active local governance structures (Government of Ontario, n.d.). In contrast, the territories of Yukon, Nunavut, and Northwest Territories have a relatively lower count of incorporated communities, with values of 8, 25, and 33 respectively (Government of Yukon, 2023; Government of Nunavut, n.d.; Government of Northwest Territories, n.d.). This discrepancy emphasizes the unique characteristics and dynamics of local governance across Canadian provinces and territories.

Disparate Classification of Incorporated Municipalities Exist Across Provinces and Territories



The local governance structures of Canada also unveil a discernible pattern in the classification of municipalities across different provinces and territories. Québec and British Columbia exhibit the highest degree of diversity in municipal classifications, with 11 municipalities falling under distinct categories in each province. Alberta and Saskatchewan also demonstrate a significant level of variety, both featuring 9 different classifications (Alberta Ministry of Municipal Affairs, n.d.; Government of Saskatchewan, n.d.). Conversely, regions such as Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, and New Brunswick display a more moderate range of classifications, spanning from 3 to 5. Yukon and Nunavut have the fewest classifications, with only 2 municipalities falling into distinct categories in each territory (Government of Nunavut, n.d.).

Adding to the complexity is the fact that incorporated communities in Canada may bear different names and definitions based on the governing Acts in each province. These Acts stipulate the incorporation of various types of municipalities, with each province

employing distinct criteria to determine the municipality's classification. Common standards often revolve around factors like population size, tax base, geographical location, and other regional considerations. However, in some cases, these classifications do not necessarily imply variations in population size or governance structure.

A Case Study of the Classification of Incorporated Municipalities: The Urban-Rural Divide

The prevailing body of literature on local governance primarily focuses on major urban centers, including Toronto, Montreal, and Québec in the Canadian context. However, urban municipalities encompass not only cities and towns but also villages with as few as 250 residents.

What Counts as “Urban Municipalities”?

The classification of urban municipalities exhibits a wide range of variation across the country, and in some cases, the distinction between the terms used holds little more than aesthetic value without legal implications for the treatment or powers bestowed upon the municipalities. Rather than getting lost in these complexities, it is essential to identify commonalities among these municipalities across provinces and territories. One can start by considering the different thresholds such as population size, economic indicators, tax base size, or even the absence of formal qualifications that determine the categorization of a municipality as a “village,” “town,” or “city” (if such distinctions are employed).

The most commonly employed criterion is the total population, with Manitoba being the sole province to consider population density alongside it. Interestingly, Alberta utilizes the average size of land parcels for development as a potential proxy for density. In cases where the classification of a municipality affects governance and service delivery, a focus on density becomes pertinent.

Regarding economic activity, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut set thresholds for the size of the tax base. However, while the first three provinces use this criterion to differentiate between different sizes of municipalities, Nunavut simply utilizes a single tax base threshold as the sole criterion for incorporation as a city. Additionally, Saskatchewan also employs a minimum threshold for the number of business or residential premises, which is not observed in other jurisdictions.

Québec, unlike most other provinces, does not have a legislated distinction between cities and towns. Thus, if these terms are merely aesthetic or artifacts of historical contingency, it becomes impractical to base the threshold for transitioning a municipality from one classification to another on any material consideration. Consequently, Québec does not set thresholds based on the mentioned criteria.

Ontario does differentiate between various types of urban municipalities but does not establish quantitative thresholds for transitioning between them. The distinction lies qualitatively in the governance structures of single-tier and two-tier municipalities. Although Québec also has multi-tier municipal structures, they function differently from Ontario's system, sometimes incorporating more localized governance within larger urban centers and at other times emulating former, larger municipalities in cases where the province has disaggregated municipalities through a process inverse to the municipal amalgamation pursued by successive Ontario governments.

What Counts as "Rural Municipalities"?

The classification of rural municipalities is also contingent upon the specific region and may vary across the country. In some jurisdictions, it represents an official type of municipality with a specific definition, while in others, it serves as a descriptive term for municipalities that stand in contrast to urban areas. The legislative framework for rural municipalities (and municipalities in general) in some western provinces derives, in part,

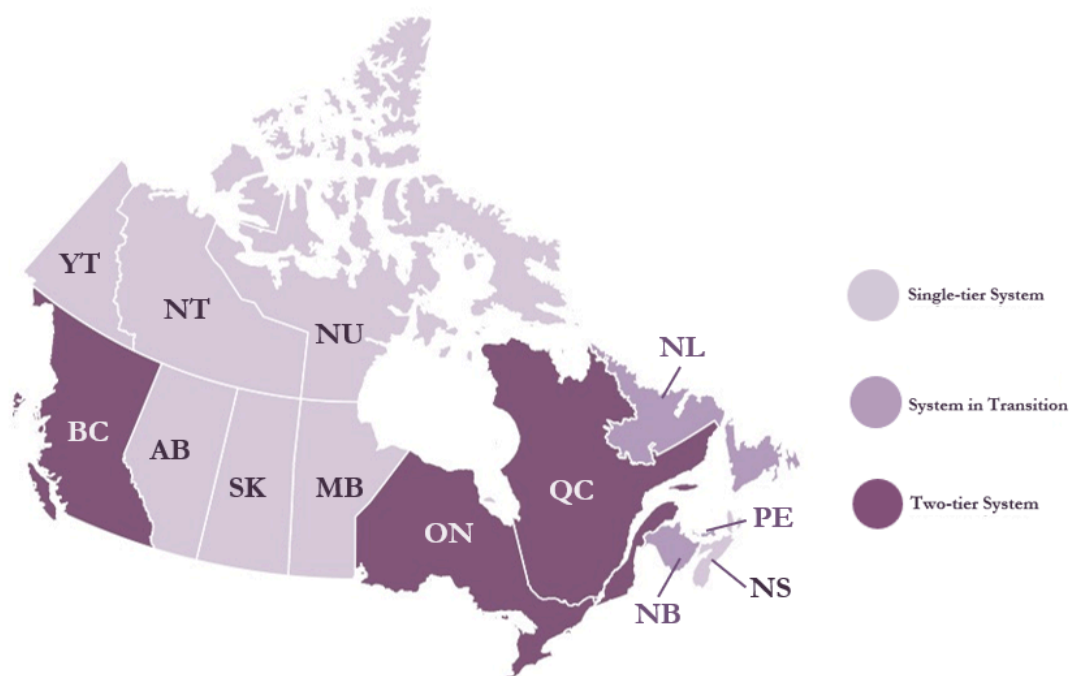
from the local government provisions in the Northwest Territories that were in place shortly following Confederation (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, n.d.).

However, rural (and regional) municipalities do not encompass the entirety of rural local governance. In Canada, rural governance takes on various forms, including special classifications of incorporated municipalities such as seasonal municipalities/villages in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Prince Edward Island, as well as remote municipalities like Québec's and Saskatchewan's northern villages. These classifications and institutions are responses to the unique challenges faced in rural governance, which often stem from dispersed and sparse populations that nevertheless require services. Delivering these services effectively and efficiently becomes more challenging in less densely populated areas.

Depending on the type of municipality, adherence to a province-wide (or regional) template for the structure of government may be required, with only larger cities or outliers deviating from this standard. While this institutional symmetry offers advantages in terms of simplicity, it necessitates careful consideration to ensure that legislation remains flexible enough to accommodate communities of similar sizes but with varying needs and classifications. In recent years, provinces and territories have shifted their focus to increase the autonomy and capacity of municipalities as a means to address the longstanding issue of one-size-fits-all provincial policies for local matters and the ongoing need for capacity-building at the local level (Martin, Paget, & Walisser, 2012; Young, 2007).

Different Municipal Systems are in Use across Provinces and Territories

Different Municipal Systems in Canadian Provinces and Territories

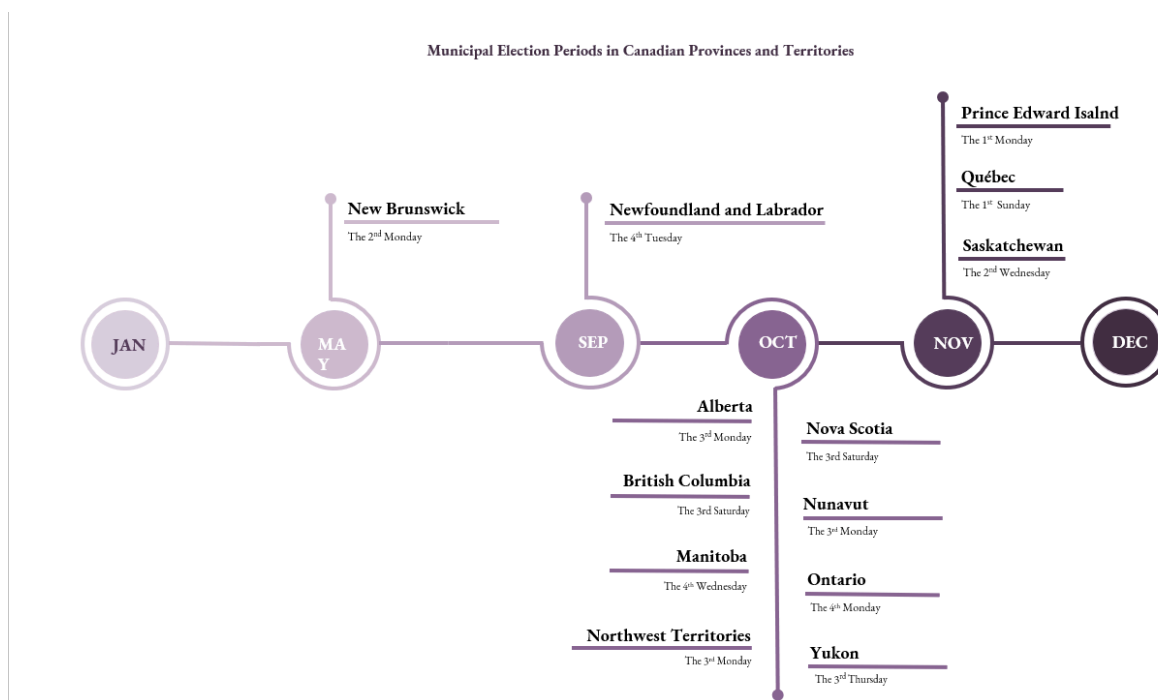


Note: New Brunswick commenced its local governance reform in January 2021 and successfully implemented the new local governance structures in January 2023.

The landscape of local governance structures in Canada reveals a distinct array of municipal systems operating across different regions. The majority of provinces and territories, such as Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, employ a single-tier municipal system. In contrast, three provinces exhibit a comprehensive or partial two-tier system: British Columbia employs a fully integrated two-tier system, Ontario utilizes a combination of single- and two-tier systems depending on geographical location, and Québec operates a complex system with both local and supralocal levels of government. Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island are currently undergoing reform within their municipal systems, as discussed in the previous section, illustrating the diverse approaches to local governance and the provision of services to their respective communities. New Brunswick commenced

its local governance reform in January 2021 and successfully implemented the new local governance structures in January 2023.

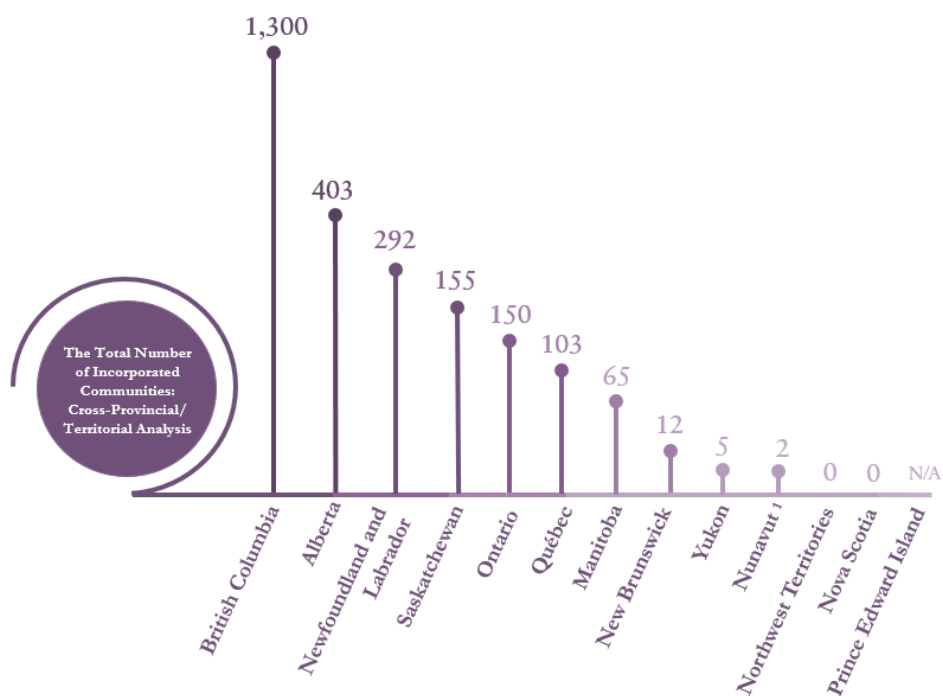
Provinces and Territories Adopt Varying Municipal Election Periods



At the local level, each province and territory in Canada operates under its own election Acts, leading to variations in the timing of municipal elections. Notably, it becomes evident that there is no uniform pattern or standardized timing for these elections nationwide. While the municipal election across all provinces and territories in Canada typically occurs every four years, the busiest months for municipal elections tend to be September, October, and November. During these three months, 11 out of 13 provinces and territories hold their elections. However, there are exceptions to this general trend. For instance, New Brunswick holds its local government elections on the second Monday of May, making it one of the earliest provinces to conduct such elections. In Newfoundland and Labrador, municipal elections take place on the fourth Tuesday of September.

Additionally, it is important to highlight other certain exceptions and peculiarities. In Saskatchewan, election dates differ for urban, rural, and resort municipalities. Urban municipalities hold general elections every four years on the second Wednesday of November. Resort villages, on the other hand, conduct general elections every four years but on a different day—the last Saturday of July. Rural municipalities in Saskatchewan hold elections every two years, with the election of councillors in even- and odd-numbered divisions alternating, each serving a four-year term. Similarly, in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, municipal elections for hamlets occur on different dates compared to general elections for municipalities. Moreover, charter communities and settlement corporations determine their general election day based on the community charter or the order establishing the settlement corporation. This decentralized approach allows for flexibility and acknowledges the need for specific attention and analysis when conducting municipal elections in each province or territory.

