



Constitutional Reform Consultation Sessions

*held April - June 2022
in all 12 Regions across Saskatchewan*

Summary Report

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*This summary was compiled based on feedback gathered during the
Spring 2022 Constitutional Reform Consultation Sessions
held in all 12 Regions across Saskatchewan*



Overview

INTRODUCTION

In April 2019, the Métis Nation Legislative Assembly (MNLA) mandated a province-wide consultation process on the reform of the *Constitution of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan* (“the *Constitution*”). A three-phase process was developed and “*Voice of the People*” Consultation sessions commenced in Fall 2019, with an interim report presented at the Fall 2019 MNLA.

Phase Two and Three of the consultations were halted in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resumed in Spring 2022. From April to June 2022, the Constitutional Reform team, led by the Vice President’s office, travelled to communities in all 12 Regions and hosted three virtual sessions, with discussions focused on:

- Métis Judicial (Tribunal) System
- Mapping and Boundaries
- Proposed Changes to the *Saskatchewan Métis Elections Act, 2007* (“the *Elections Act*”)
- Proposed Changes to the *Constitution’s* Amending Formula

DESCRIPTION OF THE SPRING 2022 DISCUSSION TOPICS

Métis Judicial (Tribunal) System

The development of a Métis Judicial System (i.e., “Judicial Tribunal” or “Métis Court”) was directed by a resolution passed at the MNLA in 2018 and supported by the *Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement* (MGRSA), signed in 2019. Creating a Métis Court would include community consultation under Indigenous peoples’ inherent right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), as affirmed by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP).

Led by Marilyn Poitras, System Designer, a team of experts would review community feedback and data on existing Indigenous judicial models, consider the current context of Métis needs, and design a prototype Métis Court that reflected Michif values, traditions, customs and ways of knowing. The prototype would be brought back to communities in Fall 2022 for further review and revision, with the intent to implement the tribunal in 2023.

Mapping and Boundaries

The map attached as Schedule A to the *Constitution* lacks well-defined boundaries, which created challenges during elections. A proposed regional boundaries map was developed by the MN-S to address discrepancies and was presented by the Chief Electoral Office during the consultation sessions. The attendees were informed that changes to the maps would require constitutional amendments and ratification at an Annual General Assembly (AGA), and that no changes had been made to date. It was suggested that the MNLA could adopt the proposed maps prior to the 2025 MN-S Election. However, participants at the consultation sessions highlighted that changes to boundaries had far-reaching impacts, and further consultation was required. There was overwhelming support for a full review of the boundaries, rather than small adjustments.

OVERVIEW

Proposed Changes to the Elections Act

Proposed changes to the *Elections Act* were presented, which were primarily technical or legal in nature, and related to the growth and evolution of the MN-S.

In the consultation sessions, discussion largely focused on:

- Byelections, and whether they could be held virtually
- Proof of voters' eligibility
- The provision of voters' lists to electoral candidates
- The Chief Electoral Officer's authority to approve the form of ballot and the appointment of election officials
- Considerations of limits to contributions and campaign spending by candidates
- Whether Youth and Women representatives should be included on the provincial election ballot.

Proposed Changes to the Constitution's Amending Formula

The Amending Formula, found under Articles 15 and 16 of the *Constitution*, was written based on a not-for-profit model, and participants were asked for their feedback on a government model for constitutional amendments. Discussions focused on the importance of the AGA as a venue for citizens to have a direct role in MN-S' decision making. It was clear that citizens would like to continue the AGA, and that virtual assemblies, or hosting the AGA in different communities would be considered.

Intent of the Consultation Sessions and Proposed Next Steps

The consultation sessions provided an opportunity for Métis people across Saskatchewan to voice their thoughts, experiences, and ideas relating to the *Constitution* and its reform. The MN-S will conduct further consultation on additional discussion topics. Feedback gathered at the sessions will be compiled into an interim report and presented to the MNLA.

A detailed information kit can be found on the [Voice of the People](#) website. Citizens were encouraged to email further comments to info@metisvoice.ca.

Note: the attachments below reflect citizen feedback, and it is recognized that some comments may require follow up and/or clarification of facts.

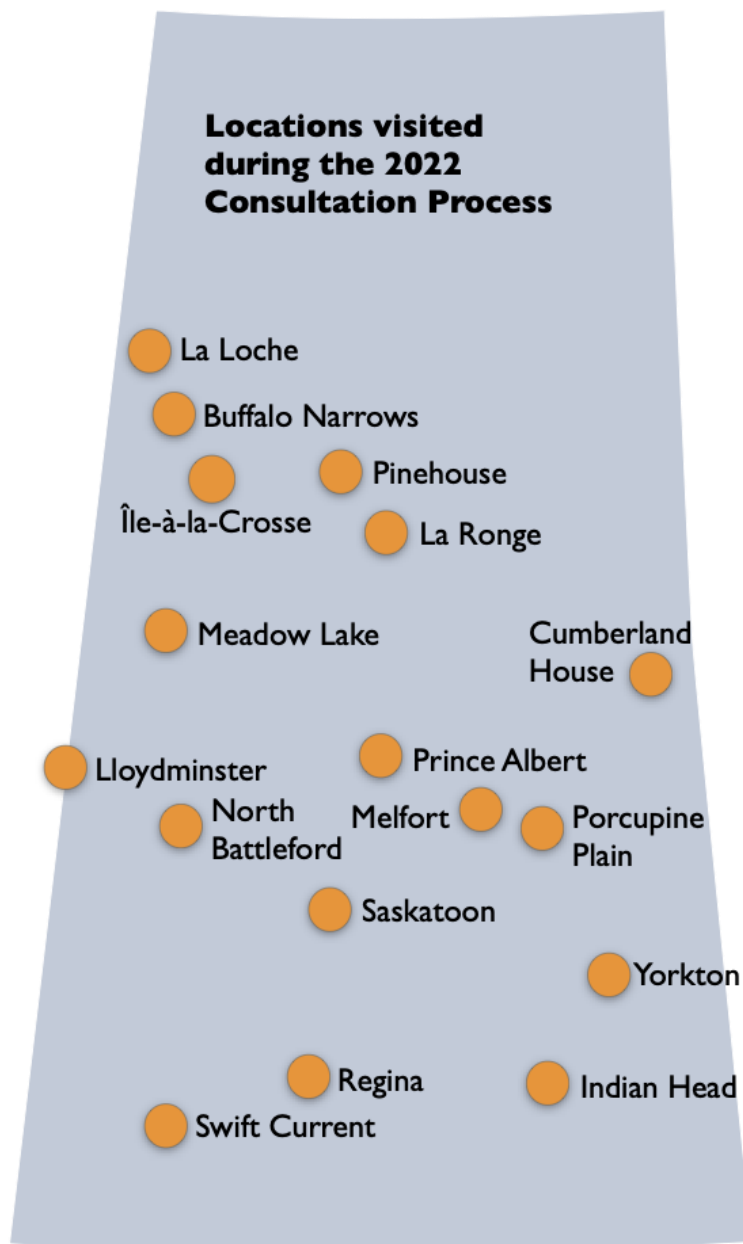
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LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

