

CONFIDENTIAL**Narrative****Spring 2022****Contract enforcement for BVR Highways and Public
Works**

Contract enforcement for bid value reductions

- Highways and Public Works is refining the enforcement approach for when bidders use bid value reductions to employ Yukon First Nation citizens or hire Yukon First Nations subcontractors.
- The refined approach uses new statutory declarations that specifically refer to Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy commitments.
- This will help us to achieve the objectives of the Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy while ensuring that everyone is held accountable to their bid commitments.
- We also ensure that our tender documents have clear expectations that help to set contractors up for success if they win the contract.
- Within the tender documents, we explicitly say that Yukon government has a right to not pay a contractor if they do not meet their Yukon First Nation Procurement Policy commitments.
- This allows contractors to know what the expectations are for contract enforcement prior to being awarded the contract.
- During the life of contract, the contractor will be required to regularly report on how they are meeting their Yukon First Nation commitments.

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- The contractor reports to the project manager monthly, which will allow Yukon government to manage the contract proactively and reduce any impacts to the contractor's cash flow.
- Managing the contract proactively includes early and regular communication between Yukon government and contractors about how the contractor is meeting their commitments.
- This allows for issues to be resolved early on, so that they do not impact the contractor's payments.
- If contractors cannot demonstrate they have met their Yukon First Nation commitments, project managers will take the appropriate actions such as holding back payments.
- We manage contracts this way to ensure that we do not pay for work we have not received.
- Contract enforcement is extremely important to ensure that anyone using bid value reductions is held accountable and we continue to advance the objectives of the Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy.

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Introduction

- Back in March 2020, few of us thought we would still be living with this pandemic come 2022.
- However, our commitment to keeping Yukoners healthy while maintaining service delivery is stronger than ever.
- Highways and Public Works has done an immense amount of work, often behind the scenes, to support these goals.
- From enhancing our cleaning measures in government buildings to helping employees work remotely, the Highways team has truly stepped up to help minimize the impacts of this pandemic.

ICT

- I need to start off by giving a major nod to our team over at the Information and Communication Technology Division.
- When, in April of 2020, over 50 per cent of Yukon government employees adjusted to remote work, ICT wasted no time in providing hundreds of employees with the technology and equipment needed to work remotely.

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- It's a good thing we were already pondering a shift to remote work before COVID-19, as part of our response to climate change.
- The digital workplace, as we called it, was a crucial part in our pandemic response effort, mitigating the risk of close contact between employees.
- But, it was a new way of doing work – and many had to adapt. We needed to ensure we could continue to provide services for Yukoners.
- Employees were provided with laptops and devices that would allow them to work remotely through our Virtual Desktop Infrastructure.
- Our ICT group worked tirelessly, extending their service desk hours into the evening and weekend.
- They updated our internal collaboration site regularly with instructions on how to access resources remotely.
- And, they developed a unique ticket system to help staff solve their IT problems quickly and efficiently.
- Without this quick thinking and fast action, services to Yukoners would have been seriously impacted.

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- The ability to work remotely also improves the way government functions.
- We've introduced modern tools for collaboration and communication and have also been able to improve online service delivery for Yukoners.
- For example, Yukoners can renew their vehicle registration online and download their proof of vaccination credential immediately.
- This helps to keep citizens safe by limiting their need to conduct business in person. And, it increases our efficiency.
- One such service we are working on is our new digital identity platform, called MyYukon.
- The service will allow Yukoners and businesses to access government services using one convenient secure log-in, similar to that used for online banking.
- I'm excited to see this service launch later this year.
- Early in the pandemic, we also launched the COVID19 info line - a place where Yukoners could call in and ask any non-medical COVID-19 questions.

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- It proved especially helpful with providing Yukoners answers to their questions on current enforcement measures, travel and supports that could be available to them.
- The info line is now used to help Yukoners book their vaccine appointments.
- One of our most visible and recent online supports is the digital Proof of Vaccination Credential, or PVC.
- Last fall, we began working with Health and Social Services to develop the PVC for Yukon residents and launched the service on September 7.
- Our digital PVC is the document Yukoners need to provide when required – whether they are sitting down at a restaurant or boarding a plane.
- It was important to us – and to all Yukoners – that the PVC service is secure.
- It contains the minimal amount of information required to confirm your COVID-19 vaccination status: the type and date of dose, and basic personal identifiers like name and date of birth.
- We based the PVC entirely on the requirements for international travel determined by the federal government.

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- This means you can use your PVC to board a plane, or to prove vaccination status when re-entering Canada.
- Following development of the PVC service, the ICT team turned their attention to verifying vaccination status.
- This came in the form of an app – the Yukon Vaccination Verifier.
- The tool gave businesses and organizations the ability to scan the QR code found on the PVC to see if an individual “meets requirements” for vaccination, or is not vaccinated.
- This app was downloaded over 2,500 times.
- This is just a snapshot of the work the ICT team has done to support Yukoners through COVID-19, and beyond.
- The ICT team often works behind the scenes, but that doesn’t mean the impact of their work isn’t felt far and wide.

Transportation

- The same can be said of folks across our Transportation division.

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- From Motor Vehicles, to Aviation to Maintenance, employees have stepped up to maintain operational continuity in the face of illness, isolation requirements and more.
- I want to take a minute to talk about the steps this division took to keep our services running smoothly, and our roads clear and safe.
- For starters, both the Motor Vehicles Branch and the Aviation team quickly took measures to increase safety and maintain continuity at public facing facilities.
- They installed plexi-glass barriers when practical to protect staff and the public, and provided signage to ensure everyone was aware of the latest restrictions.
- They took steps to ensure that, despite the pandemic and the challenges it created, Yukoners could still safely get on a plane or get vital documents like their driver's licence or vehicle registration.
- At the height of the pandemic, the Aviation branch prepared other Yukon government employees to fill labour gaps at the airport, if needed.
- This helped maintain a consistent level of service and security.

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- Across the Transportation division, we also called on Auxiliary On-Call (AOC) staff when needed to fill positions – whether in the airports or in the grader stations.
- Across the board, employees were flexible and adaptable throughout the pandemic.
- As a government, we want to extend our gratitude and respect to our public servants.
- The past two years were not been easy for anybody.
- Least of all, for those who work on the front lines, or who had to go above and beyond to provide consistent service delivery for Yukoners.
- People worked long hours, day after day, to make sure our airports stayed open, our services continued and that our roads were clear and well-maintained.
- Staff took on additional duties, but still showed up with enthusiasm, creativity and commitment to keep our territory moving.
- The combination of all the challenges COVID has presented us had an impact on our operations – but we adapted and persevered, so we could deliver essential services to Yukoners.

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- Our operational teams' commitment and the care of individuals were the reason we had seamless operations throughout COVID-19.
- We know the pandemic was challenging for the aviation sector.
- Yukon's aviation system is essential for connecting our communities, building our economy and linking the Yukon with the rest of the world.
- Our government has made significant investments in aviation over the past few years, including upgrades to equipment and facilities.
- Since the start of the pandemic, the Yukon government distributed nearly \$12 million to support air carriers that provide critical and essential services.
- This funding supports an industry that was among the hardest hit by COVID-19, and helped ensure that essential services like MEDEVAC continued across the territory.

Corporate

- Throughout the pandemic, we did our best to ensure government projects kept moving.

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- Procurement is an important economic force in the Yukon – especially during the pandemic, it was important that we keep dollars in the territory.
- From the beginning, the Procurement Support Centre worked quickly to cross-train staff to ensure service continuity – so that projects could be tendered and awarded in a timely fashion.
- We worked with industry to ensure we addressed the impacts of COVID on procurement, and adapted accordingly.
- We made sure we had appropriate supports for the local business community in place – increasing the use of invitational tenders to local businesses and increasing the use of value-driven tenders.
- We also launched a new, online procurement system called Yukon bids&tenders.
- Now businesses no longer have to travel or mail their tender submissions, they can do it all remotely.
- We made sure to support local businesses by sourcing goods, supplies and services locally whenever possible.

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- We worked closely with the Yukon Hospital Corporation on the distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies.
- Together with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the Health Emergency Operations Centre, we developed PPE guidelines that were approved by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- And we monitored our inventory stock of PPE, to ensure that we could continue to meet government needs and including schools.

Facilities

- Our facilities team was also a major part of the front-line response against the spread of the virus.
- When the pandemic hit, their response was swift.
- The team worked quickly to enhance cleaning practices to protect building occupants.
- Similarly, the Maintenance team installed countless plexiglass and other physical barriers in Yukon government buildings and offices across the territory.

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- Not only did the barriers help promote physical distancing, but they also put an important physical barrier between the public and frontline staff.
- These measures protected the public and our staff - allowing people to continue to work and access services with their safety in mind.

Wellness supports

- I know safety has been paramount for all of us over the last two years.
- Certainly, the last two years of vaccines, boosters, remote work and public health restrictions have been challenging.
- And, we had to manage it all while trying to balance work, personal lives, and more.
- Certainly, this took a toll on everybody's mental wellness.
- Government of Yukon employees can access the Employee and Family Assistance Program at any time, which offers supports such as counselling sessions.
- Human Resources took great strides to ensure employees and their families are aware of the services and supports available to them through this program.

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- Over and above of this, employees can access up to \$1,000 each year for counselling services through their benefits package.
- This is in addition to the counselling services available through the Employee and Family Assistance Program.
- Through benefits, employees can access other services that may support mental health, such as massage therapy and acupuncture.
- We also have a subscription to LifeSpeak, which is a digital wellness platform.
- The platform has videos and archived live chats about a series of wellness topics, including stress and anxiety.
- Within the Department of Highways and Public Works, we encouraged our people leaders to complete mental health training from the Canadian Mental Health Association so they can support employees when in need.
- We also offered training on resilience as well as safe and inclusive workplaces to HPW employees.
- Outside of training, we created a mental health and wellness working group to support staff, and also organized wellness activities to celebrate and

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recognize the great work of our employees and let them and their families know we appreciate their services and commitment.

- I hope all of our employees - in HPW and across Yukon government - know how appreciated they are.

Conclusion

- Across the Government of Yukon and the territory, Yukoners have truly stepped up over these past few years.
- Yukoners have a special knack for looking out for one another and supporting one another.
- Being so remote, we have to watch out for our neighbours - and that was doubly true during the pandemic.
- From working remotely, to taking on new, enhanced responsibilities at work, to limiting contacts and masking up - we all demonstrated resilience during those challenging times.
- These efforts paid off.
- So, I want to say thank you.
- Thank you for wearing your mask.

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- Thank you for getting your vaccine - and your booster.
- Thank you for all those times you sanitized your hands - no matter how dry and cracked they were.
- And thank you to our Yukon government employees who went above and beyond in our pandemic response.
- Your efforts are noted, and appreciated.

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Introduction

- The work we do here at Highways and Public Works impacts each and every Yukoner.
- From designing our roads, to maintaining our infrastructure – we keep Yukoners connected in meaningful ways.
- In essence, Highways and Public Works provides the necessary infrastructure that makes life in the Yukon possible.
- One of the things I'm most proud of here at our department, is our approach to building, growing and managing greener, smarter and longer-lasting infrastructure.
- We do this by making thoughtful choices about spending, finding innovative approaches to service delivery and by being smart with our systems.
- Everything we do, we do to support a healthy, growing and thriving society.
- Now, when you think of Highways and Public Works, you likely think about the management of public roads throughout the territory – their construction, their maintenance and their clearing.
- But what many overlook, is the amount of designing and planning that goes into this work.