Provinces and Territories Vary in the Total Number of Unincorporated Communities

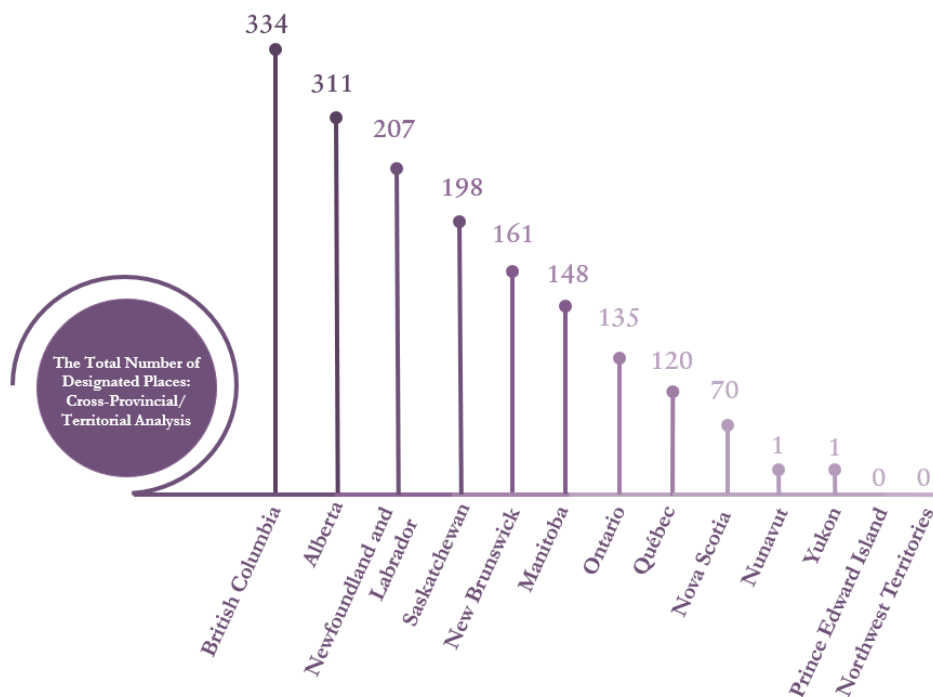


¹ Note: Due to the local governance reform in 2023, New Brunswick has created 12 Rural Districts encompassing the unincorporated areas that lie beyond the territorial boundaries of local governments

In addition to the diversity observed in the counts of incorporated communities, Canadian provinces and territories also exhibit distinct patterns in the number of unincorporated communities. Unincorporated communities lack formal municipal status and operate outside the realm of municipal incorporation. Nova Scotia and Northwest Territories stand out with no recorded unincorporated communities, indicating a higher prevalence of municipal incorporation in these areas. Conversely, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Yukon, Nunavut, Québec, Ontario, British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador all have noteworthy numbers of unincorporated communities. Notably, British Columbia leads the way with an impressive count of 1,300 unincorporated communities, signifying a significant presence within the province. This pattern underscores the diversity of governance structures and administrative divisions across regions, showcasing the range of local development and organization beyond formal municipal incorporation.

However, it is crucial to exercise caution when comparing unincorporated communities across provinces due to variations in definitions, classifications, and treatment by different

government units. Each provincial or territorial government establishes its own definitions in alignment with its official responsibilities. Therefore, when analyzing the impact of unincorporated communities on local governance in different provinces and territories, it is essential to approach such comparisons with care, acknowledging the variations in definition and the potential influence on local governance structures.



Similarly, our comparison of designated places, as reported by Statistics Canada (2021), affirms this diversity. The concept of designated places was introduced in 1996 by Statistics Canada to address the growing need for population counts and census data regarding sub-municipal or unincorporated areas. While this terminology may encompass unincorporated areas within provinces and territories, it may differ from the definitions employed at the individual provincial or territorial level. British Columbia exhibits the highest count of designated places with 334, followed by Alberta with 311. Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick (in 2021) also demonstrate a significant number of designated places, with counts of 207, 198 and 161, respectively. In contrast, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Québec have comparatively lower counts of

designated places, ranging from 70 to 148. There are no reported designated places in Prince Edward Island and the Northwest Territories. The variations in the number of designated places reflect the diverse geographical and population characteristics of each region, highlighting the distinct local governance models across Canada.

THE SUB-NATIONAL PICTURE: LOCAL GOVERNANCE MODELS WITHIN PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

The types and structures of local governance exhibit considerable variation from province to province within Canada. A consistent country-wide governance pattern is absent, indicating the absence of a unified system. The subsequent section delves into a comprehensive examination of the local governance models in each province and territory, organized in geographical order for clarity and coherence.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (NL)

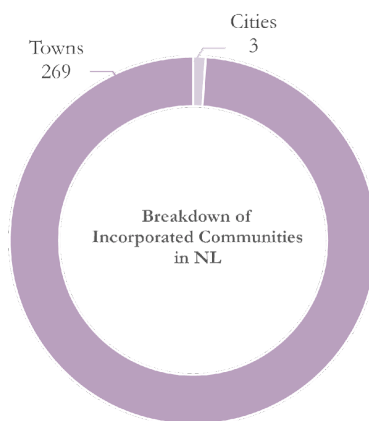


In the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the main structures of local governance encompass a total of 272 incorporated communities and 292 unincorporated communities, as identified by the provincial government (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2022). Additionally, there are 5 Indigenous/Inuit Community Governments within the province.

Incorporated Communities

The administration of incorporated communities or municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador falls under the jurisdiction of the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Provincial and Municipal Affairs.

Classification. There are two types of incorporated communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, namely cities and towns, each governed by specific incorporation Acts.



- **City (3):** The province currently has three cities, namely Corner Brook, Mount Pearl, and St. John's. Each of them is operating under its respective city-level Act: *The City of Corner Brook Act (1990)*, *The City of Mount Pearl Act (1990)*, and *The City of St. John's Act (1990)*.
- **Town (269):** The province has 269 towns that operate under the *Municipalities Act (1999)*. Unless a municipality is specifically incorporated under a city act, it is considered a town.

Governance. The governance structure of incorporated communities follows a common pattern. The head of a city council is always referred to as the mayor and is elected at large. Cities have the option to establish electoral districts called wards. In cities with wards, each

councillor, excluding the mayor, is elected by and represents the residents of their respective ward. In the absence of wards, councillors are elected at large.

Currently, the cities of Corner Brook and Mount Pearl do not have wards, while the City of St. John's has five wards, with each ward represented by one councillor, in addition to four councillors and a deputy mayor elected at large.

Similarly, the head of a town council is known as the mayor and is also elected at large. Towns may establish wards through bylaws or upon incorporation. In towns with wards, councillors, except the mayor, are elected by and represent the residents of their respective ward. In the absence of wards, councillors are elected at large.

Elections. Municipal elections in Newfoundland and Labrador are governed by the *Municipal Elections Act* (1999) of the province. Since 2001, general municipal elections have been held on the last Tuesday in September every four years. The responsibility for administering these elections lies with the individual municipalities, with support from Elections Newfoundland and Labrador. In municipalities with wards, each ward corresponds to a different electoral district.

It is important to note that Newfoundland and Labrador does not recognize any municipal political parties. Municipal elections and councils operate on a non-partisan basis, promoting a focus on local issues rather than partisan affiliations.

Eligibility to Vote in a Municipal Election in Newfoundland and Labrador:

Eligibility Criteria	Voting in Municipal Elections
Canadian Citizenship	Must be a Canadian citizen
Age	Must be 18 years of age or older
Residency	Must have been a resident of the municipality or ward for at least 30 days immediately prior to election day

Eligibility to Run for Municipal Office in Newfoundland and Labrador:

Eligibility Criteria	Running for Municipal Office
Eligibility	Must meet the eligibility criteria for voting
Taxes and Charges	Must not owe taxes or other charges payable to the municipality
Residency	Must be a resident in the municipality or in an area that is part of the municipality for a period of 30 days before the commencement of the nomination period

Unincorporated Communities

Classification. In Newfoundland and Labrador, unincorporated communities can be classified into two types. Residents in these areas are also responsible for financing and organizing essential local government services such as fire protection and waste management.



- *Local service district (172):* Local service districts are established to cater to the specific needs of communities or areas within a community or geographic zone. They are not considered incorporated municipalities. Currently, there are 172 local service districts in the province. These districts provide certain services to residents, but the responsibility for funding and managing local government services such as fire protection and waste management falls upon the residents themselves.
- *Unincorporated area (120):* Unincorporated areas refer to regions that are neither incorporated municipalities nor local service districts. In Newfoundland and Labrador, there are 120 such unincorporated areas. Residents in these areas are also responsible for financing and organizing essential local government services (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Local Service Districts, n.d.).

Data by Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada's Census Profile for 2021 recognizes 5 retired population centers and 202 designated places in its designated place category within the province. The designated place category (totalling 207) serves the purpose of providing data that includes unincorporated communities. It is worth noting that this definition differs from the earlier discussion on local service districts and unincorporated areas.

System in Transition. The governance system for unincorporated communities is currently undergoing a transition in Newfoundland and Labrador. In 2020, the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs (MAPA) established the Working Group on Regionalization. This group sought input from residents residing in the Local Service Districts and Unincorporated Communities to explore the potential implementation of a regional district system. The objective was to improve services for these unincorporated communities. After a year of deliberation, a decision was made to move forward and establish a form of regional governance in the province. This development aims to enhance access to essential services for residents in these areas (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, "Regionalization," n.d.).

Indigenous Communities

There are five Inuit Community Governments in Newfoundland and Labrador, specifically within Nunatsiavut, a region located in northern Labrador. These Inuit Community Governments are established as municipalities, and their boundaries are outlined in the *Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act* (2005).

History. Prior to confederation, all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador held equal status under the law regardless of their Indigenous identity. However, upon joining Canada in 1949, it was determined that the *Indian Act* would not be applicable to Indigenous peoples within the newly formed province. Instead, the provincial government took responsibility for its relationship with Indigenous residents (Heritage Newfoundland and Labrador, 2008).

In 1977, the Labrador Inuit Association filed a land claim with both the Newfoundland and Labrador and Canadian governments. Negotiations commenced in 1988 and concluded in 2004, resulting in the *Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act*. This trilateral self-government agreement between the province, federal government, and local Inuit is considered a modern treaty and is safeguarded under section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, “Labrador Inuit,” n.d.).

Governance. Under the governance of the Nunatsiavut Government, extensive powers are granted concerning resource management, healthcare, education, language, culture, and the justice system within the designated land claim area known as Nunatsiavut, which translates to “our beautiful land” in Inuktitut. Communities within Nunatsiavut are incorporated as Inuit Community Governments.

Significantly, these governments possess natural-person powers as stipulated in the agreement, affording them powers comparable to those of typical municipalities, including the ability to borrow money (Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement, 2004). The initial five Inuit Community Governments (Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville, and Rigolet) were effectively established by replacing five existing municipalities while preserving their respective bylaws, regulations, assets, and debts.

The leader of an Inuit Community Government Council is known as the AngajukKâk. In communities with fewer than 2000 residents, there are seven councillors, with five seats reserved for Inuit residents and two seats reserved for new (i.e., non-Inuit) residents. In communities with more than 2000 residents, there are nine councillors, with seven seats reserved for Inuit residents and two seats reserved for new residents (Labrador Inuit Constitution, 2005).

Elections. All adult residents, regardless of their claim to Inuit ancestry, are eligible to vote. However, only Inuit community members can vote or run for the seats reserved for Inuit residents, whereas only new residents can participate in the voting or candidacy for the

seats designated for new residents. All adult residents are eligible to vote for the AngajukKâk, but they themselves must be of Inuit heritage.

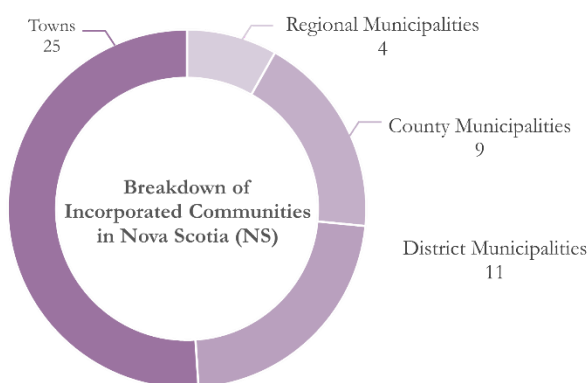
NOVA SCOTIA (NS)

In the province of Nova Scotia, the local governance system consists of 49 incorporated communities. However, no unincorporated communities have been identified by the government (Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, n.d.).

Incorporated Communities

The administration of municipalities in Nova Scotia falls under the jurisdiction of the Nova Scotia Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The province operates using a single-tier municipal system (Government of Nova Scotia, 2021).

Classification. There are four primary types of incorporated communities in Nova Scotia, governed by the *Municipal Government Act* (1998):



- **Town (25):** Nearly 50% of the urban communities in Nova Scotia are incorporated as towns. The province is home to a total of 25 towns.
- **County municipality (9)**
- **District municipality (11):** Rural communities in Nova Scotia are typically incorporated as a county or district municipality. The distinction between a county and a district municipality is based on historical circumstances and does not impact governance. There are 9 county municipalities and 11 district municipalities in the province.
- **Regional municipality (4):** 4 regional municipalities have been established in the province. Regional municipalities are formed through the amalgamation of two or more previously existing municipalities, often representing a combination of urban and rural communities under a unified municipal government (Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, n.d.).

Additionally, there are other organizations that provide services commonly associated with municipalities but are not classified as municipalities in Nova Scotia. As of March 31, 2020, these organizations within county or district municipalities include:

- Village commissions incorporated and operating under the *Municipal Government Act* to provide municipal services.
- Local commissions incorporated and operated under special Acts of Legislature (e.g., street lighting or fire protection).
- Service commissions, such as rural fire districts, incorporated under the *Rural Fire District Act* to offer fire protection. Village commissions and service commissions have the authority to levy taxes in addition to those collected by the municipality itself (Government of Nova Scotia, 2021).

Governance. The leader of a town council is known as the mayor and is elected at large. Towns have the option to establish municipal electoral districts called wards. In the case of ward divisions, each councillor, excluding the mayor, is elected by and represents the

residents of their specific polling district, with a maximum of two councillors per ward (Government of Nova Scotia, 2021). Otherwise, councillors are elected at large.

The leader of a county or district municipal council is called the mayor or the warden and is selected by the council members from among themselves. County and district municipalities are divided into municipal electoral districts called polling districts, with one councillor representing each district. Each councillor, except the mayor, is elected by and represents the residents of their respective districts.

The leader of a regional municipal council is known as the mayor and is elected at large. Regional municipalities are divided into municipal electoral districts called polling districts, with one councillor representing each district. Each councillor, apart from the mayor, is elected by and represents the residents of their respective districts.

Elections. Municipal elections in Nova Scotia are governed by the *Municipal Elections Act* and are held every four years starting from 2000 on the third Saturday in October (*Municipal Government Act*, 1998). The polling district includes the ward or the entirety of a town that is not divided into wards. Municipalities are responsible for conducting their own municipal elections. In Nova Scotia, there are no officially recognized municipal political parties, and municipal elections and councils operate on a non-partisan basis.

The following table outlines the eligibility requirements for individuals who are eligible to exercise their right to vote in municipal elections and run for municipal office:

Eligibility Criteria	Voting	Running for Municipal Office
Citizenship	Canadian citizen	Canadian citizen
Age	18 years or older	18 years or older
Residency in the Province	6 months minimum	6 months minimum

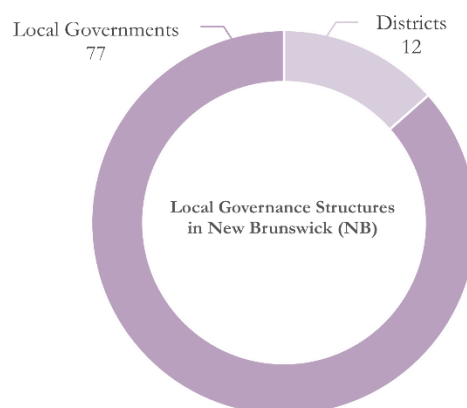
Eligibility Criteria	Voting	Running for Municipal Office
Residency in the Municipality or Annexed Area	Ordinarily resident	Ordinarily resident
Property Liens and Taxes	N/A	All paid up
Election Offense	N/A	Must not be specifically disqualified from running under the Elections Act, House of Assembly Act, or any other law

Unincorporated Communities

In the province of Nova Scotia, there are no unincorporated communities. According to the Municipal Statistics Annual Report (2021), “all of Nova Scotia is incorporated into municipalities,” indicating that every community within the province falls under the jurisdiction of a municipality.

Data by Statistics Canada. The Census Profile of 2021 identifies 66 Class IV areas and 4 retired population centres, categorized as designated places. These 70 designated places may include areas that are not incorporated into municipalities; however, it is essential to note that this designation is solely for statistical purposes and differs from the definition of unincorporated communities as defined by provincial legislation in Nova Scotia.

