

# A Regional Municipality for your Communities

## The Choice is Yours!

*A vote will be held on December 2, 2013, to determine whether the LSDs in your area and the Town of Tracadie-Sheila will form a regional municipality.*

**You are invited to consult this document in order to make an informed choice.**

### **Communities Involved**

This is a summary of the feasibility study report on the Local Service Districts of Benoit, Brantville, Gauvreau-Petit Tracadie, Haut-Rivière-du-Portage (Upper Portage River), Haut-Sheila, Leech, Pointe-à-Bouleau, Pont LaFrance, Sainte-Rose, Pont Landry (Losier Settlement), Rivière-à-la-Truite, Rivière-du-Portage-Tracadie Beach, Saumarez, Saumarez Parish (Canton des Basques, Pointe-à-Tom, Pointe-des-Robichaud), Saint-Irénée and Alderwood, Saint-Pons, Inkerman Parish (Six Roads), Val-Comeau and a small portion of the Local Service Districts of Tabusintac and Inkerman Centre (Four Roads) and the Town of Tracadie-Sheila forming a new regional municipality.

### **Message from the Study Committee**

Dear fellow residents:

For four and a half years now, people from the Local Service Districts (LSDs) have been studying the feasibility of adopting a form of local governance based on our needs, our aspirations, and our means.

The desire of the LSDs to come together and take control of their affairs comes from a deep belief that we can build a better future for our communities and that it is no longer acceptable to try to move forward without having local representatives with decision-making powers.

We believe that our future is no longer in the LSD structure within which we cannot build our communities. Instead, a new regional municipality would facilitate working together and give us the political and financial tools with which we can forge economic and social prosperity for our communities.

Our ambition is encouraged by the interest of the Town of Tracadie-Sheila in dissolving its municipal structure and joining our 18 LSDs, giving us a population of 16,000 and a tax base of close to \$800 million.

While it's true that the coming together of our LSDs with the Town of Tracadie-Sheila to form New Brunswick's first regional municipality will require a slight tax increase over the next few years, the benefits would be worth the cost – we have to invest in order to build our communities.

Together, we now have to make an important decision about the future of our communities. We strongly urge you to vote during the plebiscite on December 2, 2013.

Study Committee  
*Ensemble vers l'avenir*



## The Coming Together of the LSDs and the Town of Tracadie-Sheila to Form a New Regional Municipality Aims to Achieve the Following Objectives:

- ◆ To give residents the power to elect their representatives: mayor and council – local people who know their communities and have their interests at heart.
- ◆ To be able to make decisions on the annual operating budget and property taxes and to have the power to take out loans for projects.
- ◆ To have meaningful political power in order to successfully negotiate projects with the federal and provincial governments and to capitalize on the sharing of services with other communities in the Acadian Peninsula.
- ◆ To unite a population base and provide the necessary facilities and services to better serve and attract businesses.
- ◆ To gain improved access to grants from the federal and provincial governments so as to better meet needs in terms of infrastructure, facilities and equipment, e.g., walking/biking/ATV/snowmobile trails, parks and playgrounds.
- ◆ To protect and improve community resources built through volunteer work, such as community centres, outdoor skating rinks, and trails.
- ◆ To give the communities a land use development plan that would ensure that various types of future development (e.g., residential, commercial, institutional, recreational, and resource-based) are established in an orderly manner and at the appropriate locations in order to protect farmland, forests, rivers/streams, coastal areas, green spaces, drinking water, the rural character and peacefulness of the communities, and to preserve the lifestyles of residents (e.g., having animals, owning a farm, heating with wood).
- ◆ To have access to trained and qualified professionals to serve the community, and to promote and support community engagement.

## The Proposed Regional Municipality

**Geographical boundaries:** Would include the 18 LSDs and a portion of two others (as previously noted) as well as the Town of Tracadie-Sheila.

**Name:** The first council would choose a permanent name in consultation with the residents.

**Maintenance of the identity of the communities:** The postal and civic addresses of residences and the names of the communities would not change.

