

Update on Inuvik Airport Projects

Madam Speaker, making strategic infrastructure investments is a priority of 19th Legislative Assembly.

Given our vast Territory, airports are indeed strategic infrastructure to the North. Residents across the Territory depend on air travel for the movement of goods and people, medevacs, search and rescue operations, forest fire response, and much more. Our airports also contribute to the economic and social well-being of NWT residents.

The GNWT is making major improvements to Inuvik's Mike Zubko Airport, a key part of the Territory's multi-modal transportation system. The improvements at this Airport I will speak about today are the runway extension and civil infrastructure projects.

Madam Speaker, the civil infrastructure improvements will make the airport more resilient to the effects of climate change and help protect the permafrost below the Airport.

Plans to extend the runway by 3,000 feet, as well as upgrades to the lighting, navigational and military aircraft landing systems, it will support the Department of National Defence in meeting its obligations under the North American Aerospace Defence Command Treaty. Collaboration and partnership is an important part of how we do business in the North,

Madam Speaker. The GNWT is committed to maximizing employment and training opportunities for residents and businesses in the Beaufort Delta region. We have partnered on this project with Delta North Alliance Construction Inc., an Indigenous-owned and operated joint venture comprised of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Gwich'in Tribal Council, and EGT Northwind Ltd.

In order to maximize local involvement, several work packages associated with the construction of the Inuvik Airport runway extension and civil infrastructure projects were

created. In September 2021, a first work package for clearing and grubbing was awarded for \$1.7 million dollar. This work began in January 2022 and is now substantially complete.

More recently, the GNWT and the Government of Canada reached an agreement with the Joint Venture to advance additional work packages. A \$41.2 million dollar contract for drainage, earthworks and quarry material production was awarded in July 2022. The Joint Venture started this construction work last month.

Madam Speaker, this is an important project, both for Inuvik and the Northwest Territories. Like many capital projects in the Northwest Territories and across the country, it has been impacted by inflation and market escalations due to supply chain issues that have increased project costs beyond the original budget.

Current projections for the project have identified a shortfall of approximately \$90 million dollars and discussions with the GNWT and Canada continue to address this funding gap. The GNWT will be responsible for a portion of the increased costs for the civil improvements.

We are working through these challenges with our partners, and the July agreement reached between the Joint Venture, the GNWT and Canada, is an example of how this collaborative approach allows us to advance this project.

The GNWT remains committed to doing all it can to see that this project is a success and benefits not just the people of Inuvik and the Beaufort Delta but the entire Northwest Territories.

Quyananni, Madam Speaker.