

Managing the Forgotten North: Governance Structures and Administrative Operations of Canada's Provincial Norths

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Abstract: The Provincial Norths in Canada are among the most marginalized, externally controlled, and impoverished regions in the country, a reality largely obscured by the country's long-time preoccupation with conditions in the Territorial North. Canada may see a new Provincial North in the years to come, but substantial progress requires the willingness and ability of provincial governments to adapt their policies, administrative systems, and expectations to northern needs. In this article, the authors review the governance structures and regional operations of the Canadian Provincial Norths including British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Quebec. Particular attention is placed on administrative structures, departmental identity and autonomy, connection to the broader government structures, and governance legislation. The information is provided on a province-by-province basis, as arrangements vary substantially across the country. The governance systems for the northern parts of the provinces have shifted considerably over time, as south-centred provincial governments wrestle with the challenges of balancing northern interests with the province-wide supports for aggressive resource development.

The Provincial North is an unusual part of Canada, sparsely populated yet economically highly influential, substantially Aboriginal in population but with limited national or international profile. It is a single region, or at least the largest part of the vast sub-Arctic swath that dominates mid-Canada, but is subject to seven different political systems. There is a general geographic and even socio-economic unity, but the ties of politics and culture are thin. Indeed the Provincial North, as a unit of political analysis, is defined more by fragmentation and difference than by political or administrative structures. As the region continues to grow in prominence, particularly in the closely connected areas of resource development and Aboriginal political and legal aspirations, it has become increasingly important to understand the region's political and administrative systems.

This article contributes to the general understanding of the politics of the Provincial North by providing an overview of the governance structures and regional operations of the provincial northern regions of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Quebec. Particular attention is placed on administrative structures, departmental identity and autonomy, connection to the broader government structures, and governance legislation. The information is provided on a province-by-province basis, as arrangements vary substantially across the country. It is worth noting, as well, that the governance systems for the northern parts of the provinces shift considerably over time, as south-centred provincial governments continue to wrestle with the challenges of balancing northern interests with the province-wide supports for aggressive resource development.

The boundaries across the Provincial Norths are not clearly or consistently defined and current descriptions are often unclear about where many northern regions begin and end.¹ British Columbia's elections office describes the evolution of BC's northern boundaries in terms of its electoral districts, while Alberta does not seem to have defined its northern region at all.²

The Saskatchewan *Northern Municipalities Act* states that a northern municipality refers to a "town, a northern village, a northern hamlet, the district or a restructured municipality," but does not clearly define the boundaries of the region.³ The Government of Manitoba defines "Northern Manitoba" under the *Northern Affairs Act* as north of the northern boundary of Township 21 excluding provincial parks, forests, and wildlife management areas.⁴

Ontario's boundary distinction is complex and involves a history of boundary defining legislation and disputes⁵ including the *Canada (Ontario Boundary) Act*, 1889,⁶ which originally set the province's northern boundary at the Albany River. It was later defined in *The Ontario Boundaries Extension Act*, 1950 and *The Manitoba-Ontario Boundary Act*, 1953,⁷ with the creation of the northernmost part of Ontario, from the Albany River to Hudson's Bay, which was transferred from the Northwest Territories.

Northern Quebec is more clearly described and provides a clear example of the delineation of the region. As indicated in *The Quebec Boundaries Extension Act of 1912*,⁸ and more specifically defined in the *1898 Act respecting the North-Western, Northern and North-Eastern Boundaries of the Province of Quebec*, the northern boundaries are defined as beginning at the head of Lake Temiscamingue along the eastern border of Ontario, to the northern region

known as James Bay, all the way to Patamisk Lake and south to the Hudson's Bay Company's post on Lake Nichigun, and ending near Lake Ashuanipi.⁹

When Newfoundland entered Confederation in 1949, the boundaries defining Labrador in relation to Newfoundland were confirmed in the *Newfoundland Act*.¹⁰ Confirmation was deemed necessary due to Labrador's historical dispute with respect to Newfoundland and Quebec, also known as the Labrador Boundary Dispute.¹¹ The conflict over the Newfoundland–Quebec boundary remains alive to the present.¹²

Statistics Canada has developed a Geography Working Paper Series that seeks to offer a comprehensive approach to defining the Provincial North. Chuck McNiven and Henry Puderer describe their methodology for defining what constitutes the north-south line across Canada, including the transition zones on both sides of the line. Their paper describes the sixteen indicators selected for the north-south line, which include: the southern limit of the boreal forest; the 6,000 degree-days line; the 1,250 growing degree-days line; the southern limit of the zone of discontinuous permafrost; Agroclimatic Resource Index of > 1.0; summer concentration of thermal efficiency value equal to 68%; population ecumene; agricultural ecumene; northern limits of the all-season road and rail transportation networks; accessibility index based on enumeration areas; Living Cost Differential; resourced areas and Native north; the OECD's rural north categories; and Revenue Canada's northern and intermediate income tax zones. The authors note that the north-south indicators "represent a complex set of environmental, political, biotic and human factors. While no single indicator or method is sufficient on its own to define the north, in aggregate the indicators can form a functional definition of Canada's north."¹³ Figure 1 depicts the transition lines developed by McNiven and Puderer.

One of the defining characteristics of the Provincial North is the poverty and economic challenges facing Aboriginal people. Figure 2 indicates the locations of First Nations communities in Canada for which a 2006 Community Well-Being (CWB) Index score has been calculated by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). The data is presented at Statistics Canada's Census Subdivision (CSD) level. Higher scores indicate a greater level of well-being.

According to AANDC, the index revealed that:⁴⁷

- "In British Columbia fifteen communities had scores of less than 50. One hundred and three communities scored between 50 and 69, and twenty-nine communities scored between 70 and 89. Most of these higher scoring communities are located in the southern part of the province."

- “In Alberta, twenty-two communities had scores of less than 50 and twenty-eight communities scored between 50 and 69.”
- “In Saskatchewan, forty-three communities had scores of less than 50 and thirty-five communities scored between 50 and 79.”
- “In Manitoba eighty-two communities had scores of less than 50 and twenty-three communities scored between 50 and 79.”
- “In Ontario, twelve communities had scores of less than 50. All of these were in Northern Ontario. Seventy-two communities scored between 50 and 69, and thirteen communities scored between 70 and 79.”
- “In Quebec, three communities had scores of less than 50, twenty-five communities scored between 50 and 69, and four communities scored between 70 and 79.”
- “In Newfoundland and Labrador, all the communities scored between 60 and 69.”

It is important to note that, based on this index, the largest concentration of low-ranked Aboriginal communities is found in the Provincial North, particularly in the prairie provinces, and not in the Territorial North—Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut—as is generally assumed.⁴⁸



Figure 1. North-South Line and Transition Lines. (Source: McNiven and Puderer)

Table 1 indicates the provincial government authorities with lead responsibility for their respective Provincial North.

Table 1. Government department responsible for the northern provincial region, by province

Province	Government Department	Sub-Division
British Columbia	The Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development ¹⁴ in consultation with the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) ¹⁵	Governance & Structure Division: 1) the advisory services branch; 2) the community relations branch; and 3) the local government structure branch ¹⁶
Alberta	Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) ¹⁷ legislated through the Northern Alberta Development Council Act	Council consists of nine public members and the Chair is a member of the Legislative Assembly
Saskatchewan	Ministry of Municipal Relations ¹⁸ Saskatchewan Municipal Board ¹⁹ First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs ²⁰	Northern Municipal Services Branch ²¹
Manitoba	Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs ²²	Local Government Development Division
Ontario	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing ²³ Ontario Municipal Board ²⁴ Ministry of Northern Development and Mines ²⁵	Local Government and Land Use Planning
Quebec	Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Regions and Land Occupancy ²⁶	The Kativik Regional Government ²⁷ Eeyou Istchee-Jamésie Regional Government ²⁸ Regional and Rural Development, Nord-du-Québec (Region 10) ²⁹
Labrador	Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs ³⁰ Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs (Municipal Affairs) ³¹	Municipal Support and Policy Branch – Local Governance Division

Various pieces of provincial legislation define the political and administrative arrangements for the Provincial Norths. These are summarized in table 2.

