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HANSARD

Tuesday, April 19, 2022 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2022 Spring Sitting

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Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Deputy Premier Minister of Health and Social Services; Justice
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Hon. Jeanie McLean	Mountainview	Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate

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Yukon Party

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Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
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THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Emily Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
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Speaker: I will now call the House to order.
 We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will now proceed with the Order Paper.
 Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would ask the Legislative Assembly members to help me welcome a number of individuals who are here today for a tribute for World Heritage Day. First, I would like to welcome — here on behalf of the Yukon Heritage Resources Board and a well-known and respected veteran — Red Grossinger, who is with us today. As well, from the Yukon government Historic Sites, Stephan Biedermann, Shannon Van Bibber, Nansen Murray, Gisli Balzer, and Rebecca Jansen.

So, let's give them a hand and a welcome for being here today.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any tributes?

TRIBUTES

In recognition of World Heritage Day

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the International Day for Monuments and Sites, celebrated as World Heritage Day.

Heritage is the representation and interpretation of our past, a lens through which to view our present, and a legacy that we pass on to future generations.

The Yukon has a rich and multi-faceted heritage, visible through many sites, historic objects, and commemorative items that tell our story. The *SS Klondike*, the *Yukon Rose*, the *SS Keno* and the *MV Sibilla* are emblems of gold rush era transportation. The Whitehorse waterfront is home to the healing totem and two installations from the Aboriginal Women's Circle and one memorializing the students of the Indian Mission School and the drummer statue honouring missing and murdered indigenous women, girls, and two-spirited individuals. Just outside this House stands the restored peace totem. Also, Harrison Tanner's bronze busts of iconic Yukoners dot the streets of the capital.

There are 12 national historic sites, 11 Yukon historic sites, 22 municipal historic sites, 11 national and territorial parks, and a range of other protected areas of historical significance. With First Nations, we have co-managed historic sites like Conrad, Rampart House, and Fort Selkirk.

This year's World Heritage Day theme is "Heritage and Climate", raising awareness of the challenges presented by our warming climate as well as the potential for heritage conservation to strengthen sustainable development. The

threats to cultural heritage in the north due to climate change are unique and pressing. Innovation is required to mitigate these impacts and to understand and interpret the possible heritage opportunities that it can reveal.

One of Yukon's most relevant heritage projects being done in partnership with six Yukon First Nations is the Yukon ice patches where each summer's melt reveals remarkably preserved ancient hunting tools and other artifacts. The fragile and fascinating specimens being revealed here have been preserved in ice since the time of their use by indigenous hunters and represent some of the best examples in the world of the technology and ecosystems of their time period.

The iconic Herschel Island Territorial Park is another location being impacted by climate change at alarming rates, with a loss of sea ice, longer ice-free seasons, thawing permafrost, increased storm frequency and intensity, warmer summers, and shifting vegetation communities. Here at this site, efforts are underway to support the conservation of the historic buildings at Pauline Cove.

I want to recognize the expertise and dedication of those who preserve, interpret, and protect Yukon's heritage legacies. Through your aptitudes and wisdom, you are helping to identify the heritage challenges that we face and the value of meeting them. You are defining the path that we take to responsibility and guide the future of our cultural discovery and preservation.

Thank you.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize Monday, April 18 as World Heritage Day. Also known as International Day for Monuments and Sites, April 18 observes the importance of our diverse cultural heritage around the world and of preserving it for future generations.

Across the Yukon, you will find 30 sites registered under the Yukon Register of Historic Places. These sites are in some way connected to historic events and people or have cultural or architectural significance to the Yukon. Many are now well-known landmarks within our communities. Here in Whitehorse, we have the all-familiar log skyscraper, either as a rental home at some point or just a cool piece of history.

We know the Old Fire Hall and the Old Log Church here in town, and most of us who have travelled the highway have visited Watson Lake Sign Post Forest or checked out the Caribou Hotel in Carcross. Ironically, today when I was coming back to session, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Nugget was talking about a famous patron of the Carcross Hotel, Polly.

These sites are important to our history, and each holds incredible value to the community where it is located and to the Yukon. A number of our incredible landmarks are also considered National Historic Sites in Canada. Among these: the *SS Klondike*, Dredge No. 4 in Dawson, and the Chilkoot Trail. On an even bigger heritage scale, Canada joined the World Heritage Convention in 1976. Since then, 20 of our country's heritage sites have met the criteria to be included in the UNESCO world heritage list.

Our lone Yukon contribution to this list is Kluane National Park, and it is part of the World Heritage Site of Kluane/Wrangell-St. Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatshenshini-Alsek, which spans 97,000 square kilometres between the Yukon, northern BC, and Alaska. I may be a little biased, but I am fortunate to call this area home and I do think that it is one of the most beautiful places in the world.

I would like to thank all those who work to preserve our history of our territory. Many organizations work in tandem to ensure that historical buildings are kept in good repair and that our parks and natural sites are kept pristine. They work to ensure that our heritage and our culture throughout the territory is preserved, documented, and passed along to showcase through further generations. I would encourage all Yukoners to get out there and see some of these sites.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to World Heritage Day. Today, we celebrate the world's cultural heritage. Culture is identity, a way of thinking about the world around us that influences our behaviour. We celebrate the ingenuity of humankind when we look toward our monuments and heritage sites, but we also acknowledge the vulnerability of these sites and the efforts that are required to protect, preserve, and learn from them, especially in a time of climate change.

These sites around the world tell amazing human stories of the relationship to the land and environment, of great feats of determination and engineering, and of the human propensity for good and for evil. We have an incredible story to tell here in the Yukon. Dawson City and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation have been working hard to get the Tr'ondëk-Klondike a world heritage designation. Tr'ondëk-Klondike is one of the most legendary places on Earth. For thousands of years, this land has been home to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Tr'ondëk-Klondike is a significant site in Yukon's history, Canada's history, and the world's history. At the end of the 19th century, it was the site of the Klondike Gold Rush, an international event that changed the land and the peoples of the north forever. This is an extraordinary story of survival and adaptation in a challenging environment — dramatic change in accommodations between cultures that continues to this day.

World heritage means more than preserving historic sites. The world's languages are our heritage, and many indigenous languages are at risk of being lost forever — and, with that, a loss of a people's voice and way of being. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have been working hard to preserve their language and culture.

From a project that started as an idea in the 1970s and that has really picked up momentum since 2013, we are so excited that the nomination dossier was accepted by the World Heritage Centre in March 2021. We are hopeful that, in 2022, we will get affirmation that Tr'ondëk-Klondike will become a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the world will get to understand just how important the Tr'ondëk-Klondike site really is.

This site has much to teach the world, not only about the adaptation of the past, but about the adaptation required to now preserve these important places from the very real effects of climate change.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Today I have for tabling three documents. The first is a CBC article from June 13, 2016 entitled “Yukon hospital bed shortage prompts minister to call meeting”; from the *Whitehorse Star*, an article dated June 6, 2007 entitled “Hospital's operation crumbling: ex-chair”; and finally, a *Yukon News* article from June 10, 2016 entitled “Whitehorse General Hospital is in crisis”.

Ms. White: Today, I have two documents for tabling. One is a *Washington Post* article, entitled “To find out where the covid pandemic is headed, look here: The sewer”, and the second document is from the Government of Canada's science.gc.ca website, entitled “Harnessing the power of wastewater testing to detect COVID-19 outbreaks”.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

North Klondike Highway construction project

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Over the past two years, the Department of Highways and Public Works has been hard at work reconstructing one of the busiest highways in the Yukon, the north Klondike Highway. This highway, one of the only roads connecting us to our most northern and remote communities, is a vital link for industry and a well-travelled route for Yukoners and tourists alike.

This multi-year construction project is significant. So far, we have reconstructed 29 kilometres of road, replaced, upgraded, and repaired a number of culverts, and cleared vegetation in the corridor. We have also installed digital message signs to help make drivers aware of construction zones ahead and have started work on the replacement of the Crooked Creek bridge.

We are proud to be making this highway safer for Yukoners and more efficient for businesses that rely on it to transport goods and services. Just last summer, our government, along with our federal counterparts, announced additional funding through the national trade corridors fund to upgrade this road even further. In fact, once all is said and done, a total of 209 kilometres between Carmacks and the Dempster Highway intersection will be completely reconstructed.

Included as part of that reconstruction is the rehabilitation of two bridges and the replacement of another. What's more,

once complete, this reconstruction will allow us to remove seasonal weight restrictions for heavy trucks between Carmacks and Stewart Crossing. This will tie into future work ultimately with the north Klondike and the Silver Trail.

The department is also planning to expand the use of technology in the corridor that collects data on traffic, road conditions, and weather, all of which help to improve safety for road users. Further to this, we are planning the development of electric vehicle charging stations along this corridor to support the growing use of electric vehicles.

These important upgrades will take place over the next several years and will ultimately increase safety, improve driving conditions, and better connect the Yukon's resources to markets. They will also increase the resiliency of the highway to the impacts of climate change in the face of changing weather patterns and thawing permafrost. But what is most important of all, these upgrades will support over 800 jobs and provide our government with the opportunity to strengthen our relationships and collaborative principles with Yukon First Nations through the use of the First Nation procurement policy.

This year, we will complete an additional 18 kilometres of road construction and complete the Crooked Creek bridge project. We will also begin and complete work on the Moose Creek and McCabe Creek bridges. In short, the work we are doing on this project is good for the Yukon's economy and it is good for Yukon's communities.

I look forward to continuing this good work.

Mr. Hassard: I would like to start off today by saying that today is April 19, and if you are a contractor in the Yukon, your calendar for the busy construction season should be filling up quickly. As we all know, the season is a short one north of 60. So, it is imperative that you make hay while the sun shines.

Now, to the project being discussed today, it should come as no shock to anyone that the north Klondike Highway is one of the major highways here in the Yukon. It funnels critical supplies to central Yukon communities; it provides an outlet for mining companies to get their equipment to job sites; and, with the spectacular scenery and historic areas such as Dawson and the Silver Trail, it is important to the tourism industry.

That is why it is puzzling that no contracts have been tendered for the north Klondike Highway reconstruction yet. It is funny that the Liberals would bring this forward today as their ministerial statement. Just last week when I asked about procurement, I wondered about contracting for a number of projects, including upgrades to the Robert Campbell Highway between Faro and Ross River, as well as a couple of important mining roads — those, of course, being the Freegold Road and the Nahanni Range Road. In 2016, the Liberals promised to tender all seasonally dependent construction projects no later than March each year. This marks the sixth year of the Liberals breaking this promise.

When will these contracts get out the door, or are Yukoners missing out on more projects this year?

Now, for the Klondike Highway, \$42.9 million in capital estimates is being set aside for this year. So, how much of that is actually going toward the north Klondike Highway? How

much of this is going to complete projects from last year, and how much is for engineering and design?

As well, the contract for the right-of-way clearing from kilometre 388 to 532 was in the neighbourhood of \$4 million. We wondered why this tender was tendered as one large contract rather than parceled out so that smaller contractors would have an opportunity to bid on it. This contravenes what was one of the goals of the Yukon First Nation procurement policy.

We are also wondering about the status of the Shakwak funding agreement and when we can expect much-needed investments in the Alaska Highway from Haines Junction to Beaver Creek.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the announcement says that the upgrades will remove seasonal weight restrictions between Carmacks and Stewart Crossing, so our question is this: How does this assist moving equipment to mining districts north of Stewart Crossing or shipping of ore south? We look forward to the minister's response.

Ms. Tredger: We are glad to hear this project is moving forward. These upgrades are sorely needed. We do have a few questions for the minister.

I wonder about completion dates. According to the minister, the last two years have seen 29 kilometres of road upgraded, so what is the expected finish date for the next 209 kilometres of construction that is planned?

I also have some questions about road safety. In past years, we have heard concerns about safety of vehicles passing through the construction zones. We have also heard about — and I have had personal experience as well — concerns regarding the route through the construction zones being impassable for vehicles, impassable for motorcycles, damage to vehicles from rocks and mud, unclear routes after hours without pilot cars, vehicles getting stuck, and so on.

What role will Highways and Public Works play in making sure that, during the construction work, people can safely travel the highway?

We look forward to the replies from the minister.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: For anyone who has driven through the Yukon, our territory has some of the most beautiful and scenic highways anywhere in the world, and they are maintained throughout the seasons to ensure Yukon travellers can drive safely across the territory.

The Department of Highways and Public Works maintains close to 5,000 kilometres of Yukon roads from Watson Lake all the way to Eagle Plains and the Northwest Territories border.

As we approach the spring, we also find ourselves once again in pothole season. Over the next few months, our hard-working team at Highways and Public Works will be working to fix potholes on highways across the territory and will start to brush highways, fix signage, and repaint highway lines.

Since 2019, crews at Highways and Public Works have brushed over 1,800 kilometres along Yukon highways, installed over seven kilometres of new barriers, and painted over 2,600 kilometres of highway lanes. During the winter

months, regional highway crews work seven days a week to keep our roads clear of snow and ice and ensure that sections with the highest traffic volumes are cleared first.

I thank the highway crews who have cleared our highways this past winter and have made sure that Yukoners can safely drive to all communities in the territory. Our government is also working to modernize our roads in the territory. Over the last 12 months, we have installed seven new fast electric vehicle chargers in the communities of Carmacks, Teslin, Watson Lake, Pelly Crossing, Mayo, Stewart Crossing, and Dawson City. These seven new charging stations expanded Yukon's existing electric vehicle charging network to 12 fast chargers. Yukoners can now travel between Whitehorse and Dawson City in their electric vehicle with a quick stop to charge along the way.

In addition, over this next year, we will add an additional seven fast chargers to the communities of Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Mendenhall, Faro, Ross River, and two more in Whitehorse, bringing the total network of electric vehicle chargers in the Yukon to 19 by the end of 2022.

As well, this past fall, the Department of Highways and Public Works upgraded the 511 Yukon website and launched a new mobile app. The new app includes GPS route mapping, route planning, advanced monitoring or route conditions, and a hands-free drive mode that reads critical alerts to drivers. Users are also able to view roadside cameras to see first-hand what the road conditions are like in many areas of Yukon before heading to their destination.

Mr. Speaker, I want to once again thank the crews at Highways and Public Works for all of the hard work that they continue to do to ensure that highways and roads remain safe for travellers in the territory.

I look forward to seeing progress happen on the north Klondike Highway this upcoming construction season as our highway systems continue to be modernized, improved, and expanded.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: French immersion programming and capital plan for schools

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, on the Yukon government's procurement website, there is a notice of planned procurement for the expansion of Selkirk Elementary School. The description indicates that the project is to accommodate the expansion of the French immersion program.

Can the minister tell us what the plan is for expansion of French immersion at Selkirk Elementary School? And will the minister also confirm that Selkirk will continue as a dual-track school that offers both French immersion and English programs?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you very much for the question. I have had opportunity to meet with the Selkirk school community, as I have with communities across the territory. Certainly, I've had some really great discussions with the Selkirk school community regarding the French immersion

program at the school. This is a very popular program in the Yukon Territory.

We are working with both the Selkirk Elementary School and the Whitehorse west school community to continue to provide French immersion programming. I'm happy that we will be accommodating all of our folks who are requesting this type of programming this year. We'll continue to work with the Selkirk school community. They are very committed to the programming that they are providing to Yukon students and we're happy to work alongside them.

Mr. Kent: So, the question was about the expansion — the physical expansion and the program expansion at Selkirk as well as looking for a commitment that the school will remain a dual-track school.

So, over the years, immersion programming at Selkirk has been steadily expanding. There are now two full French immersion kindergarten classes. Likewise, the number of kindergarten French immersion classes at Whitehorse Elementary has also been expanding, and this year, there are four French immersion kindergarten classes at that school.

