

# Town of Faro

SHADOW POPULATION COUNT



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## Objective

In November 2023 the Town of Faro completed an administrative census. The purpose of this census was to give an accurate count of the number of people residing within the borders of the Town of Faro at any given time, regardless of permanent residency status.

## Authority

Section 229 of the Statutes of the Yukon Chapter 154, *Municipal Act* states “Council may take a census of the municipality. S.Y. 1998, c.19, s.228.”

## The Need for a Population Count

Town Council did not believe that the active population of residents, both permanent and non-permanent, is reflected properly by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics. This is important because many grants, especially the Comprehensive Municipal Grant (CMG), are heavily influenced by the population count. As such, in 2023, Council directed Administration to complete a municipal census to calculate the population of Faro as of 2024.

To be fair, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics does their best to estimate the population of a community, based on the addresses of record they can collect from drivers' licenses, medical information, assessment rolls, etc. The problem of course, is that the population of the Town is being heavily influenced by non-resident workers who have a permanent residence somewhere else, but live in the community for cyclical terms. These workers may be here for a few weeks at a time (in and out) and replaced by other workers on an opposite cycle, or they may be here for 3 to 9 months at a time, or even years at a time, depending on their work or contracts.

This 'Shadow Population' places a demand on municipal services but these people are not factored into the grants provided the Town Office to assist in providing these services.

To further complicate the issue, some permanent residents, who live outside the municipal boundary, can accidentally be included in the municipal population estimate from Yukon Bureau of Statistics if these people collect their mail in Faro. These people do not pay for services, like access to waste management or recreation, nor do they pay property taxes to the Town, but they skew the population count.

### The 2021 Federal Census Population Estimate

It should be noted that, according to the 2021 Federal Census, Statistics Canada counted 210 'private dwellings occupied by usual residents' in Faro. Statistics Canada also uses the factor of 2.1 persons as possible inhabitants of a livable residence. Therefore, in 2021, they were estimating a population of 440.

It is also important to note that Statistics Canada also recorded there were 423 private dwellings in Faro. At the time of the 2021 census, there were many dwellings NOT occupied whereas, in 2024, many of these dwellings either have been, or are in the process of being, renovated and occupied. As such, with the possibility of 100% occupancy could some day be calculated as  $423 * 2.1 = 888$  people in Faro. History notes, however, that during peak population in the 1980s, Faro had a population in excess of 2,000.

### 2023 Yukon Bureau of Statistics Population Estimate

In 2023, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics estimated the population of Faro was 453, which is very close to the estimate by Statistics Canada some 2 years earlier in 2021. Yet it is generally believed that the population of the community has grown substantially in the last few years.

For example, in January 2019, the Town Office issued 197 residential utility invoices. In January 2024, the Town Office now has 274 active residential utility accounts. That's an increase of 40%. If the factor of 2.1 is applied to 274, the population estimate would be 576 for Faro.

### Faro Administration proceeds with a Municipal Census

At the recommendation of the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, an administrative count of the shadow population was completed as opposed to a traditional census. Two non-partial locals, who have vast knowledge of the community and residents, were contracted as Census Workers to complete the administrative count.

## Methodology

At the recommendation of the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, a similar approach was used as outlined in the “Shadow Populations in Northern Alberta” 2006 Report.

To be as accurate as possible, the Census Workers first utilized the Town’s land files and development permits, to create a base list of all properties. Using their knowledge of the community, along with business licence applications, curb stop turn on/shut off forms, and development permits, these Census Workers then determined the number of occupants in each residence at any given time. Where and when required, they contacted local construction companies, who have purchased housing units for staff housing, to confirm the occupancy numbers and cycles of these units.

The Census Workers then followed the general methodology in the Northern Alberta report process. For clarification, the census counted people in the following categories.

### Permanent Residents

Permanent Residents are defined as persons who have a main residence in Faro and reside in Faro for more than 6 months of the year. Because a “door-to-door” survey was not completed, an accurate count of permanent residents was not calculated in the “Shadow Population Count”. According to the 2023 3Q Population Report from the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, there are 453 people living in the Town of Faro. This is the number used to calculate the total number of permanent residents in Faro.

