

GARETT COCHRANE FOR MAYOR

Moving Yellowknife Forward

My plan for Yellowknife





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Meet Garrett

As a born-and-raised Yellowknifer who is also 2SLGBTQ+ and Métis, my love for this urban paradise in the bush I've always called home, is at the heart of my commitment to our community.

My love and unwavering devotion for Yellowknife and its people got me to run for Council in 2022. I have had the honour of serving as Deputy Mayor, chairing and being a member of multiple committees, while along with everyone on Council helping lead Yellowknife through emergencies and towards greater economic opportunity.

Let's move Yellowknife forward together.

More Homes, More Choice

Yellowknife should be a place where people can find a home and build a future. Having more housing options is essential to making life affordable, keeping people in our community and attracting the workers and investment our economy needs. These housing priorities bring together new development, stronger partnerships and practical changes at City Hall to help more homes get built.

Develop land for housing

Frame Lake North (West Town) is identified as a priority for residential development, together with the infrastructure required to support new neighbourhoods. The policy also commits to using City-owned land strategically for affordable, rental and missing middle housing, creating opportunities for development that responds to a wider range of housing needs. As well as a broader scope of the housing continuum with single detached homes for those in their social mobility journey.

Expand housing options and incentives

Expanded and simplified city-wide housing incentives would support cooperative housing, townhouses, multi-unit developments and the conversion of underused commercial buildings into homes. Incentives would focus on missing middle and affordable housing, infill development and building conversions. These measures would be accompanied by faster permitting and the removal of unnecessary approval barriers across the city, helping housing providers and developers bring projects into construction.

Strengthen partnerships and non-market housing

Partnerships with Indigenous governments, non-profit organizations and private developers would help make land available and increase housing supply. The policy also calls for advocacy to the GNWT for more non-market and supportive housing, recognizing that additional private development must be complemented by housing for residents whose needs are not met by the market.

Set targets and report results

Measurable annual targets for new housing approvals, serviced lots and housing starts would provide a basis for tracking implementation. Public progress reports would allow residents to assess results and hold the City accountable for its contribution to housing delivery. Infrastructure requirements and long-term servicing costs would be considered alongside development, consistent with broader commitments to responsible spending and long-term planning.

Policy Focus on housing bullet points

- Develop Frame Lake North (West town).
- Expand missing-middle housing, including co-ops, townhouses, multi-unit housing and conversion of underused commercial buildings, by use of incentives.
- Speed up permitting and remove unnecessary barriers city-wide.
- Advocating to the GNWT for more non-market and supportive housing.
- Set measurable annual targets for new housing approvals, serviced lots and housing starts, and publicly report progress.
- Use City-owned land strategically for affordable, rental and missing-middle housing.
- Partner with Indigenous governments, non-profits, and private developers to unlock land and increase housing supply.
- Think Larga-like projects, YWCA Housing First like projects, and old-school developers as Homes did.

Reliable Infrastructure, A Stronger City

Yellowknife needs infrastructure that supports housing, protects essential services, and keeps the city moving. Our focus is completing critical projects, servicing new neighbourhoods, and improving maintenance standards. Responsible planning, leveraging external partnerships, and unlocking strategic federal and territorial infrastructure streams will limit the burden on local taxpayers.

Build infrastructure for new neighbourhoods

Roads, water, sewer and other municipal infrastructure will be planned alongside housing development to support new neighbourhoods across Yellowknife. Coordinating this work will help prepare land for new homes, with Frame Lake North (West Town) as one priority. We will assess construction, operating and long-term maintenance costs from the outset, ensuring that growth is supported by infrastructure the City can afford to build, operate and maintain.

Renew essential water and sewage systems

We will prioritize completing the Pumphouse No. 1 replacement and raw-sewage upgrades to strengthen the systems residents and businesses depend on. Pumphouse renewal will support reliable water supply and fire protection, while sewage upgrades will help accommodate existing needs and future development. All options for the submarine water-intake line will be explored, supporting long-term water security while reducing the share of major infrastructure costs carried by local taxpayers.

