

LESSER SLAVE LAKE REGION

Tri-Council and CAO Secretariat Governance Protocol

17 June 2015

The purpose of the Lesser Slave Lake Region Tri-Council Governance Protocol is to provide guidance for how the Tri-Council consisting of the Councils of the Town of Slave Lake, the Municipal District of Lesser Slave River No. 124 and the Sawridge First Nation acting collectively and the CAO Secretariat that supports it, are to operate and in so doing, to ensure consistency, predictability, transparency and accountability.

**Town of Slave Lake,
Municipal District of Lesser Slave River No. 124
and
Sawridge First Nation**

Lesser Slave Lake Region

Tri-Council and CAO Secretariat Governance Protocol

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS this Protocol builds on the success of the consensus based Tri-Council model of regional governance established in the aftermath of the May 2011 wildfires to lead the Lesser Slave Lake Region in its collective recovery;

AND WHEREAS the Lesser Slave Lake Tri-Council Governance Model has achieved considerable success to the benefit of the residents of the Lesser Slave Lake Region;

AND WHEREAS the Lesser Slave Lake Tri-Council Governance Model has received both Provincial and National recognition;

AND WHEREAS the Signatories to this Protocol recognize the importance of jurisdictional autonomy and the right of jurisdictional self-determination while working collectively to benefit the Region as a whole;

AND WHEREAS this Protocol is not intended to be construed as modifying or affecting any existing legal or contractual rights or obligations of the Signatories;

AND WHEREAS this Protocol is not intended to be construed as modifying any Treaty, creating a new Treaty or as a treaty-making process or as abrogating or derogating from any rights of the First Nation recognized and affirmed by Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*;

AND WHEREAS the Signatories recognize that their common interests are greater than their differences and that the advancement of their shared region will benefit all communities;

AND WHEREAS the Signatories acknowledge that the advancement of their shared region is best accomplished through effective and ongoing cooperation, collaboration, coordination and communication;

AND WHEREAS the Signatories therefore commit to promoting, fostering and embodying cooperation, collaboration, coordination and communication in their relationships with each other and to base that relationship on the principle of mutual respect;

AND WHEREAS the Signatories recognize that they each, separately and together with the other Signatories, have a significant role to play in the success of their region and will ultimately share both the risk and the reward of regional success or failure;

AND WHEREAS the Signatories want to provide quality of life to their residents by ensuring that a range of regional assets, programs and services that are effectively, efficiently and economically delivered are reasonably available to the residents of their region;

AND WHEREAS the Signatories want to take cooperative advantage of the natural, geographic and built assets of their region to promote and effectively position it competitively in a global economic environment in a way that strikes an appropriate balance with the need for responsible environmental stewardship and social responsibility;

THIS PROTOCOL THEREFORE BEARS WITNESS that the Signatories agree as follows:

PURPOSE

Purpose. The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance for how the Regional Tri-Council and the CAO Secretariat that supports it are to operate and in so doing, to ensure consistency, predictability, transparency and accountability.

SIGNATORIES

The Signatories to this protocol are the Town of Slave Lake, the Municipal District of Lesser Slave River No. 124 and the Sawridge First Nation.

DEFINITIONS

“Lesser Slave Lake Region” (the Region). The Lesser Slave Lake Region is the area encompassed within the boundaries of the Municipal District (MD) of Lesser Slave River No. 124, the Town of Slave Lake and the Sawridge First Nation.

“Local Government”. The term *“Local Government”* means a municipality or a First Nation.

“Tri-Council”. The term *“Tri-Council”* refers to the Councils of the Town of Slave Lake, the MD of Lesser Slave River No. 124 and the Sawridge First Nation acting collectively as one.

“CAO Secretariat”. The term *“CAO Secretariat”* refers to the Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs), or designates, of the Town and MD and the Executive Director of the Sawridge First Nation acting collectively.

“Consensus”. For purposes of decision-making by the Tri-Council, *“consensus”* will have been achieved when the members of the Tri-Council in attendance at a meeting can “live with” the decision taken or endorsed and no one is absolutely opposed to it.

