



## **The National Association of Japanese Canadians' Proposal to the Government of British Columbia Regarding Remediation and Redress for the Violation of Citizenship Rights**

**Submitted by the National Association of Japanese Canadians**

**April 19, 2018**

### **Proposal**

At this initial meeting with the British Columbia government, the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) is requesting:

- A formalized process for ongoing discussions between the BC government and the NAJC;
- Support for community consultations; and
- Commitment for a meeting with Minister Lisa Beare and the Premier in the fall of 2018.

The National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) is formally requesting that the BC Government engage in discussions with the NAJC to determine the form and scope of remedial measures to appropriately redress/address the BC Government's participation in, benefit from, and responsibility for the uprooting, detention, dispossession, and forced exile of Japanese Canadians between 1941 and 1949. Although the Legislature adopted a ministerial statement of apology in 2012, no measures were taken at the time to address this historical injustice.

The NAJC has formed a BC Redress Committee (see Appendix A) comprising representation from the local NAJC member organizations in BC to begin discussions with the BC government. The NAJC has also formed an Advisory Panel (see Appendix B) to provide guidance and to support the BC Redress Committee. The Advisory Panel members represent different experiences and connections to the uprooting, dispossession, and internment of Japanese Canadians, including direct experience as survivors of internment.

The NAJC has discussed what is needed to initiate a process to involve and inform the community. The government could demonstrate its first commitment to this process with direct funding of the community consultations. An example of the potential support is in Appendix C. The NAJC proposes to begin community consultations with its member organizations along with community organizations over the next six months to determine what specific remedial measures would be appropriate. In the fall of 2018, the NAJC is requesting to meet again with government representatives and the premier to discuss the community's proposals for remedial measures. While this fits within the larger structure of racialization, we would expect the community consultations would address measures that would support annual opportunities that make visible our history of injustice, support the sustainability of the Japanese Canadian community, and also make visible the contributions of Japanese Canadians to creating a just and prosperous society for all.

By engaging in these formalized discussions, the government would be supporting a meaningful process that is non-partisan and not a quick fix. It is a process that would garner significant support, because it's about creating a just and lasting settlement.

A remedial course of action is necessary to assist Japanese Canadians in overcoming the inter-generational trauma and aftermath of what many today consider the practice of ethnic cleansing in this province.

## **Background**

### **Executive Summary**

On May 7, 2012, the BC Legislature made an apology to Japanese Canadians who were uprooted, dispossessed and interned. They were “being discriminated against simply because they were of Japanese descent...” MLAs from all political parties in the BC Legislature supported the apology. However, no meaningful steps were taken to determine the appropriate form and scope for remedial action and redressing the injustices suffered by over 21,000 people with Japanese heritage, the majority (75%) of whom were Canadian citizens, when the government of British Columbia both worked in concert with and benefitted from the federal government's use of the War Measures Act to remove “all people of Japanese racial origin” from the province in the period from 1942 to 1949.

The federal government in fact decided to target Japanese Canadians because of pressure from British Columbia. For instance, two members of the BC coalition government, BC Minister of Labour George Pearson and former Conservative MLA MacGregor MacIntosh, attended meetings in Ottawa on January 8-9, 1942, to lobby the federal government to remove Japanese Canadians from the coast. Pearson tells the legislature on January 23, 1942 that he had submitted “detailed proposals made by the Province.” (Price, 2016) But at every level of the government, from the City of Vancouver to the Provincial Legislature and British Columbia's Members of Parliament,

like Ian McKenzie, directly and indirectly strongly advocated the removal of Japanese and other Asian Canadians from BC, where most had settled before the Second World War.

The National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) is now requesting that the Government of British Columbia (BC) who has acknowledged their complicity to take the next steps for redress. Working with the NAJC, the BC government can demonstrate their sincerity by supporting community consultations and post-apology measures to make visible the history and culture of Japanese Canadians in British Columbia and make meaningful measures to redress the violation of rights, the losses, and the intergenerational impacts.

