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HANSARD

Thursday, April 17, 2025 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2025 Spring Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Jeremy Harper, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Annie Blake, MLA, Vuntut Gwitchin
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Lane Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Ranj Pillai	Porter Creek South	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
Hon. Jeanie McLean	Mountainview	Deputy Premier Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate
Hon. Nils Clarke	Riverdale North	Minister of Environment; Highways and Public Works
Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Minister of Health and Social Services; Justice
Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Government House Leader Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Minister of Finance; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

Currie Dixon	Leader of the Official Opposition Copperbelt North	Scott Kent	Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South
Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Yvonne Clarke	Porter Creek Centre	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Lane Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
Annie Blake	Vuntut Gwitchin

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, April 17, 2025 — 1:00 p.m.**

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.
We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of a change made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 1241, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South, has been removed from the Order Paper, as it is similar to Motion No. 1261, which was adopted by the House yesterday.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.
Visitors introduced

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Yukon Fish and Game Association 80th anniversary

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Yukon Fish and Game Association on its 80th anniversary.

Back in 1945, the Yukon Fish and Game Association was founded with a clear mission to advocate for the responsible management and conservation of our territory's natural resources. Over the past eight decades, the Yukon Fish and Game Association has become one of the Yukon's most influential conservation organizations.

The Yukon Fish and Game Association's work has been foundational in shaping how we understand wildlife stewardship here in the Yukon. Through their efforts, Yukoners have learned the importance of ethical hunting and fishing practices. The association has also highlighted the need to preserve our wild spaces for future generations. They have been a steadfast advocate for sustainable practices in wildlife management. Their collaboration with First Nations, other environmental groups, and the Government of Yukon has been crucial in advancing conservation efforts across the territory.

Today, with nearly 2,000 members, the Yukon Fish and Game Association continues to be an essential voice in discussions about wildlife conservation, environmental sustainability, and the protection of the Yukon's unique ecosystems.

As Yukoners prepare for the association's annual wild game banquet and fundraiser on April 19, it is a perfect opportunity to celebrate the people and legacy that have made this association so vital to our community. This event is more

than just a chance to enjoy a delicious meal full of wild game and local vegetables prepared by chef Chris Irving.

Mr. Speaker, I know that I, my spouse, and the Premier very much look forward to attending this Saturday evening.

It is also a chance to support the Yukon Fish and Game Association's ongoing work in conservation. From the very beginning, the association has been powered by volunteers with a deep love for the land, the water, and the wildlife that define our way of life. Their hard work and dedication have had a lasting impact, ensuring that our natural environment remains healthy and vibrant for future generations.

The 80th anniversary of the Yukon Fish and Game Association is not just a celebration of what has been accomplished; it's a reaffirmation of the important work still ahead.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Yukon Fish and Game Association for this incredible achievement. I also want to thank all its members for their ongoing dedication to conservation. Their leadership will continue to inspire us all as we work together to protect and conserve Yukon's wildlife for future generations.

Here's to the next 80 years of partnership, stewardship, and success.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to the 80th anniversary of the Yukon Fish and Game Association. Ensuring safe, sustainable, and enjoyable hunting and fishing for current and future generations of Yukon's residents — that is just one of the priorities that they list in their strategic framework for 2024 to 2026. But it is something that they have been doing — and doing very well, I might add — for eight decades and counting.

The Yukon is home to a number of organizations that focus on conservation and sustainability. The association does just that, and they do so much more. They help to manage fish and wildlife populations with a balanced and educated approach to ensure that our outdoor recreational resources are conserved and enjoyed now and way into the future.

Outfitters in the beginning were quite involved as founding members. One of the founding members of the association, Alex Van Bibber, who was also an outfitter back in the day, took the greatest pride of all the awards that he ever received in receiving the Clay Pugh Memorial Award for Sportsman of the Year from the Yukon Fish and Game Association in recognition of his work with youth in the Yukon.

As many of us have, I spent much time with Alex over the years. I once asked him why the association was so important to the Yukon, and he told me that it was so important to pass down our traditional knowledge, teaching our youth about the outdoors, and that we need to care for Mother Earth and all of her gifts.

This is what formed the young conservation association into this active, dynamic group that we see in the Legislature today and how they have become. I would like to recognize the following individuals who were recognized with top awards

this year. The Outstanding Member Award — the Clay Pugh trophy — this year was awarded to Eric Schroff, former executive director and long-time member. Congratulations to Hannah Walchuk, Hannah Welsh, and Luke Welsh, recipients of this year's Youth Outstanding Member Award. I do understand that there were many nominations this year and it was decided to recognize three outstanding youth for their achievements and contributions.

The Alex Van Bibber Award for Outdoor Education to Michelle Beaulieu — thanks to Michelle, who is a leader in the Great Outdoors Experiential School — or GOES, as it's known — out of Golden Horn Elementary School, which focuses on the development of a skill set that will see our school help to build a sense of belonging by building a community. The program will benefit from this award as well in the form of a \$1,000 grant — it's great.

So, congratulations to all and the recipients of this year's hunting awards. Enjoy the banquet coming up this weekend, and thank you to the board and staff whom I have met with many times over the years, past and present, for all of your hard work and dedication to wildlife, conservation, outdoor recreation, and way more that you do.

Applause

MLA Tredger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to recognize the eight decades of work that the Yukon Fish and Game Association has done for conservation, education, and community engagement in the Yukon.

For 80 years, the association has worked to preserve the natural beauty and wildlife of the Yukon, ensuring that current and future generations can get out and enjoy the pristine landscapes and diverse ecosystems and take part in the activities that they love. Through countless initiatives, including habitat restoration projects, wildlife monitoring programs, and educational outreach, the Yukon Fish and Game Association has made an enduring mark.

Their commitment to fostering a deep connection between people and nature is evident in its wide array of community events, workshops, and youth programs. These efforts not only educate and inspire but also cultivate a sense of responsibility and passion for the environment among Yukoners of all ages. I have to say that while I have never taken part, I have heard about some of their camps and workshops, particularly for women, and people rave about them.

Over the years, the association has spearheaded many conservation projects, including salmon habitat restoration, wildlife corridor creation, invasive species management, wetland conservation, and youth conservation camps.

As we celebrate this milestone anniversary, we reflect on the incredible achievements of the past 80 years and look forward to the future. Their unwavering dedication to conservation and community serves as an inspiration and a model for organizations everywhere. Here's to 80 years of making a difference and to many more years ahead.

Congratulations to the Yukon Fish and Game Association on 80 years.

Applause

In recognition of Earth Day

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, early next week is Earth Day. Earth Day started back in 1970, so, you know, 25 years after the Yukon Fish and Game Association. Some people say that Earth Day was inspired by Rachel Carson's insightful book *Silent Spring*.

I have always believed that the thing that awoke our collective understanding to the importance of the environment and our planet was the first photo ever taken of the Earth by Apollo 8 astronauts. The picture, titled *Earthrise*, physically shifted our understanding of this place we call home. We unexpectedly realized that it's not about our individual backyards; it's that all our backyards are connected. That sudden, simple revelation was evident everywhere we looked: ocean currents, the migration of Arctic terns, dandelion seeds blown by the wind, our climate, the teachings of our elders — our Earth is all connected, and we are a part of it.

This year, the theme for Earth Day, as I said earlier, is "Our Power, Our Planet", and it's all about promoting renewable energy. Here in the Yukon, First Nations, supported by Yukon Energy and ATCO and the Yukon and Canadian governments, are leading with community-based renewable energy projects happening all across the territory. Kluane First Nation's wind/battery backup project is now up and running, and Chu Níikwān is exploring more wind at Mount Sumanik to build on the success of their Thay T'āw project on Haeckel Hill.

We have new solar in Beaver Creek and, coming soon, the Sāde' solar project in Watson Lake, led by First Kaska. Ta'an Kwāch'ān Council is exploring for pump storage, and Little Salmon Carmacks is looking at conventional hydropower. For Earth Day, "Our Power, Our Planet" — a big shout-out to all of the Yukon First Nations looking to power our future with renewable energy.

I recently spoke at the Renewables in Remote Communities Conference held at the Kwanlin Dūn Cultural Centre, with folks attending from all across Canada.

During my closing remarks, I told the story about one of my heroes, astronomer Carl Sagan. Sagan suggested in 1990 that the *Voyager* spacecraft, as it was heading off into deep space, turn its camera and take the most distant photo ever of the Earth. In that photo, the Earth appears as a tiny pale blue dot. Sagan describes our planet as a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark, and he said — and I quote: "That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives ... It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known."

Happy Earth Day, Mr. Speaker.

Applause

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize April 22 as Earth Day, the largest global environmental awareness event to be celebrated annually.

Earth Day 2025 has a global theme of “Our Power, Our Planet”, emphasizing the impact of increasing the production and use of renewable energy. Here in the Yukon, we are fortunate to have most of our electricity produced by hydro. That is primarily due to work decades ago by the Northern Canada Power Commission and, of course, the Yukon Energy Corporation took over those hydro assets in 1987.

In 2009, the Yukon government set a target of increasing renewable energy by 20 percent by 2020. Just three years later, the Yukon had already met and surpassed that target. As noted in the *Energy Strategy for Yukon — 2012 Progress Report*, the Aishihik third turbine and Mayo B projects increased Yukon Energy Corporation’s renewable generation capacity by 22 percent, thus exceeding the territory’s target of increasing renewable energy 20 percent by 2020.

Yukon Energy’s 2016 annual report shows that, in 2016, 98.37 percent of electricity came from hydro. Since then, the territory has seen a large increase in the use of fossil fuels to meet electricity needs. Last week, Yukon Energy Corporation told this House that their electricity was — quote: “... about 82-percent renewable for the 2024 year.” While we do welcome the increase in renewable energy under the microgeneration program and other larger solar and wind projects, it’s important to note that, other than minor gains achieved by replacing turbines at the Whitehorse dam, we have unfortunately not seen an increase in dependable renewable energy capacity on the grid in the last nine years.

In addition to work that should be done by government, there are many things that we can do personally as individuals and as households to respect our planet and the environment. The distance that much of our food travels to get to our tables gives our groceries a carbon footprint that we often don’t think about. Our local agriculture sector is diversifying and growing through the efforts of Yukon farmers and gardeners. Supporting local food production starts at home.

Whether you plant a garden yourself or buy vegetables from local producers, it’s a step toward increasing local food production and meeting more of our own needs right here in the Yukon. Buying meat, eggs, dairy, flour, and other products produced by Yukon farmers is another positive action that we can all take. We encourage people who are able to support our local farms by buying their products, and we encourage government to buy more local food.

In closing, I would like to thank all of those who support Yukon-grown food and food products in the choices they make.

Applause

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate Earth Day. Today and every day, we pause to honour the one home we all share — our beautiful Earth. Towering mountains, rolling hills, the whispering forests, swaying poplars, rushing rivers, to the deep blue oceans, our planet gives us everything we need to live, grow, and thrive.

Earth Day is a reminder of the breathtaking beauty that surrounds us and the deep responsibility that we carry to protect it. It’s a day to reconnect, to feel the soil beneath our feet, the sun on our faces, the wind through the trees, and a day to listen — to really listen to the natural world and all it teaches us about balance, resilience, and renewal. Earth Day reminds us all of the responsibility to think globally and act locally, as the health of the entire planet is interconnected.

Whitehorse’s own Yukon Plastics does just that. They act locally by repurposing plastics that are destined for the landfill or far-away recycling depots. Janna and Will transform discarded plastic waste into beautiful, functional houseware and other useful products. Their mission is to breathe new life into discarded resources, embracing a truly circular business model that combines innovation with environmental stewardship. This Earth Day, they take that mission to a bigger stage by launching on Kickstarter. I don’t know what’s coming, but you can bet that I will be supporting their vision through investment.

So, may this Earth Day inspire us to walk gently, give back, and love fiercely. Let us be stewards of healing, planting seeds — both literal and metaphorical — that will bloom for generations to come, because every small act of care creates a ripple of change and together those ripples become waves.

Here’s to Mother Earth, our source, our sanctuary, and our sacred connection. May we rise with purpose to protect her not just on Earth Day but every day.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. McLean: I have a legislative return regarding questions from April 1 from the Member for Porter Creek North.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 31 — received

Clerk: Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly: I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 31 of the First Session of the 35th Legislative Assembly, as presented by Kate White, the Leader of the Third Party, on April 16, 2025.

The petition presented by the Leader of the Third Party meets the requirements as to the form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Speaker: Accordingly, I declare Petition No. 31 is deemed to be read and received. Pursuant to Standing Order 67, the Executive Council shall provide a response to a petition which has been read and received within eight sitting days of

its presentation. Therefore, the Executive Council response to Petition No. 31 shall be provided on or before May 1, 2025.

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Notices of motions.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to include tolvaptan in the Yukon Drug Formulary to ensure access to Yukoners with polycystic kidney disease.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to review the Yukon Drug Formulary.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Hunting in Yukon

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, I have some wildlife management questions for the Minister of Environment.