Strengthen emergency services and wildfire protection

Completing the Fire Hall renovation and expansion will support the facilities needed for effective emergency response. Stronger vegetation-management and FireSmart service standards around municipal parks, trails and infrastructure will make wildfire prevention and safety an ongoing maintenance priority. These measures will connect investment in emergency facilities with practical work to reduce fire hazards, improve resident safety and protect essential municipal assets.

Create a safe, connected and accessible transportation network

The Master Transportation Plan will guide improvements for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and emerging forms of mobility. Our focus will be on how roads, sidewalks, crossings and trails connect neighbourhoods with workplaces, schools and community services. Planning will account for Yellowknife's winter conditions and maintenance needs, supporting a network that is safer and more practical throughout the year.

Improve waste collection and public sanitation

Additional waste collection points and more frequent collection will support cleaner streets, parks, trails and other public spaces. To ensure reliability, the City will enforce strict service-level agreements with waste management contractors so public bins are emptied before they overflow. Clear bylaw standards will also be consistently enforced to ensure adequate bin capacity and prevent neighborhood spillover. Coupled with targeted action against illegal dumping, the emphasis will be on accessible disposal options and dependable collection, keeping shared spaces clean and welcoming.

Focus on critical infrastructure

- Develop Frame Lake North (West Town), including the infrastructure needed to support new neighbourhoods.
- Complete the Pumphouse No. 1 replacement and upgrades to raw sewage infrastructure.
- Complete the Fire Hall expansion and renovation.
- Strengthen vegetation management and FireSmart service standards around municipal parks, trails and infrastructure.
- Use the Master Transportation Plan to create a safe, connected transportation network for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and emerging forms of mobility.
- Add more waste disposal points, increase collection frequency and enforce service standards.
- Seek grant funding for the submarine water-intake line.

Affordable City, Happier Community

City decisions affect what residents pay to get around, use community facilities and maintain a home. Our focus is on practical measures to ease those costs while keeping municipal finances sustainable. Affordable services, predictable taxes and broader sources of funding will guide how we address the cost of living.

Keep transit and recreation affordable

We will keep public transit affordable with the \$2 fare, helping residents travel to work, school, appointments and community activities. Expanded free and low-cost recreation will begin with youth, seniors and lower-income residents. Reforming the Access for All formula will support this effort, helping ensure that cost does not prevent residents from using municipal recreation facilities and participating in community life.

Plan spending and keep property taxes predictable

We will require priority-based budgeting and a three-year fiscal strategy, linking spending to clear priorities and the services residents rely on. Planning revenues, operating expenses and major investments together will help the City anticipate costs and make responsible choices. This approach will support more predictable property taxes, giving households and businesses greater certainty when planning their own finances.

Make municipal fees and tax relief fair

Municipal fees and charges will be reviewed to ensure they remain affordable, transparent and connected to the actual cost of delivering services. Residents should understand what they are paying for and how charges are determined.

Broaden the tax base and secure external funding

Population growth and new development can expand the tax base and help fund municipal services, easing pressure on existing taxpayers. We will pursue this growth with attention to long-term servicing costs. A two-year tax abatement for tourism and entertainment will support efforts to attract investment and broaden the local economy. For major capital projects, we will actively seek territorial and federal funding so Yellowknife taxpayers do not carry costs that should be borne by other orders of government.

Focus on cost of living

- Keep public transit affordable with the \$2 fare.
- Expand free and low-cost recreation, beginning with youth, seniors and lower-income residents.
- Require priority-based budgeting and a three-year fiscal strategy.
- Reform the Access for All formula to improve access to affordable recreation.
- Provide predictable property taxes through multi-year financial planning and disciplined spending.
- Review municipal fees and charges for affordability, transparency and alignment with the actual cost of delivering services.
- Expand the tax base through population growth and new development to ease pressure on existing taxpayers.
- Introduce a two-year tax abatement to encourage investment in tourism and entertainment.
- Actively seek outside funding for major capital projects, including appropriate territorial and federal contributions.

A City Ready for the Future

Yellowknife needs to prepare for a changing economy and make decisions that serve the city beyond the next budget or election. Our focus is on attracting investment, supporting community life and ensuring City Hall has a clear plan for delivering residents' priorities.