Table 2. Provincial legislation on northern administration, by province

Province	Provincial Legislation
British Columbia	Community Charter (2003) ³² Local Government Act (1996) ³³ Northern Development Initiative Trust Act (2004) ³⁴
Alberta	Municipal Government Act (2000) ³⁵ Northern Alberta Development Council Act (2002) ³⁶
Saskatchewan	The Northern Municipalities Act (1983) ³⁷ The Northern Economic Development Regulations (1995) ³⁸
Manitoba	The Northern Affairs Act (2006) ³⁹
Ontario	Municipal Act (2001) ⁴⁰ Ontario Municipal Board Act (1990) ⁴¹ Mining Act (1990) ⁴² and An Act to Amend the Mining Act (2009) ⁴³ Far North Act (2010) ⁴⁴
Quebec	Act respecting Northern Villages and the Kativik Regional Government (1978) ⁴⁵
Labrador	Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act (2005) ⁴⁶

In the sections that follow, the general political and administrative situation in the seven Provincial Norths is discussed. The purpose here is to provide a general overview and not a detailed description of each province's North. Administrative and policy examples have been selected to represent the range and diversity of programming and administrative arrangements developed for the northern parts of the provinces.

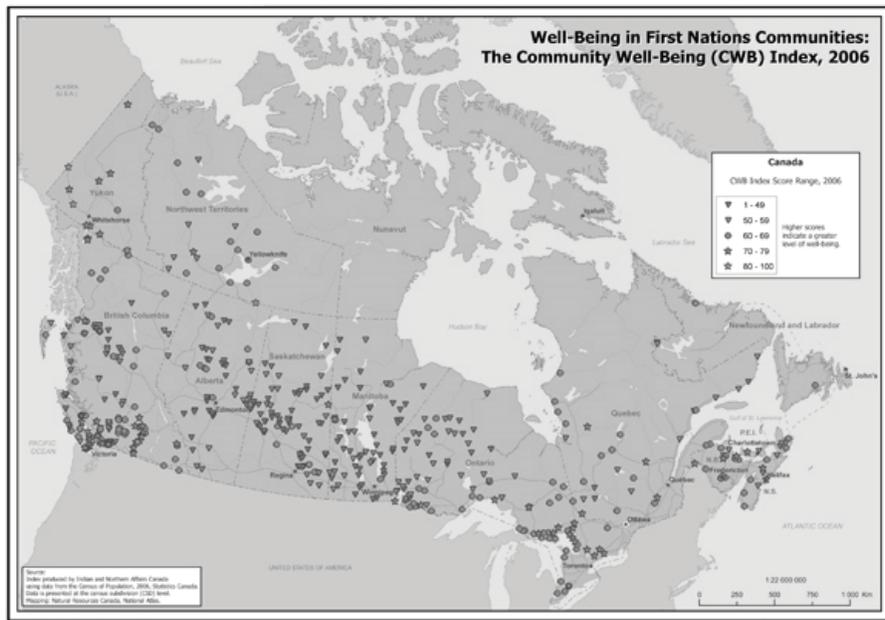


Figure 2. North-South Line and Transition Lines. (Source: Statistics Canada, 2000)

British Columbia

British Columbia's vast northland constitutes over half of the province but has fewer than 350,000 people, or less than one-tenth of the provincial total. The area is rich in timber, hydroelectric, and mineral resources, but has burst into international prominence due to the extensive carbon-based energy resources in the northeast and the strategic location of the northern part of the province relative to proposed bitumen and natural gas pipelines that would criss-cross the region. Northern British Columbia has been aggressive in promoting its interests in recent decades, enjoying a marked success with the creation of a regional university, the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), that opened in 1994. There are sharp divisions within the region, particularly between the northeast corner and the Peace River Valley, which is more politically and culturally attuned to Alberta than to the southern parts of British Columbia. There have been repeated attempts to restructure northern governance, none of which have found widespread support in the region. Efforts to treat northern British Columbia as a single region, with the notable exception of the establishment of UNBC, have typically done poorly, in large measure because of the social, cultural, and economic diversity within a region that is, after all, larger than France and Germany combined. Efforts at sub-regional development and policy-

making, a process aided by the empowerment of Aboriginal governments in recent years, will likely be more successful over time.

Northern Regional or Municipal Districts

Northern British Columbia is a sparsely populated region comprised of roughly 250,000 people (7.7%) of the province's total population despite constituting 70% (approximately 569,000 km²) of the province's land mass. It is rich in natural resource wealth.⁴⁹ The region includes census division numbers 2, 4, 13, 15, 20, 22, 24, and 26. Eight regional districts are considered to be in northern British Columbia including: Bulkley-Nechako (39,000), Cariboo (62,000), Fraser-Fort George (92,000), Kitimat-Stikine (37,000), Northern Rockies (6,000), Peace River (58,000), Skeena-Queen Charlotte (19,000), and Stikine (600), as illustrated in figure 3. Some definitions of British Columbia's Provincial North include parts of the Cariboo.⁵⁰ The most populated communities from each district, with populations over 2,000 people, are: Smithers (5,000), Williams Lake (11,000), Prince George (72,000), Terrace (11,000), Northern Rockies (5,000), Fort St. John (19,000), and Prince Rupert (13,000).

British Columbia has the second largest Aboriginal population of Canada's jurisdictions, with around 196,000 or roughly 5% of the total population. First Nations people constitute the vast majority of the Aboriginal population (66%), followed by Métis (30%), Inuit (0.4%), and other Aboriginal peoples (2.3%).⁵¹ There are 198 distinct First Nations in the province.⁵²

Governance and Administrative Structures

The northern regions of British Columbia are governed by the Ministry of Community, Sport, and Cultural Development in consultation with the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). There are three Acts that govern BC's north: the *Community Charter* (2003),⁵³ the *Local Government Act* (1996),⁵⁴ and the *Northern Development Initiative Trust Act* (2004).⁵⁵

The British Columbia regional government system operates at three levels: municipalities (160), regional districts (27), and improvement districts (231).⁵⁶ The forms of local governments are not static, however, and may shift because "some communities that are represented by a regional district or improvement district may be incorporated as new municipalities, or they may become part of existing municipalities through a municipal boundary extension or restructure process."⁵⁷ Regional districts are governed by boards and the board directors are both directly and indirectly elected. British Columbia is sectioned into regional districts so that municipalities and rural areas may work together and allow for the regional distribution of programs and services. Municipalities have the greatest amount of autonomy to provide local services.



Figure 3. Map of British Columbia regions. (Source: “List of Regional Districts of British Columbia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_regional_districts_of_British_Columbia)

The Ministry of Community, Sport, and Cultural Development⁵⁸ in consultation with the UUBCM⁵⁹ is responsible for local government and defines municipal borders. The Governance & Structure Division supports local government in three areas: 1) the advisory services branch that advises complex local government issues; 2) the community relations branch that supports relationships between local and First Nations governments and supports economic and social development of communities; and 3) the local government structure branch that is responsible for overseeing the restructuring of local governments including municipal boundary extensions and incorporation of new municipalities.⁶⁰ The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation negotiates treaties to create economic certainty over Crown land and resources, and to improve the lives of First Nations people.⁶¹

Legislation and Initiatives Promoting Northern Governance and Development

Programs for enhancing economic development in northern regions of British Columbia are expected to play an important role in the region’s economic growth and sustainability. RuralBC is one such economic initiative that links

government and rural communities by identifying provincial and regional-level needs and opportunities, providing specific services to the northern regions, and supporting rural and remote areas facing negative economic climates and impacts.⁶²

Launched in 2009, RuralBC is composed of two connected elements: the Regional Economic Policy and Projects Branch and Regional Economic Operations Branch. The Policy and Projects Branch identifies needs and opportunities within regions and works across governments, and with external stakeholders, to represent and support the needs of rural communities. Regional managers in the Economic Operations Branch assist companies, municipal governments, and community organizations to access services and funding and provide support for regional economic development initiatives.⁶³ The Regional Economic Operations Branch also provides Community Adjustment Services to rural and remote resource-based municipalities facing negative economic impacts due to industry downsizing or closure, by assisting community leaders, industry, the province, and other interested parties to develop and implement coordinated responses that seek to re-establish financial viability based on the community's needs.