“Consensus of Councils”. For purposes of decision-making by the Tri-Council, a *“consensus of Councils”* will have been achieved when each of the three individual Councils acting as a whole can “live with” the decision taken or endorsed and none of the three is absolutely opposed to it.

“Majority Vote of the Councils”. For purposes of decision-making by the Tri-Council, the term *“majority vote of the Councils”* means a simple majority of the Councils (2 of 3).

AUTHORITY and MANDATE

The Tri-Council and the CAO Secretariat derive their authority from the Councils of the Town of Slave Lake, the MD of Lesser Slave River No. 124 and the Sawridge First Nation.

The Tri-Council is not empowered to enact laws or bylaws or otherwise encroach upon the law/bylaw making powers of the Town, MD or First Nation.

The authority and responsibility vested in the Tri-Council is a collective authority and responsibility; individual members of the Tri-Council have no specific authority in their own right.

FIDUCIARY DUTY

When convened as the Tri-Council or the CAO Secretariat respectively, the members of those two bodies have a fiduciary duty to the Lesser Slave Lake Region as a whole and must carry out their duties in the best interests of the Region.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To the extent possible, the relationship between the Tri-Council and the CAO Secretariat and how they carry out their functions, should mirror a well-functioning local government and reflect best practices in local government governance and operations. In this, the Tri-Council equates to the Council and the CAO Secretariat to the CAO/Executive Director.

The business of the Tri-Council will normally be done in open session. The Tri-Council may go *in camera* under the same circumstances specified for municipalities in the Alberta Municipal Government Act (MGA) specifically, the Tri-Council and its committees may close all or part of their meetings to the public if a matter to be discussed is within one of the exceptions to disclosure in *Division 2 of Part 1 of the Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Members of the Tri-Council shall adhere to the Code of Conduct (Annex A).

ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

Tri-Council. Acting collectively, the Tri-Council will provide regional leadership and strategic direction for the Region. It will establish regional priorities and provide oversight of the CAO Secretariat and its implementation of Tri-Council direction. As required, it will provide a policy framework in support of regional initiatives.

CAO Secretariat. Acting collectively, the CAO Secretariat is responsible for implementing the strategic direction of the Tri-Council. It is the principal advisor to the Tri-Council and will provide it with policy advice as required. It will coordinate the implementation of Tri-Council direction. It will also coordinate the agendas for meetings of the Tri-Council and ensure that records of its deliberations are kept and available to all three jurisdictions. The CAO Secretariat has primary responsibility for regional issues management on behalf of the Tri-Council.

QUORUM

Tri-Council. Quorum for the Tri-Council will be achieved when four (4) elected officials from each of the Town and MD and two (2) elected officials from the First Nation are in attendance.

CAO Secretariat. Quorum for the CAO Secretariat will be achieved when any two of the CAOs/Executive Director or their designate are in attendance.

Exceptional Circumstances. In the exceptional circumstance that the business of Tri-Council must proceed and a delay to the next meeting is unacceptable and a quorum of elected officials

cannot be achieved, the Town, MD and First Nation may appoint their CAO/Executive Director or another person as a proxy for purposes of informed decision-making and reaching consensus. Such an appointment must be ratified by the respective Council and confirmed by the Chief, Mayor, Reeve or their designate as appropriate, as the first order of business at a meeting.

Right to Waive. The Town, MD and First Nation have the right to waive their requirement for quorum. A waiving of this right is to be declared as the first order of business at a meeting so that it can be recorded in the Minutes and any subsequent business conducted can be demonstrated to be legitimate.

DECISIONS

Decisions Are Binding. Decisions of the Tri-Council shall be binding on each of the Town of Slave Lake, the MD of Lesser Slave River No. 124 and the Sawridge First Nation individually and collectively.

