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HANSARD

Wednesday, May 19, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

SPECIAL SITTING

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2021 Special 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 — Emily Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre

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

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
Emily Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
Annie Blake	Vuntut Gwitchin

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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, May 19, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we could all please welcome several guests who are here today for our tribute to Yukon Mining and Geology Week. We have with us Anne Turner, the executive director of the Yukon Mining Alliance. She is also the president and founder of Yukon Women in Mining.

We have Leneath Yanson, project manager for the Yukon Mining Alliance. We have Randy Lewis, circumpolar advisor for CSR Management Inc., and Darlene Laureano, also from CSR Management.

From the Yukon Chamber of Mines, we have President Ed Peart. We have the executive director, Samson Hartland — and also a city councillor. We have directors from the board: Nikolett Kovacs and Lorealee Johnstone. We have executive policy analyst Brianne Warner and the president of the Yukon Prospectors Association, Grant Allan.

Could we welcome them, please?

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of National Road Safety Week

Hon. Mr. Clarke: I rise today to pay tribute to National Road Safety Week, the Canada Safety Council's annual campaign to raise awareness about the behaviours that put drivers, passengers, and other road users most at risk.

It is a national call to action for Canadians to take greater precautions and adopt safer habits when behind the wheel. Too many lives are lost and people injured every year in Canada because of bad decisions, particularly when it comes to impaired driving, distracted driving, and speeding.

It is no coincidence that National Road Safety Week falls during the Victoria Day long weekend — a weekend when Canada's roads and highways see a surge in traffic volumes.

As Canadians celebrate, it is also a time when we see a rise in the number and severity of accidents due to impaired driving. Alcohol, drugs, and excessive speed are not the only menaces that we need to worry about, however. Distracted driving is now the number one killer on Canadian roads. According to the Canada Safety Council, texting while driving makes a crash or a near crash 23 times more likely.

As difficult as it may be to not take that call or to ignore that text, it is important that Yukoners do not pick up their phones. If you are driving, leave the phone alone.

Mr. Speaker, it's up to each and every one of us to take responsibility and make safe driving habits a top priority, not just this week but each and every time we get behind the wheel.

As a government, we're also doing what we can to make Yukon's roads and highways safer. For instance, we're rewriting the *Motor Vehicles Act* to accommodate advances in technology and to reflect best practices.

We're working with Mothers Against Drunk Driving — or drinking and driving — the RCMP, and other local stakeholders to combat the danger of alcohol- and drug-impaired driving, and together with the RCMP and National Safety Code officers, we're conducting road checks of commercial vehicles throughout the territory to ensure that they are operating in a safe manner. The safety and well-being of Yukoners remains a priority for government.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish all Yukoners a safe and fun-filled summer. While enjoying all that our beautiful territory has to offer, please be mindful of construction zones, observe posted speed limits, and be cautious of wildlife on the highway or on the right-of-way. As Yukoners, please watch out for one another.

Applause

Mr. Hassard: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize May 18 to 24 as Canada Road Safety Week, driven by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police as an initiative to increase public compliance with safe driving measures.

We are all responsible, as drivers, to ensure that our roads are safe for other drivers, passengers, and pedestrians. Most accidents are preventable, and drivers must be aware that the choices they make before and while on the road are what determine the risk of accident for themselves and others. Impaired driving is unfortunately still a problem across this country and the main cause of vehicular accidents. Alcohol, drugs, and fatigue all lead to impairment. Distracted driving is another leading cause of accidents and has finally been acknowledged as such and legislated across the country.

Another law that has come into effect in many jurisdictions is "slow down, move over". The Official Opposition has been pushing for such legislation, as well, here in the Yukon. This legislation would require drivers to slow down and move over when passing emergency vehicles and other workers such as tow-truck drivers, carrier compliance vehicles, electrical workers, and others who are at risk by just doing their jobs on the side of the road. We will continue to advocate for this legislation on behalf of those workers and urge Yukoners to remember the importance of "slow down, move over" when passing vehicles with lights flashing.

This week, and always, take a look at the decisions that you make as a driver and make sure that those decisions are the best for everyone sharing the road with you.

Applause

Ms. Tredger: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to National Road Safety Week. Think about how much time Yukoners spend on the road, how proud we are of our highways, our roads — big and small. For our communities, they are our lifeline. They also connect us to the places we love so much — our campgrounds, our cabins, and our tourism operators. They are our access to rivers and mountains and forests. I imagine that we were all alarmed to hear the results of Operation Corridor — a blitz of commercial vehicle road checks done by the RCMP and Highways and Public Works in early May.

There were charges for fatigue and impaired driving, speeding, poorly secured loads, and careless driving. This highlights the need for a week like this one — a time when we pause to think about road safety. For most of us, driving is something that we do every day. We don't even hesitate as we get in our vehicles and make our way through our towns and across our territory. It is only when there is a tragedy that we think of the risks.

So, today, I encourage us all to pause and remember that it is up to all of us to keep each other safe. Let's work together to keep our roads safe for all Yukoners.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon Mining and Geology Week and National Mining Week

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I rise today to pay tribute to rocks — to pay tribute to the Yukon Mining and Geology Week taking place this year from May 31 to June 4.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon Mining and Geology Week provides an opportunity to share information about exploration and mining with Yukoners, to think about the history of mining and the future that we will shape together. This year, the Yukon Chamber of Mines, Yukon Women in Mining, and the Yukon Geological Survey will partner with the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, Yukon Producers Group, Yukon Prospectors Association, and the Government of Yukon to commemorate and celebrate Yukon's 125-year mining history.

Yukoners can discover geology, historic sites, and iconic places. The public will also be able to virtually explore projects and mines through online tours and videos. Mining and Geology Week helps Yukoners to better understand the mineral sector and how it shapes our territory.

The event is also an opportunity to share information with Yukon students. Many events are fun, educational, hands-on, and include the annual "Where?" challenge — a contest that challenges kids to discover where their stuff comes from. Youth who take an interest in geology can now train for mining-related careers at Yukon University.

Another important part of Mining and Geology Week is sharing of information. Data on mineral exploration and production highlights in the territory are published every year by the Yukon Geological Survey. For anyone with an interest in rocks, these publications are an invaluable source of information.

Mining and exploration contribute significantly to Yukon's economy by supporting local businesses and

communities throughout the territory and providing good-paying jobs to Yukoners. The mining industry provides many opportunities for Yukoners and we look ahead to a future for the industry where these opportunities continue to grow and develop. Working with First Nations and municipalities, we are building a foundation for a sustainable mining industry that protects the environment, that provides tangible benefits for our communities, and that aligns with the vision in Yukon's *Our Clean Future* strategy.

The Yukon's mineral sector will play a critical role in shifting our energy economy to a renewable energy future.

To wrap up, Mr. Speaker, thanks to the folks at the Yukon Chamber of Mines and everyone else who has done a fantastic job organizing the upcoming events. I encourage all Yukoners to take time to join the activities put on by the Chamber of Mines and the Yukon Geological Survey during Mining and Geology Week.

On behalf of the Liberal government, happy 125th anniversary for mining week in the Yukon — happy quasiquascentennial and happy rocks.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Mining Week which takes place each year during the second week in May. We celebrate the importance of mining to the lives of Canadians, Yukoners, and acknowledge the incredible contributions of mining through our history.

The last couple of years have been a little different here in the Yukon, forcing us to press pause on some of our usual much-anticipated events. Yukon's Mining and Geology Week — hosted by the Chamber of Mines, Yukon Women in Mining, the Yukon Geological Survey, and other industry partners — is well known among Yukon kids who, in past years, have looked forward to smashing geodes and climbing on equipment, among other things.

This year, Yukon Mining and Geology Week will take place from May 31 to June 4. Industry and partners will be hosting a variety of activities, including a scavenger hunt and field trips to the Whitehorse Copperbelt.

The Yukon has 125 years of rich history in mining and exploration. The benefits of mining on the territory, both direct and indirect, spread across all areas of our economy and throughout each community. Operating mines, including placer operations, employ hundreds of Yukoners. More are put to work during the exploration and drilling phases.

Revenues from mining in the territory flow through our communities to our First Nations and allow significant investments, not only in infrastructure but in educational and social areas.

Mining has shaped the Yukon into what it is today, driving innovation, promoting environmental awareness and well-being throughout the territory. We are proud to celebrate mining as a foundation of Yukon's incredible history and look forward to future years of mining and exploration across the territory.

Thank you to our mining industry and industry partners — some of them are here today — for their work and dedication to mining, exploration, sustainability, and our environment. Let us just hope that your licences and permits come in on time and your gold pans are full.

Applause

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP to encourage folks to pan the riches of this year's Yukon Mining and Geology Week. For 11 years, the Yukon Chamber of Mines, Yukon Women in Mining, and the Yukon Geological Survey, with their partners from the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, the Yukon Producers Group, Yukon Prospectors Association, and both the Yukon Department of Economic Development and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, as well as the Department of Education, have worked together to showcase Yukon's mining history.

This year, in celebration of Yukon's 125-year mining history, events have been organized. I invite Yukoners of all ages to safely explore the territory to discover geology, historic sites, iconic places, as well as virtually visit exploration projects and mines through online tours and videos.

Schools and families, friends and mining week adventurers will be able to share their Yukon Mining and Geology Week explorations online, showcasing their discoveries on Facebook and Instagram.

I thank my colleagues for the information and history of the week that they have shared, and I am going to drill down to an event that has captured my imagination.

So, if you are like me, you love a good scavenger hunt. The Yukon Geological Survey has planned one heck of a Yukon scavenger hunt where you will learn about geological locations and occurrences, rocks and minerals, iconic places and paths, businesses, services, virtual projects, and, of course, mines. This event has been organized to allow participation from every corner of our territory, both in person and virtually. Mining and Geology Week will have exhilarating prize categories, and the Chamber of Mines has hit the trail to support local businesses in search of a bonanza of exciting prizes. So, if you plan on doing one activity during Mining and Geology Week, I suggest you get ready to explore your own backyard through this year's scavenger hunt.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I have two letters for tabling. The first is from the Yukon Real Estate Association to the Premier, dated May 13, requesting consultation on the proposed rent control, and the second is from the Yukon Real Estate Association to the Premier, dated May 17, noting that no consultation occurred on the rent control.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I have two documents for tabling. The first is a transcript from yesterday's Question Period regarding

procurement, where the Member for Copperbelt South quoted inaccurately comments from a recent debate. The second is a transcript from the actual debate that occurred in the recent election and clearly demonstrates that what the member opposite said yesterday is inaccurate.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Mr. Cathers: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Highways and Public Works to make improving Takhini River Road a high priority and move forward with a major upgrade to the roadbed, ditches, and road surface.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with commercial garbage haulers in the City of Whitehorse to restore commercial garbage service to customers on the Mayo Road, Takhini Hot Springs Road, and Ibex Valley areas.

Ms. Blake: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that patients' voices are heard on the decisions with regard to coverage for medications by creating a patient advisory committee to advise the formulary working group.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Dempster fibre project

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, our Liberal government is investing in infrastructure to support our communities and help grow our economy. Today, I am pleased to provide an update on the Dempster fibre project. An 800-kilometre fibre optic line will run along the Dempster Highway between Dawson City, Yukon and Inuvik, Northwest Territories.

Reliable telecommunications are vital to diversifying our economy and helping Yukoners participate fully in the digital economy. This project will provide Yukoners and communities across the north with access to more reliable telecommunication and Internet services.

ROHL Global Networks, in partnership with Dagoo Services, has been awarded a \$67-million contract for the construction of the Dempster fibre line. I am particularly happy to share that more than 20 percent of the contract value will be subcontracted to First Nation businesses. This has been a long time coming, Mr. Speaker, and through our work on this important project, we are writing a new story — one that takes ambitious groundbreaking steps forward in many areas.

This is the first transboundary infrastructure project led by the Yukon. Since January 2019, we have worked closely through consultation and engagement with the eight First Nation and indigenous groups whose traditional territory the fibre line will cross here in Yukon and in the Northwest Territories. This engagement has occurred at all stages of project development, from inception to project design, from procurement methods to job opportunities. As a result of these discussions, project operations will ensure protection of heritage and social and cultural resources while minimizing environmental impacts with special consideration for the protection of permafrost, wetlands, caribou, and nesting birds.

We have provided training courses to First Nation and indigenous citizens in both wildlife and environmental monitoring. This certification, recognized by the Environmental Careers Organization Canada, will lead to the graduates having employment opportunities during the construction of the line and for their future career. This project is the first of its size in the Yukon that incorporated a negotiated procurement plan that will result in direct employment and training opportunities for First Nation citizens and subcontracting opportunities for First Nation businesses.

Construction of the fibre line will begin this summer in Dawson City and is scheduled to be completed in 2024. This is an important milestone for the Dempster fibre project. Investing in more reliable telecommunications and Internet service for Yukon communities will help Yukoners to participate fully in the digital economy. Moreover, it will also bring real economic benefits to northern communities as well as employment opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, this project will ensure that northern communities have Internet and cellphone services that they can rely on even in the event of a cut to the fibre line like the one that occurred last week.

Mr. Kent: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to respond to this ministerial statement today.

It is important for Yukoners to know the timeline related to this project over the last five years under the Liberal government in order to understand the massive mismanagement of this project by the Liberals.

In 2016, the project was ready to go. In fact, the Liberal election platform from 2016 even promised to — and I quote: “... accelerate the completion of the fibre optic redundancy project.” In 2017, the former Deputy Premier decided to make his mark on the file and, instead of accelerating it, he paused it. In fact, he even took the bold move of attacking Northwestel in the media. To quote from a February 2017 *Yukon News* article — and I quote: “... Northwestel hopes to apply for permits in March and begin construction on the Dempster line in the winter.

“Pillai said that’s news to him. He accused Northwestel of taking a ‘cavalier approach’ in assuming the Dempster project is going ahead.”

Shortly afterward, the former Deputy Premier iced the plan and went on and did a study to look at building a redundant line

toward Skagway rather than through the Dempster. He did this despite this study already having been done years earlier.

Moving along on the timeline of mismanagement by the Liberals, in 2018, the Premier said — and I quote: “... you can be guaranteed that the route has been picked and the work will be done this summer.” Of course, 2018 went by without the work being done that summer. In the summer of 2018, the government released a fact sheet about the project that said construction would start in 2019. Later that year, the Highways and Public Works minister said that work would begin in the fall of 2019. Of course, we went through 2019 without the work beginning. In 2019, the Liberal government issued a newsletter on the project, which stated that construction was supposed to start in March 2020 — again, another missed timeline by the Liberals.

Moving along, fall 2019 documents sent to the Mackenzie Valley Review Board changed the construction date yet again — this time to spring of 2020 — and they further said that it would be completed in two years.

So, the Liberal government’s own environmental assessment documents said that construction would start in spring of 2020 and that it would be completed by 2022. Well, we went through the spring of 2020 without construction. We know that construction will not be completed in 2022.

Moving along to last year, the Liberal government submitted a YESAB application in the fall of 2020. That application says that construction is now expected to be completed in 2025.

The timeline on this project does not paint a pretty picture for the Liberals. Year after year, they continue to miss timelines — at least half a dozen timelines that they have missed with respect to this project — and I think it is important to note that every single one of these timelines are ones that they themselves committed to.

Unfortunately, as a result of these Liberal delays and mismanagement, our territory is still vulnerable to telecommunications outages like the one that we experienced last week.

So, I appreciate the new Minister of Highways and Public Works telling us that construction will now be completed in 2024, but, of course, you will have to forgive Yukoners for being skeptical as the last two ministers in charge of the Dempster fibre project missed every single timeline that they set for themselves.

Ms. Tredger: As mentioned, last week’s interruption of Internet service was a reminder to all Yukoners of the importance of the Dempster fibre line project.

While for some folks it might be a good reason to take a night off from the latest Netflix show or to send the kids to play outside, interruptions of service like these can have much more serious consequences. From our 911 service to any financial transaction that requires a credit card, Yukoners depend on reliable infrastructure to conduct their day-to-day lives and to respond to emergencies.

I would also like to note that this project is a very long time coming. We’ve been talking about it for 10 years. It was first

talked about and promised by a Yukon Party government, but little actual progress took place. The previous Liberal government also saw this project being delayed, so it is a relief that work will actually start on it this summer.

It is also important to note that this project will improve our telecommunications infrastructure, not only in Whitehorse but in many communities along the route that will have the redundancy required to prevent outages, as we saw last week, once the project is complete.