## **Japanese Canadian History**

As indicated above, due to pressure from anti-Asian organizations and politicians in British Columbia, the federal cabinet decided to use the War Measures Act to categorize all people of “Japanese racial origin” as threats to national security and strip their rights in 1942. BC Attorney-General R.L. Maitland declared on January 30, 1942 that Japanese Canadians were “a real danger on this coast” and stated the provincial government was demanding Ottawa take action.

[Note: Maitland was renounced for his racist views]

The BC cabinet approved Education Minister HG Perry’s ban on Japanese Canadians students participation in the cadet corps.

It was seventy-six years ago, on April 21, 1942, when the government began to round up women, children and men sending them with as little as 24 hours to internment camps and road camps, separating men from women, children and the elderly (Adachi 1991, Sunahara 1981). It was only when second generation men began to protest against the separation of families, as they were anxious for their safety, that the government permitted families to remain together (Miki and Kobayashi 1991). Families were kept together only if they agreed to work as forced labourers on beet farms in the prairies. Before being shipped out of the lower mainland and settlements in a 100-mile wide “Protected Zone” along the Pacific Coast, Japanese Canadians were required to submit their properties, businesses, and personal belongings to the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property, which was supposed to hold everything in trust. The BC Government actively supported the forced sale of Japanese Canadians properties and possessions undertaken by the Custodian of Enemy Property beginning in early 1943, a dispossession on a scale unknown since the dispossession of First Nations in the 19th century.

In any case, the government liquidated everything, selling it at below market values to British Columbian residents and businesses, using the revenue to pay for the costs of their own internment (Price Water House 1986; Kobayashi 1987).

Because the military refused to cooperate with the federal government, claiming that it would be a waste of their resources to round up and intern Japanese Canadians because they were not a threat to security, the British Columbia Security Commission was set up to oversee and run the uprooting of Japanese Canadians, building and managing internment camps in the province's interior (Miki and Kobayashi 1991).

In 1943, the BC Government refused to pay its share of education expenses for 2,800 young Japanese Canadians detained in camps in the province despite a formal request from the federal government to do so. This action violated the mandated division of responsibility between the federal and provincial governments and denied innocent children the right to an education.

When the war with Japan ended, the federal cabinet extended the executive powers of the War Measures Act in order to continue its plan to remove all people of Japanese "racial origin" from British Columbia. Japanese Canadians were not permitted to return to BC's coast in 1945 after the defeat of Japan. Instead the federal government conducted a "loyalty test" and gave families two options: they could be shipped to Japan, which for the majority of second generation Japanese Canadians was a foreign country, or they had the option of being dispersed east of the Rocky Mountains. Restrictions on their movements were not lifted until 1949 when they also were permitted to vote. In fact in 1947, the BC government refused to grant Japanese Canadians the vote despite having done so for South Asian and Chinese Canadians.

To understand the force behind the measures to remove Japanese Canadians from the province it is important to understand that the racism targeting them didn't start during the Second World War nor did it end with the war.

Stories of the first Japanese to travel to Coast Salish territories (prior to British Columbia becoming a province in 1871) are actually documented as early as 1833. There are also Coast Salish accounts about men who looked like them, which have been passed down through the generations so there may be even earlier arrivals. The first provincially documented case of a person from Japan landing and settling in British Columbia was in 1877. Like other migrants to the west coast of Canada, Japanese Canadian settlers found work in various industries (millwork, mining, fishing, farming, building railroads, businesses) and contributed to building the infrastructure and industry of BC. But given the virulent anti-Asian views, the BC government denied the right to vote to all citizens of Asian descent in 1895.

Even in this early stage of immigration, Japanese Canadians sought to secure a just society. For instance, in 1900, Tomekichi Homma legally challenged the BC government ban on voting imposed on Indigenous peoples and Asian Canadians beginning in 1872. Homma won at the County and BC Supreme Court. However, the BC Government alone refused to accept the decisions and appealed to the British Privy Council without the support of the federal government. The BC government action perpetuated racist voting laws for another 45 years.