While this expansion has been welcomed by parents who want their students to access French immersion, there remain a number of questions about where all these students will go when they finish elementary school.

Can the Minister of Education explain the plan for the future of French immersion in the Yukon and does the minister anticipate further expansion to French immersion programming at high schools to accommodate the increasing numbers of immersion students graduating from our elementary schools?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you for the follow-up question.

Again, French immersion is a very important aspect of our programming that we provide to Yukon students and one that is growing in popularity. It's a popular program for sure. We know, of course, that there are growing pressures in terms of where students go from the elementary school level. We're working with the French first. We have a working group that's working right now on developing a longer term strategy on French first and French immersion and all aspects of the programming going forward.

This is work that we're very much committed to. I had long discussions with the school community in Selkirk, and with other schools, and I'm happy that this work is going forward and we'll continue to work with our partners as this work progresses.

Mr. Kent: One significant thing that the Department of Education is relying on going forward is that francophone secondary students will shift from F.H. Collins to the CSSC Mercier French language school; however, that school is already almost at full capacity with 113 of 150 available spots already occupied. That means that the options for secondary school French immersion students are getting more and more limited.

Does the minister believe there is adequate capacity in secondary schools for the number of French immersion students currently in the elementary system?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I thank you again for the question regarding French immersion. It's an important aspect of the programming that we provide to Yukon students. We continue to always monitor the enrolment and to work with our school communities and partners to plan for the long-term needs and delivery of French second language programs in Yukon schools and French first, for sure, and work with the francophone community in that regard.

We work with the French second language advisory committee right now to create a vision statement and plan for French immersion programming in Yukon schools. This is very important work that is happening right now. That is the commitment that I made with all of our schools that are providing these types of programs and that will continue to work alongside them to ensure that we're meeting the needs of our Yukon students and that they are able to access programming.

We know that this certainly is an area of expansion, and we're looking at all the options that are available to us as we work toward planning for school growth.

Question re: Consultation re school replacement

Mr. Dixon: The budget for this year contemplates a new school beginning construction in Whitehorse next year. When we asked in Committee of the Whole about what consultation the minister has done so far, she said — and I quote: "I certainly have had a number of discussions with school councils across the territory. Every single one has included a discussion around infrastructure and need."

From that quote, it sounds like the minister thinks that consultation has already occurred with school councils, but that's not the impression that many school councils have.

So, will the minister commit to formally consulting with affected Whitehorse school councils and the First Nation School Board before a decision is made about which Whitehorse school will be replaced?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the work that our government has done in terms of planning for new schools. We are, together with our partners and with Yukoners, really rewriting a new chapter on education in the Yukon and building for a brighter future for the territory. Our young people are very much part of the next seven generations to come. When we look at capital investments, I am proud that we are planning for and building — starting a new elementary school this year with Whistle Bend and have over \$25 million in the budget for the Whistle Bend school.

We are committed to building a replacement elementary school in the City of Whitehorse and we are continuing, of course, to have those discussions with our partners. Again, we have \$200,000 in our capital budget for the 2022-23 main estimates for preliminary construction and initial design of an existing aging Whitehorse replacement school.

I will continue to build on my answer as we go forward.

Mr. Dixon: We were looking for a commitment to consult with affected school councils. I didn't hear an answer, unfortunately.

When the Minister of Highways and Public Works was asked about this in March, he said — and I quote: "I am not going to be providing the big reveal" and that he would be leaving the decision to the Minister of Education. He went on to discuss the possibilities being Whitehorse Elementary, Selkirk, Takhini, and Wood Street. Now we have recently learned that Selkirk school will see a significant expansion to accommodate growth of the French immersion program, so that means we can likely rule out Selkirk. The Minister of Highways and Public Works also seemed to dismiss Wood Street school because it is already, in his words — quote: "... a purpose-built school." So, that means that it is down to Whitehorse Elementary and Takhini.

Will the minister commit to meeting with the school councils of both WES and F.H. Collins and the First Nation School Board for a specific discussion about potential school replacements before the government makes what the Minister of Highways and Public Works called "the big reveal"?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I want to start by saying, and continue to say, that we are very proud to be investing in school infrastructure in our territory and to meet the growth needs that we have. Yukon government has a five-year capital plan that includes school replacements and renovation projects to ensure all buildings are safe and suitable for years to come. I have spoken a number of times this Sitting about the fact that we are building new schools and that we have money available to start the planning of the next Whitehorse elementary replacement school. Again, it is long overdue.

We are building the Whistle Bend elementary school, which is the first new elementary school to be built in Whitehorse in a few decades, so I'm really happy that the Yukon Party is now interested in school infrastructure. It has certainly been a priority for our government. I have met with school councils across the territory. I have met with school councils within the City of Whitehorse. I am committed to continuing to do that and have those discussions with them as we plan.

Mr. Dixon: It is disappointing to hear the minister dodge the question and dodge the commitment to actually consult these school councils before a decision is made. We know that there is money budgeted for a new school beginning the next construction year. We know from comments from the Minister of Highways and Public Works that there is a short list; however, so far, the Liberal government has been unwilling to share much more than that. Earlier this month, the Minister of Education revealed to the Legislature that the decision was currently before Cabinet. That was on April 7 — over two weeks ago.

Can the minister tell us when she will be announcing which elementary school in Whitehorse will be replaced?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, thank you for the follow-up question. I am happy to stand every single day, if I need to, to talk about the great work that our government is doing in terms of investing in school infrastructure. This is not something that we saw from the Yukon Party government when they were in power. I know that they don't like us to refer back to the history here, but I think it's important for Yukoners to be fully aware

of the — I don't know what it was back in their time — but not very interested in building infrastructure for the growth of our schools. We are, and I know that the member opposite would like me to make an announcement here on the floor of the Legislature; I am not prepared to do that. I have made a commitment to our school community to work with them, to work with our partners, and to do things in a proper and right way with those folks.

That's a commitment I've made and I'll stand by that. The member opposite can continue to try to put words in my mouth, and I don't accept that, and I don't think Yukoners do, either.

Question re: Waste-water testing for COVID-19

Ms. White: Last week, Dr. Theresa Tam, the chief public health officer of Canada, declared that Canada is in its sixth wave of COVID-19. Yukoners have been through wave after wave of COVID and look to this government for long-term solutions to manage this pandemic. One of these long-term solutions could be waste-water testing. It allows communities to monitor for the presence of COVID-19 in their waste water before people develop symptoms and to assess the level of community spread. Public officials and communities can then make informed decisions in the absence of mass testing and reporting.

The minister has said before that this is not what their science recommends. The Yukon is one of only two jurisdictions in Canada not currently using waste-water testing.

Can the government tell Yukoners what science they follow that differs from the rest of the country?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think the acting chief medical officer of health was very succinct in answering this question when it was posed at the most recent press conference. We have a number of tools in the toolkit, as far as making sure that we in Yukon can trace whatever strain comes our way, and we've been very successful in doing so.

They also talked about the data that's collected through waste-water treatment being a tool but not necessarily the tool that they're recommending at this time. Now, that may change. Based upon what Dr. Theresa Tam is saying, we will obviously still take our recommendations and take our direction therein for our policies from our chief medical officer of health.

I guess the question for the NDP is: Do they agree with our current chief medical officer or acting chief medical officer of health and our local professionals? The Yukon Party can scoff at that. We know that they obviously don't support and have been very critical of our own officials in the past, but we will continue, on this side of the House, to listen to the advice of locals — of Yukoners — who are paying attention to all of the information, whether it's coming from the CDC or other organizations as well.

Ms. White: I think the concern is that every other jurisdiction in Canada, except us and one other, uses more tools in their toolbox than we do here, and that's the problem. So, the Public Health Agency of Canada said — and I quote: "The most advantageous application of wastewater surveillance is in smaller communities ... There is a clear public health benefit

when it is utilized in northern, remote and isolated communities."

Our entire territory fits this description. The Yukon has faced outbreaks in long-term care facilities, at the Whitehorse General Hospital, and in many rural communities, but it's hard to know what's happening now with so little testing. Some Yukon communities are trying to implement waste-water testing for COVID-19 on their own.

If this government won't test waste water, will the government at least commit to supporting Yukon communities in testing their own waste water and then making that data publicly available?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I was just listening to Dr. Kancir on the media before coming down here today. I think one of the most important messages that Yukoners can take in is that COVID is ever-changing. Our health advice has been ever-changing. If anyone on the other side of this Legislative Assembly thinks that, for the last two years, we got one or two pieces of advice and we carried on with that, they simply just don't know what has been going on.

There have often been weekly pieces of advice coming from medical scientists, from medical experts, with respect to COVID. We have taken a measured response throughout this process. We have been guided by and followed science. For two years, we have avoided the most severe health and economic impacts of COVID-19, and we will continue to adapt.

We must be able to respond quickly. We must have health professionals who can respond quickly. We must have Yukoners who unfortunately in many aspects of their lives, live with uncertainty. Our strong leadership has guided us through the pandemic and kept our economy going. I look forward to speaking more about testing and COVID.

Ms. White: The minister's right; COVID is ever-changing, and that is exactly why every other jurisdiction in Canada, except for us and one other, is testing waste water.

Many Yukoners are concerned about how to live in this new COVID reality and what this government is doing — or rather not doing — to keep them safe from it.

With no mass PCR testing, no data collection for rapid at-home tests, no more mask and vaccine mandates, it seems that this government is just giving up managing the pandemic altogether. Waste-water testing could make a huge difference. This could even be done to monitor specific congregate living facilities, like long-term care, corrections, or even hospitals.

Can the minister explain why the Yukon is at odds with what is recommended in the rest of Canada and northern communities when it comes to testing waste water for COVID-19?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Waste-water testing, like a lot of testing, has evolved over time with respect to dealing with COVID-19 and continues to be developed. It may become a useful surveillance tool here in the territory in future.

The Government of Yukon is working with our partners, including the Public Health Agency of Canada, our First Nation and municipal governments, and our acting chief medical officer of health to determine next steps in the consideration of waste-water testing and a program here in the territory. The

process does not provide specific details about where there is COVID-19 or how COVID-19 is spreading or who may have been exposed. As such, waste-water testing has the potential to be a surveillance tool that can be used for early detection of cases at a population level but not necessarily providing the information, as noted by the question.

We recognize that waste-water testing is being used in other jurisdictions. We will continue to explore how it may be a useful tool here in the territory to respond to COVID-19.

Question re: Macaulay Lodge site development

Ms. Clarke: On March 16, we asked the government about their plans to develop the Macaulay Lodge site; specifically, I asked about the greenbelt lot adjacent to the building and whether the government had plans for it. In response, the minister said, “Again, there are no plans for that greenspace area...” However, the government documents on Bids and Tenders directly states that the property proposed for development encompasses a portion of the greenbelt.

Can the minister clarify if he was right, or are the tendering documents right?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: The demolition of Macaulay Lodge is a fantastic opportunity to provide both Riverdale and Whitehorse with hopefully a medium-to-dense — it will repurpose Macaulay Lodge as housing for both mixed use, with either mixed density or high density.

The contract for demolition of the building has been awarded, as indicated previously. It is a great example of Yukon First Nation businesses using the tools and the Yukon First Nation procurement policy. The successful candidate included bid value reductions for being a Yukon First Nation business and hiring First Nation labour as well.

My recollection is that the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation provided a statement on Macaulay Lodge two or three weeks ago, and he indicated at that time that there was an expression of interest that was provided and that all manner of options were open, but where we’re going is for mixed or high-density housing, which will provide both Riverdale and Whitehorse at least a partial answer for the housing crisis and provide for affordable housing.

I look forward to working with the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation on this valuable project.

Ms. Clarke: To quote from the government’s request for expression of interest documents, which detail the area being proposed for development, “The property encompasses 5 lots ... plus a portion of the greenbelt...”

On March 16, the minister said — and I quote: “... there are no plans for that greenspace area...” Both statements cannot be correct, so can the minister tell us how large a portion of the greenbelt will be open for development?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: First, I think it’s important to talk about the order of operations for what’s happening here. Number one is that we’re in the middle of doing a demo on the property. There is a number of the infrastructure that is in place that has to be removed. Secondly, as I’ve said publicly, there was some concern of a potential historic hydrocarbon spill, and we’re

looking into that to make sure. From there, we’re moving toward looking at different design principles.

I stand behind what I said. We are going to look at different options. We haven’t even had a chance to look at those options yet. In many developments, what ends up happening in the City of Whitehorse is that developers have an obligation for a public land use dedication, a PLUD. I have talked to my colleagues who speak with their constituents, and people in that area feel very strongly about that greenbelt area. We believe that the current footprint of the building — and maybe in some of those other areas — not greenbelt — could be extended, but again, these are early stages.

I think members opposite are trying to pick away at something where really there’s nothing to pick away at. We’re just looking to be able to look at multiple options for high density. We have obligations to the community on consultation. We have to work with the City of Whitehorse, and those are all the things that we’re committed to doing and we will do.

Question re: Fuel-wood supply

Mr. Istchenko: Last week, we asked the minister about the fuel wood shortage in the Yukon. We know that several dozen loads are stranded in the Quill Creek area because the minister said that April 1 to September 30 is fire season. When we shared this with several industry representatives, it was pointed out to us that we are the only jurisdiction in the country that completely shuts down logging during the fire season, regardless of the wildfire risk.

So, will the minister work with the harvesters in southwest Yukon so that they can haul out the wood that is currently on the ground and ready for transport?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We will always work with local harvesters. I hope that this has been clear — that we appreciated it when they came to talk to us about concerns that they had. We hustled and we worked with YESAB to try to get the Quill Creek project through in the Haines Junction area. We were successful there. We got it permitted. I thank the wood producers in the area for the work that they have done over this past winter to develop the fuel wood there. I am happy to work with them and am continuing to do so, but I will also ask for the advice from the wildfire professionals, and I hope we all do.

What I said last week, and I will stand by it again, is that I hope that it is not a political conversation about what the fire risk is. I hope that we can talk to our wildfire professionals and have them tell us when the appropriate time is or is not, but at all times, we are willing and able to work with the Wood Products Association.

What I can say, since the question came last week, is that I did talk to the department. I asked them to please make sure to be working with the harvesters there and across the territory, and we’ll continue to do so.

Question re: Opioid crisis

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, in January this year, the Yukon government declared a substance use emergency in response to the dramatic increase in overdose-related deaths in the Yukon. Since then, the government has focused the vast

majority of its efforts on harm reduction. While we support effective harm-reduction measures, there needs to be an increased focus on prevention, treatment, and enforcement.

When the government announced the declaration of a substance use health emergency in January, they committed to increasing on-the-land treatment options. Since then, how many new on-the-land treatment spaces have been created?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am very pleased to stand in this House and speak about the declaration of a substance use health emergency here in the territory. It is absolutely critical. It is a call to action for all governments in the territory and for all Yukoners, in fact. I think that this is the first time that I have had the opportunity to rise to speak about the substance use health emergency, and I am very pleased to do so.

What I can indicate is that, despite some of the preamble of the question and the emphasis on enforcement, this is a health issue. This is a health problem.

The declaration of the substance use health emergency in fact, in part, was to redefine this as a health issue. We must work together. We are taking action. We have dedicated budget resources to the substance use health emergency. It, at its core, is a health problem. Our government is taking the most progressive steps toward substance use harm reduction in the history of the Yukon Territory.

Building on our 2018 opioid action plan, we have opened the first supervised consumption site here in the north to increase safety for those who use substances. We have improved access to social, medical, and mental wellness. I look forward to speaking more about the actions taken.