### Seasonal Residents

Seasonal Residents are people who permanently reside elsewhere but have property in Faro and return annually for a period of more than 30 days, but less than 6 months.

These residents count for 0.5 persons in the census count as they are only in Faro for half of the year.

### B&Bs, Guest Houses, and Campgrounds

These establishments host tourists, short-term and long-term contractors, and temporary workers. The purpose of this census was not to count tourists, nor contractors, who are in the municipality for less than 30 days annually.

The number of rooms/campsites were counted at these establishments and each room counted for 0.25 of a person. This assumes that a room may not always be filled, and the occupants may not meet the shadow population guideline of residing in Faro for more than 30 days, but less than 6 months.

## Corporate Houses

A Corporate House is a residential property which temporarily houses employees that permanently reside outside the community, by providing them a place to live while at work within the community. There are two types of corporate houses: Corporate Houses with Year-Round Employees and Corporate Houses with Seasonal Employees.

### Corporate Houses with Year-Round Employees

Corporate Houses with Year-Round Employees have employees who work two to three-week shifts and stay in the house when on shift, then another employee moves in for two-three weeks and lives in the house. Therefore, the room is always occupied.

Since there is always a person living in the house, they are counted as one (1.0) person. The local corporations were contacted to confirm the number of employees saying in the house at any given time.

### Corporate Houses with Seasonal Employees

Corporate Houses with Seasonal Employees may have employees living in them from May to October to complete work during the warmer months or may have employees who cycle in and out during the warmer months. Either way, local corporations were contacted, and each room was counted as 0.5 of a person, since the house is only occupied 50% of the year.

## Potential Housing

With the large number of previously vacant housing in Faro, many of the residential properties are being renovated and many will be ready for occupancy within the next 6 months. These property owners were contacted and asked how many units/rooms would be available within that six-month time period.

Because there is no way of knowing that all units/rooms would be completed and because some properties may be short-term rentals and not occupied all year, or occupied with tourists, each unit was counted at 0.5 of a person. It also must be noted each unit also has the potential become a family home with four or more permanent residents, or a year-round corporate house with three bedrooms and three employees residing in the unit at any given time.

This number is important to count because it shows Faro's growth, and that Faro will continue to grow. Because Potential Housing units are expected to be ready for occupancy in 2024, this census has been dated 2024, and effective from January 1, 2024.

# Results

Chart 1 – Results

Type of Residents	Counted Occupancy	Methodology Applied	Counted Population	Percentage of Total Population
Permanent Residents	393	YBS	453	72%
Seasonal Residence	26	50%	13	2%
B&B / Guest House	46	25%	12	2%
Campsites	21	25%	5	1%
Corporate Houses with Year-Round Employees	88	100%	88	14%
Corporate Houses with Seasonal Employees	35	50%	18	3%
<b>Sub-total</b>			<b>589</b>	<b>94%</b>
Potential (houses ready for rental within 6 months)	75	50%	38	6%
<b>Total</b>			<b>627</b>	<b>100%</b>

These results show that the number of residents, used when calculating the population for the Town of Faro by Yukon Bureau of Statistics, is understated.

There is a Shadow Population of 136 people not included in the YBS population estimate. Note: Seasonal Residents (13), B&B / Guesthouse (12), Campsites (5), Corp Houses w Year-Round Employees (88), Corp Houses w Seasonal Employees (18) = 136 people