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- Each of our roads, bridges and culverts are strategically and carefully designed for the safety of Yukoners, while also considering future population growth and climate impacts.
- But it isn't just our roads that are carefully managed, designed and maintained, the department takes this approach in all of its responsibilities.
- For example, we manage and maintain airports and aerodromes across the Yukon along with over 500 other facilities such as schools and office buildings.
- And, we manage the building of new government infrastructure across the Yukon - from the Whistle Bend Elementary School here in Whitehorse to the new health and wellness centre and 10-plex housing unit in Old Crow.
- It's a busy department with a lot on the go but the work we do does not come without its unique northern challenges.
- Consider for instance, the long, cold winters that our infrastructure must withstand.
- Or, the short construction seasons our contractors have to contend with.

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- And, with the warming global temperatures, we are seeing more avalanches, washouts and shifting roads for our crews to manage.
- Yes the challenges we face are many, but despite all of this, we ensure the Yukon's road and aviation network is safe so Yukoners can get to where they need to go.
- Now of all the unique challenges we face, there are few more challenging than climate change.
- Here in Canada's north, we are warming at roughly three times the global average rate, which is having a myriad of effects on our ecosystems, weather patterns, waterways, communities, and infrastructure.
- Increased precipitation is causing more avalanches in the winter and more washouts in the spring and summer.
- An increase in forest fires is putting a higher risk on communities and our remote public infrastructure.
- And warming temperatures are making winter infrastructure like ice bridges and winter roads harder to plan, build and safely maintain.
- In an effort to manage some of these major climate challenges, we've begun conducting climate risk

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assessments of all major transportation infrastructure projects and major building projects above \$10 million.

- The purpose of a climate risk assessment is to determine the infrastructure's vulnerability to climate change - such as permafrost, flood, fire or other environmental factors.
- Once the assessment is complete, we incorporate climate resiliencies into our designs so that we can adapt to potential climate change impacts and ensure our infrastructure will be there for the long-term.

Roads

- Anyone who has driven through the Yukon has seen the beauty of the territory, the winding rivers, valleys and impressive mountains.
- Travelers and Yukoners alike are able to see and experience the Yukon because of the incredible highway network that spans the territory.
- I may be a little biased when I say that the Yukon has some of the most beautiful and scenic highways anywhere in the world, but anyone would admit that driving the Dempster Highway or traveling along Kluane Lake is pretty incredible.

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- It probably comes as no surprise that the Department of Highways and Public Works is responsible for keeping the Yukon's highway system safe and operational.
- During the winter months, regional highway crews are scheduled to work seven days a week, keeping our roads clear while Whitehorse has coverage 24 hours a day.
- Highways are cleared on a priority basis. The sections with the highest traffic volumes are cleared first, followed by school bus routes.
- All other roads and highways are cleared and sanded as soon as possible thereafter. I think we can all appreciate how much work the highway crews have put in this year and I commend them for their service to Yukoners.
- While we work hard to maintain and clear our roads, we are also constantly improving how we communicate road condition information to Yukoners.
- This past fall, the Department of Highways and Public Works upgraded the Yukon 511 website and launched a new mobile app.
- These user-friendly upgrades make it easier for users to navigate the system while providing more information to motorists.

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- Users are now able to view roadside cameras to see first-hand what the road conditions are like in many areas of the Yukon before heading to their destination.
- Additionally, the mobile app features a hands-free voice recognition program that will provide road condition notifications straight to one's device, including when there may be a delay ahead.
- Clearing the ice and snow, repaving and grading are all critical elements of highway maintenance but equally important are things like vegetation clearing and installing safety barriers.
- Indeed we've recently implemented a roadway safety improvement program that is designed to make Yukon's roads safer.
- Through brushing, improved lane markings, removing hazards in the right-of-way, and installing and maintaining more roadside barriers, the government is ensuring that Yukoners have safe roads to travel on throughout the year.
- Since 2019, the department has brushed over 1,800 kilometres along Yukon highways, installed over 7 kilometres of new barriers, and painted over 2,600 kilometres of highway lines.
- While roads take up a large portion of our work, we can't forget about the work we do on our bridges.

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- Many of the Yukon's bridges were built in the 1950s and 1960s and are at an age where they need regular work to keep them in service.
- In 2018, we implemented a new inspection program to enhance and modernize maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement decisions for the bridges we manage across the Yukon.
- We assess, evaluate and rate all bridges, large culverts, and paved sections annually or bi-annually to prioritize any improvement and investment decisions.
- This program keeps our infrastructure up to the highest standard, ultimately keeping Yukoners safe.

BridgesNares River (Naataase Héén) Bridge

- Now I can't forget to mention the new bridge that was recently built in Carcross along the Nares River.
- The bridge, which was originally built in 1970, is a vital piece of infrastructure that helps ensure the transportation of goods and services between Yukon and the Skagway port.
- In other words, it's a major gateway into Alaska. The Nares River Bridge replacement project resulted

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in a new bridge that meets current and future traffic demands, and provides a safer crossing for the travelling public, including a lit pathway.

- On top of that, it has provided a number of economic and training benefits for Yukoners and the citizens of Carcross/Tagish First Nation.
- In October 2019 - two years after shovels hit the ground - the opening ceremony of the new Nares River Bridge was held. The bridge officially opened to traffic on November 8, 2019.
- By investing in bridge infrastructure, our government is strengthening the vital links and transportation routes that tie Yukon's communities together.

Alaska Highway Safety Improvements

- Many of you are familiar with the work we have been doing on the Alaska Highway through Whitehorse.
- These safety improvements have been designed to improve traffic flows, increase public safety and reduce the number of collisions.
- Most recently, we've installed a protected green arrow light at the Robert Service Way intersection, which will make it safer for vehicles to make left turns.

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- But that's not all. So far, we have completed:
- intersection improvements at the Carcross Cut Off;
- improvements at the Range Road intersection that include new traffic lights and a paved multipurpose trail;
- the addition of turning lanes along the North Klondike intersection and a safer access to the Cousins Rest Stop and;
- improvements between Hillcrest Drive and Burns Road including the addition of streetlights, two pedestrian-controlled traffic signal crossings and a paved multi-user trail into downtown.
- We are already planning the next multi-year phase of the project which will see safety improvements between the Whitehorse weigh scales and Philmar RV.
- These improvements will also include the closure of a number of unsafe highway accesses, the addition of service roads, but most importantly, it will see much needed safety improvements at the Robert Service Way intersection.
- We have been meeting with affected businesses along the highway and residents who live on McLean Lake Lane and Squatter's road to share our plans and listen to their questions and concerns.

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- Based on those discussions, we made adjustments to our design.
- The project was recently posted on YESAB's project registry for public comment and review.
- Construction on portions of the project will begin this summer.

North Klondike Highway

- When discussing our highways and roads, we can't forget to talk about the North Klondike Highway – a key access route for over 50 per cent of Yukoners who live outside of Whitehorse.
- It is one of the only all-season highways connecting the Yukon's capital city, Whitehorse, to remote, isolated communities and important resource development areas.
- This route also provides the only road access to the Beaufort Delta region of the Northwest Territories via the Dempster Highway.
- Like many roads in the Yukon, this highway has undergone many iterations over the past decades, going from a trail to a gravel road to eventually being resurfaced in BST or bituminous surface treatment.

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- As the road has aged, it has also gotten busier; with the added complications of climate impacts, the need to reconstruct several areas of the highway has become clear.
- For example, thawing permafrost has been causing drainage and erosion issues which reduces safety for road users.
- We are fortunate to have received federal funding for upgrading this highway through the National Trade Corridors Fund.
- In total, this will be a \$337 million dollar project.
- It will eventually see the reconstruction of 209 kilometres of the North Klondike Highway over seven distinct sections between Carmacks and the Dempster Highway intersection.
- We will also use the funding to create better and more efficient drainage systems such as culverts to accommodate the increase in water flowing as a result of climate impacts.
- Other improvements will include a raised roadway and wider ditches to protect against flooding and slope erosion.
- These upgrades will reduce long-term maintenance costs and increase efficiency of the transport of

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goods by eliminating the need for weight restrictions for our heavy trucks transporting vital goods along the highway.

- It will also make travel from natural resource development areas in Canada's north more efficient.
- Not only that, the project is expected to support 800 jobs over the construction period.
- Some of the funding received for this project will also be used to support our Intelligent Transportation System.
- This system uses a number of tools that are designed to help better manage the road and help warn us of climate impacts through radar and weather monitoring.
- Portions of the funding will also be used to develop the infrastructure for electric vehicle charging stations along the highway between Carmacks and Stewart crossing.
- This will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the territory.
- In summary, the North Klondike Highway reconstruction project will enhance the safety and efficiency of travel for locals, tourists and commercial vehicles.

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Climate Impacts and HPW ResponsePermafrost heaving

- The effects of climate change are felt intensely in Canada's north and shifting permafrost is compromising infrastructure in many parts of the territory – not just on the North Klondike Highway.
- Most notably is the North Alaska Highway in the Yukon – in particular the segments of road between Haines Junction and Beaver Creek.
- This section of road has seen increasing damage and cracking as a result of shifting and thawing permafrost.
- Previously the Shakwak funding agreement with the US helped to maintain this section of road but the last of that funding agreement expired a few years ago.
- However, I was very pleased to see that on November 15, 2021 the United States passed the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* – a law which could provide funding for the Yukon to reconstruct segments of this essential travel corridor.
- We are working closely with our Alaskan counterparts to understand what steps need to be

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taken in order to secure this funding and begin the project as soon as possible.

- As most of us know, however, permafrost is not limited to the Shakwak area, in fact the majority of the Yukon is underlain with permafrost.
- Permafrost is a thick subsurface layer of soil that remains frozen throughout the year. When it thaws, it can significantly destabilize the ground, posing a number of risks to infrastructure and buildings.
- This can range from cracking to complete structural failures requiring reconstruction.
- To address this challenge, the Government of Yukon is dedicating attention, time and resources so that effective adaptation measures are taken across the territory.
- This includes working with local, territorial, provincial, national and international partners on adaptation initiatives that will preserve our existing infrastructure.
- One of our climate adaptation pilot projects, located at Dry Creek along the Alaska Highway, involves the design and construction of thermosyphons. These will reduce and stabilize permafrost thaw by freezing the ground beneath the surface of the road.

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- Thermosyphons, when installed in appropriate conditions, will reduce road maintenance costs and prolong the service life of the Yukon's highways.
- We are also working with Yukon University on the development of an early warning detection system for permafrost changes that could impact certain sections of a highway. This type of early warning system could be very helpful in how the department plans highway repairs and upgrades.
- This is a great example of academia and government working together to solve real challenges affecting Yukoners.

Dempster Fibre Line

- While I've talked plenty to you about our physical highways, I can't forget to mention our information superhighways.
- Reliable access to the internet is a critical element of our economy and our modern society.
- As we are all certainly aware, the Yukon currently depends on a single fibre optic line, and when that line goes down we're largely cut off from the digital world.
- This leads me to our work on the Dempster Fibre Line, an 800-kilometre fibre optic line we're

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building along the Dempster Highway from Dawson City to Inuvik.