Mr. Cathers: I asked the minister a very specific question about addiction treatment spaces and she did not answer the question.

In addition to increasing treatment options and providing increased focused on prevention, government also needs to provide the resources necessary to the RCMP to ensure that they can target illegal drug dealers. While law enforcement alone will not solve this crisis, charging the drug dealers responsible for the sale of these toxic drugs needs to be a priority.

Why hasn't the government provided additional resources to the RCMP to ensure that those profiting from the sale and proliferation of these illegal drugs are held accountable?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Over \$5.5 million is in this year's budget to support the government's immediate response to the substance use health emergency. This includes more than \$1.1 million to enhance the supervised consumption site to increase access and support for people who are in need. More than \$850,000 will allow the safer supply program to be expanded to rural communities and to increase availability here in Whitehorse. Nearly \$1.8 million will support additional mental health and social services throughout the territory and is part of the increased funding for policing services this year. Almost \$300,000 will bolster the RCMP's response to the toxic supply of illegal drugs here in the territory.

Mr. Cathers: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister again tries to paint a rosy picture, but the facts show otherwise. Addictions services are not meeting the needs of some

Yukoners. Prevention is an afterthought for this government. When it comes to enforcement, the RCMP's most recent year in review shows that their funding over the past four years has not increased enough to meet demand on services.

A few examples from the RCMP report show that sexual assault is up 31 percent, robbery is up 25 percent, and trafficking offences are up by 90 percent. Their operational funding, on the other hand, has barely increased under this Liberal government.

Will the minister agree to increase funding to the RCMP to help them target the drug dealers who are selling these illegal and toxic drugs, charge them, prosecute them, and put them behind bars?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: This is, of course, a completely different question, but I am very pleased to be able to address it just the same.

Our government knows that many Yukoners are struggling with mental health and substance use issues. By coming together as a territory, we are working together to find solutions that will help ensure that every Yukoner has access to the supports they need and where they need them.

Once again, the members opposite have proven completely unreliable with respect to the facts regarding the RCMP. I would like to take the opportunity to draw attention to the fact that the RCMP have been working extremely hard. There have been their own public statements with respect to intercepting drugs here in the territory, intercepting weapons here in the territory, and, most recently, completing the investigations with respect to that in order to keep Yukoners safe.

In addition to that, we have been working closely with our First Nation partners with respect to their programs to address the substance use health emergency in their own communities. I am happy to mention the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, and the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and the programs that they have advertised, developed, and initiated to help their own citizens with respect to dealing with the issues of substance use. It is critical in the territory that we come together to deal with this and help Yukoners where they are.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Kent: In order to continue debate on other business, including the 2022-23 budget, the Official Opposition will not identify any business for Wednesday, April 20, 2022.

Ms. Tredger: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, April 20, 2022.

It is Bill No. 304, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre.

Speaker: We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

Bill No. 204: *First Appropriation Act 2022-23* — continued

Deputy Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Request for Acting Chair of Committee of the Whole

Deputy Chair: At this time, I will ask if any private member wishes to volunteer to be Acting Chair of Committee of the Whole, as the Chair would like to take part in the debate on Yukon Housing Corporation.

Member for Takhini-Kopper King rises

Yukon Housing Corporation

Acting Chair (Ms. White): Order, please.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: As Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, I rise today to present the 2022-23 capital and operation and maintenance budgets for the corporation. Before I begin my address, I would like to introduce the officials who will assist me today: Mary Cameron, president of the Yukon Housing Corporation, and Marcel Holder Robinson, director of Finance and Risk Management at the Yukon Housing Corporation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to again share my appreciation and thank both the staff and the board at the Yukon Housing Corporation for their hard work over the past year and

for their dedication and passion to supporting more affordable housing options available to Yukoners along the housing continuum.

The corporation has been successfully working toward their five-year strategic plan vision to deliver housing solutions that contribute to healthy, sustainable, and inclusive communities. In the year ahead, the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors will begin work to develop the next five-year strategic plan in line with changing housing needs.

The government understands that to have healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities, Yukoners' need to have homes that fit their needs and that they can afford. The Yukon has faced many challenges and experienced a number of losses through this pandemic.

The current housing market brings an opportunity for an innovative and flexible approach to address those challenges. This focus has been a mainstay of the corporation's response to how they tackle housing solutions during the global pandemic.

We have seen unprecedented pressures in the housing market. Specific challenges include: increases in living costs and construction; disruptions in supply chains; and a shortage of labour. Also, our territory is battling a substance use health emergency during a pandemic, both of which placed additional pressures on the local social support and housing network.

As a community, we grieve our losses while continuing to do what we can to support those in need. People need a safe and affordable place to call home now more than ever. As spring returns to the territory and we learn to adapt to living with COVID, I encourage Yukoners to reflect on our collective strength and resiliency. Think about your individual abilities to encourage and support your neighbours and community.

Although, over the last five years, our investments in housing programs and commitments to housing have helped to fund the development or upgrading of over 600 homes, this year I am pleased to bring forward the largest housing capital budget in the last 10 years. We are dedicated to supporting Yukon families in their efforts to gain and maintain affordable and adequate places to live. We are guided by the three goals of the Yukon Housing Corporation's strategic plan: We are a trusted housing partner; we are renewing and rebalancing community housing; and we are strengthening our corporate stewardship.

In addition to the corporation's strategic plan, we are working on delivering 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; the recommendations from *Putting People First*; as well as *Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice: Yukon's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit+ Strategy*. All the while, we are also focusing on key components in the *Our Clean Future* climate change strategy. These plans have many interwoven goals and priorities; however, at the centre are citizens and their well-being.

I would like to bring our attention to the Yukon Housing Corporation's community housing program, where the objective is to better support housing affordability and

availability across the Yukon and to more closely address the housing needs and successes of our vulnerable Yukoners. The community housing program is guided by four foundational goals: focusing on meeting housing needs and successful outcomes for our clients; balancing our client focus with fiscal resilience and responsibility; rethinking government's roles and responsibilities within Yukon's housing system; and, where practical, focusing Yukon Housing Corporation's programs on building healthy housing markets so that Yukon communities remain healthy, vibrant, and sustainable.

The implementation of the community housing program is working toward achieving the objectives in our various action plans. Examples include: working toward goals in the Safe at Home plan and *Putting People First* to secure housing through the coordinated access approach for those who have experienced homelessness or have other vulnerabilities; implementing actions within the housing action plan by rebalancing the role in communities to provide affordable rental housing and ownership options through the private market incentives for loans, like our rural home ownership program, directly to Yukoners; as well as providing rent subsidy programs like the Canada-Yukon housing benefit rental housing subsidy; and supporting the goals of the *Aging in Place Action Plan* by recognizing that the needs of our seniors in our housing are unique and focusing on client experience. We provide barrier-free units in our seniors community housing buildings and an accessibility grant for those wanting to age in place at home.

This budget shows renewed effort to support our community housing program in addition to our continued support of several housing development initiatives. The Canada-Yukon housing benefit, launched in November 2020, continues to directly support tenants living in the private rental market to help with housing affordability. We are proud to report an increased budget to \$1,005,000 to continue supporting over 200 Yukon households that have already joined the program since its start and to help them afford rent.

We anticipate the 47-unit community housing building at 4th Avenue and Jeckell Street in Whitehorse will be now completed this summer. Providing more affordable housing in Whitehorse, this new build will be the first building to be allocated using our new mixed-income model. The mixed-use and mixed-income model approach adopted in much of Canada and the United States will enable social diversity and support better social outcomes through the intentional integration of Yukoners with different income levels, including vulnerable Yukoners who require supports.

As a highlight, the Yukon Housing Corporation's triplexes in Mayo, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse under the federal rapid housing initiative round one are nearing completion and will be ready for tenants later this spring.

These three projects will contribute nine units toward supporting affordable and accessible community housing options for vulnerable Yukoners, including a barrier-free unit in each triplex, with a focus on supporting First Nation women and children fleeing violence.

As we move forward with plans for new buildings in Yukon communities, we will work to ensure the mixed-income and mixed-use model works for their unique needs, while striving for our community housing program goals of fiscal sustainability, social diversity, and better social outcomes for Yukoners.

The Government of Yukon's 2022-23 five-year capital plan prioritizes the interests and needs of Yukoners. This year, we are excited to start and nurture new initiatives that will help Yukoners find the housing support they need while helping achieve the goals of our strategic plan, the housing action plan, and the foundational goals of our community housing program.

New capital developments in the planning and/or design phase this fiscal year include the design of a new supportive community housing project in Watson Lake, which will be operated on Housing First principles. This project is based on findings of the recent housing needs assessment, which identified a significant need for supportive housing. We will continue to work with the community for input on the project and have budgeted \$4.5 million for its construction.

There has been \$1.45 million allocated for planning and design work to support community housing needs in the communities of Teslin, Carcross, and Dawson. Finally, we allocated \$900,000 for the construction of a duplex in Dawson.

At the fall 2021 Yukon housing summit, we learned that a number of Whitehorse families were living in unsafe and precarious housing. The corporation quickly stepped in with support from the Safe at Home Society and NGO partners, through the coordinated access team, to identify housing that could be made available to meet these emerging and urgent needs.

As a result, 16 Yukon Housing Corporation units in Whitehorse were identified for immediate allocation by expediting health and safety repairs. Through working with community partners and using the by-name list, this ensured housing was available to families in need as quickly as possible. In continuation of these efforts, we allocated \$450,000 for temporary emergency housing to help support immediate housing pressures for emergency housing situations. We have taken what we have learned this last year and moved this allocation from what was previously budgeted under the deployable mobile homes program to now be ready for use for temporary emergency housing.

We are happy to have joined the Government of Canada and the City of Whitehorse in the announced funding support for the Safe at Home Society's supportive housing project this year. The Safe at Home Society was successful in receiving funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for a supportive housing project for vulnerable Yukoners, including \$10 million through the northern carve-out of the national housing co-investment fund and \$5 million under the City of Whitehorse rapid housing initiatives project stream. The Yukon Housing Corporation is further supporting this project through \$1 million in additional funding under the housing initiatives fund.

This project will provide 55 units of permanent supportive housing for vulnerable Yukoners, including units for women,

youth, and indigenous Yukoners, helping to alleviate existing housing and homelessness challenges in our territory. I think we can all agree this is indeed a first for the Yukon and a very creative and innovative approach.

While we're excited by the new initiatives coming this spring, we have not forgotten about our previous commitments. We will ensure that our existing housing stock is safe and accessible to Yukoners. We know it is important to build new housing, but as part of our government's commitment to a sustainable future, it is also important to invest in repairs and upgrades. Each year, we renovate and retrofit a number of homes in our existing housing stock to make sure they continue to be safe, adequate, and affordable homes for Yukoners.

We have budgeted \$3.8 million to support the renovation and rehabilitation of existing stocks. To ensure that our current stock supports Yukoners' needs, we have also allocated \$3 million to replace units that are too old to be economically repaired. However, it's important to note that we are not only working on our own units. \$1.6 million has been allocated under our First Nation energy-efficiency program, partially funded through the Government of Canada's low carbon economy fund, to support energy-efficiency retrofits in First Nation housing around the territory. This is an increase of \$419,000 over previous years, based on federal funding recovery. In addition, \$2.1 million has been allocated under the low carbon economy fund to help ensure that Yukon residents living in Yukon Housing Corporation's community housing stock continue to live in energy-efficient housing.

Our loans and grants 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 for the rural home ownership program continues to help Yukoners buy or build homes in Yukon communities outside Whitehorse, where it can be difficult to secure financing from traditional lenders.

The home repair program — with three streams for accessibility, emergency repair, and home repair loans — 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 eligible Yukoners. I would like to bring everyone's attention to the fact that this program can also be used by seniors to make their homes more accessible as they age in place in their home.

We recognize that there is a higher demand to build housing. As such, I am happy to announce a budget increase of \$6.5 million for the developer-build loan for a total of \$8 million in 2022-23 to assist developers in increasing housing options for Yukoners.

In addition to direct provision of housing, the Yukon Housing Corporation also cultivates partnerships with the private sector to grow the number of housing options in Yukon communities. We have successfully completed five intakes of our housing initiatives fund, a community partnership program that supports increased affordable housing options to Yukoners across the housing continuum. To date, existing commitments from previous intakes will bring online approximately 470

housing units in our different communities. If we are to address Yukon's unique housing needs, it is crucial that our work is in partnership with First Nations, First Nation development corporations, non-profit organizations, and the private sector.

I am happy to report that we have budgeted an additional \$2.1 million for the housing initiatives fund this year, increasing our total annual budget to \$5.7 million to address the growing demand for affordable and high-density housing solutions.

Another partnership that we are pleased to continue is the municipal matching rental construction program grant, which will increase rental housing in the territory and provides more rental options for all Yukoners by supporting private developers in communities that offer a municipal incentive program. The budget for this program has been increased by \$2 million this year, for a total of \$3.5 million.

We started the year in 2022 on a grave note, as we declared a substance use health emergency. As a community, we grieve our losses while we try to continue to do what we can to support those in need. The COVID-19 Omicron has made it harder for us to meet in person, but the restrictions put in place enable us to move ahead of the curve. We must continue to be vigilant and act responsibly while we deliver housing solutions that contribute to Yukoners' well-being within sustainable and inclusive communities.

The Yukon is in a peculiar predicament. We are experiencing a housing boom and a housing crisis in parallel. We are excited by the number of residential housing permits, which reached an all-time high of 590 permits in 2021, while noting, on the flip side, that the average sale price of a house in Whitehorse also hit a record high, going over \$650,000. Simultaneously, Yukon's population has increased 12.1 percent to more than 40,000 since 2016. Although this population growth is exciting in one way for our economy, it is also directly contributing to the housing demand — as is the increase in our very own aging population, who are choosing to stay in the Yukon for their senior years.

The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Community Services, and Yukon Housing Corporation are leading a joint effort on this front by working with stakeholders across the territory to increase lot availability, address homelessness, and support renters, landlords, and homeowners to ensure that more housing is available to Yukoners of all means.

We are excited to see what can be imagined by the housing developers as they apply on the expression of interest released for the development of Macaulay Lodge, which we spoke about earlier in Question Period today. As well, we are proud to work and partner with the Northern Community Land Trust society as they also move forward with a first-of-its-kind project in affordable housing — truly, for the Yukon, on the forefront of creative and innovative solutions to housing. This budget supports our commitment to a solution-focused trusted housing partner. It supports our work toward delivering on our new opportunities, which will lead to housing solutions that contribute to healthy, sustainable, inclusive communities to maximize benefits for Yukoners. This is evident in the work

that we do with our community partners in the implementation of the housing action plan for Yukon and the Safe at Home action plan to end and prevent homelessness.

The corporation's staff are passionate about working on housing solutions across the territory, and we continue to strengthen our corporate stewardship as we deliver on our client services and programs. We are proud of our employees and the work that they do for Yukoners. They take pride in working to find solutions to affordable housing as the Yukon population and economy continue to grow. With our partners, we will work to make sure that we provide the housing solutions that Yukoners need. We know that we are stronger together and that we can build healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities in the Yukon.

Again, I will just touch on a few other points and then we can move into some questions. I will again now provide just a bit of a detailed breakdown of the Housing Corporation's expenditures and recoveries to highlight the ways that we're helping Yukoners.

For the 2022-23 budget, \$20.2 million has been allocated in operation and maintenance expenditures to provide housing services to Yukon residents, and \$46.8 million has been allocated for capital expenditures to assist Yukoners in meeting their housing needs. Total revenue and operation and maintenance recoveries are estimated to be \$12.6 million. That's including recoveries from the federal government. We estimate that the total capital recoveries will be about \$12.4 million, including recoveries from the Government of Canada, while recoveries from loan programs are estimated to just be under that at around \$11.8 million.

