

Local Government Resident Representation in Canada

The overwhelming majority of municipalities in British Columbia use an 'at-large'* election system to elect mayors and councillors. The only municipality in B.C. that uses electoral districts is the District of Lake Country (north of Kelowna). There, four councillors are elected from specific districts and two councillors 'at-large'. Section 36.1(2) of the BC Local Government Act gives municipalities the authority to create constituencies through a by-law.

Ward (or District) council representation systems, and/or combinations of same are widely used across the rest of Canada. There are several variations of Ward/District systems used by Canadian municipalities and they are used by both large and small municipalities.

The main variances are:

- 1) Wards (Districts) with one councillor elected in each ward.
- 2) Wards (Districts) with more than one councillor elected in each (usually two per Ward)
- 3) Ward and at-large - a combination of one council member elected in each ward with more than one councillor(s) elected 'at large'
- 4) Ward and at-large - a combination of more than one council member elected in each ward with more than one councillor elected "at-large"

Various papers have been written and studies done on the strengths and weaknesses of both the 'at-large' and ward election methods of electing councillors and is beyond the scope of this document.

In Greater Victoria, the two largest municipalities elect councillors 'at-large'. In the City of Victoria, Council assign Councillors to represent Neighbourhood associations, however Councillors are not specifically accountable to the neighbourhood they represent. In Saanich, Councillors are assigned to represent specific municipal departments, e.g. a resident with an issue with Planning would be referred to the Councillor responsible to liaise with the Planning Department.

The following Canadian municipalities use either a ward/district electoral system for councillors or a modified version of a ward system:

Canadian Municipalities with Wards or Districts

Lake Country, BC	http://www.okanaganway.ca/municipal/mayor-council/council-bios/	12,922
Calgary, AB	http://www.calgary.ca/CityCouncil/Pages/About-Calgary-City-Council.aspx	1,239,220
Edmonton, AB	https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/city_organization/city-councillors.aspx	932,546
Red Deer, AB	Red Deer reverted from Wards to electing Councillors "At Large" in a 2013 referendum	N/A
Prince Albert, SK	http://citypa.ca/Portals/0/Council/Ward%20Map%20with%20Councillors%20names.pdf	35,926
Saskatoon, SK	https://www.saskatoon.ca/city-hall/mayor-city-councillors/city-councillors	246,376
Regina, SK	http://www.regina.ca/residents/council-committees/meet-city-council/	215,106
Brandon, MB	http://brandon.ca/council-information/wards/ward-map	48,859
Winnipeg, MB	http://winnipeg.ca/council/	705,244
Thunder Bay, ON	http://www.thunderbay.ca/City_Government/Your_Council.htm	107,909
Windsor, ON	http://www.citywindsor.ca/mayorandcouncil/City-Councillors/Pages/City-Councillors.aspx	217,188
Greater Sudbury, ON	https://www.greatersudbury.ca/inside-city-hall/city-council/	161,531
London, Ontario	http://www.london.ca/city-hall/city-council/Pages/default.aspx	383,822
Barrie, Ontario	http://www.barrie.ca/City%20Hall/MayorCouncil/Pages/default.aspx	141,434