First, I will ask about the South Canol moose PHA. The Fish and Wildlife Management Board and most of the hunting community didn't agree with the minister's plan to impose a PHA and called for a survey to be done and public consultation. Ultimately, the minister decided to reject the advice of the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and to impose a PHA anyway.

In the following year, the department conducted a moose survey in the area. Will the minister commit to making the results of the survey public, and if they show the results that everyone in the wildlife management community expects, will the minister immediately remove the PHA and have that decision take effect in the 2025-26 hunting season?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to answer this question.

I had the opportunity to meet with the Yukon Fish and Game Association as recently as two days ago. I met with the president and the executive director and the youth director. I certainly am very heartened by the relationship that I've had with the Yukon Fish and Game Association over the course of the last four years. We've met quite regularly and we've listened closely to the Fish and Game Association's concerns, whether it's about providing additional opportunities for the deer hunt, for the moose opportunities in the Southern Lakes — which I will get to in subsequent answers.

But I would also concede to the member opposite that they did bring up the issue of the South Canol permit hunt authorization. I certainly listened, and I committed to looking into the data and considering moves forward with respect to potentially providing additional opportunities in the South Canol area. I heard loud and clear that this is an area that is of significant interest to the Fish and Game Association.

We will continue those fruitful conversations with the Fish and Game Association and with my department.

Mr. Istchenko: Another example of the minister making wildlife management decisions that are inconsistent with scientific data is the Finlayson caribou herd. The government announced the shutdown of hunting of this herd several years ago. However, recent survey data shows that the Finlayson caribou herd is growing and has a healthy and stable population.

So, based on this recent survey data, will the minister consider making changes to the management regime for this herd?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that question as well. Certainly, we'll look — I've heard about the concerns with respect to the Finlayson caribou herd and the survey data results over the course of the last four years as well. I'm absolutely committed to being evidence driven with respect to decisions that could be made with respect to providing additional opportunities.

But I think it is a good opportunity at this time to indicate that, with respect to the 2025-26 hunting season, this year we will offer eight new moose permits in the Southern Lakes region. Four of the permits will be for the Fish Lake moose management unit, with the other four offered in the Mount Lorne moose management unit. The Wheaton River moose management unit will remain at four permits this year.

These permit increases are the result of the collaborative efforts of the Southern Lakes moose management group. The additional eight permits increase the moose-hunting opportunities from 11 to 19. Some permits have been reallocated in the Southern Lakes region to account for ease of access, land use and recreational impacts, and overall hunting pressures. There will also be — as I indicated in my first response — eight additional deer permits offered this year: six permits for various game management zones in the territory and two youth permits for the territory. This increases deer-hunting opportunities in the Yukon from 12 to 20.

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, bison hunting has become a popular way for many Yukon hunters to get out on the land and get access to wild game through the winter. Even with this growing interest, the number of bison harvested each year continues to be sustainable and the bison herd is healthy and growing.

The final week of bison season has always been popular because it is much lighter and warmer, and it's a great time for hunters to get out in that last week. Despite this, the minister recently announced that the bison season would be shortened by a week next season. I know several hunters who were disappointed at this reduction of hunting opportunities and that there wasn't more consultation about this decision and it didn't go through the Fish and Wildlife Management Board process.

Can the minister tell the hunting community why this decision was made without proper consultation and whether or not he will consider putting this off for at least a year to allow more engagement with those most affected by his decision?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question from the member opposite.

A 2022 population survey estimated the Aishihik bison population to be just under 2,000 adult animals, indicating a stable population. One of the goals of the new plan is to ensure that the bison population remains viable, which will require managing harvest to maintain a minimum population.

Starting in 2026, as the member opposite indicated, the bison-hunting season will be shortened by one week, closing on March 24. This change, recommended by the Aishihik Bison Technical Team, is designed to reduce pressure and stress on pregnant and lactating cows, thus helping to protect the bison herd during a critical reproductive period. Bison cows begin giving birth as early as the last week of March and throughout April and May. The early calving coincides with when we typically see an increase in bison harvest in late March due to warmer weather and longer daylight hours.

This issue was also raised briefly, I believe, with the Yukon Fish and Game Association. Actually, I haven't heard much pushback with respect to this modest reduction of opportunities. There are a lot of opportunities that are provided for bison hunters, and I certainly urge Yukoners to avail themselves of the many opportunities.

Question re: Takhini River bridge on Mayo Road

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, many of my constituents are concerned about safety on and near the Takhini River bridge on the Mayo Road. There have been accidents on the bridge and its approaches, and many people have had near misses and close calls. As the Minister of Highways and Public Works knows, I have raised this issue many times. The number one issue that people raise about it is how dangerous the narrow bridge is for vehicle traffic. The second most common concern is about approaches to the bridge.

While I am glad that the government has identified \$8.5 million for the Takhini River bridge project, we have yet to hear them confirm if the road surface on the bridge will actually be widened. So far, the indication seems to be that the main focus is on adding bike lanes.

Can the minister please tell us what the current scope of the project is and what the contract for engineering and design work will cover?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, in 2022, the Yukon government secured federal funding through the Active Transportation fund to enhance safety and accessibility on the Takhini River bridge, creating an active transportation crossing.

The total project value was \$8.5 million, with a federal contribution of \$6.2 million. On April 3, 2025, a request for proposals was published to secure a consultant for design services. The proposed scope includes a cantilevered sidewalk on the west side of the bridge and rehabilitation, such as strengthening bridge trusses.

The tender is scheduled to close on May 8, 2025. The proposed sidewalk will be attached to the outer edge of the bridge, meaning that the current vehicle lane widths are not impacted. The work includes the design of new trail

connections to the sidewalk on the bridge to make travel by active transportation safer and more comfortable through this corridor. Sightline improvements for vehicle users were also reviewed. Once the design package is developed, an information session will be held with the public prior to submitting the project to YESAB.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, last fall, the minister indicated that funding from the federal government was — quote: "... to enhance safety and accessibility by adding separated sidewalks on both sides of the Takhini River bridge, creating an active transportation crossing." We have now learned that the project has been changed to adding a sidewalk on the west side of the bridge and bike lanes on the approaches.

My constituents want to see the Takhini River bridge on the Mayo Road replaced with a wider bridge.

We have now learned that replacing this bridge with a wider bridge is also what was recommended to this Liberal government by experts eight years ago.

Why is the government dismissing public concerns and requests and ignoring what was recommended to it by experts, which is replacing the Takhini River bridge with a new wider bridge?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, retrofitting bridges with active transportation lanes is not wasteful; rather, it is a proactive measure to enhance safety and accessibility while maximizing the existing infrastructure's utility during its remaining lifespan. The success of similar projects, like the Robert Campbell bridge, also known as the River Rail bridge, underscores the feasibility and benefits of such upgrades.

While built in 1955, the member opposite will well know that, in 2014, the bridge underwent a significant \$1.7-million renovation project to widen the walkway by one metre on each side, adding dedicated bike lanes, and improving the connection between the Millennium Trail and Robert Service Way. This project was completed in September 2014, enhancing both safety and accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians. I am sure that Yukoners listening today cannot imagine a year or a day when that Robert Campbell bridge didn't have dedicated active transportation corridors on either side. But let me tell you, it did exist. Of course, now it's an absolute success.

I would also like to remind the member opposite of the truth that the width of the Takhini River bridge is absolutely comparable to other bridges in the Yukon and it is not narrower than bridges of its vintage.

Mr. Cathers: Well, Mr. Speaker, according to documents on the government's Bids and Tenders website, this government was told by experts that the recommended option for the Takhini River bridge was to replace it with a wider bridge. That report recommended against just adding sidewalks to the existing bridge. The bridge is 70 years old and is nearing the end of its estimated lifespan. My constituents want it replaced with a new wider Takhini River bridge and, of course, active transport could be incorporated into the new project.

The experts that Highways and Public Works hired also recommended replacing this bridge with a new bridge upstream. So, instead of spending millions of dollars adding a

sidewalk to an old bridge and adding bike lanes, will the minister agree to put that money toward designing and replacing the Takhini River bridge on the Mayo Road with a new wider bridge?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I know that the member opposite did hear that the Robert Campbell bridge was built in 1955.

But nevertheless, if the member opposite had paid attention during his 14 years in government rather than suddenly discovering bridge safety in opposition, he would understand that we have a methodical, evidence-based approach to infrastructure replacement. Yes, the Takhini River bridge is slated for replacement, just like every bridge in the territory, but unlike the Yukon Party, we prioritize infrastructure based on engineering assessments, not when political theatrics or internal politics indicate that it's time.

While concerns about funding and bridge lifespans are valid, retrofitting existing infrastructure often provides immediate safety improvements at a fraction of the cost of building entirely new structures. We know that if the Yukon Party had started work, for instance, on — wait for it — the Nisutlin Bay bridge years ago, we would be in a very different situation.

So, Mr. Speaker —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Please spare us all your manufactured concern and your agitation on social media.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Clarke: The bridge — I can't hear myself.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order, please.

Please be respectful when a member has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: The bridge still has at least a 15-year lifespan despite how desperately the Member for Lake Laberge seems to wish for there to be an immediate crisis to exploit. When actual engineers, not politicians seeking headlines, determine that it's time for replacement, we will handle it professionally, just like our Liberal government does with all critical infrastructure.

Question re: Connective Support Society and Whitehorse Emergency Shelter

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, last May, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin brought forward a motion calling for an independent review of the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter and all other programs managed by Connective. Every member of this House, including every Liberal MLA, voted in favour. Ever since, the Yukon NDP has been following up.

Earlier this week, the minister finally tabled reviews on Connective's SHARP and Housing First programs, but there was nothing about the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter. The other reviews are important too, but the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter is the issue of most concern to Yukoners. Its absence was noted by many. It has Yukoners wondering if the Liberals even did a review at all.

Has the minister fulfilled her commitment to conduct an independent review of the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, it would be very much appreciated if members opposite could refrain from insulting the public service in their questions. If they have questions for me, please bring them, but the allegation — or the insinuation, frankly — that a Connective review was not done at all is simply false and is absolutely unappreciated by the hard-working people who did this work.

The review of the Connective programs was completed. Connective currently has agreements with the Government of Yukon for the operation of three programs: the shelter and Housing First programs at 405 Alexander Street, the Housing First program at 5th Avenue and Wood Street in Whitehorse, and the supervised housing and reintegration program for men.

Each of those programs was reviewed — the summary that was tabled and attached the independent reviews with respect to those programs as well as the transfer payment agreement for 405 Alexander for the purposes of supporting documentation to the summary of the review that was done. There is detail with respect to each of those reviews. There is a full note of the independent corporation — Meyers Norris Penny — and their work.

I look forward to further questions.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, reviews are critical. They highlight areas in need of improvement and they also highlight strengths. Reviews can lead to better program outcomes. The Minister of Health and Social Services not only promised to do a review of the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter last fall, she committed that she would table it by the end of October 2024. So, six months past her own deadline, the review is nowhere to be found. There have been calls from many community members, as well as First Nation governments, for this government to terminate their contract with Connective.

The Liberals' failure to table this review, the lack of immediate action or any communication, and the continued loss of community members has left Yukoners feeling frustrated and angry.

Where is the review of the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, again, incorrect information. My commitment was to table the review of the recommendations, the review that was done by Yukon government, by Connective, in response to the coroner's inquest recommendations that were released in April 2024. That document was, in fact, filed by the end of October 2024. It was released publicly; it was provided to the coroner, and the recommendations with respect to the operations at 405 Alexander were, in fact, completed during that period of time.

The one extension with respect to that recommendation was our work with families of the tragic deaths that occurred there and the families and their concerns and making sure that we worked with the families on their schedules. We did meet with some family members before the October 24, 2024 deadline. We continue to do work with those First Nations in particular and be available to work with those individual First Nations, with the chief and council, and with the families of those women so that we can meet their needs on their schedules.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter is a necessary and important community resource. That is why it is so important that we get it right. We support having a low-barrier shelter in Whitehorse, and we acknowledge the hard work of front-line staff at the shelter who are doing their best in incredibly challenging situations, but it is obvious that there are problems at the emergency shelter and deep concerns about its management.

It is evident from the Housing First and SHARP reviews that the minister tabled that Connective is not doing a good job of supporting the staff and the clients of those programs. That makes the minister's choice not to table a review of the emergency shelter even more concerning.

So why, despite the continued deaths, the calls for action, and their own commitments, have the Liberals refused to complete and table a review of the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The operations at 405 Alexander underwent a line-by-line review of the transfer payment agreement to ensure the agreement was being met and that the requirements reflect the needs of users and the community and the intent of the program. The transfer payment agreement is attached to the *Summary of the Connective program reviews* that was filed in this Legislative Assembly, and it is attached as Appendix E to that document.

The review was initiated in January 2024, as I've said in this Legislature before — that we were working with reviewing the transfer payment agreement — in fact, requires ongoing review. It was replicated and expanded in October 2024. The results of this review are being used to inform future operating agreements of 405 Alexander, and there were themes that emerged in the review. The notations in the report that I did table here outline those — in particular, staffing requirements, relationships with community and First Nations, and case management improvement.