The following items are attached to the Summary:

- Feedback Gathered during Community Consultation Sessions, presented by Region
- Summary of Feedback Gathered during Virtual Consultation Sessions
- Summary of Key Themes Heard Overall
- List of Frequently Asked Questions
- List of Reference Materials
- List of Acronyms

Community Participation and Feedback



18

Communities Visited

Community Consultations were held in communities across all 12 MN-S Regions.

500+

Participants

More than 500 participants attended the community and virtual consultation sessions.

3

Virtual Sessions

Three virtual sessions were held in April and May 2022, two of which were specifically held for Métis Youth.

4

MNLA Dialogue Forums

Dialogue Forums held in Spring 2019, Fall 2019, Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 included discussion of Constitutional Reform, the Judicial Tribunal and the Commissioner's Review of Locals.

50+

Written Submissions

More than 50 written submissions were received, providing comments on Constitutional Reform.

Northern Region 2

Key themes identified from participant feedback provided at the following sessions:

- La Loche - April 4 and 5, 2022
 - Buffalo Narrows - April 6 and 7, 2022 (morning and evening sessions)
-

Judicial Tribunal

- Ensure the tribunal is arm's length from the MN-S.

Mapping and Boundaries

- Establish clear criteria for what constitutes Regions (consider using a population-based model)
- Many Métis citizens would prefer to belong to the Local from which they were born and raised, not the Local in the community where they currently reside.

Elections Act

- Allow individuals with the second highest number of votes to assume roles that Elected Officials can no longer fulfil
- Elected Officials want to access voters' and citizenship lists, to identify their constituents
- Amend the *Constitution* to make 18 the legal voting age
- Hold electronic/virtual byelections and set campaign spending limits
- Include the Women's representative on the provincial election ballot
- Address concerns regarding individuals holding both Treaty and MN-S citizenship cards.

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- Establish a schedule to regularly review and update the *Constitution*
- Hold virtual AGAs or hold them in different locations across the province to increase access for citizens in rural communities
- Hold Elected Officials accountable and ensure they adequately represent citizens at the MNLA.

Additional Themes Identified

- Update the process for ratifying decisions at the MNLA and AGA, to be more representative of the population across the province
- Build a government that is reflective of Métis culture and values; not based on a colonial system
- Review existing Locals and ensure they meet eligibility requirements for recognition by MN-S
- Recognize the unique needs of the North and rural communities
- Provide board governance training to Locals and Regional Councils, and provide capacity to undertake day-to-day business and provide services to citizens.

Eastern Region 2

Key themes identified from participant feedback provided at the following sessions:

- Porcupine Plain - April 21, 2022
 - Melfort - April 22, 2022
-

Judicial Tribunal

- Build trust in a judicial system
- Involve Elders and Youth, with a representative from each Region
- Use technology (i.e., virtual sessions) to support those who cannot attend in person
- Mediation is an important component; find opportunities to heal rather than punish.

Mapping and Boundaries

- Consult with Kinistino as to whether they want to be a part of Eastern Region 2
- The Chief Electoral Officer should work with Locals to determine polling station locations
- The boundaries in Eastern Region 2 will require additional consultation.

Elections Act

- Laws should apply to all levels of government (Provincial, Regional and Local)
- Citizenship or voters' lists should be provided so Local Presidents can contact citizens in the community and advise them of programs and services
- Set a fixed election date
- There are concerns over inconsistencies related to providing proof of eligibility at previous elections
- Citizens should have the ability to call for an electoral recount
- An Ombudsperson role could be created to handle complaints under the *Elections Act*
- Campaign spending limits could be set, considering the varying costs of running in a provincial election versus a regional election.

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- Consider creating a process at an AGA for a new election
- Maintain the AGA, as it provides citizens with a voice; however, a process is required to ensure equal representation of citizens across the province.

Additional Comments/Themes Identified

- Ensure the MN-S model of government is unique to Métis in Saskatchewan (e.g., Laws of the Buffalo Hunt); it should not be based on colonial models
- Individuals should choose which Local they want to belong to; consider creating Locals based on criteria other than geography (e.g. "Two-Spirit Locals")
- Citizens want greater accountability; there is a sense that the PMC may be making decisions "behind closed doors".

Eastern Region 1

*Key themes identified from participant feedback held at the following session:
Cumberland House - April 23, 2022*

Judicial Tribunal

- The Tribunal must be independent of the MN-S
- Tribunal members must be carefully selected on a case-by-case basis, with consideration of their ties to the community
- Mediation is important; suggestion to look at the University of Victoria's Indigenous Law program.

Mapping and Boundaries

- Population and impacts on hunting, trapping and harvesting must be considered.