We're happy to hear about the work that has been done with the First Nations whose traditional territory is affected by this project and that economic, cultural, and environmental considerations have been at the centre of these discussions.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: I have not been the Minister of Highways and Public Works for long, but I do know the history of this file.

During their time in government, Yukon Party started looking into different fibre routes, but nothing happened beyond that. During the 2016 election, the former Yukon Party leader stated that the fibre line was in the works. That was not true as there was no plan, no consultation had been done, and there was no budget. In short, the Yukon Party never got it done.

It wasn't until our Liberal government was elected that we made real headway. Less than five years after taking office, our Liberal government has secured funding with the Government of Canada for nearly \$60 million, negotiated a deal with Northwestel to operate and maintain the line at no cost to government, secured the permits, and gotten shovels in the ground. Compare that to 14 years under the Yukon Party when no progress was made. If this is not accelerating the project under a Liberal government, then what is?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Order. The member has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: It's all right. Our Liberal government is investing in infrastructure to support our communities and to help grow our economy. We are pleased to be moving this project forward. Reliable telecommunications are vital for diversifying our economy and helping Yukoners participate fully in our digital economy. This project will provide Yukoners and communities across the north with access to more reliable telecommunications and Internet services.

Construction of the fibre line will begin this summer in Dawson City and is scheduled to be complete in 2024. Investing in more reliable telecommunications and Internet services for Yukon communities will help Yukoners participate fully in the digital economy. It will bring real economic benefits to northern communities as well as employment opportunities. This project will ensure that northern communities have Internet and cellphone service that they can rely on, even in the event of a cut to the fibre line like the one that occurred last week.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: COVID-19 vaccination verification measures — protection of privacy

Mr. Cathers: Two weeks ago, the government announced that they would be relaxing border restrictions on May 25. That date is now just six days away. But, like many things from the Liberal-NDP coalition, the details in the implementation plan are left to the last minute. Yukoners are wondering how government is going to relax border restrictions while balancing safety and protection of privacy.

Yesterday, we learned that the minister did not even consult the privacy commissioner prior to arriving at the decision to make people sign waivers to give access to their private health information. As the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General, why did the minister not think that it was important to consult with the privacy commissioner about accessing people's confidential medical records?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question. I had the opportunity to answer this yesterday. I also had an opportunity to speak to the media about this yesterday, but here we are again — I'm happy to reiterate what I said regarding the plans going forward.

Unfortunately, the Yukon Party takes a stance that I'm not really understanding. I'm wondering if the Yukon Party supports changes to self-isolation requirements or not. That's not really clear. Complaints come with respect to there being no advance notice, but we have been very clear all along that, in the event that something is recommended by the chief medical officer of health — his recommendations are based on science — it then becomes government's responsibility to consider those, to respond, and to implement them if they are satisfactory.

The process going forward — the criticism often comes that they haven't been told soon enough about things or, if they have been told soon enough about things, they have not been told enough details about them. So, there is really no wining, Mr. Speaker. The truth is that we provide the information to Yukoners as soon as it becomes available, and we are mindful of protecting them at every stage of this process.

Mr. Cathers: The minister did not answer the questions yesterday, and if she is wondering what we are saying, we are reminding the minister that government has an obligation to respect people's rights and the rule of law and to be forthcoming.

May 25 is six days away, and the government's announcement is still short on details. This has become common with the Liberal-NDP coalition, including their haphazard plan for rent control where details were not announced until less than 24 hours before implementation. We have seen it as well with the decision to reverse the Liberal government's cuts to individualized education plans for students. Now we are seeing it with respect to their plans to gain access to private health information of Yukoners.

As we have already noted, the southern border is staffed by private contractors. Under this plan, private contractors will be asking Yukoners questions about private and confidential health information. How will the minister ensure that the

privacy of Yukoners is protected, and what assurance does the minister have that what she is proposing is not against privacy legislation?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Our government has been committed all along to a one-government approach. That is no different from our response to COVID-19, which has been, no doubt, as Yukoners know, lengthy and complex.

The Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Social Services, and the Department of Community Services, to name just three, are working diligently on the process of implementing the most recent recommendations of the chief medical officer of health. As a result, we are working together to ascertain the expertise that is necessary.

Let us be clear — and what Yukoners deserve to know is that vaccines will need to be verified. That is not just here in the Yukon; it is across the country; it is across the world. With the success of the Yukon vaccines and the success of our opportunities here to keep COVID-19 at bay and to keep Yukoners safe, we are in the enviable position of being very early in that process to determine how that work is done.

We are doing that work with our partners across the territory, across this government, and certainly across Canada and the world to determine how to best implement the opportunity to verify vaccines in the least intrusive way possible.

Mr. Cathers: Well, Mr. Speaker, the rule of law still matters. Today, privacy commissioners from across the country released a joint statement about proposals such as the one the Liberals are proposing. The statement says — and I quote: “... it is an encroachment on civil liberties that should be taken only after careful consideration.”

It goes on to say this about vaccine passports and similar measures — and I quote: “... must be developed and implemented in compliance with applicable privacy laws. They should also incorporate privacy best practices in order to achieve the highest level of privacy protection...”

It also specifically mentions the importance of consulting with privacy commissioners. Despite this, the minister did not consult with the privacy commissioner. Since she didn't consult with the privacy commissioner, how can she assure Yukoners that this encroachment on civil liberties will incorporate the highest level of privacy protections as noted in the joint statement by privacy commissioners from across the country or that it is even legal?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I almost don't know how to go there, to be frank with you. I think that the allegation or the insinuation that somehow the Government of Yukon is acting against the legal interests required is in fact an insinuation, and it's not clear information for Yukoners. Yukoners deserve clear information, Mr. Speaker, and they deserve facts that are based on science and a government that puts their safety ahead of everything.

We have heard the opposition suggest opening the borders to Alberta earlier. Again, I ask the question whether or not they are supportive of these changes that have been recommended by the chief medical officer of health as we go forward. I hope that it won't surprise the members opposite that, as a former

Information and Privacy Commissioner, I completely agree with the statement that came out from the information and privacy commissioners across Canada today. It is excellent guidance. It is a great reminder that the privacy interests of Yukoners and Canadians must be paramount. Again, we will be verifying vaccinations so that we can move forward as a country, but we will be doing so in the least intrusive way possible.

Question re: Whistle Bend school

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, last week, when I asked about the Whistle Bend school, the minister said that the project is not delayed. He said — and I quote: “... it is still on time with respect to the planning and ultimately getting shovels in the ground.”

However, in our briefing with the Department of Education, we were told that the school has been delayed because of additional time needed for design work and review processes.

The government Bids and Tenders website also indicates that the project has been delayed four times. Can the minister explain the discrepancy between what he told us and what the Department of Education told us?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you for the question from the Member for Porter Creek Centre. This is from the perspective of Highways and Public Works. This is the most recent information that I have, but I can certainly return to the department and return to my officials, and I will get back to the member opposite in due course with respect to the schedule. But the information that I provided to the House last week is the most recent information that I have, but as indicated, I will return to the member with updated information as required.

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, it is challenging for us and for our constituents when departments provide us different information from what the minister provides us in the Legislature. When I asked about the budget for the school, the minister refused to provide a clear answer. But when the former minister addressed this issue back in March, he said that they have budgeted \$36.5 million for this project.

Can the minister confirm that this is still the current budget for this school?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question from the Member for Porter Creek Centre. As I believe I answered last week, in the five-year capital project, money is set aside for schooling priority projects. What I said — I believe — is that \$10.5 million is budgeted in the current construction year for the Whistle Bend school.

Just to confirm as well, Mr. Speaker, building a new school for the community of Whistle Bend is a high priority for our government. We have worked with the Department of Education and Whistle Bend project advisory committee throughout the project to ensure a schematic design that incorporates important community elements. A tender for this design/build project was issued on March 9 of this year. Construction of the school is scheduled to begin in late 2021, with the occupancy of the school planned for the winter of 2023. I know that the vibrant, dynamic, and rapidly growing

community of Whistle Bend — those families are excited to have a state-of-the-art school being built in that community, which will house, I believe, up to 425 students. So, exciting days are ahead for Whistle Bend.

Ms. Clarke: Last week, I asked about the traffic impacts of the new school on Whistle Bend and Mountainview Drive. The minister shrugged and said that was the city's problem. However, the government is building an infrastructure project that will significantly impact traffic. So, they share responsibility.

The document in the tender package for the new school includes a traffic study. That study says that the school will add over 100 new trips in and out of Whistle Bend during the peak hours in the morning. Will the minister commit to working with the city to take measures to alleviate the traffic that Whistle Bend will face as a result of the new school?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you for that final question from the Member for Porter Creek Centre. I thank her for her concern and advocacy for her constituents in Whistle Bend.

One of the overarching purposes of building an elementary school in a new subdivision would be, in my view, to reduce the in and out traffic, because you will actually have students who are resident in Whistle Bend and they will be, hopefully — through active transportation — bicycling, walking, or whatever they might be doing, to their school.

It's certainly possible that there will be some traffic coming in, but I would think that the overall impact would be positive because those students would not be leaving Whistle Bend.

Of course, in the big picture, the Department of Highways and Public Works will work closely with the City of Whitehorse. We have a strong working relationship. Ultimately, if different plans have to be made with respect to traffic flows in Whistle Bend, then we will engage in those discussions with the city.

Question re: Social housing

Ms. Tredger: Over the last few years, a growing number of Yukoners have been struggling with homelessness. Many more have insecure housing and are hopping between short-term rentals and couch surfing for months on end as a last resort.

NGOs have worked hard to support Yukoners in these situations, stepping in to fill in the gaps left in government services. Unfortunately, the housing shortage means that many people are living long term in hotel rooms. We have heard countless stories about the often unsafe conditions that these clients face — many of whom are families with young kids.

For years now, the government has been paying hotels every month to house social assistance clients who can't find other more appropriate long-term accommodation. Does the minister know how many people are living long term in hotel rooms in this territory?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: First and foremost, I think that it's important that we identify the fact that our government recognizes that stable, affordable housing is foundational to the health and well-being of all Yukoners.

Together with our partners, we continue to increase housing options for all Yukoners, and we are taking a multi-faceted approach to the increase in availability of housing across the territory. I do want to thank the Housing Corporation — as we talk about these challenges around housing — for the great work that is being done right now on the 47-unit building. I want to touch upon the fact that this is, again, going to alleviate the immense pressure that we are seeing in the housing continuum right now — and the amazing work that is being done and the folks who are overseeing that — the project manager — so again, great work being done.

Of course, we saw the development of almost 600 units in the 34th Legislative Assembly — again, taking more pressure off of the immense increase in folks looking for houses.

I also want to touch upon, before I hand it over to my colleague in Health and Social Services — specific to the questions around folks staying at hotel stays. I think it's also going to be very important, as we talk about wait-lists — we haven't talked about that yet, and I look forward to those questions, but I've asked the Housing Corporation to dig into the analytics to that so that we know exactly who is on that housing list as we go forward and discuss it.

Ms. Tredger: I'm glad to hear it acknowledged that having a safe place to live affects every part of a person's life because we know that people in stable housing are mentally and physically healthier. Even though this government frequently speaks of a whole-of-government approach or a one-government approach, it's clear that they haven't approached housing this way.

Yukoners are living in hotel rooms that are not set up for success. They lack basic needs like a full kitchen or safe shared spaces. Every month, the Yukon government pays thousands of dollars to house people in these less than ideal conditions.

Can the minister share how much the government spends to house Yukoners in hotel rooms every year?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I do not have the figure that the member opposite is looking for at my fingertips, but I will endeavour to provide it to her.

I should note, and take the opportunity, to speak to Yukoners about the important steps that we have taken to address housing and housing services, including the housing action plan here in the territory. It makes reference to and includes shelters and transitional housing, with particular attention paid to our most vulnerable Yukoners. We're also committed to ending and preventing homelessness through community collaboration initiatives, such as the Safe at Home plan and the Reaching Home program.

There is a clear need for low-barrier housing and shelter services for Yukoners who have complex care needs, and we must have ways to support all people. It is critical. We do, in fact, provide funding to support a number of the shelters in the territory, including the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter, the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre's Youth Emergency Shelter, Kaushee's Place, Betty's Haven, the Dawson Women's Shelter and the men's shelter, and the Help and Hope for Families women's shelter in Watson Lake, to name a few.

The Social Services division of Health and Social Services supports the Council of Yukon First Nations, as well, on a project that I will speak about, hopefully, again.

Ms. Tredger: Yukoners who live in hotels face the constant threat of eviction. Unlike regular tenants who must be given three month's notice, people who live in hotels have even less time to find a new place to live. Now, as hotel operators begin to consider reopening to travellers, Yukoners living at these hotels and motels are facing even more uncertainty and even more risk.

Does this government have a plan to protect Yukoners who live in hotels rooms once tourism in the territory picks up?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I just want to touch on the fact that, when we are looking at supports that are in place through the Yukon Housing Corporation — just for information for the public — again, I think now, with our COVID-19 rent assistance, we have helped over 170 households over the last number of months. I will endeavour to get some key information that you have requested on the relationship that we have between the government — whether it be Health and Social Services or housing — and how that relates for individuals who are staying in hotels. It has been a long practice — something that I do not think anybody in the Assembly wants to rely on, but there is a long history of that.

I will just make the statement that I know we can go through the long history of how the territory got here, and I do not think that does any justice. What I will say is that moving forward, it is really about working with my colleagues. I am excited to be doing that work, to be here and be accountable to both opposition benches. We have Community Services, Highways and Public Works, as well as Energy, Mines and Resources — we are really bringing those teams together. We are moving forward on Whistle Bend; we are moving forward on 5th Avenue and Rogers, and we are also supporting indigenous governments, as we saw in the announcement this week from Kwanlin Dün. I think it will take all those things.

Question re: Land use planning

Mr. Kent: I have a number of questions for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources regarding land use planning.

A little over three years ago, the former Deputy Premier announced what he called “a new way of doing business” when he tied a sub-regional land use plan to the environmental assessment decision document for a mining exploration tote road north of Keno City.

This new way of doing business has so far been a disaster, as the delays have caused uncertainty for companies and actually may have contributed to ATAC Resources refocussing their investments in Nevada this year. According to yukon.ca, the final draft plan for the Beaver River watershed was due in March 2021, which is one year later than what was committed to.

Can the minister tell us if this document is finished and, if so, when will the public have a chance to comment on it?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that we continue to work with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun toward finalizing a land use plan for the Beaver River

watershed, located north of Mayo. In November of last year, we denied ATAC Resources a permit to construct a tote road at that time. If ATAC Resources wishes to submit their own road access management plan again, they will need to reconsider the mitigations proposed to address the issues identified in our record of decision. I have had a quick call with ATAC and I look forward to talking with them further.

We will continue to accept and review applications from all claimholders in the area who are planning to carry out exploration programs. All applications will follow the typical assessment review and approval process.

I look forward to answering further questions. I will say that there was some slowdown due to COVID and I have asked for an update on anticipated timelines. I don't have a date in front of me here today, but I know that folks are continuing to work on it and we will continue to work with industry as well.

Mr. Kent: We have heard the Premier, over the past year or so, brag about where to get the most up-to-date information — and that is from yukon.ca. Yukon.ca says that the draft plan was to be finalized in March 2021, so obviously that statement and the website are incorrect or they need an update.

So, the evening before the Premier called an early election in March, the government put out a news release regarding a mineral staking withdrawal in the Dawson regional land use planning area. The amount of land withdrawn was 12 percent of the planning region and affected existing claimholders in the area.

So, can the minister tell us which individuals or organizations were consulted prior to withdrawing this land from mineral staking?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite for alerting me to the fact that there is something out of date on the website. I will reach out to the department; I am sure that we will get that updated, and I am sure that it was inadvertent. I am happy to try to make sure that we keep that information up to date.

Second of all, the member opposite asked about the conversation that was had with respect to withdrawals. So, what I will say is that the Government of Yukon and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation formed the Dawson land use planning commission in December 2018, and the commission is developing a land use plan for the Dawson region to achieve the objectives of chapter 11 of the *Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement*. The commission has amended the target date for the draft plan to May 2021 and the recommended plan to early 2022. The amended timeline reflects delays in operations — again, due to COVID-19.

The member opposite asked about the interim withdrawal of mineral staking in parts of the planning region, and the areas selected for the interim withdrawal represent key areas for conservation based on Government of Yukon analysis and the commission's preliminary conservation areas — and, of course, we would have been speaking with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in as well.

I'll answer further questions as they come.