NEW BRUNSWICK (NB)



New Brunswick implemented its local governance reform on January 1, 2023. The new local governance systems consist of 77 local governments (similar to conventional incorporated communities) and 12 districts (similar to unincorporated communities as identified by the provincial government) (Government of New Brunswick, “Local Governments,” n.d.).

The present local governance structures represent the result of the local governance reform initiative launched in New Brunswick in 2021 through the enactment of Bill 82: An Act Respecting Local Governance Reform. The primary objective of this reform is to reconfigure local government bodies and rural districts, thereby implementing a regional framework to effectively tackle the societal requirements of marginalized communities relocating to more populous urban areas, particularly within the Southeast, Fundy, and Capital regions.

Local Governments

The administration of local governance in New Brunswick is regulated by the *Local Governance Reform Act*, also known as Bill 82 of 2021, as well as the previous *Local*

Governance Act (2017). The New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Government holds the authority over this domain. The implementation of Bill 82 has led to significant transformations in the local governance landscape within the province, resulting in a substantial reduction from the initial 340 incorporated communities to the current count of 78 local governments. It is important to note, however, that the geographical boundaries of these present local governments have been established through a process of amalgamation, which involves the consolidation of two or more existing local governments, as well as the annexation of portions from former local service districts. Notably, these local service services were previously classified as unincorporated communities by the province.

Classification. There are five primary types of local governments in New Brunswick. Currently, we have not been able to locate any official information that establishes the distinguishing criteria among these five primary types of local governments in New Brunswick.



Governance. Local governments, as defined by the Government of New Brunswick, typically encompass towns, villages, cities, and rural communities. The head of a local government's council is always referred to as the mayor. Local governments may establish electoral districts known as wards. In municipalities with wards, councillors, excluding the mayor, are elected by and represent the residents of their respective wards. Otherwise, councillors are elected at large. are responsible for providing community administration, land use planning, emergency measures, policing, road maintenance, and garbage collection services.

In comparison, regional municipalities are only required to provide community administration, planning, and emergency measures, rather than the full range of services provided by cities, towns, and villages. Rural communities are also only required to provide community administration, planning, and emergency measures, with other municipal services being provided by the provincial government until the rural community chooses to assume responsibility for them. This flexible form of local governance allows alignment with the specific needs of individual communities.

In conjunction with the occurrence of local governance reform, initial elections were conducted in 50 local governments to democratically select entirely new councils. Furthermore, 9 additional communities held byelections to address the newly established council positions generated as a result of the local governance reform process.

Elections.⁷ The procedures for voting and elections are governed by the *Municipal Elections Act* (1979). In municipalities with wards, residents of a ward can vote only for the candidate nominated for that ward. The *Local Governance Act* (2017) stipulates that general municipal elections in New Brunswick are held on the second Monday in May every four years, starting from 2020. Elections New Brunswick is the governing body responsible for the

⁷ The *Local Governance Reform Act* (2021) did not incorporate any amendments to the *Municipal Elections Act* (1979). Instead, it stipulates that the first general election for electing entirely new councils of the newly established local governments should take place on November 28, 2022, as per the provisions outlined in the *Municipal Elections Act*.

administration and oversight of municipal elections in the province. It is important to note that there are no recognized municipal political parties in New Brunswick, and municipal elections and councils operate on a non-partisan basis.

The following table outlines the eligibility requirements for individuals who are entitled to exercise their right to vote in municipal elections. Any person who is eligible to vote is also qualified to be a candidate for the office of mayor or councillor in a municipality in New Brunswick.

Eligibility Criteria	Voting & Running for Municipal Office
Citizenship	Must be a Canadian citizen.
Age	Must be 18 years of age or older on the day of the election.
Residency in the Province	Must have been ordinarily resident in the province for at least 40 days before the election.
Residency in the municipality	Must be ordinarily resident in the municipality on the day of the election.

Rural Districts

The novel local governance structures in New Brunswick also encompass a total of 12 rural districts. These rural districts encompass the unincorporated areas that lie beyond the territorial boundaries of local governments. These districts share similarities with local service districts, which referred to the unincorporated communities prior to the implementation of the local governance reform. However, the rural districts are significantly larger in size, with many of them boasting populations equivalent to those governed by a local government entity.

Data by Statistics Canada⁸. According to Statistics Canada's Census Profile for 2021, there are 152 local service districts and 9 former local governments categorized under designated places. It should be acknowledged that due to variations in definitions and data collection methods, the number of designated places (161) provided by Statistics Canada does not align with the provincial government's figure of 236. It is crucial to differentiate Statistics Canada's information, which serves the purpose of data collection, from the definition of local service districts discussed above.

⁸ Due to the local governance reform, the number of designated places provided by Statistics Canada cannot be directly compared to the existing quantity of rural districts. Furthermore, there is a lack of updated census data to incorporate the transformed local governance models in New Brunswick. The inclusion of this figure here is solely intended to present a more comprehensive picture for the purpose of cross-provincial/territorial comparisons concerning the number of designated places.

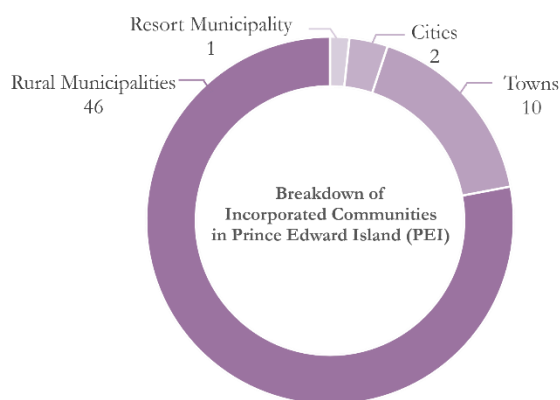
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (PEI)

In the province of Prince Edward Island, there are a total of 59 incorporated communities within the local governance system (Federation of Prince Edward Island Municipalities, n.d.). However, due to limited information, we were unable to find the exact number of unincorporated communities as defined by the provincial government.

Incorporated Communities

The administration of municipal corporations in Prince Edward Island is regulated by the *Municipal Government Act* (1988), which falls under the jurisdiction of the Prince Edward Island Department of Fisheries and Communities.

Classification. Prince Edward Island has four primary types of incorporated communities, each with specific incorporation criteria outlined in the *Municipal Government Act*:



- **City (2):** There are two cities in the province, namely the City of Charlottetown and the City of Summerside. To qualify for city incorporation, a place must have a population of at least 15,000 and a property assessment value of \$750,000,000 or more.

- **Town (10):** PEI is home to ten incorporated towns. To qualify for town incorporation, a place must have a population ranging from 4,000 to 15,000 and a property assessment value between \$200,000,000 and \$749,999,999.
- **Rural municipality (46):** Any municipalities, excluding towns and cities, that were incorporated before the enactment of the *Municipal Government Act* in 1988 are considered rural municipalities. There are a total of 46 rural municipalities in the province.
- **Resort municipality (1):** The Resort Municipality of Stanley Bridge, Hope River, Bayview, Cavendish, and North Rustico is the sole resort municipality in PEI. As per the *Municipal Government Act*, once the resort municipality reaches a population of 2,000 eligible voters, it should be restructured into another type of municipality.

Governance. The head of a municipal council is known as the mayor, who is elected at large. In cities, there are usually eight councillors in addition to the mayor, although a bylaw can increase this number to ten. Cities may also establish municipal electoral districts called wards. Both the City of Charlottetown and the City of Summerside currently utilize wards. Charlottetown has a council of 10 councillors, while Summerside has a council of 8 councillors.

Towns typically have six councillors in addition to the mayor, with the possibility of increasing this number to eight through a bylaw. Similar to cities, towns may establish wards for municipal electoral districts or have councillors elected at large.

Rural municipalities follow a similar governance structure, with six councillors alongside the mayor, expandable to eight through a bylaw. They can also establish wards for municipal electoral districts or have councillors elected at large.

The Resort Municipality of Stanley Bridge, Hope River, Bayview, Cavendish, and North Rustico currently operates with six councillors and a mayor. The council can pass a bylaw

to increase the number of councillors to eight, and the municipality is not divided into wards.

Elections. As outlined in the *Municipal Government Act*, general elections for typical municipalities in PEI are held every four years on the first Monday in November. Resort municipalities, however, follow a different schedule and hold elections on the second Monday in August, starting from the year 2018.

In most cases, municipalities are responsible for conducting their own elections. However, certain municipal elections are administered by the provincial election agency, Elections PEI. Charlottetown, Cornwall, Stratford, Summerside, and Three Rivers have contracted Elections PEI to administer their municipal elections and by-elections. It's important to note that there are no recognized municipal political parties in Prince Edward Island, and municipal elections and councils are non-partisan.

Eligibility to Vote in a Municipal Election in PEI:

Eligibility Criteria	Voting in Municipal Elections
Citizenship	Must be a Canadian citizen.
Age	Must be at least 18 years of age by election day.
Residency in the Province	Must have resided in the province for at least six months immediately preceding election day.
Residency in the Municipality	Must be ordinarily resident in the municipality on election day.

Eligibility to Run for Municipal Office in PEI:

Eligibility Criteria	Running for Municipal Office
Eligibility	Must meet the eligibility requirements for voting.
Residency in the Municipality	Must be ordinarily resident in the municipality for a period of at least six months preceding election day.

However, there exists an exception to the aforementioned rules. In the case of the Resort Municipalities of Stanley Bridge, Hope River, Bayview, Cavendish, and North Rustico, registered property owners who are not typically resident in the Resort Municipality are granted the right to vote on election day. The subsequent table presents a comprehensive overview of the eligibility criteria for individuals who possess the entitlement to exercise their voting rights in the resort municipality election. It is important to note that a person who meets the criteria to vote in the report municipality is also eligible to run as a candidate for the esteemed positions of mayor or councillor within the locality.

Eligibility Criteria	Voting & Running for Office in Resort Municipalities
Citizenship	Must be a Canadian citizen.
Age	Must be at least 18 years of age by election day.
Residency in the Province	Must have resided in the province for at least six months immediately preceding election day.
Residency in the Municipality	be ordinarily resident in the municipality on election day, OR be a non-resident property owner as defined in section 31(2) of the Municipal Government Act, OR be entitled to vote as a shareholder on behalf of a corporation that is a non-resident property owner.

Unincorporated Communities

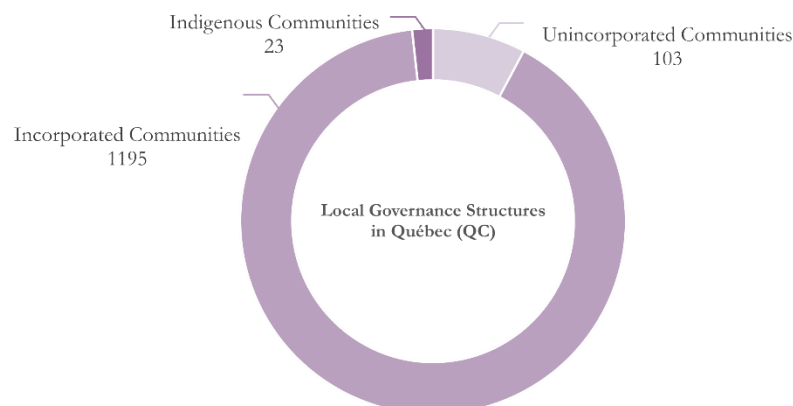
Nearly two-thirds of Prince Edward Island (PEI) consists of unincorporated areas (Government of Prince Edward Island, n.d.). Specifically, these unincorporated regions encompass approximately 70% of the land mass in PEI and are home to around 30% of the island's population (Baglolle, Griffin, & Macdonald, 2007). The responsibility for various aspects related to land ownership and local governance in these unincorporated areas largely falls under the purview of the provincial government, as indicated in the Report of

the Commission of Land and Local Governance (Government of Prince Edward Island, 2009). However, official documentation from the provincial government does not provide a specific count or information regarding the exact number of unincorporated communities in the province.

Data by Statistics Canada. According to Statistics Canada's Census Profile of 2021, there are no designated places or statistical classifications that specifically encompass unincorporated communities in Prince Edward Island. This also shows the discrepancy between the provincial government's recognition of a significant presence of unincorporated land and the absence of corresponding designations in Statistics Canada. The data highlights our limited understanding of the quantity and nature of unincorporated communities within the province.

System in Transition. In recent years, the provincial government of Prince Edward Island has initiated discussions and proposed measures to transition and restructure these areas, aiming to streamline governance in unincorporated communities. This process may involve various approaches such as combining existing municipalities, dissolving certain entities, altering boundaries, and exploring options for amalgamation (merging multiple municipalities into one) or annexation (incorporating properties without local government; Government of Prince Edward Island, 2017). The introduction of the new *Municipal Government Act* in 2017 brought about reforms to enhance standards of good governance, financial accountability, and service delivery for municipal governments. This act also empowered local authorities with greater discretion, flexibility, and decision-making authority when addressing local issues.

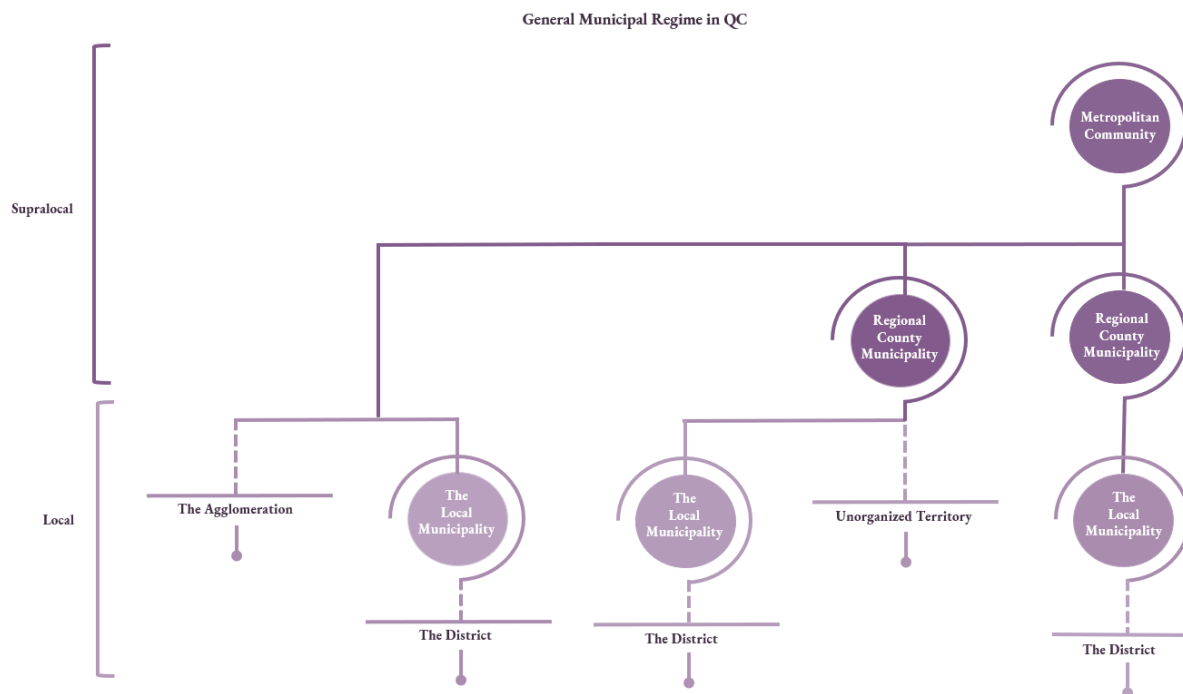
QUÉBEC (QC)



In the province of Québec, there exists a total of 1,195 incorporated communities and 103 unincorporated communities, as defined by the provincial government, within the local governance system. Additionally, the province is home to 23 Indigenous communities (Gouvernement du Québec, n.d.).