**Wards:** Eight wards, of which six, grouping only the LSDs, would be rural (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) and two urban wards, including Ward 7, composed of the Tracadie sector (former Town of Tracadie-Sheila), and Ward 8, composed of the Sheila sector (former Town of Tracadie-Sheila), and the LSDs of Pointe-à-Bouleau and Canton des Basques.

**Composition of the council and method of election of the councillors:** The mayor would be elected by the residents of all wards. One councillor would be elected in each of the rural wards (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) and two councillors would be elected in both wards 7 and 8.

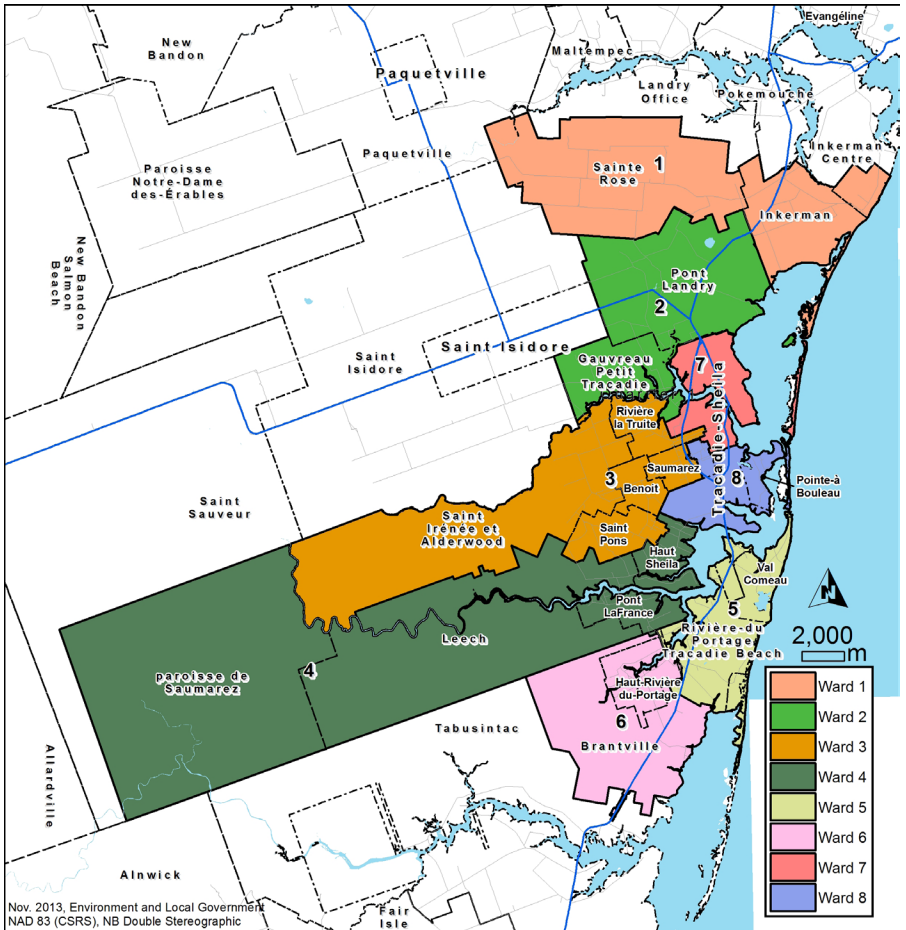
**Staff (employees):** The current employees of the town would become the employees of the regional municipality and a community development officer would also be hired to support the achievement of community projects in the former LSDs.

**Community centres:** \$200,000 would be invested (with an increase of \$5,000 per year) in order to support and improve the community centres, which would all remain in place.

**Community projects:** \$240,000 would be invested annually to support community projects in LSDs.

**Police protection:** The RCMP would continue to provide this service and the regional municipality would only have to pay 70% of the costs.

## Proposed Geographic Boundaries and Wards



**Fire protection:** The fire protection services of Tracadie-Sheila and Rivière-du-Portage/Tracadie Beach would remain in place.

**Highways:** The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DTI), Bathurst District, would continue to maintain the roads in all of the old LSDs in summer and winter, for as long as the regional municipality finds it beneficial and preferable. In addition, DTI would ensure repair of roads that are not in good condition within eight years.