Mr. Kent: So, the minister essentially confirmed that there was no consultation with affected claim holders or mining organizations like the Klondike Placer Miners' Association or

the chambers of mines. If I am incorrect in that assertion, he can correct the record in his final answer.

However, the NDP-Liberal coalition agreement commits to accelerating land use planning and committing additional resources to the process. Can the minister tell us what the budgetary impacts of this will be and when he anticipates this accelerated process to begin?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, I do want to say that we have no intention of circumventing the land use planning process. I will say that, when I first sat down in my new role with the Yukon Chamber of Mines, we had a good conversation. We talked about the Dawson land use plan. We talked about the areas withdrawn. We were actually working through the maps and talking about them — about where they have interests and where they have concerns. We agreed to continue that conversation. But I will continue to use the Dawson land use planning process and the planning processes as they have been laid out under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. So, that is how we'll work.

We have also indicated, based on the Peel plan — and I was really happy to see that come forward. We have said that, under the Peel plan, we would work iteratively to withdraw lands. I hear from environmental groups that we should be withdrawing more; I hear from industry groups saying that we should withdraw less. So, it's always a balancing act, Mr. Speaker. I think that the process that we work under is based on chapter 11 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite asked about a budget and timelines for the broader land use planning process. I would be happy to look into the budget —

Speaker: Order.

Question re: Mining legislation

Mr. Dixon: Section 4, item 3(c) of the confidence and supply agreement between the Liberals and the NDP reads as follows — and I quote: “To meet the commitment to Yukoners made at the time of devolution, successor legislation for the mining sector is required. Subject to meaningful consultation Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Liberal Government and the Yukon NDP Caucus will develop and implement such legislation during the term of the agreement.”

Mr. Speaker, the term of the agreement is from now until January 2023. If I am reading that right, they are proposing to have a new *Quartz Mining Act* and a new *Placer Mining Act* tabled by next fall.

Mr. Speaker, my question is simple. Is that correct? Can the government confirm that they are going to have these two pieces of legislation tabled by next fall?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will comment very quickly on CASA. Yukoners deserve a stable government, and this agreement allows us to work in that direction, especially when we are working through the pandemic. There are a number of items that are in the CASA, including a commitment to successor legislation.

I would like to thank the Yukon Party for also committing to successor legislation in the election campaign. It seems that all three parties think that this is an extremely important next

page for us to be turning together on reconciliation and in drawing down on self-government agreements, and we will again do our best job to work with CASA to make sure that these extremely important initiatives are underway and developed.

We also know that the Mineral Development Strategy Independent Panel released their final *Yukon Mineral Development Strategy and Recommendations* on April 15 this year — of course, successor legislation being one of the cornerstones of that documentation.

Again, I'm really glad to hear that the Yukon Party is now moving toward reconciliation and wants to see successor legislation happen, and we will do our utmost to make sure that we expedite this process.

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, the question was simple: Does the government intend to live up to the commitment in the CASA, which is to have that legislation tabled by next fall?

The CASA is unambiguous. The Premier was very ambiguous in that statement, but the CASA is unambiguous. It says that we will have these two pieces of legislation developed and implemented by January 2023. So, in order to do this, these pieces of legislation will have to be tabled in the Legislature in October of next year. That is just 16 months away, Mr. Speaker, and these are two massive pieces of legislation. They are complex and foundational to one of the most important aspects of our economy.

Does the Premier actually believe that it is possible to live up to this commitment?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: There are many things under the confidence and supply agreement that talk about how we will work together constructively with parties here in the Legislature, and I think that we did that because we heard from Yukoners that they wanted us to work together to serve them and to collaborate more. So, we'll continue to do that.

When I met with the Chamber of Mines — I understand that the Yukon NDP had also met with the Chamber of Mines, and one of the things that we all talked about — all of us — and what I think that the members opposite have also talked about was — just in the earlier questions from the Official Opposition House Leader — to make sure that we are engaging with industry, with the Chamber of Mines, and talking with them. I think that it's also there in the agreement — that it talks about how we will work with industry and discuss issues with them.

I think there is also, as we look through the mineral development strategy, a range of pieces under successor legislation — for example, the *Lands Act*, the *Placer Mining Act*, and the *Quartz Mining Act*. There is a lot of work that's there. What I think is that we are going to work hard for Yukoners in order to get to successor legislation. I'm happy to say that we're working together and happy that all parties in the Legislature agree on that.

Mr. Dixon: I would encourage the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to read the CASA because it makes no reference to “in consultation with industry” at all, although he just committed, on the floor, that he will do that.

But, Mr. Speaker, since I have him up, I have a simple question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. One

of the fundamental tenets of both of these pieces of legislation is, of course, the free-entry staking system. I would like to ask the new minister a very simple question: Does he support the free-entry staking system of granting mineral rights — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'll just disregard all the jeers from next door there. At the same time, there is nothing ambiguous about what we're saying. We made good on making an agreement with the NDP for the confidence and supply agreement, and we will absolutely endeavour to make sure that every single part of that agreement gets done in the time frame in which it was designed.

I think, really, Yukoners saw a lot of ambiguous language from the Yukon Party during the election campaign. It was interesting. One campaign ago, carbon pricing was the biggest voodoo ever invented, and then this year, the leader campaigned on carbon pricing. So, the only thing ambiguous right now is whether or not the Yukon Party stands by —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Order. The member has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you, sir — stands by their previous stance on carbon pricing or taxing or whether this is an important part of dealing with climate change.

When it comes to the specific agreement — the CASA — we will make good on the commitments. There is no ambiguous nature there at all, Mr. Speaker. We signed this agreement with the NDP and we'll make good on it.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 40

Clerk: Motion No. 40, standing in the name of Mr. Dixon.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Copperbelt North:

THAT the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments review the *Child Care Act* and all corresponding regulations; THAT the committee conduct public hearings; and

THAT the committee report to the Legislative Assembly on its findings and recommendations no later than May 19, 2022.

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to this motion, Motion No. 40.

As has been outlined, the intent of this motion is to provide some guidance to the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments with regard to its work — in particular, knowing that a review of the *Child Care Act* and all the corresponding regulations under that piece of legislation could be reviewed.

It also notes that the committee can conduct public hearings and that the committee should report to the Legislative Assembly on its findings with recommendations no later than May 2022 — which, of course, is one year from today.

By way of background, I was first elected as the leader about a year ago. Since that time, I have spent a lot of effort, resources, and time of my own to engage with this particular issue. It is one I am interested in and want to see developed and advanced in the territory.

One of the ways I have gone about that is by trying to immerse myself in the issue and connect with as many of the affected stakeholder groups as possible. In the early stages of my leadership over the last year, I began meeting with and reaching out to as many of these groups as possible. I have spoken to members of the childcare board and had conversations about their work. I have met with the Partners for Children organization, which falls under the Network for Healthy Early Human Development. That, of course, is a community action program for children — CAPC program — that provides workshops, information sessions, and supports to parents, children, and practitioners in the field.

I've met with representatives from the early childhood education community. Of course, there is now an early childhood education community of practice. I've tried my best to reach out to a variety of members of that organization, both here in Whitehorse and around the territory. I know that there are representatives from a number of other communities in that community as well.

I've done my best to reach out, tour, and visit as many childcare facilities as possible. I've also taken the time to tour and meet with senior officials from the Child Development Centre and with the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate.

While there is a lot to say about the childcare field and the early learning and childcare field as a whole, I think that one of the prevailing sentiments that I heard throughout my time over the last year of meeting with representatives in this field has been the need to review the *Child Care Act*. That is something that has been made very clear to me. It is something that I know a number of organizations have raised, either officially or unofficially. The sentiment is quite clear that the time is now to review this act.

One of the clearest explanations for this comes from the Yukon Child Care Board itself. As members know, the Child Care Board is a creature of the *Child Care Act* and it receives its authority from that act. Every few years, the Child Care Board issues a report to government which is then tabled in this Legislature. In those reports over the last number of years, the Child Care Board has, over and over again, suggested that the *Child Care Act* needs to be reviewed. I would point to the most recent annual report of the Child Care Board, which is from 2018-20.

In that report, the Child Care Board says the following: “Another project we have been working on is showing the need to modernize the *Child Care Act* for reasons including: the language and intent of the Act do not reflect current best practices in ELCC and lag somewhat behind many other jurisdictions in Canada; recommendations from the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission's review indicate the need to consider First Nation culture and heritage into ELCC; the Comprehensive Health Review conducted by the office of the Chief Medical Officer indicated a need to systemically rethink ELCC in Yukon, including bringing the management of child care services under the Department of Education; due to a declining pool of early childhood educators, the critical need to attract qualified people to the field (and retain them) is getting much harder; and the stability and resiliency of essential services in ongoing and future emergency situations should be proactively mitigated."

The Child Care Board, on this issue, concludes with a formal recommendation, and that recommendation reads: "The Yukon Child Care Board recommends that the *Child Care Act* be modernized to address current issues, reflect best practices in the field and to strengthen the ELCC industry as a whole."

Mr. Speaker, there are many other organizations that have expressed an interest in seeing the *Child Care Act* reviewed, but I think the Child Care Board's recommendations from their most recent annual report do a good job of summarizing those.

I would note that, before us on the floor of the Legislature in this Sitting, are changes to the *Child Care Act*. While those are good to see and we are happy to review those changes, I don't think that the changes that we have before us today represent the extent of the review that is contemplated by the Child Care Board. So, I think that more work is needed. That is the nature of this motion. It is clear from a number of aspects and players in the field of childcare that this act needs to be reviewed, so that is why we have identified this particular act and the corresponding regulations associated with the act.

Next, I think it's worth noting that this motion seeks to have the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments conduct this review. The reason for that, Mr. Speaker — as we discussed earlier this week, the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments is a standing committee of this Legislature that has a lot of potential and a lot of opportunity before it to conduct work on behalf of the Legislature and that its new composition — having come from a minority situation in the Legislature — allows for a different set-up on that committee.

Given the current structure of the committee — it being an all-party committee, one that is a standing committee of this Legislature and one that has an existing handbook and a set of rules associated with its operations — I think that it's well suited to take this work on.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is ultimately how we've determined that the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments is the appropriate body here. I know that it is not probably the perfect body for this but, other than setting up a select committee, I think that this is the best of the standing committees that we have available to us. I believe that the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments is the best suited of the standing committees to look at this issue.

The other matter I wanted to note was the broad view that I got earlier this week related to a common consensus, I believe, in the Legislature today about the need to have these standing committees to work and to function as they are intended. I

believe that reviewing a statute and corresponding regulations is precisely what this committee is designed to do.

As we all know, the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments has not met in years — perhaps even decades. I think that reinvigorating that committee — I should correct myself, Mr. Speaker; it has met. It did meet in the last Legislature — only once though, and long enough to elect a chair and then, of course, the chair never recalled the committee again. It has met, but it hasn't done a lot of actual work and a lot of the actual function that it's intended to do.

I think that there is an opportunity now with no party having a majority on the committee and with the composition of the committee having been established already — and that there's a general consensus, I believe, in the Legislature that these committees ought to do real work and ought to function appropriately — that there is a sense that this could be the appropriate vehicle for this.

So, because of the fact that the early learning and childcare field is of such interest these days, there is so much going on in the field, and there are a number of new programs coming forth from the government that will require a new way to look at the early learning and childcare field, I think that now is the appropriate time to review this piece of legislation and I think that conducting that review in an all-party way through a standing committee of the Legislature is an appropriate way to do so.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, that is a brief summary of why I think that this is an important issue and why I think the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments is an appropriate vehicle for this discussion. I am very hopeful that members will agree with me, and I look forward to providing this order of reference to the standing committee to begin conducting this work on behalf of the Legislature.

It is obviously entirely appropriate for the Yukon Legislative Assembly to provide this kind of direction to its standing committees, and with the support of my colleagues today, we can have this standing committee begin this work immediately. I look forward to seeing the results of that work come from the work of the members on that committee.

I myself am not a member of the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, but I do think that the five members of that committee are well-suited to conduct this work, and I certainly look forward to them taking on this task and carrying out this very important work because it is an important issue and it is an important issue that affects a great deal of Yukoners today.

With that, I will conclude my remarks and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you for the opportunity to address this motion on the first Wednesday of motions here in this Sitting. I appreciate the opportunity to do that.

I don't think that it will — I hope that it won't — surprise anyone that I will agree with much of the what the Leader of the Official Opposition has said, but I do have some distinctions about this particular motion.

Yukoners have sent a clear message that we need to work together for the benefit of the territory and that is what we are committed to doing. We believe that this Assembly works best when all members can put forward good ideas and come together to support those ideas and advance the public good. We will continue to work with our partners across the territory to advance community priorities that benefit Yukoners. It is, in my view, the work of government — and perhaps the most important aspect of our work.

The substance of this motion is the review of Yukon's *Child Care Act*. The second aspect of this motion is the process or the method by which that review should be done. I will speak first to the review of the *Child Care Act* — and this is where our government and my remarks today will align with those of the Leader of the Official Opposition.

I will speak first about the review of the *Child Care Act* and then about the process. This review is necessary. The review must be done and will be done. The review of the *Child Care Act* is a commitment made by our government and by me personally during the recent election — and before, based on the work of the early learning childcare program going forward.

On April 7, I had the pleasure of participating in a forum that was hosted — or some called it a “debate” — by the early learning childcare community. I was joined on that Zoom call by the Leader of the Yukon Party conservatives and by the Third Party House Leader. I think that we were all very pleased — I guess she was not then the Third Party House Leader but the candidate for Whitehorse Centre at the time. I think that we were all very pleased — I'm not speaking for them — that the forum was very well-attended by possibly over 100 people on Zoom, and we were all joined by early learning childcare experts, operators, parents, early learning childcare professionals, and others.

On that call, we each made brief statements and then spent almost two hours answering questions from the participants. One of the commitments that I was able to clarify and to make clear is our commitment to review the *Child Care Act*. Our platform committed to the modernization and improvement of the early learning childcare program. As everyone now knows, the first phase of that initiative began on April 1, 2021, when our universal childcare subsidy came into effect, reducing the monthly cost of childcare by \$700 per child for Yukon families.

Our early learning childcare model is built on the three principles of quality, affordability, and accessibility. In order to fully support the implementation of our early learning childcare model, a review of the *Child Care Act* is necessary and will be done. The *Child Care Act* has not been reviewed — or it had but a few minor regulation changes since 1995, or 25 years ago. The time for a meaningful review is long overdue.

I want to ensure that the members of the Official Opposition have heard our commitment clearly and that they understand what I am saying on behalf of our government.

Now, on to the process suggested by the motion. The process requires that the review of the *Child Care Act* be done by the Standing Committee for Statutory Instruments. That committee, as debated earlier this week, is populated by the Hon. Mr. Nils Clarke, me, Ms. Clarke, Mr. Cathers, and you,

Madam Deputy Speaker — all skilled and talented individuals, but I daresay, not experts in the intricacies of the *Child Care Act*.

To be clear, this motion requires the review of the *Child Care Act* legislation. It is important to note that the mandate of the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments does not have the jurisdiction to review legislation. “The Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments has the authority to review any regulation that comes into effect after the committee is formed. The Legislative Assembly may also refer existing or proposed regulations to this committee for review.” Madam Deputy Speaker, that is a direct quote from the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, from the website of the Legislative Assembly where the mandate of the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments is explained to the public and to anyone who might want to learn about it, and certainly it is the mandate for the Members of the Legislative Assembly to abide by.

As we noted earlier this week in debate, the standing committee has not met for decades. The Leader of the Official Opposition made reference to this. They have met, with one reference made by the Leader of the Official Opposition, in the 34th Legislature, but no substantive work was done. The last time they met before that was in 1991 — some 30 years ago.

Again, as I noted a few days ago, it is the strongest tenet of administrative law that committees should be responsible for their own process and priorities. The Leader of the Official Opposition noted, in his opening remarks, that his motion was an attempt to provide guidance to the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments. Madam Deputy Speaker, I submit to this Legislative Assembly that the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments does not, in fact, need guidance.

The committee should meet, constituted newly by way of a motion here in this Sitting — they should meet, for the first time in some 30 years. In a substantive way, they should review their mandate, and they should determine their process and their priorities. That will help them carry on with the work that they are mandated to do — again, the review of regulations, not legislation.

These comments by the mover of this motion, the Leader of the Official Opposition, also named a number of the experts that should, in fact, and must, in fact, be consulted with respect to the review of the *Child Care Act*, including the Yukon Child Care Board.