Elections Act

- Schedule provincial elections at the same time as Local elections to increase voter turnout
- Lack of funding prevents candidates from running in elections
- Add Youth representatives to the provincial ballot – one from the north and one from the south
- Engage and support Youth in the MN-S government
- Electoral candidates and Local Presidents would like access to voters' lists
- Allow citizens to vote at polling stations in the location of the town they are working
- Implement spending caps for electoral campaigns, with different amounts for regional and provincial elections
- More oversight and transparency of election contributions
- Keep the "general offence" provision high-level and allow the tribunal to adjudicate matters on a case-by-case basis.

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- The AGA provides an opportunity for citizens to have a voice
- To maintain quorum at the MNLA, a suggestion was made to not pay attendees of the MNLA until the end of the final day.

Additional Comments/Themes Identified

- Losing citizens due to individuals choosing to take First Nations status is concerning.

Western Region 2A

*Key themes identified from participant feedback provided at the following sessions:
Saskatoon on April 26, May 28 and June 14, 2022*

Judicial Tribunal

- Create a system of supports and mediation to prevent punitive measures; include an Indigenous world view of interconnectedness and restorative law
- Include Youth, and support them through the tribunal
- Include methods of enforcement when someone contravenes laws/rules of the MN-S
- Articulate the roles and accountabilities of Elected Officials; the tribunal can address matters when Elected Officials are not abiding by rules and demonstrating accountability
- Include a provincial Métis Ombudsperson for the MN-S to address matters related to justice, housing and policy
- Utilize the Senate or Regional Elders on the tribunal, as Elders have traditionally been used in dispute resolution.

Mapping and Boundaries

- Consult specifically on the boundaries that will affect the Region and clearly articulate the changes; do not consult on the entire map in each consultation session
- Regional Councils and Locals require the rationale as to why changes are proposed
- Consider representation by population in each Region
- Mandate a 'Regional Boundary Commission' to develop boundary changes.

Elections Act

- Share citizenship/membership lists with Local Presidents
- The citizenship application process requires improvement to allow more people to vote in elections
- Hold Regional meetings specific to women to provide direction to the provincial government
- Eliminate the letter from the Registry as proof of eligibility for the next provincial elections; citizenship cards should be the only valid piece of identification for voting.

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- Do not present "pros and cons" of the amending formula
- The importance of the AGA as an opportunity for citizens to have a voice
- Concern that an AGA had not been held in a long time
- Maintain the roles of the provincial Secretary and Treasurer.

Additional Comments/Themes Identified

- The importance of looking at Locals, holding Local Presidents accountable to citizens, and ensuring they are operating in a fair and transparent way
- Concern that Local Presidents were not attending the consultation sessions

WESTERN REGION 2A

- The expectation that the Commissioner for the Review of Locals will meet with each Local and gain a complete understanding of the underlying issues
- The MN-S should not transition to a colonial-style government
- There is a lack of transparency at Regional Council meetings and frequent in-camera sessions
- The citizenship application form contains a section regarding consent for releasing personal information; When was this section added, and what is personal information used for?
- Locals require capacity and funding to operate effectively
- Acknowledge the grassroots and the importance of their role in the MN-S government
- Regional Directors should host constitutional reform meetings before the MN-S team goes into community
- Include the word “Michif” in the Constitution.

Western Region 1A

Key themes identified from participant feedback provided at the following sessions:

Lloydminster - May 3, 2022

North Battleford - May 4, 2022 (morning and evening sessions)

Judicial Tribunal

- Expand the Tribunal's oversight to areas of Child and Family Services
- Ensure the Tribunal is built based on feedback from citizens; demonstrate that the MN-S is listening to its citizens
- Create a system that reflects Métis customs, traditions and culture; not a colonial system
- Ensure the tribunal is arm's length from the government; citizens need time to build trust
- The tribunal could address individuals who hold both Treaty and MN-S cards.

Mapping and Boundaries

- There are communities in Western Region 1A that have historically voted in Western Region 2
- Changes to the maps and boundaries must be carefully considered as they may impact hunting and harvesting rights in the area.

Elections Act

- Appreciation to the MN-S Electoral Office for how the 2021 election was held
- Some individuals with Treaty status also hold MN-S cards and vote in MN-S elections
- Keep voters' lists private to protect the identity of vulnerable citizens
 - o Some Locals actively reach out to members and maintain lists of contact information
 - o MN-S to could consider a 1-800 number to connect citizens with Locals
- Implement campaign spending limits and contributions
- Include Youth on the provincial ballot, with representation from the North, South, East and West
- Update citizenship cards to provide proof of current residency
- A Womens' representative not be necessary, as women have reached parity in the MN-S
- Include a two-spirited and non-binary representative on the provincial ballot
- Electoral candidates should provide proof of residency and demonstrate that they spend at least 50% of their time residing in their Region
- The *Elections Act* should apply to all levels of MN-S government (Provincial, Regional and Local)
- Consider the multitude of barriers to participating in elections (e.g. access to technology, transportation, childminding, etc.)
- The slow and complicated process of applying for citizenship prevents some individuals from participating in elections.

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- The AGA should not be the only venue for citizens to be heard; provide opportunities through town halls, consultation sessions, the MN-S website, social media, etc.

Additional Comments/Themes Identified

- The consultation sessions provide important opportunities for citizens to provide feedback
- The Commissioner for the Review of Locals must gain a clear understanding of why so many Métis in Saskatchewan do not belong to a Local
 - o Many people would prefer to belong to the Local in the community they are from or are most closely tied to, not the community in which they currently reside
 - o Create liaisons to assist in connecting citizens to their Locals and the MN-S; the liaisons could also assist in sharing information, completing application forms for programs and services, filing taxes and creating awareness of what services are available to citizens
 - o Locals require governance training and the capacity to conduct business in a clear and transparent manner
- The MN-S should provide support for land and resource agreements with large developers or natural resource companies; concern that citizens and Locals do not have a clear understanding of their Section 35 rights and they require assistance from their government
 - o Provide public education to communities on Free, Prior and Informed Consent, as well as other legal matters
- Advance the negotiation of settlements for residential and day school survivors
- The MN-S needs to consider those who do not have access to technology when sharing important information; utilize radio, newspapers, and mailouts to keep citizens informed.