Among the key initiatives of RuralBC are five regional economic trusts.⁶⁴ One of these is the Northern Development Initiative Trust, which was created in November 2004 with the mandate to foster economic development and job creation in the central and northern regions of British Columbia. Established with an initial allocation of \$185 million, the Trust supports agriculture, economic development, energy, forestry mining,⁶⁵ Olympic opportunities, pine beetle recovery, small business, tourism, and transportation.⁶⁶ NDI was established through provincial legislation, including the *Northern Development Initiative Trust Act* (Bill 59) in 2004⁶⁷ and *Northern Development Initiative Trust Amendment Act* (Bill 6) in 2005, by which the province granted the Trust an additional capital infusion of \$50 million.⁶⁸ The strategic plan covers over 70% of the province including thirty-nine incorporated communities, nine regional districts, one regional municipality, and eighty-eight First Nations. The main organizational objectives include capacity building, funding, investment attraction, and business development. NDI's goal is to inject \$2 billion into the regional economy every decade.⁶⁹

Community Well-Being

According to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), the Community Well-Being (CWB) Index provides a method for measuring and examining the well-being of Canadian communities based

on four indicators of socio-economic well-being: 1) education; 2) labour force activity; 3) income; and 4) housing. The indicators were developed from Statistics Canada's Census of Population and combined to assign a well-being "score" to each community. "These scores are used to compare well-being across First Nations and Inuit communities with well-being in other Canadian communities over time."⁷⁰

Table 3 is derived from the AANDC's CWB Index⁷¹ and Statistics Canada Census Subdivision (CSD)⁷² information for the five most populated Census Subdivisions considered to be in British Columbia's rural "north." Major urban centres or cities were excluded from the list. The average Community Well-Being Index Score for Northern British Columbia CSDs was 81.2, with Peace River B taking the lowest overall CWB score at 75, and Peace River C taking the highest overall CWB score at 85.

Table 3. Community well-being by census subdivision for the five most populated rural CSDs in British Columbia

Census subdivision (CSD) name	2006 Income Score	2006 Education Score	2006 Housing Score	2006 Labour Force Activity Score	2006 CWB Score	2006 2B Population
Prince George	88	58	95	87	82	70375
Peace River B	82	43	85	89	75	5530
Peace River C	99	55	96	91	85	6350
Peace River D	90	52	95	89	82	5780
Bulkley-Nechako A	85	60	94	88	82	5285

Alberta

Alberta is renowned for its ranching culture and widespread farming activity, supplemented by the rich oil and gas resources developed after the Second World War. In the Northwest Central region, the Peace River Valley extends the agricultural region further north than would be expected. The top third or more of the province is among the most resource rich areas in Canada, with the massive Athabasca oil sands development dominating and contributing to Alberta's sustained growth and supporting the national economy. Outside of the two largest centres, Fort McMurray and Grande

Prairie, the communities of northern Alberta are a combination of oil and gas developments; First Nations settlements; farms; and forestry and resource camps. The northern part of the province is frustrated by the gap between northern resource prosperity and the services available on the ground, best exemplified by the dangerous and overcrowded two-lane highway connecting the oil sands and Fort McMurray to Edmonton.

Northern Regional or Municipal Districts

Roughly 10% of Alberta's population lives in the northern half (350,000 people),⁷³ with 43% living in communities under 2,000 people and around 280,000 people living in the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) region.⁷⁴ Fort McMurray is one of the largest urban centres with an official population of approximately 65,000 people, but an actual size of over 110,000 with seasonal workers employed to work on the oil sands; it is followed by Grande Prairie (50,000) and Cold Lake (13,000), which includes the Canadian Forces Base.

There are six Census Subdivisions (CSDs) considered by Statistics Canada to be within the northern region of the province—division numbers 12, 13, and 16–19.⁷⁵ Northern Alberta has fifteen communities with over 2,000 residents including Whitecourt (9,000), Slave Lake (7,000), Bonnyville (6,500), Peace River (7,000), St. Paul (6,000), Fairview (3,000), High Level (4,000), Grande Cache (4,000), High Prairie (3,000), Lac La Biche (3,000), Athabasca (3,000), Grimshaw (3,000), Fox Creek (2,000), Beaverlodge (2,000), and Sexmith (2,000).

Alberta's north has thirty-three of the province's forty-five First Nations across three treaty areas, and there are 140 First Nations reserves in Alberta total.⁷⁶ Aboriginal peoples make up around 16% of the population in the North.⁷⁷ Figure 4 illustrates the northern regions of Alberta.⁷⁸

Governance and Administrative Structures

Northern Alberta is represented by Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta elected in the ridings of Athabasca-Redwater, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock, Bonnyville-Cold Lake, Dunvegan-Central Peace, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo, Grande Prairie Smoky, Grande Prairie Wapiti, Lac La Biche-St. Paul, Lesser Slave Lake, and Peace River.⁷⁹ The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC)⁸⁰ is responsible for the northern region of Alberta and is legislated through the Northern Alberta Development Council Act (2002).⁸¹ Alberta is governed through three general types of municipalities—urban, rural, and specialized.⁸²



Figure 4. Northern regions of Alberta. (Source: Northern Alberta Development Council, <https://www.benorth.ca/assets/NADC-map.jpg>)

Local Government Services is a division of Municipal Affairs, which provides such services as advisory support, training, and internship programs as well as tools for enhancing municipal capacity and sustainability. In addition, the division is also responsible for promoting co-operation through land-use planning assistance, mediation programming, and financial support for regional collaboration, as well as administering grant programs such as the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI). Advice is provided to municipalities related to tax issues and assessment.⁸³

There is a range of governance options for municipalities with respect to services offered regionally, allowing for considerable variation in operational autonomy, borrowing, and legal powers. Figure 5 outlines these differences.⁸⁴

Legislation and Initiatives Promoting Northern Governance and Development

The *Municipal Government Act*⁸⁵ provides the legislative framework in which all municipalities and municipal entities across the Province of Alberta operate. It is a substantial piece of legislation, with eighteen parts and over 650 sections. The Act outlines the “governance model for cities,

towns, villages, municipal districts, specialized municipalities, and other forms of local government” and contains the three areas of focus including governance, planning and development, and assessment and taxation.⁸⁶

Governance Options
 The governance options available to municipalities considering regional services delivery

- Intermunicipal agreement
- Regional services commissions
- Municipal controlled corporations
- Cooperatives
- Societies
- Part 9 (not for profit) companies
- Public-private partnerships

Comparison of Governance Structures for Municipal Services in Alberta

	Inter-municipal Agreement	Regional Services Commission ¹	Municipal Controlled Corporation ²	Cooperative	Society ³	Part 9 Company ⁴	Public Private Partnership
Separate legal entity		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ ⁵
Can borrow and incur debt servicing costs		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Can directly expropriate land ⁶		✓					
Can make a profit and distribute to members			✓	✓			✓
Requires provincial government approval for establishment		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ministry/parties responsible for establishment	Municipalities	Municipal Affairs		Service Alberta			Municipalities and Partners
Legislation restricting types of services provided	Municipal Government Act			Cooperatives Act	Societies Act	Companies Act	Municipal Government Act

Figure 5. Governance options for Alberta municipalities

The Government of Alberta established+ the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI), the province’s key initiative to strengthen the municipal sector, to assist municipalities with financial support/funding for infrastructural needs and to help them meet the challenges of growth by enhancing long-term sustainability. The 2014 budget committed \$3.7 billion over three years under MSI to address growth pressures.⁸⁷ Other major municipal grants include the Alberta Community Partnership, the Federal Gas Tax Fund, and the Southern Alberta Flood Response Program.

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC)⁸⁸ is a legislated government program (*Northern Alberta Development Council Act*⁸⁹), which has a mandate to promote economic development in the North. NADC assists economic development and growth in the 150 communities and for the 350,000 people living in the northern region of Alberta. Development and planning involves collaborations with educational institutions and northern corporations to properly address the economic needs of Alberta’s northern communities. Specifically, NADC’s mandate states that it is to

“investigate, monitor, evaluate, plan and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta and to advise the Government accordingly.”⁹⁰

NADC is made up of provincial and local leaders and staff that provide development information, support education and skills enhancement programs, and build strategic partnerships. As indicated on NADC’s website: “The Council is made up of nine public members and the Chair is a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) of Alberta. Council membership reflects the geographic, cultural and vocational diversity of northern communities. All are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. A small staff support the directions set by Council. The NADC head office is in Peace River and there are small offices in St. Paul, Fort McMurray, and Edmonton.”⁹¹

NADC’s strategic framework for 2013–2016 indicates four priority areas: 1) transportation and infrastructure; 2) workforce development; 3) human and health services; and 4) resource management.⁹²

Community Well-Being

Table 4 is derived from AANDC’s CWB Index⁹³ and Statistics Canada Census Subdivision (CSD)⁹⁴ information for the five most populated Census Subdivisions considered to be in the rural “north” of Alberta. Major urban centres or cities were excluded from the list. The average Community Well-Being Index Score for Northern Alberta CSDs was 81.6, with Slave Lake and St. Paul taking the lowest overall CWB scores at 80, and Peace River taking the highest overall CWB score at 84.