In 1907, the Japanese Canadian population was over 18,000, and growing. The Asiatic Exclusion League, whose supporters include members of the wealthy elite, unions, and government, began to use more reactionary measures and stirred by hostilities in September of the same year. A large mob gathered at Vancouver's city hall and looted and vandalized Chinatown, and threatened to kill Japanese Canadians as they made their way to Powell Street. The Japanese Canadian community attempted to protect their families and fought back but their defensive actions were used against them, and the mainstream media portrayed them as vicious foreigners. The next year, immigration from Japan is restricted to 400 males per year. Here it is important to understand that the racial hostilities were not restricted to Japanese Canadians nor Chinese Canadians. In 1914 there was the infamous Komagata Maru incident also in Vancouver and Indigenous Nations were also treated with hostility, with BC and Canada's colonial governments denying their rights to their territories and the legitimacy of their forms of governance.

Regardless of the hostilities and restrictions, by 1909 a directory of Japanese Canadians in the Powell Street area lists 568 businesses and in 1916 over 200 Japanese Canadian volunteer to enlist but are rejected. In order to demonstrate their loyalty, 196 volunteers travel to Alberta and join the Canadian battalions of the British army. 54 are killed and 92 are wounded. They were promised the right to vote when they returned, but they had to wait until 1931 when they would get franchise.

Like other Asian and Indigenous residents, their university training in BC is not recognized and they are barred from many professional occupations, like teaching and law. Likewise Japanese Canadian workers were paid less and are not able to join white unions. Yet Japanese Canadians prospered in many of the fields where they worked. For example, Japanese Canadian fishers had over half of the 3,267 fishing licenses in 1919. This does not go unnoticed. By 1925, nearly 1,000 fishing licenses are stripped from them.

The BC government kept close tabs on Japanese Canadians. In 1940, the provincial Department of Trade and Industry compiled a list of all Japanese Canadians who held trade licenses and forwarded this list to the BC Attorney Generals' office. (Price 2016) In 1941, from March to August, the RCMP carried out compulsory registration of all Japanese Canadians over 16 years old and the BC Minister of Education H.G. Perry ordered an investigation of all Japanese Canadian students enrolled in public schools citing them as potential problems. (Price, 2016)

From the historical research that has been conducted, it is clear that the BC government was both directly involved in and benefitted from stripping the rights and appropriating the properties as well as the removal of Japanese Canadians from British Columbia. Systematic research needs to be done to investigate the extent of its involvement.

For a more complete timeline of Japanese Canadian history please see the NAJC website: <http://najc.ca/japanese-canadian-history/>

## **British Columbia's Apology in 2012**

On May 7, 2012, all members of the BC Legislature, voted in favour of the motion, "Be it resolved that this House apologizes for the events during the Second World War, when under the authority of the federal War Measures Act, 21,000 Japanese Canadians were incarcerated in internment camps in the interior of British Columbia and had their property seized. The House deeply regrets that these Canadians were discriminated against simply because they were of Japanese descent and believes that all Canadians regardless of their origins should be welcome and respected." (Hansard 2012)

Liberal Minister Naomi Yamamoto, in her statement accompanying the motion noted that a "delegation from the BC government – including the BC Minister of Labour, the Provincial Secretary and the provincial police commissioner – travelled to Ottawa to make the case for internment. These delegates pledged publicly to press for the suspension of Japanese Canadian fishing licenses, the sale of Japanese Canadian fishing vessels to non-Japanese and the internment of all male Japanese Canadians of military age." (Hansard 2012)

Adrian Dix, who was the NDP Leader of the Official Opposition at the time of the 2012 apology, responded, recognizing the contributions of Japanese Canadians, and also noting the racism they endured before and after the war. "...in fact, [Japanese Canadians were] not allowed to return home, if you can believe it, until April 1, 1949. It was the law in British Columbia that Japanese Canadians could not go near a hundred miles of the coast until 1949 – by the way, four years after the United States allowed just such a thing." "There were no political parties in this Legislature in 1941 that have any honour in this – none. This was a stain on this place that we are addressing today, one I think is important to address. It's one that was a long time coming." (Hansard 2012)

Notwithstanding the acknowledgement of the complicity of the BC government by Ms. Yamamoto and Mr. Dix, there has not been a full examination by the government into its participation of the forcible uprooting of Japanese Canadians nor has there been any consultation with the Japanese Canadian community to determine what would be meaningful forms of remediation and redress following the apology. In 2016, the BC government issued the Chinese Legacy BC Legislation Review Report, but it did not examine government actions, regulatory and otherwise, related to the uprooting of Japanese Canadians. The role that some BC politicians, departments and agencies played is known to some of our elders in the Japanese Canadian community and scattered throughout books and the archives, but it is not widely known. More needs to be done so that it is not a limited number of people who know what happened in the decade of the 1940s and why remedial measures in BC are called for.