DECISION-MAKING

Consensus Model. Decision-making will be based on consensus. Consensus will have been achieved when the members of the Tri-Council in attendance at a meeting can “live with” the result and no one is absolutely opposed to it. If consensus is not achieved, it is incumbent upon the Tri-Council supported by the CAO Secretariat to work through the issue until consensus can be achieved. This will ensure that issues before the Tri-Council are not only dealt with but dealt with in a way that is based on trust and a respect for the autonomy and right of self-determination of the Town, MD and First Nation. The intent is to ensure that decision-making by the Tri-Council does not create “winners and losers” but rather is based on a philosophy of mutual benefit.

Acting Reasonably. All parties are expected to act reasonably and to actively try to achieve consensus.

No Veto. It is not intended that the consensus model provide any party with a veto.

Three (3) Step Process. Tri-Council decision-making using the Consensus Model will follow a sequential three step process:

- Step 1 – Consensus of individual members of the Tri-Council;
- Step 2 – Consensus of Councils; and
- Step 3 – Breaking a deadlock (a majority vote of Councils).

Consensus of Councils. To the extent possible, all members of the Tri-Council, acting reasonably, will work to achieve consensus. If however, consensus of individual members cannot be achieved at a meeting of the Tri-Council, then a consensus of the Councils, as opposed to individual members, will be sought at the next meeting.

Breaking a Deadlock. If neither a consensus of individual members nor of Councils can be achieved by the next regular meeting of the Tri-Council after the meeting at which a consensus of Councils was not achieved, then the Chair will ask if the Tri-Council wishes to proceed to the third stage of decision-making, a majority vote of the Councils, or to remove the issue from consideration. Should the Tri-Council wish to proceed to the third stage of decision-making, a majority vote of the Councils will decide the issue. In this case, each Council will have one (1) vote to be exercised by the Mayor, Reeve and Chief or their designate, respectively.

Timeliness. Notwithstanding the intent of these provisions, should the delays contemplated under them not be possible because of an urgency to resolve the issue, then, at the discretion of the Chair, the decision-making process may be accelerated so that if needed, all three of its steps may take place at the same meeting.

No Abstention. No individual or Council may abstain from a vote.

Opting Out. In the rare event that a majority vote of Councils settles a matter and one of the Councils acting as a whole, feels that it cannot support the decision, it will have the right to opt out of the decision by providing written notice of such a decision to opt out within five (5) working days of the original decision having been made by a majority vote of Councils. The written notice is to be provided to the Chief Elected Official of each of the other two Councils and the Chair expressing the decision to opt out and providing a rationale for so doing. Should a Council exercise this right to opt out, the decision in question will not apply to that Council or the entity that it represents. They will neither benefit nor incur liability from the decision. In opting out, they also expressly give up the right to influence the matter about which the decision was taken. Should a Council subsequently wish to re-enter the matter, it may request such consideration from the other two parties who must both agree to such a request. The request to re-enter must be in writing and be provided to the Chief Elected Official of each of the other two Councils and the Chair. The terms under which a Council and the entity that it represents may re-enter a matter from which they had previously opted out, are to be determined at the time of the request to re-enter.

Once a Decision is Made. Once the Tri-Council has made a decision, that decision is deemed to be owned by all of its individual members and each Council as a whole. An opportunity for discussion and debate will be provided prior to the decision point but once a decision is made,

members of the Tri-Council are expected to be unified in their response to it. In the case that a Council opts out of a decision, it and the jurisdiction that it represents, are expected to respect and not work against the decision. Similarly, when a Council opts out of a decision, the other Councils and the jurisdictions that they represent are expected to respect that decision and not to openly criticize or work against it.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Applicability. Notwithstanding the provisions intended to ensure good decision-making, any of the three Councils or the Chair may, at any time, request that a dispute or disagreement be submitted to a dispute resolution process.

Good Faith. Such a request must be made in good faith with the aim of bringing an issue to a mutually beneficial conclusion and not be misused as a delaying tactic.

Making a Request. A request for dispute resolution may be made either at a meeting of the Tri-Council or in writing to the three Councils through their respective Chief Elected Officials and the Chair. Such a request must outline the issue to be resolved and the rationale for submitting it to dispute resolution as opposed to dealing with it through the decision-making provisions of this Protocol.