- The Dempster Fibre Line will connect the Yukon to the existing Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link, creating a 4,000-kilometre continuous network that will ensure digital traffic can be run in the other direction if there is an issue at any point along the network.
- By making internet and cellular wireless services more reliable, the Dempster Fibre Line is going to enhance Yukoners' participation in the digital economy and improve access to government services.
- This project is funded by the Government of Canada through its Connect to Innovate Program and Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.
- It also includes investments from the Government of Yukon and NorthwesterTel.
- Work on the fibre optic line broke ground in July 2021 and the project is expected to be complete by 2024.
- The project has already completed the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment process and we have received a land use permit from the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board.

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- Once completed, it will be operated by Northwestel for 20 years.

Buildings

- Let's talk about our buildings now.
- As I mentioned before, Highways and Public Works manages and maintains 29 airports and aerodromes along with over 500 other facilities such as schools and office buildings.
- We are very committed to providing safe, and respectful spaces that are gender-inclusive and accessible to people of all ages and abilities.
- Just recently, the department released a new *Building Design Requirements and Technical Standards Manual*, which contains standards for inclusive and accessible buildings including criteria for integrating gender-inclusive washrooms and change rooms.
- These standards are now being used for all new buildings, additions, renovations, and major system upgrades.
- Speaking of renovations and upgrades, many of the Yukon's public buildings are showing their age.

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- Rising energy prices are also leading to higher costs to heat our older, thermally inefficient buildings.
- We are actively upgrading government buildings with low-carbon energy solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and are constructing new buildings such as schools and community centres to support the needs of Yukoners.
- Two significant building retrofits we are currently working on include replacement of the Yukon University roof and replacement of the Youth Justice Centre skylight.
- These projects may sound straightforward, but they will do a lot to improve the energy efficiency of both buildings - helping us to advance the government's commitments outlined in *Our Clean Future*.
- In addition, we recently began the installation of a biomass system at Elijah Smith Elementary School in Whitehorse and will soon issue a tender to expand the district heating biomass system at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre.
- I also want to mention the upgrades we are making to the Old Territorial Administration Building in Dawson City.

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- ## Schools

- Prepared for Minister Clarke
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- While many schools are getting upgrades across the territory, I just want to touch on the two new schools underway.

Burwash Landing School

- First, let me tell you about Burwash Landing School.
- We are proud to be honouring a request from Kluane First Nation (KFN) to build a new kindergarten to grade 12 school in Burwash Landing – one that would accommodate the needs of the residents in the area, and reflect the culture of their community.
- We have been working closely with Kluane First Nation to plan the design and construction of the school.

Whistle Bend School

- Here in Whitehorse, construction has started on the new elementary school in Whistle Bend.
- This school will be the first new elementary school in Whitehorse in decades, and the first school in the Whistle Bend community.
- This new school will serve students in the Whistle Bend community as well as surrounding areas, giving them the opportunity to enjoy a high-quality learning environment close to home.

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The Old Crow Health and Wellness Centre and 10 Plex Housing Unit

- Looking to our northern communities now, let me tell you about the work we are doing in Old Crow, on the Health and Wellness Centre and 10 Plex housing unit.
- This project will replace the aging health centre in Old Crow, increase the number of affordable housing units and create jobs for the community.
- Old Crow is the Yukon's only fly-in community so constructing the new building is challenging – simply in the way we get the materials there.
- In addition, the shifting permafrost presents added construction challenges.
- But, as always, the department is finding ways to get it done.
- A winter road was constructed this winter from Eagle Plains to Old Crow to help ship materials for a number of projects in the community, including this one.
- We are working in full partnership with the Vuntut Gwitchin government and are expecting to finish the 10-plex housing unit this year, and the health and wellness centre in 2023.

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Airports

- Shifting to airports now, the Yukon's aviation system is essential for connecting our communities, building our economy and linking the Yukon with the rest of the world.
- The Department of Highways and Public Works continues to make strategic investments to keep our aerodromes and airports safe and open for business while ensuring the infrastructure meets Transport Canada regulations.
- We have made significant investments at our airports and aerodromes over the past few years. For example:
- Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport has undergone a number of significant upgrades, including the replacement and upgrade of the baggage screening and conveyance system, which was completed in April 2021.
- We are planning further improvements including replacing the main runway, upgrading the parallel runway, developing airport land for commercial use, the construction of a new rotary area, and apron panel expansion.

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- The Mayo Airport has seen a number of important investments as well, including runway reconstruction and purchasing of new maintenance equipment, all of which will allow Mayo airport to be better equipped to deal with increased travel and meet modern airport standards.
- We also recently completed a \$2.7 million runway lighting upgrade project in August 2021, which allows Mayo airport to be used at night.
- Additionally, we are investing \$1.5 million at the Watson Lake Airport to resurface the runway and portions of the taxiway.
- Following the resurfacing, we are planning to replace the airfield lighting system.

Conclusion

- As I conclude, it's important to remember all of the hard working staff in the department that help ensure we get to where we need to go safely.
- Recognizing the unique challenges we face up here in the north, along with the impacts of a changing climate, it helps to know that Highways and Public Works is dedicated to ensuring our infrastructure can withstand the changing climate that we live in.
- As always, the department will continue working to build a stronger, more sustainable, more

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collaborative and more prosperous territory for all Yukoners.

- Thank you.

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Introduction

- Being the Minister of Highways and Public Works is a great honour – one that I do not take lightly.
- When I became Minister, I was given a mandate letter that outlined my responsibilities as Minister.
- Mandate letters help our government create a measured approach to accomplishing our priorities and hold us accountable for the work we do.
- Today I'd like to give you an update on the significant progress our department has made on our mandate letter items.
- When I first read the mandate letter, I knew there was a lot of work to do but I felt confident knowing I had a strong team of public servants to help me.
- Here we are, six months in from receiving that direction and already we have made significant progress on these mandate items.

OCF Commitments

- First, I want to talk about one of the biggest priorities we have – one that I am most passionate about.

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- *Our Clean Future.*
- *Our Clean Future*, as everyone is likely aware, is our answer to the climate change emergency.
- Developed in partnership with Yukon First Nations, transboundary Indigenous groups and Yukon municipalities, *Our Clean Future* is a strategy to guide our government's approach on how we can respond to the climate change emergency our planet is facing.
- While it is an all-of-government initiative, the Department of Highways and Public Works is taking the lead on 23 important climate actions.
- These actions have a specific focus on active transportation, reducing our building emissions, and conducting climate risk assessments.
- As a department that focuses a lot on transportation, reducing our greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) is top of mind for me.
- Transportation within the Yukon is the biggest source of our emissions.
- In fact, you may have heard that 54 per cent the Yukon's GHG emissions come from road transportation alone.

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- And an additional seven per cent comes from aviation.
- These numbers are our reality, and they show us where to put our resources and where to take action.
- Just this past year, we have started to move toward reducing our emissions through actions such as electrifying more of our fleet vehicles.
- We have also recently received federal funding from the National Trade Corridors Fund, a funding initiative that is helping address the unique transportation challenges in the North.
- This funding will be used to make major road improvements along the North Klondike Highway, helping to create roads that are more resistant to permafrost.
- It will reduce the need for seasonal weight restrictions, which will allow trucks to carry heavier loads - reducing their number of trips.
- All of these changes aim to improve fuel efficiency and fuel economy - ultimately reducing our carbon footprint.
- While these are big actions, some of our smaller actions are making a noteworthy impact too.

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- For instance, we are incorporating active transportation into the design of our highways and transportation infrastructure.
- By creating active transportation infrastructure that is safe, convenient and even fun for people to use, we are encouraging Yukoners to make greener choices in their daily commutes.
- A great example of this commitment is the new multi-use trail that we installed during the Alaska Highway upgrades.
- One such trail connects Hillcrest to Range Road and into downtown. This trail provides a route for cyclists, runners and others to access downtown from their neighbourhood.
- We are also planning to incorporate a multi-use trail in our Alaska Highway Safety Improvements this summer.
- Although this is just the start, I can only hope it shows how serious we are about incorporating active transportation into our highway infrastructure.
- Along with transportation, buildings also have a large role to play in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.
- We are currently working on retrofitting Government of Yukon buildings to contribute to our territory-

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wide goal of a 45 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030.

- Highways and Public Works has a new program focused on this, called the Green Infrastructure Program.
- It's a multi-year capital investment fund dedicated to implementing renewable energy systems, building retrofits and sustainability projects.
- In 2021 we completed nine energy retrofits.
- Of the nine retrofits, seven of these are high-efficiency energy projects, each expected to reduce emissions by five tonnes or more each year.
- We also have 38 energy retrofit projects underway in Yukon government buildings across 11 communities.
- Two significant examples of these building retrofits are the Yukon University roof and the replacement of the Yukon Justice Center skylight.
- These projects may sound straightforward, but they will do a lot to improve the energy efficiency of both buildings.
- The Yukon University roof project is planned to start this year.

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- By improving the thermal efficiency of the roof, we estimate the project will reduce the building's greenhouse gas emissions by about seven per cent.
- The project will also improve the life of the building and reduce maintenance costs.
- Likewise, the replacement of the skylight at the Yukon Justice Center will improve insulation and will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by more than four percent.
- Both of these projects will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by about 130 tonnes per year.
- To give you an idea of the impact, it's roughly equivalent to 600 round trips from Whitehorse to Dawson City by car.
- We are continuing to assess Government of Yukon buildings across the territory to ensure that we are implementing the most important retrofits in the right places.
- We're also incorporating biomass into some of our buildings.
- Biomass is an alternative way to heat buildings through the use of wood or other organic matter.

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- This will reduce our need for traditional heating fuels like oil and propane that contribute to our emissions.
- The Government of Yukon currently heats three buildings by using our biomass facilities:
 - the Whitehorse Correctional Centre;
 - the Dawson City Water Treatment Plant; and
 - the Dawson City Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- We are also working on expanding Whitehorse Correctional Centre's biomass heating system to include the Young Offenders Facility and Takhini Haven.
- This expansion is expected to reduce the buildings' total greenhouse gas emissions by 320 tonnes.
- Last, we have awarded the tender for the installation of a biomass heating system at Elijah Smith Elementary School here in Whitehorse.
- The biomass system will offset the school's propane use, and will reduce emissions by an estimated 130 tonnes each year.
- The final item highlighted under *Our Clean Future* is to conduct climate risk assessments of all major transportation infrastructure projects and major building projects above \$10 million.

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- Climate risk assessments determine the infrastructure's vulnerability to climate change, and use that information to incorporate adaptation measures into the design to mitigate climate change impacts.
- These assessments focus on determining risk of permafrost, fire, flood and other environmental factors.
- Once the assessment is complete, we incorporate adaptations into our design to mitigate climate change impacts.
- The climate risk assessment has two components:
 - the greenhouse gas mitigation assessment - which measures the anticipated GHG emissions impact of an infrastructure project; and
 - the climate change resilience assessment - which employs a risk management approach to anticipate and plan for any climate change related disruptions or impacts.
- One project I want to point to that is currently undergoing a climate risk assessment is the second phase of the North Klondike Highway Upgrade.
- For this project a climate risk assessment is planned for completion this year.