Incorporated Communities

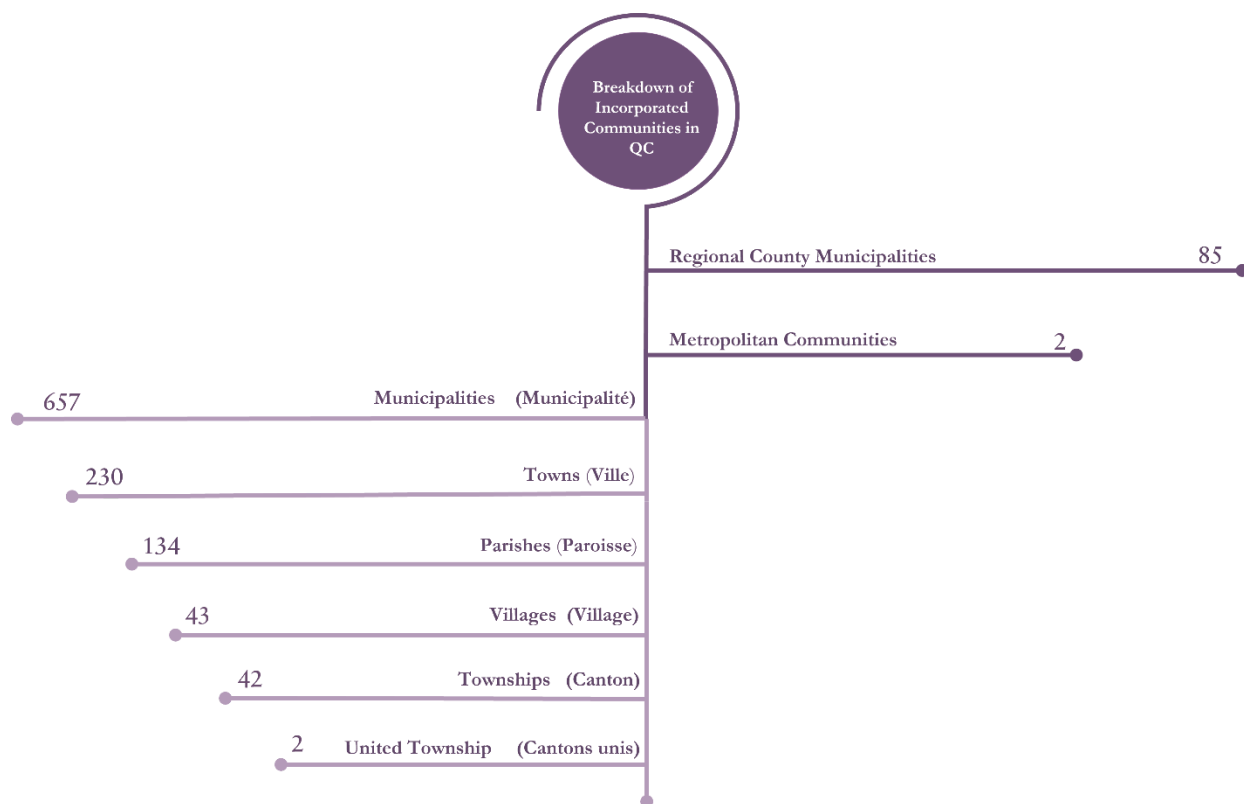
The province operates under a two-tier municipal system, known as the General Municipal Regime of Québec, which is considered one of the most complex systems of local government in Canada. This system is divided into the local and supralocal levels. Municipalities in both levels in the province are administered by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (French: Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation).



The Local Level

Within this level, Québec has a total of 1,108 local municipalities. These incorporated communities fall under the *Cities and Towns Act* (1977). These local municipalities can be classified into six types, although the differences in names do not reflect variations in their structure, as they function similarly. The term “city” is colloquially used to describe major urban centers like Québec City and Montreal, but it is not an official designation.

Classification. The main types of local and supralocal municipalities in Québec are as follows:



Governance. Municipal governance at the local level involves a mayor (French: maire/mairesse) who is elected at large, along with a council. Most local municipalities consist of a mayor and six councillors, although this number may vary based on population (Gouvernement du Québec, “Territoires non Organisés,” n.d.). Municipalities with a population exceeding 20,000 residents must be divided into electoral districts, with one councillor representing each district. If a municipality is not divided into districts, councillors are elected at large (Élections Québec, n.d.).

Apart from local municipalities, the local level of the Québec General Municipal Regime also includes two distinct governance arrangements: the agglomeration, which functions as an intermunicipal council, and the district (also known as the borough), which serves as a subdivision within a local municipality.

Districts, also known as boroughs, are separate entities from electoral districts and often encompass multiple electoral districts within them. Districts are assigned certain municipal functions, which benefit from being organized on a smaller scale. The specific functions of a district may vary across municipalities. Districts are governed by borough councils, comprising councillors from the electoral districts within the borough. However, not all local municipalities have districts, and currently, only eight local municipalities in Québec are divided into boroughs. The organization of districts is determined by each city's charter.

Agglomerations, on the other hand, are advisory bodies rather than municipalities. They operate in parallel with municipalities and consist of several member municipalities that delegate some of their authority to the agglomeration. Agglomerations fall under the *Act Respecting the Exercise of Certain Municipal Powers in Certain Urban Agglomerations* (2004). The establishment of agglomerations stems from municipal reorganizations in the early 2000s, following referendums held under the *Act Respecting the Consultation of Citizens Concerning the Territorial Reorganization of Certain Municipalities* (2003). During this process, some large municipalities were divided into smaller ones. Agglomerations were formed to include the newly created municipalities within the territory of the former, larger municipality, aiming to preserve communities and service distribution systems. The central municipality within the territory assumes responsibility for exercising the powers of the agglomeration throughout the area. Agglomeration councils oversee the administration of common services to the member municipalities and make decisions through majority votes. Each representative on the council is allocated votes proportional to the size of their population.

The Supralocal Level

Supralocal municipalities in Québec consist of 85 regional county municipalities and 2 metropolitan communities. This governance model addresses the need for facilitating service sharing and managing regional decisions that impact multiple municipalities.

Regional County Municipality (85): regional county municipalities fall under the *Municipal Powers Act* (2005). They are composed of municipalities of various sizes. Not all local municipalities are part of a regional county municipality; those excluded perform all the functions of a regional county municipality independently.

The municipal council of a regional county municipality comprises the mayors of each member municipality, with the head of the council being called the *prefet* or chief officer. The *prefet* can be either selected by the members from amongst themselves or elected at large.

Metropolitan community (2): There are only two metropolitan communities in Québec: the *Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal* and the *Communauté métropolitaine de Québec*. These communities serve as planning and coordination bodies, providing services to member municipalities such as spatial planning, economic development, international economic promotion, artistic or cultural development, metropolitan transit guidelines, and waste management planning.

The Montreal Metropolitan Community Council consists of 28 seats, while the Québec City Metropolitan Community Council has 17 seats. These councils primarily comprise mayors of member municipalities and various municipal councillors.

Elections. Elections for local municipalities, excluding Northern, Cree, or Naskapi villages, are regulated by the *Act Representing Elections and Referendums in Municipalities*. As per this act, local municipalities are responsible for conducting elections every four years on the first Sunday of November. Elections Québec supports and trains returning officers during municipal elections and maintains a register of all authorized municipal political parties and independent candidates. Municipalities with a population exceeding 20,000 on January 1 of the year preceding the election must divide their territory into electoral districts.

Notably, Québec differs from most other provinces as it does not officially recognize municipal political parties, although a list of 140 authorized municipal political parties exists in the province.

The following table summarizes and compares the eligibility requirements for voting in a municipal election and running for municipal office in Québec:

Eligibility Criteria	Voting	Running for Municipal Office
Canadian Citizenship	Yes	Yes
Age 18 or older	Yes	Yes
Not under curatorship	Yes	Yes
No electoral offence conviction in the last five years	Yes	Yes
Resided in the municipality and/or district for at least six months	Yes	N/A
Owned property within the municipality and/or for at least 12 months	Yes	N/A
Resided in the territory of the municipality for at least the last 12 months before the general election held	N/A	Yes

Unincorporated Communities

Unincorporated communities, as defined by the *Act Respecting Municipal Territorial Organization* (1988), are categorized as non-organized territories, referred to as “territoires non organisés” in French. Within the province, there are a total of 103 such communities; however, their combined population amounts to fewer than 2000 individuals, with a majority lacking any registered inhabitants. Consequently, the issue of local governance often does not pose an immediate concern in these cases in terms of jurisdiction.

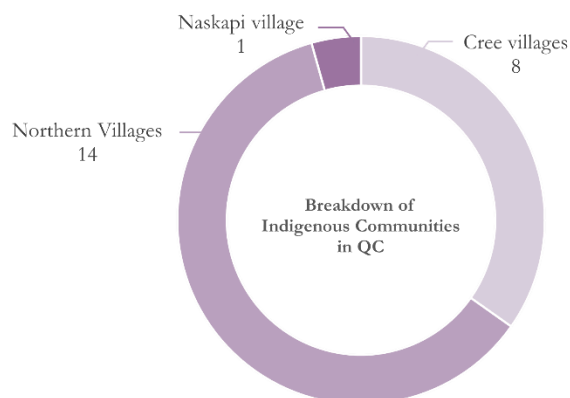
The jurisdiction over unincorporated territories falls under the purview of their respective administrative regions, known as “régions administratives” in French. While administrative regions do not function as independent governing bodies, they bear the responsibility of

overseeing regional funding, services, and economic development within their designated territories. The province consists of a total of 17 administrative regions. As per the provisions outlined in the *Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development* (1979), the regional county municipality, or “municipalité régionale de comté” in French, serves as the de facto local municipality for the non-organized territories (TNO).

Data by Statistics Canada. The Census Profile of 2021 by Statistics Canada provides insights into various designated places within the province, totaling 120 in number. These designated places include 12 instances of Localité non constituée, 94 instances of Municipalité dissoute, and 14 instances of Retired population. It is important to note that the definition of designated places differs from that of non-organized territories, as determined by the province itself. The purpose of designated places is primarily for the presentation of census data.

Indigenous Communities

Within Québec’s local governance systems, there are 14 Northern Villages, 8 Cree villages, and 1 Naskapi village, all of which are Indigenous communities established through Indigenous self-government agreements. While these communities share similarities with incorporated communities in a conventional sense, they are created under different legislation than that used to incorporate standard municipalities.

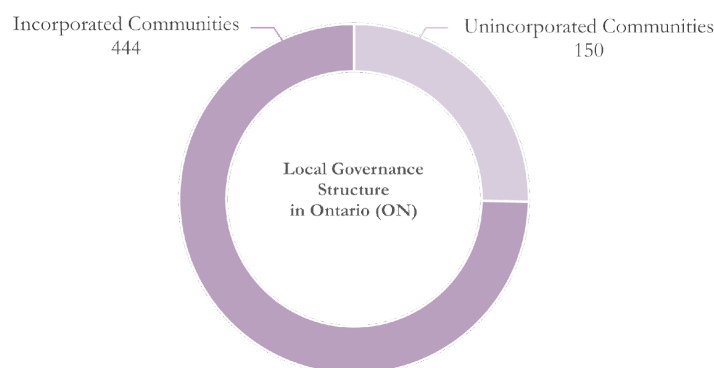


- Northern Villages (14):** Northern Villages fall under the jurisdiction of the Kativik Regional Government, which was established based on the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement of 1975. They operate under the provisions of the *Act Respecting Northern Villages and the Kativik Regional Government* (1978). The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement of 1975 was a self-government agreement signed by the Québec and Canadian governments, representatives of the Inuit and Cree, and other stakeholders. It designated land in northern Québec exclusively for the use of the Indigenous groups involved and established structures for self-governance and resource agreements. In 1978, the Naskapi Band of Schefferville joined the agreement and secured similar rights through the Northeastern Québec Agreement. The leader of a Northern Village council holds the title of mayor and is elected through a general election. Additionally, the council is composed of two to six councillors, as determined by bylaw.
- Cree village (8):** Similar to Northern Villages, Cree villages are established under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement of 1975. However, they have chosen not to participate in the Kativik Regional Government and instead belong to the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee). The Cree villages operate under *The Cree Villages and the Naskapi Village Act* (1979). The council of the Cree Band serves as the municipality's council, and the chief of the Cree Band acts as the mayor. At the time

of writing, two additional villages, Washaw Sibi and MoCreebec, are in the process of becoming Cree Villages (The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee), 2022).

- *Naskapi village (1)*: Québec is home to a single Naskapi village called Kawawachikamach, which was established based on the Northeastern Québec Agreement of 1978. It is situated adjacent to Naskapi reserved land in the region. Like Northern Villages, Kawawachikamach participates in the Kativik Regional Government. However, it is administered under *The Cree Villages and the Naskapi Village Act* (1979; Gouvernement du Québec, 2023a; Gouvernement du Québec, 2023b).

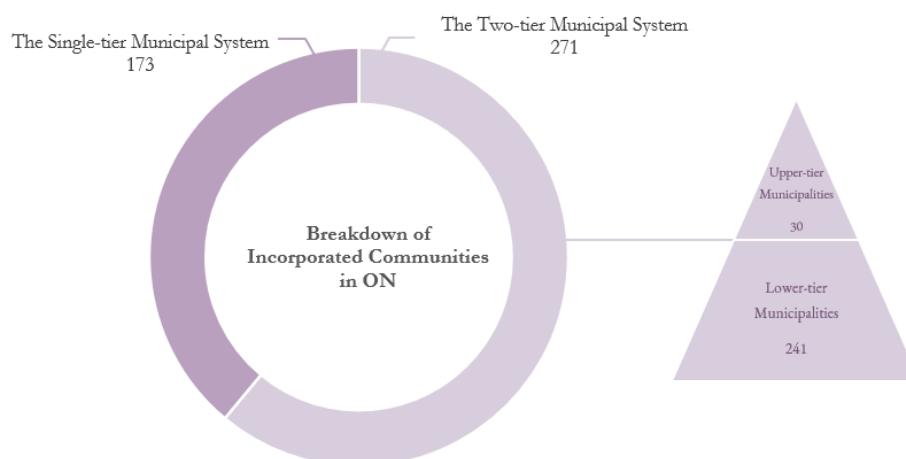
ONTARIO (ON)



In the province of Ontario, local governance structures consist of a total of 444 incorporated communities and at least 150 unincorporated communities, as identified by the province. All unincorporated communities are located in Northern Ontario.

Incorporated Communities

The province of Ontario operates under a combination of single-tier and two-tier municipal frameworks. The *Municipal Act* (2001), overseen by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, governs municipalities in the province.



Of the 444 municipalities in Ontario, 173 operate under the single-tier system, while 271 fall under the two-tier municipal system, including 30 upper-tier municipalities and 241 lower-tier municipalities (Government of Ontario, 2022).

These municipalities can be classified into eight main types within the single-tier and two-tier frameworks. However, it is important to note that these names do not indicate variations in population size or governance structure. The eight types are as follows:



Governance in Single-Tier Municipalities: In a single-tier municipality, a single municipal corporation assumes responsibility for all government functions and services provided to the community. While some single-tier municipalities may be geographically located within the boundaries of an upper-tier municipality, they operate independently. The *Municipal Act* (2001) grants single-tier municipalities the authority to pass bylaws on various matters, including governance structure, accountability, financial management, public assets, well-being, safety, services, protection, animals, structures, and business licensing.

The head of a single-tier municipal council, commonly known as the mayor or reeve, is elected at large. Additionally, there must be a minimum of four councillors, along with the mayor/reeve. Single-tier municipalities have the option to establish electoral districts called wards, wherein each councillor represents and is elected by the residents of their respective ward. Otherwise, councillors are elected at large.