AB Municipal Affairs Municipal Dispute Resolution Services (MDRS). To balance the need for timeliness, sensitivity to inter-municipal/First Nation relationships and cost, upon receiving a request for dispute resolution, the Chair or his designate, will seek the assistance of the AB Municipal Affairs Municipal Dispute Resolution Services.

Dispute Resolution Process. The process to be used in reaching a mutually beneficial resolution to an issue for which dispute resolution has been requested, will be determined as a first step with the assistance of the AB Municipal Affairs Dispute Resolution Services.

CONFLICT of INTEREST

Municipal Government Act (MGA). The Tri-Council, its committees and working groups as well as the CAO Secretariat shall be governed by the conflict of interest provisions reflected in Section 170 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) of Alberta.

Personal Interest. Notwithstanding those provisions, no personal interest of a member of the Tri-Council, its committees or working groups or the CAO Secretariat shall influence or interfere with the decisions and actions of those bodies. Examples of personal interest include but are not limited to:

- Taking part in a Tri-Council decision with the knowledge that the decision might further a private interest of the Tri-Council member or an individual with whom the Tri-Council member has a close personal relationship;
- Using their public role to influence or seek to influence a Tri-Council decision which could further a private interest of the Tri-Council member or an individual with whom he or she has a close personal relationship; and
- Using or communicating information not available to the general public that was gained by the member of Tri-Council, its committees and working groups or the CAO Secretariat to further a private interest of the member or an individual with whom the member has a close personal relationship.

Declaring a Conflict of Interest. A member of the Tri-Council, its committees and working groups and the CAO Secretariat who is or believes that he or she is in a position of conflict of interest, shall at the beginning of the agenda item in question, either declare the conflict or seek the guidance of the meeting Chair in determining whether a conflict of interest exists. If it is determined that a conflict of interest exists or might exist, the person in question shall recuse him or herself for the duration of the item and any subsequent items that deal with the issue.

SPEAKING on BEHALF of the TRI-COUNCIL

Annex C - Tri-Council Communications Policy outlines authorization for speaking on behalf of Tri-Council.

MEETINGS

Frequency. The Tri-Council will meet as required but no less frequently than once per calendar quarter (three months). The CAO Secretariat will meet as required but no less than once per month.

Regular Meetings. Unless specified, regular meetings of the Tri-Council will normally be held on the third Wednesday of the month in which a meeting is scheduled to take place commencing at 4:00 PM.

Special Meetings. Special Meetings of the Tri-Council may be convened under exceptional circumstances. Only the Councils of the Town, MD and First Nation, the CAO Secretariat or the Chair can request that a Special Meeting be convened. Such a request must be made to the Chair and specify the proposed subject matter, why the meeting is necessary and why dealing with the proposed subject matter cannot wait until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Tri-Council. Any request for a Special Meeting must be made a minimum of three (3) working days before the proposed date of the meeting. The Chair, in consultation with the Chief Elected

Officials of each Signatory, will determine whether a Special Meeting is warranted. Should an issue be of such urgency that it must be dealt with immediately, the Chair, in consultation with the CAO Secretariat will determine how best to handle it.

MEETING CHAIR, COSTS, AGENDA, DELEGATIONS, MINUTES, MEETING RECORDS and REQUESTS FOR ENDORSEMENT

Meeting Chair. Meetings of the Tri-Council will be chaired either by a neutral third party or by the Chief Elected Official of the Town, MD or First Nation. The Tri-Council will determine how it is to be chaired at its first meeting of the calendar year with the decision taking effect immediately at that meeting.

Meeting Costs. Costs associated with meetings of the Tri-Council and the CAO Secretariat will be the responsibility of each of the Town, MD and First Nation respectively except that:

- Meeting space costs will be split equally among them; and
- Meal and/or refreshment costs will be split proportionately based on the number of attendees present from each entity.

Agenda. The CAO Secretariat is responsible for coordinating Tri-Council Meeting Agendas and any supporting materials so that they can be distributed at least four (4) working days prior to each meeting. Meeting Agendas are to be reviewed by the Chief Elected Officials of each of the Tri-Council partners prior to publication.