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- It will consider potential long-term climate change-related impacts to the entire project, including impacts on GHG emissions from transportation.
- Although this is only the beginning stages of our journey to meet our commitments under *Our Clean Future*, I am confident we are already making excellent progress.

Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy

- Along with our climate change work, one of the things I am most proud of as Minister is our progress on the Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy.
- The Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy enhances economic outcomes for Yukon First Nations people and businesses.
- It does this by providing Yukon First Nations people and businesses with better opportunities to take part in Government of Yukon contracts.
- My commitment in the mandate letter is clear: continue to ensure we hear concerns and perspectives from stakeholders while we implement the policy.

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- I think it's important to clarify that we consider Yukon First Nations our partners and industry and other groups as stakeholders in this context.
- Yukon First Nations have been involved as our partners since the inception of this policy.
- We wrote it together line by line and we are continuing to work together through the Technical Working Group and the Monitor and Review Committee.
- It is a given that we will continue our work with our partners, but we have also been working with stakeholder groups such as industry.
- Industry is taking an important role in shaping the future of the policy by having representation on the Monitor and Review Committee.
- On the committee, we have four representatives from industry as well as representatives from Yukon First Nations and the Government of Yukon.
- They are tasked with collecting data on the policy, tracking the outcomes and creating recommendations to make the policy a success for everyone.
- By continuing to work with industry, we are broadening our level of expertise on the committee since they can share their first-hand experiences of doing business under the policy.

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- Now that the policy is fully implemented, I am looking forward to seeing our vision become a reality and for Yukon First Nations to become greater participants in Yukon's economy.

Modernize procurement

- While the Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy is certainly new and innovative, my next mandate letter item focuses on continuing to make improvements to procurement.
- It directs me to continue to modernize our procurement processes while maximizing local business expertise and supporting sustainability.
- In 2020, we moved to a digital submission process for bids through the Yukon bids&tenders platform.
- This system allows for online bid submissions that reduces red tape, flags compliance errors and makes the entire procurement process more reliable.
- This was a huge step in modernizing our procurement process and making it easier for businesses to compete on Government of Yukon tenders.
- Another great example is the Vendor Performance Review Program.
- This new program will evaluate and score vendors on their performance throughout a government contract.

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- Prior to this program, vendor performance was not one of the factors considered in our procurement process.
- Now we will be able to reward good performance from vendors, as well as encourage government project managers and vendors to work together.
- Although we are modernizing the procurement system in many different ways, one thing I wanted to highlight in particular is the Sustainable Procurement Strategy.
- This strategy helps provide procurement authorities with different tools to support them in making more informed and more sustainable choices when purchasing goods and services.
- For example, procurement authorities will be encouraged to buy goods that have a certified eco-label that signifies that the item is environmentally friendly.
- We are currently piloting this program, and we will be expanding it soon.
- As you can see, we have rolled out many new programs and policies that will make our procurement process work better for Yukoners and I look forward to continuing this great work.

Maximizing local food purchases

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- Being innovative with our procurement is helping us achieve another one of our mandate letter items: maximizing local food purchases through government procurement
- At HPW, we are working behind the scenes to set up the purchasing agreements for buying local food.
- In the 2020-21 fiscal year, we awarded a five-year Standing Offer Arrangement that supports the agricultural industry and local food manufacturers in the territory.
- This agreement allows the Continuing Care Facilities, the Whitehorse General Hospital and Gadzoosdaa Student Residence to easily purchase local food.
- Supporting local food not only grows our local economy and supports farmers, but it increases our food security and decreases reliance on food supply from down south.
- We have been working closely with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources (EMR) on this initiative.
- EMR has done an excellent job on the outreach and communication aspects.
- You may have seen their "Yukon Grown" program.

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- This program tells consumers which food products have been raised or grown in the territory.
- We know that growing food isn't always easy in the Yukon and our department is committed to using procurement to support our local food providers.

Motor Vehicles Act Rewrite

- While we have taken big steps in being innovative and modernizing our procurement processes, we can't forget the progress we've made on rewriting the *Motor Vehicles Act*.
- As I'm sure you can appreciate, this is no small task.
- This is largest legislative re-write within our department.
- This file started well before I was Minister, but I get the privilege of continuing to see this through as per my mandate letter.
- The new modernized Act will address long-standing safety and administrative issues and fill gaps that have arisen since the existing Act was written over 40 years ago.
- I have directed the department to do everything they can to expedite this timeline.

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- However, it's important we get this right and that the legislation meets our needs now and well into the future.
- I am confident that by 2024, we will have the new bill and regulations in front of the honourable members of this assembly.

Yukon Resource Gateway Program

- My mandate letter also mentions the Yukon Resource Gateway Program.
- The Yukon Resource Gateway Program supports one of the most significant construction programs ever considered in the territory.
- Through it, we are improving access to Yukon's most mineral-rich areas and ensuring long-term benefits for all Yukoners.
- While the work itself will provide infrastructure upgrades for up to 650 kilometres of existing roads in areas of high mineral potential and active mining in Yukon, it is so much more than physical infrastructure.
- It's also investing in Yukon's most precious resource of all - its people.
- Our government has committed to working with Yukon First Nations to build meaningful, collaborative

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relationships that will support the success of the program.

- This means that we have committed to entering into a Project Agreement with each Yukon First Nation in whose Traditional Territory a project resides.
- Project Agreements not only help to address concerns related to development of an area, but they also lay out how the affected First Nation and the Government of Yukon will work together throughout the life of the project.
- This can include developing training, employment and business opportunities for each of the affected First Nations.
- So far, we have six Project Agreements with Yukon First Nations for seven components under the Program.
- As a result, the Yukon Resource Gateway Program now has a number of infrastructure projects that are going through various stages of implementation, planning, design, assessment and construction.
- Just last fall, we began work on the first project under the Program, the Carmacks Bypass project, which will see construction of a new road and bridge from south of Carmacks to the existing Freegold Road north of town.

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- The new road and bridge, which spans across the Nordenskiöld River, will allow industrial trucks to bypass the community of Carmacks, creating an enhanced and safer flow of traffic for residents.
- It's clear even from the Carmacks Bypass project, that the projects under the Yukon Resource Gateway Program will not only pave the way to build and establish meaningful relationships with First Nations, it will also generate a number of economic opportunities for Yukoners.

Dempster Fibre Line

- While the Yukon Resource Gateway Program may be one of our largest construction programs, the Dempster Fibre Line is no small feat either.
- This important infrastructure project will serve the Yukon and the North for generations to come which is why it is one of the mandate letter items,
- Four pillars continue to guide this project: respectful and meaningful relationships with our partners, environmental stewardship, localization of economic opportunities and strategic infrastructure that is resilient and sustainable.
- After two and a half years of planning and engagement work with Yukon First Nations and Indigenous partners, both in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to report

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progress on construction phase of the Dempster Fibre Line.

- As you know, this project involves the installation of an 800-kilometre fibre optic line along the Klondike and Dempster Highways, connecting Dawson City, Yukon, and Inuvik, Northwest Territories.
- The new line will connect to the existing Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link in Inuvik and will provide a backup line in the event of a service disruption.
- Construction of the fibre line began in July 2021 and is scheduled to be completed in 2024.
- In the 2022 construction season, fieldwork will start up again in late spring with wildlife and environmental monitoring activities – such as the identification of wolf dens and invasive species, as well as observation of nesting birds.
- This season, the project will have more First Nation businesses involved, employ more people and increase the stock of equipment on site.
- This will allow the contractor team to accelerate the speed of conduit installation.
- If you are driving the Dempster this spring, make sure to give a wave to the crews out working.

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- Last year I had a chance to take a trip up there myself and see some of the work in action.
- I think it goes without saying that we look forward to continuing work on this important piece of infrastructure that will ensure northern communities have access to digital services that meet their needs.

Grader Station Relocation

- A mandate letter item that's a little closer to my home in Whitehorse is the relocation of the Marwell grader station.
- We have begun the process of relocating the grader station.
- In 2021, Highways and Public Works completed initial planning for a replacement grader station that will now be considered for inclusion in the Five-Year Capital Plan.
- The current buildings at the station are approximately 80 years old and have high-energy use and maintenance costs due to their age and condition.
- In addition, it is a challenge to meet the needs of the department with the current grader station.

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- To meet the current capacity demands it requires replacement and relocation to a new site.
- The grader station also sits on riverfront land that may be more suitable for other types of development or usage.
- As per the Kwanlin Dün First Nation Final Agreement, we are working closely with their government on the future opportunities for this lot.
- In terms of a new site location, the department is considering several possible sites for the new grader station.
- A final decision on the location will be part of the next phase of planning.

Build new schools

- Building infrastructure that will uplift and better our communities is extremely important.
- One of the mandate letter commitments that I feel personally connected to is the building of new schools across the territory.
- As someone who has children who went to school in the Yukon, I know how important their learning environment is.

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- We are working on two new schools – one in Burwash Landing in the Kluane area, and another in Whistle Bend here in Whitehorse.
- We are proud to be honouring a request from the Kluane First Nation to build a new kindergarten to grade 12 school in Burwash Landing – one that will accommodate the needs of the residents in the area, and reflect the culture of their community.
- We have been working closely with the Kluane First Nation to plan the design and construction of the school.
- In January, we started the conceptual design process with the community.
- The conceptual design process is where we begin to explore ideas for the project and consider different designs.
- To get feedback on the potential designs, we hosted community engagement sessions and presented options.
- We were able to receive feedback from the community and adapt the designs to meet their needs.
- Although these are the initial stages, we are very excited to move this project forward.

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- Here in Whitehorse, work has begun on the new elementary school in Whistle Bend.
- This school will be the first new elementary school in Whitehorse in decades, and the first school in the Whistle Bend community.
- The contract for designing and building the school was awarded to Ketz Construction Corporation this past summer, and the design will include important elements that were identified by the community.
- Their crew started brush clearing in the fall, but substantial site excavation and building construction will start this spring, with construction completion expected during the 2023-24 school year.
- I am looking forward to see the future generation of Yukoners thrive in their new schools.

Working remotely and in the communities

- My next mandate letter item is about the importance of flexibility in our work environment.
- Although the majority of Yukon's population lives in Whitehorse, we have a large territory with numerous communities.

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- Many Yukoners value living in our communities and we want to support them by providing them better digital infrastructure to work remotely.
- Within the Government of Yukon, we have been providing employees the ability to work remotely with new productivity tools like Microsoft Teams and technology like VDI.
- These tools and technology allow government employees to securely access their desktop and connect with other employees when working remotely.
- Which brings me to one of the most challenging parts of increasing peoples abilities to work from the communities: reliable internet connection.
- One of the ways we are improving the reliability of our internet connection is the Dempster Fibre project.
- As I mentioned earlier, this project will provide communities along the route, as well as some communities dependent on satellite link, with a backup line in the event of a service disruption.
- Today our more remote communities throughout our territory do not always have reliable internet.
- As such, we are in support of NorthwTel's efforts to improve internet connectivity for the Yukon's communities through its 'Every Community' project.

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- This project aligns with our goals of providing Yukoners with the technology they need for a flexible work arrangement throughout the entire territory.
- When the project is complete, it will increase broadband speeds for Yukoners.
- Yukoners living in communities will see improved speeds and pay the same rates as people who live in Whitehorse.
- For more remote areas that are not part of this project, new satellite options such as Starlink and OneWeb should be available in the future.
- While there is still work to do, we have taken steps forward in supporting Yukoners to work in our communities.