Table 4. Community well-being by census subdivision for the five most populated rural CSDs in Alberta

Census subdivision (CSD) name	2006 Income Score	2006 Education Score	2006 Housing Score	2006 Labour Force Activity Score	2006 CWB Score	2006 2B Population
Whitecourt	92	52	96	91	83	8955
Slave Lake	89	52	90	90	80	6645
Bonnyville	89	50	96	90	81	5720
Peace River	91	59	95	92	84	6175
St. Paul	84	51	95	90	80	4840

Saskatchewan

Northern Saskatchewan is a contradiction: resource rich and yet quite poor, sparsely populated but with a growing transient population, filled with promise but lacking basic services. The North covers almost half of the province and is known provincially as much for its thousands of lakes, impressive rivers, and great sporting opportunities as for its social and economic challenges and opportunities. Successive governments have struggled with the persistent gaps in quality of life and economic opportunities between the North and the rest of the province—supporting resource development that sustains all of Saskatchewan and working with First Nations, Métis, and mixed communities to create improved life chances throughout the region. The rise of Aboriginal self-government and the growing confidence of Indigenous communities and leaders speaks to the important impacts of capacity building across the North while underscoring the need for continued improvements.

Northern Regional or Municipal Districts

Saskatchewan's northern region is defined as Division No. 18 by Statistics Canada, and is known as the Northern Saskatchewan Administration District (NSAD). Northern Saskatchewan includes fifty-eight census subdivisions, with twenty-four municipalities, two northern towns, eleven northern villages, ten northern hamlets, one unincorporated settlement, and thirty-two of the province's seventy First Nations communities.⁹⁵

The northern region has a population of roughly 37,000 people, which is less than 4% of the province's population—two-thirds are under the age of 35, and 80% are of Aboriginal heritage (predominately Cree, Dene, or Métis).⁹⁶ The most populated northern Saskatchewan communities, with populations over 2,000, are LaRonge (2,000), with the neighbouring settlements of Air Ronge and the La Ronge Indian Band, and La Loche (3,000).⁹⁷ Figure 6 illustrates the district boundaries.⁹⁸

Governance and Administrative Structures

The Northern Saskatchewan Administration District (NSAD) is administered by the Northern Municipal Services branch. Northern municipalities are governed by an elected council that can hire staff to manage daily administration and maintain municipal services (e.g., roads, utilities, recreation facilities). Northern settlements are created under the same legislation. However, each settlement is governed by an elected local advisory committee that reports to the Minister of Government Relations on how it

provides for the health and safety of the municipality's residents.⁹⁹ Local governments are responsible for an array of services within their boundaries including police and fire services, water and sewage treatment services, transportation services, land use planning and development services, library services, recreation, and cultural services.¹⁰⁰

New North, now incorporated into the Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities Services Inc. (SANC Services Inc.), provides services to northern municipalities, which focus on three key areas: advocacy, capacity building, and strategic relationships. New North's goal is to identify and advocate issues and concerns on behalf of northern communities; organize and coordinate capacity building to improve knowledge and skills of northerners through training and developing activities for municipal governments and organizations; and, finally, building and maintaining strategic relationships with other organizations and governments to improve conditions for northerners.

The *Northern Municipalities Act*¹⁰¹ outlines the local governance structure for districts, settlements, hamlets, villages, and towns including procedures for establishing municipalities, such as the orders for establishing and altering boundaries and northern municipal names. The Municipal Relations branch is responsible for municipal administration.¹⁰²

All municipalities in Saskatchewan have elected council members with the exception of northern settlements, which are quasi-municipalities for which "the provincial Minister responsible for municipal government is the de-facto mayor and the local advisory committees serve as advisors to the Minister regarding local services, revenues and expenditures."¹⁰³ Fully incorporated municipalities have a council headed either by a mayor (cities, urban municipalities, and northern municipalities), or by a reeve (rural municipalities). Officials of rural municipalities are elected for two-year terms with half of the representatives in each municipality elected each year. Officials in other types of municipalities are elected for three-year terms, and all are elected at the same time.¹⁰⁴

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), one of the oldest First Nation political organizations in Canada, represents seventy-four First Nations in Saskatchewan. The goals and objectives of the FSIN are: the protection of treaties and treaty rights; the fostering of progress in economic, educational, and social endeavours of First Nation people; co-operation with civil and religious authorities; the provision of constructive criticism and thorough discussion on all matters; the adherence to democratic procedure; and the promotion of respect and tolerance for all people.¹⁰⁵ Within Northern Saskatchewan, there are two large tribal councils. The Prince Albert Tribal

Council includes the First Nations communities in the northeast and north-central parts of the province. The Meadow Lake Tribal Council represents the communities in the west-central part of Saskatchewan. As with the FSIN, the tribal councils are evolving their role, with activities ranging from political advocacy to program delivery. They have emerged in recent years as a key element in the governance of the North, working with and for Aboriginal communities to provide improved services and programs.



Figure 6. Saskatchewan’s census divisions, highlighting Division No. 18 (Source: *Wikipedia*)

Legislation and Initiatives Promoting Northern Governance and Development

The division of First Nations, Métis, and Northern Affairs (FNMNA), under the Ministry of Government Relations, supports the social, economic, and business development of First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan.¹⁰⁶ The Government of Saskatchewan’s Northern Affairs branch, Northern Engagement, supports economic growth in the North and seeks to close the serious economic gap between the North and the rest of the province. Northern Engagement strives to assist northerners in participating more fully

in the regional economy. Dating back to the 1948 *Northern Administration Act*, Saskatchewan's Northern Administration District (NAD) is defined in the Province's *Northern Municipalities Act* and provides for the administration and development of the northern part of Saskatchewan.¹⁰⁷ The Northern Capital Grants Program provides financial and technical assistance to northern communities for the construction or upgrading of municipal facilities and for the acquisition of municipal equipment.¹⁰⁸

Saskatchewan has been an active member in the Northern Development Ministers Forum (NDMF), established to bridge the work of federal, provincial, and territorial governments with respect to managing the province's north.¹⁰⁹ NDMF's mandate is focused on reinforcing co-operation among the various authorities in northern regions, identifying appropriate governmental actions, and providing leadership to advance socio-economic developments.

First Nations and Métis Community Engagement Projects are supported through the Office of the Provincial Interlocutor,¹¹⁰ which focuses on practical arrangements and partnerships with First Nations and/or Métis communities. Projects considered fall under the following categories: Safe Communities, Strong Families, Student Achievement, and Economic Growth.¹¹¹

The Aboriginal and Northern Justice Initiatives (ANJI), under the Community Justice Division at the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, is tasked with initiating justice reform measures by reacting to Aboriginal and northern community issues, building community trust and confidence in the justice system, and establishing positive working relationships. Their mandate is to provide Aboriginal and northern program and policy advice, with the goals of ensuring their needs are addressed in both existing and proposed activities. ANJI is also tasked with identifying areas in need of improvement and to facilitate the self-empowerment of communities to address crime, victimization, and preventative issues. The ministry also initiates and participates in activities that aim to build positive relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. It supports the Traditional Elders Ministerial Committee, ensuring that senior officials and representative Elders have the opportunity to discuss and influence policy development for programs and services within the ministry.

Community Well-Being

Table 5 is derived from the AANDC's CWB Index¹¹² and Statistics Canada Census Subdivision (CSD)¹¹³ information for the five most populated Census Subdivisions considered to be in the rural "north." Major urban centres or cities were excluded from the list. The average Community Well-Being Index

Score for Northern Saskatchewan CSDs was 63.6, with Pelican Narrows 184B taking the lowest overall CWB score at 42, and Creighton taking the highest overall CWB score at 79.

Table 5. Community well-being by census subdivision for the five most populated rural CSDs in Saskatchewan

Census subdivision (CSD) name	2006 Income Score	2006 Education Score	2006 Housing Score	2006 Labour Force Activity Score	2006 CWB Score	2006 2B Population
La Loche	57	23	70	61	53	2340
La Ronge	81	59	83	88	78	2725
Creighton	86	49	93	88	79	1500
Île-à-la-Crosse	68	41	81	76	66	1340
Pelican Narrows 184B	37	30	39	61	42	1345

Manitoba

Of the northern provincial districts in Canada, Northern Manitoba is perhaps the least understood and least recognized by the majority of Canadians. It is a vast area, covering over two-thirds of the province, but with a small population; intense poverty; massive hydroelectric power generating capacity (which has caused substantial dislocations to the Aboriginal communities); and substantial mining activity, with several mines in operation for generations. Indeed, in the 1950s and 1960s, the combination of Inco's massive mine and smelter at Thompson, and the construction of major hydro dams across the North, gave the region a profile somewhat close to that of northern Alberta in the twenty-first century. The excitement and attention have declined dramatically in recent decades. The North struggles for recognition within the province, let alone across the country, and has often attracted negative attention due to socio-economic difficulties within the Aboriginal communities. There are few parts of the country requiring greater local and regional transformation than Northern Manitoba.