Delegations. Annex B – Delegations outlines the rules that will govern delegations to come before the Tri-Council.

Minutes and Meeting Records. The CAO Secretariat is responsible for ensuring that Minutes of Tri-Council Meetings are taken and Meeting Records are maintained and available to all three jurisdictions.

Requests for Decision/Endorsement. Requests for Decision/Endorsement will be in writing.

INFORMATION FLOW

Flow of information in regular and emergency circumstances will follow the guidelines in Annex C - Tri-Council Communications Policy.

COMMITTEES and WORKING GROUPS

The Tri-Council and/or the CAO Secretariat may establish committees and/or working groups as they may deem appropriate.

Authority. Committees and working groups established by the Tri-Council and/or CAO Secretariat will be advisory in nature and not have decision-making authority. They will advise and make recommendations in accordance with the Terms of Reference governing them.

Terms of Reference. Every committee and working group established by either the Tri-Council or CAO Secretariat will be governed by Terms of Reference that as a minimum specify the following:

- Committee/Working Group Title;
- Purpose;
- Duration;
- Composition:
 - Number,
 - How Appointed,
 - How Removed;
- Mandate and Limitations;
- Reporting Expectations:
 - To whom,
 - Frequency,
 - Format;
- Administrative Support and Funding; and
- Dissolution.

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Protocol require a consensus of the three participating Councils as opposed to a consensus of the individual Tri-Council members. This recognizes that the Tri-Council, the CAO Secretariat and by extension the guidance reflected in this Protocol, derive their authority from the Councils of each of the Town of Slave Lake, Municipal District of Lesser Slave River No.124 and the Sawridge First Nation respectively.

ATTACHMENTS:

Annex A – Tri-Council Code of Conduct

Annex B - Delegations

Annex C – Tri-Council Communications Policy

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the Signatories have hereunto executed this Protocol under their respective corporate seals and by the hands of their proper officers duly authorized in that regard.

Signed this ____ day of _____, 2015 in _____, Alberta.

TOWN OF SLAVE LAKE

MD of LESSER SLAVE RIVER No. 124

per: _____

Mayor Tyler Warman

per: _____

Reeve Murray Kerik

per: _____

CAO Brian Vance

per: _____

CAO Allan Winarski

SAWRIDGE FIRST NATION

per: _____

Chief Roland Twinn

per: _____

Executive Director Michael McKinney

Annex A

TRI-COUNCIL CODE of CONDUCT

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is:

- To affirm the Tri-Council's commitment to good governance practices in support of open, transparent and effective democracy;
- To preserve the integrity of the Tri-Council, the CAO Secretariat and the Administration(s) of each jurisdiction;
- To provide guidance to Tri-Council to insure that each member of the Tri-Council is afforded reasonable and fair treatment; and
- To assist Tri-Council members in avoiding problems related to role clarity and behaviour.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Tri-Council as a whole and each member of Tri-Council individually recognize that their overarching responsibility is to act in the best interests of the Region as a whole.

RELATIONSHIPS to TRI-COUNCIL MEMBERS, the CAO SECRETARIAT, the ADMINISTRATIONS of EACH JURISDICTION and MEMBERS of the PUBLIC

Each member of Tri-Council shall ensure that their behaviour towards other members of Tri-Council, the CAO Secretariat, the Administrations and representatives of the public before, during or following a meeting or hearing is at all times:

- Courteous, professional, fair and unbiased;
- Contributes to the preservation of orderly decorum and the effectiveness of the meeting or hearing;
- Avoids sarcasm, derogatory comments or questions or comments that are meant to embarrass;
- Contributes to the creation of a respectful workplace; and
- Is respectful of the decisions of Tri-Council as a whole.

OPENNESS and TRANSPARENCY

To ensure to a robust democratic legitimacy and to enhance the public's confidence in their democratic institutions, Tri-Council commits to conduct its business openly and transparently.