Mississauga, Ontario	http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/cityhall/mayorandcouncil	721,599
Peterborough, Ontario	http://www.peterborough.ca/City_Hall/City_Council_2833/City_Council_Contact_Information.htm	81,032
Belleville, Ontario	http://belleville.ca/city-hall/page/city-council	50,716
Brampton, Ontario	http://www.brampton.ca/en/City-Hall/CouncilOffice/Pages/Welcome.aspx	593,638
Chatham-Kent, ON	http://www.chatham-kent.ca/Council/Pages/Council%20Home%20Page.aspx	101,647
Hamilton, Ontario	http://map.hamilton.ca/Static/PDFs/WardMaps/AllWards_Statistics.pdf	536,917
Oshawa, Ontario	https://www.oshawa.ca/city-hall/city-council.asp?_mid_=309	159,458
Kitchener, Ontario	http://kitchener.ca/en/insidecityhall/CityCouncil.asp	233,222
Kingston, Ontario	https://www.cityofkingston.ca/city-hall/city-council/district-map	123,798
Orillia, Ontario	http://www.orillia.ca/en/insidecityhall/wards.asp	31,166
Ottawa, Ontario	http://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/mayor-and-city-councillors	934,243
Sault Ste Marie, Ont	http://saultstemarie.ca/City-Hall/City-Council.aspx	73,368
Timmins, Ontario	http://www.timmins.ca/mayor-and-council	41,788
Quebec City, PQ	https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/EN/apropos/vie_democratique/elus/conseil_municipal/index.aspx	531,902
Longueuil, PQ	https://www.longueuil.quebec/en/council	239,700
Moncton, NB	http://www.moncton.ca/Government/City_Council.htm	71,899
Frederickton, NB	http://www.fredericton.ca/en/city-hall/city-council-committees/mayor-council	58,220
Saint John, NB	http://www.saintjohn.ca/en/home/cityhall/mayor-and-council/default.aspx	67,575
Edmondston, NB	http://edmundston.ca/en/l-hotel-de-ville/conseil-municipal	16,580
Charlottown, PEI	http://city.charlottetown.pe.ca/mayorandcouncil.php	36,094
Summerside, PEI	http://www.city.summerside.pe.ca/mayor-and-council/pages/2012/2/ward-map/	14,829
Cape Breton RM, NS	http://www.cbrm.ns.ca/district-11.html	94,285
Truro, NS	http://www.truro.ca/meet-your-mayor-and-council.html	12,261
New Glasgow, NS	http://www.newglasgow.ca/index.php/town-hall/mayor-council-town-committees	9,075
Halifax, NS	http://www.halifax.ca/council/index.php	403,131
St. John's, NF	http://www.stjohns.ca/CityWebDev/cityhall/elections/wardmaps.pdf	108,860

In the western United States (Cascadia: Alaska, Washington & Oregon) ward and modified ward systems are widely used in both small (Blaine, Wa) and large (Seattle) cities.

CITIES/MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS THAT USE A COUNCILLOR WARD/DISTRICT REPRESENTATION SYSTEM (WESTERN USA):

CITY/MUNICIPALITY	Description of Council Representation - Reference Data:	Population:
Tacoma, Wash	Mayor and 8 Councillors - 5 Councillors are elected from 5 Districts and 3 Councillors are elected "at Large"	207,948
Seattle, Wash	Mayor and 9 Councillors - 7 Councillors are elected from 7 Districts and 2 Councillors are elected "at Large" - Seattle adopted this method of councillor elections in a 2013 City Referendum - http://www.seattle.gov/cityclerk/municipal-code-and-city-charter/council-districts	684,451
Bremerton, Wash	Mayor and 7 Councillors - all 7 Councillors are elected from 7 separate Districts within the City - http://www.ci.bremerton.wa.us/155/City-Council	39,520
Bellingham, Wash	Mayor and 12 Councillors - City is divided into 6 Wards - 2 Council members are elected within each Ward - http://aberdeenwa.gov/government/city-council-members-2/ Mayor and 7 Council Members - 6 Councillors are elected from 6 Separate Wards and 1 Councillor is elected "at Large" - https://www.cob.org/gov/council/pages/contacts-bios.aspx	16,276
		85,146