Information technology strategy for YG

- As we have seen our world become increasingly digital, we are working hard to improve online services for Yukoners.
- One of my final mandate items is to create an Information Technology Strategy for the Government of Yukon.
- The strategy is currently being worked on by Highways and Public Works.

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- It is focused on creating digital tools to move government forward, ensuring that information is secured and protected, and that we have the flexibility and resiliency to meet the needs of a more digital government.
- The strategy will provide a roadmap that will ensure the digital services Yukoners use are modern, secure and aligned to provide a one-government approach to meeting citizen needs.
- It will also help guide investments in the government's digital infrastructure and establish standards, goals, and measures for technology development in the Government of Yukon.
- We expect the strategy to be released this year.
- You will be able to find a copy on Yukon.ca when it is released.

Closing

- As I mentioned earlier, the mandate letters lay out our strategic direction and holds us accountable to specific items for each department.
- It provides the roadmap for where we are going.
- Each department has the opportunity to create and influence the ways in which we arrive at our end goal and I know the Department of Highways and

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Public Works is putting an immense amount of effort into ensuring these mandate items are progressing quickly as they will benefit all Yukoners.

- I know that it has been less than a year, but when I read all the things we have accomplished or are working on, I am immensely proud of the progress that has been made so far, and I will continue to share updates on this extraordinary journey as it proceeds.
- Thank you.

CONFIDENTIAL**Narrative****Spring 2022****Net Debt and Infrastructure Investment**Highways and Public Works

Strategic Investments

- I am extremely proud of the budget we have introduced and our track record in making needed investments in the territory.
- We are investing in the future of the Yukon. Our capital spending is focused on building needed infrastructure like roads, bridges, schools and health facilities that are essential for growing our economy and continuing to provide vital public services.
- Equally important is ensuring that our existing assets are maintained and do not fall into disrepair.
- Our government uses asset-management principles to prioritize infrastructure maintenance and capital investment every year. This helps to ensure that the infrastructure that Yukoners rely on is there for the long-term.
- Yukoners rely on this infrastructure every day and we are committed to maintaining it to a safe standard for today and tomorrow.
- Our government is also very aware of the importance of responsible fiscal management for the territory.
- On this note, I am pleased to be able to report that approximately 40% of this year's capital spending is fully recoverable from the federal government.

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- This means that our government is augmenting the impact of Yukon dollars by making best use of available federal funds.
- For example, if you were renovating a house, it might make sense to also upgrade the insulation to reduce the future heating costs for your home - particularly if you could get a generous rebate for it.
- We're doing the same thing right now. We are taking advantage of areas where the federal government will offset the costs of much needed investments.
- These federal funds provide assistance in funding capital projects, and also work to minimize the fiscal impact of the capital program.
- These opportunities may not exist in the future so it is prudent for us to make strategic investments now while that federal money is on the table.
- Our government will continue to make responsible investments in our infrastructure to support a growing territory and economy.

Net Debt

- We've heard concerns in the past about the increase of the Yukon's net debt and increased borrowing - I want to address that.
- To be clear, net debt does not represent how much money government has borrowed.

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- Net debt is the difference between the total of the Government's financial assets minus its financial liabilities.
- These liabilities include things like pensions, severances and environmental liabilities. These liabilities are extremely unlikely to materialize all at once.
- While capital spending does contribute to the territory's overall net debt - I want to emphasize again that their impact is offset by those federal recoveries.
- I also want to note that comparative budget summaries - on a consolidated basis - across Federal, Provincial, and Territorial governments show that the Government of Yukon's net debt is one of the lowest in the nation.

The 5-year Capital Plan

- We are excited that the capital plan is growing because this means we are planning for needed investments across the territory.
- Equally exciting though is that over the last five years the amount that we have been able to recover from the federal government has grown more than net capital spending.
- Indeed, our government has been able to leverage a bigger percentage of federal funding to support

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more of our capital plan than it could five years ago.

- To provide some context – five years ago we were only able to recover 19% of the capital budget. In the capital budget introduced this year, we expect to recover 40%.
- Just like if you were making investments in your home and were able to take advantage of rebates it would make sense to spend more if you could get a larger percentage reimbursed.
- I want to be crystal clear however that this is needed spending.
- These projects need to happen to ensure the needs of Yukoners are met. It was just a question of when to pay for them.
- We are being strategic in our timing of investments to take advantage of the fiscal circumstances that exist today.

CONFIDENTIAL**Narrative****Spring 2022****Nisutlin Bay Bridge**Highways and Public Works

Background

- As many of you know, the Nisutlin Bay Bridge is a critical link along the Alaska Highway and an important landmark for Teslin.
- In spring 2019, the Yukon government and the Teslin Tlingit Council signed a historic project charter to replace the Nisutlin Bay Bridge.
- Through the agreement, we have been working together to plan for a reliable structure – one that supports active transportation by including shoulders and a walkway so pedestrians and cyclists can safely use the bridge, LED lighting along the walkway, and a trail that will provide safe, all-season access underneath the bridge.

Tender

- Throughout the procurement process for the Nisutlin Bay Bridge, we have been working closely with the Teslin Tlingit Council.
- Community engagement has been a key component to the success of this project so far.
- In an effort to ensure all potential contractors truly understood what it was like to live and work in Teslin, we first conducted a Request for Qualifications, or an RFQ process.

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- An RFQ is used to help compose a list of those who would pre-qualify for the project.
- The list is based on whether the potential contractors have the knowledge, experience and skills to conduct a project this size.
- We were fortunate to have selected two qualified contractors, who over the past several months, have come out and met the community, learned from both the Mayor and Chief, and discussed potential local opportunities with residents.
- On February 3, 2022, the tender for the Nisutlin Bay Bridge project closed.
- We are currently in the process of evaluating both of the submitted proposals.
- Prices have come in higher than anticipated due to current global circumstances and the high premium on steel and other materials.
- The higher prices are also linked to factors related to the recent flooding events in BC's Fraser Valley region which led to increased opportunities for contractors to repair damaged transportation infrastructure.
- It's also related to increased transportation infrastructure spending in Canada and USA.

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- For all the reasons I mentioned previously, awarding this contract is a high priority for us.
- We also need to do our due diligence to evaluate whether we are making the right decision on behalf of Yukon taxpayers before we proceed with the award.
- To allow us this time, we asked both contractors to hold their current bids beyond the set timelines.
- Unfortunately, they are unable to accommodate this request due to the increased uncertainty of material pricing.
- We know that this project will provide a significant positive economic outcome for the territory, local businesses and the community of Teslin.
- Therefore, we are exploring options to secure the additional funding needed to award this contract.
- As well, we are continuing to work with the Teslin Tlingit Council to ensure that the environmental assessment and other authorizations are in place for this project.
- All of these factors need to be considered before we can make a final decision on the contract award.

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Intro

- Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time.
- Since 1948, temperatures in the Yukon have increased by 2.3 degrees Celsius.
- This is close to three times the rate at which global temperatures are rising.
- Three times.
- Over the same period, rain and snowfall has increased by six per cent on average in the Yukon.
- The combination of warming temperatures and higher levels of precipitation have contributed to extreme weather events over the past decade.
- In the last year, we've experienced this first hand.
- While avalanches are a normal reality living in the mountains, last winter we saw avalanches and winter storms with more frequency and intensity.
- In a typical year, there are on average 10 avalanches that cause road closures.
- In 2021 we experienced 40 closures due to avalanche-related activity.

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- Clearing the roads was the first challenge, but once the snow melted, we had to deal with major flooding.
- Last summer, we experienced the largest flood mitigation effort in the Yukon's history with many properties, critical infrastructure and wildlife put at risk.
- We also saw an intense wildfire season, which meant we were responding to two climate-related emergencies at the same time.
- We had flooding in one area and fires just a few hundred kilometers in another direction.
- The community response by workers and volunteers to handle these challenges was incredible and we're so grateful to everyone who contributed during that time.
- There can be no doubt that climate change is affecting the Yukon in many ways, and that we not only have to adapt to this new reality, but we also need to be a part of the solution.
- Our Clean Future, is the Government of Yukon's answer to the climate emergency.

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- It sets out our collective vision, goals and values along with our strategic objectives over the next ten years to address our changing climate.
- Developed by engaging with First Nations, transboundary Indigenous groups and municipalities, the public as well as climate scientists, this was, and continues to be, a collaborative approach to addressing the climate crisis.
- Through these conversations, we were able to better determine the climate impacts Yukoners are facing and where the Yukon government should focus its attention.
- As a result, Our Clean Future prioritizes four key areas:
 - reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
 - ensuring Yukoners have access to reliable, affordable and renewable energy;
 - adapting to the impacts of climate change; and
 - building a greener economy.
- While it is a government-wide initiative, the Department of Highways and Public Works is taking the lead on 23 climate actions.

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- Each of these climate actions is important, but rather than listing each one, I want to focus on some of the larger initiatives that are underway.

Buildings

- The first thing I would like to talk about is the actions we are taking to reduce the emissions of Government of Yukon buildings.
- We have set a goal of reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent by 2030.
- While this is a big goal, I know it is one we can achieve when sustainable practices are prioritized in all areas of our work.
- To that end, Highways and Public Works has created the Green Infrastructure Program.
- This program is a multi-year capital program dedicated to implementing building retrofits, renewable energy systems and sustainability projects.
- Building retrofits are ways we can upgrade our buildings to decrease their greenhouse gas emissions.
- Before we begin the retrofitting process, we conduct assessments on our existing infrastructure.

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- In 2021 the department completed certified energy audits on 51 high-emission Government of Yukon buildings in Whitehorse.
- The overall purpose of these audits was to assess the current state of our buildings and determine what retrofit work is needed to make them more energy efficient.
- Based on the assessments that were done, I am happy to report we now have 38 energy retrofit projects underway in Government of Yukon buildings across 11 communities.
- While all of these retrofit projects are important, there are two examples I would like to highlight:
 - the Yukon University roof project;
 - and the replacement of the Yukon Justice Center skylight.
- These projects may sound straightforward, but they will do a lot to improve the energy efficiency of both buildings.
- The Yukon University roof project is planned to start this year.
- By improving the thermal efficiency of the roof, we estimate the project will reduce the building's greenhouse gas emissions by about seven per cent.

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- The project will also improve the life of the building and reduce maintenance costs.
- Similarly, the replacement of the skylight at the Yukon Justice Center will improve insulation and will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by more than four per cent each year.
- Both of these projects will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by about 130 tonnes per year.
- To give you an idea of the impact of this reduction, it's roughly equivalent to 600 round trips from Whitehorse to Dawson City by car.
- We are also making our buildings more efficient by investing in heating systems that capture and recover heat.
- One great example of this is the secondary school in Watson Lake, which is now connected to a waste heat recovery system.
- By switching to a waste heat recovery system, we reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent at the school and saved over \$45,000 in heating costs last year.
- While waste heat recovery systems and retrofits are definitely a major part of the solution, considering that more than 75 per cent of our heat

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generation in our territory comes from fossil fuels, we need to explore alternative heat sources.