The systemic racism directed at Japanese Canadians has resulted in an erasure of the history and presence of Japanese Canadians. The forced dispersal after the Second World War and the shame associated with being labelled an enemy alien meant Japanese Canadians at an individual level and at the community level cut ties with

families, community, and their identities. Sansei (third generation), yonsei (fourth generation), and gosei (fifth generation) typically do not have Japanese language skills, and lack knowledge of the history and culture of Japanese Canadians. The public at large including younger people and new immigrants (even those from Japan) do not know the history and cultural practices and knowledge of Japanese Canadians. Statistics Canada (2011) continues to report Japanese Canadians have the highest percentage of culturally mixed marriages and other common law unions, which isn't a surprise when you see the yonsei and gosei and newer generations. Japanese Canadians are less visible.

The dispersal of Japanese Canadians because of internment has also resulted in less visibility for us as a community. Whereas most cities and towns have Chinatowns and community sites for activities and growth and there isn't an equivalent for Japanese Canadians. Some Japanese Canadian projects have attempted to provide some of the history (for example, Hastings Park 1942 signage) ([hastingspark1942.ca](http://hastingspark1942.ca)) and the Ministry of Transportation is also supporting signage for some of the internment sites in clusters. These are more sites for public education rather than sites of community activity and growth. In the daily life of most citizens, both the history and contemporary presence of Japanese Canadians is also invisible. Even when there are historical features in a town, no one knows the history, resulting in incidents like the recent chopping down of historic cherry trees in Northern BC. The trees were a donation from a Japanese Canadian elder, an internment survivor, who wanted a symbol of peace to beautify the home that he knew he would never return to. (Saanich News, March 26, 2018)

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Statistics Canada, Table 1 Couples by Visible Minority Group, Canada, 2011  
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## Appendix A

### BC Redress Committee

#### George Uyeda

George Uyeda is currently the Co-ordinator of the Kamloops Japanese Canadian Association ([KJCA](#)) Cultural Centre and has been for the last 9 years.

George was born/raised in BC. After moving to Kamloops, finished his schooling, and met the love of his life Karlau, married and had 3 children and 2 grandchildren. At the same time of raising his family, he and his late wife ran their own business for 15 years.

George was one of the co-founder of the KJCA, the Kamloops Multicultural Association, and the Kamloops Chapter of the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC).

George has spent many years actively involved in the Japanese Community, he was the President of the KJCA for 10 years, and President of Kamloops NAJC Chapter for 5 years. Vice President of the National NAJC for 2 years, and Director of the National NAJC for 5 years

As well as spending time with his grandkids, George enjoys collecting hockey cards, creating sports archive scrapbooks, and playing various sports.

#### Tsugio Kurushima

Tsugio Kurushima is a second generation Japanese Canadian born and raised in Winnipeg where his family relocated after internment during WW II. He moved to Victoria, BC in 1979 where he raised two children. He had a successful career in the IT industry in both the public and private sector. He retired in 2006. Tsugio is a founding member of the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society ([VNCS](#)) which he helped form in 1993 and has been its president off and on for 11 years.

#### Richard Ogasawara

Richard Ogasawara is president of the Vernon Japanese Cultural Centre ([VJCS](#)). He first became active with the centre in 2004, starting as a hall manager. He enjoys the community spirit and supporting events at the centre including food, dance, religion, language, sport and cultural events.

He was born and raised in Vernon where he spent most of his youth. He was raised by his grandmother Katsu, his uncle Hiroshi, and his father Tosh Ogasawara. His grandparents were very active in the early days with the Japanese farmers association and the local Buddhist temple.

He is a soccer coach who was recently awarded an honorary board position with the North Okanagan Youth Soccer Association in recognition of his years of volunteering and dedication to the sport.