Northern Region 1

*Key themes identified from participant feedback provided at the following sessions:
La Ronge on May 12, 2022 (morning and evening sessions)*

Judicial Tribunal

- The Tribunal should implement consequences for Elected Officials when they do not abide by the PMC Executive Handbook
- Ensure citizens are clear about what the tribunal can and cannot address.

Mapping and Boundaries

- According to the *Northern Registration Act* and the *Municipalities Act*, the north is designated as a region in provincial legislation, and therefore the new map should recognize the following school divisions:
 - o Île-à-la-Crosse
 - o Creighton
 - o Northern Lights
- The maps and boundaries should include a rationale as to why boundaries are located where they are; connect with Elders and others with historical knowledge to find this information
- Consider renaming the Regions and using names that reflect Métis history and influential people from the Regions.

Elections Act

- The citizenship application process is long and complicated, preventing many Métis in Saskatchewan from becoming citizens and participating in elections
- Voter registration application could include a box that grants permission for electoral campaign managers to access a list of voters
- Allow individuals to vote in the towns in which they work rather than those in which they reside
- Do not share voters' lists for privacy reasons.

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- Virtual attendance at AGAs would increase participation from those who cannot travel to attend
- MN-S should come to communities to get feedback on important matters, as virtual attendance is not an option in many rural communities
- Consider changing the structure of the AGA to facilitate more productive and engaging dialogue
- The AGA is an important way to keep citizens engaged and included
- Locals need to abide by the same rules and policies and demonstrate accountability to their citizens.

Northern Region 3

Key themes identified from participant feedback provided at the following sessions:

Île-à-la-Crosse on May 25, 2022

Pinehouse on May 26, 2022

Judicial Tribunal

- Ensure separation of the tribunal from politics and MN-S administration
- Provide clarity on what the tribunal can address and resolve, how it will be developed and how members will be selected
- The model must be unique to Métis communities and citizens and consider the differences between northern and southern Saskatchewan
- Consult with Elders on how Métis governed themselves before the RCMP arrived
- The tribunal should have a mechanism to advocate for people with disabilities.

Mapping and Boundaries

- There are older reports on MN-S boundaries that made suggestions to reduce the number of regions (e.g., a Stantec report on mapping)
- Do not proceed with adjusting boundaries until the consultation and review are complete
- Boundary adjustments will have impacts on hunting and other activities.

Elections Act

- MN-S citizens' personal information should be protected
- Métis Youth and Women should be included on the provincial election ballot
- Youth representatives could develop policies for the Provincial Métis Youth Council (PMYC) election process, separate from the *Elections Act*
- Consider allowing candidates access to voters' lists with names of minors redacted
- Electronic voting does not increase accessibility for those with limited access to or knowledge of technology
- Campaign spending limits could be implemented, but consider who will oversee the spending and allow contributions from all individuals, not only those who are Métis

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- Consider tasking a separate table to make decisions on amending the *Constitution*; the MNLA and AGAs do not fairly represent citizens
- A plebiscite could be held to amend the *Constitution*
- An "*Annual General Assembly Act*" could outline parameters for engagement
- Entrench the revitalization of languages in the *Constitution*
- Amend the *Constitution* to allow for the removal of Elected Officials
- Concerns that AGAs have not been held for a number of years
- An AGA should be scheduled to include citizens from all 12 Regions, Elders, Youth and Women and to provide an update on the status of the MN-S Senate.

Additional Comments/Themes Identified

- The signing over of rights to the MN-S on the citizenship application form and that this line was added without consulting citizens is concerning
- Authority is supposed to flow from citizens to the MN-S, not from the top down
- Customary adoptions should be permitted when individuals are applying for Métis citizenship; communities should have a greater say in what criteria are used for citizenship
- A different model is required for Locals; the requirement should be more than nine members, and the overall number of Locals across Saskatchewan should be reduced
- Locals are not adequately represented at the MNLA; the range in membership is too broad, and some Local presidents do not consult with their members
- Communities and Locals require the capacity to deliver programs and services to citizens
- MN-S needs to reconsider how it advertises and shares information on consultation sessions; low turnout is due to a lack of awareness
- Communities require support from MN-S when negotiating agreements for mining and other resources.

Western Region 1

*Key themes identified from participant feedback provided at the following sessions:
Meadow Lake on June 13, 2022 (morning and evening sessions)*

Judicial Tribunal

- Ensure the Tribunal has consistent funding and offers a streamlined and focused approach to addressing matters
- Establish clear roles, responsibilities and procedures for Tribunal members
- The Tribunal must be separate from MN-S politics; a Judicial Tribunal Committee could be formed to provide oversight
- Consider having psychologists and social workers on the tribunal
- The Tribunal should provide oversight of Elected Officials and lateral violence within the executive
- Ensure that all rulings and judgements are enforceable
- Create a system that is uniquely Métis and not colonial
- Provide adequate knowledge and education on the unique Métis issues the tribunal will address

Mapping and Boundaries

- Consider the area of Jackfish, which includes Cochin, Meota, and Metinota, as it is unclear where these communities vote and access services
- Boundaries should be created based on citizens' needs; not on the Province of Saskatchewan or rural municipality boundaries
- Changes to the boundaries can impact mutual benefit agreements, land leases and funding that is population-based
- When making changes, MN-S needs to consider capacity and population (e.g., there are more people in Saskatoon than in the Athabasca area).

Elections Act

- Do not remove the grandfather clause
- The process for applying for MN-S citizenship is onerous, and that many individuals do not have the means to complete their applications
- Eliminate a health card as proof of voter eligibility
- Individuals should have the ability to vote in their home communities, even if they no longer reside there
- If electronic voting is in place, MN-S needs to support Elders and others who will struggle with technology
- Byelections are required when Elected Officials cannot fulfill their duties, and all MN-S citizens should vote in the byelection
- Elected Officials should not be allowed to hold two positions
- Vulnerable sector checks should be required for all candidates
- Individuals holding both Treaty and MN-S cards voting in MN-S elections is concerning

WESTERN REGION 1

- Changes in the *Elections Act* should address the elections and election process (e.g., lateral violence, spread of misinformation, slander, etc.)
- Require candidates to submit campaign plans to the Chief Electoral Officer and ensure there is follow-up on that plan.