- Which brings me to biomass.
- Biomass is an alternative way to heat buildings through the use of wood.
- Using wood will reduce our need for traditional non-renewable heating fuels like oil and propane that contribute to our emissions.
- The Government of Yukon currently heats three buildings by using our biomass facilities:
 - the Whitehorse Correctional Centre;
 - the Dawson City Water Treatment Plant;
 - and the Dawson City Waste Water Treatment Plant.
- We are also working on expanding the Whitehorse Correctional Centre's biomass heating system to include the Young Offenders Facility and Takhini Haven.
- This expansion is expected to reduce the buildings' total greenhouse gas emissions by 320 tonnes.

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- Finally, we awarded the tender for the installation of a biomass heating system at Elijah Smith Elementary School here in Whitehorse.
- The biomass system will offset the school's propane use, and will reduce emissions by an estimated 130 tonnes each year.
- Biomass is one of the many ways we are reducing emissions, and I look forward to more biomass projects being announced in the years to come.
- But we have more good news.
- I am excited to say that the department is planning to install renewable electricity generation systems in five off-grid government buildings by 2025.
- This will further reduce our reliance on diesel-generated electricity.
- Highways and Public Works has now submitted four of these projects to YESAB and these assessments are near completion.
- The climate crisis demands action and we are moving quickly to do our part.
- It is exciting to see these projects move forward, but this is just the beginning of what we will do.

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- Right now, there are two large feasibility studies underway that are evaluating biomass, solar, geothermal and other renewable energy options at over 50 sites across the territory.
- These feasibility studies will inform future renewable energy initiatives over the next several years and I am confident we will continue to do everything we can to make these important projects happen.

TransportationElectric Vehicles and Active Transportation

- While significant parts of the Yukon's emissions come from our buildings, the biggest source of the Yukon's emissions is actually from the transportation sector.
- About 54 per cent of the Yukon's total emissions come from road transportation.
- This is why we are prioritizing reducing emissions from government vehicles.
- Our original goal was to have 50 per cent of our newly purchased fleet passenger cars to be zero-emission, but I am proud to announce that for the next fiscal year we have surpassed that and are aiming for 100 per cent of our newly purchased light-duty cars to be zero-emission.

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- Barring any supply chain disruptions we are also expecting 12 new SUV hybrid electric vehicles by April of this year.
- To support the use of electric vehicles, the Government of Yukon has also committed to making all communities accessible by road reachable by electric vehicle in the next few years.
- To date, the Yukon government has installed 12 Level 3 fast charging stations available for public use.
- Making sure our vehicles are more efficient and not producing emissions is an important goal however, we also want to strive for fewer vehicles on the road and smarter travel decisions overall.
- The global pandemic has taught us that we can be much more efficient in how and when we travel.
- To that end, we are working on a system to coordinate carpooling for Government of Yukon staff travelling by vehicle to help reduce congestion and air pollution.
- Lastly, the government is committed to making our roads more accessible for active transportation.

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- We want Yukoners to have the option to safely walk, bike or even kicksled to their destination whenever possible.
- A great example of this is the new multi-use trail that we installed during our recent Alaska Highway upgrades.
- This trail connects Hillcrest to Range Road and into downtown.
- We are also planning to build another multi-use trail as part of the new upgrades on the Alaska Highway happening this summer.
- Reducing emissions from the transportation sector and from our buildings is a critical element of Our Clean Future.
- However, good climate leadership is not just about reducing our emissions, it's also about making sure we plan for climate changes that are and will continue to impact our infrastructure.

Roads

- Across the Yukon, our roads are experiencing extensive damage due to permafrost deterioration.
- When permafrost goes through freeze and thaw cycles it creates cracks and bumps along the road.

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- As we continue to experience rising temperatures in the north there is a high likelihood that permafrost thaw will continue to affect our highways for years to come.
- Because of this, we are investing in innovative ways to adapt and to prevent the thawing of permafrost.
- A good example of this type of innovation is seen through our use of thermosyphons.
- Thermosyphons act as refrigeration devices that transfer heat using gravity and cold air.
- The pilot thermosyphon installation in Beaver Creek is the first in Canada of this scale with 58 thermosyphons in a half-kilometre stretch.
- The use of thermosyphons have the potential to reduce our road maintenance costs and prolong the service life of highway sections experiencing permafrost degradation.
- It is clear that we are already experiencing the effects of climate change on our roads.
- This is why our government has made it an *Our Clean Future* action item to conduct a climate change vulnerability study on the road transportation network by 2023.

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- The findings of this study will inform new road standards and specifications and contribute to developing a system-wide approach to infrastructure resilience.
- It is important to note that we are also developing and implementing a plan to conduct monitoring of government assets that are located on permafrost.
- Monitoring of our infrastructure is critical for determining which areas of our territory are being impacted by permafrost thaw.
- This will allow us to prioritize, make a plan, and to mitigate actions against permafrost damage.

Climate Risk Assessments

- Planning for climate change impacts to our infrastructure is so important for the future of the Yukon, this is why we are conducting climate risk assessments of all major transportation infrastructure and major building projects above \$10 million.
- Climate risk assessments determine the infrastructure's vulnerability to climate change, and use that information to incorporate adaptation measures into the design to mitigate climate change impacts.

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- These assessments may focus on determining risk for permafrost, fire, flood and other environmental factors.
- In our analysis we consider questions like:
 - what can happen?
 - how likely is it to occur?
 - how can we better prepare our infrastructure for the consequences of climate change?
- Once this analysis is complete, we incorporate adaptations into our design to accommodate expected climate impacts.
- One project I want to point to that is currently undergoing a climate risk assessment is the second phase of the North Klondike Highway Upgrade.
- It considers potential long-term climate change-related impacts to the entire project.
- Aside from the climate impacts, this assessment is also taking into consideration greenhouse gas emissions from transportation.
- This assessment will be finished by the end of this year and we will use the information from it to help us build a more resilient, safe highway for years to come.

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Research and Partnerships

- While the government is taking meaningful steps in addressing the climate change crisis, we also believe that collaboration is crucial in the fight against climate change.
- By working closely together with other organizations, governments, and educational institutions, we can build on our knowledge and continue having new and innovative approaches.
- For example, drawing upon the expertise of Yukon University climate scientists, we are setting up a research project to develop a guideline document for climate change adaptation practices.
- This means we take into account flood, wildland fire, permafrost and other natural phenomena resulting from climate change into our infrastructure design.
- We are also collaborating with the Yukon Conservation Society and Yukon University to pilot a commercial-scale electric thermal storage system.
- This system will store excess electricity during off-peak hours as heat, which will help us use less fossil fuel when heating a building.
- The Yukon also participates in the Northern Transportation Adaptation Initiative Program.

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- This national program is led by Transport Canada and links the territories with academic researchers and consulting engineers in southern Canada.
- The program helps our engineers:
 - gain new knowledge about how climate change is affecting transportation systems in the north;
 - develop tools and practices to respond to these effects;
 - help manage transportation systems.

Conclusion

- There is so much resilience in who we are as Yukoners and as Canadians.
- From our plow operators who will clear more snow from avalanches, to the wildland firefighters who will encounter more intense days, to the dedicated volunteers who worked tirelessly to fill sandbags – what is happening in the Yukon now is perhaps a snapshot of what is to come across Canada.
- The reality of climate change can be daunting and we cannot conquer the crisis alone.
- It will take a coordinated approach from all levels of government, the private sector, First Nations

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governments, community organizations, non-profits and citizens to meet our goals.

- The challenges we face are real and urgent but, I believe that through hard work, collaboration, difficult decisions and aggressive targets - we can make a difference.
- Thank you.

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Introduction

- Government procurement is a significant contributor to our economy.
- During the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the Yukon government spent over \$446-million on government contracts.
- This is something that affects the daily lives and livelihoods of Yukoners and we take that seriously.
- While we ensure value for taxpayers' money, we also know that government spending has impacts beyond the price paid for a good or service.
- Our spending can provide stability for local companies, grow new businesses and help make the Yukon's economy more fair and equitable.
- One of the commitments of this government is to make our public procurement system more accessible by modernizing our practices and exploring innovative methods for evaluating bids and awarding contracts.
- Over the past year, we have seen major improvements such as completing the digitization of our tendering system and implementing the new Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy.

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- Our efforts in bettering our procurement practices have not gone unnoticed.
- Last year, our government was a recipient of the Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award – an award from the National Procurement Institute in the United States that recognizes commitment to procurement excellence.
- The award is given to organizations that can demonstrate excellence in areas like ethics, continuous improvement, organizational structure, education and training.
- The Government of Yukon was also on the Indigenomics Institute's Ten to Watch List for the launch of the Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy.
- The annual list recognizes leadership in furthering reconciliation, increasing inclusion and designing business relationships to support the growth of the Indigenous economy.
- It's great to see this kind of recognition and I applaud the procurement professionals across government for their work.
- Although we have taken major leaps forward, procurement is not something that stands still.

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- The new policies and programs that we implement will have impacts on how people do business in the Yukon.
- This will require us to monitor the new methods we have put in place and adapt as needed.
- This will also push us to be in constant pursuit of ways we can improve, innovate and make government procurement work for all Yukoners.

Yukon First Nation Procurement Policy

- A great example of doing something differently and innovating to support Yukoners is the Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy.
- This policy positions us as a trailblazer in indigenous procurement.
- When we wrote the policy, we drew on other jurisdictions that have taken similar approaches, but the way this policy was drafted and how we have adapted it to the Yukon context makes it unique.
- This policy was drafted in complete collaboration with Yukon First Nation governments, beginning with a blank page.
- Once the policy was drafted, we worked closely with both our Yukon First Nation partners and Industry to phase in implementation.

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- Now that the policy is fully implemented, there is a suite of tools available to increase Yukon First Nations participation in our economy.
- For example, our annual capital planning meetings. Through this policy, we have agreed to meet annually with Yukon First Nations governments to discuss spending plans for capital projects planned within their Traditional Territory.
- By sharing our plans for capital spending, we allow Yukon First Nations governments and communities to plan and prepare for upcoming projects.
- While all of the tools are essential for achieving the policy goals, one that I would like to focus on the Yukon First Nations Business Registry.
- The Yukon First Nations Business Registry hosts a list of Yukon First Nations businesses that have undergone a verification process.
- The verification process requires Yukon First Nations business to submit documents to prove they meet the definition in the policy.
- Examples of these documents include:
 - Registered name & address;
 - Name of Yukon First Nation with direct or beneficial ownership;
 - Names of all directors and officers;

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- o Name and position of primary contact for the corporation;
 - o Certificate of Status or Entity Profile from Yukon Government's Corporate Registry;
 - o Articles of incorporation;
 - o Unanimous Shareholder Agreement or Bylaws;
 - o Shareholders register; and
 - o Business License.
- In addition, for each shareholder that is a Yukon First Nations person, they must provide their:
 - o Yukon First Nation Citizen Cards;
 - o Indian Status Card; or,
 - o Letter from an Authorized Official of the YFN government.
- They must also provide a consent form for the collection, use and disclosure of personal information.
- If people would like to know more process, they can visit the registry online.
- The Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce acts as the Registrar of the registry.
- The Chamber both assists Yukon First Nations businesses with the application process and performs the business verifications.