We met last Friday with chiefs and councils of individual First Nations from across the territory. We will continue to work with them on improvements to 405 Alexander.

Question re: Residential lot development

Ms. McLeod: With delays in lot development in Whistle Bend and a lack of alternative options, many Yukoners are worried about the long-term supply of residential lots for development in the coming years. Last year, the government announced that they would be leading feasibility work to evaluate the potential for residential development in two areas of Whitehorse. One is south of town in the McLean Lake area, and the other is across the river in the Long Lake area.

Can the minister provide an indication of the timelines for this work? When can those who are concerned about the availability of lots over the coming years reasonably expect that lots in either of these areas might be developed?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Once again on the floor of the House, we're talking about lot development. I'm happy to talk about that. We've already, since 2021 — I believe it has been 1,465 days, as a matter of fact — we have built 1,000 lots here in the City of Whitehorse and around the territory.

We're going to continue that work so that we actually add more lots next year. We have Range Point going on; we have lot development in Whistle Bend; we have lot development happening in Watson Lake, in Haines Junction, in Teslin, in Dawson City. As a matter of fact, Dawson City's new subdivision around the new rec centre has already started; we just cleared trees on it this week.

We are doing an awful lot of work throughout the territory to support Yukon citizens to make sure that not only do they have houses to live in but also places to recreate. We're going to continue that good work for every single municipality in this territory, because that is what we campaigned on. Every community matters, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue to do that good work on behalf of the territory.

For those Yukoners who are concerned about lot development, look back in the past. We're spending four times as much this very year than the Yukon Party spent in the last four years of their mandate.

Ms. McLeod: Well, Mr. Speaker, no answers there.

One particular issue with the north area, which is across the river in the Long Lake area, is the need for a bridge. The 2017 pre-feasibility study that was done on the north growth area stated that there are two options for the bridge location and that both of those are in Marwell. Either bridge location will require further technical analysis to identify a preferred option. This is the work that the City of Whitehorse will not be able to fund or complete on its own.

Has the Yukon government committed to work with the city on funding, and if so, how much funding has been identified for conducting the analysis for a new bridge?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: You know, I'm going to say this: The member opposite is bringing up concerns of Yukoners. I'm telling Yukoners today that this government — with the leadership provided by two Premiers here on our benches and my predecessor in Community Services — has built more lots in the last nine years than the Yukon Party — it has been the largest housing development project in Yukon history, Mr. Speaker, and we can stand behind that record with pride. I can say to Yukoners that we are building more houses this year and next year going forward, and we have plans to build far more. We are working very closely with our municipalities to make sure that they do the planning. I was pushing the municipality very hard to get their new official community plan done — which they have now done — so that we can start planning for these new subdivisions that will drive development into the future. I certainly hope that those developments go forward.

There's an awful lot of development that we'll have to do to make those developments happen, as the member opposite has said. We will need infrastructure dollars; we're going to have to hit those up and either help fund with the City of Whitehorse — look for federal partnerships to do that.

I will also say, Mr. Speaker, that in the meantime, we also have Valleyview, which is an enormous repository of land for lot development. We're looking at that as well. We're going to look to make sure we have lots for all the people moving to this prosperous territory.

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the feasibility studies for both north and south growth areas estimate that it will require a significant amount of money to develop either one. The 2017 feasibility study showed that approximately \$700 million would be needed for the south growth area and over \$840 million would be needed for the north growth area.

Considering that development of a new subdivision could likely take upward of a decade, it's important for investment to be made right away and to get moving quickly. So, how much funding has the government identified over the next few years to allow this early-stage work to begin and for plans to be made to allow for the city to continue to grow?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: All right, first, the very specific question — and I think I answered it in question 2. We're working with the municipality to lay out the future of the City of Whitehorse, which will be the focal point, I imagine, for growth in the territory — though we are trying to diversify that growth throughout the entire territory. We will work with the municipality to make sure that we have lots going forward.

That work, we know, is critical. On the first days in here, the Economic Development minister, now the Premier, identified housing as one of the main challenges that we were going to face as a government, and we immediately started building lots. My predecessor in Community Services built more lots — government officials said that we cannot build as many lots as you're doing. They got those lots out the door and they continued year after year after year — nine times, Mr. Speaker, and we're still doing it.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon government is building lots. The Yukon Party's record on housing is embarrassing. It sat on millions of dollars and refused to invest in affordable housing. We're still paying the price for the Yukon Party's inaction on housing for years. We're trying to get ahead of that; we're going to continue that good work on behalf of the people of the Yukon.

If they are worried about the future, look in the mirror. They set this up; we're trying to fix the problems of the past.

Question re: Land disposition process

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources on changes that he has announced to the lottery system for residential lots. One of the changes that the Liberal government announced in November last year was that someone who was successful in obtaining a lot through the land lottery process would be ineligible for further lottery lots for a period of five years.

As I explained earlier this week, this will do nothing to achieve fairness and will explicitly harm those businesses and individuals who make a living by getting lots to build homes. The minister admitted earlier this week that he has also heard these concerns from home builders as well.

So, will the minister agree to hold off on making these changes to the lot lottery system until he can properly consult with industry to better understand their implications?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, when I met with some representatives from the industry, we talked about — wait for it — the new land legislation — successor lands legislation.

What we talked about was that, as we worked through that legislation with First Nations and we seek to bring it in, we would be looking at things like the lottery system. What we talked about was that the changes that we bring in right now — we will watch to see how they unfold and how they are received, and then we will use that secondary process — the deeper process — of rewriting legislation together based on the devolution transfer agreement and based on working government-to-government with First Nations to improve the lottery system. If the changes that we brought in to improve it now need some tweaks, we will make those tweaks.

I think that it is important to stay in dialogue with, for example, the new Yukon house builders association, with the Contractors Association, and with all these groups. That is what I have directed the department to do — to stay working with them as we see how the changes to the lot lottery system evolve over time.

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, in a November 2024 news release, the Yukon government stated that these changes to the lot lottery process would be in place for the spring 2025 land lotteries. Earlier this week, the minister was unable to answer when that lottery would occur or how many lots it would include. I hope that the minister has found the answers to those important questions by today and he can tell us later today.

Regardless, will these flawed changes to the lot lottery process be in effect for the upcoming 2025 lottery as the press release from November committed?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The answer is yes. The number of lots that we have in the release coming up for this summer is, I think, 98. For Yukoners — let's say it's around 100 lots. The time has not been set, but I was told that they will be out this summer, so I don't have the ability to share with Yukoners the exact date of the lottery, but it is this summer.

As we announced previously, all the updates to the lottery system that we introduced will be here this year. I asked the department what that was going to mean for the building season, and their sense was that the lots would be available for Yukoners and for home builders to get the foundations in for this fall and to be ready to do the work over the winter. That was the update that I got from the department. I thank the member opposite for the question.

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, it sounds like some home builders may not want to win this lottery because they would be ineligible for the following five years after that, which would preclude them from doing the work that they need to do to build houses for Yukoners, which is obviously very disappointing.

Yesterday when I pressed the minister on the change that his department made with regard to the 30 days before the close-of-sale payment requirement, the minister said that his department continues to engage the City of Whitehorse through their Housing and Land Development Advisory Committee. Unfortunately, that committee no longer exists, and it was wound down by the city last year.

So, between the title transfer change and the change that is proposed to make successful applicants to the lot lottery system ineligible for five years, it seems that the department has been

making changes that are negatively impacting home builders rather than helping get more homes built.

Going forward, will the minister agree to consult with those most affected by these issues before they are introduced by the government rather than after they are already in place?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, the way the lottery system has been working is that home builders use a group of people to put their names forward, so that is who is not allowed. It's not that the home builder isn't allowed to continue to build homes; it's that if there is an individual who has received a lottery, then that person — or whoever is named — is not eligible to put in their name again for that window of time.

The committee that was struck by the city to do its work, the Housing and Land Development Advisory Committee, has fulfilled the end of its mandate. I was at city council that evening listening to its last report, but that doesn't mean that there isn't ongoing work with the city. It doesn't mean that there isn't engagement from home builders with the city, and it doesn't mean that there isn't engagement with home builders with us.

The system has had its challenges over the years, because originally, it was intended to be for individuals. It has since become how home builders get access and, generally speaking, they are doing great work for Yukoners, building those homes. We will continue to evolve this system as we continue to build lots for all Yukoners.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 47: *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 47, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Silver.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 47, entitled *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 47, entitled *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the members for their contributions to the debate, those who came forth with their comments and ideas through the second reading in Committee of the Whole of Bill No. 47, *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)*.

As we wrap up this discussion on the bill, I would like to focus my short closing comments on the substantive proposal of the legislation, which is the creation of the fertility and surrogacy tax credit. For many people, as you know, Mr. Speaker, the desire to have children is fundamental to their physical and mental well-being. This significant support will be critical to individuals and families achieving their lifetime goals of expanding their families.

According to the World Health Organization, roughly one in six individuals worldwide experiences infertility during their lifetime, and data suggests that this rate of infertility is increasing slowly with time. These two factors point to the need to increase access to affordable, high-quality fertility care for those in need.

Again, I want to thank folks who asked questions on all parts of this bill, and now I wish to close the debate on the bill. I'm looking forward to comments from members opposite and seeing it pass through third reading.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, as we have already spoken to this and addressed the elements of this legislation, including parts that the Minister of Finance didn't speak to in his third reading speech, as we have indicated before, we will support its passage.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, today, I am happy to speak in support of the bill to amend the *Income Tax Act* and am particularly proud of the work that the Yukon NDP did to bring the fertility tax credit forward. I note that folks who are accessing this tax credit to create their families are also similar folks who will get caught up in the *Inclusive Yukon Families Act*. I hope that the future for them is a safe one, but, of course, I still have my concerns.

We will be voting in favour of this act.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, he will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Clarke: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

MLA Tredger: Agree.

Ms. Blake: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 47 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 47 has passed this House.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Deputy Chair (MLA Tredger): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 27, French Language Services Directorate, in Bill No. 217, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2025-26*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Deputy Chair: Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 217: *First Appropriation Act 2025-26* — continued

Deputy Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 27, French Language Services Directorate, in Bill No. 217, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2025-26*.

French Language Services Directorate

Deputy Chair: Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Deputy Chair, first of all, I would like to welcome back to the Assembly Deputy Minister Philippe Mollet, and I would like to welcome — well, it's sort of back to the Assembly, but for the first time here in this role is our manager of finance and administration, Melissa Ordish. It turns out that Melissa is coming back to the Assembly, because she was a page here some 25-plus years ago — whenever that was — so, she had one of these lovely folks' roles.

I know that we don't debate FLSD, or the French Language Services Directorate, too much, so I am going to read some of the opening remarks about what has been happening with the department. I will give a couple of paragraphs in French, but

I'll do them in English first and then in French just because I didn't have a chance to get them all copied out for everybody ahead of time.

I'm pleased to present the French Language Services Directorate's budget for 2025-26. J'ai le plaisir de présenter le budget 2025-2026 de la Direction des services en français.

This budget enables the directorate to continue building on its accomplishments and empower departments and public bodies to provide bilingual services and information to Yukoners. The following estimates include the Government of Canada's \$6.5-million contribution and the Government of Yukon's \$2-million contribution.

The directorate forecasts operation and maintenance spending of \$8.15 million, which is just under a \$400,000 increase compared to last year. Of that \$8.15 million, \$4.6 million — or roughly 56 percent — supports the directorate in providing centralized services, such as translation, to departments and public bodies, and \$3.6 million — or 44 percent, which is the other portion of it — supports departments and public bodies to increase access to public French language services and information. This amount also supports community-based initiatives that foster a thriving Yukon francophone community.

Of the \$4.6 million for central services, the directorate allocates roughly \$3.5 million for personnel. The directorate's central services include: providing advice rooted in a language policy management approach to support the planning and delivery of French language services; tailored French language training and assessments; and centralized translation services. The directorate also manages the government's French language web and social media presence.

The directorate budgeted just over \$1 million for the other expenses category of the operation and maintenance expenses, and the lion's share of this is for the directorate's operations, including translation contracts to meet government needs and fast turnaround times. \$42,000 of that is for a special project to increase access to health services and \$92,000 is for a special project to increase access to justice services, which I will detail under our partnership and strategic support program. Under that program — the partnership and strategic support program — the directorate budgeted \$3.6 million to support departments, public bodies, and community-based organizations, and \$2.3 million is for designated bilingual positions and designated points of service. This represents 77 designated bilingual positions strategically placed across government to best serve the public in French.

More than 45 percent of the designated bilingual positions are part of the Department of Health and Social Services and more than 15 percent are part of the Department of Justice. This reflects the francophone community's priorities to have better access to health and legal services in French. To further address these priorities, there is also \$300,000 for the two ongoing special projects to increase access to services, of which \$190,000 is for the health project and roughly \$110,000 is for the justice project.

