

SHXWELMÉXWELH / CONSTITUTION COMMUNITY INPUT

Public Report June 2020



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Overview

The Shxwelméxwelh/Constitution was approved by Leadership on September 23, 2019. With the draft document in hand, Outreach and Communications team members moved forward with a series of community events, digital and door-to-door engagements from October 2019 to March 15, 2020. Their goal was to engage Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw Community members in learning about and providing feedback on the Constitution. (Note: Preliminary feedback was also gathered during community events in Spring 2019 and those comments have been included in this report)

Since the Constitution was approved on September 23, 2019, the Outreach Team has:

- Created Draft Constitution booklet, Constitution Overview brochure, Governance video and questionnaire.
- Held 8 large community engagements with more than 200 attendees.
- Held 4 Family Dinners/Kitchen Table Gatherings (several others were postponed).
- Connected with community by email and on Facebook (3 sessions to update lists).
- Distributed material by mail, email, website, social media and in-person.
- Hired 5 Community Outreach Contract Workers to do door-to-door work.
- Trained Outreach staff and contractors with key messages for one-on-one engagements.
- Held 3 Facebook live sessions of community engagements.
- Held 1 Movie Night and 1 Community Barbeque.
- Tallied 2 “How would you vote” Surveys.
- Provided an interim report to leadership (February 2020).

Community Engagement Timeline for Constitution Vote

Community Engagement Timeline for Constitution Vote



NOTE: This timeline was approved by leadership in October 2019 and may shift to reflect current realities.

Statistics

Number of people reached - **313**

Community Number Reached:

Áthelets/Aitchelitz - 27

Leq'á:mel - 88

Sq'ewá:lxw/Skawahlook - 10

Sq'ewqéyl/Skowkale - 70

Ch'iyáqtel/Tzeachten - 94

Yeqwyeqwí:ws/Yeqwyeqwí:ws - 24

NOTE: Every member was sent a Constitution Information package via mail in October 2019. These numbers are not included here. See Appendix A for more details.



Community Engagement session at Lummi in February 2020.

Material Preparation and Distribution

In preparation for Fall 2019 outreach, several documents and digital products were created. A package was mailed to every SXTA community member and sent digitally to all on our email list. All of these items are available on our website <https://www.sxta.bc.ca/constitution/> and on social media. The links were also sent to the administrators of each community.