Richard feels he is very lucky to be able to represent the Vernon community of Japanese Canadians, and be a father to four wonderful children, and husband to his wife Dionne.

### **Eiko Eby**

Eiko Eby, a Nikkei Yonsei, is currently the President of the Central Vancouver Island Japanese-Canadian Cultural Society in Nanaimo, B.C. (more commonly referred to as the [7 Potatoes Society](#)). She has been actively involved in the Japanese-Canadian community in Nanaimo since 1987. Eiko is a Community Council Member of the Landscapes of Injustice Project which is a University of Victoria Research Project dedicated to the dispossession of property of Japanese-Canadians during World War 2 in Canada. In addition, Eiko is a member of the National Executive Board of the National Association of Japanese Canadians. In this role, Eiko serves as the Membership Committee Chair as well as serving on the Future Directions Committee, Community Renewal Fund Committee, BC Redress Committee, and BC Redress Advisory Panel. Eiko is a Professor in the Faculty of Education – Sport, Health, and Physical Education Department at Vancouver Island University.

### **Lorene Oikawa**

Lorene Oikawa speaks and writes about her passions, including human rights, and her heritage. She is a co-editor of the book, *Honouring Our People: Breaking the Silence*, which tells the stories of Japanese Canadians who survived uprooting, dispossession, and internment. Lorene, a University of British Columbia (UBC) alumna, is a strong advocate of life-long learning. She contributes to the process by facilitating community forums, and delivering workshops. She is the President of the Greater Vancouver Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association ([GVJCCA](#)), and the Vice President of the National Association of Japanese Canadians ([NAJC](#)). She is a yonsei, fourth generation Canadian, whose family migrated from Japan to British Columbia in the 1800s and 1906.

## Appendix B

### Advisory Panel

#### Judge Maryka Omatsu

Maryka Omatsu is Canada's first East Asian woman judge. Before her appointment in 1993, she practised criminal and administrative law for 16 years in Toronto.

Maryka was on the National Association of Japanese Canadians' (NAJC) strategy and negotiation team that won Redress in 1988 for her community. Her book, *Bittersweet Passage* documented that history and won the Prime Minister's Award for Publishing and the Laura Jamieson Prize for the "best feminist book.

Most recently, Judge Omatsu has been appointed to: the Canadian Race Relations Foundation: Special Advisory Council (2018); NAJC's Advisory Panel for B.C. Redress (2018) & National Honorary Advisory Committee (2017). She has been awarded the Order of Ontario (2015); the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association Trail Blazer of the Year (2013); and the Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers' Life Time Achievement Award (2010).

#### Dr. Arthur K. Miki, CM, OM

Dr. Arthur Miki has had a distinguished career as an educator and community activist. He has been active in promoting positive race relations and human rights issues in Canada. He has been the Vice-Chair of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, President of the Asian Heritage Society of Manitoba, and was a Citizenship Judge for Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Dr. Miki is an active leader in the Japanese Canadian community having served as President of the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) from 1984-1992. He led the negotiations to achieve the redress settlement for Japanese Canadians interned during the Second World War. He is currently the President of the Japanese Cultural Association of Manitoba ([JCAM](#)).

Dr. Miki has received numerous awards and honors some of which are: Order of Canada, Honorary Doctorate degree from the University of Winnipeg, Order of Manitoba, Canadian Race Relations Lifetime Achievement Award, NAJC National Honorary Advisory Council, Harmony Award for Leadership and Excellence from the Transformation Institute and Silvertrust Media, and the Order of the Rising Sun from the Japan government.

## **Mary Kitagawa**

Born on Salt Spring Island. Exiled in 1942. Journeyed through ten different incarceration camps and sugar beet fields until we were allowed to return to Salt Spring Island in 1954.

Graduated from the University of Toronto in 1959. Received my Professional Basic diploma from UBC to teach at the secondary school level.

Taught at Kitsilano Secondary. Joined the GVJCCA Human Rights Committee shortly after redress. Initiated the renaming of the environmentally friendly federal building from Howard Charles Green building to the Douglas Jung building. Initiated the honouring of 76 Japanese Canadian UBC students expelled in 1942. Co-taught the first class at UBC called The History and the Legacy of Japanese Canadian Internment with Dr. John Price: January to April 2018 semester. All successes achieved due to the support of husband Tosh.