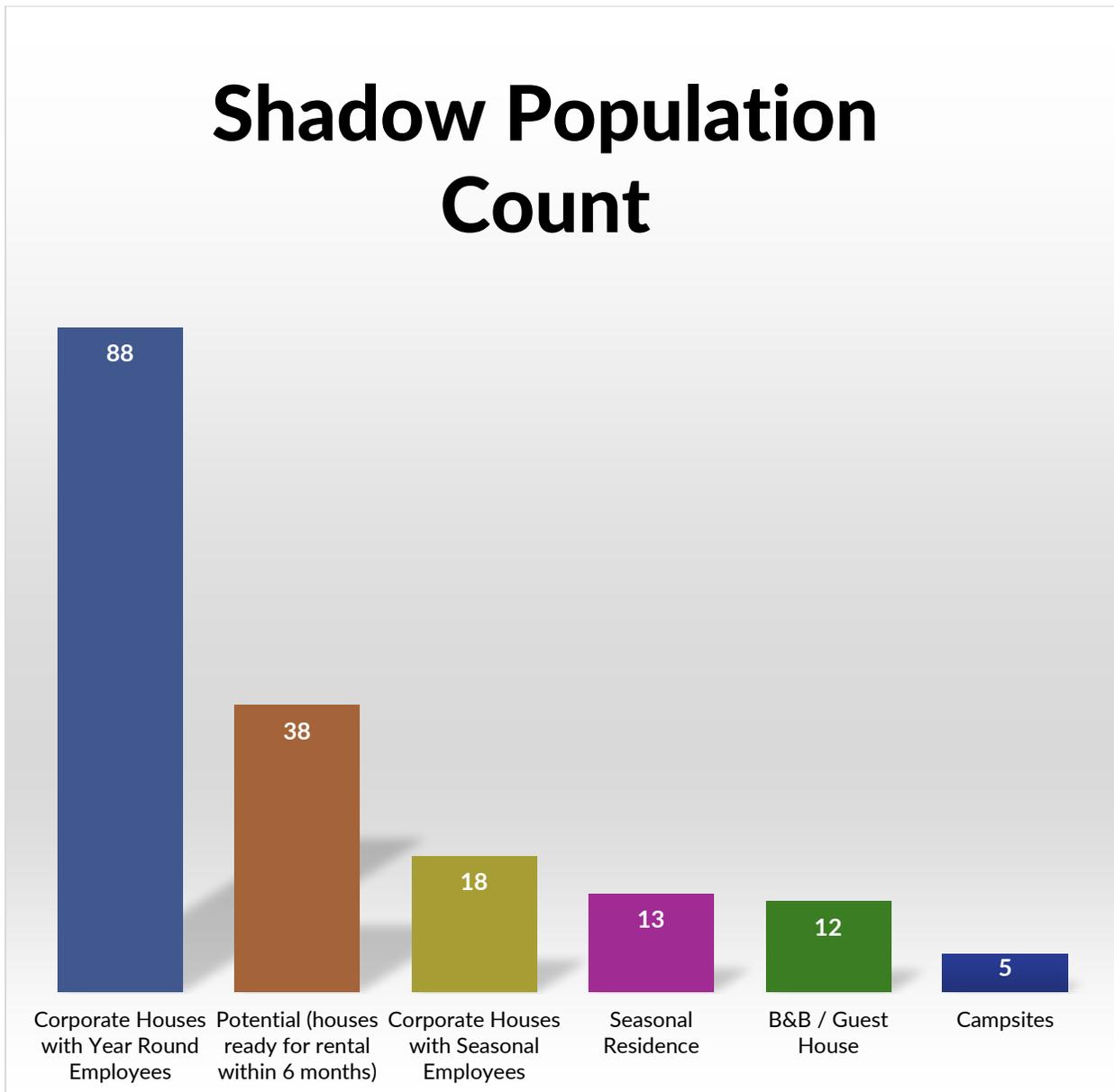
Yukon Bureau of Statistics estimates 453, but the shadow population of 136 should be included making the population **589**. (453 + 136 = 589). That's **30%** more than YBS estimates.

When the Potential Housing population of 38 more people are factored in, that further increases the total to 627 in 2024. That's **38%** more than YBS estimates.

**Important Note:**

When comparing the Third Quarter YBS population estimate for 2023, compared to the conservative administrative count completed by the Census Workers, there is an approximate difference of 60 people (453 YBS count versus 393 Admin count). This may be due to the residents who live outside Faro Town boundaries but maintain Faro addresses.