Governance in Two-Tier Municipalities: In a two-tier system, certain services are provided by the lower-tier municipality, while others are provided by an upper-tier municipality that serves two or more lower-tier municipalities. Generally, upper-tier bodies deliver region-wide services, while lower-tier bodies cater to the specific needs of their respective communities. The *Municipal Act* assigns different spheres of jurisdiction to specific upper- and lower-tier municipalities. In case of conflicting bylaws between a lower-tier and an upper-tier municipality, the bylaw of the upper-tier municipality usually takes precedence, although there are exceptions outlined in the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

Service Provision in Two-Tier Municipalities in ON					
Item	Sphere of Jurisdiction	Part of Sphere Assigned	Upper-tier Municipality(ies) to which Part of Sphere Assigned	Exclusive or Non-Exclusive Assignment	
1	Highways, including parking and traffic on highways	Whole sphere	All upper-tier municipalities	Non-exclusive	
2a	Transportation systems, other than highways	Airports	Peel, Halton Waterloo, York Durham, Halton, Lambton, Oxford, Peel, Waterloo, York		
2b		Ferries			
2c		Disabled passenger transportation systems			
2d		Whole sphere, except airports and ferries		Exclusive	
3	Waste Management	Whole sphere, except waste collection			
4a	Public Utilities	Sewage Treatment	All countries, Niagara, Waterloo, York		Non-exclusive
4b			Durham, Halton, Muskoka, Oxford, Peel		Exclusive
4c			All countries, Niagara, Waterloo, York		Non-exclusive
4d			Durham, Halton, Muskoka, Oxford, Peel		Exclusive
4e		Collection of storm water and other drainage from land	All upper-tier municipalities	Non-exclusive	
4f		Water production, treatment and storage	All upper-tier municipalities, except counties	Exclusive	
4g		Water distribution	Niagara, Waterloo, York	Non-exclusive	
4h			Oxford, Durham, Halton, Muskoka, Peel	Exclusive	
5	Culture, parks, recreation and heritage	Whole sphere	All upper-tier municipalities	Non-exclusive	
6	Drainage and flood control, except storm sewers				
7	Structures, including fences and signs	Whole sphere, except fences and signs	Oxford		
8	Parking, except on highways	Municipal parking lots and structures	All upper-tier municipalities		
9	Animals	None	None	Not assigned	
10a	Economic development services	Promotion of the municipality for any purpose by the collection and dissemination of information	Durham	Exclusive	
10b			All countries, Halton, Muskoka, Niagara, Oxford, Peel, Waterloo, York	Non-exclusive	
10c			Durham	Exclusive	
10d			Halton, Lambton, Oxford, Waterloo	Non-exclusive	
11a	Business Licensing	Owners and drivers of taxicabs, tow trucks, buses and vehicles (other than motor vehicles) used for hire Taxicab brokers Salvage business Second-hand goods business	Niagara, Waterloo	Exclusive	
11b		Drainage business, plumbing business	York		
11c		Lodging houses, septic tank business		Non-exclusive	

Lower-tier municipalities: The head of a lower-tier municipal council, typically referred to as the mayor or reeve, is elected at large. Similar to single-tier municipalities, lower-tier municipalities must have a minimum of five council members, including the mayor/reeve. They also have the option to establish electoral districts called wards, where

councillors are elected by the residents of their respective wards. Otherwise, councillors are elected at large. Lower-tier municipalities, together with single-tier municipalities, collectively form “local municipalities.”

Upper-tier municipalities: Most upper-tier municipalities in Ontario are known as regions. However, some upper-tier municipalities in Southern Ontario, which were already incorporated as counties before the *Municipal Act* came into effect in 2001, continue to be classified as counties or united counties. Upper-tier municipal councils must consist of a minimum of five members, one of whom serves as the head of council. The head of council can be elected at large or chosen by council members from amongst themselves. Other councillors can be elected as members of a lower-tier council and then selected by that council to serve on the upper-tier council, directly elected to the upper-tier council, or elected to both. If councillors are directly elected to the upper-tier council, they can be elected through general voting or within wards. However, each lower-tier municipality must be represented in some capacity on the upper-tier council. For an upper-tier municipality bylaw to be enacted, it must first receive majority assent in the upper-tier council and then be supported by a majority of lower-tier municipalities representing a majority of voters in the upper-tier.

Elections. Municipal elections in Ontario are regulated by the *Municipal Elections Act* (1996). Voting Day has been held on the fourth Monday in October every four years since 2006, and the term of office for all elected positions is four years, starting on November 15 in the year of a regular election. The administration of municipal elections is handled by the municipalities themselves. In case of wards, an elector is entitled to vote only in the ward where they reside. Municipalities have the authority to divide or redivide their jurisdiction into wards or dissolve existing wards, based on the *Municipal Elections Act*. Municipal elections in Ontario are non-partisan, and there are no recognized municipal political parties (Association of Municipalities Ontario, n.d.).

To be eligible to vote or run for municipal office, an individual must meet the following requirements displaced in the table. All persons eligible to vote in a local election are also

eligible to run for municipal office unless they are an employee of the municipality, a judge, or serving as a representative in a provincial or federal legislative body.

Eligibility Criteria	Voting & Running for Municipal Office
Citizenship	Must be a Canadian citizen
Age	18 years of age or older
Residency	Reside in the municipality
Property Ownership	Own property in the municipality
Spousal Connection	Be married to someone who owns property in the municipality

Unincorporated Communities

In the province of Ontario, unincorporated communities are predominantly found in the northern region, known as Northern Ontario⁹. A significant portion of the geographical area in Northern Ontario remains unincorporated for municipal purposes, referred to as unincorporated territories or territories without municipal organizations (TWOMOs). Currently, there are over 150 unincorporated communities within Northern Ontario (Government of Ontario, 2019).

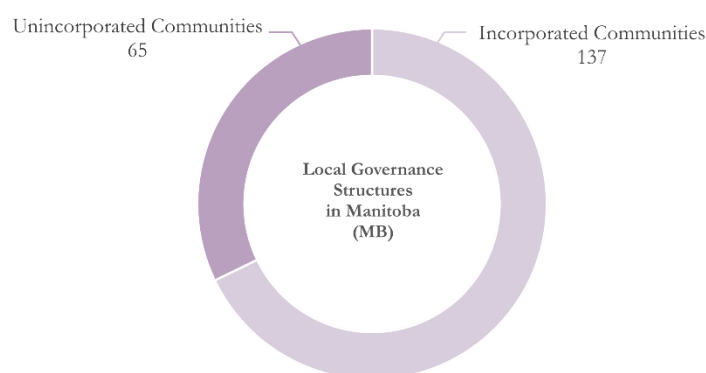
To provide specific services to these unincorporated territories, District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) were established under the *District Social Services Administration Board Act* (1990). DSSABs act as service managers, offering services such as childcare and social assistance to both the unincorporated territories and municipalities within the region. Comprising a combination of municipal representatives and individuals elected by residents in TWOMOs, there are ten DSSABs currently operating in Northern Ontario.

⁹ Mainly located north of Lake Huron (including Georgian Bay), the French River, Lake Nipissing, and the Mattawa River.

In addition to DSSABs, the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines assists residents of TWOMOs in establishing Local Services Boards (LSBs) under the *Northern Services Board Act*. These LSBs play a vital role in delivering essential services, including fire protection, sewage, and water supply. Moreover, Local Roads Boards, created under the *Local Roads Boards Act*, collaborate with the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines to ensure the maintenance and construction of local roads without reliance on municipal organizations (Government of Ontario, 2022).

Data by Statistics Canada. According to Statistics Canada's Census Profile for 2021, there are 135 designated places that encompass dissolved municipalities (44), local service boards (44), municipal defined places (38), and retired population centers (9). These 135 designated places may include unincorporated communities as defined by the province. However, it is crucial not to confuse these places with the TWOMOs discussed earlier, as they serve a specific purpose in the presentation of census data.

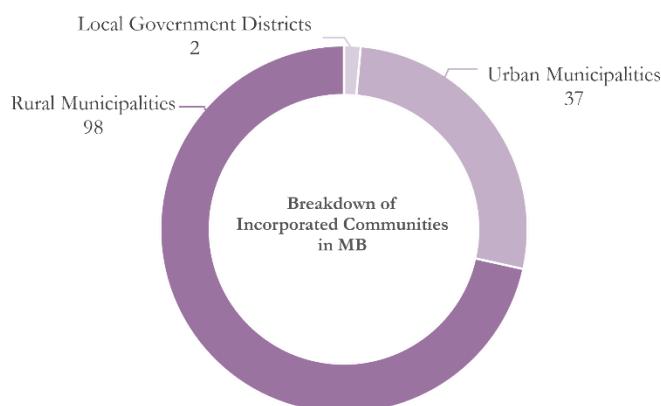
MANITOBA (MB)



In the province of Manitoba, the local governance system comprises a total of 137 incorporated communities and 65 unincorporated communities, as defined by the provincial government (Manitoba Municipal Relations, 2022).

Incorporated Communities

Manitoba's municipalities operate under *The Municipal Act* (1996), which is administered by the Manitoba Department of Municipal Affairs. *The Municipal Act* (1996) establishes various incorporation criteria for different types of incorporated communities.



- *Urban municipality* (37): To establish an urban municipality, the population must be equal to or greater than 1,000, and the population density must be equal to or greater than 400 persons per square kilometer¹⁰. Urban municipalities may be designated as cities, towns, or villages. However, these names are purely cosmetic and do not affect the governance or powers of the municipalities. It is important to note that a municipality named as a city must have a minimum of 7,500 residents. Currently, Manitoba has 10 cities, 25 towns, and 2 villages.

¹⁰ Or such other density as the minister may in a specific case consider sufficient for the type and level of services to be provided in the local urban district.

- *Rural municipality (98)*: To establish a rural municipality, the population must be equal to or greater than 1,000, while the population density must be less than 400 persons per square kilometer. Rural municipalities may be referred to as municipalities or rural municipalities. Similarly, these different names are cosmetic and do not impact the governance or powers of the municipalities. At present, there are 36 municipalities and 62 rural municipalities in the province.
- *Local government district (2)*: If there is a locality within the boundaries of a rural municipality with a population of at least 250 and a population density of at least 400 persons per square kilometer (similar to urban population density), that community may be established as a local urban district. Currently, there are only two local government districts in the province.

Governance. A municipal council consists of the head of council, elected at large, and a minimum of 4 but no more than 10 councillors. The head of the municipal council may be referred to as the mayor, reeve, or head of council, as defined by bylaw. The number of councillors representing each municipality is determined in the regulation incorporating that municipality and can be changed through bylaw if needed. If a municipality is divided into electoral districts (wards), each councillor is elected by the residents of their respective ward. Otherwise, councillors are elected at large.

Elections. Municipal elections are regulated by *The Municipal Act*. All municipalities hold elections every four years on the fourth Wednesday of October. According to *The Municipal Act*, every council member is elected by the voters of the entire municipality unless the council, through bylaw, determines that councillors are to be elected based on wards.

Councillors are responsible for dividing the municipality into wards, aiming for an approximately equal number of residents in each ward. Factors such as community or diversity of interests, topographical features, settlement patterns, and population trends

may be considered. It is important to note that there are no recognized municipal political parties in Manitoba, and municipal elections and councils are non-partisan.

However, there are two exceptions to be aware of in regards to eligibility to vote in municipal elections in Manitoba. One is that if a property in Manitoba is jointly owned by multiple non-residents, only two of them are eligible to vote. The selected voters must provide written consent from the majority of property owners to the Senior Election Official. The other is that there is no residency requirement to vote in a ward. In other words, as long as an individual is eligible to vote in the municipality, they are eligible to vote in the ward where they reside and/or own property.

The table below summarizes the eligibility requirements to vote in a municipal election and run for municipal office in Manitoba:

Eligibility Criteria	Voting	Running for Municipal Office
Canadian Citizenship	Yes	Yes
18 years of age or older	Yes	Yes
Resident of the local authority for at least six consecutive months	Yes	N/A
Registered owner of land in the local authority for at least six months	Yes	N/A
Resident of the province	N/A	Yes
Voter of the municipality	N/A	Yes
Not subject to any disqualification under The Municipal Act, or any other Acts	N/A	Yes

Unincorporated Communities

In Manitoba, the classification and nomenclature of unincorporated communities have undergone changes under *The Municipal Act*. Previously, an unincorporated village district established under the former *Municipal Act* is now referred to as a local urban district under the current Act. Similarly, an unincorporated urban district established under the *Local Government Districts Act* is now designated as a local urban district under the current Act. As a result, all unincorporated communities in Manitoba are now encompassed by the term “local urban districts,” without distinction between village districts and urban districts.

According to *The Municipal Act* (Section 50), a local urban district is defined as an unincorporated community located entirely within a rural municipality, with a minimum population of 250 residents and a population density of at least 400 residents per square kilometer. The Local Urban Districts Regulation identifies a total of 65 local urban districts in Manitoba.

The committee responsible for a local urban district, as stated in *The Municipal Act* 117(1), holds the following responsibilities:

- Developing and adopting a service plan for the local urban district.
- Presenting the service plan to the municipality’s council prior to its adoption of operating and capital budgets.
- Exercising powers delegated by the council of the municipality.

Data by Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada’s Census Profile (2021) provides data on 148 designated places in Manitoba, including unincorporated urban centers (48), local urban districts (44), northern communities (46), retired population centers (1), and dissolved municipalities (9). However, due to varying definitions and data collection methodologies, the number of designated places reported by Statistics Canada (148) that may include unincorporated communities differs from the figure (65) provided by the provincial government. These designated places serve the purpose of data presentation and should

not be confused with the official definition of unincorporated local urban districts established by the province.

SASKATCHEWAN (SK)



The province of Saskatchewan has a local governance system consisting of 767 incorporated communities and 155 unincorporated communities, as defined by the provincial government (Government of Saskatchewan, n.d.).

Incorporated Communities

The municipal system in Saskatchewan is organized based on geographic areas. Municipalities in the southern half of the province operate under *The Cities Act* (2002) and *The Municipalities Act* (2005) and are administered by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Government Relations. Municipalities in the northern half of the province are governed by *The Northern Municipalities Act* (2010) and are administered by Northern Municipal Affairs Saskatchewan, a division of the Ministry of Government Relations.

Classification. There are nine primary categories of incorporated communities, with each category having specific criteria based on the Saskatchewan legislations for southern and northern municipalities. These classifications are primarily based on the geographic distribution of municipalities in Saskatchewan. Cities, towns, villages, and rural municipalities are predominantly located in the southern half of the province. On the other hand, the northern half of the province encompasses incorporated communities such as northern towns, northern villages, northern hamlets, and a single District.

The distinction between these categories is governed by the legislations specific to southern and northern Saskatchewan. The criteria for each type of municipality are outlined in the respective legislations, ensuring that different standards and requirements are applied to these distinct categories within the province.

Municipalities and Governance in Southern Saskatchewan



- City (16): To be recognized as a city, a place must have a population of 5,000 or more. Only cities in southern Saskatchewan are officially designated as cities.

The *Cities Act* regulates the structure and administration of cities. The elected head of a city council is known as the mayor, who is elected at large. Cities are typically represented by six councillors, not including the mayor. The number of councillors can be adjusted through bylaws, but a city must have a minimum of two councillors. Cities may choose to establish electoral wards, which are divisions with approximately equal populations. Councillors in cities are either elected at large or by residents within their respective wards.

- **Town (147):** A place in southern Saskatchewan can be incorporated as a town if it has a population of 500 or more. Only towns in southern Saskatchewan are officially recognized as towns.

The Municipalities Act governs towns. The mayor, elected at large, leads the town council. Generally, towns have two councillors, excluding the mayor, but this number can be modified by bylaws. Towns may also choose to establish electoral wards for the election of councillors.

- **Village (241):** Villages must meet certain criteria to be established, including a population of 300 or more, a minimum of 150 residential units or business premises, and a minimum taxable assessment of \$30 million.