PRINTED MATERIALS

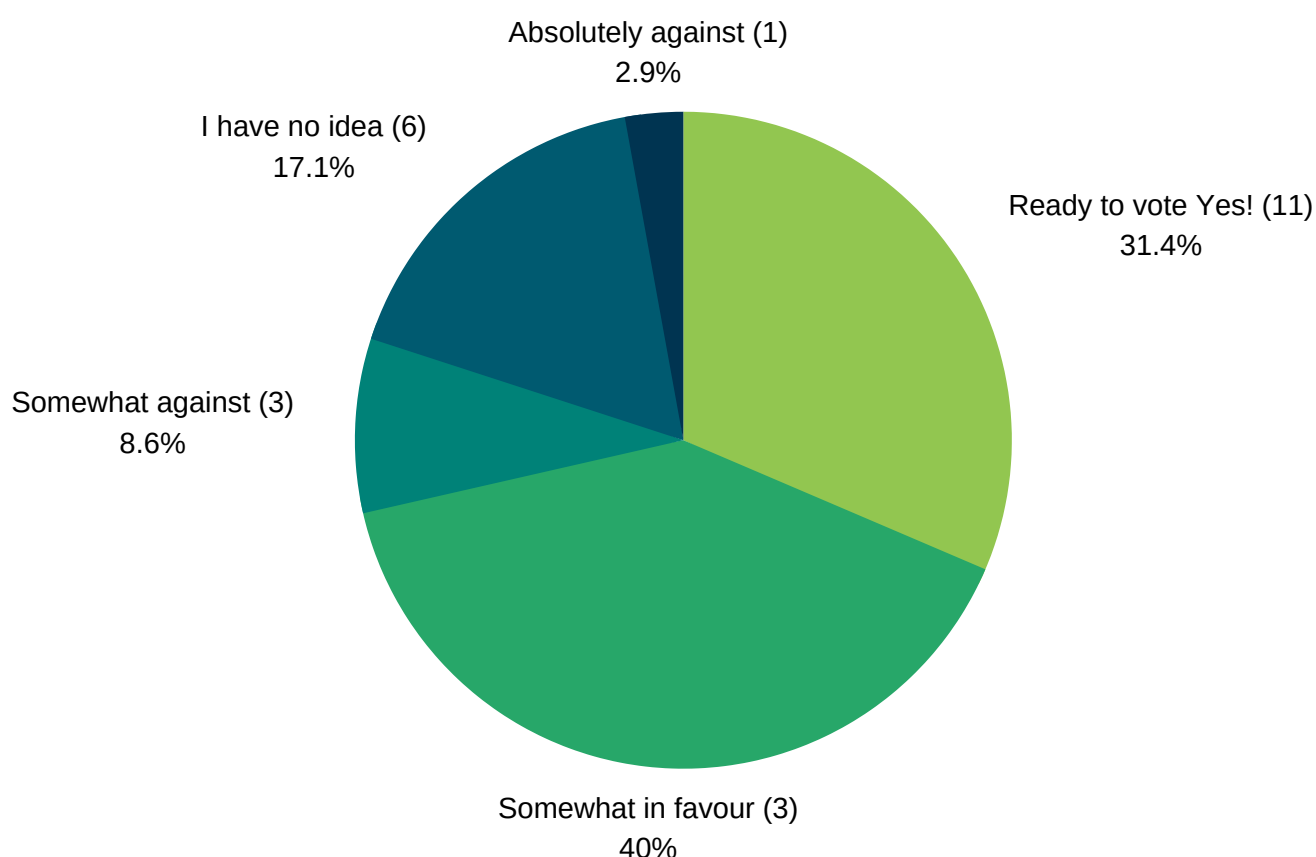
- Draft Constitution Booklet (mail, e-newsletter, social media, website)
- Constitution Overview brochure (mail, e-newsletter, social media, website)
- Governance structure drawing (mail, e-newsletter, social media, website)
- Questionnaire (mail, e-newsletter, social media, website)
- Treaty Tour on-line presentation postcard with link (mail, e-newsletter, put on social media, website)

VIDEO: What does self-government look like? (e-newsletter, social media, website, live screenings)

INTERACTIVE WEBSITE: Treaty Tour On-line Presentation – www.sxta.bc.ca/treatytour

Taking the Pulse (Survey One)

With a deadline of December 15, 2019, this survey was intended to determine how people felt about the Constitution in the early part of our engagement strategy. Of the 35 people who responded, just over 30% were ready to vote YES and another 40% would likely vote YES on the Constitution. But some people still had questions.



Community	Yes!	Somewhat in favor	I don't know	Somewhat against	No!
Áthelets				1	
Leq'á:mel	2	3		1	1
Sq'ewá:lxw		1			
Sq'ewqéyl		4	4		
Ch'iyáqtel	2	1	1	1	
Yeqwyeqwí:ws	7	5	1		

Constitution Engagement Community Events

Two sets of community events were held in this six-month period with the goal of reaching as many community members as possible and asking them what they thought of the Constitution.

Fall 2019

Events were held in Vancouver, Leq'á:mel, Lummi and Chilliwack. These were also live-streamed on Facebook. The format of these events included a verbal welcome and song, dinner, a presentation about the Constitution by our spokespeople Chief Terry Horne and Grand Chief Steven Point, a question and answer period and small group engagements.

- A Power Point presentation included the text of the Constitution and explanations of the different levels of government.
- Question and Answer Period: Notes were recorded, including questions from on-line viewers.
- Small group activity: Developed by the SXTA Outreach team called "Solving Problems in our Own Way." Participants were provided with a graphic depiction of the governance structure as well as a list of scenarios that community members face. In their groups they discussed each scenario and determined which level of government might handle the topic. The goal was to get people talking and imagining life as self-governed people.
- Participant Feedback: Presentation was too long; people enjoyed the small group conversations.

Constitution Engagement Community Events

Winter 2020

Events were also held in January and February 2020 as a follow up. The format for these events included a verbal welcome and song, dinner, a very short overview of the night by Grand Chief Steven Point or other spokesperson, and focus on small group work.

