



# Sahtu Land Use Planning Board

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## **Closing Comments**

(Delivered by SLUPB Chair)

The Board would like to thank everyone for coming. The Board now has a clearer understanding of the Parties interests in a Final Draft Plan. We've had some successes these last few days in resolving some of the questions that were outstanding. We appreciate the Parties efforts to be flexible and accommodate the different interests in this process. There is still further work to be done on some issues as we've all anticipated, and we all have to roll up our sleeves to get through this final phase of revisions.

So here are the next steps as the Board sees them at this time.

First, the Board is relying on the Parties to follow-up on their commitments made over these last 2 days:

- Delivery by the GNWT of their table of authorizations no later than mid-October, but preferably sooner.
- Follow-up comments by SSI as indicated in their comments. Give that these may impact a variety of subjects, the Board asks that these comments be provided within 2 weeks.
- For its part, the Board will compile a general summary of discussions, including key messages and results. That will be posted on our public record once it is ready and meeting participants will be notified when it is available.

In the meantime, the Board will begin the process of final revisions, taking into account the discussions here, the comments submitted recently and dating back to the release of Draft 3, and with consideration to the overall public record, purpose and vision of the Plan. As we undertake those revisions, our planner will take the opportunity to fact check and test wording with appropriate parties as much as possible, as has been our practice, to ensure that what we are developing is accurate and achieves its intended purpose. These are expected to be working-level discussions and a fast response will be needed from the Parties to allow the Board to meet its timelines.

Barring any further challenges, the Board hopes to finish the Plan by early winter, at which time it will be submitted for approval to the Parties. The Board has heard the Parties requests for some form of a pre-approval screening and will give that further consideration in the coming months.

Following the Board's formal adoption of the Plan and submission for approval, the Board will carry out a round of Information Sessions on the Final Draft Plan in Sahtu communities and government centers to explain the final revisions and rationale for the Board's decisions, to assist the parties with their approval decisions.

At the same time, the approving parties should also begin to consider their approaches for Plan approval. The MVRMA sets up a sequential approval process, requiring first approval by SSI, followed by ENR then AANDC. The Board encourages the Parties to consider whether that could be done in a collaborative manner, where all the Parties approve the Plan at the same time, but



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in the proper sequence as required by the MVRMA. This may reduce the possibility of having the Plan caught in an approval loop where it is approved by one party and rejected by another. While the approval decision and how that is carried out is the responsibility of the Parties, if the Board can assist the Parties in facilitating that process, it will.

The Board also strongly encourages each of the Parties to finalize their own internal approval processes in the very near future if they haven't already done so, so that they can communicate their timelines and information needs to the Board and the other parties at the start of the approval process. For governments, that may entail a process for inter-departmental sign-off before it approves the Plan; and for SSI, how it will undertake its approval decision on behalf of the Districts and communities. These decisions rest solely with each approving party. However clear up front communications between the Parties and the Board on their approval processes will help to set realistic expectations and reduce uncertainty for everyone involved.

With that, the Board again thanks everyone for their active participation in this meeting, and the planning process. This has been a long, and at times frustrating, road. But that's how we know that we are making progress on the tough issues. The Board appreciates everyone's commitment to the planning process, and the goals we are trying to achieve.