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- Amendment of the *Constitution* should include procedures/policies to ensure accountability.

Additional Comments/Themes Identified

- Regional Directors are to take direction from Local Presidents
- Review existing reports on boundaries, constitutional reform, citizenship, etc.
- Many individuals want to belong to locals in their home communities rather than the Locals in which they reside
- MN-S could provide workshops for citizens to understand resolutions brought forward to the MNLA, as well as proposed budgets and financial statements.

Western Region 2

Key themes identified from participant feedback provided at the following sessions:

Prince Albert on May 27 and June 15, 2022

Big River on June 16, 2022

Judicial Tribunal

- The Tribunal must be arm's length from MN-S
- Create a selection committee to appoint members to the tribunal
- The Tribunal requires mediators who can speak Cree, Michif, and French
- Use Elders and other experts on the tribunal (e.g., harvesting, families, elections)
- The model must be created in a way that allows for access to justice for citizens; funding, travel, etc. should not be barriers to a fair hearing
- Mechanisms are required to enforce judgements
- Citizens will need the ability to take MN-S to the tribunal
- It is hoped the tribunal will be able to address issues related to hunting and harvesting.

Mapping and Boundaries

- It is not clear why Kinistino was changed to a different Region
- The boundaries should not be adjusted without consulting with impacted communities
- The maps should be available online for review and feedback
- Many individuals have expressed that they would like to join Locals in the communities from which they are from rather than those in which they reside
- Establish boundaries based on population or distribution in the North, South and central regions of the province.

Elections Act

- Now that gender parity has been achieved on the PMC, a women's representative may no longer be necessary
- Set a fixed election date
- Provide voters' lists to candidates during Regional and Local elections; redact names and personal information and only include individuals over the age of 18
- Support for Women and Youth on the provincial ballot and whether women should only vote for women and youth only vote for youth was mixed
- Limit campaign contributions and establish a body to monitor expenses; unspent funds can be reallocated to other causes
- The Act requires provisions to hold Elected Officials accountable if they do not fulfill expectations; consider including a non-confidence vote
- Elected Officials must be held accountable in a way that represents the best interest of communities
- Create job descriptions for Elected Officials and require a mid-term review of each position.

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- Voting at the MNLA should be done electronically rather than by a show of hands
- The AGA should include citizens from all 12 Regions, as well as Elders, Youth and Women
- The AGA is an important venue for citizens to be heard and should be accessible to all citizens
- Decisions should be made by the majority of citizens across the province, not only the ones who can attend an AGA
- Hold the AGAs in Batoche.

Additional Comments/Themes Identified

- The *Constitution* requires a provision to remove Elected Officials if they do not fulfill their duties
- The citizenship application process is lengthy and sometimes results in Métis being unfairly declined; an interest was expressed in where the personal information goes when an application is declined
- Concern that the President assigns portfolios when the *Constitution* states that the MNLA approves portfolios
- Regional Directors should assign alternates to cover their roles when they cannot fulfill them
- The unlawful removal or lack of recognition of Locals is concerning; criteria for Locals should come from the grassroots
- There is an unbalanced distribution of funding and resources to Regions
- MN-S needs a larger say in matters that impact the environment and historical Métis settlements.

Eastern Region 3

*Key themes identified from participant feedback provided at the following sessions:
Indian Head on June 18, 2022*

Judicial Tribunal

- Utilize a restorative model of justice (e.g., sentencing circles)
 - o Include liaisons or support workers to assist individuals applying for diversion or support circles.

Mapping and Boundaries

- Eastern Region 2A was created when potash mines were developing in the area; the economic development from those mines should have remained in Eastern Region 3
- Determine regional boundaries based on population
- There is a need for more equal economic opportunity and wealth distribution across the Regions.

Elections Act

- Local Presidents require access to citizenship lists in order to contact Métis in their communities
- There is a need for ethics, a code of conduct, and guidelines around how to collect and report on contributions; this reporting should be to citizens and the MN-S
- Criminal record checks should go back longer than five years for electoral candidates
- Each Regional Council could appoint a representative to meet with a provincial Minister of Women
- Allow absentee votes or for individuals to vote in the Regions they work in, rather than in the one they reside.

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- Each Region should hold an annual cultural conference, hosted by the Regional Director and attended by all Local Presidents to share information
- Regional town halls held every six months would help keep citizens informed
- Local Presidents are elected to represent their people at the MNLA; the AGA should be an information session for citizens to learn about programs and services.

Additional Comments/Themes Identified

- Concerns that the MN-S might be trying to remove or eliminate some Locals and that Locals are losing membership due to this
- Locals require funding in order to conduct business and provide services to members.

Eastern Region 2A

*Key themes identified from participant feedback held at the following session:
Yorkton on June 22, 2022*

Judicial Tribunal

- The Tribunal could move beyond colonial decision-making and guide, direct, and suggest future actions, laws and practices; work as an advocate body
- The Tribunal could assist with advocating for traditional hunting and fishing practices by having a panel of experts
- Consider the use of sentencing circles, and ensure restorative measures are taken; individuals should be encouraged to hunt, not punished for it; illegally hunted game could be redistributed to needy individuals
- When the Métis have their own land base, Métis laws could be applied to that land and addressed by the tribunal.

Elections Act

- Les Filles de Madeleine (LFDM) is not accountable to Métis Women; a suggestion was made to re-establish “Métis Women” and have representation from each Region in the next MN-S provincial election
- Women and Youth representatives for each Region should be included on the provincial ballot
- A fixed date for provincial elections should be established
- Virtual and in-person elections should be carried out province-wide
- Keep the voting age at 16 to encourage Youth to participate in politics
- Maintain the privacy of citizens by not releasing voters’ list.