Only villages in southern Saskatchewan are officially recognized as villages.

The Municipalities Act governs villages. The mayor, elected at large, leads the village council. Typically, villages have two councillors, excluding the mayor, but this number can be adjusted by bylaws. Villages may choose to establish electoral wards.

- **Resort village (42):** Resort villages have specific criteria for establishment, including a permanent population of 100 or more, a seasonal population of 300 or more, a minimum of 150 residential units or business premises, a taxable assessment of \$35 million or more, and being primarily characterized as a resort destination.

Resort villages are governed by *The Municipalities Act*. The mayor, elected at large, leads the resort village council. Generally, resort villages have two

councillors, excluding the mayor, but this number can be modified by bylaws.

Resort villages may establish electoral wards if desired.

- *Rural municipality* (296): Rural municipalities are established through ministerial order and fall under *The Municipalities Act* (2005). The head of a rural municipality council is called the reeve, who is elected at large. Rural municipalities are divided into electoral districts called divisions, with one councillor representing each division.

In addition to the above categories, a municipal district is a possible format of local government defined in *The Municipalities Act* (2005), allowing urban and rural communities to fall under a single local government. However, there are currently no municipal districts in southern Saskatchewan.

Municipalities and Governance in Northern Saskatchewan

The governance and incorporation of municipalities in the northern half of Saskatchewan, fall under *The Northern Municipalities Act*, 2010. Within the Northern Saskatchewan Administration District (NSAD), four types of municipalities are incorporated:



- *Northern town (2)*: Northern towns require a population of 500 or more to be established. The mayor, elected at large, leads the council of a northern town. Typically, northern towns have two councillors, excluding the mayor, but this number can be adjusted through bylaws.
- *Northern village (11)*: To establish a northern village, certain criteria must be met, including a population of 250 or more, a minimum of 50 residential units or business premises, and a minimum taxable assessment of \$17 million. The mayor, elected at large, leads the council of a northern village. Generally, northern villages have two councillors, excluding the mayor, but this number can be modified through bylaws.
- *Northern hamlet (11)*: Criteria for establishing a northern hamlet include a population of 100 or more, a minimum of 50 residential units or business premises, and a minimum taxable assessment of \$2 million. The mayor, elected at large, leads the council of a northern hamlet. Typically, northern hamlets have two councillors, excluding the mayor, but this number can be adjusted through bylaws.
- *The District (1)*: All areas in the NSAD that are not First Nations Reserves, designated parkland, or incorporated municipalities (northern towns, northern villages, or northern hamlets) function as a single municipality known as “the District.” The District is directly administered by Northern Municipal Services, which acts as the municipal government, and the Minister of Government Relations, who acts as the Council.

Elections. Municipal elections in Saskatchewan are governed by the *Local Government Election Act*. Councils are elected for four-year terms, and the number of councillors can be adjusted by bylaws, provided they are passed at least 180 days before the election. It is noteworthy that in this province, the election dates for urban, rural, and resort municipalities differ. Additionally, there are distinct requirements for individuals eligible to vote in municipal elections and those aspiring to hold municipal office, varying among urban, rural, and resort municipalities. However, one aspect remains consistent: Saskatchewan does not recognize municipal political parties; thus, municipal elections and councils operate on a non-partisan basis.

Urban municipalities hold general elections every four years on the second Wednesday of November. Municipalities, excluding rural municipalities, can establish electoral wards through the Municipal Wards Commission. The table below outlines the eligibility criteria for voting and running for office in urban municipalities in Saskatchewan:

Eligibility Criteria	Voting	Running for Office in Urban Municipalities
Canadian citizenship	Yes	Yes
Age 18 or older	Yes	Yes
Residency in Saskatchewan	Yes	Yes
Residency in the municipality	Yes	Yes
Land ownership in the municipality	Yes	Yes
Residency duration prior to Election Day	6 consecutive months	6 consecutive months
Residency duration prior to Nomination Day (for candidates)	N/A	6 consecutive months in Saskatchewan AND 3 consecutive months in the municipality

Rural municipalities hold elections every two years, with the election of councillors in even- and odd-numbered divisions alternating, each serving a four-year term. The following table outlines the eligibility criteria for voting and running for office in rural municipalities in Saskatchewan:

Eligibility Criteria	Voting	Running for Office in Rural Municipalities
Canadian citizenship	Yes	Yes
Age 18 or older	Yes	Yes
Residency in the municipality	3 consecutive months	3 consecutive months

Eligibility Criteria	Voting	Running for Office in Rural Municipalities
Land ownership in the municipality	3 consecutive months	3 consecutive months
Meeting residency criteria	Yes	Yes
Chief Executive Officer of an organization	No	Yes ¹
Residency duration prior to Election Day	N/A	6 consecutive months in Saskatchewan
Residency duration prior to Nomination Day	N/A	6 consecutive months in Saskatchewan

¹ of a co-op, corporation, or religious association that owns taxable property within the Municipality.

Resort villages hold general elections every four years on the last Saturday of July. The eligibility criteria for voting and running for office in resort villages is shown below:

Eligibility Criteria	Voting	Running for Office in Resort Villages
Canadian citizenship	Yes	Yes
Age 18 or older	Yes	Yes
Residency in the municipality	3 consecutive months	3 consecutive months
Land ownership in the municipality	3 consecutive months	3 consecutive months
Meeting residency or land ownership criteria	Yes ¹	Yes ²
Residency duration prior to Nomination Day	N/A	6 consecutive months in Saskatchewan 3 consecutive months in the

Eligibility Criteria	Voting	Running for Office in Resort Villages
		municipality
Property ownership duration prior to Nomination Day	N/A	3 consecutive months in the municipality
Marriage to a person meeting residency or land ownership criteria during Nomination Day	N/A	Yes

¹ for at least 3 consecutive months immediately preceding Election Day

² for at least 3 consecutive months immediately preceding Election Day

Unincorporated Communities

The definitions of unincorporated communities differ between southern Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan. In total, the province has three different types of unincorporated communities:

- *Hamlet*¹¹: According to *The Municipalities Act* (2005), unincorporated communities in southern Saskatchewan include hamlets and organized hamlets. A hamlet must consist of at least five homes and 10 subdivided lots, each of which has an area less than one acre. Hamlets are part of a rural municipality and are governed by it, but they do not have formal boundaries (Government of Saskatchewan, “Organized Hamlet Designation,” n.d.).
- *Organized hamlet (144)*: An organized hamlet is designated by the Minister’s Order and has a legal boundary. It is also governed by the rural municipality in which it is located. Currently, there are 144 organized hamlets in Southern Saskatchewan.

Additionally, residents of an organized hamlet have the option to elect a three-person advisory board to represent the community to the rural

¹¹ The Government of Saskatchewan does not provide the total number of hamlets existing in the province.

municipality. An organized hamlet can be incorporated as a resort village or village if it meets certain criteria, including being an organized hamlet for at least three years and meeting minimum requirements for population, number of dwellings or business premises, taxable assessment, and any other prescribed criteria¹² (Government of Saskatchewan, “Organized Hamlet Designation,” n.d.).

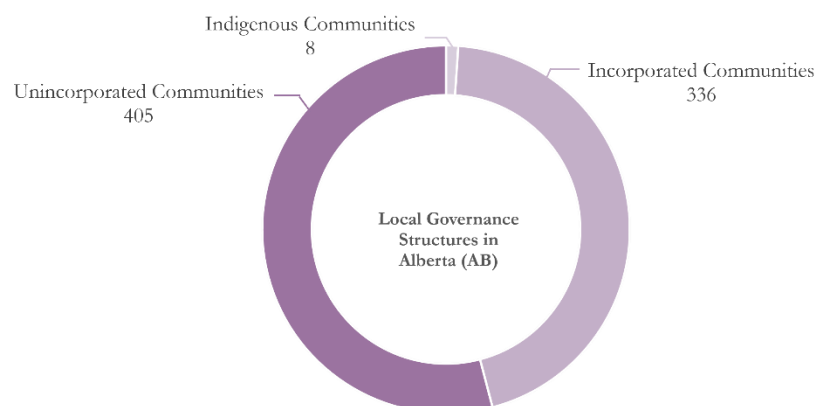
- *Northern Settlements* (11): Unincorporated communities in northern Saskatchewan are referred to as “Northern Settlements” and are administered by the Northern Municipal Services Branch. The Northern Saskatchewan Administration District (NSAD) is responsible for providing services to these communities. Currently, there are 11 northern settlements within the NSAD.

It is important to note that *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010* defines a “northern hamlet” as a type of incorporated municipality within the geographical area of the Northern Saskatchewan Administration District (NSAD). This is distinct from a hamlet or an organized hamlet in the southern half of the province.

Data by Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada (Census Profile, 2021) includes organized hamlets (143), Northern Settlements (9), cluster subdivisions (2), retired population centres (2), resort subdivisions (2), and dissolved municipalities (40) as designated places in Saskatchewan. Due to variations in definitions and data collection processes, the number of Northern Settlements and Organized Hamlets (at least 155 in total) does not match the information for designated places (198). Designated places are used for data presentation purposes only and should not be confused with the hamlets, organized hamlets, and Northern Settlements discussed above.

¹² More information on the legislation and regulations of hamlets and organized hamlets can be found in the Section 50 of *The Municipalities Act* and Section 6.01 of *The Municipalities Regulations*.

ALBERTA (AB)

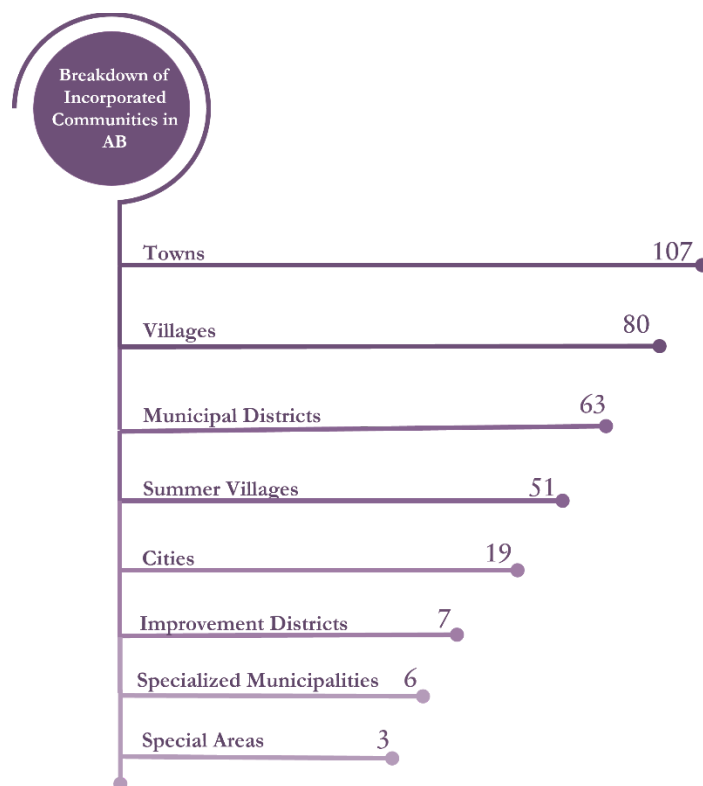


In the province of Alberta, the local governance system consists of 336 incorporated communities and at least 405 unincorporated communities, as defined by the government. Additionally, there are 8 Indigenous communities.

Incorporated Communities

Alberta's municipalities are governed by the *Municipal Government Act* (2000) and are administered by the Alberta Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

Classification. There are eight primary types of incorporated communities in Alberta, each with its own incorporation criteria defined by specific legislation acts:



- **City (19):** To establish a city, the population must be equal to or greater than 10,000, and the majority of buildings must be on parcels of land smaller than 1850 m². Currently, there are 19 cities in Alberta.
- **Town (107):** To establish a town, the population must be equal to or greater than 1,000, and the majority of buildings must be on parcels of land smaller than 1850 m². Alberta has established 107 towns.
- **Village (80):** To establish a village, the population must be equal to or greater than 300, and the majority of buildings must be on parcels of land smaller than 1850 m². There are 80 villages in the province.
- **Summer village (51):** New summer villages cannot be established anymore, but existing ones continue to function.
- **Municipal district (63):** To establish a municipal district, the population must be equal to or greater than 1,000, and the majority of buildings must be on parcels of land greater than 1850 m². There are 63 municipal districts in Alberta.

- *Specialized municipality (6)*: Specialized municipalities are established when other forms of municipalities do not meet the specific needs of a community. They allow for the coverage of both urban and rural areas under a single municipal government.
- *Special Area (3)*: The three Special Areas are located in southern Alberta. The land area of about 5.1 million acres comprises 2.5 million acres of privately held land, 1.6 million acres of Crown land and one million acres of tax recovery land. They are governed collectively by the Special Areas Board under the *Special Areas Act* (2000; Government of Alberta, n.d.).
- *Improvement District (7)*: Improvement Districts are formed in areas that lack the population or tax base to support a local government (Government of Alberta, “Improvement Districts,” n.d.). All seven Improvement Districts are located in provincial or national parks, and some have no population at all. Special Areas and Improvement Districts are used for areas without the population or tax base to support their own municipal government (Alberta Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 2023).

Generally, cities, towns, villages, and summer villages are considered urban municipalities, where the majority of buildings are on parcels of land smaller than 1850 square meters. Conversely, municipal districts in Alberta are typically rural municipalities, where the majority of buildings are on parcels of land larger than 1850 square meters.

Governance. Governance models also vary among the different types of municipalities in Alberta:

- *Cities*: The head of a city council is called the mayor and is elected at large. Cities may establish electoral districts called wards, and councillors are elected either at large or by residents of their respective wards.
- *Towns*: The head of a town council is called the mayor and is elected at large. Towns are not divided into wards, and the number of councillors may vary.
- *Villages*: Villages are governed by a mayor and two councillors, all of whom are elected at large.

- *Summer villages*: Summer villages have the same governance structure as villages, but annual meetings are held in the summer, and elections take place in July or August.
- *Municipal districts*: Municipal districts are divided into electoral districts called wards. Councillors are elected by residents of their respective wards, and the head of the council, known as the reeve, is selected by council members. Municipal districts may also be referred to as counties.
- *Specialized municipalities*: The structure of a specialized municipal council varies according to the community's needs.
- *Special Areas and Improvement Districts*: The provincial government is directly responsible for local government services in Special Areas and Improvement Districts. Advisory Councils representing residents may be appointed or elected to represent their interests to the government.

Elections. Elections in Alberta municipalities are regulated by the *Local Authorities Elections Act* (2000). With the exception of summer villages, all municipalities hold elections once every four years on the third Monday of October. In municipalities that are divided into wards, eligible voters are entitled to cast their vote only in the ward where they reside. The responsibility of administering these elections lies with the respective municipalities themselves.

The following table summarizes the eligibility to vote in municipal elections and to run for a municipal office in Alberta.

Eligibility Criteria	Voting	Running for Municipal Office
Canadian Citizenship	Required	Required
Age 18 or older	Required	Required
Residency in the Local Jurisdiction on Election Day	Required	Required

Eligibility Criteria	Voting	Running for Municipal Office
Residency in the Municipality (and Ward, if applicable)	N/A	Required ¹
Submission of Nominations	N/A	Required ²

¹ for a minimum of 6 consecutive months immediately preceding election day

² including signatures of at least 5 eligible electors by noon on nomination day, which is 4 weeks before the election date

Summer villages present an exceptional case in terms of elections. While summer villages share the same governance structure as villages, they differ in the timing of their annual meetings. Annual meetings for summer villages must be held during the summer season. Consequently, their elections are also scheduled in the same year as other Alberta municipalities but take place in the months of July or August instead of October.