- A Power Point presentation included an introduction to the event, a graphic depiction of governance structure and a screening of the short-animated video “What does self-government look like?”
- World Café-style set of conversation tables were set up with a facilitator, leader and note taker at each table. Participants had 20 minutes to discuss what they liked and didn’t like about: The National Government, the Village Government, the Justice Council and the Advisory bodies. After 20 minutes, the groups were shifted so that everyone was able to talk about each topic. Notes were taken and at the end of the evening, each table reported to the larger group on the thoughts and comments that were raised.
- Conversations were recorded graphically by Melissa Kendzierski.
- Participant feedback: The group conversations were preferred by participants and leadership.

Kitchen Table Gathering

Small family gatherings were vigorously promoted at events, newsletter and social media. The purpose of these gatherings was to invite smaller groups to discuss our Treaty with their families.

Constitution Engagement Community Events

ONE-ON-ONE ENGAGEMENTS

Door-to-door Campaign

In January 2020, Outreach contracted five community champions to help with our door-to-door work. These workers represented four of the six communities and worked under the direction of Emily Kelly, Community Engagement Coordinator.

Digital contact

Community champions worked to communicate with members who were not in easy reach by door-to door methods and by contacting them by Facebook and via email. This work also included searching for members whose information was incorrect in our lists.

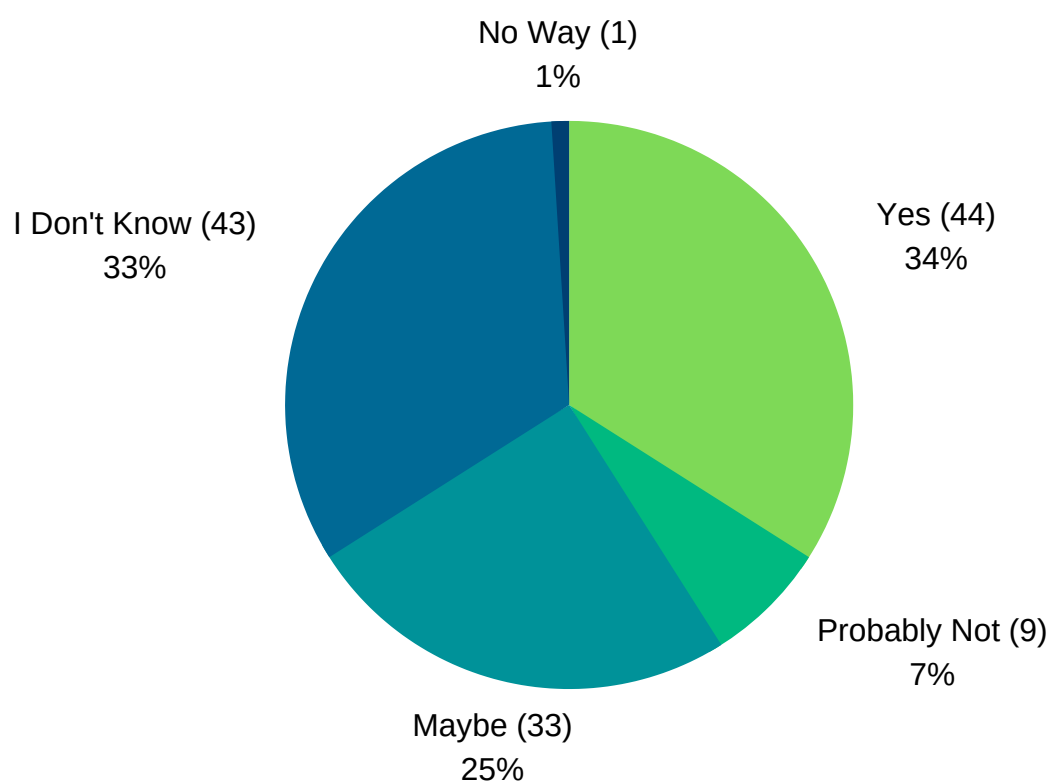


SXTA Community Champions: Back row, from left: Emily Kelly, Magdalena Kelly, Danielle Munroe, Joy Hall, Danya Douglas. Front row, from left: Lydia Archie, Jazmine Horne, Amelia Roberts.

Taking the Pulse (Survey Two)

Survey work undertaken while on the door-to-door campaign revealed this change in results. Of the 130 people who responded to the survey, 34% were ready to vote yes and 25% would probably vote yes. The shift to more yes votes is encouraging, but with more people reached, we also received more information about people who were undecided (33% said they have no idea and 7% said they were somewhat against). Only one person in 130 said they were absolutely against (1%).