Northern Regional or Municipal Districts

The northern region of Manitoba is composed of four census divisions (19 and 21–23) encompasses over half (67%) of the province. It is largely undeveloped wilderness. Northern Manitoba is sparsely populated with 7.3% (88,000) of Manitoba's total population. There are ten municipalities, seven of which

are towns, two cities, and one local government district. The most populated communities, with over 2,000 people, are: The Pas (6,000), Norway House 17 (5,000), Flin Flon (6,000), and Thompson (13,000).¹¹⁴ The northern region has fifty-four of the province's sixty-three First Nations reserves, with a population of around 41,000.¹¹⁵ Twenty-three of the province's First Nations situated in the north are not accessible by an all-weather road. Figure 7 shows the geographical distribution of the municipalities.¹¹⁶



Figure 7. Municipalities in Northern Manitoba. (Source: Association of Manitoba Municipalities, <http://www.amm.mb.ca/northern.html>)

Governance and Administrative Structures

Administrative responsibilities fall under the Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (MANA)¹¹⁷ department. MANA was developed when the first *Northern Affairs Act*¹¹⁸ was proclaimed in 1966, giving the Northern Affairs Commission powers to provide municipal services (physical infrastructure development) to northern communities. Subsequent amendments and new legislation have reshaped the focus of Northern Affairs toward self-government and provision of municipal services. This

has led, in stages, to the creation of the Local Government Development Division in 1970 and the Native Affairs Secretariat in 1982. The two units were merged in 1999 to create Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

The Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs department has three divisions: the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, Local Government Development, and Financial and Administrative Services.¹¹⁹ The goal of Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs is to improve the quality of life and opportunities for northern Manitoba residents by providing better services and by closing the gap between Aboriginal and northern residents and other Manitobans particularly in the areas of education, health, housing, economic opportunities, and employment. Other key goals include meeting constitutional obligations and provincial responsibilities, and community development and self-determination through enhancing autonomy, accountability, and sustainability of Aboriginal and northern communities.

The Northern District of Manitoba has ten municipalities.¹²⁰ The Association of Manitoba Municipalities identifies and addresses the needs and concerns of its members in order to achieve strong and effective municipal government.¹²¹ The AMM was created in January 1999 as a result of a merger between the Union of Manitoba Municipalities (UMM) and the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities (MAUM). All 197 incorporated municipalities in Manitoba are members of the AMM.

There are three active provincial political organizations that represent First Nations in Manitoba and these are divided on a north-south basis.¹²² According to AANDC, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) is the main political organization representing chiefs from across Manitoba providing information on issues facing First Nation politics, history, or events. The Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that provides a collective voice on issues of inherent, treaty, Aboriginal, and human rights for the citizens of the province's northern First Nations and is affiliated with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

Legislation and Initiatives Promoting Northern Governance and Development

The Northern Development Strategy (NDS), an initiative introduced by Manitoba's five northern MLAs, seeks to improve social, educational, and economic opportunities in Northern Manitoba and to address challenges to the realization of the North's human and economic potential. The strategy is designed to achieve improved quality of life, expand educational and employment opportunities, increase economic opportunities, and coordinate approaches to services and investment in Northern Manitoba.

The Government of Manitoba works with residents, governments, NGOs, and the private sector to address fairly familiar regional priorities including improved education, training, housing, health, and infrastructure.¹²³

The Northern Healthy Food Initiative (NHFI) is a community-based intervention funded by the provincial government of Manitoba and designed to increase access to affordable and nutritious food in Northern Manitoba communities. The initiative was mandated by the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet and focuses primarily on fostering food self-sufficiency. Food security projects in northern and remote areas are delivered by local community organizations such as Bayline Regional Roundtable, Northern Association of Community Councils, Four Arrows Regional Health Authority, and Food Matters Manitoba. NHFI is administered and managed by Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs with the assistance and guidance of the NHFI Management Committee (with representatives from Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Initiatives, Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship, Manitoba Health, Manitoba Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs, and Healthy Child Manitoba).

In the 1970s and 1980s, assistance with provincial efforts in the North were aided by financial accords with the federal government including the Canada/Manitoba Special Rural Development Agreement, the Northlands Agreement, and the Northern Development Agreement. In addition, the Northern Flood Agreement provided compensation for the socio-economic costs associated with the community dislocations caused by the hydroelectric development in the region.¹²⁴ The Northern Flood Agreement has been controversial, as communities struggled to convert the cash awards into long-term economic opportunities.

Community Well-Being

Table 6 is derived from the AANDC's CWB Index¹²⁵ and Statistics Canada Census Subdivision (CSD)¹²⁶ information for the five most populated Census Subdivisions considered to be in the rural "north." Major urban centres or cities were excluded from the list. The average Community Well-Being Index Score for Northern Manitoba CSDs was 60.6, with St. Theresa Point taking the lowest overall CWB score at 43 and The Pas taking the highest overall CWB score at 79.

Table 6. Community well-being by census subdivision for the five most populated rural CSDs in Manitoba

Census subdivision (CSD) name	2006 Income Score	2006 Education Score	2006 Housing Score	2006 Labour Force Activity Score	2006 CWB Score	2006 2B Population
Kelsey	84	54	85	85	77	2480
Norway House 17	48	24	67	66	51	4045
St. Theresa Point	45	25	39	61	43	2635
Peguis 1B	41	37	67	66	53	2520
The Pas	84	54	92	86	79	5520

Ontario

Northern Ontario has assumed a high profile in recent years, due to a series of community-level crises (most notably Kashachewan and Attawapiskat), the revitalization of the northern hardrock mining economy, and the controversy surrounding the “Ring of Fire” chromite mining opportunity. The juxtaposition of resource potential and Aboriginal distress is compounded by long-standing northern grievances about the lack of attention given to the region by the provincial capital and the striking gaps in quality of life and government services between the province’s north and south. With the Ontario manufacturing economy in considerable difficulty, government attention has shifted to promoting mineral development in Northern Ontario, a continuation of a pattern of episodic engagement with the region.

Northern Regional or Municipal Districts

Northern Ontario is a large administrative region that constitutes 87% of the land area but that has only 6% (790,000)¹²⁷ of the provincial population. The northern region has a large number of Aboriginal communities and a significant Aboriginal population who are primarily Ojibwe, Cree, and Oji-Cree nations; the region has a total Aboriginal population of 96,000.¹²⁸ Northern Ontario has 121 of the province’s 145 reserves, along with all six Indian Settlements.¹²⁹ Northern Ontario is split into two main administrative regions, the Northeast and Northwest parts of Ontario, and is further divided into eleven territorial districts: Algoma (116,000), Cochrane (81,000), Kenora (58,000), Manitoulin (13,000), Muskoka (58,000), Nipissing (85,000), Parry Sound (42,000), Rainy River (20,000), Sudbury (21,000), Timiskaming (33,000), and Thunder Bay (146,000).¹³⁰

Territorial districts were originally created in 1858 for the delivery of services to the region and are not municipalities. Northern districts contain incorporated improvement districts, villages, towns, cities, and townships but have no councils, unlike the southern parts of Ontario. The most populated communities across the districts, with over 2,000 people, are: Sault Ste. Marie (75,000), Elliot Lake (11,000), Timmins (43,000), Kenora (15,000), Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands (3,000), Huntsville (19,000), North Bay (54,000), Parry Sound (6,000), Fort Frances (8,000), Greater Sudbury (160,000), Temiskaming Shores (10,000), and Thunder Bay (108,000). Figure 8 illustrates Northern Ontario's census divisions.¹³¹

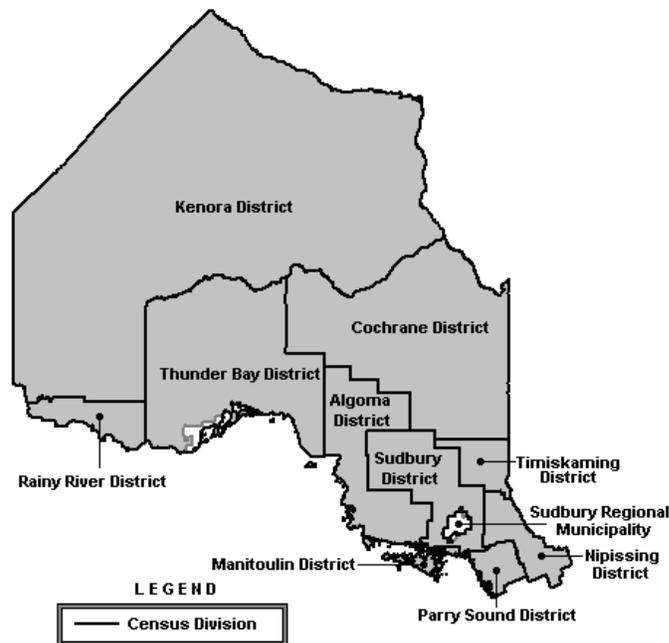


Figure 8. Census divisions of Northern Ontario (Source: “Northern Ontario EI Economic Region, 2000, Government of Canada, 2004, http://srv129.services.gc.ca/rbin/eng/pdf/nortont_C.PDF.)

