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YUKON GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS DESIGN OPTION FOR NEW CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

WHITEHORSE – Justice Minister Marian C. Horne today announced that the Yukon government has accepted the recommendation of the Building Advisory Committee on a decision option for a new correctional centre.

The new correctional facility will allow for flexible programming, separate remand facilities and will promote a healing environment that reflects Yukon First Nation culture and values.

“I am pleased with the option recommended by the Building Advisory Committee and would like to thank them for their work in coming to this recommendation. We are now in a position to begin drafting a design that fosters collaboration and is flexible to meet our diverse needs now and in the future,” Horne said.

The design of the new facility will reflect the recommendations of the Corrections Consultation, as well as discussions at the Yukon Forum in December 2006.

“The new correctional centre will be a modern, secure facility that provides security, but also offers offenders real opportunities to heal and take responsibility for their actions,” Horne added. “This option allows us to design a facility where staff work directly with the offenders and will facilitate the delivery of high quality correctional programming.”

The location of the new correctional centre has also been confirmed.

“We have considered alternate sites within the Whitehorse area and have concluded that the best option is to build the new correctional centre at the current location on Range Road. Building on the existing site allows the work to proceed without delay and is the most cost effective choice,” Horne said.

The current location will allow the government to use services that are already in place, including the site preparation that began in 2002.

The next step in this building process is to develop a detailed functional program that will guide the schematic design of the new correctional centre. Site preparation will start early in 2008, with a goal of opening in 2011.

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Attachment: Two-pages regarding the new correctional centre planning options and location decision

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ATTACHMENT - New Correctional Centre Planning Options and Location Decision

A Building Advisory Committee (BAC) was established following the April 2006 Yukon Forum. The Yukon Forum approved the Corrections Action Plan and an Implementation Framework that supported working collaboratively with First Nations.

Building Advisory Committee members include:

- Norma Davignon, Chair, Corrections Action Plan Implementation
- Bob Riches, Assistant Deputy Minister, Community Justice and Public Safety
- Cathy Johnsen, Manager of Justice Programs, Council of Yukon First Nations
- Ray Santa, Community Services Director, Kwanlin Dün First Nation
- Sgt. Kris Vibe, RCMP “M” Division
- Phil Perrin, Superintendent, Whitehorse Correctional Centre
- Art Birss, Team Leader, Whitehorse Correctional Centre
- Simone Arnold, Project Manager, Corrections Action Plan Implementation
- Peter Blum, Property Management Agency

The BAC was asked to develop planning options for a new correctional centre based on Committee expertise, what was heard during the Corrections Consultation and planning work that was done in 2002.

The planning options are concepts and describe what type of building could be built to meet the Yukon’s adult secure custody needs.

The BAC developed parameters to guide the drafting of the planning options. These parameters include:

- Reflect Yukon First Nation cultures and values;
- Program oriented healing centre;
- Provide a secure environment for public and staff;
- Separate living units for remand and sentenced offenders;
- Separate living unit for females;
- Special purpose space for offenders such as mental health, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and behavior management;
- Maximize staffing and operating costs;
- Flexibility to accommodate small and diverse populations; and
- Flexibility for growth over the next 40 years.

On April 27, 2007, the BAC made a recommendation to the Government of Yukon to proceed with the development of Option 4. This option is recommended because it best reflects the design parameters developed by the Building Advisory Committee.

The four planning options are described as follows:

Option 1:

- “Single, efficient, utilitarian structure containing all components envisioned to accommodate inmates”
- Essentially ‘the warehouse’
- Larger living units
- Limited separation of special needs inmates (FASD, mental health, etc.)

Option 2:

- “Two structures on the same site with a ... secure pedestrian link between them”
- Separate buildings for remand and sentenced offenders
- Two 40-room living units

Option 3:

- “A three structure healing centre on a common site”
- Separate buildings for remand, sentenced and pre-release offenders
- Provides ability to cascade inmates according to security level

Option 4:

- A comprehensive facility that provides public protection and promotes healing with integrated program space
- Separate living units for remand and sentenced offenders but bridged by central control
- Discreet programming for offender groups; women, remand, sentenced, and protective custody
- Special purpose capacity for FASD offenders and offenders requiring behavior management

BAC recommends Option 4:

- Meets modern correctional operating principles and allows for integrated and flexible program capabilities while separating remand and sentenced inmates;
- Promotes inmate accountability and healing in an environment that reflects Yukon First Nation culture and values;
- Best meets the needs for discreet and quality programs for female offenders;
- Is flexible to meet diverse needs now and in the future;
- Best fosters collaboration between the Department of Justice and other agencies, First Nations and community groups.

The BAC was also asked to make a recommendation to the Government of Yukon on location; this decision was deferred to the Government of Yukon.

The Government of Yukon has decided to build in the current location on Range Road:

- Alternate sites within the Whitehorse area were considered.
- These sites would require consultation, changes to zoning and/or Official Community Plan designations and high land development costs.
- The current location allows for building to begin quickly and is the most cost-effective choice.