How Would You Vote on the Constitution?



Community	Yes!	Somewhat in favor	I don't know	Somewhat against	No!
Áthelets	3	1	5	2	0
Leq'á:mel	12	4	6	4	0
Sq'ewá:lxw	3	0	2	0	0
Sq'ewqéyl	9	8	12	0	0
Ch'iyáqtel	8	13	17	3	1
Yeqwyeqwí:ws	8	6	1	0	0
Other	1	1	0	0	0
Total	44	33	43	9	1

Constitution Engagement Comments

The feedback from our communities came via questionnaires that were mailed out to all community members with a return address and postage-paid envelope, notes taken during community events, one-on-one interviews and on-line surveys. Many responses were open-ended, so a system to classify these comments was created and grouped into themes: Support for Self-Government; Governance Structure; Representation and Internal Process; Capacity and Infrastructure; and Looking for Clarity. The full comments gathered will be included in Appendix B.

1. SUPPORT FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT

The most comments received were focused on the importance of creating our own laws. These comments also show a general support for the idea of self-governance. Some respondents expressed this by writing notes of direct support and others identified specific laws they would like to see enacted, such as membership/citizenship laws; fishing and hunting; and natural resource protection laws. A large number of comments also focused on the importance of working together and ensuring Stó:lō culture and traditions were reflected in any laws and government.

Our own laws – Comments on the importance of creating our own laws. These varied from topics on justice, conflict of interest, impeachment, policing, jurisdiction, family law, stewardship and more.	60
Culture – The need to ensure culture is strong aspect of laws.	35
Support – General support for self-government and/or treaty.	23
Membership - Importance of defining our own membership.	22
Working together – Importance of working together and/or partnering.	18
Self-sufficiency – Self-government will make us more self-sufficient.	17
Fishing and hunting – Considered fishing and hunting a priority.	13
Ewéta Indian Act – Support for getting out from under Indian Act.	8
Moving Forward – Moving forward is positive.	7
Aboriginal Rights and Title – Made it clear we need to maintain Aboriginal Rights and Title and sovereignty on unceded land.	7
Natural resource laws/protection	5
	215

Constitution Engagement Comments

2. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Some specific comments about the governance structure were provided.

Satisfied - These comments indicated satisfaction with the governance structure as presented.	50
Youth – Concerns about age range. Most suggested raising the maximum to 25 or 30 (9). Others suggested having male and female reps (5) or alternates (3). Others expressed general support for youth council.	20
Not Satisfied – General dissatisfaction with the Constitution with no specific recommendations.	18
Colonial Structure – Concerns that the governance structure is still too much like current colonial structure.	19
Grand Chief – Concerns were raised about clarity around criteria for appointing someone to this role (9), or people suggested deleting this advisory body (6).	15
Elders – These suggestions ranged from ensuring there was an alternate, to setting criteria and term timelines for Elders.	12
Family – These comments sought to find a way to include families as a political unit into the governance system, while ensuring these members were accountable.	9
Autonomy – A specific desire expressed to maintain village autonomy	3
Ombudsperson – Concerns raised about criteria for this role and general comments. Appointed for 4 years (1); Needs to be elected by membership (1)	5
	151

3. REPRESENTATION AND INTERNAL PROCESS

This group of responses raised concerns about representation in a variety of ways: whether the distribution of decision-making power and resources would be fair; would there be a set criteria for leadership in all member communities; who would hold leaders accountable; how would internal conflicts be managed; how would internal processes be changed if things weren't working; and who would represent off-reserve and US members?

Constitution Engagement Comments

3. REPRESENTATION AND INTERNAL PROCESS (CONTINUED)

Fairness: Concerns about fair representation of bigger communities and how resources will be shared etc.	44
Leadership criteria: Requests that strict leadership criteria be set.	26
Internal Process: Concerns about how changes will be made in future and how the system will work logistically between governments.	25
International Issues (USA): Cross border concerns.	17
Elected vs Hereditary: Concerns about each community's methods of selecting representatives.	10
Accountability: Who is holding leaders accountable?	10
Overlaps: Concerns about getting overlaps sorted out.	3
Off-reserve: Need to support/include off-reserve members.	5
Total mentions	140

4. CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

This group of comments ranged from Are We Ready? to concerns about how a Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw government would pay for the infrastructure and government-level salaries as well as the services and benefits that community members receive now. Also, how feasible is it that current village leaders will be able to take on more duties?