Governance and Administrative Structures

Northern Ontario's governance/administrative structures are designed to respond to the needs of communities across the North that have unique development and social programming requirements. They also permit local input when needed and provide effective management.¹³² Vast distances and small populations make it difficult to adapt the government structures

to northern regions; instead, northern Ontario is divided into districts administered by the province. The smaller and broadly dispersed population has meant little administrative control resides in the region. For many communities this has translated into socio-economic problems and tensions with the provincial government.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is responsible for municipal relations including northern regions—from establishing planning areas and boards and coordinating provincial interests through input, review, and approval of planning applications and decisions, to acting in place of municipal councils and approving official plans, amendments, and development applications.¹³³

There are a number of unique structures to bring government action to the North including Improvement Districts (which operate like municipalities), Local Roads Area Boards, Local Services Boards, and Planning Boards.¹³⁴ The Ontario Municipal Board established Improvement Districts to respond to the needs of areas facing rapid development pressures and is designated at the request of local citizens or the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. They are administered by boards of three or five trustees, appointed by the provincial government. When population size warrants, they may become a village, town, or township. The board is an independent administrative board, operated as an adjudicative tribunal that is governed by the *Ontario Municipal Board Act* reporting to the Ministry of the Attorney General; it hears applications and appeals on municipal planning disputes under the *Planning Act*, *Expropriations Act*, *Ontario Heritage Act*, and the *Municipal Act*.

Roads Area Boards and Local Services Boards are specialized organizations and not municipalities. The Roads Area Board develops roads in unorganized territories while Local Services Boards are established upon citizens' requests and are responsible for up to six areas of service including fire protection, recreation, street lighting, water and sewer systems, and garbage collection. Local requests for the provision of services are approved through the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. The Development Area Board is similar to an Improvement District and is designed for rural areas.¹³⁵

Legislation and Initiatives Promoting Northern Governance and Development

A number of government ministries are involved with the promotion of economic and social development in Northern Ontario. The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines provides many government programs. The Ministry of Infrastructure's "Places to Grow" focuses on planning for

growth and development that supports economic prosperity, protection of the environment, and helping communities to improve the quality of life. The initiative was legislated in 2005 under the *Places to Grow Act*,¹³⁶ which seeks to connect growth plans to the needs, strengths, and opportunities of communities involved and tries to find a balance between the needs of the economy and environmental protection.¹³⁷ Ontario's Ministry of Finance implemented a Northern Ontario Energy Credit for northerners that offsets their higher energy costs (single persons receive up to \$141 and families up to \$216).¹³⁸

Community Well-Being

Table 7 is derived from the AANDC's CWB Index¹³⁹ and Statistics Canada Census Subdivision (CSD)¹⁴⁰ information for the five most populated Census Subdivisions considered to be in the rural "north." Major urban centres or cities were excluded from the list. The average Community Well-Being Index Score for Northern Ontario CSDs was 79.2, with Kirkland Lake taking the lowest overall CWB score at 77 and Kenora, Unorganized taking the highest overall CWB score at 81.

Table 7. Community well-being by census subdivision for the five most populated rural CSDs in Ontario

Census subdivision (CSD) name	2006 Income Score	2006 Education Score	2006 Housing Score	2006 Labour Force Activity Score	2006 CWB Score	2006 2B Population
Parry Sound	84	52	93	87	79	5595
Kirkland Lake	83	50	92	82	77	8030
Kenora, Unorganized	89	57	93	85	81	7045
Thunder Bay, Unorganized	87	57	93	83	80	6585
Kapuskasing	87	51	95	82	79	8355

Quebec

For more than four decades, northern Quebec (Nord-du-Québec) has held the key to Quebec's economic and nationalistic aspirations. The northern region's immense hydroelectric potential has provided core cash flow for the Government of Quebec, a strategy for provincial development that continued through to the Plan-Nord approach of the Jean Charest government in May 2011. The Nord is a vast area, with a very small population. It is also the centre of the first modern land claim settlement in Canadian history and, although it took a while to unfold, one of the more impressive examples of Aboriginal self-government and regional administration in the world. The region remains a major focal point for debate about Quebec's future, particularly because of the growing authority of the Cree and Inuit and the development of impressive new models of local governance.

Northern Regional or Municipal Districts

The Nord-du-Québec region is the province's largest administrative region encompassing 750,000 km², and covering roughly 55% of Quebec. The total northern population is 43,000, over half of which are of Cree (16,000) or Inuit (12,000) heritage.¹⁴¹ The most populous communities in each of the districts are the city of Chibougamau (8000) in Jamésie, Chisasibi (4000) in Eeyou Istchee, and Kuujuaq (2000) in Kativik. Figure 9 illustrates the three regional divisions of Kativik, Eeyou Istchee, and Jamésie.¹⁴²

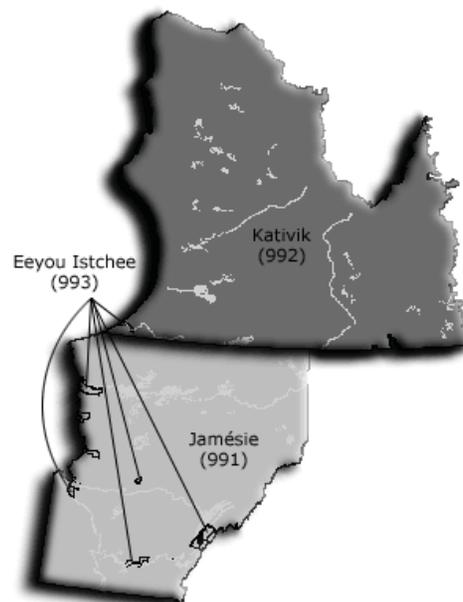


Figure 9. Regional districts in Northern Quebec (Source: "Nord-du-Québec and its Regional Municipalities," Institut de la statistique Québec)

There are thirty-nine First Nations and sixteen Inuit communities in Quebec. Northern Quebec is subdivided into three territories (TE, territory equivalent to a regional county municipality) including Kativik (also referred to as Nunavik), Eeyou Istchee, and Jamésie.

Governance and Administrative Structures

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Regions, and Land Occupancy oversees municipal relations in Quebec.¹⁴³ Northern Quebec is administratively split between two native semi-autonomous governments—the Cree Regional Administration and the Kativik Regional Government—and five municipalities. The Cree Regional Authority, formed in 1978, represents the Cree Nation (nine Cree villages of northern Quebec), which has been called Eeyou Istchee since 2007 (also known as “The People’s Land”). This area has been incorporated into the political body of the Grand Council of the Crees, which represents around 18,000 Crees or “Eeyou.” The Kativik Regional Government serves the fourteen villages of the Nunavik region, except the Cree village of Whapmagoostui, which is under the Cree Regional Authority. The *Act respecting Northern Villages and the Kativik Regional Government*¹⁴⁴ of 1978 establishes the Kativik municipal government in this territory.¹⁴⁵

There are three distinct public administrations of Kativik (Nunavik): the Kativik Regional Government, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Service, and the Kativik School Board. Northern Quebec is managed by the region-wide units as seen through the public administration arrangements in Kativik/Nunavik or through the public/ethnic hybrid form of governance found in Eeyou Istchee-Jamésie region. Baie-James is the largest of the five municipalities found in northern Quebec and almost entirely covers the Jamésie Territory.¹⁴⁶ A 2012 governance agreement signed between the Cree and Quebec led to the creation of the Eeyou Istchee-Jamésie Regional Government.¹⁴⁷

The Kativik Regional Government (KRG) provides local services to the Nunavik region while the Cree Regional Administration provides municipal services for the nine Cree nations of Eeyou Istchee. The Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay and the Cree School Board provide Health and Education services to the Cree population.¹⁴⁸ Northern villages provide municipal services that are similar to those in the south except for the method of delivery (e.g., water is delivered and waste water is collected by truck).

The KRG delivers services across a large array of sectors: airport management and marine infrastructure maintenance; regional and local economic development, as well as business development; policing and

civil security; crime victims assistance; Inuit hunting, fishing, and trapping support; wildlife conservation, environment, and climate change research; park development and management; employment, training, and income support; childcare services; municipal infrastructure development and drinking water monitoring; Internet access; and sports and recreation. The KRG also provides technical assistance to the fourteen northern villages on management and municipal accounting, land use planning and development, legal affairs, engineering, and public transit.