Additional Comments/Themes Identified

- Hunting and harvesting rights for Métis need to be recognized and advanced; the tribunal cannot adjudicate these matters until legislation is in place, but MN-S should be supporting citizens in
- The MN-S should support traditional Métis ways of living
- MN-S staff should take direction from citizens that more work is required on residential schools, land claims, and harvesting to get the recognition that Métis people deserve
- The need to re-establish friendship centres as a place for Métis to gather in Yorkton
- Many Métis people are not internet savvy, and alternative modes of communication (newspapers, radio, newsletter, etc.) must be used
- The Area Director of Western Region 2A has not been available to the citizens in the Region
- More information is required on the accountability of Locals (e.g., Board members, meeting minutes, finances, etc.).

**due to time constraints, Mapping and Boundaries and the Constitution’s Amending Formula were not addressed at this session.*

Western Region 3

Key themes identified from participant feedback provided at the following sessions:

Swift Current on June 23, 2022

Regina on June 24 and 25, 2022

Judicial Tribunal

- The Tribunal must be restorative, incorporate traditional ways of healing, and uniquely Métis
- The Tribunal should adjudicate matters on the accountability and actions of Elected Officials
 - o Concern that the “Handbook for Executives, Ministers and Members of the Provincial Métis Council” (the “Executive Handbook”) was created by a Human Resources Committee appointed by the PMC and is therefore a conflict of interest
- Concerns around how the Tribunal will be funded and whether an ethics community would oversee the design of the tribunal and the data collected from the process
- Include Elders on the Tribunal, with representation from the different Regions
- Consider those with experiential knowledge as important advisors on the Tribunal – do not only use academics
- Provide clear timelines, oversight mechanisms, and reporting structures for the Tribunal
- Consider collaborating with First Nations for the Tribunal/dispute resolution.

Mapping and Boundaries

- Clarification is required on why the boundaries are the way they are for Western Region 3
- Place ballot boxes in every community to increase accessibility
- Create boundaries based on hunting, harvesting, and fishing access, as well as language and geographical markers.

Elections Act

- MN-S should create a website with candidates platforms; ensure it is widely accessible to citizens
- Include provisions in the *Elections Act* that address lateral violence
- Campaign spending could be modelled after the *Cities Act*; candidates are accountable for the spending, and if they do not provide that accountability, they cannot run or serve
 - o Unspent money could be donated to Locals
- The *Elections Act* should direct that the electoral report goes directly from the Chief Electoral Officer to Elected Officials in a specified amount of time
- The Chief Electoral Officer needs clear policies on how to adjudicate complaints
- The Chief Electoral Officer is not arm’s length, as the MN-S employs them
- Each region should elect their own Women and Youth representatives
- Use citizenship numbers in voters’ lists rather than names to protect privacy
- Include Two-Spirit, LGBTQ2+ and persons with disabilities as representatives on the provincial ballot
- Registry must perform regular audits to ensure MN-S citizens are not also Treaty status

WESTERN REGION 3

- The consent forms for the release of personal information on the citizenship application form is concerning:
 - o Where does the personal information go once it is provided? Who has access to it?
 - o When did this consent piece get added to the application form?
- Concerns regarding the vacant Treasurer position and whether the Chief Electoral Officer upheld their duty by not calling a byelection.

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- Provide Local Presidents with Assembly materials (in print, if requested) well in advance of the meetings to allow time for proper review
- Maintain the AGA to allow citizens to have a voice.

Additional Comments/Themes Identified

- Rebuild trust in leadership and ensure community voices are heard and represented
- There is a need for financial transparency from the MN-S
- Allow individuals to belong to Locals in the community from which they are from or feel they belong to
- Locals require capacity and funding to organize themselves and hold meetings
- Consider the potential for votes of non-confidence
- Communication from the MN-S to Locals and communities is lacking; traditional groups would come together for socials or classes together and discuss matters that are needed
- Provide information on the *Constitution* in small, clear and easy to understand packages; bringing too much information at one time does not allow for adequate understanding and feedback
- Lac Pelletier is a traditional Métis community that developers have bought out; the MN-S Duty to Consult department could assist in negotiations
- Allow Métis people to choose where they want to register for citizenship or to have one national citizenship registry
- Caution about entering into a Treaty as opposed to self-government
- Concern that southwestern Saskatchewan does not have a voice or receive equitable funding from the rest of Saskatchewan
- Locals need capacity to operate, as well as governance and finance training.

Virtual Sessions

Key themes identified from participant feedback provided at the following sessions:

Virtual Youth Sessions on April 25 and May 18, 2022

Open Virtual session on May 17, 2022

Judicial Tribunal

- Do not structure a Tribunal based on colonial systems
- A Métis-specific model should be considered that allows for early intervention, support systems and a referral process
- Use technology to enable more people to access the judicial systems
- Create requirements and provisions that address lateral violence and promote non-violent communication
- Ensure the Tribunal is arms-length to the MN-S
- Create a process to hold Elected Officials accountable for their actions
- Ensure the Tribunal is current, modern, and culturally relevant.

Mapping and Boundaries

- Ensure that systems are in place that do not allow some regions to have more sway in elections due to larger populations
- Boundary changes could have impacts on hunting, fishing and trapping blocks
- The AGA as a valuable venue for citizens to be heard.

Elections Act

- Adjust the age category for Youth to allow elected representatives to serve their terms while in their 20s (e.g., 18-26 years old)
- The provision for temporary residents in the *Constitution* should be applied to Youth who leave their communities to attend university
- Spending limits should be considered for all MN-S electoral candidates and campaigns; however, consideration should be given to Youth and their potential to generate revenue/earn money to fund their campaigns – money should not be a limiting factor for Youth to participate in the MN-S government
- Include Youth and Women Representatives on the provincial ballot
- Individuals should not have to list their gender when voting in elections; more inclusive language is required in the Act
- Implement an age limit on who can run for Youth president
- Consider special considerations for Youth and the funding required for Youth to participate in elections
- Concerns regarding the consent box on the citizenship application form for the release of personal information
- The vacant Treasurer position and the suspension of one PMC member is concerning, and leaves a Region without representation

VIRTUAL SESSIONS

- The Act requires a section that speaks directly to Youth participation
- Multiple groups must be represented in government; inclusivity is important.