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- As of March 23 2022, there were 79 Yukon First Nations businesses on the registry.
- The registry plays an essential role in administering the policy tools.
- One of our commitments in the policy is to check the Yukon First Nations Business Registry before issuing any invitational tenders.
- If there are one or more Yukon First Nations businesses that can supply the good or service, we will invite them to the tender.
- It is also the foundation of bid value reductions.
- For those who may not be familiar with this term, bid value reductions are a way to rank bids to reflect the level of Yukon First Nations participation.
- This means that the greater the participation of Yukon First Nations businesses and Yukon First Nation people, the greater the reduction we'll apply to a bidder's price during the tender evaluation process.
- Businesses must be listed on the Yukon First Nations Business Registry in order for Yukon government to apply bid value reductions on their bids.

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- This ensures that the business has undergone the verification process and that the benefits of bid value reduction are going to Yukon First Nations people.
- Recently, we saw an example of this in action when we tendered the Macaulay Lodge demolition.
- A Yukon First Nations business who is on the registry used bid value reductions in their bid and won the tender.
- Without bid value reductions, this company would not have been the successful bidder.
- It's great to see the policy tools benefiting Yukon First Nations businesses.
- In this case, a Yukon First Nations business won the contract; however, there are also opportunities for all Yukon businesses to benefit from bid value reductions.
- For example, Yukon businesses can find a verified Yukon First Nations business to work with by using the registry.
- If a Yukon business subcontracts a Yukon First Nations business or hires Yukon First Nations labour, they can also apply bid value reductions to their bids.

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- While the registry is extremely useful for Yukon government and local businesses, it also acts as a marketing tool to outside businesses looking to work in the Yukon.
- Recently, Highways and Public Works, Energy Mines and Resources and the Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce presented about the Yukon First Nations Business Registry at the Roundup conference.
- This conference brings together the mineral exploration community to discuss new and innovative trends in the mining industry.
- The presentation focused on how mining companies can use the registry to hire Yukon First Nations businesses.
- The presentation was well attended and reached over 140 industry professionals.
- As you can see, the registry truly sets the groundwork for many of the policy tools and objectives.
- Going forward, we will continue to see the registry grow and more businesses using it as a resource.
- This means that we will start to see the changes we are hoping for in our economy.

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- I think it is important to say that this policy is supposed to create change.
- The whole goal is to enhance the economic outcomes for Yukon First Nations people and businesses in our territory.
- We cannot achieve this if we do not change the status quo.
- This is truly in the interest of all Yukoners as there can be no meaningful economic growth in our territory without greater Yukon First Nations participation.
- While we expect changes to the market from the policy, we also want to ensure that it remains stable.
- This means carefully tracking how the market is responding to the policy.
- We are tracking this through the Monitor and Review Committee.
- This committee has Industry, Yukon First Nations and Yukon government representatives.
- They are responsible for analyzing data, monitoring outcomes and providing recommendations to the Government of Yukon for continuous improvement.

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- The committee meets at a minimum every month, and is working on their first annual report summarizing the work they have done to date.
- This is just the beginning and we have a long journey ahead of us, but this policy is paving a path forward.
- I am looking forward to seeing how this policy benefits all Yukoners.

Contract Management

- The Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy gives us the tools we need to increase Yukon First Nations participation in our economy.
- However, we need to make sure this is happening in practice through contract management.
- When a contractor bids on a tender, they make commitments about pricing and scope, but they can now include commitments like Yukon First Nation participation.
- Our government expects that contractors will fulfill all commitments they make in the tendering process during contract performance.
- If a contractor is successful, the project manager will meet with them to confirm that they can fulfill their commitments in their tender.

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- After the contract is awarded, the Yukon government's role during contract management is to ensure that all deliverables and commitments are being met, whether that be the schedule, the price or a Yukon First Nation commitment.
- If the contractor is not living up to their commitments, the project manager will engage informally with the contractor to solve the issue.
- If this is unsuccessful, there is a dispute resolution process within the contract.
- Good contract management ensures that we can be confident that all commitments including Yukon First Nations participation are being fulfilled.

Vendor Performance Review Program

- One way we are strengthening our contract management is through our Vendor Performance Review Program.
- The program will evaluate and score vendors on their performance from the start to the end of the contract.
- The goal of the program is to incentivize good performance from vendors, encourage Yukon government project managers and vendors to work together and provide feedback to vendors on how to improve their performance.

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- This will help the vendor know what is expected of them and how they are being evaluated.
- Vendors will be evaluated on up to seven key performance indicators for each contract.
- This will create an average performance score for that contract.
- I want to highlight that one of the indicators is Yukon First Nations participation.
- For example, if a vendor makes a commitment to hire a certain number of Yukon First Nation labourers and they do not, they will be evaluated accordingly and receive a lower score for that indicator.
- In contrast, if they do meet their commitments, they will receive a higher score, thus increasing their chances to secure a contract in the future.
- With any new program, it's important to make sure that everyone has time to adjust.
- We are phasing implementation over the next two years to ensure that project managers and vendors are familiar with the program before full implementation.
- Once the program is fully implemented, scores will be incorporated into the procurement evaluation process.

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- This will incentivize good performance from vendors and reward those who live up their commitments.
- Vendors will be able to view their scores and make bids through our new e-procurement platform, bids&tenders.

E-Procurement (online procurement)

- This brings me to bids&tenders.
- This change was something that was necessary for us to modernize our procurement system
- In 2020, we introduced eProcurement through our Yukon bids&tenders platform, which moved our procurement processes fully online.
- Before this system, vendors were required to print and deliver their bids in person – an inconvenience for many – especially during the pandemic.
- Others were frustrated that their bids were rejected for math errors, missing details or a missing signature.
- We responded to this by implementing a new eProcurement system that reduces red tape, flags compliance errors and makes the entire procurement process more streamlined.

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- In the last full year of using the old Tender Management System, nine and half percent of bids were rejected due to compliance issues. This fiscal year, due to the Yukon bids&tenders functionality, we have seen a drop in the non-compliance rate to four percent.
- This improvement means fewer bids are rejected in the tender process, which improves competition and value-for-money.
- Not only that, eProcurement will improve our ability to analyze spending across government.
- This will enable us to be smarter buyers, save money and focus our efforts to maximize economic benefits to Yukoners.

Regional Economic Development Exceptions

- Another way we are maximizing economic benefits to Yukoners is by using our regional economic development exceptions.
- The exceptions allow us to restrict procurement competitions exclusively to qualified Yukon businesses ten times per year in order to keep government dollars in the territory and support local businesses.

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- I am proud to say that since 2018, Yukon businesses have competed for and secured 45 Yukon-exclusive government contracts worth \$21.5 million.
- When selecting projects for the exceptions, we consider how the project will create economic opportunities in the Yukon and whether the project supports the territory's industries and suppliers.
- The procurement process for these projects is done by invitation only.
- This means that only select Yukon-based businesses that meet the criteria will be invited by the Government of Yukon to submit a bid or proposal.
- For example, in the 2020-2021 fiscal year, we used a regional economic development exception to tender a five-year Standing Offer Arrangement that supports local food manufacturers in the territory.
- This SOA makes it easier for the Government of Yukon to purchase local food at places like our Continuing Care Facilities or the Yukon Hospital Corporation.
- Whether it is the use of policies or exceptions, we are looking for the "sticky dollars" meaning the dollars that are going to stick around our territory and contribute to the economy.

Sustainable Procurement

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- So far, I have discussed the great progress we've made on procurement, but there's more work to do.
- For example, in *Our Clean Future*, we commit to exploring new and innovative procurement methods to support sustainability.
- To meet this objective under *Our Clean Future*, we are launching a sustainable procurement strategy that will focus on the environmental factors in the procurement process.
- The strategy will provide procurement authorities with different tools to support them in making sustainable choices.
- We based our strategy on the experiences of the Canadian Collaboration for Sustainable Procurement, which is a working group of municipalities and organizations across Canada.
- They provided us with ideas for new and innovative tools to help our procurement authorities make informed choices when purchasing goods and services.
- The Acquisition Services and Planning branch at Highways and Public Works is currently piloting this program to test out some of the tools in practice.
- The tools include:

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- o a questionnaire for suppliers to fill out that informs the government of their sustainability practices;
 - o a list of certified eco-labels for goods;
 - o a checklist for procurement authorities that will help them make more sustainable choices;
 - o evaluating the total cost of an item through its lifecycle by including expenses such as maintenance and disposal; and
 - o lastly, performing a risk and opportunity assessment, which will help procurement authorities identify any sustainability risks and ways to mitigate them.
- Once the pilot project is complete, we will be evaluating each of the tools and determining how to incorporate them into our overall procurement process.

Procurement Training/Conferences

- With all of these new programs and policies, it is important to have opportunities for Yukoners to learn, ask questions and ultimately benefit from these changes.

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- One way we do that is by providing free online training for anyone interested in learning more about a specific program.
- After we launched the Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy, we hosted four training sessions specific to bid value reduction.
- We also had three online training sessions for the Vendor Performance Review Program.
- These training sessions have been extremely successful with around 145 people attending the sessions.
- For those who cannot attend the sessions, the recordings are freely available online on the YGLearn platform.
- In addition to training, conferences are an excellent way to connect with the business community and share information about new procurement processes.
- Each year the Procurement Support Centre hosts an Industry Conference and the Reverse Trade Show.
- These events allow businesses, associations, and governments to gather, connect and learn about public procurement.

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- Over the last year and a half, we have had to adjust how we offer events during COVID.
- The Procurement Support Centre has been offering virtual options for these events.
- We offered a virtual Reverse Trade Show this November that focused on some of the new programs and policies in the Yukon such as the Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy and the Vendor Performance Review Program.
- We were hoping to have the Industry Conference in person this year, but COVID had other plans for us.
- Instead, we will be hosting a virtual Industry Conference that will take place from March 29 until March 31.
- This year the theme is Embracing Change and throughout the conference, the presenters will be sharing information about the new programs and policies that are shifting how we do business in the Yukon.
- To get more information on the Industry Conference you can visit Yukon.ca and check out the virtual conference platform.
- Please spread the word to anyone you think may be interested in learning more about doing business with the Yukon government.

CONFIDENTIAL**Narrative****Spring 2022****Procurement**

Highways and Public Works

Timing of Tendering and Forecasting

- While networking at a conference is important for building relationships between Industry and government, it is equally important for the business community to know and plan for projects happening during the limited construction season.
- One important way we do that is by issuing tenders as early as possible to help vendors prepare for upcoming work.
- This includes forecasting and tendering projects earlier so that businesses can take full advantage of Yukon's short, intense building season.
- It also includes staggering closing dates to make it easier for contractors to bid on a number of tenders.
- The Government gives businesses advance notice of our upcoming projects by posting our planned procurements to the Yukon bids&tenders website, and by sharing information through our Five-Year Capital Plan.
- By forecasting and tendering our projects early, we are listening to our industry stakeholders and laying a strong foundation for the construction season.

Closing

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- While the timing of tendering is important, it's one of many factors that contribute to a thriving public procurement system.
- We will continue to be fair, open and transparent about the procurement of goods, services and construction.
- We will strive for continuous improvement by making it easier for businesses to work with the Government of Yukon.
- Ultimately, success on the procurement front will come from communicating with each other, working together and continuing to innovate our processes through thoughtful and strategic planning.