In the spirit and intent of working together, I want to reiterate our commitment to review the *Child Care Act*, but we must involve independent experts, stakeholders, and communities going forward. It is not, in my submission to this House, work to be led by politicians. It is a policy review of the act; it is a policy review to take into account experts and those who are experts in the field of early learning childcare. In fact, as I've noted earlier, in order to properly implement the full extent of our early learning childcare program, the *Child Care Act* must be reviewed and must be more modern and must be more responsive to Yukoners' needs.

As a result — and primarily as a result of the fact that the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments is not the appropriate vehicle — I cannot speak in support of this motion

as it does not contemplate including enough of the stakeholders who have been mentioned by the Leader of the Official Opposition in the process. The method, or the process, that this motion seeks to use for the delivery and review is not appropriate and is outside, in fact, the jurisdiction of the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments.

Our government recognizes that the current *Child Care Act* needs to be reviewed and is committed to doing this work in an open way — in a way that is full engagement and consultation.

As I noted earlier, I had the honour of working with the early learning childcare community, not only during the campaign but previous to that in our work on the universal childcare program and the ultimate early learning childcare program that will continue to be rolled out in different phases to the benefit of Yukon families and children.

I publicly made a commitment at the time to review the act. I do so here again today. There is no question whatsoever that this will be a priority. Our government remains committed to the review, but we don't agree with the mechanism suggested in today's motion. That suggested approach puts the review in the hands of multiple elected officials instead of industry experts and it commits a legislative committee that has not met in, really, over three decades with the task of this review.

As I have noted, the review of this legislation is outside the jurisdiction of this committee. We believe that there is a more appropriate method to conduct such a review. Our work on this review will take a broad approach and will include opportunity for stakeholders across the Yukon to share their concerns — and members of the opposition in this House.

We will also seek independent input and expertise for the review. We look forward to moving forward with this important piece of legislation to ensure that it works for Yukoners and — most importantly — that it works for Yukon children.

Ms. White: I just take the liberty of saying what you might have said, as a member of this committee. So, although we are glad to have had the government commit to going forward with the *Child Care Act* review — I think that it is important. It was mentioned during the election and it was mentioned again right here on the floor. We know that, with recent changes, it is a great time to review that act. But I think that it is important to note — as mentioned by the Leader of the Official Opposition — that this committee has only met one time in recent history. So, it seems strange that, through this motion, the agenda would be set for a committee that was only appointed this week and has yet to have their first meeting together.

As with other committees of this Assembly, I think it is best that the committee will decide what their work will look like for the next duration of time, rather than be directed by this motion. I am sure that the committee would consider recommendations for reviews to be done, but ultimately it is that committee who would decide their work plan going forward.

We believe that the committee should meet and make their decisions about the work that they want to prioritize. We are aware that there is currently legislation in place that does have

review times that have not been met or are due shortly. There are a few examples.

The *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, which is to be reviewed five years after coming into effect — I can speak and say that currently has been done by the Child and Youth Advocate Office itself and is awaiting next steps. The *Health Information Privacy and Management Act* is to have a comprehensive review of this act before the fourth year of its coming into force. The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* is to be reviewed within five years of the act coming into force. Looking into the future, the *Lobbyists Registration Act* will also need to be reviewed. I'm sure that this committee will create a list of the outstanding reviews that need to be done. They will set their own work plan and figure out the process forward.

For those reasons, the Yukon NDP will be opposing the motion, but we are looking forward to the *Child Care Act* review taking place.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Dixon: Madam Deputy Speaker, I can see the writing on the wall for this one. That has been determined by the other parties, of course. I do want to address a few issues that have been raised though. The first is related to the idea that somehow looking at legislation is outside of the mandate of the standing committee. I would note that the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments is a creature of this Legislature, and as such, its mandate is whatever the Legislative Assembly tells it to do. So, it is not quite accurate in any way to say that it is unable to look at this issue because it's legislation. Of course, the motion includes legislation and regulations. The regulations pursuant to this act are dated and are substantial and I think that they ought to be reviewed in the context of the act review itself.

It is certainly not the case that the standing committee can't review this because it's legislation; that is just simply not the case at all. The standing committee is a creature of this Legislature and as such we can direct it to do things. That is unfortunately the reality. I see that the Government House Leader is shaking her head, but the reality is that we can pass these motions as legislators and, of course, we are able to do that.

The second piece relates to the review of the act. I'm pleased to hear the commitment from the government that they will be reviewing this act. That is positive. This act does need to be reviewed, and the minister has acknowledged that. I do worry though about the level of commitment because — as we've seen in the confidence and supply agreement and as we've seen in the government's legislative agenda otherwise — the reality is that my prediction on this is that we aren't going to see a *Child Care Act* reviewed and tabled in this Legislature, certainly not before the agreement between the NDP and the Liberals runs out. I don't think that's going to be the case at all, and that's really unfortunate.

The reason why we wanted to include the date in this motion to spur the committee on in its work was because we

know that the government has dragged its feet on this. These recommendations have come for years and years now to update this act. At least the last two annual reports from the Child Care Board have referenced the inadequacy of the act.

I do worry about the level of commitment from the government on this. I do stand to be corrected. If the minister is genuine in her commitment and immediately launches a review of this act, I will be proven wrong and I will be happy to admit as much once I see that new legislation thoroughly reviewed and tabled in the Legislature.

The other issue that concerned me, Mr. Speaker, was the notion that legislators shouldn't lead the review of legislation. Quite frankly, I think that is not the case at all. We have seen Members of the Legislative Assembly review numerous pieces of legislation over the history of this Legislative Assembly and do so quite successfully. The way that they do that is by tapping into the resources available in our community with regard to expertise. I've sat on several standing committees or select committees of the Legislature that have easily and frequently sought the advice of industry experts. The ability for groups like the Child Care Board, industry experts, and those in the field themselves to come forward and provide their input to a standing committee is a well-established process and one contemplated in the motion that establishes the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments. So, of course we would seek their input if this were to pass. Of course, we would be calling them as witnesses and seeking their advice, because they truly are the experts and their input is incredibly important.

But, ultimately, legislation comes to the Legislative Assembly and we as legislators have to review it, debate it, in some cases amend it, and then ultimately pass it.

It is fully within the purview of Members of the Legislative Assembly to review legislation. That is quite literally what our jobs are, so the notion that we are incapable of reviewing legislation because we are not industry experts is misguided from the Minister of Health and Social Services.

It is clear, like I said, where this going. Despite our interest in having this act reviewed quickly and in an all-party way, it is the interest of the other two parties in the Legislature to deny that opportunity and to allow the government to lead this review on its own timeline.

Like I said before, Mr. Speaker, I hope that I am proved wrong. I would be happy to see this legislation thoughtfully reviewed, comprehensively reviewed, and then tabled in the Legislature before the conclusion of the confidence and supply agreement between the Liberals and NDP, but quite frankly, I don't see that happening, so I fear that this will be another lost opportunity and that this legislation will not appear in the 35th Legislature. I really hope that I am wrong, and I look forward to seeing that legislation come forward, but it will not be through an all-party process, obviously. I am disappointed to hear that.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to bringing this to a vote and hearing my colleagues' votes on this important motion.

Speaker: 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. Silver: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Disagree.

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: Disagree.

Ms. Blake: Disagree.

Ms. Tredger: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 8 yea, 10 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the motion negatived.

Motion No. 40 negatived

Motion No. 14

Clerk: Motion No. 14, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Watson Lake:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Highways and Public Works to initiate upgrades to the two Alaska Highway crosswalks in Watson Lake to include pedestrian-activated flashing lights.

Ms. McLeod: It is my pleasure to rise today to speak to my motion calling for the Minister of Highways and Public Works to provide for pedestrian safety in my community of Watson Lake. As you may know, the Alaska Highway is an important traffic route directly through the community of Watson Lake, so the substance of this motion should be largely self-explanatory.

Watson Lake is similar to parts of Whitehorse such as Porter Creek, where the Alaska Highway actually divides the community in two, and it is important for pedestrians to be able to cross the highway in a safe manner. Whether it is an elder crossing to the grocery store or a child getting to school, they deserve safe passage and the same as a resident in Porter Creek.

Traditionally, these types of motions have been dismissed by the Liberal government. However, the NDP leader has recently encouraged us to bring such motions forward, as they

feel that, with the minority government situation that we are in, we are much more likely to get consent and hopefully real action taking place.

With the appointment of a new Minister of Highways and Public Works, I would like to, once again, call attention to this matter and reiterate the importance of highway safety for the residents of Watson Lake, especially for pedestrians. During the long Yukon winters, we were subjected to long hours of darkness. We currently have two crosswalks in Watson Lake that help pedestrians cross the Alaska Highway. Neither are equipped for pedestrians to push buttons to notify oncoming traffic that someone is waiting to cross. Unfortunately, we have seen a number of near misses in town, where drivers have little time for reaction upon realizing that there is a pedestrian on the highway.

I know that my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek North, has raised the same issue in the House and has been requesting push-button activated crosswalks for residents of Porter Creek by Super A and 17th Avenue for a number of years. She has voiced the same concerns that I am today. I find it alarming that the government could listen to safety concerns from Members of the Legislature for many years and simply dismiss or disregard them.

Today, I would like to ask members to recognize the importance of pedestrian safety and the fact that an act as small as adding pedestrian-activated flashing lights to a crosswalk could very well save a life.

I thank all of my colleagues in the Legislature for listening to the concerns for the safety for my constituents, and look forward to seeing this motion pass today with unanimous consent.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: I am pleased to speak to Motion No. 14. Thank you to the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this motion for debate.

Yukon's transportation network is crucial to all of our communities as well as our territory's economy. Our Liberal government has made it a priority to invest in upgrading our roads, highways, and bridges to support our communities, to make road transportation for our territory safer, and to create economic opportunities. Over the past couple of years, the Department of Highways and Public Works undertook several significant projects to improve safety along the Alaska Highway, Yukon's busiest transportation corridor. This included better lighting, signage, and pedestrian crosswalks.

When we took office in 2016, Yukon was in an infrastructure deficit. We have made it a priority to address this deficit for the benefit of all Yukon communities. In this year's budget, we have included more than \$54 million for highways and bridges throughout the territory. We have taken a whole-of-government approach to improving our transportation network.

Officials in the Department of Highways and Public Works continuously assess the state of our roads and highways to prioritize investments. Officials in Community Services work directly with municipalities to identify community priorities so that we can support local solutions.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Highways and Public Works, my view — which I hope resonates with members of this Assembly — is that comprehensive safety reviews need to be conducted prior to addressing potential highway safety issues in order to make a determination on a project that would be correct for Whitehorse, Watson Lake, or in fact any other Yukon community. There are guidelines to follow regarding highway safety, as there are specific standards and prescribed rules as they pertain to the safety of pedestrians.

I will note for the benefit of the Assembly that there are risks associated with taking a piecemeal approach on road safety, but we are prepared to initiate work on this issue. Our Liberal caucus will support the motion brought forward by the Member for Watson Lake. Yukoners have sent a clear message that we will all need to work together for the benefit of the territory, and that is what we are committed to doing.

We believe that this Assembly works best when all members put forward good ideas and come together to support those ideas that advance the public good. I look forward to working with my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, in order to engage with the community of Watson Lake to provide long-lasting solutions for pedestrians.

This government will continue to deliver and will always be on the lookout for the best interests of Yukoners. We will continue to balance engagement with residents and their needs while conforming to important highway safety guidelines.

Ms. Tredger: To speak to this project a little bit, it has been asked for by the citizens of Watson Lake for a long time — for many, many years. As we consider the importance of different projects, it's important that we take in the reality of life in rural communities. The highway is quite literally the centre of Watson Lake, and many different types of users need to cross it many times every day. This is actually something that we've asked for in the past, so we're very happy to reiterate this call by supporting this motion.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I rise this afternoon to add my voice to this discussion about safety — traffic safety in this case. Safety is a subject that I have paid close attention to for almost a decade — much more than that, of course, but professionally, for almost a decade.

In 2012, I started a new career in the civil service at the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. After that, I worked for Highways and Public Works and, of course, have cast an eye to public safety as it pertained to highway safety, community safety, airport safety, and the myriad of sectors that it touched. Now I'm Minister of Community Services, following in the footsteps of my colleague, the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, and I'm looking at it now from a community point of view.

It has been an honour to serve Yukoners as a civil servant with an eye toward safety, and I have to commend the civil service itself for its efforts to keep Yukoners safe at work and at home. Civil servants, certainly in the last year and a bit and before that, have worked tirelessly in the service of Yukoners in so many ways.

They have worked to preserve the health and safety of Yukoners, whether you are an engineer, a nurse, a grader operator, a wildlife officer, an administrative assistant, a systems analyst — in fact it does not matter the position that these people hold in the civil service. I have seen first-hand how safety is foremost in their minds, and that service and commitment to people's safety in the territory deserves to be recognized, so thank you.

This afternoon, we are looking at traffic lights in Watson Lake. That's the gist of this motion that we are debating this afternoon. Roads that wend their way through the territory connect us to our friends and family and our doctors. They carry needed supplies north. They also carry travellers — Americans and tourists in much better times — through to Alaska and to all our communities throughout the territory.

Over the last four and more years, our Liberal government has made investments in bridges, culverts, and the very roadbeds that carry our cars and trucks across the territory. We put together a plan to assess our highways, rate them and, based on that rating, designed a schedule for brush-clearing, line-painting, regular maintenance and safety improvements throughout the territory — all 5,000 kilometres of the road. That is the very first time that has ever been done, Mr. Speaker — that consistency, that planning. It deserves to be recognized.

I know that my colleague, the current Minister of Highways and Public Works, has spoken this afternoon about assessments that are done annually — or in some cases, more often — to support investments and improvements across the road network. That is important work, and it needs to follow that national standard so we are not striking on our own to do things that are not consistent with traffic standards in BC, Alberta, and the rest of the country. Consistency across the road network perpetuates road safety.

We also need to keep in touch with our communities when we are making decisions. I know that my predecessor in this role made it a regular part of his job to regularly visit communities at least once a year — often twice or more. It was an amazing schedule that he maintained. He also kept in touch by phone — phoning municipal leaders, keeping in touch weekly with the Association of Yukon Communities. These are practices that I plan to emulate.

Since coming into Community Services, I know that the community advisors attend regular municipal council meetings to keep informed about community affairs and their needs and desires. In Watson Lake, I have heard the community's desire for more Emergency Medical Services staff. I've heard the need for more lots. That is a need that the community shares with most others in the territory. I've also heard that the community is quite progressive in its approach to waste management and is supportive of regionalization of its landfill and consistency across the territory. I really think that is great to see. I commend them for that.

Now, the Member for Watson Lake has brought forward a motion asking for button-activated crosswalk lights on the Alaska Highway for community safety. I am committed to working with the community of Watson Lake to prioritize the critical municipal investments that the community would like

us to make. We will continue to work with the community to identify problems and address them. Community Services is committed to working with Highways and Public Works and the community of Watson Lake to find solutions to the problem that it has identified and wants addressed. We will do that in a responsible manner, a manner that is consistent with the rest of the territory, and we will do it with our partners throughout the territory.

We will, of course, be supporting the motion this afternoon.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the NDP member for her comments; they are very much appreciated. While I heard the members from the Liberal caucus say that they support this motion, I'm quite concerned that the language that they used — it sounds like more of a threat to Watson Lake that, if they proceed with these pedestrian crossings, they are going to lose somewhere else. That's kind of what I heard from the Liberal government. So, I hope that's not the case. I certainly am going to be engaging fully with my community on this. I can pretty much guarantee that. The Liberal members should be quite assured that this is not a matter that is just going to go away or be forgotten about; we are going to continue to follow up on it.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the members for their support of this motion that is important to the people of Watson Lake.

Speaker: 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. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: 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.

Ms. Blake: Agree.

Ms. Tredger: Agree.

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

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion No. 14 agreed to

Motion No. 30

Clerk: Motion No. 30, standing in the name of Mr. Kent.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Copperbelt South:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop a territory-wide type 1 diabetes strategy to be completed by September 2022 in partnership with the Yukon T1D Support Network and including consultation with:

- (1) persons who live with type 1 diabetes;
- (2) the Yukon Medical Association;
- (3) an adult endocrinologist;
- (4) a pediatric endocrinologist;
- (5) a pediatrician;
- (6) the Diabetes Education Centre;
- (7) the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation Canada;

and

(8) other agencies or agents as may be identified through the Yukon T1D Support Network.