The Grand Council of the Crees Community Services Department supports a diverse set of initiatives including home care programs in the Cree Communities, the operations of the Cree Tourism Association, and the Cree Crafts Association. Additionally, the department supports the Cree communities in capital planning and economic development. Community Services units include Technical Services, Economic Development, and Fire Protection.¹⁴⁹ The Northern Quebec Module (NQM) meets regional needs for Nunavik/Kativik communities by linking health institutions and the University Integrated Health Network (RUIS) McGill in Montreal, and providing accommodation, transport, and services of nurses and interpreters for Inuit receiving health care in Montreal.¹⁵⁰

Legislation and Initiatives Promoting Northern Governance and Development

Northern Quebec is covered under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (1975) and, largely due to the modern treaty and government commitments, is one of the few provincial northern regions that is doing well financially (supported through federal government transfers); it operates with considerable regional autonomy. The Northern Villages and Kativik Regional Government Act (1978) paved a path for the development of regional governance.

The Government of Quebec has a number of programs that support northern regions, municipalities, and territories including the Economic Development Fund (CDF), Assistance Fund Regional Initiatives (FAIR), Support Fund Territories in Difficulty (FSTD), Financial Assistance Program to Municipal Amalgamation, and Funding Regional County Municipalities Program (MRC). For example, the CDF supports initiatives contributing to economic, social, cultural, tourist, environmental, and technological enhancement. The initiative promotes the revitalization of Quebec's regions with particular focus on those that face difficult situations. Financial aid is granted to projects in regions with substantial and long-term socio-economic need.¹⁵¹

There are a number of programs supported by the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) related to community enhancement and economic development, environmental and wildlife preservation, and a number of assistance and youth programs. In 2007, the KRG signed the Economic and Community Development Agreement with the Quebec government, which contributes to businesses and socio-economic enterprises. One component of the agreement was the provision of a second phase of the Makigiarutiit Fund, which helped stimulate the creation and development of private enterprise by providing loans, loan guarantees, and investments related to infrastructure and equipment start-up and development projects.¹⁵² The Uumajuit Program is a wildlife conservation initiative started by the KRG in 2004 under the Agreement Concerning Block Funding for the Kativik Regional Government (Sivunirmut Agreement) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management Program. The program combines marine mammal conservation (federal jurisdiction) and terrestrial and freshwater wildlife protection (provincial jurisdiction) by maintaining daily contact with harvesters and other community members for keeping reports on harvesting and wildlife activities.¹⁵³

Plan Nord was created in 2011 to stimulate resource development in northern Quebec, focusing on the natural resource extraction sector in the part of Quebec north of the forty-ninth parallel. The plan hopes to foster over \$80 billion in energy, mining, and forestry investments and create or consolidate 20,000 jobs a year over twenty-five years. Plan Nord received the full support of the mining industry and from some Crees and Inuit representatives. However, there has been skepticism and opposition by the Innu and the majority of environmentalists.¹⁵⁴ In addition, there were significant reductions in investment shortly after the reform of the Quebec Mining Act. Plan Nord was put on hold during the short-term Parti Québécois government. In June 2014, however, Plan Nord was re-launched by the Quebec Liberal government through the Northern Plan Fund, which allocated \$63 million for 2014-2015 and with the potential of \$2 billion by 2035. The project would be partly funded by reinvestment of direct and indirect tax benefits from economic activity north of the forty-ninth parallel.¹⁵⁵ The new Plan Nord will be managed by a ministerial committee (fourteen ministers and chaired by the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources) who will establish the government's strategy and policies with respect to the development of Northern Québec and will create and organize the Société du Plan Nord, whose prime role will be to "open up the territory" for economic development in the North.¹⁵⁶ The new Plan Nord also includes a variety of additional initiatives including a tourism strategy, a research centre

focused on northern development, rail and road infrastructure construction, a natural-gas sea transportation plan, and \$100 million in educational and professional training for First Nations and Inuit youth.

Community Well-Being

Table 8 is derived from the AANDC’s CWB Index¹⁵⁷ and Statistics Canada Census Subdivision (CSD)¹⁵⁸ information for the five most populated Census Subdivisions considered to be in the rural “north.” Major urban centres or cities were excluded from the list. The average Community Well-Being Index Score for Northern Quebec CSDs was 73, with Chisasibi taking the lowest overall CWB score at 63 and Lebel-sur-Quévillon taking the highest overall CWB score at 81.

Table 8. Community well-being by census subdivision for the five most populated rural CSDs in Quebec

Census subdivision (CSD) name	2006 Income Score	2006 Education Score	2006 Housing Score	2006 Labour Force Activity Score	2006 CWB Score	2006 2B Population
Chibougamau	86	52	95	86	80	7530
Chisasibi	72	32	67	80	63	3960
Kuujuuaq	88	48	74	89	75	2115
Mistissini	76	32	72	83	66	2895
Lebel-sur-Quévillon	91	54	94	86	81	2725

Labrador

Long viewed nationally as a small adjunct of Newfoundland, Labrador has come into its own politically in recent years. For a time, the region was best known to Canadians for its diverse Indigenous peoples, rugged landscape and, on several sad occasions, Aboriginal community breakdowns that attracted international attention. The development of the Voisey’s Bay mine, the partial settlement of Aboriginal land claims in the region, and renewed interest in the Churchill River’s hydroelectric potential has raised Labrador’s profile nationally and internationally. The rapid transition of Newfoundland from a “have not” to a “have” province has given Newfoundland the resources required to accelerate its investments and to support both economic and community development. As a result, Labrador has emerged quickly as

one of the most innovative administrative districts in the Provincial Norths, catching up with Quebec in terms of the development of region-sensitive programs. The provincial government's Labrador office provides Labrador with input on all Newfoundland government programs, services, and initiatives, offering an effective regional check on province-wide actions and ensuring appropriate attention to the unique needs of Labrador.

Northern Regional or Municipal Districts

Labrador is located in the northern region of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, in the eastern part of the Labrador Peninsula (figure 10).¹⁵⁹ Census Divisions Numbers 9–11 are generally considered to be “northern.” The Labrador region covers twice the geographic area (269,073 km²) as the main island of Newfoundland but only has roughly 9% (27,000 people) of the province's population.¹⁶⁰ There are thirty-two recognized communities and twenty municipalities in Labrador; the most populated communities with over 2,000 people are: Happy Valley–Goose Bay (8,000), Labrador City (7,000), and St. Anthony (3,000).¹⁶¹

Labrador has a diverse Aboriginal population including the Central and Northern Inuit of Nunatsiavut (3,200 Inuit in five communities), the Southern Inuit-Métis (Labrador Métis Nation with over 6,000 people) of the NunatuKavut Community Council (NunatuKavut), and the Innu of the western and northern expanse of Labrador to the Quebec border.¹⁶² There are two Innu First Nations in Labrador with approximately 2,500 Innu—the Mushuau Innu First Nation located in Natuashish and the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation located in Sheshatshiu.¹⁶³ Only recently did the Canadian government recognize the Mushuau Innu and Sheshatshiu Innu as bands.¹⁶⁴ Although there are five Inuit communities in Labrador, close to 60% of Aboriginal people in the province are not of registered Indian status under the federal Indian Act.

Governance and Administrative Structures

The Newfoundland Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs is responsible for Labrador by coordinating departmental activities, handling Aboriginal government and local government relations, working closely with the federal government, and supporting the economic and social development of Labrador.¹⁶⁵ The department plays an important role in evaluating provincial legislation to ensure that the government's plans fit with Labrador's needs. Aboriginal groups and governments have also shaped Labrador's socio-political and economic development through greater control and the transformative impact of modern treaties. The

Newfoundland legislation governing the region is the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act (2005).¹⁶⁶



Figure 10. Labrador (Source: “Labrador Map Regional Political Province,” *Blogspot*, <http://maps-canada.blogspot.ca/2011/09/labrador-map-regional-political.html>)

There are thirty-two recognized communities and twenty municipalities in Labrador. The Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs¹⁶⁷ (Municipal Affairs) branch focuses on strengthening local governance through land use policies and regional approaches to service delivery; providing municipal training to elected administrative officials; offering legislative interpretation to assist in the development of municipal by-laws; advising local government officials; conducting reviews of municipal administrative matters; administering grants and subsidies for community infrastructure; examining local governments’ financial operations; monitoring levels of debt; providing operational support; participating in inter-provincial policy development and knowledge sharing; and supporting regional co-operation initiatives. The department also guides infrastructure investments and oversees employment support initiatives. The Intergovernmental Affairs branch is responsible for the development, implementation, and administration of provincial policies and agreements in relation to intergovernmental issues.