AUTHORITY and POWERS

Tri-Council and each member of Tri-Council will respect the authority that confers upon the Tri-Council as a whole the ability to make decisions that guide the actions of the CAO Secretariat and through it, the Administrations. This authority is vested in the Tri-Council when it is convened as a body at a duly constituted meeting. Tri-Council members will therefore refrain from attempting to guide or influence individual members of staffs.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Tri-Council members are not restricted in any public statement that they choose to make except in so far as the provisions of the Governance Protocol set out but as a member of Tri-Council, they are expected to follow guidelines set out in Annex C - Tri-Council Communications Policy.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

Each member of Tri-Council shall follow the follow confidentiality guidelines set out in the Tri-Council Communications Policy (Annex C of the Governance Protocol).

COMMITMENT TO GOOD GOVERNANCE

In fulfilling its commitment to effective and appropriate policy-based governance, the Tri-Council will establish strategic direction for the Region and ensure that there is a strategic plan that provides appropriate guidance to the CAO Secretariat for the development of implementation plans over which the CAO Secretariat will have sole authority provided that they are in keeping with the context and spirit of Tri-Council's strategic direction.

Each member of Tri-Council shall give priority to the meetings of Tri-Council and ensure that distractions are eliminated so that they can focus on the business of the Tri-Council.

Tri-Council shall be responsible for policy development with the advice of the CAO Secretariat and the CAO Secretariat shall be responsible for policy implementation with the advice of Tri-Council.

It is expected that Councillors will come prepared to make informed decisions on the issues placed before them as a Tri-Council.

It is further expected that members of Tri-Council will actively participate in debate and the decision-making process.

Once a decision has been made by Tri-Council as a whole, that decision is owned by all members of the Tri-Council.

NORMS and VALUES

The following norms and values will guide the members of the Tri-Council:

- Honesty and Integrity;
- Respect for individuals and each other;
- Openness;
- Willingness to Listen;
- Willingness to Participate;
- Commitment to the Task at Hand;
- Focus on Issues and Not Individuals;
- Being Receptive to New Ideas;
- Dedication to Preparation;
- Mutual Support through Positive Feedback;
- Speak with One Voice; and
- Make Decisions in the Best Interests of the Lesser Slave Lake Region.

Annex B

DELEGATIONS

The following rules will govern the procedure for delegations to come before the Tri-Council:

B-1. The Lesser Slave Lake Region Tri-Council may, at its sole discretion, hear delegations at a regular meeting for the purposes of providing it with information.

B-2. Delegations may request the opportunity to appear before the Tri-Council through the Chief Elected Official of the Town, the MD or the First Nation; the Chair of the Tri-Council or the CAO Secretariat. A request to appear before the Tri-Council must state the reason for wanting to appear, who will appear, whether audio-visual support will be required and whether a written submission will be provided.

B-3. Notwithstanding Provision A-2, the Tri-Council may, by consensus of its individual members, choose to hear delegations who have not pre-registered. In this case, the Chair must be notified prior to the beginning of the meeting. At an appropriate point on the meeting agenda, normally before the agenda is approved, the Chair will seek consensus to allow the unregistered delegation(s) to present their point of view. The Chair will then designate an appropriate place on the agenda for the delegation(s) to present to the Tri-Council.

B-4. Each delegation will be allowed five (5) minutes to present.

B-5. At the conclusion of the presentation members of the Tri-Council will have an opportunity to ask questions of clarification. There will be no debate or positions taken by members of the Tri-Council at that meeting.

B-6. Tri-Council will either accept the presentation for information or provide direction to the CAO Secretariat on how the issue is to be dealt with.

B-7. An issue cannot be brought back before the Tri-Council for six (6) months unless there is a material change in circumstances.

TRI-COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Tri-Council is committed to providing its diverse internal target audiences (Tri-Council members, CAO Secretariat and committees), local external audiences (residents, businesses and visitors) and broader external audiences (media, provincial and federal governments, etc.) with timely, clear and accurate information about the Tri-Council's programs, services, events, policies and emergency situations through proactive communications. The Tri-Council will use a variety of communications methods to reach and engage these target audiences. The Tri-Council will prioritize joint advocacy on issues of concern to its members.