I will just stop there and then we can get into further detail as the questions begin.

Ms. Clarke: I would like to thank the officials for being here with us today. There is an increase of \$6.5 million to the funding allocation for developer loans — from \$1.5 million to \$8 million. I understand that this amount was increased in anticipation of a number of projects. Can the minister please confirm how many projects are anticipated?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It's hard to determine that number right now as it is a loan intake program, so we have had some discussions with interested parties, but, again, like any of these programs, it is hard to give a definite number until we start to see the applications begin to come in over the year.

Ms. Clarke: What are the conditions of this loan to be met by developers during the development phase?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Something at that level of detail within the scope and terms of the program — we certainly have no problem with bringing that back. I can provide it to the member opposite and give some detail on what that application looks like and the expectations that we have for folks who access that program.

Ms. Clarke: Are there specific conditions that must be met after development for a project to qualify — for instance, that they address affordable housing demand?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: As noted a second ago, getting into that level of detail — we certainly can come back and provide the applications, terms of reference, and scope for the program. The

member opposite can then review it and see the detail of what our expectations are.

Ms. Clarke: What is the maximum loan available?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It's the same answer.

Ms. Clarke: Programs like the developer loan, the rapid housing initiative, and the housing initiatives fund have different affordability clauses. They require units to be available at an affordable market rate or to specific populations for a longer term. What mechanism is in place for monitoring to ensure that the terms of housing are complied with?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think there are two things that we have to consider because the member has just touched on a number of different programs. One would be if we are using third-party funding. If we are reaching out to the federal government in some cases — in the opening statement that I made — I would talk about very specific things. I talked about the triplexes. It might be specific for women or families fleeing violence. It could be about accessibility, so it's always tied to the federal terms if we are using third-party funding. That would be one thing that would then help us to define. Then, of course, we create programs on our own. In those particular programs, we might be trying to meet a certain goal. As the member opposite said, it could be affordability, or it might be a scenario where we are doing a matching grant because the municipality has an offset for affordable housing.

There is a plethora of different things that we look at doing, and then we have a TPA agreement. We would do a funding agreement with the individual. That could be an NGO, a First Nation government corporation, or even a private developer. In those cases, we would identify our expectations that we would then take into consideration. Of course, there have been many projects executed in the Yukon, in Whitehorse, and in our communities.

There's a commitment — essentially a binding agreement — between us and said party/client in order to ensure that the outcomes are met and that the outcomes are upheld.

I will just check with my officials to see if there is anything else they would like to share.

Again, under our transfer payment agreement terms and our loan agreement terms — of course, this is very similar to how government disburses funds for many different projects. We outline that. In many cases, we have to go back and have those agreements or frameworks and templates identified and supported through Justice, and then we have people sign off on them.

That's how we ensure — and I hope that I have given an example of, in some ways, how we have to look at the scope of program and how a third party, in some cases, defines how we build out — unless it has been something unique that we have built in-house and was supported by our board of directors.

Ms. Clarke: Are there controls in place to ensure the property does not move to above market rent amounts? Are there controls in place if the building is sold?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Again, back to that, these are binding agreements. Within that work, we do have the opportunity to audit and we can audit. There is a legal declaration that has to be made by said client.

Ms. Clarke: Did you say that a TPA is a binding agreement?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: No, I said that we identify, in our transfer payment agreements — which was the first piece — I talked about what our expectations are and our scope. I talked about the fact that we have a declaration that is signed off, and I spoke about the fact that the TPA is an agreement between us and the client who receives the money. So, I sense that there is some level that is there that binds. I will leave the rest to the Justice department. I mean, if you want me to disseminate what the legal liabilities are for somebody who does not follow through on a TPA after signature, I could follow up on that, but I will probably go to the Justice department and request a memo on that through the Housing Corporation and bring it back, if that is something that you are very interested in.

Acting Chair's statement

Acting Chair: I will just remind all members that remarks are to be referred through the Chair.

Ms. Clarke: Thank you, minister, for that answer, and yes, I would appreciate that, please.

The government has taken away the down payment assistance program, which provided Yukoners access to a down payment loan for a home provided that they had financing from a financial institution. This was well-subscribed to, and it allowed help to those who had trouble coming up with a down payment. Has the minister considered reinstating this program to allow more Yukoners to gain entry into the housing market? Has the minister considered creating a similar program?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Yes.

Ms. Clarke: What would be that program?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I'm still considering.

Ms. Clarke: The government has changed the home ownership program to only be available to rural Yukoners. The first-time homebuyer program, which was once accessible to all Yukoners, has been changed to the rural home ownership program. This is of no benefit to individuals who are having trouble accessing the market in Whitehorse.

So, my first question is: Why did the government change this program to be available only to rural Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We did it because the terms of reference at the time were very consistent with the thresholds that were required for traditional lenders. There seemed to be a duplication in the fact that, if you could meet the terms that we had, you would also be able to meet the terms of the traditional lender, i.e., one of our major banking institutions.

Not quite the case in rural Yukon. In rural Yukon, what we've heard from municipal leaders specifically is that it's very difficult to be able to leverage the same way from an institution, partially because it's hard to get comparables to other — when people are looking to build new. So, what we've done is we have worked very closely — taking advice from municipal leaders, primarily — to look at increasing our ceiling on what can be leveraged from us in the rural home ownership.

But, just like the previous line of questioning concerning the down payment program, we're still looking at this. I have

talked to the president about it in our bilateral meetings, and we still want to make sure in every case that, if we have to look at a different model for more of an urban program that used to be in place but especially now, when we're seeing an increase in interest rates and likely more difficult for folks in the future — likely, I say — to be able to meet the requirements of traditional lenders, is there a role in an urban environment for the Yukon Housing Corporation? Those are all things that we're contemplating.

I think we're doing a good job with our rural program. We have been very agile in ensuring that it works for folks. I think we've talked before about the number of clients that we have seen.

I think we always have to be monitoring to monitor and adapt, the same way that we have done with the economic development programs, and that's what we're continuing to listen to folks who are here. There have been questions by the Third Party, and those have been focused on people who have reached out to them. We're listening respectfully to those comments.

With the housing market moving the way it is, it is very important for us to not get stuck in one particular way of doing something but to ensure that we are cognizant of the fact that this is an ever-changing landscape.

Ms. Clarke: Has the minister considered reinstating this program to help all Yukoners to gain entry into the housing market in the face of this housing crisis?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Yes, I think that is what I just touched on. I said that we are constantly monitoring and seeing if this is a potential. I think that the word "all" has significant implications, so breaking that question into parts, are we looking at making sure that, if there is a gap, yes. Would I support the question with the term "all"? That would be difficult. That is why we are looking at different types of options within the continuum. Some people will look to purchase single detached, some people will look to purchase condominiums, some people will look to rent, and some folks will hopefully look at some of our new innovative programs. Some folks will look at affordable housing and some folks will be working with us on social housing. Certainly, there is a really broad range, but we are looking at every specific area at all times, trying our best to monitor with big growth.

Again, as I stated in the previous answer, yes, we are looking to see if it is needed in an urban environment, because we believe that the rural focus on that program is still doing a good job.

Ms. Clarke: How many applications has the government received for the rural home ownership program each year since it began? Also, are all applications approved?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Sorry, can I just get clarification? How many years back was the request for applications?

Ms. Clarke: I will repeat the question: How many applications has the government received for the rural home ownership program each year since it began? Are all applications approved?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: So, the number of clients and applications that we've received and that have been approved

is 18 — six in Haines Junction; one in Watson Lake; six in Dawson; one in Teslin; rural Yukon, not in a municipality, two; and one in Carcross. There have been seven builds, 11 purchases, with a total approved of \$6,307,399. The number of client projects that have been completed out of that 18 is 10. Those were completed — three in Haines Junction, one in Watson Lake, five in Dawson City, and one in Carcross. If you take into consideration how much of that money that was allocated constitutes those projects, that's \$2,870,399.

Of the projects that are still in progress, three are in Haines Junction, three are in Dawson, one in Teslin, and two in rural Yukon. Out of those, the breakdown is: One was a purchase and seven are builds. That would be the remainder of that initial number, and that would be \$2,937,000. If we wanted to break that down based on a monthly view for the program since it started, we had eight applications in August 2021, six in September 2021, 11 in October 2021, four in November 2021, nine in December 2021, eight in January 2022, and eight in February 2022. Of course, we have ones that would be looking toward our allocations of the budget for this year that would be identified in the new applications.

Ms. Clarke: Thank you, minister, for that answer.

With respect to the emergency home repair grant, there are a number of conditions that must be met by applicants before they are approved for this grant. However, repairs often must be made immediately, and the application process prohibits work to take place before final approval of the application. In some situations, businesses performing repairs are willing to invoice until funding comes through, assuming that a grant application will be successful.

Has the minister given consideration to making policy changes that would allow people to have work done in that emergency situation prior to their application being finalized?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that it is important, with any of these programs, to consider that it is a fine balance between making sure that we are looking after our clients, for Yukoners, and that we are accountable — both are very important to consider. Inevitably, we have Yukoners we have to be accountable to, and in our case — our third pillar talks about our work in corporate governance, which we have to take into consideration, and we have to follow the direction of our board. In some cases, of course, all areas within Yukon government inevitably have to be accountable to Yukoners but with the oversight of the OAG — the Auditor General of Canada. These are all things that we have to balance.

If we are taking into consideration the accessibility grant or emergency grant, the client can work with Yukon Housing Corporation to approve to have an advance requested by the contractor. In the first instalment, it could cover up to 50 percent of the project estimate; that is under our current terms. Otherwise, payment by the Yukon Housing Corporation is within seven to 14 days of receipt of invoice, which is usually below the 30-day payment due date.

We try to be as flexible as we possibly can. We try to make sure that if we are working with folks, we understand that they are under, in some cases, duress. When you are dealing with something in your home, I think that probably most of us here,

at some point, have had something like this happen, and it is always difficult to balance — trying to make sure that it is repaired and, at the same time, deal with that and live through that.

Again, a fine balance between accountability and ensuring that we are supporting our clients.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for that answer.

We have received notice that there are a number of individuals who are nearing the end of their three-year contract for staff housing in rural Yukon and are being asked to vacate their units. Unfortunately, in many cases, there is no other housing available for rent, sale, or in terms of lots in some of these communities.

So, my first question is: Is the minister willing to work with other departments to extend employees who are currently being asked to vacate staff housing but have no other option for accommodations?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think it would be good to clarify — not that I am “willing” to work. I have been, and I have been since I took on this portfolio last spring. Through my visits to a number of communities, meeting with both municipal leaders and First Nation leaders and with our housing staff — our housing family in many of our communities — we have been made aware of these situations. I am in agreement. If the premise of the question is that we need to have flexibility, I agree with that. There is an obligation that we have, as a government, in our communities to provide lots, and so we have to make sure that it happens. If we don't have enough options in those communities, then we need to be flexible. I can tell you that I have spoken with our team around situations in Watson Lake, Teslin, Carmacks, and others.

But I think it's important — if people are reaching out to the member, as you have stated — for them to follow the process that, first of all, is within their department. Whether they are teaching staff or they are health staff — first, they should clarify with their human resources folks how best to do it. Inevitably, it is a decision at the deputy minister level within said department, as I understand it. We are very flexible around those things.

I think it's important, though — for Yukon government public servants who are listening — that the other thing we are trying to do — in some cases, there were options previously, and people weren't making that commitment in those communities where they have lived for a very long time. In some cases, they were over-housed. What I mean by that is that maybe there was one individual in a multi-unit structure and there were other individuals who were on the Yukon Housing Corporation list and in need, but they didn't have an option or were under-housed, so we have to balance that.

We want to see folks make that commitment in those communities. We want to see, like many people do — if they are a long-time public servant in a community and the people in that community have welcomed them and supported them in their professional career and vice versa — and we also think that it is important for individuals to make that commitment. That goes to a few questions back when we talked about making sure that the right tools are in place for rural home

ownership and being able to leverage that, where it was more difficult previously. We want to see that happen. I think our housing market is quite strong. I know that, in some cases and in some communities, depending on the level and value of the asset, there could be challenges in a sale, but I think that what we have seen for the most part is a pretty live market that is available across the Yukon.

Again, we want to see people make that commitment. Are we flexible when we hear from their department? Yes, we are. Have we been doing that? Yes, we have, and it has been undertaken in multiple communities. I appreciate the municipal leaders who have reached out, brought us up to speed, and briefed us on particular situations. This gives us a better visibility to the uniqueness of some of those situations for the team, supporting us to make sure that we can extend those situations for folks in rural Yukon.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for that answer.

Will the minister consider working with other departments to look at their staff accommodation arrangements to ensure that no essential staff in rural communities face similar situations in the future?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Yes, I think that our focus is not so much working with other departments. We identify demand in those discussions, but I'm looking for solutions with the private sector, development corporations, and NGOs. That is really where our conversations are happening.

Last week, we were in Mayo, and your colleague was there as well, the Leader of the Official Opposition. We were celebrating the opening of one project, but there are also other areas within that town that the team was taking a look at. We met with the municipality and we talked a little bit about what their thoughts were with their OCP and what was available. At the same time, we had private sector folks reaching out to us.

What we are trying to do in every situation, if possible — we know that there is a need in many of our communities for appropriate staff housing, and we know that there is a need for affordable housing and, in some cases, social housing options. What we are doing is looking at different entities that want to do a build, and then we want to have that discussion with them to see if we can de-risk. How we de-risk is by making some of the longer term commitments to be able to hold those units for government employees or for affordable housing. That is how we are looking at it.

I think that, for us, it's not so much that we would go out to the Department of Education and say, "We want you to build something with us", but it's more along the lines of internally saying what the needs are, what can be forecasted, and just help us to plan better.

Later this year — and we talked about it a bit. We have finished off our triplex in Watson Lake, and then there are discussions with the First Nation and there have been discussions with the municipality, I believe, with our team. That has all been done in a broader community, which was essentially a scan of what our housing needs were in Watson Lake, and we've done that in a couple of different communities. We take those data points — and, of course, that's partially as well — we're trying to understand what the needs are or the

demand that is being struck by the activities and the service delivery of the Government of Yukon. Then that helps us define our longer term planning.

That's how we're looking at things. We're trying to make sure that we can look multiple years out. As you saw, these five-year strategies were coming to a conclusion and then we have to do our next five years. I think everybody can agree that building homes with as many partners as possible is our only solution — what I've said since I have taken on this responsibility. We certainly are not going to be able to do it just as the Housing Corporation, but we look at it as "Many partners required", but also that is leading to tremendous opportunity — economic development opportunity and substantial opportunity for a number of organizations and private sector entities across the Yukon.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for that answer.

With respect to the Housing First project in Watson Lake, I understand that there was a decrease in this year's budget due to the completion of the planning and design phase in 2021-22. The construction phase is transferred to the northern carve-out program. So, my first question is: Can the minister provide a status update on the Housing First project in Watson Lake? I'm wondering what progress has been made of this project going to tender.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: What we're undertaking this spring is two-part. We have almost completed our triplex. We thank our builders for the good work that they've done.

At the same time, part of the work that we have to do is a broader conversation with the community. We're looking at early May. I'll make sure that I reach out to the Member for Watson Lake. We're just solidifying the date. I did lock down a date this morning for that, but I want to make sure that it works with all parties involved. It is when we finish up here but not long after we finish up.

So, we are going to do an open house, and then we will move that carve-out money ahead for this year, which is really about the design portion that we would move forward. We would be looking at design this year. We are thinking, on the tender piece — I want to see what is said at that open house, but we would like to — I'll put it this way — have that tender out in June. That is when we would like to do it.

