



Pathway to Canada Target 1 En route vers l'objectif 1 du Canada

Letter to the Pathway to Canada Target 1 National Steering Committee from the Local Government Advisory Group (LGAG)

December 7, 2017

Attention:

Pathway to Canada Target 1 National Steering Committee Co-chairs:

- Nadine Crookes, Director, Parks Canada Agency
- Scott Jones, Executive Director, Alberta Parks, Alberta

Dear Nadine & Scott,

Professional representatives of municipal and regional governments across the nation were invited to comment on how local protected areas might contribute to Pathway to Canada Target 1. In response to this opportunity, the Local Government Advisory Group (LGAG) was formed, with the support of the Local Engagement Task Team (LGETT), and members discussed strategies to enhance local government engagement in biodiversity protection. The recommendations in the attached document are provided for consideration by the Pathway to Canada Target 1 National Steering Committee (NSC). Please note that these recommendations reflect issues raised by LGAG members from a technical perspective as a first step, and have not been endorsed by municipal authorities. As such, they should be received as guidance towards a fulsome discussion with local governments across the country.

We would appreciate if these recommendations could be considered for possible inclusion in the National Steering Committee's March 2018 report to the Ministers. Recognizing that Canada's biodiversity hotspots are often found within or nearby the most populated areas in Canada, that protected green spaces and natural areas are essential to stopping biodiversity loss, and that these spaces provide a variety of precious ecosystem services to a large number of Canadians, the Local Government Advisory Group encourages consideration by the NSC of a dedicated few pages in your report on the subject of Local Governments and their contribution to Canada Pathway to Target 1.

The recommendations fundamentally recognize the opportunity Canada has now to set the stage to not only reach Canada's commitment to the Aichi Targets by 2020 but also establish the relationships necessary to go beyond those targets. Without the support of local and Indigenous governments, Canada will remain without the governance arrangements needed to accelerate the establishment of protected areas and connect them across the country.



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**Letter to the Pathway to Canada Target 1 National Steering Committee
from the Local Government Advisory Group (LGAG)**

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in this important initiative and wish you success.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Local Government Advisory Group Co-Chairs

Joëlle Roy LeFrançois, Ville de Montréal & Dr. Mike Walton, Capital Regional District, Victoria



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Local Government Advisory Group (LGAG) Input to the Pathway to Canada Target 1 National Steering Committee

Context

Local Government Input into the proposed March 2018 Pathway to Canada Target 1 National Steering Committee (NSC) Report to Minister Catherine McKenna (Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Canada) and Minister Shannon Phillips (Minister for Alberta Environment and Parks)

Nations gathered on the occasion of the 1992 Earth Summit identified local governments as important partners for sustainable development. Today, the majority of the world's population is urban, and 80% of the Canadian population live in urban areas: local driving forces can certainly be an asset towards reaching our collective sustainability and biodiversity protection goals in this global context of biodiversity loss and a changing climate.

Local governments by design engage with local citizens at a pace and in a way that differentiates them from higher order governments. In cooperation with other levels of government, Canada's municipal governments reflect the priorities of every day Canadians, every day. In that same spirit, protected areas located within municipalities contribute significantly to the health and quality of life of a large number of Canadians, and to fostering an interest for biodiversity protection in future generations.



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Now, as signatory nations to the Convention on Biological Diversity mobilize to address biodiversity loss through the protection of 17% of terrestrial and inland water, and 10% of coastal and marine areas, local governments in Canada may be counted among those participating, and when necessary, leading in Canada's Pathway to Target 1. With Indigenous governments, local governments create the foundation for a new approach to the establishment and management of parks and protected areas in Canada. Through shared decision-making across jurisdictions, including private landowners, nature conservancies, and land trusts, local governments are positioned to build the processes required to achieve local support for more, connected, parks and protected areas.

In Canada, governance structures necessary to achieve linked and interconnected networks of protected areas are evolving. With efforts underway to recognize Indigenous Protected and Conservation Areas and growing understanding that local governments are essential partners to the success of Canada Target 1, the following **non-prioritized list** of recommendations are provided, along with some points for further consideration.