The special projects are the primary reason for the \$400,000 increase in the budget compared to last year, and this

is thanks to increased contributions from the Government of Canada. We put out a press release about this, Deputy Chair, maybe a week and a half ago just announcing our new agreement with the federal government that has gone up to \$18.3 million over the next three years, which is an increase of about \$1 million — so, thank you, Government of Canada.

The directorate received an increase of \$200,000 to improve access to legal aid and education in French. This fiscal year is the second year of the three-year project.

Working with the Department of Justice and two non-profit organizations, the directorate supports the development of bilingual capacity to offer cost-effective and high-quality legal services in French here in the Yukon. To enhance access to health care services in French, there is an additional \$186,000 committed to a joint project with the Department of Health and Social Services. This will be the third year of a five-year project.

This project will result in the creation of two strategies; the first is a data collection strategy to identify patients' preferred language of care so we can help plan for the future, and the second is a digital solution strategy that recommends ways to expand access to French language health care.

The two projects support priorities of the 2023-25 strategic framework for French language services: keeping people safe and leveraging technology. Another way that the directorate is leveraging technology to serve the public in French is through remote interpretation services. Using remote interpretation services ensures that our government provide French language services even when bilingual employees are not available. To support public bodies and Yukon francophone community-based organizations, the directorate will invest \$550,000 through government transfers. This includes \$350,000 to the Yukon Hospital Corporation to continue supporting their efforts to increase access to French language services. The Yukon Hospital Corporation currently employs 25 bilingual service providers and those are distributed across Whitehorse and Dawson hospitals.

The directorate will also transfer \$200,000 to foster a thriving Yukon francophonie. This includes a \$50,000 investment in the Québec and Yukon Intergovernmental Cooperation program to fund community-based projects and \$145,000 to support Yukoners' French language training and professional development.

I'm going to do this paragraph again in French for our colleagues from Québec whom we are going to be signing this agreement with again this summer.

La Direction transférera aussi 200 000 \$ pour favoriser l'épanouissement de la francophonie au Yukon. De cette somme, 50 000 \$ seront investis dans le Programme de coopération intergouvernementale Québec-Yukon pour financer des projets communautaires, et 145 000 \$ serviront à financer la formation et le perfectionnement professionnel en français.

These are the big components of the directorate's budget. I want to say a few thank yous. Thank you to our partners for collaborating with us to foster the vitality of the growing Yukon francophone community and supporting its evolving priorities.

I would also like to thank the federal government for its ongoing financial support. Finally, I would also like to give a big thank you to the team at French Language Services Directorate.

Finalemment, je veux dire merci beaucoup à l'équipe de la Direction des services en français. Vous êtes formidables. They are a wonderful group. I look forward to continuing all of these collaborations with other governments and the francophone community here in the Yukon in the coming years.

Thank you for the opportunity, Deputy Chair, to provide some opening remarks. I look forward to any questions for the directorate.

Ms. Clarke: Deputy Chair, I would like to thank the officials for the briefing and for joining us here today. I would also like to thank the French Language Services Directorate staff for continuing to enhance access to French services throughout government.

I just have a few questions for the minister today. Recently, the Yukon government renewed its Canada-Yukon agreement on minority language services. With this agreement, the Yukon will receive \$18.3 million over the next three years. This is an increase of \$1 million. How will this increase be allocated?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We're right in the middle of redoing our strategic framework. It's a rolling three-year plan about how we should focus services. I think we went out for the survey recently, and it has had this tremendous response, and there have been some direct meetings with the governance table — la Table de gouvernance — where they meet with French community organizations to talk through about priorities; we will let that guide us.

If it has been going the way that it has been in recent years, then I think it is fair to say that we will look at several things. But one is making sure that, across our departments, we provide more service points in French, especially where the francophone community believes that there is a priority. Health and Justice are examples of that. I don't want to pre-guess where they are going to go through this engagement, but I wouldn't be surprised to hear that again.

The other thing that I'll note for colleagues here in the Assembly is that, under the new *Official Languages Act*, there is going to come a way in which agreements, like transfer payment agreements from the federal government to come for work here in the territory, will start to have additional elements in there around service in French. We will work to support that as well.

Even though these dollars are what will come directly to our work, we anticipate that there can be other money that is coming through other agreements — they might be around Health or Justice or Education or whatever the department is — and we will also work to focus that.

That can have an impact on where we choose to spend the dollars, because sometimes, if there used to be a lack of funding and suddenly there is some funding there, then the francophone community will sometimes redirect their priorities in order to distribute those dollars to best serve the community overall.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for that answer; I really appreciate it.

There is currently a public input survey for Yukoners to share their input about access to French language services to identify what is working well and what needs improvement. How does the directorate plan to utilize these results to shape the 2025-28 strategic framework?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will just note for Yukoners that the survey we put out there is closing one week from today, so please try to get it in, if anyone is thinking about putting in their feedback, in the next week. As I noted earlier, it has been really terrific feedback. The deputy minister let me know that the response rate has been very strong.

This is my third or fourth time with one of these three-year plans. Every time, what we have done is we really are asking sincerely of the community where we should focus. I think that, in my previous answer, I mentioned that what we hear from this survey will be built into the strategic framework, and it becomes sort of like a mandate letter — like, here are the things that we are to achieve. It is very direct; what gets provided to us typically becomes the lead priorities. That is how it has worked in the past, and that is what we are going to continue to do. It has been successful, and the community is typically very thoughtful, very active in providing feedback on these strategic frameworks.

Ms. Clarke: I appreciate the answer from the minister.

This spring, there was an announcement of an engagement session with a Table de gouvernance de la Franco-Yukonnie to better understand how the government can support the growing Yukon francophonie community in the future. Has this engagement session taken place? What was the feedback from this engagement?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Yes, the governance table — la Table de gouvernance — is sort of the community organizations. So, think: Association franco-yukonnaise, AFY; but it's also the French school board; it's also Partenariat communauté en santé — so, the health not-for-profit group — the francophone health not-for-profit group; *L'Aurore boréale* — the French media; it's also — I don't know if the member opposite will recall, but when we did the tribute the other day, I had this tough time pronouncing the one word, and it's the "improvisation group" — so, think of a cultural group; and there is also the historic society — the francophone historic society.

The main takeaways were, as I have already listed, that the priorities — so, that was an in-person meeting; yes, it took place, and yes, the feedback was in line with what I have already listed off here. For example, health is a priority, justice — legal is a priority. The one other thing that was raised at the table that I haven't yet mentioned is some work that we have been doing toward a complaint resolution mechanism — so, to track how we receive complaints, how they are processed, what they look like over time. The directorate has been doing some work to establish that, and that was one of the conversations that came up at the table.

Again, it's in line with the things that we have been doing and reflecting sort of similar to the feedback that we have been getting in the rest of the engagement period.

Ms. Clarke: I would like to thank the officials once again for taking the time to join us here today. We have no

additional questions, and I will pass things over to my colleague.

Merci beaucoup.

Ms. White: Deputy Chair, I was saying to the officials on my way in that this one is always very quick, and it's not quick because it's not important; it's quick because things are moving so well.

You know, I could go back to 2011, 2012 — the first time it came up for debate, it used to — French Language Services Directorate used to be under Highways and Public Works, and it had never been debated on the floor before I asked, so we have come a long way.

We have seen the budget in the French Language Services Directorate increase astronomically compared to what it was back when I was first elected. Along with that, we have seen incredible services, whether we talk about access to French language in any government office or about either direct or through online translation services across in really important places, especially health.

As the department continues to grow and continues to translate documents and continues to do language training and it continues to do the good work, all I can really say is merci — un grand merci.

Mr. Speaker, I have nothing else to say today except, again, thank you to all of those within the department who continue to do the good work.

On continue toujours au Yukon et c'est formidable et c'est quelque chose dont on devrait être fier. Alors, un grand merci pour tout le travail, un grand merci pour les services.

I am looking forward to the future, thanks.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I know that we never get a lot of time to debate this and I understand why. There are always so many things that we wish to debate here. I take it as a compliment for the department, not for me, and I will make sure to pass that along to the French Language Services Directorate. I thank the members for the questions that they had and the opportunity to share a bit of information. We didn't make it very hard on Melissa today, but I appreciate them coming in; thank you very much.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further general debate on Vote 27, French Language Services Directorate?

Seeing none, we will proceed with line-by-line debate.

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 27, French Language Services Directorate, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 27, French Language Services Directorate, cleared or carried

Deputy Chair: The Member for Takhini-Kopper King has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 27, French Language Services Directorate, cleared or carried, as required.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.
On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures
Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$8,148,000 agreed to
On Capital Expenditures
Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of nil agreed to
Total Expenditures in the amount of \$8,148,000 agreed to
French Language Services Directorate agreed to

Deputy Chair: The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 217, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2025-26*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Deputy Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 217, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2025-2026*.

Department of Community Services — continued

Deputy Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Deputy Chair, very nice to see you this afternoon. I have with me my deputy minister, Damien Burns, and my finance director, Marie-Alexie. We are ready to go, so I will cede the floor and look forward to your questions this afternoon. I am looking forward to this.

Mr. Dixon: Deputy Chair, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King was meant to begin, but she graciously allowed me to ask a few specific questions for the minister about the implementation of the *Psychologists Regulation* or the regulation of psychologists and the implementation therein.

I will jump right into it. As the minister knows, part 4, section 22 of the *Psychologists Regulation* includes a commitment to establish a psychologists advisory committee. It is my understanding that has not happened yet, and the lack of a psychologists advisory committee is hindering the ability of the department to continue to regulate psychologists.

Can the minister tell us why there is no psychologists advisory committee established yet and what the timeline for the establishment of that committee will be?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I welcome the Leader of the Official Opposition to the debate this afternoon on Community Services. It's always great conversing and debating with him in this Chamber. So, welcome to the floor this afternoon.

I will say this: We are currently in the process of registering psychologists in the territory. Psychology is the fifth

profession to come under the *Health Professions Act* here in the territory. Work on the committee — this is information that I'm seeking out of the department and I haven't heard back yet — where the committee structure and where it's at as far as being struck. As soon as I have that information, I'll get back to the member opposite, but at this time, I don't have any specifics on the committee regarding psychologists.

It is important that we get them registered, and we are doing that work, but I have no information to provide this afternoon, right now, on the committee work.

Mr. Dixon: So, when the government released the *Psychologists Regulation* in January 2025, there was obviously optimism among psychologists about this development. They were heartened, certainly, by the commitment and the regulations to have an advisory committee that would provide advice to the registrar about the profession of psychology.

That's important because the registrar obviously has no specific expertise in psychology and would rely, therefore, on this advisory committee to provide input on the ongoing regulation of psychologists. So, the absence of that committee is very much hindering the registrar's work, in my view.

I have heard increasing examples from the field that there is inconsistency among the process for getting registered for psychologists right now. Right now, the registrar will only accept psychologists who are recognized by another province, except there is a disparity in what requirements are being asked of those. For example, two psychologists with the exact same degree from the same institution have been asked for a different set of paperwork around their proof that they are indeed registered psychologists. For instance, one was asked simply for evidence that they are registered and another was asked for a whole host of transcripts from the university, proof of hours, and so on.

My question for the minister is: How can they proceed to register psychologists without the expertise in the form of the advisory committee? How can they begin this work without a psychologist advisory committee in place to provide advice to the registrar who obviously has no specific expertise in psychology?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want a system in the regulatory process that is consistent. There are no two ways about it. If the member opposite has psychologists whom he is talking to or who are having difficulties with that — if he would forward to me the information, I will certainly deal with specific causes.

But every application to the registrar is going to be unique. I don't know the specific circumstances surrounding each application coming in. The member obviously has very specific examples that have happened. If that is the case, I am happy to look into it — casework it for the member opposite or, if he wants to put those people in touch with me, I can certainly delve into the matter a little bit further.

We do want consistency, but every single application coming into the territory is unique. I will say that we have engaged with local psychologists and regulators across Canada since July and October 2023 regarding policy direction for the regulations that we just put in place, which were a long time coming. Local psychologists were again engaged in July 2024

for feedback on the proposed standards of practice. We are now in the process of registering psychologists in the territory so that they can operate here.

Once we get psychologists registered, then I understand that we are going to try to form this regulatory committee that will then advise going forward. It is a chicken-and-egg situation. We are trying to give accreditation to psychologists and then have them on a committee or we form a committee before we have that process finished. I know that the department is working on this. If the member opposite would like the casework — some of the very specific examples of inconsistency that he has — I would be happy to look into this for him.

Mr. Dixon: Can the minister provide a timeline for when we can expect to see that committee established?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This has been ongoing on my files for several years now. I know that it has been an issue circulating through the territory for many years. I have met with psychologists who have told me how important this is. It is important to me as well. We now have the regulations in place. We have heard from the member opposite that there is a committee that wants to be struck. I will strike it as soon as possible. We are working with the department to make sure that this is a seamless process.

We have psychologists in the territory who we know are psychologists. We have now turned it so that the territory is in a place where people can come up, throw a shingle on their door, and call themselves a professional and they are not. It is an important step in the process. I am hearing from the member opposite — from the people whom he is speaking to — that this committee is important; I hear that.