Again, we would be looking at design this year and then we would be looking at building out that project next year.

Just a little bit more information — and we were speaking about this earlier. That process that we undertake in a number of communities — in this case, it was essentially Watson Lake's housing needs assessment. What it identified was a need for supportive housing with the community of Watson Lake.

The Housing Corporation purchased the former lakeview property from the Town of Watson Lake, and we are currently under contract with Kobayashi and Zedda for design. We have had conversations with the Liard First Nation Chief and Council and with the Town of Watson Lake's mayor and council. We're looking to complete that and go to tender later in the summer.

What we're looking at is about a 10-unit structure, but again, we'll be looking at an open house and a dialogue to

answer questions with folks in Watson Lake, likely in early May of this year.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for that answer. My next question is: Can the minister provide further information on how this facility will be managed post construction?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We are looking at a Housing First model. We have one, of course, that has been done in Whitehorse. I think that we will have more information that we will provide, because it is a multi-department undertaking between us and Health and Social Services. So, Yukon Housing Corporation — we are working through some of the agreement with Health and Social Services around this undertaking. A bit more detail to come, but we can say — looking at the model that has been undertaken so far in Whitehorse on Wood Street, with the existing structure that was built just a few years ago.

Ms. Clarke: Is there any indication whether this facility will be government-run or if there is an option for alternate management?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: No, it is similar to those previous comments. Look, I think that in any case where we can find a strong partnership in the sense of an NGO — in many cases, what happens is that there are organizations out there that do a really good job of this, and there are some organizations that don't. I think that we have been lucky enough to strike partnerships in the Yukon with a couple of organizations over the last couple of years that do a very good job of this type of work. So, again, looking in this case potentially to have — I believe that our same folks who are working within the Yukon — but I don't want to get ahead of myself, because that conversation with Health and Social Services is still underway, and we still have to build the structure. So, we have a lot of runway in front of us, but we are monitoring the model that has been put in place and that may be appropriate for this particular building in Watson Lake.

Ms. Clarke: The Jeckell Street mixed-use housing project: When is it anticipated that the project will be complete?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We are anticipating July, which is the summer — not the spring, before I am asked by the Third Party.

We had a good discussion — our team today — and said: “Look, nothing gets a person into a more challenging situation than coming back and making sure that we have the right timeline.” There have been a few pieces — we were hoping for late spring. We are looking at July of this year for completion.

Then, of course, we have talked a bit about making sure we have a staggered entry, making sure that not everybody would be moving in right away, and that gives us the opportunity to give appropriate support as folks move in. It is a very diverse population that we are looking at for this particular building.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for the answer.

My next question is: What is the selection process for tenants, and have they already been selected?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There are different criteria in the sense that we have many different folks who apply for Yukon housing. We have tried to identify within Jeckell spots that would be family-oriented, accessible, seniors — then we have to take our underlying criteria for each one of those streams of clients and then prioritize, based on the unique scenarios within

those applications. That's how we approach it. It is going to be the same thing we do for all our housing. The only difference is that it's not just a seniors housing residence or not just for vulnerable folks fleeing violence; this is a mix of different types of clients, so we will apply the metrics that we normally do in order to prioritize each stream of clients. That's how we will make our decisions, and to date, we have not yet made decisions about which clients will be moving into that new building.

Ms. Clarke: If the anticipated completion is July 2022, what is the anticipated move-in date for tenants?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The first thing with any level of investment of this magnitude is that there is always work that has to be done with the builder. We are looking at July for completion. There will be a period of time after that. I can't give you exactly that time in weeks, but we will go back, and before we close up that arrangement, we will be looking at any deficiencies that have to be fixed.

The mindset is likely in the month of August, and then we are looking at about a three-month period, so you would have folks moving in potentially in August, but that could be — I want to state for Hansard that we still don't know until we understand — that there could be very little in the sense of deficiencies and that could speed it up, but we are looking at about a three-month period for staggered entry for the clients to move in. We are looking at a period of time after July when we will go back and forth with our builder to ensure that the commitments that were made in our contracts for that building have been met and that it's appropriate and safe and ready for our new clients to move in.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for that answer.

How many commercial spaces are going to be available in the building?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There are no commercial spaces in that building.

Ms. Clarke: The minister has spoken about the opportunities with the Northern Community Land Trust. The society has established office space, and we understand that they will be one of the new corporate tenants at the Cornerstone building. The minister has mentioned it as one of the key initiatives that he is working on since the housing summit. My first question is: Can the minister provide an update on how things are progressing in discussions between the land trust and Yukon Housing Corporation and if any core funding has been supplied to this society?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Sorry, that last little piece — I just want to clarify if it was how much has been provided to the organization so far. I just want to make sure, that last piece.

Ms. Clarke: I am asking about the core funding that has been supplied to the society — how much, if any?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There is no core funding provided. There have been two tranches of funding. One was seed funding, which was \$20,000. That helped with some planning and was through our housing initiatives fund, which has both an early seed fund and it also has funding that can offset the cost of cap ex. Then in this last round, in HIF 5, they received \$1 million. Now we're working with them to just finish off

what we have to do to be able to look at an appropriate place for them to build out their project.

We think that this is a great undertaking. It is essentially made up of a lot of different professionals who are volunteering their time with expertise in architecture, engineering — that type of background. The Northern Community Land Trust has a plan to develop their first 20- to 40-unit affordable ownership development in Whitehorse over the next three years. So, this is something that we're excited to be working with them on. I appreciate the fact that these folks are taking time on the side to volunteer and contribute. We think that this model is very innovative in the sense that the idea behind it is — as it's built out, it gives individuals the opportunity to acquire equity in an asset, but at the same time, looking to cap the value or the sale value — or the sale price of the asset — therefore, continuing to keep it at an affordable rate, but giving people flexibility to entry and then hopefully taking that to move on to another asset in the future.

I will just state that if we're going to get into really minute details about what the agreement is or how long they have to hold the asset or a number of those questions, as we did with question one or question two today, I think it will be best for us to provide that in a written summary versus the information that we have with us today.

Ms. Clarke: Yes, any information would be very helpful and appreciated.

My next question is: We understand from discussions with them that one of the keys to the housing trust being affordable is to acquire free land for their development. Can the minister indicate if he has been working to arrange for free land to be provided to the housing trust, as they require?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Yes, we have been working alongside them. This is a similar model that we're looking at that we have done with Habitat for Humanity. This is similar to the discussions that we've had over the years and discussed with Vimy — that sort of model.

Of course, I cannot pre-empt a process through Management Board, but we have been working closely with them to ensure that their structure and governance model would be adequate and, at the same time, looking at different spots that we believe would be suitable for the magnitude, style, and zoning of build that they are looking to undertake.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for his answer. To make that happen, will the minister be developing a program for free land to be provided to organizations? Or does the minister think that free land would be provided on a case-by-case basis?

As well, has the minister been working with any other organizations on any free land for affordable housing?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: At the current time, no, we're not looking at a new program. We're looking at the same form of land allocation that was done by the member opposite's colleagues — no different. This is the same process that was undertaken by the previous government for Habitat for Humanity, and this is the type of process that we would be looking to continue at this time. We're not looking to build a new program.

Ms. Clarke: The budget speech said — and I quote: “More than \$11 million is included to incentivize residential construction for projects like the proposed Kwanlin Dün First Nation subdivision expansion in Copper Ridge...”

Can the minister provide an update on this?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We are in discussions with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. We anticipate that we will be receiving a detailed proposal from them. I know we have been in discussions with them already. We haven't defined the exact number, but I think it's also important — we're pleased to be able to support our local housing partners and small and large housing developments.

What we are talking about is our grants and loan programs. Yukon Housing Corporation works with First Nation governments and First Nation development corporations on any number of projects, so not just Kwanlin Dün First Nation. We are working with Kluane First Nation, Selkirk First Nation, Kwanlin Dün — as we talked about — Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, and Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation on funding for energy efficiency in new and existing stock.

We are working with Liard First Nation in the broader community on the design, which we spoke about just a couple of questions ago. We are working with Da Daghay Development Corporation on the River Bend in Whistle Bend affordable housing and continuing to look at that partnership. It was started a number of years ago under a previous government, and we have continued to do that work.

We are looking to continue to work with Chu Níikwän on next steps for the Copper Ridge West subdivision. I know that there is an interest there and a number of lots — we are looking, of course, to see — I hope that the members opposite see that as a good thing and that they will be supporting the passing of this element, but also the passing of the budget, so that we can look at the largest capital investment into housing by the Yukon Housing Corporation in the last 10 years.

I thank you for that question. We believe that it is important. I think that the member opposite — I think — believes that this is important and solid work. We are looking forward to finalizing the details with Chu Níikwän, which is the development corporation arm of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation.

Ms. Clarke: How much of the \$11 million has been accessed?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We are debating this budget now, so we are still waiting to complete the budget, and then we are in talks. I think that it is important to know — I will pull out here — I know that the Kwanlin Dün First Nation sent me this document. There have been some comments that members of the Yukon Party made on social media, and they just wanted to verify — and they sent me this from September 2, 2011. This was when the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Yukon partnered on residential land development, and this goes back, of course. The member opposite would not have been in government, but members flanking on either — members who are here, who are currently in caucus, would — and this was when there was a letter of understanding that was signed, and this would enable the Yukon and First Nation to work together

on potential residential land opportunities on Kwanlin Dün settlement land.

The quote that was here — quote: “The Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Yukon share a common goal in supporting the sustainable growth and development of Yukon communities”. This was the Premier of the day. “Both governments recognize the need for affordable housing and the demand for developed residential land within the City of Whitehorse and the surrounding areas.”

The concerning part is that here we are; we are following through on this, but we are a decade after this commitment was publicly made and this was supported.

I have a bunch of documents here that we can go back to about this. What we are trying to do is — we believe that as well, but the only difference is that we want to try to get that work done. We think it’s important to support Chu Níikwān in this endeavour. Once we have the budget passed, we will be able to get into a more detailed dialogue with them on an agreement so that they can be supported in some of the work they are looking to do.

Ms. Clarke: The minister just said that discussion is going on with this program, so what are details of the program?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We are looking at existing programs where we can allocate. In my second or third answer today, I talked about the fact that we can provide very minute details into how our programs are working. We are in discussions. There is an interest. There are lots of similar relationships with First Nation governments.

Champagne and Aishihik — under the previous government, there were conversations that happened where we detailed at that time priorities around that and infrastructure work. At this time, we are in discussions. Again, you can say — the discussions started, I think, 10 years ago, and they have continued. We are now looking to action their interests. I think once we finalize those discussions, it will be an appropriate time to get into detailed discussions.

The member opposite would agree that, for me to now lay out all the details of an ongoing discussion and negotiation previous to the passing of this budget, it would not be appropriate. I will continue to support the work of the Yukon Housing Corporation in that dialogue, and I will be excited to stand with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Chu Níikwān Development Corporation when we have concluded — if we conclude — that work and if that is supported through the governance structure here in the Yukon.

Ms. Clarke: I just want to clarify, because the minister said that the discussion has been going on for 10 years. So, again, I just want to ask if he could share some of the details of that program.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think there’s some confusion. I just read a statement that was made by the Leader of the Yukon Party that individuals who are currently in caucus with the member opposite would know the details. I don’t know the details. On September 2, 2011, there was a statement made by the Yukon Party and Kwanlin Dün about developing residential land. I have another article that talks about this on September 6, 2011. What I can tell you is that there seemed to

have been a dialogue between two levels of government with an interest in this. What I’m focused on today is the existing programs in this budget. I have only been in this portfolio since last spring, and we’re having a dialogue with Kwanlin Dün First Nation.

I would say that you want to know the details of that program — we’re using programs that we have here. We’ve committed to showing and sharing the terms of reference, which is all information that’s public. In this specific scenario, we are currently in dialogue. I think — what I would suggest — and I think it has happened already — is members from the Yukon Party should reach out directly as well to Kwanlin Dün. I know there has been some concern. There were some statements that were — I was made aware of — some content that could have led to some ire that was on social media, and certainly some folks — I had somebody reach out to me, and I think members opposite maybe had the same. I think that this activity is happening in Copper Ridge.

I know that the Kwanlin Dün development corporation and the chief and council are always open to hearing from all members of the Assembly. I will leave it for them to speak, if they feel they want to get into details about dialogue, but I can tell you where we are at; we are speaking and answering questions to this budget. There are funds in this budget that I would like to see allocated toward enhancing the number of lots that we have in the Yukon. I think that working with self-governing First Nations is a unique part of the housing continuum that we can focus on. I think that the Yukon Party, as per the statements that were made publicly 10 years ago, believe the same as stated there.

I believe that the newspaper article from the *Whitehorse Star* written by Chuck Tobin on September 6, 2011 highlights that. I look forward to bringing more information to the House once we have concluded an agreement. Other than that, I think that we are running up a tree here. Probably there are more important questions that the member opposite would like to ask me.

Ms. Clarke: Well, thank you to the minister for that answer. I am going to move on.

Other than the Kwanlin Dün First Nation project in Copper Ridge, are there other projects that are being considered?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: This goes back to the original conversation exchange that we had today. There are numerous projects, I believe, but I don’t know the number. There are a number of projects. We have loan programs and we have grant programs. We publicly announced our housing initiatives fund phase 5, so there were a number of programs identified there. Depending on applications — to be specific, I know that there has been a dialogue, which I just touched on, concerning Kwanlin Dün. I have had other First Nation governments reach out and share high-level information about their interests. We have also seen support through departments like Community Services, pending the exchange of information from government to government on the priorities of both First Nations and those departments.

I think that there are a lot of programs. I can say to the member opposite that we have stood up publicly and said that

if there are First Nation development corporations or governments that want to partner with us to help us with solutions for housing pressures, we want to sit down and have those conversations. We have been very open about that. We have also said that to municipalities. We have said that to the private sector entities that we have had the chance to speak with, so I think that there will be a lot of different programs. I think that you can see that.

What I would state for Hansard, which is really important when we talk about these programs — one of the things that I did upon coming into this role was to look back at the last 10 years. I wanted to know what the investment looked like. To be fair — and I say this with a bit of fun — there are lots of times during Question Period when the member opposite would say, “You’re not investing in housing” or “There is a lack of affordable housing”, so I wanted to pull the numbers out.

What you will see, if you take a look at the last 10 years — if you go from 2011 back when those comments were being made by the previous government about their commitment to coming up with solutions for housing — if you go from 2011 to about 2017, that is when you see it. So, that is sort of like that previous government’s whole mandate, and then in the early year — say year 1 or year 2 — of this government’s first mandate, what you’ll see is more money being spent on O&M, not on capital. So, the previous government will like you to believe that, yes, we like to build, but really, it was being spent on O&M.

Then what you will see is this turn. You will see this change at 18 months — sort of 12 to 24 months — of: “We have a plan” and “Let’s start building.” Then what you will see is the change where the capital again takes a jump and starts to be, in 2018-19 — in our actual budgets, not just mains but the actual — and then you will see 2019-20 with, again, more capital, but only by a couple of million. Then, in 2021, you will see the delta is \$10 million. You will see \$19 million for O&M and \$29 million for actuals on our capital expenditures. Then you get into 2021-22 — and, of course, we will see with those the finale — but you will see the Supplementary No. 2, and then you see a jump from \$19,907,000 — so I would say \$20 million — to \$42 million. So, you’re seeing an absolute — well, it’s a double in expenditure. Then you see this year — that year at \$20 million again in O&M, but you’re at \$46 million.

What we’ve seen over the last number of years is extensive investment in housing — something that was not seen previously — in the previous mandate.