Mr. Kent: I thank colleagues and members of the House for the opportunity to speak to this motion here this afternoon. I think that those who were here in the 34th Legislative Assembly will know that supporting Yukoners and their families who are living with type 1 diabetes is something that's very important to me and that I've talked about on a number of occasions throughout the 34th Assembly, and this is the first opportunity in the 35th Assembly for us to address an issue to support the T1D community.

This motion might look very similar, if not identical, to a motion tabled by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin on the same day that I tabled this one. Of course, that is no coincidence. Members of the T1D Support Network reached out to the Leader of the Third Party, I believe over the weekend, and she reached out to me, and we came to an agreement on Monday to table similar or exact motions, and I am very pleased that we were able to do so.

I would also like to thank, of course, the T1D Support Network, and I am going to name the board: Marney Paradis, Jill Nash, Rachel Hrebien, Kevin Jack, and Brayden Kulych. They do tremendous work on behalf of their constituency, whether it is support or advocating for supports for Yukoners and their families afflicted with this disease. Some of the community initiatives that they have undertaken include hosting a diabetes forum a few years ago and Camp Becca, which is for young adults who have type 1 diabetes to get together. That camp is named in honour of Rebecca Pollard, who was a member of their board and had type 1 diabetes and passed away tragically.

They have also done educational interventions and public awareness campaigns such as the Boulevard of Hope, which was a tree display at the top of Robert Service Way throughout

the month of January, to raise awareness of type 1 diabetes and how difficult it is for those who are living with it.

It is through these efforts — and for those who don't know these individuals or this organization, the expertise that they have and how well-informed they are — I believe that they are perfectly positioned to partner with the Yukon government to develop this type 1 diabetes strategy and lead this important work on behalf of Yukoners.

I mentioned in the 34th Legislative Assembly that all of the MLAs who sat here during that time made great strides to support Yukoners and their families who live day to day with type 1 diabetes.

Motions in this Legislature — private members' motions introduced by members from both the Yukon Party and the New Democratic Party at the time — were passed unanimously. Equipment authorizations were made, starting with a pilot project for Yukoners under the age of 18 to access CGMs, or continuous glucose monitoring devices. That pilot project led to coverage for all Yukoners in the fall of last year for those CGMs, which are important lifesaving devices that monitor glucose levels in real time. In many ways, the work that we as legislators accomplished in the 34th Assembly is leading the country, if not the world, in helping people who are affected by this terrible disease.

During the most recent election campaign, the Yukon T1D Support Network put questions to all three parties. They put forward four questions and published them on their Facebook page. One of them was asking whether or not each party would create a Yukon T1D strategy, which is the subject of the motion that we are debating here today. I'm pleased to let the House know — and for those who don't know — that all three parties made a commitment to create the Yukon T1D strategy. Of course, that is one occasion when all three parties came together in support of a common initiative, and I am hoping that we can get all three parties to support the motion that is before the House here today on this.

2021 and into 2022 mark the 100th anniversary of the research and then the discovery of insulin. There is a certain ceremonial appropriateness, I guess, to the timing of what we have identified here as starting work in 2021 and carrying on into 2022. I just want to read briefly from an article on *The Canadian Encyclopedia* website. It was written by Michael Bliss and published online in August of 2015. I will provide Hansard with a copy of this as well.

It's just a brief excerpt from that, saying: "For many years scientists believed that some kind of internal secretion of the pancreas was the key to preventing diabetes and controlling normal metabolism. No one could find it, until in the summer of 1921 a team of University of Toronto began trying a new experimental approach suggested by Dr. Fredrick Banting. By the spring of 1922, the Toronto researchers — Banting, Charles Best, J. B. Collip and their supervisor, J.J.R. Macleod, were able to announce the discovery of insulin. In 1923, Banting and Macleod received the Nobel Prize for one of the most important, and most controversial, breakthroughs in modern history."

I think about what important and monumental years those were — 100 years ago. This year leading into next year — for us to create a Yukon strategy around type 1 diabetes and continue in this 35th Legislative Assembly with leading-edge policy and support for this community — dragging other provinces and jurisdictions along with us — is extremely important.

The list of individuals to be consulted with here is certainly not exhaustive. As is portrayed in the eighth bullet, other agencies or agents may be identified through the Yukon T1D Support Network. I am sure there are other experts that will help in creating this strategy. With that said, this is an opportunity for us to honour a mutual campaign commitment that was made by all three parties in the spring election, and I am hoping that Members of the Legislative Assembly will support this motion that I have brought forward here today.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to say thank you to the member opposite for bringing this motion to the floor of the House today. It is an important one for sure. Yukoners have sent the clear message that we all need to work together for the benefit of the territory, and that is what we have committed to doing. We believe that this Assembly works best when all members can put forward good ideas and come together to support those ideas and advance the public good. I believe that this is what the Member for Copperbelt South was speaking about today. We will continue to work with our partners across the territory to advance community priorities that benefit Yukoners.

I certainly appreciate the opportunity to speak for a few moments about some of the important work that has been done on behalf of Yukoners in recent years with respect to this particular issue. Yukon has become a national leader in providing supports to individuals living with type 1 diabetes.

In 2018, Yukon began a two-year pilot project to fund continuous glucose monitoring devices for Yukoners up to the age of 25. Following the pilot project, Yukon became the first Canadian jurisdiction to fund continuous glucose monitors for children up to the age of 18. That was done in March 2020.

Yukon has additionally established a glucose monitoring program for adults. Adults with type 1 diabetes are able to access their choice of either fully funded flash glucose monitors — and that was done back in October 2020 — or a continuous glucose monitoring system.

Yukon is the first in Canada to fund continuous glucose monitoring devices for all individuals with type 1 diabetes and joins Ontario and Québec in funding the flash monitors for adults. Adults are encouraged of course to work with their physicians to discuss which of these devices they would like to use. The implementation of Yukon's permanent funding for glucose monitoring was not impacted by COVID-19. The government committed to funding glucose monitors in the March 2020 budget at the conclusion of the pilot project.

The chronic conditions support program offers the diabetes wellness series and the diabetes wellness 2.0, done in consultation with the Diabetes Education Centre and the City of Whitehorse. This series includes a team comprised of a

dietician, a nurse, a pharmacist, and an exercise specialist who work with individuals to develop self-management strategies.

Chronic disease nurse educator supports are available to offer one-on-one education, case management, system navigation, and annual foot checks to clients with diabetes. The chronic conditions support program also offers supervised exercise programming.

A chronic disease management toolkit is available to provide chronic care providers, including physicians and nurses, with supports to monitor patient test results. They also provide patient recall and deliver chronic care based on clinical guidelines. The toolkit client registry management will be improved and will be incorporated into the IHealth system through that improvement.

Any strategy — which is what is contemplated by this motion — would require participation of Yukon First Nations. COVID-19 has underscored the need for a high-functioning, person-centred health and social care system which includes advancing reconciliation and reducing health inequities for First Nation persons. This need is reflected in the *Putting People First* report and is committed to with respect to the work that will be done going forward on the implementation of the recommendations from that report.

As noted by the Member for Copperbelt South, all parties, during the most recent election, were asked by the Yukon TD1 Support Network about their commitments and understanding of these issues. I haven't yet heard from the Yukon TD1 Support Network, but I do look forward to meeting with them in the near future and to working together going forward.

As part of that process during the election, the Yukon TD1 Support Network provided a number of questions that I believe were answered by each of the individual parties. The response that was sent by the leader of the party, Mr. Sandy Silver, answered a number of questions from that organization. I just want to quote a couple of parts of that letter, and I'm happy to table a copy of it for reference.

One of the questions was about children in schools who are dealing with type 1 diabetes. In response, the leader of the Yukon Liberals said — and I quote: “We are mindful of the special circumstances of TD1 children and youth and understand that a TD1 specific policy in Education would serve Yukon families and address parents and students concerns.” Again, in response to a number of the questions, the Leader of the Liberal Party said — and I quote: “Our ongoing work with Yukoners with type 1 diabetes, their families, local advocacy groups and industry coincides with recommendations in the *Putting People First* report on enhancing supports for individuals for improved health outcomes.”

Later in this correspondence, the leader of the Liberals said — and I quote: “We will continue to work with patients to address their concerns regarding drug and device needs.” That is a bit of the information that I previously noted — and perhaps most importantly for the conversation in today's debate, the leader of the Liberals then said — and I quote: “We would be very pleased to work with you to develop a Type 1 diabetes strategy to respond to the needs of Yukoners.”

Mr. Speaker, I'll take the opportunity to table a copy of that letter for the convenience of my colleagues. I would like to table the letter from which I've quoted.

Clearly, the Yukon Liberal government has in the past and will continue to be supporting the services to the betterment of Yukoners who are dealing with type 1 diabetes and we will, as a result of the comments I've made today — and we appreciate the details provided by the member opposite — we will be supporting this motion.

Ms. White: I thank my colleague for bringing forward this motion. He's correct; the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin tabled the exact same motion on the same day, actually, because the Yukon NDP — just like the Yukon Party and the Liberals — believe that those with type 1 diabetes deserve our support.

We have done a lot of work, like was mentioned before, during the 34th Assembly, and I think this is just carrying that on.

In conversation with two powerhouses within the type 1 diabetes community advocates — Jill Nash and Marney Paradis — on the weekend, we talked about the importance of creating a territory-wide strategy. The reason for that is that it's important that health decisions or direction be given the overarching — well, the understanding of those living or supporting those with type 1 diabetes.

We went through the possibilities and what it would look like — and we wanted to make sure that the list was broad about those in consultation, although I did hear the minister mention the importance of consultation with First Nations — a text message saying, "Absolutely — no problem. We'll have those conversations." So, it is an ongoing conversation.

The one thing that is really important — we talk about the strategy — we know that, within the Department of Education, for example, there is not disease-specific understanding sometimes within the department for what is required for a student living with type 1 diabetes — understanding that there can be an emergency kit that will have different things that might be needed, understanding that, you know, there is a parent on the other side of the phone looking at those numbers, and understanding that if there is a crisis, there is a timeline where there needs to be intervention. So, partially, developing the strategy is a way of making sure that we are able to address all those different angles.

There is a lot to be said in that we are at the 100th anniversary of the discovery of insulin and how far we have come and how far we can go. It's true that Yukon leads in a lot of different ways right now and that is really incredible. It is a pleasure to hear that this is going to have universal support. I know that those on the front lines of advocacy for those with type 1 diabetes are ready to go. They are ready to do the work, they are ready to be involved, and they have some ideas about different things that can also change when we look to the chronic disease programs and coverage.

So, just with that, Mr. Speaker, it is an incredible thing that the Yukon has had this group kind of, I guess, grow out of necessity. So, the T1D Support Network has had some incredible influence in the past number of years as they have

been advocating for those with type 1 diabetes. I imagine that, once this strategy is completed and it is used and adopted, what we will see is that Yukon continues to lead. So, I look forward to the vote, Mr. Speaker.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Kent: I thank the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Leader of the Third Party for their comments here this afternoon. As I mentioned during the 34th Legislative Assembly, and as was referenced by the Minister of Health and Social Services, we were able to cross party lines and get both sides of this House together to make a real difference in the lives of people and their families who are living with type 1 diabetes. This is an incredibly exciting way and an incredibly exciting opportunity for those individuals to kick off this year, moving into next fall.

As the Leader of the Third Party referenced — while she was being texted, I believe I was being texted at the same time by the same two individuals who are part of that organization, and they will be reaching out to the Minister of Health and Social Services to request a meeting very soon to kickstart this work.

This is something that's important to me, and it became important to me as an MLA. I have a number of constituents who have families with young children who have type 1 diabetes, and that piqued my interest in advocating and assisting them in the 2016 election campaign. Of course, that has been carried on through the 2021 campaign and now into the 35th Legislative Assembly.

I thank all members for their support of this motion today. I think we'll be able to accomplish some incredible work and continue to be a leader in supporting, advocating, and assisting those individuals and families who have to live day to day with type 1 diabetes.

I said it in the 34th Legislative Assembly, but it is still something that sticks with me, as a father — and in speaking to the father of a young boy who had type 1 diabetes who lives in my riding — I think he was two or three years old at the time when he was diagnosed. He told me that managing his son's diabetes was like trying to stand on a basketball and balance on that basketball 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I think for those of us who are parents or those of us who have nieces or nephews or family members, that certainly is something that will stick with you as well as it stuck with me.

As I mentioned, I am pleased that we are able to start the 35th Assembly off with a positive step like this and to assist those who are in need.

Speaker: 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. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: 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.

Ms. Blake: Agree.

Ms. Tredger: Agree.

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

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion No. 30 agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: 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

Chair (Ms. Blake): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 201: *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*

Chair: The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Is there any general debate?

Yukon Housing Corporation

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Madam Chair, as the new minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, it is truly an honour to rise today to present the 2021 capital and operation and maintenance budgets for the corporation. Before I begin my address, I would like to introduce our officials who are here with me today: Mary Cameron, president of Yukon Housing Corporation, as well as Marcel HolderRobinson, director of Finance and Risk Management at the Yukon Housing Corporation. I also would like to take an opportunity to thank the other folks at Yukon Housing Corporation whom I have had the opportunity to spend time with so far for their patience and commitment to the corporation and their work on giving me the proper material to brief up as quickly as possible. This is an extremely robust organization that has a tremendous amount of activity underway at a time when there is an immense focus on the conversation around housing.

I will start with some prepared remarks, which I think will help us maybe even answer some of those initial questions. Then, of course, I will hand it over to the opposition. Again, I will ask my colleagues here in opposition to be patient with me.

This is a new file, and I will do my best, Madam Chair, and I'll be working with the folks here, and with the COVID protocols, it might take a bit longer to gather answers, but we'll do our best to make sure that we're accountable here in the Assembly today.

I would also like to take this opportunity to show my appreciation and sincere thanks again to both the staff and the board at Yukon Housing Corporation for their hard work and dedication to making more affordable housing options available to Yukoners.

Over the past three years, the corporation has been successful in working toward their five-year strategic plan vision to deliver housing solutions that contribute to healthy, sustainable, and inclusive communities. The government understands that, to have healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities, Yukoners need to have homes that fit their needs and that they can afford.

This past year has not been easy for Yukoners. COVID-19 has impacted our social lives, our family dynamics, big projects that we might have embarked upon, and our jobs and leisure pursuits. As the vaccine rollout continues across the territory, hopefully facilitating a new normal for all of us, the days are getting longer, reminding us that summer is now on the way.

Over the last few years, our housing programs have now supported the development of over 600 homes in the territory. For the 2021-22 year, we are continuing with our funding programs that have successfully leveraged partnerships and have supported new, affordable housing projects and programs.

We are working toward supporting those in housing need and increasing both affordable and accessible homes for Yukon. We are guided by three goals of the Yukon Housing Corporation strategic plan: (1) We are a trusted housing partner; (2) we are renewing and rebalancing community housing; and (3) we are strengthening our corporate stewardship.

In addition to the corporation's strategic plan, we are working on the goals and objectives of the housing action plan for Yukon, the Safe at Home plan to end and prevent homelessness, the aging-in-place action plan, and the recommendations from *Putting People First*.

I'm excited about our transformative renewal projects that Yukon Housing Corporation is undertaking. In particular, we are transforming to a renewed and resilient community housing program to meet the housing needs of Yukoners. The community housing program will help us to achieve the objectives in various action plans. We are working toward goals in the Safe at Home plan and *Putting People First* to secure housing for those who have experienced homelessness or have other vulnerabilities.

We are working toward the housing action plan by rebalancing our role in communities to provide affordable rental housing and home ownership options through the private market incentives, or loans directly to Yukoners, as well as rent subsidy programs.

We are working toward the goals of the aging-in-place action plan by recognizing that the needs of seniors in our housing are unique and focusing on the client experience. This budget shows renewed efforts to implement our community housing program, alongside our continued support of several housing initiatives that are already underway. We launched the Canada-Yukon benefit in November 2020 and will continue to grow the program over the next six years, with funding from the National Housing Strategy that is cost-matched by the Government of Yukon.

This year, we are proud to report that this direct-to-household rent subsidy will continue with a budget of \$681,000. This program will provide support to over 190 Yukon households that joined the program since it started in November 2020, and it helps with housing affordability solutions. This is just one of the first steps toward a resilient community housing program.

We anticipate that the \$18-million, 47-unit community housing building at 4th Avenue and Jeckell Street in Whitehorse will be completed in early 2022 and will help Yukoners with housing options in Whitehorse. Through this new building, we will continue to grow and develop our community housing program by implementing our mixed-income and mixed-use model. Mixed-income and mixed-use housing is a complementary model aimed at addressing emerging community housing program needs and provides affordable housing in the context of a growing, diverse, and aging population.