I will certainly endeavour to work within the department to get said committee up and running as soon as possible, though I am sure that the registrar — as I said, she is trying to register psychologists in the territory and will do so as quickly as they possibly can.

Mr. Dixon: Can the minister tell us how many psychologists have been registered in the territory so far?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have a number of psychologists. We have psychologists registered but also some in the process. I will endeavour to get the member opposite a firm number of how many are registered as of today.

Mr. Dixon: I am not sure what the minister meant by the whole reference to the chicken and the egg. I don't quite understand why he would refer to that in the sense of the advisory committee, because the advisory committee doesn't need to have members who are currently registered, although I do know from what he just said that there are some already.

Section 22(2)(b) allows for some of those members of that committee to be registered or licensed in the equivalent of the full class of registrant in a province other than Yukon. So, there are many of those in the Yukon. They could draw on any of those, I'm sure, to appoint this committee. All that is required is action by the minister to appoint that committee. This is a committee that is appointed by the minister.

Can the minister give some further clarity to psychologists about when he will take the action necessary to appoint the advisory committee?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The member opposite's concern is heard and received. We'll do it as soon as we possibly can.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the minister's commitment to that.

The other aspect of this that has been raised with me as being concerning is the fact that there's no process for new psychologists to be registered. The current process only allows for psychologists who are already registered in another jurisdiction.

Somebody who just graduated from university or may be starting down the career path of becoming a psychologist has no options to practise in Yukon, and therefore, we will not be able to recruit or retain any new psychologist into the Yukon under the current system.

So, can the minister provide a commitment to some sort of timeline around the process for allowing for the registration and regulation of new psychologists to the field?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I said, I'm not going to commit to a firm timeline this afternoon right now. I will say that I will get to this. I will work with the department and get said structure set up as soon as I possibly can. I will say that this regulation has come in literally within the last two and a half months. It is relatively new. We're working it through with psychologists.

I hear the concerns coming out of the psychologist community. I will certainly work with the department to get some of these structures in place as soon as I possibly can.

Mr. Dixon: The final point that I will make for the minister — as he goes back to the department, surely, and reviews this file and reviews what's going on with the current process — relates to the scope of practice of psychologists.

Right now, there is an inconsistency around the application or the registration of psychologists from other jurisdictions and their scope of practice. For instance, there are some psychologists who are permitted and allowed to assess and diagnose in other provinces who are not being allowed to do that here in the Yukon or are having additional requirements placed on them that don't exist in other provinces, like Alberta or BC.

So, if the minister can make the commitment to look into that as well to ensure that there is a consistent and fair application of the new regulation as it pertains to the scope of practice.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite again for the question. We are currently in the process — I have spoken about this before when it comes to other health professions, like social workers. We are in the midst of a very broad modernization and improvement of the *Health Professions Act*. We are registering and setting up a structure for psychologists right now, making sure that the psychologists who we have working in the territory carry a licence to actually practise the profession they say that they can. We have had concerns that, without said regulation, we could have psychologists up here or people saying that they're a

psychologist and practising psychology who aren't. I heard that loud and clear when I met with the psychological association about this, and it was important enough that we got them — they got them a regulatory regime that is now rolling out.

All to say that the scope of practice in many health professions is woefully inadequate for the times. That is why we are doing the broader regulation — the broader legislation — so that the new scope of practice for psychologists will be part of that broader work that we're doing under the *Health Professions Act*, which will — and I have heard from optometrists and I have heard from a whole host of health professionals that their scope of practice is not up to the times and that they are really being constricted in what they can do.

I can also say to the member opposite that we have 24 psychologists currently registered appropriately in the territory at this moment.

Mr. Dixon: Deputy Chair, can the minister explain a little bit more about what he means by the scope of practice being inadequate? These regulations just came in two months ago. Why are they inadequate?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The regulations have come in, but the scope of practice will be covered under the *Health Professions Act* modernization and improvement, which is something we have committed to and is currently in process. It has begun. It is at the very genesis, the beginnings, of its consultation phase where we will upgrade, improve, and modernize the scope of practice for health professions in the territory.

The first tranche of health professionals will be captured by this act. We have asked social workers to feed into that as well and psychologists. There will be a whole host of health professions that will see their scope of practice and the way that they interact with society and the government improve through this new modern legislation — but it is in its very beginnings and will take years to complete that work.

Ms. White: I am just going to jump right in, actually, where the minister opened the door to the *Health Professions Act*. Can the minister share with us how he decided what health professions were going to be included in the health profession review and which ones were excluded and why?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The way we structured the *Health Professions Act* modernization — this re-write of the *Health Professions Act* — we have five of 15 health professions regulated under the current *Health Professions Act*. The others all have stand-alone acts. We are starting with those five, which include psychologists, and that's how we determined where we are starting this whole thing — with those five who are currently regulated. All the other health professions have their stand-alone acts, and we are not touching that in this first tranche of work on the *Health Professions Act*.

Ms. White: For clarity, can the minister share what other four health professions are under the *Health Professions Act* that is currently under review?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am checking my list twice. We have psychologists, midwives, pharmacists, registered psychiatric nurses, and physiotherapists. Those are the five captured under the existing *Health Professions Act*.

Ms. White: I appreciate that answer from the minister. I appreciate the time it took to find it. I will say that I found it under the background information page about why the Government of Yukon is considering changes to the *Health Professions Act*. It's not easy to find, so I appreciate the time that it took.

One of the things that I have heard about the engagement process on this was actually a real concern from the Yukon Registered Nurses Association. Is the minister familiar with those concerns?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, I am absolutely aware of the concerns from the Yukon Registered Nurses Association with the *Health Professions Act*. The project team encouraged everyone to participate in the engagement to provide their perspective, including different models of regulation.

We are analyzing information from the engagement materials and the best regulatory practices to help inform options over the coming months. I will say again that it's very, very early in the process. I have heard those concerns, and we are working and are more than happy to work with Yukon registered nurses to make sure that any legislation meets their stringent demands.

Ms. White: Understanding the concerns that have been identified by the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, by Yukon psychologists — and I'm going to go out on a limb and guess that there are others. So, the engagement process has ended. What is the timeline for the next steps, and can the minister walk us through what comes next?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Well, as I have said many, many times and I will continue to say it, this is the very beginning of a process that is going to take a long time. It's not an easy process, regulating health professions in the territory. It has proven to be difficult. We had the very first consultations, as the member opposite said. I have heard concerns from the Yukon Registered Nurses Association. Of course, I have stated publicly many times that I'm willing to hear their concerns and work them in. I have heard this afternoon of some concerns with the psychologists, though I haven't heard these directly, and I encourage any psychologists to reach out to me if they have concerns. I haven't heard those personally, but I know that the department is working to register them. We have 24 psychologists registered, which is a huge improvement over where we were a year ago, and we're going to continue to do and refine the process, as I have always said.

I have encouraged, in any department that I have been involved in, to adopt an approach of continual improvement where you take a step, assess where you are at, and then go forward in the best interests of the people in the territory.

We have just finished the very first consultation in a years-long process. We have heard some concerns, we are currently doing a "what we heard" document, and we will assess when we get that document together, which hasn't come to me yet. As soon as we get it, we will assess it and decide how we proceed from there. That is about as far as I can see into the future at this present time with the member opposite.

Ms. White: One of the reasons why I wanted to know next steps is that I am sure that other members in this House will be familiar with the dental hygienist who has reached out to all of us with queries on how they can practise in rural Yukon independent of a dentist. When they actually reached out to government officials, they were told that the Yukon dental act — there was no intention of any review anytime in the near future.

When we think about the importance of the Yukon dental care plan — or now the federal dental care plan — and the importance of preventive medicine — which I will say that I believe that access to regular cleanings and such is that support — can the minister let me know if there is any intention to facilitate, for example, the independent working of dental hygienists in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I said earlier in an answer, our intention is to work with the current five regulated health professions in the territory — the ones that the member opposite found lightning fast, and I commend her for her research — psychologists, midwives, pharmacists, psychiatric nurses, and physiotherapists. Those are the five we are focusing on. There are at least 15 others who have their own acts, as the member opposite — the dental hygienists act is one of the stand-alone acts. They will be worked on in the future, but we are starting with the first five regulated health professions. That is where the commitment begins and ends at this time.

Ms. White: I am just going to correct the minister — there isn't a dental hygienists act. There is a *Dental Profession Act*, but there is not a dental hygienists act, which would actually be quite helpful.

The reason why I am asking is — appreciating that midwives, pharmacists, physiotherapists, registered psychiatric nurses, and psychologists are the first go-round and understanding that this is going to be a multi-year process, why hasn't there been consideration about adding other health professions at the same time? Why is it just limited to these ones and why have others not been added?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: You have to start somewhere. We are starting with five regulated professions under the current *Health Professions Act*. We are going to modernize that piece of legislation and improve the scope of practice. As I have said, in many cases, the current scope of practice captured by the *Health Professions Act* does not allow professionals to provide the very broad levels of care that are probably enabled in other jurisdictions. We want to fix that.

We are starting with those five. We will learn from that process. We will refine the process, and then when we handle the other — at least 15 — health professions that are not captured by the current *Health Professions Act*, we will work on that next tranche. I have said that from the very beginning. These are the five that we are starting with.

Ms. White: Yukon government — the minister's own government — through some very healthy encouragement from the Yukon NDP, released the first public dental plan of its kind in the country, which is honestly really transformative. I am hearing lots of positive things about it, but one of the challenges is that there are dentists in the City of Whitehorse, but there are

no dentists practising in rural Yukon. Dental hygienists have reached out looking to practise. Again, I am trying to get a sense if the minister believes that access to dental health is important. If he does believe that it is important, when can we expect support for dental hygienists who would like to practise independently in the territory in rural Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am glad to hear that there are people looking to move to the territory and provide care in dental health, for sure. I know that there are a lot of other people coming as well.

Again, I share the member opposite's support of the dental program that our government launched in the territory. It is something that we had always intended to do. I appreciate that the Leader of the Third Party threw her support behind it through the CASA; that's great. It was something that we always intended to do.

As far as dealing with the *Dental Profession Act*, we are going to deal with that following the *Health Professions Act*. At this moment, that's the plan.

Ms. White: I think that for anyone who was around for debates in 2021, they may have found the comment from the minister there quite humorous.

The *Dental Profession Act* — maybe if the minister wants to open it, we can take a look at 23.03 together. I'm looking at the *Dental Profession Act*. It's a piece of legislation underneath the minister's purview. I want to talk about 23.03, "Services provided with a view to dentist examination".

It says — and I'm reading out of there: "A dental hygienist may provide any of the following dental services to a patient, without direction or supervision from a dentist ... (a) cleaning, scaling, and polishing the patient's teeth..." So, that sounds like preventive medicine.

"(b) instructing the patient on, and demonstrating, oral hygiene..." — sounds like prevention as well.

"(c) applying such prophylactic solutions..." — well, I'm not going to get into that, but there is another section that is also prevention.

So, section 23.03 talks about the abilities of a dental hygienist to provide the following dental services to a patient without the direction or supervision from a dentist. The reason why I want to bring that up is that I'm trying to understand the limitations of why a dental hygienist, right now, can't practise independently in rural Yukon without a dentist.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As we have discussed in this House just in the last few minutes, the dental hygienists are regulated under the *Dental Profession Act*. The scope of practice established under the act and not regulations — it's in legislation, which, of course, is something that is less flexible. Section 23.03, as the member opposite said, outlines the services that dental hygienists may provide without direct supervision of a dentist, while sections 23.04 and 23.05 address services that require direction from a dentist — again, in legislation, it's pretty written in stone.

The intent of section 23.03 contemplates some form of professional connection between a dental hygienist and a dentist. It is the responsibility of the dental hygienist to operate within their scope of competence and align with the intent of

the legislation. Unfortunately, this aged legislation — again, we have seen lots of it and we can go into teacups and the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and all sorts of other things. This is, again, old legislation that inhibits the provision of health services. It is why we are doing this work. This is one that the member opposite — I know that it has been in the media, and I know that the dental hygienist is trying to throw off the yoke of this really old legislation. I wish that we had other governments looking at this legislation years ago. We haven't; we're trying to untangle this Gordian knot and get through it all. We are starting with the *Health Professions Act*.

I understand the frustrations, but dental hygienists have to be tied to a doctor according to the intent of the legislation that we're currently working under.

Ms. White: Just for clarification, how long have the Liberals been in government for?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It has been — we're working on nine years; we've just actually crossed our four-year threshold the other day, on the Saturday.

Ms. White: So, Deputy Chair, I guess what I'm saying is nine years is a long time to not go over legislation, like the minister commented on the outdated *Dental Profession Act*. One might say that nine years is plenty of time to get something done, especially in 2021, when his government signed a confidence and supply agreement with myself that actually committed to a public dental plan. That would be a good time to maybe start making sure that those services were accessible.