## **Kirsten Emiko McAllister**

Kirsten Emiko McAllister is an Associate Professor in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University. Her mother's family lived on Jackson Avenue across from Powell Grounds before WWII and worked in the fishing industry. They were interned in Lillooet for the duration of the war. Her research focuses on injustice from the perspective of survivors and subsequent generations and she has conducted extensive oral history interviews with Japanese Canadian elders and studied the process of remembering internment through community projects, including memorials and art. Her more recent research focuses on issues of displacement and injustice with respect to contemporary forms of persecution, including the plight of refugees.

## **Kyla Fitzgerald**

Kyla Fitzgerald is a board director of the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society and is currently working on her Master of Arts degree in history at the University of Victoria. Kyla is a member of the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) Young Leaders Committee. She was an Oral History Research Assistant with the Landscapes of Injustice Project and helped to collect the stories of Japanese Canadian survivors of internment. She is the recipient of several awards including the Landscapes of Injustice Fellowship Award, the University of Victoria Graduate Award, and the Adeline Julienne Deloume Memorial Scholarship.

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## **John Price**

John Price has taught Asian Canadian and Transpacific history at the University of Victoria for the past twenty years. He has worked with Asian Canadian communities in Victoria and Vancouver for many years. With elder Mary Kitagawa, he recently co-taught a course on the history and legacy of Japanese Canadian uprooting, dispossession and exile at the University of British Columbia (Asian Canadian and Asian Migration Studies 320A). He is director of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council-funded project 'Asian Canadians on Vancouver Island: Race, Indigeneity and the Transpacific.' He is the author of *Orienting Canada: Race, Empire and the Transpacific* (UBC Press) and the working paper "Seventy-five Years is Long Enough: Will the BC Government Finally Acknowledge and Address its Role in the Uprooting of Japanese Canadians," (Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives, University of Victoria).

## **Dr. Henry Yu**

Henry Yu is an Associate Professor of History, and the Principal of [St. John's College](#), UBC. Prof. Yu's research and teaching has been built around collaboration with local communities and civic society at multiple levels, in particular in the digital humanities.

He is a member of the UBC Committee that organized the 1942 Japanese Canadian Students Degree Ceremony in 2012; one of the faculty of the Asian Canadian and Asian Migration Studies program that was created in 2014 as the result of commitments made by UBC Senate to honour the 76 Japanese Canadian UBC students who were removed in 1942"; Co-Chair for the *Legacy Initiatives Advisory Council* implementing legacy projects following the province's apology in May 2014 for BC's historic anti-Chinese legislation; and serves on the City of Vancouver's Historical Discrimination Against Chinese Peoples Advisory group, which led to the April 22, 2018 formal apology by the City of Vancouver; and serves on the Advisory Board of the Landscapes of Injustice Project on the dispossession of Japanese Canadians.

He received the BC Multicultural Award in 2015 in recognition of his community leadership.

## Appendix C

### Sample Costs for Community Consultations

Item	Cost Calculation	Total
Venue Rental	Vancouver Burnaby Steveston Victoria Nanaimo Kamloops Vernon Kelowna	\$ 3,000*
Refreshments	8 locations @ \$400	\$ 3,200
Travel	3 members of committee	\$ 7,500**
Accommodations	3 members of committee	\$ 3,500**
Rental of Equipment	8 locations @ \$500	\$ 3,200*
Advertising	Newspaper, and other media. Also, in kind advertising in NAJC member publications.	\$ 4,000
Printing	Flyers, handouts. 8 locations @ \$150	\$ 1,200
Documentation	Filming, photography at each location.	\$ 2,500
Technical Support	Virtual outreach for Japanese Canadian community members who live in other parts of the province.	\$ 1,500
Supplies	Pens, markers, sticky notes, paper. 8 locations @ \$50	\$ 400
Support at meetings	Volunteers	In kind
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$30,000</b>

\*Venue Rental and Rental of Equipment may include in kind depending upon the availability of a NAJC member centre

\*\*Travel and Accommodations will depend upon the home location of the committee members who will travel to community consultations.

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