**Water and sewer:** Residents would keep their wells and septic systems. Water and sewer services would continue to be offered where they are currently and only the residents who are receiving these services would pay for them.

**Municipal by-laws:** The by-laws of the Town of Tracadie-Sheila would continue to apply only in the dissolved town. The municipal council would adopt a development plan for the former LSDs and could enact other by-laws to cover the former LSDs, as needed.

## Budget Projections and Anticipated Property Tax Changes (2015-2024)

**Debts of the Town of Tracadie-Sheila and a number of LSDs:** The debts of the dissolved town would continue to be paid by the property owners in the territory of the former town, and the debts for community centres in the LSDs would also continue to be paid for by the property owners in the LSDs that incurred the debt.

**Transition grant from the provincial government:** The provincial government would give the regional municipality a total grant of \$700,000 over two years to ensure a minimal increase in property taxes.

**Property tax in the Town of Tracadie-Sheila (2015-2024):** The current property tax rate (\$1.39/\$100 property assessment) would stay the same for the first 10 years.

### Property tax in the LSDs (2015-2024):

- ♦ The property tax rate for owner-occupied residential properties (homes) would increase annually an average of 1.9 cents/\$100 property assessment to reach \$1.18/\$100 property assessment in 2024, i.e., 15% less than the urban tax rate in the dissolved town.
- ♦ The property tax rate for non-owner occupied residential properties (apartments, cottages) would be subject to a net annual increase of 5 cents per \$100 property assessment to reach \$1.18/\$100 property assessment in 2024, whereas the non-residential (businesses) property tax rate would be subject to a net annual increase of 9 cents per \$100 property assessment to reach \$1.77/\$100 property assessment in 2024. That larger increase in the property tax rate is a result of the fact that these two types of properties do not currently pay for highway services in the LSDs.

**Annual community funding and equalization grant:** The annual community funding and equalization grant awarded to the proposed regional municipality would be approximately \$955,000 in 2015.

**Gas Tax Fund:** Should the annual allocation based on population remain the same as the one currently in effect, the regional municipality would be eligible to receive an annual contribution of approximately \$1.2 million starting in 2014-2015.

**Farmland:** No agricultural land registered under the Farm Land Identification Plan (FLIP) would be subject to a property tax increase with the establishment of the proposed regional municipality.

**Property assessment:** Service New Brunswick would continue to be responsible for property assessment. Additionally, properties would continue to be assessed differently from one location to another. Being part of a regional municipality that would include the former Town of Tracadie-Sheila would not, in and of itself, result in higher property assessments in the LSDs.

## Your Community, Your Choice

*A vote will be held on December 2, 2013, to determine whether the LSDs in your area and the Town of Tracadie-Sheila will form a regional municipality.* The date, time, and location of the regular and advance polls will be sent to you in the mail by [Elections New Brunswick](#).

All residents qualified to vote will be asked to answer the following question:

“Are you in favour of the establishment of the local service districts of Benoit, Brantville, Gauvreau-Petit Tracadie, Upper Portage River (Haut-Rivière-du-Portage), Haut-Sheila, Leech, Pointe-à-Bouleau, Pont LaFrance, Sainte-Rose, Pont Landry, Rivière à la Truite, Portage River-Tracadie Beach, Saumarez, Parish of Saumarez (Canton des Basques, Pointe-à-Tom, Pointe-des-Robichaud), Saint Irénée and Alderwood, Saint-Pons, Parish of Inkerman, Val-Comeau and a small portion of the local service districts of Tabusintac and Inkerman Centre (Four Roads) and the Town of Tracadie-Sheila as a regional municipality?”

The support of the local population will be considered sufficient if the majority (50% + 1) of the people voting in the plebiscite are in favour of establishing a regional municipality.

## Additional Information:

Ensemble vers l'avenir, 393-9377, [www.verslavenir.ca](http://www.verslavenir.ca); [info@verslavenir.ca](mailto:info@verslavenir.ca)

Department of the Environment and Local Government: 394-3868