Plan for growth and a diverse economy

YK 2050, the Community Plan, will guide the city's next generation of growth. We will prepare for the post-diamond economy by capitalizing on incoming DND and federal opportunities, attracting private investment, supporting local entrepreneurs and speeding up permitting city-wide. A two-year tax abatement for tourism and entertainment will encourage investment and downtown revitalization. Introducing Indigenous procurement and strengthening local procurement will expand opportunities through City purchasing.

Invest in community and culture

We will repurpose the former Ruth Inch Memorial Pool as a multi-use community and cultural hub, with the library, arts and visitor services considered as anchor uses. Implementing and funding the Arts and Culture Master Plan will support cultural activity across Yellowknife. Preparations for the city's centennial will provide an opportunity to celebrate its history and bring the community together.

Modernize City Hall and strengthen accountability

We will modernize City governance, bylaws, decision-making and service standards to improve how the City serves residents. A work plan covering all departments will set clear goals and keep the administration focused on Council's priorities. We will also advocate for updated territorial municipal and property-assessment legislation to support effective local government.

Strengthen safety and community partnerships

A Community Safety and Well-Being Plan will be developed to guide coordinated action on safety and community needs. We will also work with residents, Indigenous partners, the federal government and other stakeholders to develop a new harbour framework. This collaborative approach will help guide decisions about the future of Yellowknife's waterfront.

Focus on the future

- Advance YK 2050 and plan for future growth.
- Convert the former Ruth Inch Pool into a cultural/community hub.
- Modernize City governance and service standards.
- Push for updated territorial municipal and assessment legislation.
- Prepare for Yellowknife's centennial.
- Implement the Community Safety & Well-Being Plan.
- Launch Indigenous procurement and strengthen local purchasing.
- Fund and deliver the Arts & Culture Master Plan.
- Create a new harbour framework with partners and residents.
- Attract investment and diversify the post-diamond economy.
- Speed up permitting and cut unnecessary barriers.
- Offer a two-year tourism/entertainment tax abatement to boost downtown.

Improved Services for an Improved Quality of Life

Quality of life is shaped by the everyday experience of living in Yellowknife: getting around safely, enjoying public spaces and getting help from City Hall. Our focus is on dependable services, accessible recreation and neighbourhoods where residents can spend time together in a safe and accessible manner.

Clean streets and public spaces

Clear service standards for snow removal, street cleaning, garbage collection and maintenance will be backed by public reporting. We will improve bin placement and increase public garbage collection. Additional funding will extend the street-cleaning season, starting earlier and finishing later. Federal grants will be sought for portable or mobile public washrooms operated by a non-governmental organization.

Improve everyday routes and recreation

Improved sidewalks, crossings, lighting and trail connections will make it easier to get around safely throughout the year. We will invest in neighbourhood parks, playgrounds and outdoor recreation, including an outdoor rink near the Aquatic Centre and a second dog park. Recreation-facility booking reform will include time-slot auctions.

Support lively community spaces

A food truck district on the 50/50 lot will replace the food truck lottery, creating a place to eat and gather. Longer, more predictable agreements for community and heritage facilities (such as the Wildcat) will support responsible investment and stable operations.

Make City services easier to access

Municipal customer service and help navigating City systems will be made available in English and French. A 311 service will give residents one place to report problems, request services and track the City's response. These changes will make it easier to reach the right service and follow up.

Focus on cost of living

- Improve service standards for public garbage collection and bin placement.
- Reform recreation-facility bookings, including time-slot auctions.
- Improve sidewalks, crossings, lighting and trail connections for safer travel throughout the year.
- Set clear standards for snow removal, street cleaning, public garbage collection and maintenance, and publicly report performance.
- Work to create an outdoor rink near the Aquatic Centre.
- Seek federal grants for portable or mobile public washrooms operated by a non-governmental organization.
- Provide municipal customer service and help navigating City systems in English and French.
- Invest in neighbourhood parks, playgrounds and outdoor recreation across Yellowknife.
- Replace the food truck lottery with a food truck district on the 50/50 lot.



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