The Nunatsiavut Government, formed in 2005 as a regional and ethnic government in Newfoundland and Labrador, provides a number of services and programs and consists of the following seven departments: the Nunatsiavut Secretariat; Nunatsiavut Affairs; Lands and Natural Resources; Education and Economic Development; Health and Social Development (Status of Women); Finance, Human Resources, and Information Technology; and Culture, Recreation, and Tourism.

Legislation and Initiatives Promoting Northern Governance and Development

A number of major Aboriginal agreements are reshaping the political and economic structures of the Labrador region. The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (LILCA) of 2005 led to the creation of the Nunatsiavut government (Labrador Inuit). LILCA dates back to the mid-1970s and the founding of the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA), which played an important role in promoting Labrador Inuit identity by representing Inuit peoples and carrying out land claims negotiations. The LILCA aided in the establishment of the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area (LISA). The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act¹⁶⁸ was negotiated and signed between the Labrador Inuit Association, the Government of Canada, and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and sets out the technical amendments to the land descriptions and maps attached to the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement. These negotiations, which took place between 1977 and 2003, recognized the Inuit homeland and land claims and supported Inuit efforts to protect their language, culture, and lifestyles.¹⁶⁹ Since 2005, the Nunatsiavut has operated as an Inuit self-government region in Labrador¹⁷⁰ and with a settlement area that covers the majority of the north coast and extends into Central Labrador.

In 1990, the Innu people of Labrador organized and formed the Innu Nation, previously the Naskapi Montagnais Innu Association (1976), which assists in protecting their rights, lands, and way of life and acts as the governing body of the Labrador Innu. More recently, the Innu Nation gained recognition under the *Indian Act* in 2002 and started negotiations over land claims agreements and self-government. Most of the Innu today live in the Innu communities of Natuashish and Sheshatshiu.¹⁷¹ These communities elect band councils to represent their concerns; the chiefs of both councils sit on the Innu Nation's board of directors.¹⁷²

A Land Claims agreement for the Innu has not been finalized, but in 2011 a "New Dawn" accord (Tshash Petapen Agreement) was reached with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador along with an agreement in principle for a larger land claims settlement. The New Dawn agreement

resolved long-standing issues between the Innu and the provincial government on the Innu Rights Agreement, Lower Churchill Impacts and Benefits Agreement (IBA), Innu redress for the Upper Churchill hydro development, and a commitment to fast-track land claims negotiations.¹⁷³

Impact and Benefits Agreements (IBAs) have played an important role in Labrador's economic development. IBAs provided compensatory benefits for Aboriginal groups affected by a major resource development, typically in the form of employment and business opportunities, cash support, and local training. An agreement made between the Labrador Inuit Association and the Innu Nation related to the Voisey Bay mine in 2002 is a good example. There was also an IBA signed by the Innu for development of hydroelectric power on the Lower Churchill River.

The Labrador Métis population (i.e., the NunatuKavut Community Council), while receiving de facto recognition by the Canadian government particularly in terms of resource rights and through their participation in the Federal Aboriginal Fisheries Initiative, have not received official recognition as First Nations or Aboriginals. Complicating the situation is the refusal by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to recognize the Métis population's official status.¹⁷⁴

In April of 2007 the Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador (NSP) was announced, which "is a five-year plan to improve the health and well-being of all Labradorians and is a hallmark of the Provincial Government's strong commitment to address the needs of Labrador, which will improve infrastructure, advance social programming and foster economic prosperity."¹⁷⁵

Community Well-Being

Table 9 is derived from the AANDC's CWB Index¹⁷⁶ and Statistics Canada Census Sub-Division (CSD)¹⁷⁷ information for the five most populated Census Subdivisions considered to be in the rural "north" of Newfoundland and Labrador. Major urban centres or cities were excluded from the list. The average Community Well-Being Index Score for Northern Newfoundland and Labrador CSDs was 77.2, with Nain taking the lowest overall CWB score at 64 and Labrador City taking the highest overall CWB score at 84.

Table 9. Community well-being by census subdivision for the five most populated rural CSDs in Labrador

Census subdivision (CSD) name	2006 Income Score	2006 Education Score	2006 Housing Score	2006 Labour Force Activity Score	2006 CWB Score	2006 2B Population
Happy Valley-Goose Bay	86	55	95	85	80	7470
Labrador City	94	59	97	85	84	7230
Nain	71	39	74	71	64	1030
St. Anthony	79	47	96	78	75	2375
Wabush	95	59	95	84	83	1740

Concluding Thoughts

This overview is not intended to provide a definitive description and evaluation of the governance systems in Canada’s Provincial Norths. The field requires a great deal more attention than it has received to date, in large measure because scholars and analysts have been preoccupied with the equally important study of governance transitions in the Territorial North. Major themes, related to rapid resource development, Aboriginal rights, the marginalization of Indigenous peoples, the challenges of working in vast northern areas, and the like, show up across the Provincial Norths. These northern regions are among the most poorly served in the country, although promising developments in Nord de Québec and Labrador provide examples that other jurisdictions might consider. Each of the provinces has endeavoured to create governance systems that respond to provincial realities and northern needs, but without relinquishing significant control to local or regional authorities. The rise of Aboriginal self-government and the dynamics associated with the Supreme Court of Canada’s June 2014 decision in *Tsilhqot’in Nation v. British Columbia* (2014 SCC 44) will influence future policy-making, as will Canada’s continued and increasingly urgent push for resource development, much of which will occur in the Provincial North.

Some forty years ago, Canadians realized that Canada’s colonies—the Yukon and Northwest Territories—functioned with much less governmental authority and fewer resources than the rest of the country. Over the intervening years, the country supported a veritable revolution in regional governance that resulted in the Territorial North, including the newly created territory of Nunavut carved out of the eastern (and primarily Inuit-inhabited) region of the Northwest Territories, becoming one of the most innovative regions

for local governance in the world. That same energy and attention needs, now, to shift southward, to focus on the unique challenges and needs of the Provincial North. That this region holds the key to Canada's economic future, and with Aboriginal people destined to play an increasing role in its development, suggests that a national effort to reimagine the governance of the Provincial North is urgently required. The seven provincial regimes provide a great deal of evidence about what has worked, what needs revision, and what is possible in the short to medium term. The socio-economic prosperity of the Provincial North requires a new approach. To a substantial degree, the future of Canada will also be determined by the country's willingness and ability to rethink the governance arrangements for the vast band of Middle Canada that holds the key to the country's resource-based economic prosperity.

The other articles in this collection look in detail at specific challenges in the political economy of the Provincial North. This vast, resource rich, and socially diverse (and, in many instances, troubled) region has contributed a great deal to Canada's well-being, and yet is among the most politically, socially, and economically marginalized in the country (table 10 summarizes the community well-being index scores across the region). The pattern of development in the region has historically ignored the Aboriginal population and newcomers have tended to make money and leave. This is now changing. Aboriginal people are assuming greater control over resource activity and local governance, and capacity building is proceeding apace. More newcomers are staying, raising their families in the region, and making a long-term commitment to the North. Canada may see a new Provincial North in the years to come, but must rest on the willingness and ability of provincial governments to adapt their policies, administrative systems, and expectations to meet northern needs more effectively and with much greater northern and Aboriginal input.

Table 10. Community Well-Being Index Scores by census subdivision for the five most populated rural CSDs across the Provincial Norths

Province	Low/ High/ Average	2006 Income Score	2006 Education Score	2006 Housing Score	2006 Labour Force Activity Score	2006 Overall CWB Score
BC	Low	82	43	85	87	75
	High	99	60	96	91	85
	Average	88.8	53.6	93	88.8	81.2
Alberta	Low	84	50	90	90	80
	High	92	59	96	92	84
	Average	89	52.8	94.4	90.6	81.6
Saskatchewan	Low	37	23	39	61	42
	High	86	59	93	88	79
	Average	65.8	40.4	73.2	74.8	63.6
Manitoba	Low	41	24	39	61	43
	High	84	54	92	86	79
	Average	60.4	38.8	70	72.8	60.6
Ontario	Low	83	50	92	82	77
	High	89	57	95	87	81
	Average	86	53.4	93.2	83.8	79.2
Quebec	Low	72	32	67	80	63
	High	91	54	95	89	81
	Average	82.6	43.6	80.4	84.8	73
Labrador	Low	71	39	74	71	64
	High	95	59	97	85	84
	Average	85	51.8	91.4	80.6	77.2

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