

**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget  
Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming  
Federal Budget**

**By: The City of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories**

### **List of Recommendations**

- **Recommendation #1:** Increase Gas Tax Funding to communities, as a measure to restart the Canadian economy – as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic – and as a measure to address the crumbling essential infrastructure in communities.
- **Recommendation #2:** Implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action #21 by providing “sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority.”
- **Recommendation #3:** Address the backlog of land claim and self-government negotiations with Indigenous organizations by increasing the staffing levels of federal negotiators.
- **Recommendation #4:** Fund the implementation of Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework.
- **Recommendation #5:** Make the investments necessary to significantly reduce the northern infrastructure gap to address the transportation, connectivity, energy, and climate-based challenges Northerners face.

## Body of Submission

### **Stronger, More Resilient Communities**

- **Recommendation #1:** *Increase Gas Tax Funding to communities, as a measure to restart the Canadian economy – as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic – and as a measure to address the crumbling essential infrastructure in communities.*

As the Government of Canada noted in their 2019-20 budget: “Investing in communities can deliver good, middle class jobs today, while setting the stage for economic, social and environmental returns for years to come.”<sup>1</sup>

From Gas Tax Funding to Clean Water and Wastewater Fund to Public Transit Infrastructure Fund and more, cities and communities have a long track-record of delivering job-creating stimulus projects efficiently and effectively. Given the significant infrastructure deficit they currently have, municipal governments are ready to move quickly on a broad range of shovel-ready projects that can further stimulate economic recovery. Municipalities will be essential partners in rebuilding the economy we want for the future.

Canadians count on local governments for good roads and bridges, efficient public transit, reliable water and waste systems, quality recreational facilities and so much more. With responsibility for 60 percent of Canada’s infrastructure and access to only 10 cents on every tax dollar, local governments have so much more potential that can be unlocked—with the right tools.

Quick facts, as per the Federation of Canadian Municipalities<sup>2</sup>:

- 60% of Canada’s public infrastructure is owned by local governments
- 18,000 jobs are generated per \$1B invested in infrastructure
- \$1.6B economic growth generated per \$1B invested

There is one tool that transfers funds directly to municipalities of all sizes, empowering them to meet local needs: the Gas Tax Fund. It’s direct, effective and predictable. We urge the Government of Canada to increase Gas Tax Funding to communities in 2021-22, as a measure to restart the Canadian economy – as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic – and as a measure to address the crumbling essential infrastructure in communities.

### **Advancing Reconciliation**

- **Recommendation #2:** *Implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action #21 by providing “sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority.”*

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission released their final report and calls to action in June 2015. It has been five years since and there has been no progress on addressing Action #21. The City of Yellowknife is urging the Federal government to work with the Government of the Northwest Territories, Indigenous

---

<sup>1</sup> Pg 14: <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2019/docs/plan/budget-2019-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://fcm.ca/en/focus-areas/infrastructure>

governments in the Northwest Territories and the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation to fund existing and new Indigenous healing centers in the Northwest Territories.

- **Recommendation #3:** *Address the backlog of land claim and self-government negotiations with Indigenous organizations by increasing the staffing levels of federal negotiators.*

As per Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework<sup>3</sup>: *The negotiation and full implementation of land claims and self-government agreements are key components of reconciliation.* The City of Yellowknife is urging the Federal government to increase the staffing levels of federal negotiators in order to conclude land claim and self-government negotiations.

### **Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework**

- **Recommendation #4:** *Fund the implementation of Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework.*
- **Recommendation #5:** *Make the investments necessary to significantly reduce the northern infrastructure gap to address the transportation, connectivity, energy, and climate-based challenges Northerners face.*

In the Foreword of Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework<sup>4</sup>:

*The Arctic and Northern Policy Framework is a profound change of direction for the Government of Canada. For too long, Canada's Arctic and northern residents, especially Indigenous people, have not had access to the same services, opportunities, and standards of living as those enjoyed by other Canadians. There are longstanding inequalities in transportation, energy, communications, employment, community infrastructure, health and education. While almost all past governments have put forward northern strategies, none closed these gaps for the people of the North, or created a lasting legacy of sustainable economic development.*

As noted in the "Our Present" chapter:

*Longstanding inequalities in transportation, energy, communications, employment, community infrastructure, health and education continue to disadvantage people, especially Indigenous peoples, in Canada's Arctic and North.*

To conclude, in the "Our Future" chapter:

*In our shared future, Canada's Arctic and North will no longer be pushed to the margins of the national community. Its people will be full participants in Canadian society, with access to the same services, opportunities and standards of living as those enjoyed by other Canadians.*

In the 2021-22 Budget, we urge the Government of Canada to work to achieve this vision of our shared future, by making the investments necessary to advance northern knowledge priorities through a

---

<sup>3</sup> Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples Chapter: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1560523306861/1560523330587>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1560523306861/1560523330587>

polytechnic university in the NWT and to significantly reduce the northern infrastructure gap to address the transportation, connectivity, energy, and climate-based challenges Northerners face.