



Community Government Underfunding

Question: Will you promise to increase funding for community governments during your term if you are in Cabinet, or to advocate for an increase if you are a regular member?

Yes – For 12 years, I was the MLA for Yellowknife Centre, and through that period, I was and will continue to be a champion for the City, that actively supported the closing of the financial gap.

That said, I have seen the City of Yellowknife carry an unfair financial burden of responsibility, as the GNWT offloads its responsibilities down to the Yellowknife tax base, again which is unfair. As the largest tax base in the NWT it can do it's fair share by being a good partner, but the GNWT cannot ignore the financial challenges our city faces over the longer term.

Social Support

Question: 1. Currently, the GNWT does not provide any funding for the Yellowknife Street Outreach program. Through your leadership, would you work with the City to co-fund the program, so that it can be expanded and improved?

YES – However this really should be a fully funded GNWT program.

The City of Yellowknife is doing an incredible community service, as an important community partner, however this responsibility really must be funded directly by the Department of Health, and is either run (supported) by the City of YK or an NGO. I agree that this program can be expanded upon, to meet the needs of the clients, such as a counseling program and tied to wrap-around services be it the Tree of Peace, the Women's Centre, a Housing program or even the Salvation Army to name a few.



2. The GNWT’s recent “A Way Home – A comprehensive strategy to address homelessness in the NWT” has many great initiatives, including • setting up Regional Partnership tables; • establishing long-term funding options to improve operator sustainability starting with zero-based budgeting to help identify and address funding gaps and accurately determine the cost of addressing homelessness through shelter operation in the NWT; and • increasing GNWT funding for transitional housing programs to improve community-driven solutions to address local needs; and more.

Will you ensure these actions are implemented and funded?

YES – the GNWT’s Homelessness Strategy needs to be fully implemented with public measurements and transparency. This includes the full resources to run this initiative. Homeless is complex, but running a half-supported program in the end, hardly put a dent into the problem. We need product support that will lend to productive solutions & results.

I’m confident that a fully supported program will create healthier people and save the health system money, and in the end, we will see better people, less crime & violence and safer & happier families.

3. In Eugene, Oregon, there is a program called CAHOOTS – which is a two person team consisting of a medic and a crisis worker who have training and experience in the mental health field. They do patrols and respond to calls through 911, and have the tools for a non-violent resolution of crisis situations. There are also many similar models across Canada where a police officer and a social worker respond to calls – including the Yukon’s program called “Car 867”

To implement a program like this in Yellowknife, the GNWT must participate as it is responsible for public health, operates 911, and holds the RCMP contract. If elected, would you fund and implement a program like CAHOOTS or Car 867?



YES – I fully agree that a blended response of support must be the new normal. By having supportive professionals & partners, will help any outreach program respond correctly and more balanced to the specific need, and will help keep safe our front-line responders in a manner that is more effective and humane.

However ultimately, this needs to be a fully funded program, as I noted earlier, and the GNWT needs to be the main partner of financial support of any initiative.

4. What actions and programs established so far do you think are working, and what needs to be done differently to address these issues of homelessness, addictions and mental health? How would you prioritize or sequence the actions you feel are needed, and how would you balance these with other GNWT priorities?

As the Executive Director of the John Howard Society, I see a lot of successful work around the community, but what they need is, a supportive partner that meets their needs with respect to the work they do already.

Programs like the Yellowknife Women’s Society, The Tree of Peace, Salvation Army, Native Women’s Society and even the YWCA or Arctic Indigenous Wellness to name a few have been critical partners in addressing addictions and homeless needs in this community, and they manage this support programs with incredible people.

However the challenges they face, and I see this in my work is, they are left half-funded to do the work when it comes to supporting mental health challenges (counseling), addictions and supportive services, housing and other crisis management. The current funding model that these agencies work under is very difficult.

That said, Yellowknife needs an addictions treatment center and an After Care Program, which I’ve been calling for, for years. Because if you’re going to support someone towards a treatment journey, they can’t be left unsupported after they return or they will slip right back into their old challenges & habits.



At the same time, the GNWT cannot go it alone. It has many potential programs partners it could work with, that can also access real and meaningful opportunities. Between NGO's and Indigenous governments, a pathway for an opportunity could be things such as on-the-land programs, and we can never overlook the important role & relationship that elders play in the healing journey.

Lastly, our Aurora College and future Polytech must-have programming that looks towards the future, that provides northerners an opportunity to take a prominent role in becoming home-grown healers. Albeit programming is best designed by those who have that skill, the leadership I would take is, encouraging them to look in this direction of supported services.

Economic Development

Question: 1. What is your overall vision for economic development in the NWT?

My vision is, to grow a diversified & sustainable northern economy, that creates opportunities for people, families, and businesses. That said, it needs resilience, that develops in a culturally sound way, which considers the future of the people and environment, whilst respecting the indigenous culture and people of the north.

2. What actions or investments would you take to strengthen and diversify the economy?

The resource sector is the backbone of the NWT economy at 30%+ of our GDP. Mineral demand is high in the world, be it rare earth, lithium or many other critical minerals. The challenge is, with such a small population, nothing can easily change despite our best wishes. The North has a resource-based future, but really how can we add to it, so that the future is smoother during times of boom and bust.