To be eligible to participate in voting for a summer village, individuals must be Canadian citizens who are 18 years of age or older, and they must fulfill one of the following requirements:

- Residency in the summer village.
- Legal ownership of property within the boundaries of the summer village.
- Being the spouse of a property owner in the summer village.

Unincorporated Communities

In Alberta, unincorporated communities primarily fall into two categories: hamlets and rural residential subdivisions.

- *Hamlets (403)*: Hamlets are designated by the council of a municipal district or specialized municipality within its boundaries. To be classified as a hamlet, an unincorporated community must have a generally accepted boundary and name, at least five dwellings, and non-residential land usage. The respective municipal district assumes responsibility for providing local government services to the hamlets within its jurisdiction. Currently, there are at least 403 hamlets in Alberta.

- *Rural residential subdivision*: Information regarding the exact number of unincorporated rural residential subdivisions in the province is not readily available (Government of Alberta, “Types of Municipalities...”, n.d.; Government of Alberta, 2021).

Data sourced by Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada’s Census Profile (2021) includes 282 unincorporated places, 19 dissolved municipalities, and 10 Métis settlements in Alberta, categorized as designated places. These 311 places collectively represent small unincorporated communities that do not meet the criteria for formal municipalities or population centers. They are solely included for the purpose of data presentation and should not be confused with the specific definition of hamlets established by the provincial government.

Indigenous Communities

Alberta stands as the sole province in Canada to have negotiated a territorially bound self-government agreement with the Métis community. Within Alberta, there are eight Métis Settlements.¹³

While other provinces may have agreements with the Métis, the Alberta-Métis Settlements Accord holds a distinctive status as it establishes the only Métis land base in the country (Metis Settlement General Council, n.d.). These Métis Settlements are located on land designated for the Métis community through this provincial agreement. As the enforcement of laws necessitates control over a specific territory, these self-governing Métis polities are the sole entities possessing such territorial authority.

The relationship between these communities and the Alberta government has evolved through successive agreements, with the most recent being the Alberta-Métis Settlements Accord in 1989 (Government of Alberta, “Métis Settlements,” n.d.). Similar to other self-governing entities whose powers are negotiated through agreements, the Métis Settlements possess natural-person powers that are comparable to those of typical local governments. Furthermore, a separate agreement signed in 1990 and amended in 2013 grants the Settlements certain royalties from the extraction of underground minerals, including petroleum (Government of Alberta, “Métis Settlement Legislation...”, n.d.).

¹³ Please note that official documentation uses the spelling “Metis” rather than “Métis” with the acute accent.

BRITISH COLUMBIA (BC)



In the province of British Columbia, the local governance system encompasses 188 incorporated communities and over 1,300 unincorporated communities as defined by the government. BC employs a two-tier municipal system consisting of 27 regional districts at the upper tier and 161 municipalities at the lower tier (CivicInfo BC, n.d.).

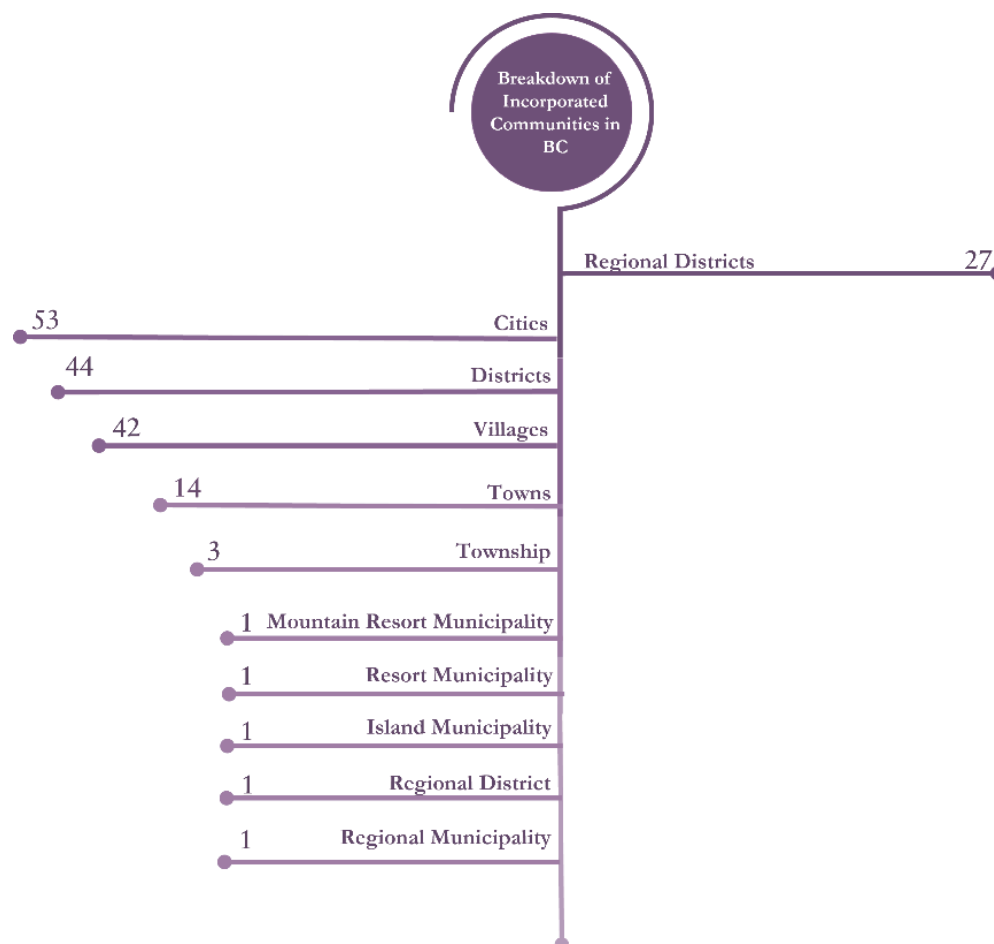
Lower-Tier Municipalities and Governance

The incorporation and governance of lower-tier municipalities and regional districts are regulated by the *Local Government Act* (1998). However, their administration and functions are outlined by the *Community Charter* (2003), except for Vancouver, which falls under the *Vancouver Charter* (1953). These charters specify the powers and procedures of municipalities and regional districts, which are administered by the BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

At the lower tier, there are 10 different types of municipalities, each with its own set of incorporation criteria and governance models. The head of a lower-tier municipal council in BC is always referred to as the Mayor, who is elected at large. Municipalities can have 4, 6, 8, or 10 councillors in addition to the mayor, as determined by bylaw. If a municipal

council wishes to decrease the number of councillors, a direct vote by residents is required. However, increasing the number of councillors does not necessitate a resident vote.

Classification. The different types of lower-tier municipalities and their governance models in BC (together with upper-tier municipalities) are as follows:



- **City (53):** To establish a city, the population must be equal to or greater than 5,000. Cities with a population of 50,000 or more are typically represented by a mayor and 8 councillors, although this can be modified by bylaw. For cities with a population below 50,000, the usual representation is a mayor and 6 councillors, but this can also be changed by bylaw.
- **District (44):** To establish a district, the area must be greater than 800 hectares, and the population density must be less than 5 persons per hectare. Similar to cities,

districts with a population of 50,000 or more typically have a mayor and 8 councillors, while those with a population below 50,000 have a mayor and 6 councillors, subject to bylaw modification.

- *Village (42)*: Villages can be established if the population is equal to or less than 2,500. Typically, villages are represented by a mayor and 4 councillors, but this can be altered by bylaw. It is possible for a village to be incorporated within a reserve with the agreement of a band council.
- *Town (14)*: Towns require a population greater than 2,500 for incorporation. The usual representation for towns is a mayor and 4 councillors, although this can be changed by bylaw.
- *Mountain resort municipality (1)*: A mountain resort municipality must have operations such as alpine ski lifts, year-round recreation, and overnight accommodation within its boundaries. The council of a mountain resort municipality may include one member appointed by the minister. Currently, Sun Peaks is the only mountain resort municipality in BC, governed by a mayor and four councillors who are elected at large.
- *Resort municipality (1)*: Whistler is the sole resort municipality in BC, incorporated under the *Resort Municipality of Whistler Act (1996)*. Its purpose is to promote, facilitate, and encourage the development, maintenance, and operation of a resort promotion area, in addition to regular municipal purposes. Whistler is governed by a mayor and six councillors who are elected at large (Resort Municipality of Whistler, n.d.).
- *Township (3)*: Some districts are also designated as townships, a term reflecting an older classification of municipalities.
- *Island municipality (1)*: Municipalities within the Islands Trust area, which is specially protected for environmental conservation under the *Islands Trust Act*, are referred to as island municipalities. They have the same structure, powers, and duties as district municipalities.

In addition to the above, lower-tier municipalities include two types for which incorporation criteria and governance models are not available due to limited information:

- *Indian government district (1)*
- *Regional municipality (1)*

Upper-Tier Municipalities and Governance

In addition to the 162 incorporated municipalities, British Columbia comprises 27 regional districts, which function as federations composed of municipalities, electoral areas, and, in some cases, Treaty First Nations. Regional districts serve three main roles: providing region-wide services, delivering inter-municipal services benefiting multiple municipalities, and offering local government services to unincorporated communities within the regional district (Government of British Columbia, “Regional Districts in BC,” n.d.).

Regional districts are responsible for emergency management and solid waste management, while other services provided beyond these essentials are determined by member municipalities and the regional district’s board of directors. Member municipalities delegate some of their authority to the regional district. The specific services offered vary across regional districts based on the needs and preferences of local communities. However, regional districts are not involved in road maintenance or policing (Government of British Columbia, “Regional Districts in BC,” n.d.).

The governance of regional districts is carried out by a board of directors. The districts are divided into electoral areas, with one elected director representing each area. Additionally, each member municipality and applicable First Nation appoints one or more directors to the board based on population. Elected members hold office for four years, while appointed members serve at the discretion of the municipal council they represent. Each board member typically has one vote. However, when making decisions related to the budget, a weighted vote is used, giving board members representing areas with larger populations more than one vote.

Elections. Municipal elections in British Columbia are regulated by the *Local Government Act*. All municipalities hold elections every four years during the third week of November. A council can choose to have all or some of the councillors elected based on a neighborhood constituency system, similar to wards or electoral districts. This requires the establishment of these constituencies through a bylaw. While Elections BC provides support to municipalities in administering local elections, it does not directly administer them.

In BC, candidates can seek endorsements from Elector Organizations or Civic Political Parties (Elections BC, n.d.). To receive an endorsement, an organization must submit an application to the municipal chief election officer and the BC chief electoral officer before the nomination period ends.

Eligibility to Vote in a Municipal Election in British Columbia:

Eligibility Criteria	Voting in Municipal Elections
Canadian citizenship	Must be a Canadian citizen
Age	Must be 18 years of age or older
Residency in BC	Must have resided in BC for at least 6 consecutive months prior to registering to vote
Custody or Incarceration	Must not be currently in custody of law enforcement, in prison, or under sentence for an indictable offence
Elections Offence	Must never have been found guilty of an election offence (e.g., double voting, buying votes, etc.)
Residency in the Municipality	Must have resided in the municipality for on voting day, AND/OR
Property Ownership	Must have owned property in the municipality for 30 days prior to registration

Eligibility to Run for Municipal Office in British Columbia:

Eligibility Criteria	Running for Municipal Office
Age	Must be 18 years of age or older by general voting day
Canadian citizenship	Must be a Canadian citizen
Residency in BC	Must be a resident of British Columbia for at least 6 months immediately before the relevant time
Disqualification	Must not be disqualified under the Local Government Act or any other relevant act

Unincorporated Communities

The province of British Columbia is home to more than 1,300 unincorporated communities. The Government of British Columbia does not provide a specific definition for unincorporated communities. Generally, unincorporated communities in the province can be categorized into two main types:

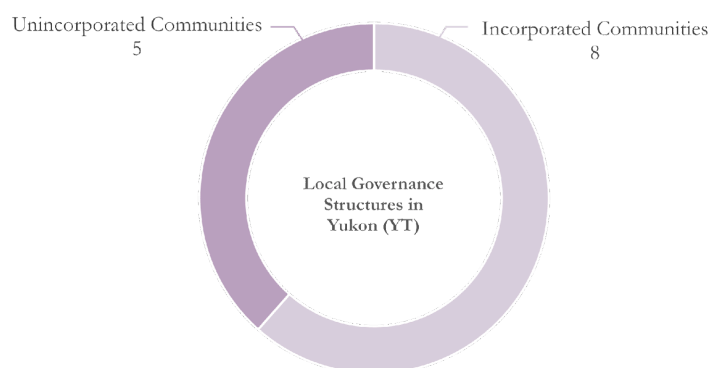
- *Unincorporated regional districts (1)*: Out of the 27 regional districts at the upper-lower tier in British Columbia, the Stikine Region stands as the only area in the province that is not incorporated within a regional district or municipality. Within the Stikine Region, the Atlin Community Improvement District serves as the local authority responsible for providing essential services such as drainage, fire protection, sidewalks, and more to the residents of Atlin. Additionally, the improvement district holds a planning advisory role, representing the community's interests in communications with provincial agencies regarding land use matters (Government of British Columbia, "Stikine Region, n.d.).
- *Electoral areas (160)*: The remaining twenty-six regional districts in British Columbia have unincorporated areas known as electoral areas. According to Statistics Canada's Census Profile (2021), there are 160 electoral areas in the province. Citizens residing in electoral areas still have access to certain forms of local government representation by electing representatives to their regional district boards. Within each electoral area, there may be numerous smaller unincorporated communities.

For example, Electoral Area A in Metro Vancouver encompasses unincorporated communities such as the University Endowment Lands (where the University of British Columbia is located), Barnston Island, and others (Metro Vancouver, n.d.).

Data by Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada also identifies 254 unincorporated places, 55 Indian Reserves¹⁴, 13 Island Trusts, 7 Nisga'a Villages, and 5 retired population centres in British Columbia. These regions are categorized as designated places. These 334 designated places represent small unincorporated communities that do not meet the criteria for defining municipalities or population centres. Provinces and territories, in collaboration with Statistics Canada, establish these designated places solely for data presentation purposes. It is important not to confuse these instances with the definition of unincorporated communities provided by the province itself.

¹⁴ Some Indian Reserves are in the census subdivision category.

YUKON (YT)

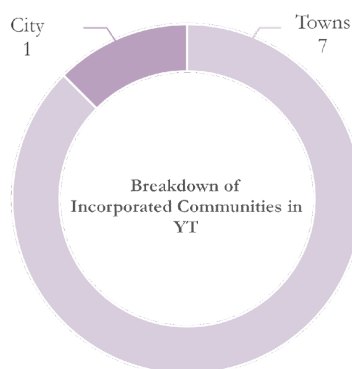


In the territory of Yukon, the local governance system comprises eight incorporated communities and five unincorporated communities as identified by the territory (Government of Yukon, 2023).

Incorporated Communities

The *Municipal Act* (2002), administered by the Yukon Department of Community Affairs, governs municipalities in Yukon.

Classification. There are only two types of municipalities in Yukon, each following different criteria for incorporation:



- **City (1):** To establish a city, the population must be equal to or greater than 2500 (estimated). Currently, Whitehorse is the only city in Yukon.
- **Town (7):** To establish a town, the population must be equal to or greater than 300 (estimated). A town may be referred to as either a town or a village. The exception to this is the City of Dawson, which is categorized as a town but had already been named a city prior to the enactment of the *Municipal Act*. These different names are purely cosmetic and do not affect the governance or powers of the towns. Yukon is home to seven towns.

Governance. In cities, the head of the city council is known as the mayor, who is elected at large. The number of councillors is determined during the incorporation of the city and can be changed through bylaws. Cities may choose to establish electoral divisions called wards in which case each councillor is elected by the residents of their respective ward. Otherwise, councillors are elected at large. The Whitehorse City Council consists of six councillors (excluding the mayor), and the city is not divided into wards.