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Introduction

- The Department of Highways and Public Works creates and maintains the infrastructure our children need to learn and grow.
- After all, the education of our children today is the foundation of our future.
- While you don't always see the work they do, the employees of Highways and Public Works are there making sure the school buildings and their systems are always up and running for our teachers and students.
- The spaces in which our children learn need to be safe, comfortable and functional and we make it a priority to ensure our schools deliver on this expectation.
- On top of that, we also ensure that they are welcoming and a true reflection of our communities.
- We do this because we know that the physical space of a classroom and a school is an important element in creating a positive learning environment.
- Currently, our department maintains 32 schools across the Yukon and we are currently in the process of constructing a new school and designing the replacement of another.

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- As we continue to see an increase in population here in the territory, we are also seeing an increased demand on our schools.
- Over the past few years, our government has been working on building new schools and upgrading existing ones to meet the needs of Yukon's students and the increase in demand.
- In doing so, we have been working with local communities and Yukon First Nations to identify where new schools and modular extensions are needed.
- Through all of it, we are doing it with the well-being of the Yukon's next generation at the forefront of our minds.

New school builds

- I'd like to start off by telling you a little bit about the new schools we are planning to build - one in Burwash Landing to replace the school on Destruction Bay, and another in Whistle Bend here in Whitehorse -- the first new elementary school to be built in the city in over 25 years.
- When planning to build a new school, we work with the Department of Education, local community members and Yukon First Nations to make sure the school meets the needs of the community.

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Burwash Landing School

- We are proud to be honouring a request from the Kluane First Nation to build a new kindergarten to grade 12 school right in the community of Burwash Landing - one that would accommodate the needs of the residents in the area, and reflect the culture of their community.
- Just recently, the Department of Education signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Kluane First Nation, which committed us to building a school and establishing an Oversight Committee.
- Working together with Kluane First Nation is a very exciting step forward in our path toward reconciliation - one that will benefit students and families and provide great economic opportunities for the community.
- We have been working closely together to plan the design and construction of the school.
- This year, we have \$1.3 million included in our budget to support the planning and design work for the school and we are very excited to get this project started.

Whistle Bend Elementary School

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- Here in Whitehorse, construction has started on the new elementary school in Whistle Bend.
- This school will be the first new elementary school in Whitehorse in decades.
- When you look around Whistle Bend, you can see that the community is growing.
- Construction of the neighbourhood continues and we know more and more individuals and families will choose to make this neighbourhood their home.
- This new school will serve students in the Whistle Bend community as well as surrounding areas, giving them the opportunity to enjoy a high-quality learning environment close to home.
- Currently, there is no centralized school for the neighbourhood and students are bussed and driven to the four corners of Whitehorse.
- By having a school in their neighbourhood, families and students will have the ability to choose greener forms of transportation such as biking or walking to school.
- This will reduce the school-related traffic congestion, lower commute times for students and reduce daily commuting emissions.

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- Although reducing the emissions of our commute is important, one of the most important benefits of a centralized school is the feeling of community connection.
- Families will be able to get to know their neighbours, children can make friends close by, which is all part of creating a thriving and self-sustaining neighbourhood.
- The design of the school itself will include important elements that were identified by the community.
- Last summer, the contract for building and designing the school was awarded to Ketza Construction Corporation.
- Their crew has already begun brush clearing and substantial site excavation.
- Building construction will start this spring, with completion expected during the 2023-24 school year.
- Prior to major work commencing, I was honoured to take part in a ceremonial land blessing that was held on site.
- Tlingit elder Phil Gatensby lead the traditional ceremony, which involved smudging and prayers at the construction site.

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- Ribbons were placed in the four corners of the site, representing the colours of the Medicine Wheel. The ribbons are placed for all of humanity in its diversity and is significant to many Indigenous peoples of North America.
- They sent out a blessing in the hope that the school will be a place of hope, safety, laughter, excitement, wisdom, understanding, open-mindedness and more.
- The land blessing put forth good intentions for the construction of the school and for future students and teachers.
- The new Whistle Bend elementary school will accommodate up to 425 students from Kindergarten to Grade 7.
- I look forward to seeing its completion and the great things to come because of it.

Paul Émilie Mercier Secondary School

- With this talk of new schools, we can't forget our most recent build - the Paul Émilie Mercier Secondary School Community Centre in Riverdale - otherwise known as CSSC Mercier.
- Construction of this new French First Language Secondary School Community Centre in Whitehorse,

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started in spring 2019 and was completed in September 2020.

- The new school features modernized, flexible learning spaces for French First Language secondary students, including a gymnasium and other spaces for learning and community use.
- The first day of classes was on November 13, 2020.

Upgrades: modular classrooms, parking lots

- Enrollment at our pre-existing schools across the Yukon continues to grow, with many nearing capacity.
- With such a large demand on our existing schools, we have seen a growing need for school expansion.
- Modular classrooms are an excellent way of increasing our capacity while still meeting the needs of our students and maintaining our capital budget.
- We have recently constructed modular classrooms at several schools, and installation is underway on a prefabricated modular classroom at Hidden Valley School.
- That classroom should be ready for occupancy this spring.

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- The demolition of modular classrooms at Robert Service School took place in last June, and new modular classrooms should be ready this summer.
- We've also just added two new modular classrooms at Selkirk Elementary School.
- These modular classrooms are made to last, but we are working on longer term solutions such as the new school in Whistle Bend.
- We also take great care in planning for the parking lot capacity for each school.
- Parking lot design needs to consider many things, but most importantly, it must consider the safety of our students.
- We just upgraded three school parking lots: Holy Family, Golden Horn and Christ the King and will soon be upgrading the parking lot at Hidden Valley Elementary School.
- In addition to repaving, we are improving the lighting in parking lots as well.
- At Johnson Elementary School in Watson Lake we replaced the outdoor lights with LED lights and added additional lighting to improve safety.

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- Upgrades are always focused on safety, but they can also be about improving the look, feel and design of a school.
- Earlier this year, we worked with local community in Dawson and the students of the Robert Service School to repaint the school.
- The students had the chance to choose to the colours of the school.
- The colours selected were vibrant orange, yellow and red inspired by a Ted Harrison painting.
- Besides the larger changes, we also do day-to-day maintenance that helps keep our students safe.
- Our regional offices across the territory complete regular maintenance.
- For example, they check the fire alarm systems, inspect the playgrounds and test the backup generators.
- The regional offices play a vital role, as they are the first to respond to maintenance issues and emergency maintenance requests.
- Maintenance and upgrades, no matter how small, help ensure the Yukon's students feel connected and safe at their schools.

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Biomass

- Yes, the folks at Highways and Public Works do a lot, but they are also leaders in innovation – creating new and more renewable design elements in the buildings our government constructs, and finding sustainable ways to improve our existing buildings.
- For example, I am excited to move forward with key actions for renewable energy, including at our schools.
- Transitioning heating systems from fossil fuel to biomass is a priority for our government, one that is a major component of *Our Clean Future* – a comprehensive strategy to reduce the carbon emissions of our government's operations by 45 per cent by 2030.
- We are working on installing a new biomass heating system at Elijah Smith Elementary School in Whitehorse and we are also working with Teslin Tlingit Council to provide biomass heat to the Khàtìnas.àxh {**Kaw keen ah sa**} Community School in Teslin.
- Biomass heating systems generate heat by burning wood chips or pellets.

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- The biomass system will offset the building's propane use, which will reduce emissions by an estimated 130 tonnes per year.
- Biomass is an important way for us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our buildings and create local jobs.
- We continue to reach out to industry to learn how we can best incorporate biomass systems in government buildings.

Safety campaigns

- We can't forget to talk about all of the education and awareness campaigns we run.
- Each year during back-to-school season, we run campaigns to promote traffic safety around schools.
- Our campaigns are not a one size fits all approach – we take the time to look at all angles of safety and focus on different people.
- Some years we focus on students and other years we focus on parents or the public.
- This year, we ran a campaign called "Slow down for me, stop for me"
- This campaign featured student's faces on school bus stop signs and school zone signs.

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- Reminding us all that our children are the reason we must slow down and stop.
- In previous years, our “Stop and Look” campaign focused on having students stop before crossing the street in a school zone.
- Other campaigns have included reminders to not pass school bus drivers when their stop signs are out, not parking in a crosswalk, and in general, slowing down while passing through a school zone.
- Through our different campaigns, we are encouraging everyone to do their part with school safety – not just when it’s back to school time, but all year round.
- There is nothing more important than the safety of our kids as they are coming and going to school.

Conclusion

- The maintenance of our current schools and the building of new ones is integral to the education system of the Yukon.

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- From maintaining playgrounds to planning for new schools, our department sets the foundation for the learning environment our kids get to experience.
- Our department takes the needs of our students very seriously and we do everything we can to make their places of learning comfortable, safe and warm.
- School buildings are an investment in the future of our territory and we are proud to have them a part of the great work we do.
- Thank you.

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Inflation impacts

- It is an exciting time in the Yukon with many major construction projects underway or in the planning stage.
- In the next few years, we'll see many major infrastructure projects like new schools and upgrades to our highways.
- Our economy continues to show signs of growth with low unemployment and strong GDP.
- While our economy continues to grow, we remain influenced by external factors happening here in Canada and around the world.
- Over the past couple of years, we've all seen increases to the cost of living across the board.
- We've also seen cost escalations on major infrastructure projects and changes in project timelines.
- There are many factors influencing the price and timelines of infrastructure projects.
- National inflation data is showing that we're in a new era of rising costs.
- Inflation has increased across the country at the fastest rate since the early 1990's.
- In addition, the global pandemic caused major supply chain impacts from factories being

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understaffed to production chains slowing down considerably.

- Not only are goods being produced in lower quantities, but demand is increasing as we continue to recover from the pandemic.
- Most recently, the war on Ukraine and sanctions on Russia have put further strain on commodities.
- For instance, fuel prices have climbed at extraordinary rates further exacerbating issues of inflation.
- These issues are not limited to a Yukon context, they are a multifaceted global phenomenon.

YFNPP and increasing prices

- Within our local economy, we are in the early days of implementing the Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy.
- Some may be wondering if this new policy is playing a role in higher bid prices and project timelines.
- I want to be clear that higher bids and changing timelines are not a result of the policy, but rather they reflect the complex global issues I have already mentioned.
- The policy is helping us rebuild our economy post-pandemic by keeping dollars in our territory.

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- For example, the Whistle Bend School was awarded to a local company.
- It was a value driven procurement, which means we look beyond the price and consider the value that this project can bring to the Yukon.
- In this case, the winning bidder earned points for their schedule, training plans, subcontractors, northern experience and First Nation participation.
- Ultimately, the Whistle Bend School was awarded to a local company who is supporting Yukon First Nation participation in our economy - I truly see this as a win.
- There are other examples of this as well, such as the Macaulay Lodge Demolition.
- The contract was awarded to a local Yukon First Nation business who used tools within the policy.
- Through the policy, there are many opportunities to keep money in our territory by working together.
- It was designed in a way to encourage Yukon First Nations businesses and non-Yukon First Nations businesses to partner with each other for their mutual benefit.
- Together we can grow our businesses, create jobs and generate new and better economic opportunities.

Narrative

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- While we continue to navigate changes in prices or timelines, I would encourage everyone to see the policy as a strength of ours.
- We have the ability to not only work together to boost our local economy but do so in a way that advances reconciliation.
- With the Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy, Yukon is growing together.