As we move forward with building mixed-use buildings across the Yukon, we will be working with individual communities to ensure that the mixed-income or mixed-use allocation model works for their unique community needs.

This year, we are also excited to start and nurture new initiatives that will help Yukoners find the housing support they need and help achieve the goals of our strategic plan and our community housing program.

We have \$1.5 million budgeted to start the design and construction of a new supportive community housing project in

Watson Lake. This project will operate on Housing First principles. Based on a housing needs assessment recently completed in the community, we know that there is a significant need for supportive housing. We will continue to work with our community partners to help inform and provide input on this project.

We have \$3 million budgeted to support the construction of three new community housing triplexes in Mayo, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse. Yukon Housing Corporation's community housing triplex projects align with the key community needs, the corporation's capital asset management plan and housing needs assessment, and our community housing program.

In addition to these new builds, we have allocated \$200,000 to explore deployable mobile home options to ease immediate housing pressures for emergency housing situations.

Another exciting new initiative finalized this spring is the northern carve-out agreement. This \$40-million funding pot under the national housing co-investment fund will be allocated to new housing projects across the Yukon over the next five years.

Under the terms negotiated with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, \$20 million will support community housing projects directly managed by Yukon Housing Corporation. To access this funding, the Government of Yukon will provide cost-matching over the period of the fund, totalling \$6.67 million.

The additional \$20-million stream will be managed by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to support First Nation governments, organizations, community housing providers, and private sector projects. Now that this agreement is signed, we plan to complete the community needs assessments and community engagements so that we can move forward with new projects, and we will use the funding to support solutions to the housing needs of Yukoners.

Even though we were excited by the new initiatives that are appearing this spring, we have not forgotten about our previous commitments and initiatives. We will ensure that our existing housing is safe and accessible to Yukoners. Each year, we renovate and retrofit a number of the homes in our existing housing stock to make sure that they continue to be safe, adequate, and affordable homes for Yukoners. We know that it's important to build new housing, but another part of our government commitment is a sustainable future. It is also important to invest in repairs and upgrades. We have budgeted \$2.2 million for renovation and rehabilitation and \$1.6 million for unit conversions.

To ensure that our current stock meets Yukoners' needs, we have also allocated \$600,000 to replacing units that are too old to be economically repaired. We are not only working on our own units. We have also allocated \$1.19 million under the First Nation energy-efficiency program, funded through the Government of Canada's low carbon economy fund, to support energy-efficiency retrofits in First Nation housing around the territory.

In 2021-22, our refreshed loan programs will continue to bridge the gaps in Yukoners' housing needs, supporting them

to buy, build, or fix their homes. In particular, the \$3.2-million rural home ownership program continues to help Yukoners buy or build new homes through our first mortgage and owner-build mortgages in Yukon's communities outside Whitehorse, where we know that it can be difficult to secure financing from traditional lenders.

The home-repair program, with three streams of accessibility, emergency-repair, home-repair loan, has a budget of \$1.65 million — \$350,000 for the emergency-repair grant, \$600,000 for the accessibility grant, and \$700,000 for the home-repair loan and home-repair subsidy.

The home-repair program is available to all Yukoners, but I would like to bring to everyone's attention that this program can be used by seniors and Yukon households that need to make their homes more accessible as they age in place. We continue to offer the \$1.5-million developer-build loan to assist developers to build new housing where it is difficult to get loans from traditional lenders.

In addition to direct provision of housing, the Yukon Housing Corporation also cultivates strong partnerships to grow the number of housing options in Yukon communities. This year marks the fourth intake of the \$3.6-million housing initiatives fund, a community partnership program that provides increased affordable housing options to Yukoners across the housing continuum. To date, existing commitments from previous intakes will bring online 350 housing units in our different communities.

Working in partnership with First Nations, First Nation development corporations, non-profit organizations, and the private sector is the only way to address Yukon's unique housing needs.

Another partnership that we are pleased to continue is the \$2-million municipal matching rental construction program grant, which will increase rental housing. This is in the territory and provides more rental options for all Yukoners by supporting private developers in communities that offer a municipal incentive program. We are pleased to announce that, since 2015, this fund has supported capital grants that funded the new development of just over 340 new rental units, providing new homes for Yukoners.

Also, we are pleased to support the Challenge Disability Resource Group to ensure the successful construction of their Cornerstone Housing project, which will bring 53 new homes to Yukoners. We know that we are not working by ourselves, and we are stronger with our partners and can accomplish more housing solutions together.

This winter has been long. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have made it a new normal to wear a mask and to meet virtually when we would much rather be with each other in person, and it has increased the time that we have spent outdoors. In addition, a large amount of snow meant increased time spent shovelling, and we know that both this winter and last year will stick in our memories, but as we move forward into the spring, this budget supports housing solutions through the renewal and rebalancing of our community housing program.

We also continue to commit to being a trusted housing partner. Our 2021-22 capital and operation and maintenance budgets demonstrate the work that we will do with all of our community partners to implement the housing action plan for Yukon and the Safe at Home action plan to end and prevent homelessness.

The corporation staff are the key to the housing solutions across the territory, and we continue to strengthen our corporate stewardship as we deliver our client services and programs.

As an employer, we are proud of our employees and the work that they do for Yukoners. Our staff take pride in helping to find affordable options across the housing continuum as the Yukon population and the economy continue to grow. We are working toward delivering on new opportunities that will lead to housing solutions that contribute to healthy, sustainable, inclusive communities and maintaining and completing our previous projects to maximize benefits for Yukoners.

Our community housing program is focused on Yukoners' housing needs and successful tenant outcomes, with the core structured on client experience, fiscal resilience, and responsibility and renewing housing roles and responsibilities within Yukon's housing continuum.

With our partners, we will continue to work to make sure that we provide the housing solutions that Yukoners need. We are implementing, again, the housing action plan for Yukon, the Safe at Home plan to prevent and end homelessness, and the aging-in-place action plan in alignment with the recommendations from *Putting People First*. Together, we will build healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities in the Yukon.

I will now provide a detailed breakdown of Yukon Housing Corporation's expenditures and recoveries to highlight the ways that we are helping Yukoners to find solutions in 2020 and 2021.

\$19.9 million has been allocated in operation and maintenance expenditures to provide housing services to Yukon residents. \$38.4 million has been allocated for capital expenditures to assist Yukoners in meeting their housing needs.

For 2021-22, total rental revenue and operation and maintenance recoveries are estimated to be \$12.7 million, including recoveries from third parties and from the federal government. We estimate that the total capital recoveries will be \$9.3 million, including recoveries from third parties and from the Government of Canada, while recoveries from loan programs are estimated to be \$5.3 million.

Note that, although recoveries from loan programs are recognized in the current fiscal year, the cash flow will only recover over the life of the loan or earlier, upon discharge.

For 2021, the net grant receivable from the Government of Yukon is estimated to be \$31 million. For the operation and maintenance expenditures — under Executive, \$1.5 million has been allocated to the executive branch, which includes the president's and vice-president's offices and support services.

Under Corporate Services, \$4.9 million has been allocated to the Corporate Services division, which includes Finance and Risk Management, inclusive of loans and grants unit, Human Resources, Policy and Communications, and Information

Management and Technology branches. This amount includes \$568,000 for long-term debt mortgage payments.

Under Operational Services, \$5.6 million has been allocated for the Capital Development and Maintenance branch. This branch provides project management for construction and capital upgrades and maintains housing units. \$7.9 million has been allocated for the Tenant Management branch. This branch provides support for tenants in housing units.

The significant changes in the operation and maintenance budget in 2021-22, which reflect efficiencies within Yukon Housing Corporation, include a \$384,000 increase for personnel and market merit increases, and a \$92,000 increase to contribution agreements. For capital expenditures under Corporate Services, \$2 million has been allocated to support the Challenge Cornerstone Housing project to provide long-term and affordable housing to individuals with moderate disabilities and/or mental illness experiencing homelessness.

\$1.5 million has been allocated to developer-build loans to be used as short-term construction financing for eligible Yukon developers building modest rental units or homes. \$1.2 million has been allocated for First Nation residential energy retrofits to increase the efficiency of housing for First Nation members and decrease Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions. \$1.65 million has been allocated for home-repair loans and programs to assist eligible homeowners to make repairs to existing homes. Of that, \$700,000 is allocated for home-repair loans; \$350,000 for emergency repairs; and \$650,000 for accessibility grants to help Yukoners make their homes safe and accessible as they age in place.

\$3.6 million has been allocated for the housing initiatives fund to support qualified Yukon projects to build affordable housing, and \$2 million has been allocated to the municipal matching rental construction program, a supply-side incentive to increase the quantity of purpose-built rental housing for apartments and secondary suites. \$3.2 million has been allocated to the rural home ownership program, which will assist eligible Yukon residents to obtain home ownership through their first mortgage and owner-build mortgages.

Under Operational Services, \$2.1 million has been allocated for energy retrofits of existing community housing units. Expenditures are 75-percent recoverable from the Government of Canada's low carbon economy fund. \$2.2 million has been allocated for the renovation and rehabilitation of existing housing units.

\$1.6 million has been allocated to convert existing single-family housing units to duplexes to help reduce the corporation's wait-list and \$600,000 has been allocated for the replacement of aged-out units as part of renewal and rebalancing of aging infrastructure.

There is \$200,000 allocated to develop mobile home options and \$681,000 has been allocated to the Yukon Housing Corporation benefit for rent subsidy program to assist Yukoners with affordability.

Ms. Clarke: I would like also to take this opportunity to thank the Yukon Housing officials for the briefing this morning. Welcome to the House, Mary and Marcel.

Thank you, again, Madam Chair. It is my privilege to rise today to debate this important issue. I understand that Yukon Housing Corporation has been doing community housing needs assessments. I was hoping that when he speaks, the minister could please share what Yukon communities have had housing needs assessments completed in the past five years and if any communities are scheduled to have these assessments done in the next few years.

As well, could he explain how these are normally conducted and how they are used to prioritize Yukon Housing Corporation projects throughout the Yukon?

Finally, could the minister provide a bit of a breakdown of what projects are currently planned for Yukon communities outside of Whitehorse?

I think that is quite a lot of detail that I have requested, so I will let the minister respond.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Madam Chair, I just know that past practice has usually been that when the officials prepare written comments — in the past, we've usually had the opportunity to continue on. It's usually opposition's key. So, I do want to thank the officials for what they wrote today. I know we'll probably get to that in a question if we didn't have an opportunity to share it earlier.

Also, I'll start with the first question. I know that the opening comments answered, I believe, questions number 2 and number 3 — at least when we talked about what projects were happening within the communities, which we touched on. The opposition may still want that question. I know that we're all coming into this topic for the first time.

When we talk about needs assessment — the needs assessments that have been completed to date — the Whitehorse needs assessment in 2019 — but I think the question was specific to communities. So, the Watson Lake assessment and work was completed in 2020, Carcross in 2021, Mayo in 2021, and Dawson in 2021 as well.

We also, in those opening remarks, touched upon the fact that this work will again continue. I don't have the exact schedule to date. I know that, over the last year at least, one of the things — and folks will know here in the Assembly — there is a big difference between the comfort level from one community to another on folks coming. You can do a lot of this work virtually, but it's also important, when we have our contractor go out into those communities, that they really get a chance to sit with individuals — whether it be the municipality or NGOs or folks who are focused on this work. Key stakeholders in each and every one of those communities are the folks who we talk to.

I'll say to any member here that, when we're coming to a community, if there are specific groups that they believe are really important to sit and speak with, please let the Housing Corporation know. I'll pass that on for these other communities — because we still have, of course, a number of Yukon communities to sit with.

When it comes to community projects — I am sorry if I'm not going in the exact order of the questions. As we touched upon, we have the three housing units — the triplexes that were mentioned — but also the fact that we are going to be doing one

housing project, which is in your home community in Old Crow — and I think that's a 10-unit — and that continues on. We are defining the design and the work around the Housing First initiative in Watson Lake and early design work on a sixplex in Carcross.

I hope that gives you a little bit of sense of where we are when it comes to the process. Again, let me endeavour — if it's okay — on that particular question about prioritizing — I think I still owe that answer. If the member opposite is comfortable, I will again look to answer that question along with answers to the questions that are coming.

Ms. Clarke: Madam Chair, I thank the minister for his answers. I had some follow-up questions on a few of the projects planned in this budget. The rapid housing initiative is a project funded through CMHC. I understand it is providing triplexes in communities. I understand that they need to be shovel-ready, and Yukon Housing Corporation owns the land. Could the minister outline where those are being built and what Yukon Housing Corporation lots they might be on in communities?

As well, could the minister provide some detail on plans for community engagement and planning on the Housing First project in Watson Lake, including lessons learned from the Whitehorse Housing First project? How will input from Watson Lake residents be considered?

Finally, could the minister respond or provide some details on how the corporation is planning to determine the breakdown of the unit mix in the Whitehorse mixed-use housing project? How is the corporation deciding which units are social housing, senior housing, or market housing? I look forward to those details.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I just want to answer the first series of questions. One of the questions was pertaining to how do we make that decision. How do you prioritize? It really comes to an analysis from our asset management team. Inevitably, you're going to be looking at the age of existing infrastructure, where you're at within the planning process — so, significant elements toward that. If there is further detail required, I can certainly do that.

I just want to get clarification before I answer those, I think, about 10 questions from the member opposite, just pertaining to what — if I could just get a little more context on the “what we heard” on the Whitehorse project so that I understand what's being referred to with that. Then I'll try to answer the series of 10 questions.

Ms. Clarke: Okay. I'll repeat that question. The community engagement and planning on the Housing First project in Watson Lake, including lessons learned from the Whitehorse Housing First project — how will input from Watson Lake residents be considered?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Sorry, Madam Chair, I was focusing on the “what we heard” for Whitehorse. I'm just trying to get a bit more understanding on what the member opposite means by the best — I think it was best practice for Whitehorse — not Watson Lake, but Whitehorse specifically. What's being pertained to there? Then I will have a better opportunity to answer that question.

Ms. Clarke: Well, the minister is trying to answer the question with a question. I am going to my question and move on, because I do have a few questions regarding wait-lists.

I'm hoping the minister is able to share a breakdown of the statistics. I realize that the minister may not have some of this information at his fingertips, as we only shared some of these questions with officials this morning.

Could the minister share the current wait-list number and the breakdown for Whitehorse versus rural Yukon? As well, could the minister share the average and median wait times for individuals on the list, including the differences between the different categories? For example, what is the average wait time of a standard client versus a senior versus a woman fleeing an abusive situation? As well, do the minister and department know what percentage of clients self-remove from the wait-list — those who simply give up on getting a social housing unit — and if the corporation follows up to see if they found some secure housing?

I'll provide an opportunity for the minister to respond.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just for the record, it is a standard practice in the Legislative Assembly, during budget debate — especially in this particular case, because there were almost 10 questions asked in a cluster — I am just asking to get clarification on a particular question so that I could best answer it, and then the member opposite has said to move on. I think that with respect to this series of questions — we will go back into Hansard and make sure that we provide answers to those questions, because I don't think the member opposite wanted me to move on and not answer them. We will endeavour to do our best to have those questions answered.

Again, this is the next one, which is wait-lists — I'm glad this question came up. We will do our best. There was a series of supplementary questions there really concerning the analytics of this information and understanding to dig into it. I think that those are all very valid questions. But as the member opposite would know well, when you are dealing with very significant, confidential data — whether that is housing data, health data, you name it — it is so key to be in a situation where you have to ensure that you respect the individuals who have submitted that data and that you ensure that, when you are looking at that data, you do that, of course, with the most appropriate approach.

I have spoken with the officials, and I think it's a great question. One of the things that I believe we have to do is ensure that we delve into that data. The reason is — and some of these questions, of course, pertain to that — looking at those subsets. I think it's important for the entire Assembly to understand that for a couple reasons.

I've listened to questions over the last number of years. It's always focused on increase or decrease of wait-lists, and I think that the Housing Corporation, when you look at the work that they've done over the last number of years, has done a tremendous job in ensuring that — all of these new units had been built, and all the folks over there are working extremely hard and are passionate about what they are doing. But our population continues to increase. We have to really identify, where appropriate and where possible, how many folks are

coming into the territory and potentially being put on the wait-list. We have to understand how long people have been on the wait-list. We have to understand those subsets, as well — as the member opposite has touched on. How do you look at those individuals — and whether they are seniors or they're folks in risk — all of those different pieces — because that's going to help us as well really understand how successful things are.