I'm going to move on. So, I was sent an e-mail that I'm going to read in a portion to the minister. I appreciate that the minister has put a pause on rural tipping fees for a couple of months, but this one came from someone who is going to be affected by that. It says: "I am a resident of Mendenhall and recently attended an information session on the Champagne dump. During the session, we learned that tipping fees will be introduced starting April 1st. While I understand the Government of Yukon ... is working on a solid waste strategy, this decision feels like yet another financial burden on rural Yukoners.

"In rural communities like ours, where services are already limited, we must haul our own waste to the dumps. The introduction of tipping fees means we will now face charges each time we dispose of waste. While many of us will try to make it work, I am deeply concerned for those who simply cannot afford these additional costs.

"In the past, the absence of tipping fees helped prevent illegal dumping, which could lead to animal attractants and ground contamination. Reintroducing these fees could push people back to these harmful practices. Additionally, some residents may consider burning their garbage, which poses serious environmental and health risks, especially in an area like ours where fire risks are a constant concern.

"We have already written to our MLA ... and to..." — the minister — "... expressing our concerns and asking for their help. However, we are reaching out to you now in the hopes that..." — you — "... can offer additional support or any possible solutions. Perhaps exemptions could be made for residents living within a certain distance of the dump, allowing

locals to dispose of waste without facing the financial burden while also preventing others from using the site for free. Income-based exemptions could also help those already struggling financially avoid being driven to unsafe waste disposal methods.

"Income inequality is especially pronounced in rural Yukon, and policies like this disproportionately impact our communities."

So, here's the question: Has the minister considered exemptions for residents living within a certain distance of rural landfills — for example, the Champagne location?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Deputy Chair, I appreciate the question from the member opposite. We haven't contemplated an income subsidy for the landfill fees that we're charging in rural Yukon. We have adopted a polluter-pay model at our landfills across the territory. The fees that we're charging at landfills in the territory will be equalized as much as possible with municipalities across the territory so everyone is paying roughly the same. They are going to be paying far less than the actual cost of the disposal of garbage across the territory. This was the model that we worked on with the Association of Yukon Communities over many, many years. It's now coming into force.

We have granted a transition to this new model in places like Champagne where we've forgiven tipping fees for the first month to allow people to understand and talk to the landfill operators and get accustomed to this new approach to garbage disposal across the territory. We are also having another tipping-fee holiday to help residents from May 15 to May 19 so that they can rid of their spring-cleaning debris.

So, we are taking these approaches. Again, we're trying to make people more aware of the amount of garbage they're producing. We're producing far too much in this territory and in society as a whole across North America. Making people more aware of the garbage that they are producing is a good way to start to ramp that down and make our landfills last longer.

Ms. White: So, I actually talked about an income-based exemption as opposed to an income-based subsidy — that would be not having someone of a certain income having to pay the disposal fee. Again, there is a concern from this person in their rural community. I think the challenge is that I feel like the minister often compares rural Yukon to Whitehorse, and that doesn't actually work.

I appreciate that, in the City of Whitehorse, I pay taxes, and I pay taxes that do both water and sewer and also my garbage and now my recycling pickup. So, every two weeks — or every week, my garbage gets picked up, and the next week, my recycling and my compost get picked up. That's fine; that's part of the cost of living in the City of Whitehorse. That's incorporated.

It's interesting, because I will say that the Silver City folks had said that they were happy to pay by having it attached to their property tax so that they could anticipate it. They would know when it was, and it didn't have to be a regular thing.

Again, I pay a tax, and every week, either my garbage or my compost and my recycling get picked up. Then, if I choose

to go to the landfill, then I'm going to pay a cost there. So, as an example, this week, like many people, I will be cleaning up after my dogs in the yard, and I will be going to the landfill. When I go to the landfill, I will be paying a fee, which is fine, because I don't want that to sit in my garbage can for two weeks. But the difference is that, if I lived in Mendenhall, once a week, someone doesn't come to pick that up. So, you're storing things; you're planning; you're making sure this works. Not only are you transporting things to your home, but then you're going to transport it again, and you're still paying a property tax; you're still paying a tax out there. You're paying additional costs to travel between home and wherever you happen to work.

So, when we compare everything to Whitehorse, it doesn't fully work. One of the things I had heard at the meetings in Silver City was: Well, in Whitehorse, this is the cost and, in Whitehorse, you can't have a key to the disposal facility. But I'm going to again make a pitch that rural Yukon isn't like Whitehorse.

So, has there been any consideration or is there a willingness to consider, for example, income-based exemptions for folks who are already struggling financially to help support them with tipping fees — to remove that burden?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the advocacy from the member opposite. We are not considering such a thing at this time. Perhaps at some future time, we will have a look at it.

Ms. White: Well, I really look forward to a future time when I have an opportunity to look at it.

I am going to move on. I want to talk more about lot development, especially in Dawson City. I was in Dawson City recently. I was told by council that they needed housing, that they needed access to lots, and that it was of a critical nature. I know that during Question Period, the minister stood up and talked about Dredge Pond II and other things. I want to dive deep into housing lots in Dawson City and timelines.

Can the minister tell me what is coming down the pike for Dawson City as far as lot development?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Dredge Pond II is 40 lots. The YESAB submission, regulatory approvals, and detailed design are advancing to tender either late this year or early in 2026 depending on the YESAB approvals. I hope I get credit for a quick answer.

Ms. White: Good job, good job. Understanding that the minister is talking about how it is not an instantaneous thing, when does the minister imagine that lots will be available for Dredge Pond II, and what other areas is the minister working with the municipality on — to identify for building lots?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We're building on the record lot development that we have seen in Watson Lake, record lot development in Whitehorse, record lot development in Watson Lake, Haines Junction, and Teslin. Dawson City is now in the queue. As I said, there are 40 lots in Dredge Pond II. Yes, the submission — regulatory. We're hoping to get the detailed design in later this year, going to tender in 2025 — early 2026 at the latest. A year after that, we should start to see lots being developed in Dawson. So, you're looking at probably the spring of 2027 for 40 new lots in Dawson.

There is also feasibility and/or planning underway or targeted for Callison east industrial infill area 2 and various infill lots in 2025-26. There is more work happening in Dawson.

Ms. White: How many lots will be available in Dawson in 2025?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: There is a possibility of a few infill lots in 2025-26 — this year. I'm working with the department to find out what the status of those lots is right now. We're working with the City of Dawson. I will get the information and relay it to the member opposite as soon as I possibly can.

Ms. White: I appreciate that the answer is "a few". I guess I'll maybe hedge my compliments to a few when the minister talks about building on the success of other communities.

Again, in meeting with the municipal council, they said that the biggest thing that they needed was lot development, and they needed housing — they needed access to housing. They said that was the first thing. That was absolutely critical.

So, I'm interested to know how many "a few" lots is. I'm interested to know if the minister or the department has reached out to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government to see if they are interested in working together for lot development — similar to what we have seen with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. I am still curious to hear about the number of those lots.

One of the questions that I had asked in Question Period recently was about West Dawson and Sunnydale. The 2013 local area plan had, it said, about 50 residents, and now we are up to closer to 300. Does the minister see any additional subdivisions or lots available in the Sunnydale area and West Dawson area?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Not at the time.

Deputy Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Deputy Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 217, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2025-26*.

Is there any further general debate?

Ms. White: I'm refreshed and back. I am hoping that there is a response, since we took a break, about the few lots in Dawson, the infill lots. If the minister just wants to start there — how many infill lots will be available this year in Dawson City?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We are hoping to have up to five lots available this year if all goes well.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that.

Understanding that Dredge Pond II is at least two years out, are there any plans to work with the municipality to identify other areas of development in the meantime?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We are always willing to work and are working with our municipal partners. We are happy to work with the City of Dawson to identify more lots. We have been doing that for four years now and we will continue to do that work to make sure that we find places where the city can grow.

Ms. White: I know that one of the plans after the initial Slinky mine on the Dome Road — post that development — there was talk of residential lots being developed. Can the minister share any information about that previous proposal?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: There are lots that are contemplated around the Slinky mine on the Dome Road. Community Services has just recently begun work on the new recreation centre in that region. That development will have an impact on lot development going forward. So, once we know the final status and layout of the rec centre, we will be able to start working on other development in that area, including the lots around the Slinky mine.

Ms. White: So, when can the community expect to hear about what those next steps might be as far as that development goes?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I know that officials with Community Services are having a meeting with the City of Dawson in May, so that's scheduled and coming up in the next month or so. We'll be able to talk with city officials and work together with them on future development.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that.

One of the things that the minister had talked about today was possible lot development in the City of Whitehorse in Valleyview. I'm interested to hear more about that.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It's a tank farm development that is currently owned by a few landowners; Sidhu is one of them. We have been working — I've had conversations with Sidhu and Sidhu's lieutenants on this property.

What has to happen and what we're waiting for now — out of the City of Whitehorse in the coming months — they are going to have bylaws that start to outline the relationship between private developers — or developers, land developers — and the City of Whitehorse. They have been working with the Government of Yukon for so long.

We have an organic relationship that we have worked out, but we really do need hard-and-fast rules developed for private developers to have certainty for development in the City of Whitehorse in land development. We are waiting for those. I recently had a meeting with the mayor and the chief administrative officer for the City of Whitehorse. The latest I have from the City of Whitehorse is that those bylaws are coming this fall.

Ms. White: So, when the minister spoke about the Valleyview lot development in Question Period and then just said that it is being driven by a company, why did the minister talk about the Valleyview lot development in terms of his department in Question Period today?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I believe that the question came from the Member for Watson Lake, and I look forward to her joining the debate sometime in the near future. I always enjoy our parlays.

I believe that the question this afternoon had to do with lot development in the City of Whitehorse in the south and across the river in Whitehorse. People were concerned about lots coming. The reality is that the tank farm development is going to be the bridge between the next big subdivision development in Whitehorse. There are an awful lot of lots available to the City of Whitehorse through the tank farm. That is held in private hands.

So, that is seen by many as the bridge development in the City of Whitehorse between Whistle Bend and the next phase of lot development in the City of Whitehorse.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. Is there a role for Community Services at all in that next bridging lot development?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We are currently the largest land developer in the City of Whitehorse — indeed, probably in the whole territory. The city led a multi-owner Valleyview masterplan that was completed in 2024. Yukon government Community Services participated in that masterplan. We hold a small portion of the land in that region and we will certainly have a role in on-site and off-site infrastructure discussions with the City of Whitehorse related to the tank farm development.

Ms. White: Thank you to the minister for that.

I'm curious to know how many applications have been made and how many accepted for the Better Buildings program.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This is a file that is bittersweet, actually. I'll explain that in a second.

As of February 17 of this year, 66 residential applications were received from property owners in Whitehorse, Faro, Haines Junction, Dawson City, and rural properties outside of municipalities. Six projects are currently underway; 10 are completed. In addition, four commercial applications and one agricultural application were received. All eight municipalities, of course, have signed agreements with the Yukon government to manage the local improvement tax for municipal participants, including Whitehorse, Watson Lake, Haines Junction, Faro, Mayo, the City of Dawson, Carmacks, and Teslin. So, that's it — the number is 66. I wish it had been higher, but delays at the front end of the program prevented Yukoners from obtaining loans under very low interest rates, and when the interest rates rose in the intervening — in the delay period — many Yukoners were not able to get those extra-low interest rates, which really did hurt uptake in the program.

Ms. White: It's interesting; I have a different take on it, which is that if municipalities hadn't signed on, then it wouldn't have mattered — the interest rates, I would say.

Can the minister please break down, out of the 66 applications, the locations? Out of those 66, which communities applied — or where those residents are — where folks applied?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The breakdown at the moment is five municipal and one rural. So, it would be five in municipal districts and one in the rural. Those are the ones completed for the Better Buildings program — the six. I don't have more

details; I will endeavour to get more information for the member opposite.

Ms. White: Just for clarification from the minister, when he says “five municipal”, does he mean in the City of Whitehorse or in municipalities? Then — if he can just commit to getting that breakdown to us at a later point.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I said “five municipal” — that will be in municipal boundaries. One in rural Yukon — I said that I would endeavour to get the information for the member opposite.

Ms. White: Pardon me, Deputy Chair. Was it the City of Whitehorse municipal boundaries? That’s what I was looking for as clarification. I did not understand the minister’s response.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I don’t have a detailed breakdown at this time. I’ll endeavor to get one for the member opposite. It’s five in municipal boundaries and one in rural.

Ms. White: So, I appreciate that. It means that neither of us really knows where they are. That makes me feel better as opposed to me just not understanding the answer. So, that’s fine; I look forward to getting the breakdown at a later point.

The next thing I wanted to go on to was that there was very recently — like, this week on Tuesday — a press conference with the YEU and wildland firefighters. Has the minister had time to consider the request of wildland firefighters for presumptive cancer coverage? I understand that this is his other portfolio — workers’ compensation — but he is responsible for wildland firefighters under the purview of Community Services. I wanted to know if there have been further discussions with him and his officials as far as coverage for wildland firefighters.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: In 2022 when we brought in the new workers’ compensation health and safety act — it is now called the *Workers’ Safety and Compensation Act* — we had 19 presumptions at that time. I believe that, at that time, it was the most in the country. I have no problem with presumptions. We’re trying to follow the evidence. I am in contact with workers’ compensation to find the latest information data on the research on cancers in expressly the wildland fire industry. When I have made a decision on that, I will certainly report back to the House.

