



**October 20, 2023**

Honourable Ranj Pillai, Premier of the Yukon  
Government of Yukon  
Whitehorse, Yukon

Send via E-mail: [Ranj.Pillai@yukon.ca](mailto:Ranj.Pillai@yukon.ca)

**Re: Supporting the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter and Calling for Leadership on Territorial Housing Policy**

Honourable Premier Pillai,

The Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce (WCC) *Housing, Lodging and Lot Development Committee* would like to provide public comment on recent attention to the private sector's relationship with the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter in the Yukon legislature and media, and to reiterate our guiding principles for effective housing policy.

While several businesses in proximity to the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter and the WCC have called on the Government of Yukon to reduce instances of noise and other negative externalities that have impacted business activity in the area, this does not mean that the private sector is in opposition in principle to the shelter and services provided at 405 Alexander Street. There is more investment needed so the services provided at 405 Alexander Street can take into account activity taking place outside the facility.

WCC's leadership believes that the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter is an essential part of community housing and healthcare infrastructure for the Yukon. We commend Connective and the Council of Yukon First Nations for the services they offer at the shelter and recognize the important role it plays in providing and improving public healthcare, for so many Yukoners with the greatest needs.

Over the past two years we have sent multiple letters to the Government of Yukon, urging them to reconsider recent housing policy that is not working for Yukoners from all walks of life. In principle, we believe that governments should focus their efforts to:

1. Increase the supply of government social housing for those who need support; and
2. Create an environment where investments in market housing are an attractive and accessible option for the private sector and all citizens.

The Yukon is behind on both investments in community housing infrastructure and deregulating market housing to reverse the negative impact that current policies have had on supply. We again call on leadership to accelerate investments in both of these areas, for the benefit of all Yukoners.

We recommend that the Government of Yukon immediately reviews increasing the budget of Connective's contract to manage the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter, in consultation with the business community. With this funding it is important that the Government's contract with Connective provides management for activity outside of the facility, that is mutually beneficial for users of the shelter, and businesses in proximity to the shelter.

We urge the Government of Yukon to follow the Council of Yukon First Nations' direction on investments into additional community housing infrastructure, where they believe the greatest impact can be made.

We also recommend deregulating market housing,<sup>11</sup> as current policies have unequivocally hampered investment in additional supply.<sup>4</sup> This lack of investment equates to additional pressure on social housing infrastructure and creates acute issues for housing the private sector workforce.



The recently announced landlord rebate of \$338 per-unit is out of touch with the needs of locals who have asked clearly for deregulation so that they may manage costs and manage risk associated with their investments. Until the Government of Yukon enacts meaningful policy change, lost trust and lost supply will not be recovered.

We believe that the guiding principles on housing policy that we have laid out will result in abundant social and affordable market housing for Yukoners from all walks of life.

Sincerely,

Allison Camenzuli  
Chair, Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce

Ben Pereira  
Chair, Housing, Lodging and Lot Development Committee  
Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce

cc:

Laura Cabott, Mayor of Whitehorse  
Shadelle Chambers, Executive Director of CYFN  
Mark Miller, CEO of Connective  
Curry Dixon, Leader of the Opposition  
Kate White, Leader of the Yukon NDP