When we go back to 2009 and 2010, the projected population was looked at. The interesting part is that, when the official community plan for the City of Whitehorse, for instance, was coming to a conclusion and then we were looking at population growth, we've actually outpaced what the high watermark was and looked at by the planning department at the City of Whitehorse. Now we're in this position where we have a very strong economy over the last number of years and a continued strong economy with GDP growth. We're seeing a lot of Yukoners finishing post-secondary. They want to come home, which is fantastic. There are jobs here for them; there are many jobs available to folks. But at the same time, all of those pressures are coming in. We're going to do our very best to get into that data, but we have to be so careful in accessing it to understand what we're allowed to dig into.

Another point in time — so, just getting into that. We call it a “point in time” — it's a snapshot of where things are, a count of the number of people in the community who are experiencing homelessness on a particular day. Scheduled for 2020 — again, so this point-in-time count was held in April 2021, so just last month. Of course, we have some of that data that will be available very soon, but I'm going to go through these lists here.

In the communities — in Beaver Creek, right now, there is no one on the wait-list.

In Carcross, we have four seniors on the wait-list and three non-seniors on the wait-list, for a total of seven.

Questions concerning time periods and things such as that — these are some of the questions that we're asking. We don't have all of that detail, but we'll go back and share what we can in a written submission.

In Carmacks, we have zero seniors and zero non-seniors on the wait-list; in Dawson City, we have eight seniors on the wait-list and 14 non-seniors, for a total of 22 individuals; in Faro, we have zero in all categories; in Haines Junction, we have two seniors and six non-seniors, for a total of eight individuals; in Mayo, there is just one Yukon government employee on the wait-list, and no other categories; and for those other ones, we had zero for employees. In Ross River, there are two seniors on the wait-list, eight non-seniors, for a total of 10; in Teslin, there is nobody on the wait-list across the board; in Watson Lake, we have two seniors, 13 non-seniors, so 15 total, and one employee on the wait-list; and in Whitehorse, we have 128 seniors, 185 non-seniors, for a total of 313.

The total for both the communities and Whitehorse is 146 seniors and 229 non-seniors, for a total of 375 individuals, and there were the two who were Yukon government employees.

During Question Period today and in the opening preamble, we talked a bit about the rate subsidy that's available. I think there are about 190 folks who are eligible. We started in

November, and they're going to have that opportunity this summer, but it's also important to note that 39 individuals who are on our wait-list are actually also receiving the rent subsidy. So, we are in a position where we have some tools that we can help them with now, and that's working with the federal government and CMHC on that.

Concerning our housing stock, I think that might be an upcoming question, so I'll leave that for now. We will endeavour to get some of that detailed information on the subsets. There are also a number of reasons why the demand for Yukon Housing Corporation housing continues to exceed supply, including an increase in the aging population and population growth, which we just touched on, as well as the high cost and limited availability of options, especially private market rentals, in both Whitehorse and the communities.

It only takes one drive through the City of Whitehorse to take a look at the rental stock and most of the bigger buildings here. Most of the bigger buildings in Whitehorse are quite old, because we saw a period of time where a developer — especially in the private sector — looked at other options.

They were not building rental housing, and the reason why they were not building rental options is because the model, when you are looking at land development — a rental housing development is a long-term investment. When you look at, say, a condominium building with a strata title, you're in a position where you can invest in that development — whether you're a development corporation or a private sector entity — and you will see an ROI — you'll see that return on investment much, much quicker.

So, the model has been — of course, when you have shareholders and investors, they want to see a return. That patient money that, in many cases, used to be there for tax reasons — and some of the tax incentives that used to be available here really drove that. So, you saw people forming corporations and building these assets.

So, again, we had that period of time where there seemed to be quite a pivot toward people building condominiums. Now the Housing Corporation is doing a great job in working with the municipalities — not only in Whitehorse but outside — to make sure that these incentives are there. Now we're getting to see that growth.

But those things, of course, have all helped to put extra pressure on where we are now. We are addressing the demand by offering rent subsidies, adding units to our stock, and establishing partnerships to assist the most vulnerable who are in housing need. The Canada-Yukon housing benefit rental subsidy program — launched in November of 2020 — provides rental support for over 190 households in private market housing.

Our rent supplement program provides \$1.4 million per year to help over 90 Yukon individuals and families, including 30 households living in the Da Daghay Development Corporation's River Bend development. This work started in the 33rd Assembly under the previous government. It continued in the 34th, and we continue to work with Da Daghay Development Corporation as we move forward. We continue that partnership. Again, we're looking at the construction of an

additional 28 new homes in Whistle Bend with the newest work.

Through an agreement, we will utilize 20 of these homes to people on the Yukon Housing Corporation's wait-list. I know that this would be of particular interest to the member opposite, because this is in the community and riding that she represents.

Additional responses to this, I would say — the housing social wait-list is 375, which we touched on. Again, we touched on the employee piece — just a couple of individuals there as well. So, I'll stop there and cede the floor for another question.

Ms. Clarke: The Member for Kluane wrote to the former Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation on October 16 to make her aware that the gathering area of the St. Elias seniors facility was closed for renovations, and seniors were asked to leave. In her response, she said that the seniors would be in by the end of November 2020. The renovations are long done, but the seniors are still not able to gather in that space.

Can the minister please confirm why the seniors are not currently in their gathering space six months after the completed renovations?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I just wanted to take this as an opportunity to commend Patty Moore on her work in Haines Junction. She was a long-time colleague of mine many years ago and has been fierce in her work in Haines Junction and has been supported by the Member for Kluane in this work. Within the last two weeks, I did receive correspondence from Ms. Moore, working to look at this and rectify the situation. I am just going to read a bit of background — I think that it's appropriate — into the record to give a reason why that has been a bit of a challenge. I'm committing right now to working to try to alleviate this problem.

So, the St. Elias Seniors Society has requested use of the common space in the corporation's Haines Junction seniors facility for gatherings and office space for the society. Although there has been an informal arrangement with the society for several years, Yukon Housing Corporation staff have recently upgraded the space to ensure that it meets code requirements for community gatherings and is currently working to develop options, including the potential of a formal memorandum of understanding with the St. Elias Seniors Society for use of the space. The changes to ensure that the room met the code for community gatherings were made, as the room was originally designed for residential use only. The changes to the room were completed by late January 2021. However, we are trying to ensure that we are working with the chief medical officer of health and to ensure the health and safety of our tenants.

Again, the Housing Corporation has not yet provided access and we are working to remedy that. Through March and April, the Yukon Housing Corporation began to work through the steps that could ultimately lead to this formal arrangement for the St. Elias Seniors Society to use the space and to develop a COVID-19 plan that respects the health and safety.

Of course, we have seen some flexibility with that as of late. I am going to leave it at that, but I am making a commitment today to work with folks at the Housing Corporation and with those leaders inside the organizations in

Haines Junction. I will make sure that I am in contact with the Member for Kluane to ensure that he is up to speed on what is happening as we try to fix this situation.

Ms. Clarke: Madam Chair, I would like to ask if the minister has a timeline for when the seniors will be back in that building.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Not yet — I think that I was pretty clear in the sense that we are working through the situation. There is a commitment here. The sooner the better, so I think that is what we will commit to, and I will make sure I get back to the member. I know that the Member for Kluane has worked on this issue. I have been on all sides of the table on housing and with seniors in conversations in Haines Junction along with the member. I know that he is passionate about it, and we will work to do our very best to make sure that those seniors — this is one of those situations, of course, that is frustrating, I think, for everybody. There are guidelines and regulations and insurance. We are always trying to keep people safe but, at the same time, you just want to get people in there to be able to recreate and to spend time and support each other. We understand that it is the ultimate goal, so we will focus on an output here and try to move through the process as quickly as possible.

Ms. Clarke: Madam Chair, I have a few questions about staff rental housing in Yukon communities. I understand that there is, or has been, a review of the staff rental housing in Yukon communities. Could the minister share how and when these changes are being implemented and how they are expected to affect the rental markets in Yukon communities?

As well, could the minister share any details on the corporation's work to determine if these are taxable benefits?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We have taken significant steps in modernizing our approach to housing for Yukon government staff in rural Yukon communities.

The new approach aims to decrease rental housing cost disparities in our communities, incentivize private sector investment in rural housing, and prioritize housing for employees considered critical for community well-being. So, we have heard that in the 34th Legislative Assembly, where some of those critical staff — whether they are medical staff or others — folks in opposition — ensuring that we work to make sure that they have a place to be, but also our belief is that we really do have to modernize this. There are opportunities. I know that there are folks here in the Assembly who have taken that opportunity — multiple people, on all sides of the floor, who are in the communities — to build out rental units, and I think there are many out there who will do it, and I think that's fantastic. That's what we want to really ensure happens — that the private sector is filling this gap. In our earlier comments, we were not going to find the appropriate solutions without a hybrid model of private sector, corporations, NGOs, as well as the government, coming together.

In late May 2019, the government policy governing employee housing was revised as part of the modernization effort. The updated policy prioritizes housing for essential positions, such as health professionals and teachers. It limits tenancies to three years to encourage staff to consider other housing options in communities and realigns rental rates to be

more reflective of private market rates in each specific community.

We will continue to implement the policy and collaborate with our partners in communities as we strive to achieve our long-term goal of affordable housing options and private market opportunities in Yukon communities. Of note, we have seen a reduction in the wait-list for staff housing from 31 households in May 2019 to two, as we just reflected upon in one of the earlier questions.

Yukon Housing Corporation's loan and grant programs support the development of new rental and home ownership housing in all communities. In some situations, the three-year tenancy limit may be extended. That is a process for requesting an extension that has been collaboratively developed by the Public Service Commission and the Yukon Housing Corporation.

The Yukon Teachers' Association and the Yukon Employees' Union were provided the opportunity to comment on the extension request process while it was developed.

Concerning the question on taxable benefit, in nearly two years under our new staff housing policy, considerable work has been undertaken to implement it, with some work remaining yet to do.

Rental rates have been realigned to be more reflective of private market rates in each community. New Yukon Housing Corporation staff housing tenants pay market-value rent, and existing tenants will see gradual annual increases of their rents during their three-year tenancy.

In January 2021, Yukon government began reporting the taxable housing benefit received by those employees in Yukon Housing Corporation staff housing who are paying below market rents. These changes bring us into alignment with the Canada Revenue Agency requirements. The Canada Revenue Agency has established fair market-value rental rates that apply to all Yukon communities.

Ms. Clarke: I have a few questions about the Canada-Yukon housing benefit rent subsidy program that the government announced last November and began in December. I was hoping that the minister could share how many clients, or households, have qualified for the program, preferably broken down according to the unit size categories.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We touched on this a couple of times — once in the opening statement and then going through the numbers. We're at 190. This went live in November. We're at 190 households. Again, this is another one of those situations that we're going to endeavour to take look at — what the subsets are and what information that we can share for the breakdown of households and sizes, with as much detail as we can possibly provide appropriately here to the Assembly. We can get back in a written submission.

Ms. Clarke: I understand the northern carve-out is \$20 million over five years. Could the minister confirm how much of that is budgeted for this year?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: \$1.1 million.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for his answers.

I had some follow-up questions on a partnership project outlined in this budget and one that is not in this budget. Could

the minister provide some detail on how the Normandy Manor project came to be a higher priority this year?

There were some changes to the supplementary budget. Could the minister provide an update on the Challenge Cornerstone project and specifics of the management of the facility, when completed?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We'll start with the Normandy project. The opening question was: Why has it become a priority in the past year? Of course, I'm new to this post, but one of the key reasons is that there is an exceptional group of private sector individuals who have an extensive track record in the Yukon of success in the projects they have done. There are a number of groups that have come together to execute this, and it was shovel-ready. So, you're in a position where there is tons of pressure, which we spoke about, and there's a project that's shovel-ready, and you have a track record of success — whether it's in the manufacturing sector or in the development sector — and all those things come together. I think that the private sector would be encouraged by the fact that the Yukon Housing Corporation worked hard and fast to meet their needs. We always like to see a crane in the air, and that's what we have seen, and that project is underway.

In keeping with our aging-in-place philosophy and the direction of the *Putting People First* recommendations and the housing action plan for Yukon, Health and Social Services and Yukon Housing Corporation are working together with our partners to support seniors where they want to live.

Currently under construction, Normandy Manor will be a privately owned and operated 84-unit residence for seniors. Anticipated completion is in the fall of 2022. In support of this project, Yukon Housing Corporation is providing \$3.5 million to support 10 units in the building for Yukon government to use for 20 years, with \$500,000 from the housing initiative fund and \$500,000 from the municipal matching rental construction program.

Normandy is being built and will be operated through a partnership of local businesses, including Ketz Construction, Borud Enterprises, and Northern Vision Development. Once completed, this residence will meet the needs of seniors who want housing with supportive services, such as meals and hospital services, filling a gap in accommodation for seniors. Normandy Manor provides an essential housing option in Whitehorse between individuals living in their own homes and those living in long-term care homes.

Our government's support for Normandy Manor is very cost-effective compared to the cost of long-term care. Our government recognizes that adequate, suitable, and affordable housing is fundamental to building and maintaining strong Yukon communities and is a strong social determinant of an individual's wellness.

I think that the other question had to do with a bit of background. I did touch on the rapid housing — but again, a little more information. So, we are seeing many new and innovative opportunities to work in partnership and leverage funds toward providing housing solutions. The rapid housing initiative funding is a federal COVID-19 economic recovery tool to create fast housing solutions. The tight building timeline

for this initiative requires projects to be constructed over the 2021 year. We are pleased by the number of Yukon projects submitted to the federal rapid housing initiative to support affordable community housing options for Yukoners.

Yukon Housing Corporation was approved for federal funding to build three triplexes in Mayo, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse and we touched on that. Of course, the corporation had gone out and done an assessment with folks in those communities already. The new 2020-21 federal budget, again, looks to expand the rapid housing initiative with an additional investment of \$1.5 billion. We have already been in discussion with the federal minister and, of course, we are looking forward to that. These are all much-welcomed programs coming to the Yukon, so we are looking to see how that will roll out.

Yukon Housing Corporation's triplex projects align, again, with the community needs identified through housing needs assessments, the corporation's capital asset management plan, and our work to modernize our community housing program.

We are investing in housing across the continuum, including through increases to supportive housing and subsidized community housing — again, \$3 million in federal funds on that work, and 75 percent of that is recoverable.

I will see if I can provide some information — I know there were questions about the lots, and if we don't have that right now, we will make sure that we can get back — just concerning the lands that we are using for those particular projects.

On to Challenge — the successful construction of the Cornerstone Housing project by Challenge Disability Resource Group will bring 53 new homes to Yukoners. It is anticipated to be completed in early 2022.

In the Yukon Housing Corporation 2021-22 budget, we have provided \$4 million as a capital grant and \$1.5 million through the developer-build loan to support project construction based on Challenge Disability Resource Group's timeline, tender award, and construction start dates. Additional funding assistance for the fiscal year 2021-22 will be provided as a capital grant in the amount of \$1.77 million.

Between 2017 and 2019, we advanced \$1.9 million from the Yukon Housing Corporation program funds to the Challenge Disability Resource Group. These funds have been used to purchase the land and for the project design and tender-readiness based on the following breakdown: \$750,000 for the purchase of the land; \$500,000 under the municipal matching rental construction; \$500,000 under the housing initiatives fund; and \$150,000 under the victims of violence program.

Our people-centred approach to wellness helps Yukoners thrive. By making strategic investments, we can build healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities. We are proud to support out community partners with housing solutions.

Again, the breakdown, as requested, for what the Challenge Disability Resource Group is constructing is a mixed-use, 53-unit building. We are looking at 46 affordable rental units, seven market housing units and a commercial space on the ground floor. I think, for many folks here, we know that Challenge has been a leader on social enterprise work. They have done great social enterprise projects for many, many

years, and this gives them a new opportunity with this infrastructure.

I just want to answer that part of the question about the management of it. I believe it is the NGO that will be overseeing the building upon completion.

Ms. Clarke: Madam Chair, the Vimy Heritage project has been discussed in Whitehorse for a long time. Could the minister please share any thoughts or information he has on the potential future of the Vimy project?

I look forward to those details.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We much appreciate the Vimy Heritage Housing Society's work to develop its vision for independent housing with supports for seniors. Seniors housing is important to this government as well as exploring options to support Yukoners while keeping sound financial principles in mind.