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Local Government Advisory Group Recommendations to the National Steering Committee:

1. Recognize the importance of local government contributions by taking into consideration their particular context and the importance of ecosystem services provided by local protected areas;
2. Clarify with local governments the implications of being counted as part of Canada's Pathway to Target 1;
3. Confirm how local protected areas will be evaluated and counted as contributing to the 17% terrestrial and 10% marine targets;
4. Recognize the importance of federal, provincial and territorial ministries responsible for parks and protected areas as the points of contact for local government protected areas, green spaces and natural areas.
5. Establish a secretariat to provide the coordination and support necessary for a Pan-Canadian local government advisory body comprised of local government park and protected area managers.

Points for further consideration:

6. Reconcile with local governments the technical requirements, including mapping requirements necessary to participate in the Pathway to Target 1 process;
7. Expand the federal government's green infrastructure funding programs and associated budgets to include parks as green infrastructure.



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- 1. Recognize the importance of local government contributions by taking into consideration their particular context and the importance of ecosystem services provided by local protected areas;**

Given that many biodiversity hot spots in Canada are located in or close to highly populated areas where land is expensive, and increasing in value, arrangements to assist local governments establish or grow land acquisition strategies immediately causes land to be set aside from development. Local governments can move quickly to purchase or set aside lands for natural area conservation purposes that are protected through by-laws, management planning and policy.

- 2. Clarify with local governments the implications of being counted as part of Canada's Pathway to Target 1.**

Local governments are cautious of increased reporting and oversight from outside authorities. Clarity will need to be brought to local elected officials regarding such issues as jurisdictional authority, decision-making, resourcing and value for local residents. Local protected green spaces and natural areas are central to connecting Canadians with nature. Their proximity to and existence within Canada's largest cities already places them in the vanguard of building a conservation conscience in Canada. Canada's Pathway to Target 1, in cooperation with local governments' commitments to providing green spaces, trails and



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networks of protected areas within their municipal jurisdictions, realizes an opportunity to increase support for more protected areas in Canada.

3. Confirm how local protected areas will be evaluated and counted as contributing to the 17% terrestrial and 10% marine targets.

This assists local governments in understanding the time, money and human resources necessary to participate in Canada Target 1.

4. Recognize the importance of federal, provincial and territorial ministries responsible for parks and protected areas as the points of contact for local government protected areas, green spaces and natural areas.

This allows for shared and familiar bodies of knowledge to set the stage for discussions. Purposes, mandates, and priorities tend to be understood between near-urban/urban park systems and Canada's higher order government park and protected area agencies.

5. Establish a secretariat to provide the coordination and support necessary for a Pan-Canadian local government advisory body made up of local government park and protected area managers.

This key recommendation recognizes the need for a coordinating body that can both facilitate and implement. Many local governments will benefit from greater connection to



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expertise resident with federal, territorial/provincial park and protected area agencies. The secretariat will require staffing to address policy development, biological inventoring, social science program development, GIS and protected area management effectiveness.

6. Reconcile with local governments the mapping requirements necessary to be included in the Pathway to Target 1 targets.

Capacity, technology, equipment and compatibility will require careful consideration. Many local governments have limited GIS capacity.

7. Expand the federal government's green infrastructure funding programs and associated budgets to include parks as green infrastructure.

Local park and protected area systems, their creation, establishment, management and maintenance, contribute to reducing the vulnerability of municipalities to climate change, uncertainty and stopping biodiversity loss. Clearing the way for near-urban/urban park systems to qualify for funding for program development in the areas of interpretation, social and natural science, facilities and trails, creates a way for municipalities to share in the costs of capacity development necessary to effectively manage and operate local parks and local park systems.



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Canada Pathway to Target 1 creates the opportunity to change the narrative in Canada about the importance of parks and protected areas in a continuum of green infrastructure that provides community amenity and ecosystem services. Through Canada's leadership, the discussion can be one where Indigenous Protected and Conservation Areas and local government secured green space and natural areas networks are seen as an appropriate top down and bottom up approach to power sharing and decision-making. This new approach builds a conservation ethic, distinctly Canadian in nature: achieving biodiversity protection; positioning protected areas as significant contributors to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples; and inspiring the establishment of more, larger and connected parks, a portion of which could also contribute to biodiversity protection in the context of Pathway to Canada Target 1.



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