Chart 2 – Shadow Population Count



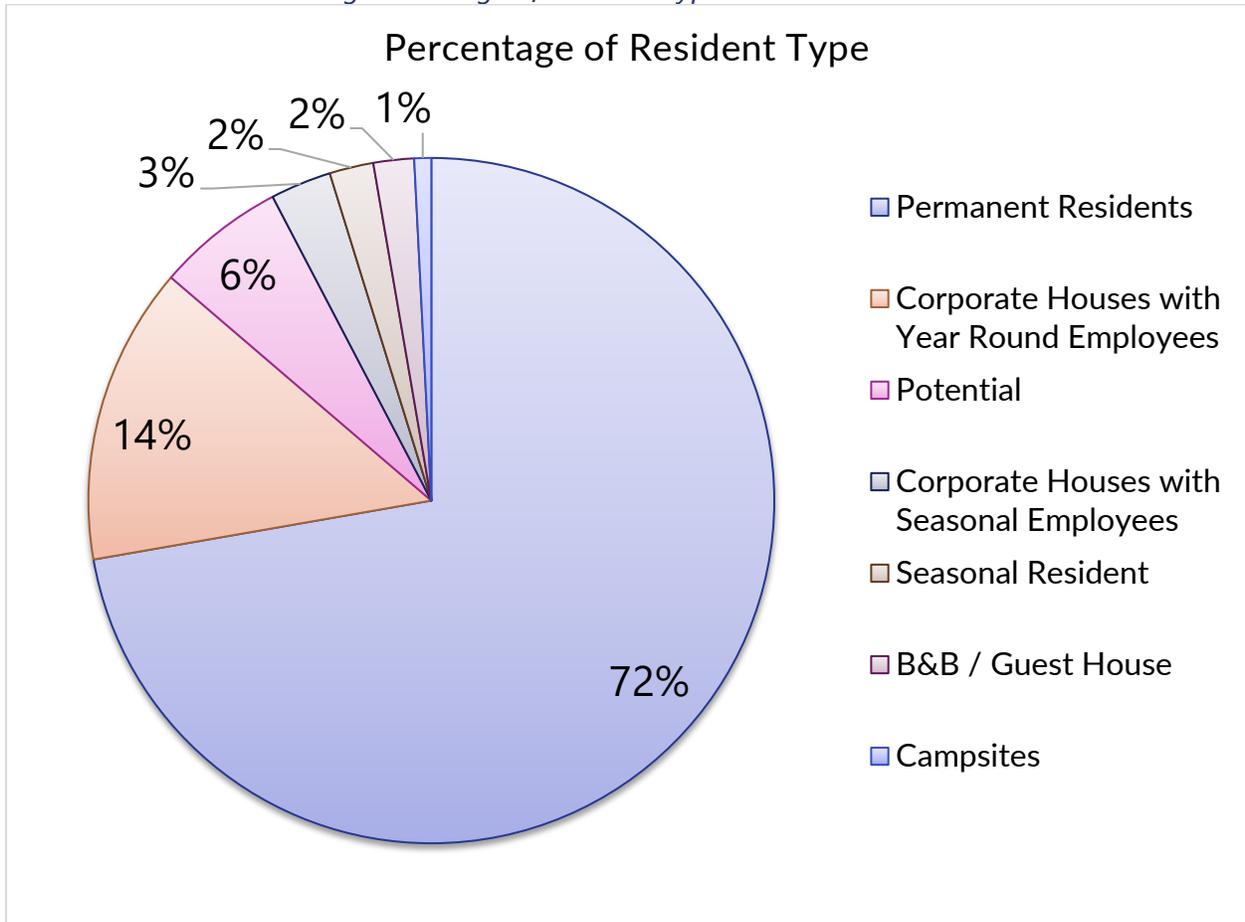
In 2024, Faro has an estimated Shadow Population of about 136 people, without counting the Potential Housing units expected to become available in mid-2024. By year end, those units would increase the Shadow Population count to **174 people**.