In towns, the head of the town council is called the mayor or the chair. The number of councillors is established during the town's incorporation and can be modified through bylaws. Similar to cities, towns can opt to establish electoral divisions known as wards, with

councillors elected by their respective wards. Alternatively, councillors may be elected at large.

Elections. Municipal elections in Yukon are regulated by the *Municipal Act*. All municipalities hold elections every three years on the third Thursday of October. Yukon does not have recognized municipal political parties, and municipal elections and councils operate on a non-partisan basis. While school council elections are administered by Elections Yukon, other local elections are conducted by the municipalities themselves.

The following table outlines the eligibility requirements for voting in municipal elections in Yukon. All persons eligible to vote in a local election are also eligible to run for municipal office, unless they owe a debt to the municipality exceeding \$500 (other than a debt for current taxes), have been convicted for corrupt practices or are currently employed by the municipality or as a judge in a court.

Eligibility Criteria	Voting & Running for Municipal Office
Citizenship	Must be a Canadian citizen.
Age	Must be 18 years of age or older.
Residency in Municipality	Must have lived in the municipality for at least one year prior to Election Day.

Unincorporated Communities

Unincorporated areas in Yukon are represented by local advisory councils, which provide advice on local area needs to the Minister of Community Services. The process to become a Local Advisory Area, denoting an unincorporated area with a local advisory council, is outlined in the *Municipal Act*.

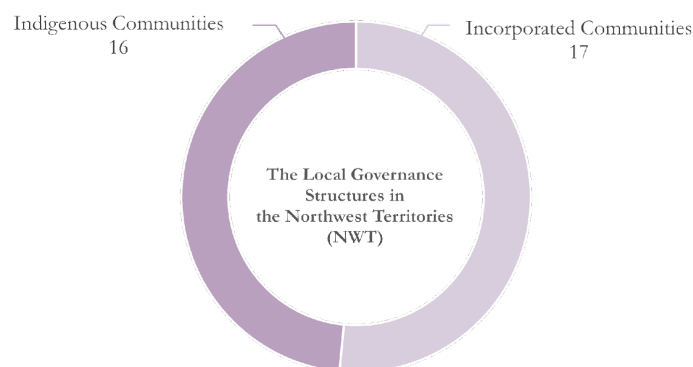
Currently, there are five local advisory councils in Yukon: Hamlet of Ibex Valley, Hamlet of Mount Lorne, Marsh Lake Local Advisory Council, South Klondike Local Advisory Council, and Tagish Local Advisory Council (Government of Yukon, n.d.). It is important to note that local advisory councils do not possess regulatory or other authoritative powers to enact

bylaws. All aspects of community governance fall under the jurisdiction of the Territorial Government as specified in the applicable territorial legislation.

Data by Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada's Census Profile (2021) designates one interim protected land and one Aboriginal¹⁵ settlement as a designated place for the purpose of data provision. These should not be confused with the five local advisory councils in Yukon.

¹⁵ Please note that though some government/official material still employs this terminology, this term is not used widely among Indigenous communities.

THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (NWT)

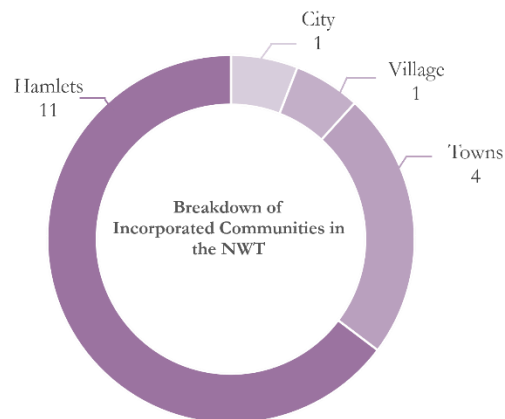


In the Northwest Territories (NWT), the local governance system consists of 17 incorporated communities and 16 Indigenous communities. Notably, there are no unincorporated communities identified in the territory (Government of Northwest Territories, n.d.).

The administration of municipalities in the NWT is overseen by the Northwest Territories Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. For administrative purposes, the department divides the territory into five regions: Dehcho, Inuvik, North Slave, Sahtu, and South Slave. It is important to note that these regions do not possess their own government and should not be mistaken for upper-level administrations in a two-tier system, such as the regions in British Columbia.

Incorporated Communities and Governance

The NWT follows a single-tier municipal system with four main types of municipalities, each with distinct incorporation criteria. Cities, towns, and villages fall under the *Cities, Towns, and Villages Act* (2003), while hamlets are governed by the *Hamlets Act* (2003).



- **City (1):** There is only one city in the NWT, Yellowknife, which requires a taxable assessment of at least \$200 million for incorporation.
- **Town (4):** The NWT has four towns, each requiring a taxable assessment of at least \$50 million for incorporation.
- **Village (1):** There is one village in the NWT, also with a taxable assessment requirement of at least \$10 million. In all municipalities, the head of the council is referred to as the mayor, who is elected through a general election. Typically, cities, towns, and villages have eight councillors (excluding the mayor), but this number can be altered through bylaws.
- **Hamlet (11):** The head of a hamlet council is always called the mayor, who is elected at large. Usually, hamlets have 8 councillors (not including the mayor), but this number can be changed by the Minister at the request of a council.

Elections. Municipal elections in the NWT are regulated by the *Local Authorities Elections Act*, administered by Elections NWT. The election dates differ depending on the type of municipality. Municipal councils, referred to as Members of a local authority in NWT legislation, serve a one-year term after being appointed through an election process. It is worth noting that the Northwest Territories does not have recognized municipal political parties, and thus, municipal elections and councils operate on a non-partisan basis.

For cities, towns, and villages in the NWT, the general municipal election for mayors and councillors takes place on the third Monday in October of an election year. The municipal council of a city or town may decide, through a bylaw, to divide the municipality into wards for the purpose of electing councillors. However, in the case of hamlets, municipal elections are held on the second Monday in December of an election year.

The following table summarizes the eligibility criteria both for voting in municipal elections in the NWT and running for a municipal office:

Eligibility Criteria	Voting	Running for Municipal Office
Citizenship	Canadian citizen	Canadian citizen
Age	At least 18 years old	At least 18 years old
Residency	Resided in the Electoral district for at least twelve months preceding election day	Resided in the electoral district for at least twelve months preceding election day
Ordinary Residence	Must be ordinarily resident in the electoral district	Must be ordinarily resident in the electoral district
Disqualifications	N/A	Not disqualified as a judge, member of the Legislative Assembly, employee of the municipality, or someone convicted of a major election offense within three years prior or convicted of an offense punishable by imprisonment for five years or more within the three years immediately preceding election day.

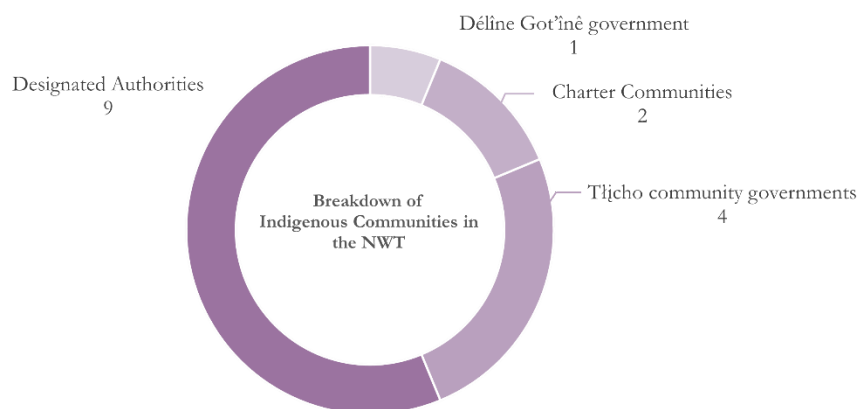
Unincorporated Communities

There are no documented instances of unincorporated communities within the Northwest Territories, according to data provided by Statistics Canada.

Data by Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada does not identify any designated places in the Northwest Territories. However, the territory is divided into six census divisions known as Region 1-6, Unorganized. The term “unorganized” does not carry administrative implications or suggest the absence of organization within these regions. These six divisions were introduced in 2011 to replace the previous census subdivisions that were labeled according to regional names, such as the former Fort Smith Region and Inuvik Region¹⁶. These regions exist solely for the purpose of statistical analysis and presentation.

Indigenous Communities

Within the Northwest Territories, there are three distinct types of Indigenous communities based on various provisions for autonomous Indigenous communities: charter communities, self-government, and designated authorities.



- *Charter community (2):* Charter communities are incorporated municipalities that arise from self-government agreements with Indigenous nations. These communities fall under the *Charter Communities Act (2003)* and each operates

¹⁶ This term should not be confused with the modern-day administrative region of the same name.

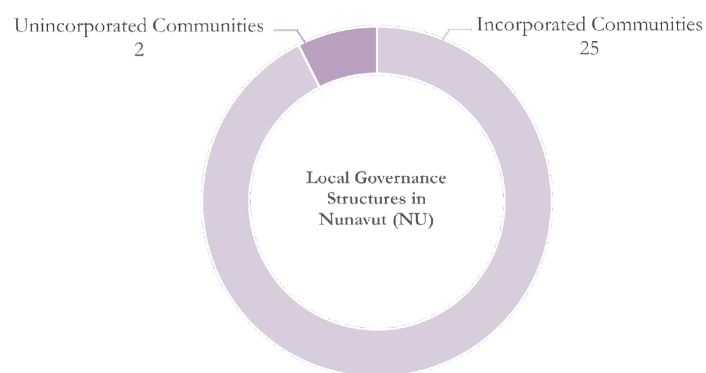
under its own charter, specifying the composition of its council and the term length for elected representatives (NWTAC, n.d.). Typically, the council members are selected from the leadership of the associated Indigenous nation. Election day for charter communities is determined by the specific provisions outlined in their individual charters.

- *Self-government (5)*: The Northwest Territories has two subcategories of self-governments: Tłı̨cho community governments (4) and Délı̨ne Got'ınê governments (1).
 - *Tłı̨cho community government (4)*: There are four Tłı̨cho community governments with self-governance: Behchoko, Whati, Gameti, and Wekweeti. All four communities are located within the North Slave region and have incorporated municipalities within the land designated by the Tłı̨cho Agreement, a modern treaty encompassing self-government and land claims between the Northwest Territories and Canadian governments, and the Tłı̨cho Nation. These communities operate under the *Tłı̨cho Community Government Act* (2004). The leader of a Tłı̨cho community is referred to as the chief and must be a Tłı̨cho citizen. Additionally, the community is represented by an even number of councillors ranging from 4 to 12. Half of the council seats must be filled by Tłı̨cho citizens, while the remaining seats are open to any candidate. All council members are elected through a general election. The Tłı̨cho Community Governments' elections are governed by the *Tłı̨cho Community Government Act*, with election day occurring every four years on the second Monday in June.
 - *Délı̨ne Got'ınê government (1)*: The Délı̨ne Got'ınê government is the self-governing body for the community of Délı̨ne, located in the Sahtu region. This government is incorporated under the *Délı̨ne Final Self-Government Agreement Act*. The K'aowádó Ke, the council, is composed of eight members who serve a four-year term. It includes the ʔek'wahtı́dó, an Elders' representative appointed by the ʔqhda K'aqwə Ke (Elders Council), as well as members at large. The K'aowádó Ke is responsible for governing and

passing laws, while the Finance Committee, comprising members of the K'aowedo Ke, holds ultimate responsibility for day-to-day decision-making within the government.

- *Designated Authority (9)*: First Nations Designated Authorities are incorporated within communities where the Band government serves as the primary authority for delivering municipal services. These authorities are established through the application of the Indian Act and include Colville Lake, Dettah, Jean Marie River, Kakisa, K'atlodechee First Nation, Lutsel K'e, Nahanni Butte, Wrigley, and Sambaa K'e. They are not subject to territorial legislation governing municipalities.

NUNAVUT (NU)

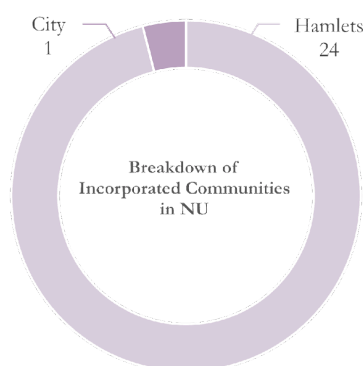


In Nunavut, the local governance system comprises 25 incorporated communities and 2 unincorporated communities as identified within the territory (Government of Nunavut, 2021).

Incorporated Communities and Governance

Municipalities in Nunavut operate under the Northwest Territories' *Cities, Towns, and Villages Act* as well as the *Hamlets Act*,¹⁷ and they are administered by the Nunavut Department of Community and Government Affairs. These municipalities primarily fall into two categories. The leader of a municipal council is referred to as the mayor, and according to legislation, there should be 8 councillors on a municipal council. However, this number can be altered through bylaws, and currently, all municipalities in Nunavut have fewer than 8 councillors.

¹⁷ Formerly part of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut was established as a Canadian territory through the signing of the *Nunavut Act* on April 1, 1999, making it the newest of the three Canadian territories. See Kenneth John Rea, "Nunavut," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2022), accessed March 2, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nunavut>



- **City (1):** Iqaluit is the sole city in Nunavut. The Iqaluit City Council presently consists of 8 councillors, in addition to the mayor.
- **Hamlet (24)**

Elections. Municipal elections in Nunavut are governed by an amended version of the Northwest Territories' *Local Authorities Elections Act*. These elections occur on different dates depending on the type of municipality and are administered by Elections Nunavut. Notably, there are no officially recognized municipal political parties in Nunavut, as municipal elections and councils are non-partisan.

General elections for mayors and councillors in cities, towns, and villages are held on the third Monday of October in an election year. The municipal council of a city or town has the authority to divide the municipality into wards through bylaws for the purpose of electing councillors. Municipal elections for hamlets are conducted on the second Monday in December. As for charter communities and settlement corporations, their general election day is determined by the community charter or the order establishing the settlement corporation.

The following table outlines the eligibility requirements for voting in a municipal election and running for municipal office in Nunavut:

Eligibility Criteria	Voting	Running for Municipal Office
Canadian citizenship	Required	Required
Minimum age of 18 years	Required	Not Applicable
Residency in the electoral district	12 consecutive months	Not Applicable
Ordinary residence in the electoral district	Required	Not Applicable
Eligible to vote in the municipality	Not Applicable	Required
Disqualification	Not Applicable	Required ¹⁸

Unincorporated Communities

As per the Nunavut Land Use Plan, Nunavut is home to two unincorporated communities: Bathurst Inlet and Umingmaktok (Nunavut Planning Commission, 2021). These communities hold the status of Inuit Owned Land under the Nunavut Agreement.

Data by Statistics Canada. According to the Census Profile of 2021, Kugluktuk is identified as a retired population centre, making it the sole designated place in Nunavut (Statistics Canada, 2021). Additionally, the Census Profile recognizes three unorganized territories in Nunavut: Kitikmeot, Qikiqtaaluk, and Kivalliq (Statistics Canada, 2021). However, it is important to note that Kitikmeot and Qikiqtaaluk lack permanent settlements, while Kivalliq boasts only four permanent settlements. These unorganized territories, categorized as census subdivisions by Statistics Canada (2021), serve the purpose of statistical analysis and presentation. It is crucial not to conflate them with the aforementioned Bathurst Inlet and Umingmaktok, which are classified as settlements in the Census Profile of 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2021). Another settlement of note is Nanisivik,

¹⁸ Disqualification as judge, member of the Legislative Assembly, employee of the municipality, or someone convicted of a major election offense within three years prior or convicted of an offense punishable by imprisonment for five years or more within the three years immediately preceding election day.

which was once a company town but now stands abandoned without any permanent residents.

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