Ms. White: So, today, opposition parties had an opportunity to get a briefing from a hydrogeologist — weather and others. I wanted to know if there was an expectation — or what the expectation was for the number of wildland firefighters who would be working with Yukon government this year — both as Yukon government employees and as contractors — so, for example, with First Nations Wildfire.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Yukon has 85 initial-attack firefighters in regional bases across the Yukon and another 40 staff managing crews and aircraft, leading prevention programs, and providing logistical support. In 2024, there were 28 wildfire crews, which were comprised of 14 Yukon government and 14 Yukon First Nation crews. We are using Yukon First Nations Wildfire again this year. I believe that they have a 20-person crew — that is correct. We have one 20-person crew with Yukon First Nations Wildfire as well. That is the private contractor who deals with Yukon Wildland Fire.

Ms. White: I am just going to shift, actually, over to the Dawson City recreation centre. One concern that I heard when I was in the municipality is that initially a new recreation centre was being planned with a backup generator. So, as an example, it could be a gathering place during times of power outages, but I understand that has been removed from the plan.

Can the minister talk about that at all, please?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have just spoken to the deputy, and to our knowledge, the backup generator is in the design at this point. It is a progressive design/build, and so that design hasn’t been finalized yet, but to our knowledge, there is still a generator in the design.

Ms. White: I want to thank the minister and his officials for their time today, and I’m going to cede the floor to my colleagues, because I had negotiated last time that I would get to start, and I feel like it’s fair for me to stop, but I thank the minister and the officials.

Mr. Dixon: Deputy Chair, I appreciate the opportunity to ask some more questions of the minister. I’ll jump right into some rural land questions that I have.

We have heard from some colleagues in Carmacks that there was feasibility and planning work advancing for two country residential sites in Carmacks. Can the minister confirm that? If so, what is the timeline for those two country residential lots in Carmacks?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Feasibility is complete and planning efforts have been initiated for three country residential sites in Carmacks. The Land Development branch hopes to proceed with a YESAB submission and complete the detail design for one of these sites by the spring of 2026 — so, in the next year.

Mr. Dixon: I’m not sure I heard everything that the minister said. I believe he said “three” and not “two”. Can he confirm that it is three?

Also, when was it anticipated that those two or three would be available for sale?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The member opposite is correct; it is three country residential sites. We are proceeding with a YESAB submission and to complete the detail design for one of these sites by the spring of 2026. So, we’re putting in a YESAB submission for the first country residential site — by the spring of 2026 is when we are hoping to have the detail design ready for that site.

Mr. Dixon: Can the minister tell us where that site is? And then what is the plan for the other two sites?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The department is endeavouring to get some more information on the two additional sites. I will endeavour to get it to the member opposite when I learn more.

Mr. Dixon: Deputy Chair, I was following fairly closely earlier, but if I missed this, I apologize. I understood that there was feasibility and planning work underway for Callison east industrial in Dawson. Can the minister confirm if that is indeed the case, and if so, what is the timeline for that?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: That is absolutely correct. Feasibility and planning are underway for Callison east industrial infill area 2 and various infill lots in 2025-26, so we’re looking for that later this year or early next year.

Mr. Dixon: Does the minister mean that they would be available during that time frame or that they would be entering the YESAB process by that time?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We're hoping to have five infill lots this year — is what we are shooting for. It is still early in the season. We are working with the City of Dawson. We have a meeting with Dawson officials in May. We will have more information after that, but that is the goal; that would be our optimum goal.

Mr. Dixon: Moving to Faro, I had understood that there was planning underway for Mitchell industrial as well as the potential of 17 lots at Rose and Ladue, which were intended to be serviced lots. Can the minister give us an update on those developments and a timeline for when we might see those lots available?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have a YESAB submission and detailed design work advancing in early 2026, so about a year out, for the 17 Rose and Ladue lots, which are serviced residential. We also have country residential planning which could begin later this year.

Mr. Dixon: Where are the country residential lots planned for Faro?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I don't have detailed information in my notes, but I will endeavour to get that information for the member opposite.

Mr. Dixon: I will move to Mayo. We had understood that the 7th Avenue north urban extension was in YESAB. Can the minister provide an update on that project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The 7th Avenue north urban expansion masterplan is complete. The YESAB submission and design will advance later this year, is the best hopes — we are hoping for later this year.

Mr. Dixon: Does the minister mean that construction would begin later this year or that the lots would be available later this year?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Whoa, whoa; don't get ahead of us here. I'm saying that the 7th Avenue north urban expansion — the YESAB submission and detail design work will advance this year. After that, we will have to go and put the pipes in the ground and then built — so, it will be, again, probably in 2026, late 2027, before we start to get hammers and backhoes on the property.

Mr. Dixon: Can the minister tell us what the budget is, and is it funded solely by the Yukon government, or are there contributions from the Village of Mayo as well?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The funding is coming from the Yukon government. We have a rural land development budget; it will come out of that. We can't confirm that budget yet, because we haven't actually got the YESAB submission through or the detail design.

Mr. Dixon: I look forward to learning more about that in the future.

I'll turn now to Watson Lake and, of course, the Frances Avenue project. We have discussed this at length in QP and other places, but I will ask for an update: Are those lots now complete, and if not, when do we expect to see them completed?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Frances Avenue 43-lot extension and lift station construction is expected to be complete this spring — soon — next month or so. Civil works are substantially complete, with only minor tasks remaining for completion this spring. The remaining work includes the lift station commissioning, finalizing the ATCO installation, and putting BST on the road. Work is underway, including appraisals. That will happen at the end of this month, apparently. Surveys to prepare the lots for lottery in parallel with outstanding site work — that is where we're at right now.

Mr. Dixon: Can the minister provide us with a total project cost for the Frances Avenue extension and the creation of those 43 lots?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Deputy Chair, the development costs have not yet been finalized, because we haven't got the lift station commissioned yet. Once that is done, we will have the total package for the development costs once the city and YG work out the commissioning of that lift station, and then it will be appraised by EMR — the actual lot costs will be appraised by EMR, but the development costs are not yet final, but they will be finalized fairly soon.

Mr. Dixon: Just so that I understand the process, once the project, including the commissioning of the lift station and other infrastructure is complete, the BST, and the things that the minister just listed, the Department of Community Services will hand the lots over to EMR and EMR will lead the process of developing the cost for those lots; is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, once we finish all the development, we pass the project over to EMR. They are already starting that work in tandem with the last bits of the work. They are going to do a lot appraisal, and they will work that alchemy out through the department, and then that will determine what the costs of the lots will be in Watson Lake — but that will be handled by EMR once the whole development is passed over to that department.

Mr. Dixon: I am sure that the minister could predict this one. The same question is for Willow Acres in Haines Junction. Can the minister provide an update on the timeline for completion of that project as well as a total project cost for the creation of those — I believe it is — 44 lots?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The serviced Dhäl Gähy (Mountain Ridge) Subdivision will be completed in spring of this year. That is 44 lots anticipated to be for sale in the summer 2025. Site work includes nearly completed ATCO installation as well as a ditch and lot cleanup, seeding, and road maintenance. BST is happening.

Work is underway, including appraisals, surveys to prepare the lots for lottery in parallel with the outstanding site work, similar to Watson Lake. EMR is apparently taking that work on and getting ahead of it as much as they can.

Mr. Dixon: Can I assume then that there is no final budget for that project as well?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It is in the same state as Frances Avenue. They are both in the same state, so as soon as we get those final costs in, we will know more, but we haven't got those finalized yet.

Mr. Dixon: I had understood that there was a next phase of the Willow Acres lots. Can the minister provide an update on the planning for the next phase beyond the 44 lots that he just discussed?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The master plan for the Area 3 country residential 63-lot subdivision is targeted for completion later this year.

Mr. Dixon: So, we'll return to the City of Whitehorse now. Can the minister provide an update on phases 9A and 9B and the Midnight Sun lift station commissioning? Can he provide a timeline for that as well as an update for the House?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The final wrap-up of phase 9 and the Midnight Sun lift station is expected in the spring of this year. Completion of phases 12 and 13 and the Evelyn lift station will continue toward completion this summer — so, this year.

Mr. Dixon: So, when will lots from phases 9A and 9B be handed to EMR for them to be included in a lottery?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We expect — and again, this is Energy, Mines and Resources' universe, but the information I have to the department from EMR is that there will be 98 lots available for sale this summer.

Mr. Dixon: I had asked about phases 9A and 9B, but I think, based on that number, it sounds like the minister was including phases 12 and 13 as well. Can I just confirm that?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Exciting news that the roughly 100 lots — 98 to 100, in that range — are simply phase 9; phases 12 and 13 are not calculated in that number and they will be part of a different tranche of lots coming in Whistle Bend this year.

Mr. Dixon: How many lots would we anticipate coming in phases 12 and 13, then?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Phases 12 and 13 will include another 15 lots: five public service and 10 large multi-family and commercial. That is happening later this year, so roughly another 15 lots are what we're expecting.

Mr. Dixon: Just so I don't ask a question that should be better asked in Energy, Mines and Resources, have those lots been transferred now to EMR, or is that still yet to happen?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Not yet. They haven't been transferred yet. The construction is still happening. They will be transferred as soon as that construction is complete.

Mr. Dixon: I'll move on to phases 10 and 11. Obviously, these phases have been delayed a number of times. I believe that they were originally slated for the design and tendering to occur in 2024 and then in 2025. Earlier in this Sitting during Question Period, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources suggested that they would be done next year in 2026.

Can the minister provide an update on the progress of the tendering of the design of phases 10 and 11?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The member opposite is correct. Detailed design and tendering for phases 10 and 11 and stormwater outfalls are planned for 2026. I have been in conversations with the City of Whitehorse, as have my officials, on these two phases. I would love to get them done sooner. We are looking to see if that is possible, but right now, they are scheduled for early 2026.

Mr. Dixon: What was the cause of the delays? Why has this continued to be pushed off for a number of years now?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have been working very hard with the City of Whitehorse on a development agreement. We haven't worked out all the details with the City of Whitehorse on that development agreement. We also have a historic sites assessment that is underway as well. So, those two things — the development agreement working with the City of Whitehorse to finalize that and getting the heritage assessment done — are currently where this project sits.

Mr. Dixon: We had heard from some in the field that there were some heritage issues that were identified in the course of the heritage assessment for phases 10 and 11. Can the minister confirm that?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I just announced that there were heritage assessments going on. We are currently looking at those to see how any heritage impacts can be mitigated. We are working on that. At the same time, we are trying to get the development agreement finalized with the City of Whitehorse.

Mr. Dixon: The minister just mentioned the development agreement with the City of Whitehorse. That is where I was planning to go next. What is the status of the negotiations of the development agreement? Obviously, what we know of the development agreement so far comes from city council packages where it has been indicated that the development agreement would require a specific agreement for infrastructure and servicing for the area, which included a number of traffic mitigation measures, including but not limited to a third entrance into Whistle Bend, the expansion of Mountainview, and others.

Can the minister provide an update on those discussions and negotiations with the City of Whitehorse?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am not going to conduct negotiations on the floor of the House. I certainly am in discussions — I have been quite open about that — with the City of Whitehorse officials and with the mayor, and those are ongoing.

Mr. Dixon: Deputy Chair, does the minister have a budget estimate for the development of phases 10 and 11 currently?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you very much. Again, I'm not going to give a figure on the floor of the House today. We are in discussions with the City of Whitehorse. I have indicated that I am hoping we can reach a conclusion and get this started this year — I'm hoping that's the case. I think the discussions with the city are going very well, and I had a great meeting with the mayor just last week. I am going to continue those discussions, and I'm going to have more to discuss or bring to the House — I'll maybe bring in a ministerial statement.

Mr. Dixon: Deputy Chair, I think I'll move on then from that. We had asked earlier this week about a resolution that was passed unanimously by the City of Whitehorse with regards to the automatic adoption of the National Building Code. The minister mentioned that he was working with the city on that and would continue to. I know that this is a priority for several city councillors as well as representatives of the Yukon

Contractors Association who have written to the city to express their support for that resolution.

Can the minister provide some comment on his thoughts on the likelihood of Yukon government being willing to entertain the idea of reconsidering the automatic adoption of the National Building Code?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Deputy Chair, I'm going to respond with a question of my own. The opposition has been talking about this; I've been in conversation with City of Whitehorse as well. I've had conversations with councillors, and I understand the concerns on this and the automatic adoption clause. I think there's a concern, and if I'm not mistaken — please correct me — if the opposition leader could correct me — there is a concern about the amount of consultation time to actually help people transition to the new rules. Is that really what the foundation of the concerns are that the members opposite are hearing?

