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Representing Northern Business Since 1973

August 19, 2020

Mayor Rebecca Alty & City of Yellowknife Councilors
PO Box 580
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N4

RE: Proposed Temporary Day Shelter Location

Dear Your Worship Alty and Yellowknife Councilors,

We are writing in support of the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce's letter and the letter and verbal concern that we have received from our joint members regarding the proposed temporary Day Shelter location.

As requested by GNWT Health and Social Services (HSS), the proposed temporary Day Shelter location was to be located in the now vacant Side Door location. We echo the concerns raised in each of the letters written by local businesses and the Yellowknife Chamber. Outside of the challenges that businesses in Yellowknife have had to endure during COVID operating as a private business in Yellowknife has been very difficult over the last few years. The current and previous day shelter has proven to be ill-managed, and businesses have suffered significant losses due to the sharp decrease in foot traffic and the considerable increase in expense to protect their business and employees.

We are empathetic to the need for another day shelter and support, but not as a band-aid solution. There are several other possible venues that a day shelter can be established without a negative effect on the economy. The HSS and GNWT need to take sole responsibility for their mandate item and find a plausible, long term solution to this dire need. Several other jurisdictions have successfully eliminated homelessness with the private industry partnership, not at the cost of private industry.

We applaud the City of Yellowknife for making the decision to request the GNWT & HSS to look else where for a location. We will also be following up on this issue with the Minister and Premier.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Renee Comeau".

Renee Comeau
Executive Director
NWT Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jenni Bruce".

Jenni Bruce
President
NWT Chamber of Commerce

CC: Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce; Hon Diane Thom, Minister of Health and Social Services; Terry Hartwright, General Manager Black Knight Pub; Jeannie Rocher, Director 974200 NWT; Sandra Sterling, Owner Overlander Sports