

## Lower Mainland Area Local Governments Support Tsawwassen AIP Negotiations

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**Burnaby, BC...** With regard to the *Agreement-in-Principle* (AIP) announced by the Parties to the Tsawwassen negotiation table on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2003, local government representatives to the *Lower Mainland Treaty Advisory Committee* (LMTAC) offer their continued support to the negotiation process at this table.

“This agreement represents a milestone in the *BC Treaty Process* as the first AIP to be reached in the Lower Mainland,” said Mayor Ralph Drew, LMTAC Chair.

Drew further noted that, “Lower Mainland area local governments via LMTAC have been a member of the provincial negotiating team, and share an interest to conclude treaties like Tsawwassen in a timely manner so that there is successful implementation ‘on the ground’.”

Treaty negotiations in the Lower Mainland involve a multitude of complex and competing policy issues, many of which are intensified by the interconnections between communities and organizations in the urban setting. Because treaties, such as Tsawwassen, will be played-out at the local community level, Lower Mainland municipalities and regional districts have a great interest in how treaties are finalized.

LMTAC supports work completed to-date on the Tsawwassen AIP; at the same time the committee acknowledges that there are numerous issues that remain to be addressed. The Tsawwassen AIP is silent on several issues of concern to local government such as:

- **Governance** – Post-treaty servicing and intergovernmental agreements; options and implications for participation of *Tsawwassen First Nation* in regional government.
- **Land and Land Use** – Transitional boundary adjustments; impacts on roads; potential loss of agricultural lands; and loss of future municipal tax base.

In addition, LMTAC has serious concerns regarding specific aspects of the **Fisheries** chapter, particularly with regard to conservation, management and allocation of the fisheries resource; accordingly, LMTAC members look forward to participating in upcoming fisheries discussions with the federal and provincial representatives on this important issue.

LMTAC has been assured that these issues continue to be identified as priority topics at the Tsawwassen table and that some of these topics will be explored as part of the *Final Agreement* negotiations. Accordingly, local government representatives must continue to be closely involved at all stages of negotiating a *Final Agreement*.

Richmond Councillor Harold Steves, LMTAC Representative to the Tsawwassen treaty table, acknowledges that, “while the AIP is not a final agreement or legally binding, it will form the basis of a final treaty with the *Tsawwassen First Nation*, and it represents a momentous step for treaty negotiations in this area of the province.”

LMTAC continues to be a strong proponent of building meaningful intergovernmental relations between local governments and First Nations in the Lower Mainland and committee members are eager to participate in the development of an intergovernmental relations side table. The intention behind creating this side table is to facilitate discussions between the *Tsawwassen First Nation* and its neighbouring local governments on key areas of concern and to assist in making a smooth transition into a post-treaty environment.

“It has been essential for LMTAC to be a part of the discussions at the Tsawwassen treaty table to ensure that issues important to Lower Mainland residents and municipal governments are raised and understood by the First Nations, federal and provincial governments. While senior governments have previously stated that agreements reached on issues at this AIP will not be used as templates for other Lower Mainland treaty tables, there is no doubt these decisions and agreements will have implications for those other tables in the future,” Drew said.

In recognition of the work ahead leading to a *Final Agreement*, Chair Drew offered: “LMTAC looks forward to continued involvement as part of the provincial negotiating team and being part of the creation of a successful final treaty for Tsawwassen and area communities.”

*1 backgrounder attached*

**For further information on LMTAC and its activities, please visit us at [www.lmtac.bc.ca](http://www.lmtac.bc.ca) or contact Kirstie Pirie, LMTAC Manager, at (604) 451-6160.**

*LMTAC coordinates and represents the interests of Local Governments, and through them their constituents, in defining and building relationships between First Nations and other orders of government.*