Mr. Dixon: So, I think I would let — in the case of this particular resolution — I believe it stands in the name of Councillor Boyd, and so I won't go as far as speaking for him. I don't know what the impetus behind his bringing forward that resolution was, but the resolution was unanimously adopted by the city council, so it's clear that they have the view that the automatic adoption of the National Building Code on the cycle that it's currently done creates some issues.

I have heard from builders as well. After we discussed this in Question Period earlier this week, as I always do, I sent the transcripts out to a number of builders. Many responded with questions and concerns that they have about this issue as well.

My sense of the issue is that the automatic adoption of the National Building Code sometimes introduces complexities to the code that create hassles for the builders and the inspectors, because there is a lack of communication about the changes that are being made. I am also aware that the Yukon Contractors Association Home Builders' Caucus has written to the City of Whitehorse about this expressing their support for the appeal to the Yukon government to delay the automatic adoption of all future revisions of the National Building Code until a review of the changes is conducted and consultations are held with home builders, suppliers, developers, governments, and other stakeholders.

That is my sense of the issue. It is something that has been unanimously supported by the City of Whitehorse. It is supported by the builders whom I have heard from, and so, again, I put this to the minister: Is that something that the minister and his government would be willing to entertain going forward?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It seems like we have both had very passionate discussions with Councillor Boyd and neither one of us are willing to speak on his behalf. I think that's fair. I have some understanding, and I had — I would characterize it — I've enjoyed the conversations and have learned a lot from the conversations I have had with Councillor Boyd and other councillors.

On the automatic adoption of the National Building Code, it is a misleading statement in some ways, because first of all, it's a national body that's going through, and we're sitting in

the midst of an election campaign where the issue of removing trade barriers across the country is certainly front and centre given the state of anarchy happening south of the border with trade tariffs and very confusing messaging coming out of the White House, which is really — and threatening language coming out of the White House, which really has the backs of Canadians up, and they're looking to strengthen their own economy, and that's going to have an impact.

The National Building Code is part of that whole system, because it sets a national code that allows the free transfer of goods, materials, and standards across the country.

So, given the situation right now, I've heard the council and I've seen the resolution that has come forward, and I'm certainly willing to consider it, but these are changing times. I can't say anything definite, and it puts me at a disadvantage. I'm sure the member opposite understands that.

I will say, however, that the statement that it's automatically adopted is misleading, because the next National Building Code is expected to land on people's desks in December 2025. It's not going to be adopted by the territory until April 2027. In that time, the plan is to consult with builders, councillors, city planners, permitting agencies, and the rest of it to get them up to speed in that period of time.

So, the automatic adoption — and I've had this conversation with Councillor Boyd as well and others. It's not like: December 2025 — here are the new regulations; go to it, folks. There's a lag of almost 16 months — December to April — so 16 months before the regulations actually take effect in the very best-case situations.

I'm happy to have these conversations with the City of Whitehorse. I've indicated that to those who are interested in this. If the member opposite has any contractors who would like to talk to me, certainly, give them my number. I'm fairly open to have those conversations and alleviate some of the fear that is coming.

Of course, the election is happening on the 28th, and I'll provide further clarity as to where the nation is going as far as dismantling some of the trade barriers that are happening inside the country.

Mr. Dixon: I'm not going to bite on the issue of internal trade. I just respectfully disagree with the minister about this being an issue of the free flow of goods or services across provincial borders; this is about the implementation of the National Building Code here in the Yukon.

This is not without precedent. We dealt with this a number of years ago when the National Building Code's adoption would have prohibited the construction of log homes in the Yukon, and we were forced to create a specific committee to go consult and review the National Building Code to ensure that the log-home-building industry in Yukon could continue. That was just one example many years ago from my time in government, but I think that there is more to this than the minister suggests, but I realize that we're probably not going to get any further debate-wise, so I will leave it aside for now and move on.

Can the minister provide some further update on the north and south development areas that were asked about today in

Question Period? The government did a press release about the work that is being done right now with regard to geophysical studies as well as a number of other studies that will determine which is a more appropriate next location for Whitehorse's future residential development.

Both areas, as my colleague — the Member for Watson Lake — noted in her question earlier today, will come with a significant price tag and a need to get moving quickly if they are going to be able to address the ongoing demand for residential lot development in the Yukon and particularly in Whitehorse.

Can the minister provide any further timelines about the press release — the activities outlined in the press release that was done by his government not too long ago with regard to the studies for those two growth areas?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We're talking about two areas: Long Lake and McLean Lake — very different geography from what we see in Whistle Bend; there is a lot of bedrock, as I'm told. They are identified in the city's official community plan as future development areas in Whitehorse. They are the next generation. So, as we phase out of Whistle Bend, we're going to move into one of these two areas.

I have been — in earlier remarks today, I spoke about how the Premier had identified in early 2017 that land development would be one of the biggest concerns that we had as our territory grew and the pressure that we were going to feel, and here it is. Nine years later, we're still feeling it. So, that's where we're at.

When I came into this role at Community Services, I did deal with Mayor Curtis at the time about the official community plan, urging council at that time to get the official community plan in place that identified these two growth areas so that we could start working on it. Mayor Cabott actually brought the official community plan into being during her term. It was a little while after she was elected — that Mayor Cabott was elected — that we got the official community plan passed by that council. It did identify these two areas. Now we are working to begin mapping out and identifying how to develop these two areas.

We are coordinating feasibility studies, building on initial feasibility reports that were completed early in 2017. This work is being carried out on a joint memorandum of understanding with Kwanlin Dün, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, the City of Whitehorse, and the Yukon government through a joint work plan and working group. So, there are a lot of players in these two new developments for the next residential subdivision in Whitehorse.

We're hoping to have feasibility work targeted for completion — well, feasibility work is hoped to be completed in the summer of this year to enable high-level master plan development and public engagement. We're hoping that may start later this year.

This is going to be a long time. I know that the members opposite were throwing out figures — \$700 million I think was the number that the Member for Watson Lake made today. You can maybe check with the member to see if that number is

correct, but I believe that it was \$700 million, and that is a big number.

Whistle Bend itself is hundreds of millions of dollars in development so far, and it has been done over the course of 15 to 20 years. This will be parsed out in smaller developments over time. We are going to have to find infrastructure dollars. With Canada in a nation-building state, perhaps infrastructure dollars will become more accessible to this territory.

There is no mistaking that this is going to be a long-term plan. It is going to roll out over many, many years just like Whistle Bend has. One of the things that I advocated for with Mayor Curtis is having two areas identified, not simply one. So, now we have a number of different areas that we can grow into as a city. I think that is smart — to have many more options — and I was glad to see that in the official community plan. It was something that I was pushing for early in my term here. I am glad to see that.

It is going to cost a lot of money. That cost will be broken down into smaller chunks. In the meantime, we are still building at Whistle Bend and we are looking at the tank farm, which has a really large number of lots that the City of Whitehorse can access to transition from Whistle Bend through to this next development. That will be the transition zone for the city, I imagine, going forward. To do that, though, we have a lot of private landowners. We are a small-holder player in that development; it's a private development. We haven't seen an awful lot of private development in the City of Whitehorse. We are dabbling in it in a couple of places, but when you start to get into large developments like the tank farm, we need rules. The city doesn't currently have a lot of explicit rules for developers inside the City of Whitehorse. There is no real certainty about what expenses they are going to be responsible for as a developer.

Working with the City of Whitehorse over the years — because we are a government, we have much more flexibility, a lot deeper pockets, a lot more flexibility to deal with the City of Whitehorse when gaps in the rules materialize. But a private developer is not going to have that same certainty or that same flexibility. The City of Whitehorse needs clear rules of engagement with private land developers before anybody is going to have the confidence to invest their money in a private land development in Whitehorse. I had these conversations with the former mayor — but certainly with the new mayor and council.

I have been told that those bylaws to start to define what a private developer will be responsible for and what the city will be responsible for — and others — will be laid out in bylaws starting this fall. That will lay the groundwork for future development in the City of Whitehorse by private developers, but that legislative framework is not in existence. It's not up to snuff yet. I am looking forward to seeing the work that the city is planning on revealing this fall. It will start to lay the groundwork for what private developers are responsible for and what the city is responsible for in terms of land development, off-site infrastructure, and all those types of important decisions when it comes to land development.

That is a long answer. I thank you all for bearing with me.

Mr. Dixon: Can the minister provide an update on the Mountain View Golf Course irrigation project? We heard that it had been delayed. Can he provide an update on the current timeline? What is the current budget of that project and the status of the project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: After a long, involved, thoughtful answer on the tank farm, I'm getting whiplash. Now we're on to golf courses, so that's great. I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Official Opposition.

My understanding is that the Mountain View Golf Course irrigation system has been tendered. The contractor is expected to begin work on that job in May. We are hoping to have the whole job completed by the summer of 2026. The budget is about \$1.5 million.

Mr. Dixon: Can I have an update from the minister on the gymnastics facility in Whistle Bend? What will the operation and maintenance budget be for the year, and who will pay that operation and maintenance cost for the gymnastics facility?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can say that I have been in the facility and it is absolutely spectacular. We have a climbing wall the likes of which I've never seen in my lifetime. We have a gymnastics facility that is going to be absolutely magnificent with bleachers. I think it will be absolutely an incredible asset to the citizens of Whitehorse. I was at a climbing wall event at the McBride Museum that went on, I think, from 5:00 to 9:00. When I was there, I think there were probably 100 or 140 people inside the event at that time, all signing up for and learning more about the climbing facility. That number — 140 — had been rotating through the entire evening. There were hundreds of people who had gone through that facility and, of course, the Whitehorse gymnastics club has a really robust membership, and so it's going to be just a real jewel in the city.

I'm saying this because I am lucky enough to have worked very closely with both of those groups and with the federal government in securing funds for this absolutely incredible facility.

Once it is done, again, I transition over to my good colleague at Highways and Public Works and hand it over to him. He has the less glamorous work of actually maintaining the building and everything else. So, I don't, at CS, have eyes on the operations of this amazing facility. I know that the gymnastics club — and in talking to the climbers — they all have a stake in this facility and in the cost of running it, so I don't know how that cost-share agreement is going to work out. I do know that my colleague at Highways and Public Works will have much more information on anticipated O&M costs of that building. So, having found out that he's not yet through debate on his fantastic budget on highways, I would encourage you to ask similar questions when he is on the floor here in my stead.

Mr. Dixon: In regard to the ongoing flooding issues at McConnell Lake, I understand that there have been some proposed mitigation measures that have been created. Can the minister provide an update on the consideration of those mitigation measures for the ongoing flooding faced by the residents adjacent to and nearby McConnell Lake?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will say that we have commissioned multiple studies for the McConnell Lake area searching for an effective risk-mitigation option. The results of these studies have been shared with residents in April of last year. Those studies revealed extremely high costs for large-scale projects without any certainty of success in mitigating the risk of future events. With this information, the Yukon government shifted focus surrounding McConnell Lake to mitigation through property-specific approaches. The Yukon government will continue to engage with residents of McConnell Lake in determining the best property-specific mitigation option for each resident.

So, that's that. We are working with residents out there to find ways of protecting their individual properties, and the other — so, that's the approach. The good news is that the snow cover in the Southern Lakes this year is a lot less heavy than it had been in former years, so we are hoping that perhaps residents will get a bit of a reprieve this year, but we'll see. There are a lot of factors going into that, and we will work with each individual resident to find a way to protect properties in that region.

Mr. Dixon: Deputy Chair, in regard to the Canada housing infrastructure fund that was recently — it was an agreement recently signed between Canada and Yukon. How will municipalities apply for projects under that fund? Do they apply to Canada? Do they apply to the Yukon? Or is there some other process?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Deputy Chair, this will be my last answer of the afternoon.

The federal budget 2024 announced \$6 billion in the Canada housing infrastructure fund to support housing growth and densification through construction and upgrading of core public infrastructure. There is a two-pronged approach to program delivery. \$1 billion is coming over eight years, which is available directly to municipalities to support urgent infrastructure needs that will directly create more housing. That's a portion of the fund that the municipalities will apply for directly.

Then another \$5 billion has been allocated for agreements with provinces and territories to support long-term priorities. The Yukon signed the Canada housing infrastructure fund agreement in March of this year — so just a couple of weeks ago. Spending is expected to be wrapped up in the fiscal year of 2033-34. Through this agreement, Yukon will receive \$74.2 million from Canada, and we'll contribute \$24.7 million to address housing-enabled infrastructure.

The purpose of the program is to support governments who own and operate water, waste-water, storm-water, and landfill infrastructure. The program is not aimed at for-profit private sector recipients, and the Government of Yukon is currently developing a process to support the project selection.

With that, Deputy Chair, I move that you report progress.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Whitehorse West that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

MLA Tredger: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 217, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2025-26*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. Tuesday.

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

The following legislative return was tabled April 17, 2025:

35-1-170

Response to oral question from Ms. Van Bibber re: teacher staffing (McLean)

Written notice was given of the following motion April 17, 2025:

Motion No. 1270

Re: scheduling of 2025 Spring Sitting (Streicker)