So, when the member opposite asks: What are the other projects? Are there other projects? Absolutely. There are a lot of projects because we’re partnering with a number of folks. This is unprecedented investment at this level of diversity in the private sector and other levels of government and, again, supporting NGOs. We know that it’s required.

I want to thank all the people at Yukon Housing Corporation because this is a tremendous amount of work. All you have to do is look at it.

Back in 2011, when the commitments were being made around these partnerships, there was \$16,446,000 being spent

on capital. This year, we’re projected to spend \$46,773,000. So, there are a lot of different projects that are there.

We are very accountable and transparent in that we provide that information publicly as we make decisions within our programs. We just want to get that support from the members opposite on this budget so that we can get building and deal with the housing pressures in front us.

Ms. Clarke: The minister said that there are lots of projects, but I am sorry — I have not heard a project mentioned. I’m going to ask again: Other than the KDFN project in Copper Ridge, are there other projects that are being considered?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: For clarification, from which specific program? As we said in our opening statement, we had a lot of different programs. So, maybe share with me which program specifically would you like me to talk about for applicants or potential. Then, based on that, the team here can pull it up. I’m more than happy. If it’s a program that we are looking to capitalize through this budget but we haven’t yet seen all the applications, then we’ll have to get to that later in the year. So, which program or programs specifically does the member opposite want me to touch on for projects?

Ms. Clarke: I’m going to refresh for the minister. I was talking about the budget speech that said — and I’m going to quote: “More than \$11 million is included to incentivize residential construction for projects like the proposed Kwanlin Dün First Nation subdivision expansion in Copper Ridge...” So, I’m asking: What other projects are being considered?

I am going to move on, and if the minister is going to answer, thank you for that. But I’m going to move on because there are still a lot of people who would like to ask questions.

Can the minister please provide an update on the Normandy project, and is there a timeline for completion?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Again, the Government of Yukon is committed to supporting the development of a wider range of housing options for Yukon seniors in line with the *Aging in Place Action Plan* and to help address the housing crisis. We’ve talked a bit about this housing continuum. Yukon Housing Corporation has committed \$3.5 million to secure 10 units in Normandy Manor, which is important for folks to be made aware of — it’s a private seniors residence — in order to meet the needs of seniors who want housing with supportive services, such as meals and hospitality service, but do not require full-service or long-term care.

When Normandy Manor opens, the 10 leased units that we have leased will allow the Government of Yukon to offer a broader, more cost-effective range of housing services for Yukon seniors.

At this time, we are looking at the date of completion for the project to be November of this year.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for his answer. Can the minister please give an update on rural Yukon community housing projects that are currently being planned or constructed?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will just go through a mix of different pieces. I will start with Beaver Creek and White River First Nation. Right now, the key work that’s being undertaken — in the 2019-2020 budget, the Housing Corporation provided about

\$107,000 of funding through our First Nation partnership program to both Kluane First Nation and White River First Nation to improve quality of housing. Through our First Nation energy-efficiency program under the low carbon economy fund, White River First Nation has been allocated \$344,250. That has been allocated, but we are still in discussions with them around finalizing the agreement.

Under Carcross/Tagish, in the Tagish area — in February 2022, our team went and met with key representatives in the community. The Housing Corporation completed a needs assessment, which is important for folks to understand and to be aware of.

Under the rapid housing initiatives fund, in Carcross, we have \$2.47 million that will be invested to create 10 new single-family homes for the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. These homes will be targeted for elders and families and will consist of seven 2-bedroom units and three 3-bedroom units.

In our 2019-20 budget, the Yukon Housing Corporation also provided \$107,000, just like we did in the Kluane area. Right now, we are looking at progress of construction with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. We have two units, both affordable units, which are from our HIF 1 program. In that particular area, we also have one through our HRP grant program that we provided in Annie Lake. When we were talking about rural home ownership, we did talk about that one purchase that happened in Carcross as well.

There are a few different pieces there. I will get into some of our rental pieces as well. In Carmacks, with the community of Carmacks and the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation through the housing initiatives fund, in completed construction, that \$107,000 that we talked about with the first two communities is pretty consistent right across all of our communities. They are pretty active in Carmacks. With our housing initiatives fund 1, we supplied support for four units. In our housing initiatives fund 2, again, there were four units, all with the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. There were also four units in our HIF 3, so a total of 12 there.

A number of pieces — and in our HIF 5, I'll come back to it, but I think that even in our last piece that we did — housing initiatives fund 5 — there was \$800,000 again for eight new homes in Carmacks. That was with the development corporation versus the First Nation.

In Dawson City, with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation under the housing initiatives fund, this has kind of been a mix. We have had both NGOs and some people in the private sector, so in our housing initiatives fund work, I will state that we provided \$107,000 through the First Nation partnership program, but also, we saw the private sector do one affordable unit, and then we saw the Klondike Visitors Association in 2019-20, which was eight units. Those are completed, but in progress for construction projects, we have another local individual who is building an affordable unit and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, with our housing initiatives fund, for 10 units.

I was there about a week ago and things look like they are progressing well on those projects. There was about \$900,000 — just to put on the record — that we are supporting for those 10 units. With the housing initiatives fund 4, the Klondike

Development Organization did two units, and that was in 2021-22. So, these are agreements — project concepts — that we support as well.

Then we have a bigger project that we are looking at in Dawson. We are partnered with the Klondike Development Organization to engage the public on the best housing use for the Yukon Housing Corporation's land holding — the area is known as the "Korbo lot". Again, we continue to use the information from this engagement to inform future construction plans on this site and work with the community to plan for the project on this property. We would like to be doing the design on that. I had a good conversation with the mayor about a week ago and then had an opportunity to meet with the KVA to get a sense of what is needed both with longer term housing options as well as in the future — maybe some temporary options as well.

We are also investing with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and we have — through the low carbon economy fund to improve efficiency — and that was a total amount of \$344,250 in our TPA, but we have allocated — I think to date, so far — \$172,125.

Moving on to the community of Faro, we have put out some funds for our home repair programs. Of course, folks in Faro have that opportunity to apply to our programs. I plan to be there in early May and to have continued discussions and make sure that people know — as we will hopefully have this budget passed and supported — that we will be able to provide some funds there.

Haines Junction is very active. A number of things have happened. Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, who we have worked with, have created 20 new homes for CAFN individuals and families who needed housing. They are working through that project. Some of that is being done in — even though it's a community partner, it is being done in Whitehorse, and we commend them for that. They are really taking into consideration that they know that they have citizens who are living in Whitehorse, as well as Haines Junction, and other smaller communities in that particular area.

This project is going to be built at 195 Olive May Way in Whistle Bend. It includes five separate town homes, each made up of four separate units, including one-, two-, and three-bedroom homes and accessible units. Again, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations will be investing about \$1.4 million into the project and receiving about just over \$6 million from CMHC's rapid housing initiatives fund round 1 and \$600,000 from the Yukon housing initiatives funding — our fourth intake. So, again, a very significant investment there. Just going back to cross-reference, in Haines Junction and then just received in our HIF 5 — housing initiatives fund — \$1 million for another 10 new homes that they're planning to be building in Haines Junction.

As well, I should note that there was, combined, about \$560,000 for new homes in Whitehorse and two new homes in Mendenhall — just because we're talking about that area — as well as another home in Dawson City.

Moving on to Mayo — through our HIF, I would just announce that there is \$640,000 for eight new homes in Mayo,

in partnership with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. That's in our HIF 5. Previously, which of course the Leader of the Official Opposition and I were there, and I know when we passed on kind remarks on behalf of the Leader of the Third Party, who had a number of things to balance and wanted to be there, but celebrating the Yukon Soaps project, which again was two more units. That comes from our housing initiatives fund 3 program. Again, we're continuing to have discussions with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun as well.

Moving on to Old Crow and working with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, in progress right now are seven units. Again, that's through our housing initiatives fund 3. As well, under the low carbon fund, we have been working — we've had \$344,250, very similar to other partnership agreements, and just about half of that we have put out as well.

Moving on to Pelly and Selkirk First Nation with the housing initiatives fund — and it's under progress — is four units with Selkirk First Nation. I believe they're on hold, and they are just re-evaluating in that particular project.

Moving on to Ross River, we have allocated just under \$350,000. We have allocated there and we're working through — that's for the low carbon economy fund. I know we've reached out to the development corporation and others letting folks know that we're willing to work together on these projects. I'm just making sure — I just want to cross-reference our other funds that we've put out.

Moving on to Teslin and working with Teslin Tlingit Council, the HIF 4 construction project — five units with the Teslin development corporation. All five are affordable units. They are working with us on the finalization of that in Teslin.

Moving on to Watson Lake, it's important to note that we also, just in this HIF 5 — we allocated \$1 million for 15 new homes in Watson Lake with Liard First Nation but already, building that's in construction — private sector entity — seven units, seven affordable housing in our housing initiatives fund 2. Again, three units that are under progress with Liard First Nation and our housing initiatives fund 2. For our project funding but toward concept, that early stage that we've talked about a little bit today — six units, all affordable — with Bergeron General Contracting with the private sector in Watson Lake.

I think I will hold, because the question was more about the communities. There is quite a bit of information concerning our work here in Whitehorse and with Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council on all of those projects, but I'll just leave it at that.

It sort of gives a bit of a snapshot about the very significant work that is being done across the Yukon in all our communities to support affordable housing.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for those detailed answers.

I have one more question, and then I'm going to hand it to the Member for Kluane for just one question. Can the minister please provide an update on the Vimy project, and is there a timeline for completion?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Our discussions are still ongoing. Their lead on their project has just reached out in the last bit to sit down and talk about the progress on the Vimy project.

At this point, what it comes down to is that they are solidifying their governance model before we go toward the design/build. They have looked at a number of different models. Our finance folks as well as a number of our senior team has continued to meet with them. I think that, at one point, there were meetings happening almost every two weeks. We haven't talked a lot about it. I have been waiting for some more questions in the House, but we have really walked through this and tried to de-risk and de-risk and be supportive over the last four or five years.

This project was of interest many, many years ago. I think that the former Yukon Party Speaker had led that before coming into politics. It was discussed then, and we have held a lot in Whistle Bend for a number of years as the potential location. We have gone back on a couple of occasions and requested to extend the hold on that lot for Energy, Mines and Resources.

I think that we are getting to a good spot. We are working with Health and Social Services. We agree with the methodology that Vimy is talking about in the sense that this is a really important part within the housing continuum. We think that folks can be in that supported environment with their friends, and that will delay, in some cases, when people would be going to more government-run, -supported long-term options. Again, when we wrap up here next week — I know that I talked to my advisor today and said that we will set up our next meeting with those folks to chat with them. They have good support and expertise — and we have supported some of that work previously. They hired Colliers and have a well-experienced project manager and management team helping them, and there are some local folks with Colliers who are doing that work.

We are getting there, but we are trying to make sure of things before the project gets built. This goes back again to supporting our clients but being accountable to Yukoners and having our policy stand the test of integrity so that we are in a position that this can be built and undertaken and can be sustainable. Those are the things that we are keeping in mind. A lot of work has been done on the Vimy file. We are looking forward to 2022 and where we get to with that team of tenacious and committed folks who have spent so much time working to get this important project in place for seniors in the Yukon.

Mr. Istchenko: I want to thank the officials who are here.

I have just one quick question about the St. Elias seniors. That building was built due to the senior advocates many years ago going after their MLA with a petition to see it through to fruition. The government of the day built that building. The society was in that building for many years, doing their thing. The minister is up on this file. I know he knows everything about this file.

All of a sudden, during the pandemic, they were evicted from that space. It was hard enough during the pandemic when seniors were lonely, but seniors have a lot of issues, and that was a place for their advocate to sit with them and deal with

ordering drugs for them or helping them with the pioneer utility grant applications. They were promised that they would be back in there by last November, and it seems like every time they are just about to move back in, there is something else — insurance or “This isn’t good enough” and “That’s not good enough”. They were in that building for many years. They held luncheons twice a week. I have been to many functions in there. I was a champion bowler for a little while in there with a couple good seniors.

I am just wondering: How long is this going to take? I don’t think it is fair to the seniors and it’s not fair to the community.

That’s my question. I want to thank the staff for their time today and thank the minister for his responses.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I am going to apologize to the member opposite. Last summer, I had the fun of following some of the opposition members through the Kluane region. I will be very open with the House. I reached out to the member opposition, who I know has championed this situation, and I called him to say that I think we have this thing solved, and I know how frustrating it has been for folks there. But we’re still in the same situation, and I want to apologize to him and to his community for that.

The St. Elias Seniors Society — I will just give a quick bit of background. They requested office space and the use of common space in the corporation’s seniors residence in Haines Junction. Over the past year, the Yukon Housing Corporation has worked to ensure that the building is up to code for these purposes, including for group gatherings.

It is fair to say, from what I know, that there have been some folks and tenants within that building — I think that the majority of folks are very supportive of those activities — not everyone, I think, is what I have been told. So, we still have to respect — even if it is just a couple of folks — their thoughts about these activities. But, again, I am not trying to build more barriers; I am trying to figure out how we can work through this.

I am pleased to say that we have identified an office space for the society and designated dates and times for the society to use the common-room space to host meals, social activities, and health and educational clinics for their members. We are working — as the member opposite alluded to — with the society to finalize the licence of occupation to ensure that terms and conditions of the use of the space supports both the society and the residents. The society is in the process of obtaining insurance and, once secured, has agreed to move forward with signing the licence of occupation. We continue to support with interim health clinics for the society and their members in that common space. We look forward to finalizing the partnership with the St. Elias Seniors Society.

I think that I will leave it at that. I think that it is important that the member opposite gets that on the record. I want to say that we need to support the organization and get it done. I’m sorry for the frustration, especially for folks who are a driving force in many ways to get that built and who just want to do good for their community. I will leave it at that. As the president of the Yukon Housing Corporation would say, there have been many conversations about this, and I am committed to getting

this solved, and I’m sorry that it is taking longer than we had hoped.

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

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before Committee is general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Is there any further general debate?

Ms. Tredger: I first want to start by thanking the officials. I, as always, really enjoyed our briefing. I am going to ask a couple of the questions again to have them on the record, but I found the information you provided really helpful. I’m really excited to be here talking about housing today.

I’m going to start off by asking a question about the lots that are for sale — as land is being developed in places like Whistle Bend — and the decision to sell those lots at market value rather than at cost.

We have all talked lots about how housing prices are out of control. This is a huge barrier to people trying to get into the market through building. Could the minister talk about that decision?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I can but not in great detail. The conversation concerning the lot-pricing methodology — look, there is a greater decision that gets made about it at the Cabinet level, but I think that we have been in a structure for quite a long time where Energy, Mines and Resources and Community Services have had a dialogue and then Energy, Mines and Resources inevitably defines how it is done. It has been a long conversation. I can go back to remembering the Member for Lake Laberge sitting two seats down a long time ago, having a discussion and answering probably the first time there was ever a delta put in place that identified how that structure was done. In city council with the former member, Mr. Doug Graham, he and I looked into this a lot. There has been that piece put in place where development costs were taken into consideration. I know that in my former role, that is kind of where it has gone, and then they look at a market valuation.

All I would say is that, wearing my Economic Development cap, you have to not look at any devaluations. What our concern is here is that we don’t want to devalue anything, but at the same time, for us at the Yukon Housing Corporation, we are focused on letting Energy, Mines and Resources folks build out the work that they do, supporting the minister. At the same time, we are looking at the housing continuum and other ways to potentially make land available that meets the needs of other folks.