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- Incorporate governance ideas from traditional Métis governments (e.g., Laws of the Buffalo Hunt)
- Hold MNLAs and AGAs in different locations around the province
- Consider inclusivity, diversity and gender fluidity; the *Constitution* and MN-S legislation requires more inclusive language

Additional Comments/Themes Identified

- General mistrust in leadership and concerns that the MN-S is modelling a colonial/western style of government
- Inclusion is important in MN-S documents, communication and overall governance structure; under-represented groups deserve and require a voice in their government.

SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES

Summary of Key Themes

The following themes were identified most frequently in consultation sessions held across the province.

Judicial Tribunal

- Keep the Tribunal at arm's length from the MN-S:
 - o Avoid any political interference or influence
 - o Consider the selection process and ensure individuals are not influenced or paid by the government
- Include Elders and other knowledge experts (Harvesters, trappers, etc.) on the Panel
- Create a system that is uniquely Michif, not a western style court system
- Utilize restorative justice and traditional governance techniques:
 - o The Tribunal must heal and restore, not punish with punitive measures
 - o Support for diversion courts, ombudspersons, sentencing circles, etc.
- Make the Tribunal accessible:
 - o Utilize technology
 - o Make it mobile; move across the province to adjudicate matters
- Hold Elected Officials accountable for their duties; the ability to have a non-confidence vote
- There is a need for legislation to avoid frivolous and vexatious claims against Elected Officials
- Be explicit about what the Tribunal can and cannot address (e.g., matters under the criminal code)
- Provide advocacy for Harvesting and Child and Family Service matters
- The Tribunal needs to be aware that there is no 'one size fits all'; there are differences between North, South, East, West and Central.

Mapping and Boundaries

- Impacts of changing the boundaries:
 - o Hunting, trapping, harvesting
 - o Population and representation at the MNLA
 - o Potential funding based on population
 - o Access to land
 - o Changes should be considered after the Commissioner for the Review of Locals completes consultations or after fulsome discussion forums took place at an MNLA/AGA
- Revisit the *Regional Boundaries Act*:
 - o Review previous acts and reports regarding maps and boundaries in Saskatchewan
 - o Base the boundaries on population
- Provide a clear rationale for changes:
 - o Consult Elders and those involved in developing the maps
 - o Do not align the boundaries with municipal boundaries; consider traditional boundaries related to land, language, and geographic markers
- Consider renaming the Regions (e.g., after notable Métis community members, traditional land use, traditional names of Regions)

SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES

- Think about significant changes, reducing the number Regions and Locals
- Why are we tinkering for the need of one election, when a full review of Regions needs to happen to determine how many and where those boundaries are?
- Should there be a map for elections only? Although this map is intended for elections under Schedule A, it is referenced for matters outside of elections (harvesting, funding affected by Region, representation based on number of Locals within the Region).

Elections Act

- Access to voters' and citizenship lists:
 - o Elected Officials and Locals would like access lists to help identify constituents and Métis individuals residing in their communities (what are the control and protection mechanisms around this for citizens?)
 - o Contact information allows for the provision of programs and services
 - o Privacy must be protected:
 - Provide with citizenship numbers only and names redacted
 - Remove minors personal information
 - Certain officials and vulnerable people who do not want their information shared
 - Individuals could sign a consent form when they register for citizenship or if they have to register to vote, indicating if they would like their contact information to be shared with Elected Officials
- Include Women and Youth representatives on the provincial election ballot:
 - o Select Women and Youth representatives from each Region or from the North and South
 - o As parity had been reached, a Women's representative may no longer be necessary
- Be more inclusive and have representation from 2SLGBTQIA+
- Be more representative and inclusive of persons with disabilities
- Individuals who hold both MN-S citizenship and Treaty status:
 - o More oversight is required to ensure dual citizens do not vote in provincial elections
 - o The Registry should perform regular audits to ensure individuals do not have dual citizenship
 - o Why are my indigenous family members being excluded from what is my family (children, naturalized citizens, spouses, customarily adopted and adopted individuals)
- Implement campaign spending and contribution limits:
 - o Processes for oversight of campaign spending must be in place (e.g., reporting mechanisms, requirements to reallocate unspent funds)
 - o Consider variations in limits for Youth candidates, as well as Regional/Local/Provincial elections
 - o Limit who can contribute to campaigns (suggestions were not offered on how to determine spending limits; this requires more research – how much will this increase cost of elections overall?)
- Increase accessibility to elections:
 - o Hold elections on a fixed date each year
 - o Have polling stations in smaller communities
 - o Consider virtual elections, but remember that not all individuals have access to technology

SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES

- Allow citizens to vote in the community in which they work or study rather than the community in which they reside
- Streamline the citizenship application process to allow more individuals to vote
- Consider possibility of distance voting (mail-in, virtual, etc.)
- Requests to post lists of Locals on the MN-S website
- Need for education regarding elections and participation in the election process.

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- Overwhelming support to maintain the AGA within the *Constitution*:
 - It provides a venue for citizens to have a voice
 - Increase accessibility to the AGA by hosting it virtually or hosting it in different locations around the province (people were concerned that they could not attend an AGA and felt excluded)
 - Many citizens do not feel they are adequately represented by their Local Presidents and Regional Directors
 - Create a process to ratify decisions that is more equitable and representative of the population across the province
 - Concern that an AGA had not been held in a number of years, people strongly felt this should be an annual process that does not only relate to constitutional amendments
 - Ensure that people understand what they are voting for; provide the information well in advance to allow time to prepare.