Some short answers are:

- Land access
- Population growth
- Skill development
- Mining

I agree economic diversification needs to be kept on the forefront of our minds, so in order to help focus and revitalize our northern economy, meaningful opportunities need to be spread across several areas, such as:

Education:

- The Polytech is a huge economic driver that brings in new federal dollars, as well as becomes a larger partner with external organizations & partnerships that bring in new investments to the north. In the end, this will help with skill and educational development in the north.

Mining:

- Create a regulatory permitting process that has timelines, clear objectives, one that is designed to support investment and growth.
- Create a mining investment team, that works to help identify opportunities for partnership and investment in the north.
- Expanding the MIP (mine incentive program) and have it focus on bringing in dollars that are tied to future longer-term investments.
- Regulatory challenges continue to be a concern and we need to resolve that.



Community:

- Support the settling of land-claims, as indigenous governments will become larger and long-term economic partners as well as drivers in the northern economy.
- Population growth will bring a new economic boom to our territory (skills, dollars & resources), however it can only be done if we have housing to support the skills and people we need.
- Create an immigration support program that actually helps employers directly, by partnering with them to resolve their labour shortage issues.
- Road expansion to the slave geological area, north of Yellowknife
- Supporting the Bathurst port

City of Yellowknife

- Fix the chronic underfunding the City of Yellowknife is plagued with, by addressing and closing the financial gaps & challenges.
- Accelerate land transfers to the City of Yellowknife by working with the YKDFN.

Tax environment:

- Small business tax needs to be revisited to help keep our existing businesses afloat, because, in the economic uncertain times, it's better to be working with them, rather than losing them completely.

Housing:

- Create an incentive plan that helps accelerate housing infrastructure investments.
- Streamline the permitting process that supports reasonable developments that meet the municipal rules, which oftentimes slow down or completely derail projects, and cause such delays, that developers walk away from critically needed investments.



Tourism, Arts & Culture:

- We need to capitalize on our reputation as an adventure territory, from outdoor adventures to fishing and aurora.
- The GNWT needs to continue to foster and market our unique cultural community tourism and Indigenous experiences that the world is looking for.
- From music and film, performing arts, Indigenous crafts and other visual mediums, all of which are economic opportunities that foster community growth and are a true expression of the resilience of our northern heart & culture.

3. With the Giant Mine remediation beginning, what actions or investments would you take to maximize the economic benefits remaining in the north?

This is a real opportunity for local employment and growth in northern businesses.

I would press to ensure we see:

- Local and meaningful training as a keystone to any short & long-term goals.
- Perhaps the Polytech, in the long run, can help support mining clean through their programming, which can be an ongoing long-term legacy.
- The work is highly skilled and specialized, but people must be encouraged to be part of this community and the north.
- There must be a social license that continues to develop local and indigenous businesses, employment and training opportunities as well as a transparent commitment to show this support is being done.



Emergency Management

Question: 1. What actions will you take or lobby for to ensure that communities are adequately prepared for future emergencies?

I continue to promote the need for an independent no-fault inquiry and I would move on that immediately once elected as we need to fully evaluate the challenges and gaps from the latest experience and response.

From experience, I would suggest the Auditor General of Canada, who has the creditability and skills, to fully review this past summers response.

Furthermore, recognizing that climate change and severe climate disaster emergencies can no longer be taken for granted as a once-in-a-hundred challenge, I would have the GNWT immediately create Emergency Evacuation & Disaster Plans, then post them on the GNWT website to ensure all northerners know we are ready, to the best of our ability, to face some of these uncertain challenges.

Once developed, partner with Indigenous Governments and other municipalities to create community training plans, and support infrastructure development and preparedness.

At the same time, communication needs to be foremost on the minds of all, so responses can be effectively communicated to the people as we work to ensure the protection of families, communities and critical infrastructure.

2. All NWT Community Wildfire Protection Plans will be five years old or older in 2024. Will you commit to funding, or advocating for funding, updates to these plans for any community that requests one?

I would fully commit to that and they must be led by professionals, funded by the GNWT in partnership with the communities, municipalities and indigenous governments.



Legislation

Question: 1. Do you support prioritizing these legislative reviews?

Yes - I support prioritizing these legislative reviews.

2. If you support prioritizing this legislation, will you work with City Council to advocate for change within this legislation?

Yes – I believe it is critical to work with the Yellowknife City Council to ensure we are supporting their work.

3. Is there other Legislation that you will be looking to review or create, and why?

All legislation requires ongoing and periodic review but at the same time, there is always some in more urgent need than others. The challenge is, when picking one over the other, legislation is very complicated and can take several years to write (or rewrite). Not to mention, those who draft legislation, skills which are in high demand, there are not a lot of people that do this. And when an Act (legislation) is in draft form, consultation can take a year or even many more.

My initial focus would be, is to see what is being worked on as of today, then start there. It would be a shame to derail years of work unfairly and without understanding any of the impacts of delaying work already started. At the same time, I would work to support what the City needs and see what can be accelerated. From my experience as an MLA, I can say, new or accelerated legislative initiatives can always be folded into the agenda.

In the end, some legislation can be cut and pasted, some only requires minor amendments and this can be done in a reasonable timeline (1-2 years), however some legislation can take up to 10-years (the wildlife act), because of all the work required.