In 2025, with the current Potential Housing units completed and many being rented for the full year, that Shadow Population could increase from 174 to potentially 212, bringing Faro's total population to well over 660. That is **45% more** than the current population estimate of 453 by Yukon Bureau of Statistics.

## Conclusion

This project was started with the belief that there were an additional 100 (+/-) residents living in the community at any given time. Neither Mayor, Council, nor Administration were expecting that the Shadow Population would make up 174 occupants of the community, or 28% of the population.

Chart 3 – Pie Chart showing Percentage of Resident Type



### Permanent Residents

Only 72% of the current population of Faro consists of permanent residents.

### Seasonal Residents

Seasonal Residents only account for a small 2% of the Shadow Population within Faro. These Summer Occupants do not cause a large disruption of the Town's resources.

## Contractors - Corporate Houses, B&Bs, Guest Houses, and Campgrounds

Corporate Houses in Faro currently account for 106 occupants. This number does not include the contractors staying in B&Bs, Guesthouses, or sites at local campground. Including ALL contractor occupants within Faro, there are additional 136 persons who are accessing and using Faro's services and resources, yet Faro receives no grant funding from YG to offset this additional service expense. YG does, however, receive revenue from the construction and developments taking place OUTSIDE Faro's Town Boundaries.

## Potential Housing

There are currently 75 units actively being renovated in Faro. Most of these units are three-bedroom duplexes.

- The Census Workers conservatively estimated those 75 units could have 50% occupancy in 2024 for a total of 38 units by year end. Using the Stats Canada factor of approximately 2.1 residents living in each unit in Faro, that would translate to 80 people ( $38 * 2.1 = 80$ ) filling those units by 2025. Using the estimate of 589 (see page 6), plus 80 would equal 669. This is not unreasonable to prepare for this level of increase.
- To make the situation more complex, most of these units are owned by corporations who are interested in filling the units with their transient employees. If these corporate units ARE occupied in 2024, with 1 person per bedroom (3 persons per unit x 75 units), that could translate to approximately 225 additional residents within 6 months, for a total of  $589 + 225 = 814$ .

The Town also realizes that the 75 units that were counted in this Shadow Population count are not the only units actively being renovated.

There are more units that are currently being renovated but did not meet the 6-month completion date when the count was being administered in November 2023. As such, it is more likely that the Town will be looking at an average of 2-3 occupants in each unit, as per the averages from the 2021 Canadian Census, or an additional 150-225 residents. In other words, it is highly possible that the Town of Faro needs to prepare for a population upwards of 800 residents within the next 12 to 36 months.

## Alberta Municipal Government Act

Section 604 of the *Alberta Municipal Government Act* provides authority to municipalities to complete their own census and for the Province to respect that information for official population count calculations (grants, etc.)

They recognize the temporary (shadow) population has an impact on the services delivered by a community and in reality, the community is supporting them. For this reason, the Alberta Government is prepared to factor that transient population into the grants and support structure, because that is the population that the community is in reality supporting.

### Ministerial Regulations

*604 The Minister may make regulations*

- (a) *defining population for the purposes of this Act;*
- (b) *respecting the determination of the population of a municipality or other geographic area and establishing requirements for a municipality to conduct a census and provide information concerning population to the Minister;*
- (c) *respecting the administration, operation and management of specialized municipalities;*
- (d) *prescribing forms for the purposes of this Act;*
- (e) *respecting the content or form of anything required to be done by a municipality under this Act.*

It is difficult for the Yukon Government to provide an accurate community population count (both permanent and non-permanent) for the Yukon communities, Faro questions whether it is time for the Yukon Government to amend the *Yukon Municipal Act* to empower Yukon communities to conduct their own community population counts.

## Administrative Note

Town of Faro employees and contractors completed this report. While all these workers have a basic understanding of statistics, none are Statistical Analysts.

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics was asked to help with the methodology. Because this process was largely new to the Town of Faro, and the Yukon in general, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics was only able to provide limited support to the Town's request.