With that, we are still working with private developers as well. I think that this will be a real test — looking at two big projects that we have talked about. One is 5th Avenue and

Rogers, which inevitably will be units versus land development and lots for housing. We are hoping it will be something that will be deeply driven by the private sector. The next one would be the tank farm, which we have talked about a little bit. That now has to go through the master planning process, and then, from there, we will look at what that's going to be. That will give us a bit of a different indication about the cost of developing lots.

It will certainly give us something to compare versus what we have seen over the last number of years, which has been government-led. You would probably have to go out toward Mary Lake or Spruce Hill, which were done by the private sector. There might be a little area that was done by a few folks in Porter Creek, but other than that, it has been government-led. That's my knowledge. I don't have a lot more than that. We are trying to focus on affordable options for individuals.

Ms. Tredger: I would like to turn to seniors for a little bit, starting with the wait-list. How many of the people on the wait-list are seniors? While I am asking about the wait-list, can I ask about the number of families who are on the wait-list as well?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Right now, we are at a high point on our wait-list. We are at 493 folks in total. Eleven are from the YG employee wait-list. From our senior to non-senior breakdown, 203 are seniors and 279 are non-seniors.

When we look at the seniors, just to give you a little more detail on that, 179 of them are in Whitehorse. Lots of communities don't have any. Dawson has 12, and Watson Lake has six folks, and then there are sort of one or two for the rest of the dispersion.

Ms. Tredger: A concern we have talked about before is security in seniors buildings. I have heard from seniors who have expressed feeling unsafe or distressed over the condition of where they live. They talk about having lots of non-residents in their hallways, unfamiliar people in the building, and things like elevators not working. Some of these specifics have been addressed in certain cases, but the overarching problem continues. I am wondering what kind of long-term plans there are for that. I am wondering if the Housing Corporation has met with seniors in the seniors buildings to hear their concerns and if any actions are being taken to address security concerns.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: One of the key pieces — we do have a partnership with the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition to hire a seniors engagement specialist, and that is until 2023. This person can provide one-on-one support, which is going to be helpful.

The Third Party, I think, has reached out — a couple of members — to me around a number of different issues — lighting, security cameras, concern about a number of those items that you just touched on — individuals entering these spaces. There are a key number of those things. I think that we are going to lean on our senior engagement specialist, but where we are at — and we have met with our team — when it comes to cameras — and I also will just put this on the record — we have to go through a process with the Privacy Commissioner and get sign-off. We do that with Highways and Public Works, and that is some of the work that we have to do.

I think that we see the value and we trust the value and I think that we need to have those cameras in place in our common areas in our seniors buildings. That is going to be really important. We have to go through a process, and I can say that I am pushing, because there has been good advocacy here from many members in the Assembly.

When it comes to — you know, there have been a couple of things. The Leader of the Third Party had reached out to me — which is odd, but anyway — and the president, I have to say, was extremely efficient in checking, looking, and identifying problems that were at 600 College Drive and getting photographs back to me and showing the member opposite as well.

But, look, there are other concerns, and it was hard to pull people together to have those conversations. It is a commitment that I made. There are a number of buildings downtown where people have reached out and said: "Can you come and have a discussion with the folks who live in that house — in these houses — in these buildings?" We have heard lots of things. We have heard that, in some cases, there are seniors who have adult children who are still counting on their parents for support or their parents are supporting them in some way, and then sometimes these folks get up to things that they shouldn't be in those buildings. We have to be aware of that. I think I have worked with members of the House to understand when we have had problems where, from a security perspective, does a key get in the wrong hand and should we be reaching out to the corporation to have locks changed? These were all the items that were there, and so, I think that, long term, we are looking at how we are going to deal with this process over time.

I think there is somebody, maybe, who the member opposite has worked with, and I brought this letter today. I was asking if this individual might have been here and it was this letter that I received on March 28 from an individual — I will just say that. That individual was a former safety officer and has worked around housing a lot and has flagged the fact, as well, about how we are going to deal with — what are our policies going to look like as we go into the 4th Avenue and Jeckell Street housing project? We're looking at a mixed use. We're going to have seniors there. What do we have to consider from a policy perspective? How do we mitigate problems or things that may happen?

I just want to say, for the record — and the Leader of the Third Party gave me a bit more background and thoughts about what this individual, who was a director of the Yukon Council on Aging, was thinking. I think we have to take this sort of advice. It was a really straightforward, no-nonsense approach to doing things. We're going to have to take that and make sure that folks — that this type of thinking is in our policy, as well as being supportive and aware of the fact that a lot of our clients have not had the easiest of times and have lots of things going on — but first of all, the safety of our clients and the health of clients is paramount. I think you could say that the discussion around a formalized structure for seniors, and just safety in building in general, is continuously evolving. We're understanding what new challenges we have.

Again, I can say to the member opposite that part of what I committed to was going down and meeting with those folks directly, in different buildings, to understand as well and for them to know that we're listening and that we're ready to act. I think some of those simple things — like the cameras, making sure that we're aware of what's happening in those buildings, the simple things like lighting, keeping an eye on what's happening, and making sure that our clients are also following the tenancy contracts — are all going to be important aspects of making sure that things are safe in our buildings.

Ms. Tredger: On the topic of seniors — this is way back, a conversation I had with someone talking about, many years ago, the Yukon housing advisory committee organized a plan to have a seniors trust fund so that any surplus from YHC would go into building housing for seniors. This idea was supported, but then it was cancelled because of, I believe, the 2000 election, but I'm not actually sure on the year.

I'm wondering if that's something that the minister is thinking about bringing back or considering at all.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: This is new information to me, but what I will do is work with our team to find out the history of that fund, what the scope was, how it was allocated, and the terms around why it is not in place. If it seems like it is something that we should further investigate, then we will work with the president to look into it and also to see if we have any new programs — or even in this budget that we are seeing coming out now at the federal level. Are there similar types of allocations now? I will try to figure out the construct that we are working within now and see if it is still relevant. I will get back to the member opposite with that information.

Ms. Tredger: I appreciate that.

I am trying to think about how to ask this question. In terms of accessible units, I have been in some of the seniors buildings downtown and I see lots of accessibility features. I haven't gone in their bathrooms, but I assume that there are good features throughout the units. Other housing that is not senior-specific does not have the same accessibility features. I am wondering if, as people move off the wait-list, are there cases where seniors are having to go into inaccessible units, or are there people aging in non-accessible units who are waiting for spaces to move over? Is there a good balance of those? How is that working?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: As an example, our team was just sharing with me that, out of the nine units that we're building in those three triplexes, only one, because it is two storeys, is not accessible. The rest are barrier-free — all the units that we have just built in that infrastructure.

If you are in a situation where you are aging in place in a unit but there seems to be a change in your needs, we would be looking to relocate you into an accessible unit. What you can gather is that, when people move out and we have that opportunity — we have to stay within code, and we are going to try to make things barrier-free. You saw the partnership that we did with Cornerstone — and I think everybody in the Assembly went there and saw how incredible that is. I would say that, from a barrier-free perspective, it is pretty cutting edge, right from access to amenities in the unit to access to the

windows — you name it. The other buildings that we are building are the same. We are trying to upgrade our units. There is still a fairly significant amount of existing stock. In those cases, we are trying, as we can, to upgrade those units.

I will note as well for the Assembly that this morning I had a discussion on the topic of accessibility with the president and had asked if the president will have a discussion with the board at their next meeting, because my other concern — and I think that people have seen it highlighted lately — is accessibility into buildings. Whitehorse, as an example, is not a very friendly place for folks who need real accessibility options — besides the climate. I have been lucky enough to have some people educate me on that work, and I have worked with some advocates who have tried to make sure that I can see the world through a little bit of a different lens. They have been kind enough to spend time and share that with me. Yes, it's difficult.

The other thing that I had asked the president is: If it's appropriate, can we reach out to the City of Whitehorse? It's probably something that we will be looking at for other areas — not so much to focus on what the city can do, but how do we work with the city in partnership? Because, of course, we have a number of buildings. I know that individuals in the Assembly have reached out to me about snow removal and access. We have our own responsibility, but a shared commitment to that through different entities as well as with the municipality is something that we have to think about.

I just want the House to be aware that accessibility and reducing barriers, for us, is not just about the interior of these buildings but also the exterior and how people who are vulnerable, as well as others, move through our communities.

Ms. Tredger: What is the asset limit for seniors to access Yukon Housing Corporation, and when was that policy put in place?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We currently do not have a cap for seniors. We do for other folks on our wait-list, but we don't for seniors, but we are looking at identifying and modernizing some of those policies to take that into consideration. That has to be a very significant conversation because normally, I believe, if individuals have a current home, there is a period of time they have to sell that. But I have also been educated by members of the Assembly who have been here longer than I have about what that really means. There are some pieces there that don't always support the client quite as well. It is a broader conversation. We will make sure that we are working through this, looking at a very holistic approach to building out these policies and evolving it over time.

At this point, for seniors, we don't — but, of course, we still have a methodology that we use to prioritize for folks as they look to move into our units.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you for that. That is very helpful.

I have one more question on the topic of seniors and that is about Normandy. My understanding is that Yukon Housing Corporation has signed the lease agreement for 10 units over 20 years that is about \$3.5 million. Will that include the access to all services in the building, such as food services, meals, and all the things that are provided to all the members? I am also wondering who is going to be operating that facility.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It doesn't. That gets access to the units. What we are trying to do right now is work with Health and Social Services — Yukon Housing Corporation — and we are working through identifying what a future modernized policy would look like. What we are trying to do is balance out the fact that some of these — of course, Normandy is being driven by the private sector. The service model is being led by a Yukoner in that role through a Yukon company. There have been some questions about that, so we think that this is something that we really appreciate supporting.

Normandy is one model where you have the private sector setting a rate for these services, and then we have 10 units. We are also looking at Vimy, which we talked about a little while ago — about it coming online and what it costs those folks to be able to deliver a service, such as food, and the model that they are looking at. What I can say is that we are delving into that. We also are aware of the cost that it takes for an individual to be in long-term care. We know that. The Minister of Health and Social Services and I have had lots of discussions about this, and I appreciate her perspective on it. We are looking at what the monthly costs would be for somebody if they didn't have this option to be in another government unit. There is a cost that we are aware of when thinking about Copper Ridge Place. There is a cost that used to be associated with Macaulay, and Whistle Bend has another cost. Those are all significant, even on a daily basis. It's not what folks have to contribute but what it costs the Government of Yukon and Yukoners as a whole as taxpayers.

Those are the things that we are balancing right now: What makes the most sense, what makes good long-term, sustainable government policy, how do we stretch dollars as much as we can, and how do we ensure folks get it?

Without saying much more than that — because it has to go through an internal process and then we have to make some decisions on that — but what we're trying to do is make good financial decisions while ensuring that we have the right supports for folks, whether it's in one of the existing structures or something else.

I guess if the line of question is getting at: "Hey, you have these 10 units. What happens for these other services like food in the building?" — we're contemplating what we would potentially need to do or what would enable folks to have the services that they need, depending on who the clients are, who would be using those units once the building is open in late fall 2022.

Ms. Tredger: I do have a lot of questions about what that's going to look like. I was just doing some sort of napkin math, and it looks to me like, per unit, we're looking at \$17,000 to \$18,000 a year per unit. I don't know if those are single units or double units, but from what I've seen, that's probably comparable to market, but it's not cheap for units. I'm a little worried about whether the tenants will be expected to then pay the company — I didn't catch the name of the company — for the services, like meal services, or whether they will have the option of not accessing those services. In that case, do they have kitchenettes or kitchens or things in their building so that they

can cook instead, or is YG committed to providing access to those services for all the tenants?

I'm curious about having pre-committed to that before a contract could have been developed and about what the costs for that would be.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think there was a lot there. I will try to just sort of work through that.

What we're contemplating is — I'm just going to talk about Normandy — that, as we identify costs associated with service delivery there, we are investigating how we could potentially provide extra supports to folks either in those 10 units or individuals who may want to stay in that structure and provide services, but it could be a challenge to attain.

Then there are other individuals who have been there. I know that, in the last couple weeks, there have been tours where they have been well-received and well-attended. In those cases, we have seen folks go in who have interest in staying there. I think they're in a financial position to make that decision.

Of course, what we look at in the future, we are discussing. We want to make sure that the folks who are most vulnerable have the option. This is just one element in an entire housing continuum. It's important to state that we are still building units through the Yukon Housing Corporation that are affordable. This is a private sector partnership with the government. We have Vimy, which is similar. Inevitably, it is a private sector NGO partnership with government.

What was important — going back to the root of that as well — was, to make that contract — what we knew was that the Government of Yukon needs units as well in an affordable space as well, and I think the previous minister, working with the board and the corporation, looked at the units and knew that being able to de-risk the project was going to provide a whole other solution in the housing continuum. We are dealing with years and years, if not decades, of different approaches. We know that we have a vulnerable population — which we have talked about — who have been in hotel rooms, and we don't want to have that anymore. We want to come up with long-term, suitable solutions, and I think that there is a good business case for that. I believe that, in this case — early on with those 10 units — it made sense to de-risk the project, be able to provide another solution for seniors who wanted that and, at the same time, be able to get those units.

Now the conversation revolves around who should be in those units. There are lots of folks. We just went through the wait-list. There are different folks. Who are suitable occupants? What would be congruent — from a societal piece or from the culture in that building? What makes sense? What are the costs there, and what are the services provided? Those are all the things that we are just trying to finalize before our tenants move into the building.

Ms. Tredger: The one part I didn't hear an answer to is: Who is going to be operating Normandy?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: My understanding is that it is a syndicate of a number of different local companies. It is KBC Holdings that has moved this forward. That is Northern Vision Development, Ketz Construction, and Borud Industries — all organizations that have a long, successful private sector history.

There was a bit of dialogue here, I think, early on around — and I apologize to Hansard. It's called Corix, I think — an Alberta organization early on that they were in discussion with as a service-provider solution. I think that what they have decided is to build out a delivery model that will be delivered on behalf of the company itself. I know that I have seen one individual who has a long history of doing management and delivery in the hospitality industry and the service industry. I think that they have identified to lead that. I could come back to the House and let folks know about where they are at from a standpoint of recruitment and the composition of staffing. I know that, early on, we knew that there were different levels of expertise that they wanted to have on-site, whether it was for food preparation or medical support staff — those types of things. I guess that we can probably even — either during Health and Social Services debate or from Yukon Housing Corporation — bring that forward. But again, we are looking at a Yukon group of companies providing a service to Yukoners with a Yukon-built model — looking at best practices in this space.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you for that answer, and I am looking forward to hearing, as we go forward, the arrangements that are made for those 10 units, and I hope that they will be really successful. I am excited that those services will be available.

I would like to jump around a little bit and follow up on some questions that my colleague asked. She asked about — there used to be a program that provided low-interest loans to people for a down payment for their first home. I believe that the minister said they are considering bringing this program back. That is very exciting news. I think there are many, many people for whom this would be really helpful. I am wondering if there is a timeline for that, because I think that is the sort of program that would be a game changer for people.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: That would have been some significant progress in an hour and a half — that we are bringing it back.

What I had said was that we are going to look at the current situation and landscape to see if it's something that we should look at trying to have in our list of programs. I want to be very clear on that. I have asked for us to investigate the current situation based on the fact that it is ever-evolving and based on the fact that interest rates are rising. I think that the means test will be more challenging in the future, I assume. That is what we have seen — that tightening up for folks.

I am going to be open. I think that the member opposite flagged this and was advocating on behalf of a constituent. I am listening. I am listening to all members of the Assembly. I went back, and the discussion that I have had with the president of the Yukon Housing Corporation is that we have to be very open to being able to adapt. With this particular program, we thought that there was a duplication because folks who could meet the test for this could also qualify for a traditional lender. We felt that we could move out of that space and let a traditional lender take that space, and we could go into places like the communities where it was harder to get debt financing.