This policy shall be reviewed as required for any necessary revisions and approved by Tri-Council.

This policy statement should be read together with the Tri-Council Governance Protocol. Any inconsistency will be resolved in favour of the Governance Protocol.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the Tri-Council Communications Policy is to outline key principles and practices for communications undertaken in the name of the Tri-Council by the Chief, Mayor, Reeve and their respective Council and administration, and to ensure that communications are clear and coordinated.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Mayor, Reeve and Chief.** The Chief Elected Officials or their designate of the Town, MD and First Nation are the primary spokespersons on behalf of Tri-Council. They are authorized to speak on all aspects of Tri-Council and the issues with which it deals.
 - a) In *urgent* situations, the leaders will consult and coordinate with each other to the extent time permits, however they have greater flexibility to communicate with the community regarding the situation on behalf of Tri-Council without consulting one another.
 - b) In *non-urgent* situations, they will normally consult and coordinate with each other and will be advised as necessary by the CAO Secretariat before speaking on behalf of Tri-Council.
2. **Councillors and Members of the CAO Secretariat.** The Councillor members of Tri-Council and/or members of the CAO Secretariat will not speak on behalf of the Tri-Council unless authorized to do so on a specific issue or as part of a broader communication or public engagement initiative.

3. **Tri-Council Committee Chairs or designated spokespersons** may speak to matters relating to Tri-Council committees in their official capacity for the committee and its activities. Committees may create publications related to the mandate of their committee.
4. **Chair.** The Chair of the Tri-Council is authorized to speak on governance as it relates to the Tri-Council but not on issues placed before the Tri-Council unless authorized to do so.
5. This policy does not interfere with the ability of elected officials and Administrations to speak on behalf of their own jurisdictions.

4. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

When speaking as authorized in Section 3 above, any statement regarding Tri-Council or its business will:

- a) Be consistent with the respective roles of the Tri-Council, the CAO Secretariat and the Administrations;
- b) Support the current policies of the Tri-Council; and
- c) Support the decisions of Tri-Council.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Information is an important commodity with both operational and political dimensions. It is therefore important that in the multi-jurisdictional, geographically dispersed and multi-element environment that characterizes the Lesser Slave Lake Region, appropriate information be shared accurately, transparently, consistently, and in a timely manner. As a principle, to the extent possible, the same information will be provided at the same time to all members of the Tri-Council. The CAO Secretariat is responsible for ensuring that information flows to and from the Tri-Council.

While informal information flow between all three parties is useful (including telephone, texting and social media) it is not always adequate because it is difficult to archive or share three ways. Therefore, any communication that is official and especially those involving decisions should be made through email, fax or hardcopy.

5.1 CAO Secretariat Reports

The members of the CAO Secretariat shall be responsible for internal communications within the Tri-Council for and with both elected officials and staff of the three communities. They will be guided by the following:

- a) The CAO Secretariat shall report on matters that are not otherwise reported on, orally or in writing, at Tri-Council meeting. Where the CAO Secretariat feels an issue is pressing they can provide an interim report.
- b) Elected officials on the Tri-Council may seek a report on a matter from their CAO Secretariat representative as required. Where the CAO Secretariat representative feels it is appropriate, they may consult with the other members of the CAO Secretariat before providing the report.
- c) CAO Secretariat members, becoming aware of a concern that is reasonably thought to affect the other CAO Secretariat members, shall notify the other CAO Secretariat members in writing.

5.2 Committees of the Tri-Council

Committees shall provide reports, orally or in writing, at each Tri-Council meeting. Recommendations for motions are to be presented in a written report. Any written report will be provided to the CAO Secretariat in advance for distribution with the agenda package.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Each member of Tri-Council shall keep confidential any matters presented to Tri-Council during an in-camera meeting of the Tri-Council.

Each member will take all prudent measures to ensure that any confidential information, including traditional knowledge, documents, reports or other material provided to that member pursuant to or in connection with the Tri-Council is treated as confidential and is not disclosed to any person except:

- a. As may be required by law;
- b. As otherwise consented to in advance by the other member.

