

**KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**Community Housing Plans and Funding**  
**Committee of the Whole—2021-2022 Operating Budget Review**  
**NWT Housing Corporation—March 10, 2021**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I think this is the part where the community housing plans fall under. Is that correct? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I think so, yes. Go ahead.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I see that there are 33 communities, of course. I think there has been one completed for Whati. Do we actually have a schedule for the rest of the communities, at this point? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we do. We have 20 engagements so far. I don't have the schedule in front of me right now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister provide that to standing committee? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Yes. Thank you.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I see that, in the Minister's opening remarks, she mentioned that there is going to be a person hired, I think, to help with this work. I'm just wondering how that's going to speed this up. Sorry. She mentioned that there is funding to support the hiring of a new term community housing planner to assist with delivery of the community housing plans. How is that position going to move this along? Because I think I've asked this about five years in a row, now. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have President Williams respond. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. President Williams.

**MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we're in the process of recruiting a second community planner. It's certainly going to help us accelerate the planning process. Right now, we have over 20 plans in various stages of activity. As the Member mentioned, Whati was the first plan completed last year. We're on the verge of completing five more plans across the territories, and we're starting to get a lot of interest. As we travel out to the communities, there is a lot of interest for communities to develop plans. The City of Yellowknife has approached us, the Town of Inuvik, the Town of Hay River, so there is a lot of interest out there. Small communities, we signed

a participation agreement with Nahanni Butte, so even the smaller communities are coming to the plate, as well. They see the benefits of the community housing plans. When they hear it's going to help inform future infrastructure decisions, I think that is a take on its own.

I have to highlight Whati because the reason why that was the first one chosen is because the road is under construction. It's going to open up. The mine is going to open up. It's going to be an influx of people moving into Whati, so getting that plan in place and having it implemented -- they are actually already implementing it. One module unit through our community housing support program was brought on the winter road last year, and the second module unit will be brought in when the new road opens. Communities are excited. They are excited to get new infrastructure in their communities, and having these plans in place is going to allow that to happen. It's going to be a living document that the community owns. It's not the old way of government telling you what you get in your communities. Those days are gone. It's the community telling us what their needs are and what their wishes are, so we are changing the model. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Williams. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I detect some excitement on the part of the president, and I am right there with you. I think the other thing, though, that these community housing plans are going to do is help refine our ask in Ottawa. We have to have that information, and we need that to compile it, to put it together, so that we have a better case to make with Ottawa, to get money out of them. Yes, we want to support communities identifying their needs, and they have to do that, hopefully, in financial terms, as well. That is what needs to be taken to Ottawa. What are the plans to wrap up the work in a more consolidated fashion to make a better case to take to Ottawa? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have President Tom Williams respond. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. President Williams.

**MR. WILLIAMS:** Madam Chair, the Member raises a good point because, like I said, it does inform future infrastructure decisions, and those are decisions made by this government and decisions made by the federal government. Certainly, putting that business case forward is critical. We have a good start on it. Having the second planner in place is really going to help expedite the process. It is a lot of work to put these plans together because there is a lot of community engagement that takes place. I think, Whati, there were four separate meetings in the community and then meetings outside after, to wrap it up. It takes some time, and we have to go at the pace of the community, as well. What our goal is in the life of this Assembly is to get them all completed. If we could get them done earlier, which is my hope and I think the hope of everybody is to get them done earlier because we need these, this information, to fight our battles with the federal government to access more housing dollars, so it's very critical that we move

forward. I am keeping my fingers crossed that we get this person recruited and we have two people doing the plans instead of like right now where we just have one person administering them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Yes. Thanks, Madam Chair. I don't think I could say it any better myself. We have to have that work done so we can make the case with Ottawa. Are we trying to get these plans done in the next year or two, or what is the end date to get all 33 done? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am very optimistic. I want to have these plans done by the end of the lifetime of this government. Thank you, Madam Chair.