

Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Capital Delivery 2020-2021

Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 virus has affected economies all over the world. On our home ground, it has hit us hard, our communities, our businesses and our people. We know that the public is ready to get the NWT economy moving again. There are very few sectors that translate investment so quickly and directly into tangible benefits for our communities than housing. Housing investment supports local and regional contractors, apprentices, building trades-helpers, homeowners and households needing housing. The investment isn't fleeting; it leaves behind critical and important infrastructure that will provide a social benefit year-after-year.

Mr. Speaker, housing is an issue that is best addressed by being person-focused. Person-focused is how we approach the delivery of our programs, but it is also important in how we deliver infrastructure and capital projects. Our 2020-2021 housing capital investment plan will bring in much needed employment and apprenticeship opportunities. For many in our small communities, COVID-19 has left them in either economic hardship or economic uncertainty. As we try and get back to a semblance of normality, our goal when delivering our housing capital plan is to bring back some financial certainty and opportunities to our residents.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's 2020-2021 capital project delivery represents a total investment of over \$43.8 million in the NWT. Approximately 90% of this amount is targeted for housing projects outside of Yellowknife, with the focus being on our smaller communities.

It will include the construction of 89 units and repair projects for 160 owned public, market and Homeownership Entry Level Program housing units located throughout the NWT.

Highlights of our new construction include:

- 22 new and replacement units across the NWT including
 - 6 market and public housing units in Behchokò
 - 2 market housing units in Hay River
 - 4 market housing units in Tulita
 - 6 public housing units in Délıne
 - 2 public housing units in Fort Smith
 - 2 public housing units in Ulukhaktok

- 9 seniors units in Fort Good Hope,
- 8 single occupancy public housing units in Yellowknife,
- 4 New Home Program units in Fort Resolution, Tulıt'a, Délıne and Tuktoyaktuk,
- 45 market housing units for RCMP
 - 6 in Fort Smith
 - 3 in Norman Wells
 - 17 in Inuvik
 - 7 in Fort Simpson, and
 - 12 in Hay River.

This year's unit repairs also include a major energy project in Yellowknife for the conversion of oil-fired furnaces to biomass heating. We are undertaking this project with significant assistance from the federal government under the Low Carbon Economy Fund federal program.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will be supplementing this \$43.8 million with a further \$3.6 million investment to deliver additional unit repairs by utilizing the internally funded \$5 million COVID-19 reserve. The aim of this additional investment is to bring on stream approximately 130 vacant housing units. Approximately 60 of these units are available for allocation in the short-term. Many of the remaining units will require some minor or major repair. When repaired, these units will be allocated for use within the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation 's public housing, market and home ownership programs. The introduction of these units, as well as the construction of new units, forms the basis of the housing response for any subsequent waves of the COVID-19 virus and is also a step towards fulfilling our mandate commitment to increase the number of affordable homes and reduce core housing need.

While we expect that the vast majority of the planned capital investment will be delivered in this fiscal year, some projects such as those involving winter road and barge transportation, may require a two-year delivery.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has a long history of supporting community businesses. In 2018-2019, 94% of our contracting opportunities were awarded to local and northern businesses, and we expect similar results for this last year. We have also worked closely with community leadership to obtain support to proceed with the majority of planned delivery for 2020-2021.

Mr. Speaker, housing will be a key element of the economic recovery of this Territory. The construction, repair and other contract work around housing brings in much needed income to the NWT, and to our smaller communities. This capital investment will support local and regional contractors, provide opportunities for apprentices and building trades-helpers, and ensures that a large portion of investment stays in the NWT. I look forward to seeing these new projects and opportunities for our people become reality.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.