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## News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 6, 2022**

### **CANADA CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING OF RAPID HOUSING IN WATSON LAKE**

**Watson Lake, Yukon** – Every Canadian deserves a safe and affordable place to call home. Affordable housing is key to Canada’s pandemic recovery, including in Watson Lake.

Today Brendan Hanley, Member of Parliament for Yukon, on behalf of the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, alongside the Honourable Ranj Pillai, Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, Stephen Charlie, Chief of Liard First Nation, and Christopher Irvin, Mayor of Watson Lake, announced the grand opening of a new triplex in Watson Lake, which received funding from the federal Rapid Housing Initiative.

The triplex contains two one-bedroom units, and one two-bedroom unit. Two of the units are accessible, and all the units are designated for vulnerable citizens, including one specifically designated for women and children. The building will be occupied in the coming weeks with clients on the Yukon Housing Corporation waitlist.

Three triplexes were built in the last year with \$3 million from the Government of Canada under the first round of the Projects Stream of the Rapid Housing Initiative, \$1.3 million from the Yukon Housing Corporation and \$1.1 million from the federal government’s Northern Housing Fund. The Rapid Housing Initiative provides opportunities to build affordable, energy efficient community housing for Yukoners in urgent housing need. The other two triplexes built with this funding are in Mayo and Whitehorse.

New investments under the Rapid Housing Initiative will create thousands of good jobs in the housing and construction sector, grow the middle class, and build back stronger communities while getting us closer to our goal of eliminating chronic homelessness in Canada.

#### **Quotes:**

“There is no relationship more important to our government than the one with Indigenous peoples. That is why through the Rapid Housing Initiative, over 40% of all units will support Indigenous housing across the country, including right here in Yukon. This is our National Housing Strategy at work.” – **The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Housing, Diversity and Inclusion**

“The 10-year, \$72+ billion National Housing Strategy is working to ensure more affordable housing for Indigenous communities. At such a critical time, these developments will provide community members with stable housing and direct access to supports and other resources, to assist them in their journey to find reliable and secure housing. Today’s announcement in Watson Lake is just one example of how we’re working to make a difference for those who are the most in need.” – **Brendan Hanley, Member of Parliament for Yukon**

“Yukon Housing Corporation works innovatively with its partners to provide housing solutions, in particular securing federal Rapid Housing Initiative Funds to build homes for Watson Lake. It is exciting to be a part of the unveiling of such a key community project that will help Watson Lake citizens with new housing and a place to call home.” – **The Honourable Ranj Pillai, Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation**

“On behalf of the Town of Watson Lake we would like to thank Yukon Housing and the Yukon government for continuing to support our social housing needs. The Watson Lake Rapid Housing Initiative triplex is a welcome addition in our community. We look forward to working with you on many more projects such as this, to help tackle Watson Lake’s housing shortages.” – **Christopher Irvin, Mayor of Watson Lake**

**Quick facts:**

- The Government of Canada’s funding of \$3 million under the first round of the Projects Stream of the Rapid Housing Initiative helped create 9 new affordable homes in three different Yukon communities: Watson Lake, Mayo and Whitehorse.
- YHC provided \$2.4 million (\$1.3 million from the Yukon Housing Corporation budget and \$1.1 million from the federal government’s Northern Housing Fund) to complete the three triplexes to address the rise in material prices and increased construction costs resulting from COVID-19.
- All nine units are designated for Indigenous people, people with disabilities and other target populations, with two units specifically designated for women and children.
- Triplex locations include:
  - 100 Morley Crescent, Watson Lake
  - 308 3rd Avenue, Mayo
  - 2 Sycamore Street, Whitehorse
- The RHI is a \$2.5 billion program to help address urgent housing needs of vulnerable Canadians, especially in the context of COVID-19, through the rapid construction of over 10,000 units of affordable housing.
- The RHI aims to create new, energy efficient, affordable housing for people and populations who are vulnerable.
- The RHI has received significant interest from Indigenous groups, which has resulted in 41% of all units created under the program being targeted to Indigenous peoples.
- Units are intended to be constructed within 12 months of when funding is provided to program applicants (with some exceptions), with units in the North and in special access communities intended to be constructed within 18 months.
- Close to 33 per cent of this new funding will go toward women-focused housing projects. The units will be built within 12 months of when funding is provided to program applicants.
- The RHI takes a human rights-based approach to housing, serving people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and other vulnerable people under the NHS, including women and children fleeing domestic violence, seniors, young adults, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, people experiencing mental health and addiction issues, veterans, LGBTQ2 individuals, racialized and Black Canadians, and recent immigrants or refugees.
- The Government of Canada’s National Housing Strategy is an ambitious, 10-year plan that will invest over \$72 billion to give more Canadians a place to call home.

**Related links:**

- As Canada’s authority on housing, CMHC contributes to the stability of the housing market and financial system, provides support for Canadians in housing need, and offers unbiased housing research and advice to all levels of Canadian government, consumers and the housing industry. CMHC’s aim is that by 2030, everyone in Canada has a home they can afford and that meets their needs. For more information, please visit [cmhc.ca](http://cmhc.ca) or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).
- To find out more about the National Housing Strategy, please visit [www.placetocallhome.ca](http://www.placetocallhome.ca).
- To find out more about the Rapid Housing Initiative, please visit [Rapid Housing Initiative \(RHI\)](#).
- [Project announcement in June 2021](#): Canada supports Rapid Housing projects for First Nations in Yukon.

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