Each member agrees that to ensure the foregoing confidentiality obligation is met, the member will from time to time, either in writing or verbally, expressly identify information as confidential or non-confidential to assist the other members in fulfilling their confidentiality obligation.

7. TRANSPARENCY AND SHARING OF DOCUMENTS

In order to ensure a transparent sharing of documents, the inventory included as *Appendix I: Inventory of Documents, Plans and Strategies* will be updated annually, guided by the following:

- a) Each community's representative on the CAO Secretariat shall be responsible for updating the inventory with any relevant documents/plans/strategies from that community.
- b) The CAO Secretariat shall share the inventory with the staff and elected officials of the three communities when revised.

8. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

In the event of an emergency, the Lesser Slave Regional Emergency Management Plan will take effect. Relevant sections on emergency communications are included in Emergency Response Guidelines section of the Plan, and designate both internal communication (between staff and elected officials of the Tri-Council communities) and external communication with provincial and other agencies. These include:

- Emergency Response Organization
- Emergency Coordination Centre Notification
- Declaration of a State of Emergency, and
- Evacuation Procedures

While the Lesser Slave Regional Emergency Management Plan is a joint plan of the Town of Slave Lake and MD of Lesser Slave River No. 124, the Plan refers to emergency communications with the Sawridge First Nation as part of the section on Evacuation Procedures. This states:

The Sawridge First Nation Chief, or designate, will be notified of evacuations within the Town of Slave Lake and/or MD of Lesser Slave River No. 124 and will be recommended to implement the Sawridge First Nation Emergency Management Plan as required.

In emergency communications, the Town of Slave Lake shall be guided by the Slave Lake Emergency Communication Procedures. This plan outlines which communication channels, tools and messaging should be used in emergency situations. Similarly, Sawridge First Nation will be guided by the Sawridge First Nation Emergency Management Plan.

9. ORIENTATION TO NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

This Communications Policy shall be reviewed by and shared with new council members as part of the orientation process to their role within Tri-Council. Normally this orientation also includes an introduction to the Tri-Council Governance Protocol and other relevant documents.

APPENDIX I: INVENTORY OF DOCUMENTS, PLANS AND STRATEGIES

Lesser Slave Lake Region Tri-Council Inventory of Documents, Plans and Strategies

Revised April 2015

Purpose: To identify which emergency management and communications documents exist within each of the three communities and those which are joint. This inventory will be updated annually and shared with the staff and elected officials of the three communities.

	Town of Slave Lake	MD of Lesser Slave River	Sawridge First Nation	Tri-Council/Joint
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Slave Lake Communications Policy (04/2014) • Town of Slave Lake Communications Plan (02/2013) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MD Communications Policy (01/2014) • MD Social Media Policy (01/2014) 		
Emergency Management			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sawridge Emergency Management Plan (03/2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesser Slave Lake Regional Emergency Management Plan (03/2014) (Joint Town and MD)
Emergency Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRAFT Slave Lake Emergency Communication Procedures (09/2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIR3 for emergency call outs 		
Economic and Regional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermunicipal Development Plan (01, 2015) (Joint Town and MD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermunicipal Development Plan (01, 2015) (Joint Town and MD) • MD First Nations Consultation Process (02/2014) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tri-Council Regional Growth Plan (01, 2015) • Tri-Council Economic Development Committee Terms of Reference (04/2015)

Governance				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tri-Council and CAO Governance Protocol (03/2014) • Structure of Lesser Slave Lake Regional Tri-Council (graphic) (02/2014)
Health and Wellness				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tri-Council Regional Wellness Committee Terms of Reference (01/2015) • Tri-Council Health Committee TORs (04/2014)
Special Projects				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildfire Legacy Corporation Articles of Association (01/2013)
Other areas/themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Vision, Mission, Development Philosophy (04/2007) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MD Mission, Vision, Values (02/2009) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sawridge Vision/ Mission (01/2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship Accord (05/2014)
Constating Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Government Act (MGA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Government Act (MGA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sawridge First Nation Constitution (08/2009) 	