Anacortes, Wash	Mayor and 7 Councillors - 3 Councillors elected from 3 separate Wards and 4 Councillors are elected "at Large" - http://www.cityofanacortes.org/council.php#.WHbZoBRh3-k 7 Council Members - 6 are elected from 3 Wards (Two Councillors per Ward) and 1 Councillor is	16,403
Bainbridge Island, Wa	elected "at Large" - the 7 council members choose one Member to act as Mayor for a two year term - http://www.ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us/217/City-Council The Blaine City Council is comprised of 7 councilmembers. There are 3 wards within the city limits and	23,840
Blaine, Wash	each ward is represented by 2 councilmembers. A seventh councilmember serves at-large. http://www.ci.blaine.wa.us/327/City-Council Seven council members serve the City of Burlington in a mayor-council form of government. Burlington	5,056
Burlington, Wash	consists of six council wards with one candidate elected from each ward. The seventh council member serves in the at-large position. All councilors are elected to four-year terms, including the mayor. http://www.burlingtonwa.gov/index.aspx?nid=144	8,633
Mount Vernon, Wash	Mayor and 7 Council Members - there are 3 wards - 2 councillors are elected in each Ward and one Councillor is elected "at Large" - http://www.mountvernonwa.gov/Index.aspx?NID=98 Seven Council members elected as follows: 1 each from 4 wards plus 3 "at Large" - Council elects one	34,053
Centralia, Wash	Councilmember to serve as Mayor for 2 year term - http://www.cityofcentralia.com/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=30	16,753

CITIES/MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS THAT USE A COUNCILLOR WARD/DISTRICT REPRESENTATION SYSTEM (WESTERN USA) (PAGE TWO):

CITY/MUNICIPALITY	Description of Council Representation - Reference Data:	Population:
Chehalis, Wash	Seven Council members elected as follows: 1 each from 4 wards plus 3 "at Large" - Council elects one Councilmember to serve as Mayor for 2 year term- http://www.ci.chehalis.wa.us/citycouncil/about-city-council	7,391
Puyallup, Wash	Seven Councils members - 6 elected from Districts (2 per District) and one elected "at Large" - Council elect one member to serve as Mayor for 2 year term(s) - http://www.cityofpuyallup.org/633/Meet-the-Council	39,659
Hoquiam, Wash	Twelve Council Members are elected - there are 6 Wards, 2 council members are elected within each Ward - The Mayor is elected "at large". http://cityofhoquiam.com/government/hoquiam-city-council/ Seven council members are elected - two per district in 3 districts and one "at Large" who serves as a	8,405
Spokane, Wash	Council President - Spokane electors also elect a Mayor "at large". https://mv.spokanecity.org/citycouncil/members/	213,272
Anchorage, Alaska	Anchorage has an Eleven Assembly Members - 6 elected from 6 Districts (1 per District) and 5 elected "at Large" and a Mayor - Anchorage uses a "strong Mayor" system, whereby the Mayor has "executive powers" and the Assembly has Legislative Powers - https://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/Pages/MemberProfiles.aspx	298,695
Juneau, Alaska	The City and Borough of Juneau is a home-rule municipality. The City and Borough of Juneau Assembly has nine members including the Mayor who serves as presiding officer. Voters elect a Mayor and 8 Assembly Members, 2 each from 3 Districts (for a total of six) and 2 "at Large" - http://www.juneau.org/Assembly/	32,756
Eugene, Oregon	A Mayor and 8 Councilors are elected on a nonpartisan ballot for four-year terms. One councilor is elected from each of eight wards with one-half of the council elected every two years. https://www.eugene-or.gov/537/Mayor-and-City-Council City Council consists of the Mayor and eight City Councilors, each representing one of the eight	163,460
Salem, Oregon	designated Wards of the City. The registered voters in each Ward elected a Councilor, who resides in the Ward, to represent them on the Council. The term of office for each Councilor is four years, with half of the Councilors standing for election every two years. http://www.cityofsalem.net/CityCouncil/Pages/default.aspx	164,549

CITIES/MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS THAT USE A COUNCILLOR WARD/DISTRICT REPRESENTATION SYSTEM (WESTERN USA) (PAGE THREE):

CITY/MUNICIPALITY	Description of Council Representation - Reference Data:	Population:
Astoria, Oregon	The Mayor and City Councilors serve four year terms. The 4 Council members are elected from 4 Wards. http://www.astoria.or.us/City_Council.aspx Mayor is elected "at Large" and 9 Council members are elected individually from the City's nine wards.	9,626
Corvallis, Oregon	Each of the nine City Council members serves a two-year term. - http://www.corvallisoregon.gov/index.aspx?page=61	55,780

USA City Population Data Source (2015): <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045216/00>