I also believe that we were also looking at the federal government's programs. There are two things that we are really

waiting to see. One is the rent-to-own that was committed to at the federal level. What does that look like, when is that program going to roll out, and how is it going to be accessible? Maybe that is going to fit the need for folks, so we want to know that. I will be up front that I have a challenge sometimes. We go through the information, but I'm also taking a common-sense approach to it. Some of the programs that the federal government has said — you can take some of your savings, such as your TFSA or RRSP, and you can pull that and use it as a down payment. I think that everyone in the House can say that there are folks out there who are trying to make sure that the bills are paid, the lights are on, their children have what they need, their children have care, and they are just trying to get through.

Even in a place like the Yukon where there are 13,000 empty jobs right now — open jobs — and there are a lot of different opportunities, even with that, even if our inflation is lower at this point than everywhere else in the country, even in that scenario, I still think there are people who would say, "Yeah, I don't have that ability to liquidate or to pull this money out of the savings program for my down payment."

I just think it's important to share that with you. We're taking into consideration all of the things that are at play here. The discussion I have had is, let's make sure, as the federal government clarifies their programs: Is that going to meet what used to be in place here for the homeowner? If not, what should we be looking at?

I don't have a time. What I'm saying is that it's a discussion, and an investigation is on the table concerning that previous program. I have listened to folks like the member opposite who is asking me questions. I have listened to others here. I think that's the respectful thing to do and the right thing to do. That's the commitment that this government has made, that there are good ideas from all corners.

Since I'm throwing the praise out, I'll say the same thing. We have also talked about — during the election, the Yukon Party talked about some beneficial programming — whether it's lots or programming — so that Yukoners can get access to homes. I would say that I agree with that, and I would even take it a step forward.

If we're going to be in a position — and, I mean, it's not in this year's budget — it's something that we'll work on and look to see if we can come up with an appropriate way to, within our existing program allocations — can we look at a program where we do give that incentivized ability for Yukoners who are finishing their trade or post-secondary as well? Because, in those cases — and it's not to alienate anybody else; it's just the fact that we're investing — folks go to school, and then we invest in those individuals. Now we're investing right from early childcare, because we have this groundbreaking program where we're investing before they go to kindergarten, then through the education system, then we have the Yukon grant. Well, we want those people home, and they want to be home, and they should be home with the support of their family. So, we're also trying to figure out how to take that into consideration — whether it's access to land to build or it's through our programs — and how do we do that?

Of course, we have to worry about trade agreements and certain items like that, but we're also — things like — we had to get an exception in the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement* just to be able to do the agricultural end, so we have to look through multiple lenses when we are thinking about the development of these programs.

I have listened to both sides of the floor — the Official Opposition and the Third Party. We are almost done with this spring session, but certainly, as we go into the fall session, there will be time to get me on my feet in Question Period to talk about where we are in that investigation or through conversations in the hallway or e-mail or letters between the end of this session and the start of the fall session.

Ms. Tredger: I appreciate the clarification. I guess I would just add that I don't think a program like this has ever been more needed than it is now. We have a sort of weird market, at least in Whitehorse, where renting is relatively expensive compared to housing prices, although they are both astronomically expensive. I can think of lots of people I know who are paying more in rent than they would for a mortgage for a comparable place, but the kicker is that they don't have a down payment to buy the place which would give them a cheaper mortgage, and they can't save for it because their rent is very high. I think this program really would make a big difference for a lot of people. I guess I just hoped to see something like that be brought forward as soon as possible.

I would also follow up on some questions about 4th and Jeckell. In the briefing, I asked whether there would be new staff allocations to support 4th and Jeckell, which I think is projected to have as many as 75 people in the 44 units. Maybe it's not 44 units; I can't remember the number off the top of my head. There is a significant number of new clients, and I was told that the department is planning to redistribute staff to cover supporting those clients as well. That worries me a little bit, because unless there is excess staff capacity right now — maybe there is, but it seems unlikely — I am wondering where people are going to find the time to support those extra clients. Can the minister explain a bit more about how that is going to work?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Within our bilateral agreement with the federal government, we do have funding for some term positions. There are three full-time positions. The funding, at this point, goes until 2028. We have used some of it. There is some flexibility. It can be used for supporting tenants as they move in or maintenance. There were two term positions that were coming to an end at this fiscal we just completed. I think that, right now, what the team is looking at is re-evaluating how those funds should be used, whether it is through the support system for some of our newer structures or existing other needs.

Again, it's taking a look first to make sure that we have an appropriate support system as people move in, but noting the fact that, yes, it is a significant amount of density. Depending on who the clients are, it's not just our department. We have other relationships with Health and Social Services and with our seniors coordinator and such, so we will have to take a look at how to best support folks who are in that building.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you for that answer.

Last Sitting, we talked about a number of units — I think it was about 20 units — that needed some repairs but were livable. I believe that the plan was to move people in as a short-term solution to get through the winter. I am wondering if that happened and if there is a long-term plan for getting those repairs done in those units and housing the people who are in them.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It was 16 units, I believe. We talked a bit about them. They weren't exactly where we would have wanted them to be, but we had to make sure that they were safe for folks to move in. This came from the housing summit that we did in October. It was identified at that time that a number of Whitehorse families were living in unsafe or precarious housing as winter progressed. At that time, the Yukon Housing Corporation stepped in and led an interdepartmental team, with support from the Safe at Home Society and the NGO community, through the coordinated access team. They worked quickly to identify housing to be made available to meet this emergent need. Again, this is consistent with the intent of Yukon Housing Corporation's community housing program, which aims to address the housing needs of vulnerable Yukoners.

Sixteen Yukon Housing Corporation units in Whitehorse were identified for immediate allocation, expediting health and safety repairs to ensure that housing was available to families in need. I am just going to check, but I don't think we are moving anyone out. We are not looking to move those individuals out of those units, but what we are doing is that they will stay in those units, if that is their decision, and we will be working with them and around our maintenance budget to identify or fix things that haven't been met to the appropriate threshold as we go forward.

Ms. Tredger: Now, that sounds like a great solution.

Speaking of maintenance, I understand that during COVID, there weren't — only emergency repairs were being done. I understand that's — the regular maintenance schedule has started again for home repairs. I imagine that, after that time, there is a bit of a backlog. I'm wondering how much of a backlog there is and when it is expected to be back to a regular time for getting repairs done in the units.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Of course, the Housing Corporation strives to ensure our housing units are safe, secure, and in good working condition for clients. The corporation prioritizes and addresses requests for maintenance and repairs on a case-by-case basis, balancing resources and staff availability with urgency of requests — again, going through and prioritizing.

Emergency repairs are addressed as soon as possible to ensure the health and safety of clients. Yukon Housing Corporation engages third-party contractors to complete many repairs, as well as specialized repairs and service work. Minor repairs are typically completed by our staff.

It was a challenge during the last two years trying to make sure that we were working with the Public Service Commission, making sure that the staff were safe and, at the same time, that our clients were safe and the back-and-forth.

We can go back and meet with our team to see where we are, if we're moving through this pretty smoothly or if there is

a big backlog, and then try to get that information back to the member opposite just to let her know.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you. That would be appreciated. I imagine many of those people are very excited to get their repairs back to being done in their homes, and I appreciate the work of everyone in the department working on it.

I continue to hear from residents about bed bugs and what a — and I understand that this is an incredibly challenging issue. I'm wondering: Is there any new money, any new strategies, any new things happening to try to address this problem? Because I cannot imagine living, on a daily basis, with bed bugs and not having any way to deal with it.

I'll leave it at that.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It's part of our maintenance budget as well. I think, as the member touched on it, it's a challenge. It continues to be a challenge for us. We continue to look at and use best practices. There are a couple of different ways that this can happen, or we go into a unit and then the challenge comes back to us. Again, it is part of our maintenance scope, and I think that it has become a reality — definitely for the Yukon Housing Corporation — that this isn't going to be completely remedied anytime soon, and we try again to understand what this means to our clients, the same way any landlord would. I think that our team reaches out to use the best expertise we can to get this done, and we are going to continue to do that — but we are going to be sympathetic to the fact that it is an extremely uncomfortable scenario for folks when they are dealing with that.

Ms. Tredger: I am going to switch gears a little bit. On the housing initiatives fund, when the ministerial statement was made about that a little while ago, most of the partnerships were with First Nations or non-profits. The one private company I did see — I think that it was called HTTVB Real Property, and there was a million dollars for 15 new homes. I was wondering if we could have some more details on what those new homes were and where they are.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We are looking to accept applications from all communities and entities, whether they are private sector or not. Officials have just made me aware — so, that HTTVB Real Property for those 15 new homes — that is the same group that we have worked with in Whistle Bend. We have done three buildings with 87 units with some of those same developers in Whistle Bend — so, a strong track record. I think that members in the House have gotten to know folks — medical professionals — part of that team — have been doing some work. I think that project is slated to be undertaken — if I'm wrong, we will come back, but as I am aware, it would be right in front of what used to be called Peacock Sales. It is just right across on an empty lot, just across from the Yukon tourism building. If it is not that lot, I will come back, but I think that is where it is. Those are the folks who are doing this project.

Ms. Tredger: I thank the minister for that information.

Regarding the flood relief program, in the briefing, officials told me that they were working on developing eligibility criteria, and I am wondering if there has been any progress with that. I am also wondering if it's anticipated that

there will need to be any flood relief for the coming year and whether any money has been allocated for that.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The eligible amounts of our flood program have three components: grant funding for restoration, replacement, or repairs to principal residences damaged by flooding to a maximum of \$35,000 per residence; flood relief initiative loans for restoration, replacement, or repairs to existing principal or secondary residences, as well as outbuildings, damaged by flooding; in addition, some flood mitigation measures related to building structures and systems may be approved. The interest rate for these loans is set at zero percent. Clients accessing loans are not eligible for subsidy on the repayment of the loan, and the maximum loan amount is \$50,000 per principal residence on that second one. And third, grant funding for property owners and tenants who had chattel possessions damaged in the flood — chattel grants have a maximum amount of \$6,000 for both owners of principal residences and rental households.

We have \$2 million in the budget for this upcoming year. We are working with what we have dealt with from last year, and I will be working closely with the Community Services department and the minister there. We will see what happens this year. Depending on what's in front of us, that might be another discussion for a further need, but at this point, we have \$2 million allocated, and we have this scope for the program.

Ms. Tredger: Is that program currently accessible to people?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: No, it's going live for application in May. I don't have the exact date in May.

Ms. Tredger: Speaking of application processes, I have noticed that recently, for most of the Yukon Housing Corporation programs, it has switched from continuous applications to quarterly application deadlines. I am wondering why that change was made.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It was to streamline application processes and allocation. It just gives us more ability to work quickly on some of the requests that are coming through with the applications.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you for that answer.

With regard to the emergency home repair program, we are hearing from folks who have mobile homes that require some pretty large-scale repairs and are currently unable to get home insurance because of the level of repairs that are required, but they would be able to get home insurance once the repairs are complete. I am wondering if people are able to access the emergency home repair program for that or if there are other supports that are available for them.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will have to get back to the member opposite on this one. There are probably specifics through individuals that the member opposite might be advocating on behalf of — or bringing those questions forward on behalf of. I know that there are a couple of things at play. Let me look at what our scope of programming is. If it's not an emergency but actually an upgrade, maybe over time — I am not sure exactly what the situation is, but we can take a look at our program.

The other thing is that one thing I know that has been challenging for folks is that sometimes — I don't know if it is

in this case, but maybe there can be an offline discussion — you get a CSA approval on the mobile home when it is manufactured. I can remember that, during my time with the City of Whitehorse, one of the challenges was if there was some level of change made to the structure that can also change how it's looked at. I don't know if that affects insurance. I can tell you that when I think back to my place, I left it basically as it was. I got my insurance through the local Co-operators at the time, but I remember having discussions to say, if you make some changes — some folks were changing the roof structure, and how folks delivering those policies looked at it tended to be augmented sometimes. In some cases, it was frustrating. People wanted to wrap the structure for better R-value.

I know that is something we really grappled with, because we were going through the building codes and — this is essentially with the City of Whitehorse, not all Yukon — going through that process and trying to figure out how to support people who were in that situation and still make sure that they can still be insured, but also taking into consideration that we — at that time, at the municipal level, there was no ability to provide that certification again once the structure was augmented, even if it was for better purposes.

So, let us get back to you on that question and see if we can clarify a few points for the member opposite.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you for that. I appreciate it.

I would like to ask a big-picture question about how we're moving toward affordable housing as a territory. I have been very excited to hear about the Northern Community Land Trust. That has been really exciting work. I'm really glad that they have been able to get support. I think what they're doing really makes home ownership accessible in a way that it is not otherwise. There are also people for whom home ownership isn't a goal.

One of the solutions I keep coming across that just seems to have so much potential and so much promise is housing co-ops. There is evidence from across Europe and other places in Canada that they just do a really, really good job of housing people in rentals and stabilizing the housing market and stabilizing the rental market.

I'm wondering if the government is doing any proactive work, whether it's supporting NGOs that want to bring these sorts of projects forward, whether they're working with developers who might be interested in these projects, or whether they're interested in sponsoring some of these projects — because my understanding is that, federally, there was a lot of support for housing co-ops that kind of dried up in the 1980s. Since then, we haven't seen a lot nationally. I'm wondering if the Yukon government is looking at proactive solutions to fill this gap.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Big picture, our process is that we are going to be open to a dialogue with partners who come with innovative ideas. I think the member opposite touches on the cooperative model. I think there is great opportunity and value in something like that, but it's a fine balance for us in the sense that — look, there are so many NGOs — which I think we all know — in the Yukon — not just in this space, but in every space.

As a government, we have done analysis of this, and there are hundreds and hundreds of NGOs. I think, for us, we also believe that Yukoners are extremely entrepreneurial and very innovative. This territory has had a long history of that and we are always willing to sit down with folks.

We are not going out with a concept to find an NGO that will do it right now, but if the housing trust — that team — came to us — and I agree with the member opposite; I think that it is a great model.

What we will do is that we will build platforms and we will pull platforms together like we did with the housing summit. What happened was that there was good output. We talked today about that summit. We identified some people in need really quickly and we addressed that through those units.

We saw one NGO that had a really significant vision of what they want to build out and also the capital to do it, and so we have started to work with them since then with some seed and planning money and support. That is kind of where we are at. What I would say is that I think there are some great organizations out there: Habitat for Humanity, the trust, Grey Mountain, and Vimy — you name it — and they are all doing different things. We are open. We are keeping an eye on what is out there. I also don't have visibility to all of the conversations that happen between our senior teams. I get phone calls a lot from organizations that are commending the accessibility of our senior team and their willingness to have discussions about future projects and all of those things.

I am sure that ideas are swapped around, but we're not, within strategy, proactively going out with some of those ideas, but we are always open to discuss them if somebody brings them to us.

Ms. Tredger: I guess that this is just my plug for a taking a more proactive approach and maybe coming up with ideas and going out and promoting them and finding partners so that the initiative doesn't have to always come from NGOs and private sectors. I would love to see a really active role for the government in promoting housing solutions.

With that, I will finish my questions for today. Thank you so much to the officials for all of their work year-round, as well as their work today, and thank you for the dialogue that we have had here today.

Acting Chair: Is there any more debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation?

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

Ms. Tredger: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, cleared or carried

Acting Chair: The Member for Whitehorse Centre has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, cleared or carried, as required.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Acting Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$20,219,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$46,773,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$66,992,000 agreed to

Yukon Housing Corporation agreed to

Ms. Tredger: Acting Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

Acting Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Whitehorse Centre that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: 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 5:23 p.m.