We are working with the Vimy Heritage Housing Society to explore sources of funding that would support a financially viable project. Most recently, Vimy received federal seed funding, and we are providing support to assist the society with developing their application to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation co-investment fund, in addition to the funding that Vimy Heritage Housing Society has received from government for functional and design planning. We will continue to explore options for support for their project proposal from our existing programs and innovative partnerships. The Government of Yukon is holding a lot in Whistle Bend for the development, and that has just been extended again. It's just showing the true commitment to patiently work and support the organization. They have been extremely patient, as they have worked through a lot of different feasibility work on this particular project and are now really coming to a key spot as they look to leverage funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation co-investment fund.

There has been a tremendous amount of work done. The Yukon Housing Corporation has been a key supporter of the Vimy society, and it has been an all-government approach. I commend the new Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and their team, which has extended the lot in Whistle Bend, and also folks in Economic Development who have helped on some of the business planning. Everybody is just trying to make sure that they are leaning into this project, and, of course, Ranjit and Elaine have done an extraordinary job of just being so strong and persistent and community leaders as this moves forward. I look forward to the continued conversations from the Yukon Housing Corporation with the society, making sure that we can help them have the best possible chance of working with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation on leveraging some of those strategic funds so this dream of many can become a reality.

Ms. Clarke: This is my final question, and I thank the Yukon Housing Corporation officials for coming here to the House today. Thank you for your time, Mary and Marcel.

My final question to the minister is: How much of the Canada-Yukon housing benefit rent program has been spent to date?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We're going to provide that in a written response. I think we've given a sense of how many individuals, but again, we're just going to go back to Finance and we're going to provide that answer back. I thank the member opposite for the detailed and extensive questions today.

Ms. Tredger: I would also like to extend my thanks to the officials here today and for your great briefing this morning as well.

I actually have a question about the housing benefit as well. I was wondering if the program has been fully subscribed to.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The Yukon Housing Corporation — again, this was such a great undertaking, launching this program in November 2020. This is the new Canada-Yukon housing benefit. As of April 2021 — and we've touched on it a couple of times here — we've approved direct housing rental subsidy support to over 190 Yukoners in market rental housing. The Canada-Yukon housing benefit is a funding initiative. It's \$9.1 million, over eight years, under the national housing strategy, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation-Yukon Housing Corporation bilateral funding agreement.

So, this subsidy program, with \$681,000 available this 2020-21 fiscal year, will help Yukoners recover from the economic effects of COVID-19.

At this point, just to the member opposite, we are still accepting applications and we're still reviewing applications. There is still a bit of room within the year, but I think that we'll probably be coming back just with a written — we can certainly provide those responses today that are going to the Yukon Party, and to you as well, and you'll have a sense of where we are within the budget.

Ms. Tredger: As a follow-up, how is the information about this program being publicized so that people know they can access it?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: To date, the information concerning the program has been shared through social media platforms, local newspapers, and our seniors coordinator. Again, if there are folks with either opposition parties who are aware of other effective platforms that we should be considering, we are open to those ideas and suggestions.

Ms. Tredger: I thank the member opposite for that answer.

The member opposite spoke about Normandy earlier, and I apologize if I have missed this, but my understanding is that some of the units are to be affordable units. I was wondering how many of the units are affordable units and if the same fee structure will apply to them as to other Yukon Housing Corporation units and also who will be deciding who gets those affordable units?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There are 26 units total — 10 of those owned by the Yukon government with the 20-year lease that I have touched on, and rent geared to income, so 25 percent of income then gets allocated toward the rent. It is a combination of both the Yukon Housing Corporation and Health and Social Services that will be working together to determine the folks who will have access to those units.

Ms. Tredger: I thank the member opposite for that answer.

I also have a question about the triplexes that are being built in the three communities — I believe that it is Mayo, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse. Who are those units intended for — whether it's staff, general citizens, or seniors?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The criteria for these triplexes is defined through the transfer payment agreement, or the bilateral agreement, with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. This is the same model for all three communities. One is an accessible unit; one is for a First Nation member; and one is for a victim of violence.

Ms. Tredger: I appreciate that answer.

One of the issues I heard about in the election on seniors buildings has been security issues. I was wondering what measures are in place right now to protect seniors and the buildings they live in.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The overall wellness and safety of our tenants is a priority and something that we take very seriously. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we changed operations to ensure the safety and security of tenants. We increased our cleaning services in multi-unit buildings, posted up-to-date information from the chief medical officer of health, worked with the senior engagement specialist to ensure that social programming continued with both virtual and physically distanced activities, and contacted each tenant directly by phone to check with them, provide information, and answer questions or concerns.

For immediate tenant security and safety issues, we continue to provide a nighttime security service in our multi-unit buildings in Whitehorse. We always encourage tenants to call the RCMP if they feel their safety is at risk. We also encourage all tenants to raise any issues or concerns with Yukon Housing Corporation staff as soon as possible so that staff are aware of and can address these issues in a timely manner.

We continue to provide a number of related safety and security initiatives. For example, we are currently working toward the installation of security cameras in all our multi-unit buildings in Whitehorse, beginning with improvements that can be completed on the exterior of the buildings. We are circulating a quarterly seniors newsletter designed to increase the safety, security, and sense of community. Prior to April 2020, we held meetings in all of our seniors buildings to provide opportunities for our tenants to discuss their needs, concerns, and ideas.

Today, we navigate support for our seniors with a more one-on-one approach through phone calls and with visits from our senior engagement specialist — the individual who I touched on earlier who has been reaching out to ensure that folks know about our rent assist program. Again, we are working to provide effective security and wellness solutions for each multi-unit building for seniors.

If there are members — probably more pertinent to the riding for the member opposite in Whitehorse Centre — but if there are things that we need to know about that focus on the security of tenants, please share that information with us so that we can work to rectify that and make sure that those individuals

who have contributed so much to the Yukon have an opportunity to get the proper supports.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you for that answer. This is actually my final question. I really appreciate how efficiently we have been able to move through this.

I wanted to ask a question about Waterfront Place, the seniors building there. Currently, the parking lot is fairly difficult to access. There is a lack of sidewalks that go to bus stops. There isn't actually access directly to the Millennium Trail despite the fact that it runs right by the building; there are locked gates in the way and there are ditches. I was wondering if there were any plans to make access to and from this building easier for seniors, many of whom have mobility issues.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The conversations have begun on this challenge. Again, this is a new topic here for me so far and we'll look to come up with potential solutions, but I'll take an opportunity to — I'm going to be able to reflect on the conversations and understand in detail — of course, we can also have that conversation formally or offline here or casually, if you would like, for any members, on these topics.

I can understand what the challenge is, especially — this is an important time because, for all of us — we have just spent 30 days getting to know even better the communities that we represent. Those particular issues that were brought up at the door, for all members — if there are things pertaining to housing or seniors housing, please let us know and we'll follow up, especially on this particular one, for the infrastructure in the downtown area.

Ms. Tredger: I spoke too quickly. Thank you for that answer. I actually do have one additional question.

I wanted to ask about housing for teachers in the communities and what new work is being done there.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: So, to date, to report, based on this budget debate — when we went through those early statistics, there were only two government employees. Again, we try to prioritize based on health professionals or teachers.

The projects in this budget that we have touched on are the project in Old Crow — which has 10 units and is mixed use — as well as the six units in Carcross. To date, that is what we have.

We talked about the three triplexes, but we also dug into the fact that those are defined by whom we would see as clients, while also encouraging the private sector — whether it be in Whitehorse or in communities — to work with us to leverage the programs that we have so that they can fill those needs.

Again, to date, there are only the two folks on the wait-list who are government employees who are waiting — but we are going to have this opportunity, because we are hoping — whether there are medical professionals or educators who are in those communities — that they are in a position to have a three-year tenancy. It is a good opportunity for other developers with an entrepreneurial spirit in our communities to build one unit or a duplex and help the housing continuum. We need everybody at the table, and it seems like there are some really good economic opportunities there for Yukoners.

Ms. Tredger: Madam Chair, I want to follow up on one of my previous questions about security in seniors buildings.

Keypad entries in a lot of seniors buildings aren't currently working. Can the minister tell me what is being done about this issue?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We will confer with our maintenance team and report back on some of the undertakings concerning any deficiencies that might be there with keypads. To help us focus that response — not only our response to the Assembly but our response there — please feel free to share which particular buildings where there have been reports. I know our maintenance team is probably on it from reports from the individuals who are living in those buildings. But again, we are always happy to put some further emphasis on ensuring that the maintenance is undertaken.

Ms. Tredger: I do have another question about seniors housing, and that is about bedbugs. I understand that there is a policy in place for Yukon Housing Corporation about bedbugs and I do appreciate that it is not a simple or easy fix. But I hear so often from seniors who are struggling with this and have been living with bedbugs — really, really terrible bedbug infestations — for months on end. I am wondering what is being done to update the policy or what new measures are being brought into place, because the situation is really, really challenging for a lot of seniors right now.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: So, of course, the health and safety and comfort of our tenants is very important to us. Bedbugs are a nuisance and they can affect anyone. Bedbugs are occurring in Yukon Housing Corporation units. The team is there to support tenants with next steps and a mitigation process. Yukon Housing Corporation staff will arrange for an assessment and, if bedbugs are identified, the staff can move quickly to support a timely response and treatment, which can minimize the impact of bedbugs on both the tenant and also their neighbours.

We mitigate bedbugs by hiring a trained professional contractor to treat any unit where bedbugs have been identified and, at the same time, we also support tenants and share best practices on how to properly clean clothing and belongings to ensure that the treatment is effective. These practices can also discourage further incidents. We know that, from time to time, some of our tenants may be affected by bedbugs. We understand that this is a stressful situation and, when this happens, we work with tenants directly to explain our treatment and prevention process and to resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

The Housing Corporation has an annual contract in place to investigate and mitigate this nuisance.

Ms. Tredger: Just to jump backward a little bit with regard to teacher housing in communities — is Yukon Housing working with the YTA to try to identify future gaps in housing in communities for teachers?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Absolutely. We are working with both the YEU and the YTA — so both unions that are representing individuals out in the communities. We are having discussions with them. I think that the member opposite brought up another fantastic point in her question and I think it will be important to endeavour to understand what those tenancy time periods are. I think I would like to maybe put the Economic Development hat on and extract that information to understand what the time

period is and work to see if we can provide that out to communities and contractors so that they actually understand when those opportunities may occur.

Of course, folks can make decisions on their employment — where they're employed or what they're doing — but it may be a chance for us to give some better information out there so that individuals have the best possible set of facts when they're looking at making investments in their communities to provide private sector solutions for rental housing.

Ms. Tredger: That was actually my final question. Thank you.

Mr. Istchenko: I just want to go back to housing and teachers housing in rural communities. The community of Beaver Creek has a trailer that is sort of set aside for Highways and Public Works. They have a teacher coming back who has a family, and the Highways and Public Works — I don't know if they're saving that trailer for something, but they have staff who come up there once in a while, but they usually stay for a month or six weeks, and they can support the economy by staying in one of the local hotels, probably — which was the prior practice, many years ago.

I'm just wondering if Yukon Housing Corporation will work with Highways and Public Works and the Department of Education to make sure that this teacher actually has housing. Otherwise, they won't have a teacher in that community, if there isn't a permanent place for a family as opposed to the little place that is set aside for a single teacher.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There are a couple of different elements to that question that can maybe lead to some further information here, if it is for further information. One is that — just when we talk about conversion — understanding that there are units out there, and the corporation — when they were educating me on the business of the corporation last week, one of the things we talked about was the conversion piece. It was maybe one of the questions asked in the briefing.

It's just important to say that we're looking to try to optimize the use of the infrastructure that we have, because in some cases in the past — probably throughout the history of the corporation — there have been situations where we are over-housing, and probably individuals — there might be one person, and then there are two or three bedrooms. I know that's something that's underway — not specific to this.

What I'll say is that, without knowing all the background on this, I will work with the Housing Corporation and take a look at this. I know that sometimes some of these solutions are a very common-sense approach to ensuring that we can help in the communities. I know that the Minister of Highways and Public Works is here, and we can look into this situation and find out exactly what is happening. I may have to reach out just to get further background, if necessary.

Mr. Istchenko: I will forward a letter off with specifics there.

I just wanted to go back to something that my fellow colleague had brought up about the St. Elias seniors centre. The reason that seniors facility is in Haines Junction was because of the advocacy of the seniors way back in the day who worked with the previous MLA, Gary McRobb, who actually brought

that petition to the House, and we had a facility — and Premier Fentie, back in the day, had built that.

One of the things with that was that space in the basement that we talk about all the time which the seniors were asked to leave for renovations or upgrades or whatever — and we've talked about them still not being back in there. The agreement — at the very beginning with that — was a special agreement on what the seniors pay for their rent. It was an individual thing. I know there has been a lot of change in Yukon Housing Corporation, and I'm not sure, when you talk to the seniors advocate, if she had mentioned to you the background history on that building and how important it is. There are a lot of files I'll forward off to the minister on that so he can actually have a look at it, because I understand that Yukon Housing Corporation changes as they move forward in how they go about doing business. But this is something that a lot of the seniors who helped build this community that I was born and raised in had advocated for and got. We're advocating, as you see in the motion today, for phase 2 of seniors housing. I just wanted to put that on the floor of the House today and I will forward that information off to the minister.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Absolutely. I appreciate those comments, of course. I did have an opportunity to attend at least one presentation there in Haines Junction. I think there was also another one that was held with some of the folks in the community at the Da Kų Cultural Centre, probably back in 2015. There were folks there from Yukon Housing Corporation and Health and Social Services, as well as some of the individuals there in the community. I think that, over the last number of years, in discussions, there has been — I appreciate — in the role of Energy, Mines and Resources, understanding the uniqueness of that community — the same as any other community — really helped to educate me so I could make proper decisions and understanding that there is so much difference and uniqueness from one situation to the next. We'll look into that and understand and respect the fact that the folks who worked so hard to get that infrastructure there — of course, we need to figure out a way that they can use the infrastructure that they lobbied for so hard and that they deserve to have access to.

I'll cede the floor and see if there is another question before we ought to conclude.

Ms. McLeod: There was a CBC news story that I believe was posted in early March of this year, and it referred to the \$20-million fund to build affordable housing in the territory. I think the minister has referred to this as “the carve-out fund” — where \$1.1 million has been designated for this year.

In that article, the government — or, maybe more specifically, the corporation — had said that some of the projects under that money were to include a men's shelter in Watson Lake and a duplex in Destruction Bay. I wonder if the minister could please give us an update on that.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I'm going to stick to the Watson Lake question, with respect for the Member for Watson Lake, and then I know that we'll provide some information on the Destruction Bay duplex.

The Yukon Housing Corporation contract for the housing needs assessment in Watson Lake was \$15,000. To collect data from the community of Watson Lake, the contractor, Vink Consulting, used interview and video consultation with stakeholders, the Watson Lake municipal government, and the Liard First Nation. The consultation included information from the Watson Lake-based employees of the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Society Yukon — FASSY — and Watson Lake regional home care and regional services, the chief administrative officer of the Town of Watson Lake, the mayor of the Town of Watson Lake, the housing officer from Liard First Nation, the executive director from the Help and Hope for Families, a representative from the Watson Lake elder society, Kate Mechan, an implementation manager with the Safe at Home plan to end and prevent homelessness, the Yukon Housing Corporation community housing manager in Watson Lake, and the director of community partnering and lending at the Yukon Housing Corporation.

Currently, the Yukon Housing Corporation is working closely with the Town of Watson Lake to identify land options in the community to build a Housing First supportive housing project. Future engagement with the community of Watson Lake will occur after the corporation identifies the final land site. The construction budget is currently allocated for 2021-22 and 2022-23 fiscal years, with \$1.5 million allocated for this year — as we get into the early parts.

Madam Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by the Mr. Pillai that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by the Hon. Ms. McPhee 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 Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Seeing the time, 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. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following documents were filed May 19, 2021:

35-1-4

Intervention in Yukon's rental market, letter re (dated May 13, 2021) from Marc Perreault, Yukon Real Estate Association President, to Hon. Sandy Silver, Premier (Dixon)

35-1-5

Implementation of rent control, letter re (dated May 17, 2021) from Marc Perreault, Yukon Real Estate Association President, to Hon. Sandy Silver, Premier (Dixon)

35-1-6

Type 1 diabetes, letter re (dated April 8, 2021) from Hon. Sandy Silver, Premier, to Marney Paradis, Board of Directors, Yukon T1D Support Network (McPhee)