Capacity - Concerns about capacity or need to increase capacity within communities to carry out this work.	56
Funding - How will we pay for this?	30
Infrastructure – Concerns around the need for infrastructure.	16
Health – Concerns around continuing to receive health benefits.	15
Education – Concerns around educating communities and/or receiving education benefits.	8
Salary – Leaders and government workers will need to be paid a good wage	6
Total mentions	131

Constitution Engagement Comments

5. LOOKING FOR CLARITY

These comments reflect the need for more communication and/or reassurance.

Communication - Didn't feel they knew enough, had enough information, that we would reach everyone, and or had some concern about communication.	37
No idea – These people specifically stated this on their forms.	25
Fear – People expressed fear of change	11
Clarity – These people sought more clarity on details.	8
Not sure	7
Total mentions	88

5. HALQ'EMÉYLEM LANGUAGE

This question was included in the Questionnaire and on our one-on-one reports. The Halq'eméylem language is used throughout our Shxwelméxwelh (Constitution) in order to respect and encourage the use and practice of our language and culture. Do you agree with this practice?

Yes	64
No	0
No answer	78
Total answers	142

Questionnaires filled out (these were mailed out to all members with an addressed and stamped envelope, handed out at community events and made available on-line): 29

One-on-One reports completed (these were completed by door-to-door campaigners): 118

**Constitution Community Engagement Events participants reached: 296
(Spring and summer 2019 numbers not included)**

Some Comment Highlights

One-on-One report, 2020

"[I would like to see] a whole section in the foundation of the Constitution on well-being. It should be written specifically that the purpose of the Constitution is for the well-being of the Stó:lō people. I think we need to say that. The first sign that a constitution is not doing well - is that the people aren't doing well. I don't see this and to me it's important. I don't think we should take this for granted."

Key words: Culture, health

USA Engagement, November 2019

"It would be nice to have some of the governing officers to travel to USA to hear our cry for help in getting the border crossing issues figured out, like getting the Canadian government and the border crossing officers to acknowledge our treaty that is in place with the USA for citizens who have families on both sides and would like to go back and forth."

Key words: International issues

Leq'á:mel engagement, October 2019

"I believe there should be formal process for family advisory [groups] to hand over process to electing leaders today. . . our original rights and title are with family representatives. We were influenced by Indian Act. It is hard for me to recognize something that isn't ours."

Key words: Family, our own laws

Chilliwack engagement, November 2019

"Cultural components are important. Seven generations forward, seven generations back."

Key words: Family, our own laws

Some Comment Highlights

Leq'á:mel engagement, January 2020

"We don't have clarity around how much is shared in economic development between big and small communities."

Key words: Fairness, infrastructure

Chilliwack engagement, January 2020

"The village system is a foreign concept and we are keeping what was imposed on us."

Key words: Colonial structure

Chilliwack engagement, January 2020

"Acknowledge that we were once one nation, why do we want to be separated? How do we reassure the bands that want to be separated, instead of one?"

Key words: Colonial structure, working together, culture

US engagement, February 2020

"How will our existing council be able to fill that workload?"

Key words: Capacity

One-on-One report, February 2020

"Add that part of teachings and history are verbal and needs to be recognized. History must be acknowledged."

Key words: Culture

APPENDICES

A. NUMBERS REACHED

Shxwelméxwelh (Constitution) Campaign Numbers Reached

As of 4/8/2020

COMMUNITY	REACHED	NOT REACHED	TOTAL NUMBER	% REACHED
AITCHELITZ	27	2	29	93%
LEQ'A:MEL	88	138	226	39%
SKAWAHLOOK	10	29	39	26%
SKOWKALE	70	34	104	67%
TZEACHTEN	94	215	309	30%
YAKWEAKWIOOSE	24	28	52	46%
ALL TOTAL	313	446	759	41%

NOTE: Address list dynamics vary from band to band: some households have multiple people, and some of the bands' addresses are listed more than once per individual.

These numbers reflect our one-on-ones, community event attendance, packages left at doors, e-mail reaches, telephone reaches and Kitchen Table Gatherings.

APPENDICES

B. CONSTITUTION ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK - FULL RESPONSES

PDFs of all the responses from questionnaires, one-on-one reports and events are available upon request.

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