

Mrs. Jeanie McLean
Minister of Education
867-393-7494

Mr. Nils Clarke
Minister of Highways and Public Works
867-333-1007

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2C6



Dear Ministers McLean and Clarke,

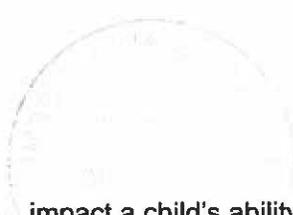
I am writing to express my deep concern that there has been no commitment from the Government of Yukon to build a school in the downtown core to service primarily downtown residents.

According to the City of Whitehorse's 2040 Official Community Plan, downtown Whitehorse is projected to see the highest growth in housing units in the next 20 years. 3,500 housing units (50% of all new housing units) are projected to be built in Whitehorse's downtown neighbourhood. This will quickly see downtown become one of the largest neighbourhoods in Whitehorse.

I grew up in Riverdale, but have lived downtown since my partner and I returned to Whitehorse. Perhaps it is because of my childhood in Riverdale... but this matter has particularly hit home for me. As a kid, I was given complete freedom of movement and this confidence and independence stemmed from the ability to walk or bike to school on my own. Since moving to downtown Whitehorse, I would argue that this neighbourhood is not dissimilar to Riverdale. Downtown is home to a mix of families and single people of varying ages. There are forests and clay cliffs behind town and natural green space throughout the neighbourhood. Some people are homeowners and others are renters.

I chose to live downtown because, to me, this neighbourhood resembles a "Complete Community". A Complete Community meets the basic needs of all residents by encompassing a mix of residential, commercial, recreational and community uses (e.g. housing, groceries, work, services, parks, and schools). To ensure that these services and amenities are actually accessible for people of all socio-economic backgrounds, they must be located within a comfortable walking distance.

Now, I would like to suggest that we should be very serious when we make decisions that



impact a child's ability to walk or bike to school. A staggering 93 percent of Canadian kids and 80 percent of American kids do not get the recommended hour of daily physical activity.¹ One in three Canadian children are either overweight or obese, significantly increasing their chances of having a lifelong struggle with body image and weight. Unfortunately, mental wellbeing is also impacted. Researchers are finding a direct link between physical inactivity and levels of loneliness that lead to depression – which 5 to 10 percent of American kids under 18 are diagnosed with. By 2040, almost three-quarters of Canadian adults will be overweight. This will be the first generation in the history of Western Civilization to live less healthful and shorter lives than their parents. This is also the same generation that experienced the most dramatic drop in active transportation to and from school. In 1969, 50 percent of American kids walked or cycled to school. By 2009, that number was just 13 percent.

I do not know what my future in downtown Whitehorse will look like. But if I have children, I will try to raise them in a place where they can independently and freely walk or bike to the places they need to go. I am asking you to commit to having an elementary school downtown and that it will be able to sufficiently service downtown residents.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Clarke

Cc: Ms. Emily Tredger, Third Party House Leader

¹ Curbing traffic: the human case for fewer cars in our lives
by Melissa Bruntlett and Chris Bruntlett. 2021. Published by Island Press: Washington.