Additional Comments/Themes Identified

- Regarding Locals:
 - Many citizens would prefer to join the Local in the community from which they most closely relate to (e.g., their birthplace or 'home'), as opposed to the community in which they currently reside
 - Locals require capacity to operate and deliver services to citizens
 - Provide governance and finance training to Locals
 - Hold Local Presidents accountable and ensure each Local operates under a clear set of guidelines that ensure fair representation of and transparency to its members
- The MN-S government must be structured in a way that is reflective of Métis values, culture and traditions – not based on a colonial/western paradigm
- The transparency and accountability of the MN-S and Elected Officials:
 - Citizens requested mechanisms in which to hold leadership accountable for their actions, conduct and responsibilities
 - The Executive Handbook does not include repercussions for contravening the rules
 - Financial oversight is needed; the Treasurer position cannot be left vacant
 - Disclose salaries and expenses of MN-S staff and leadership
 - MN-S is responsible for its citizens; decisions and actions must come from the grassroots, and citizen voices must be heard
- The MN-S must improve communication:
 - Advertising in newspapers, radio stations, and by mailouts

SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES

- Do not only rely on social media
- Do not rely on Regional Directors and Local Presidents to share information to citizens
- Concerns regarding the consent to share personal information provision on the MN-S citizenship application form:
 - What is the personal information is used for?
 - Where does the personal information go; where is it stored?
 - What happens to personal information when an application is rejected?
 - When was this provision was added?
 - Who approved it?
 - Do individuals understand that this provision is optional and not required to complete the application form; although this provision is optional, applications were not processed if this was not complete
- Citizens want to understand what the appeal process is regarding citizenship applications that are rejected
- Concerns regarding Section 35 rights on the citizenship application form:
 - The application form requires citizens to delegate Section 35 rights to the MN-S
- Education and support from the MN-S:
 - The MN-S Duty to Consult department should come to community and support those negotiating agreements with development and natural resource companies
 - Update citizens on the progress for land claims
 - Advocate for citizens who are facing harvesting charges
 - Hold workshops and information sessions on current activities the MN-S is involved in
- Fair representation and distribution of funds across the province:
 - The unique needs in the North are not understood
 - Southwestern Saskatchewan does not receive adequate funding, despite the larger population
 - No matter the size of the Local, they should all receive the same amount of money
- Appreciation for the community consultations and the opportunity to gather, share views and provide input back to the MN-S.

Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions were commonly raised during the consultation sessions (presented in no particular order):

Judicial Tribunal

- How can we trust the Tribunal, and ensure it will make fair decisions, free of political influence?
- How will Tribunal members be selected and how will they be paid?
- What matters will the Tribunal address? Can it adjudicate disputes between citizens? Criminal matters? Harvesting or Child and Family Services Disputes?
- What oversight will be in place on the Tribunal itself? Will it be reviewed and monitored on a regular basis?
- How can we create a system that is uniquely Michif, and not based on colonial models?
- How do we best support our citizens, and ensure they are protected and fairly represented in the justice system? Where are the advocates? How can we prevent our people from going to jail?
- How do we create a system that will rebuild and repair relationships among one another, and create a better future for generations to come?

Mapping and Boundaries

- How will the *Regional Boundaries Act* fit into the development of the new maps?
- Who will make the final decision on Regional boundaries?
- Why are boundaries located in the places they are? Who made these decisions?
- What impact will boundary changes on our access to land, funding and our representation in the MN-S government structure?

Elections Act

- Is a Women's Representative still required, when the MN-S has reached parity?
- Should women only vote for Women representatives, and youth only vote for Youth representatives?
- What measures and checks are in place to ensure that individuals voting in MN-S elections do not hold Treaty cards?
- How can Elected Officials or electoral candidates reach their citizens if citizenship and voters' lists cannot be shared?
- If virtual byelections will be held, how can we ensure that those with limited access to technology can participate?
- How will the MN-S provide oversight and accountability with respect to campaign spending and contribution limits?

The Constitution's Amending Formula

- Could the AGA move around the province, and be held in smaller communities?
- If you have virtual AGAs, how will you provide for citizens who do not have access to technology?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- How can we create a process that allows citizens to have a voice at the AGA, as they are not always represented by Local Presidents, and often there is no time for citizens to voice concern?
- When was the last AGA held, and when will the next one be scheduled?

General Questions

- Will the MN-S provide greater supports to Locals in order to better serve its members? Funding, governance and finance training are needed.
- How do we hold our leaders accountable? How can we ensure they are conducting themselves in ways that are in the best interest of citizens?
- How is my personal information used in the MN-S Registry? When did the consent for release of personal information get added to the application form?
- When will the MN-S return to community to provide more information on the *Constitution*? How will information be communicated on when the next consultation sessions will take place?
- Will the notes and data collected during the consultation sessions be shared with citizens and/or elected officials?
- How will I know that you heard our concerns? When will this be reflected in action?

* * *

Information Items and Acronyms

LIST OF INFORMATION ITEMS

The following documents were provided in the information kits titled, “Voice of the People: 2022 Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Constitution Reform”:

1. 2022 Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Constitutional Reform Comment Form
2. 2022 Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Constitutional Reform: Background Summary
3. 2022 Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Constitutional Reform: Background Document on Reforming the MN-S Constitution and Related Legislation
4. PowerPoint Handout: Voice of the People Background Document
5. PowerPoint Handout: Mapping and Boundaries
 - a) Comprehensive Map
 - b) Regional Map(s)
6. Background Document on Changes to MN-S Elections Act, 2007
7. PowerPoint Handout: Amending Formula
8. PowerPoint Handout: Métis Judicial Court (Tribunal)
9. Copy of the Laws and Regulations Established for the Colony of St. Laurent on the Saskatchewan and Laws of the Buffalo Hunt
10. Constitution of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, adopted December 3, 1993, and Related Legislation
 - a) *Métis Nation of Saskatchewan Citizenship Act, ratified November 6, 1999*
 - b) *Saskatchewan Métis Elections Act, 2007*

LIST OF ACRONYMS

The following acronyms are referenced in these notes:

AGA	Annual General Assembly
FPIC	Free, prior and informed consent
LFDM	Les Filles de Madeleine
MGRSA	Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement
MN-S	Métis Nation – Saskatchewan
MNLA	Métis Nation Legislative Assembly
PMC	Provincial Métis Council
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples