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City Manager Sheila Bassi-Kellett  
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17 January 2024

**Re: Visitor Information Centre Operations**

Dear Ms. Bassi-Kellett

Representatives from the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce (YK Chamber) recently attended an open house hosted by the Yellowknife Visitor Information Centre (VIC). Thank you for this excellent opportunity to chat with VIC staff and to speak with other stakeholders about their impressions of the VIC's operations. We observed that the VIC continues not to display physical pamphlets and remains entrenched in the idea that offering access to online resources is sufficient. It is our understanding that local tourism businesses, specifically, smaller tour operators, wish to display pamphlets at the VIC. For these smaller operators, producing a pamphlet once or twice per year with general information and contact details is easier than maintaining a real-time and up-to-date website. We acknowledge that information is available online for visitors, and this is a great resource to utilize. However, we have also heard from professionals in the tourism industry that modern visitor centres located in other cities often offer both online information and pamphlets<sup>1</sup>.

We have heard anecdotally that visitors to the VIC still wish to have access to physical materials that they can take with them and reference throughout their visit. We also understand that many travellers to Yellowknife may not know what to look for when searching online (you don't know what you don't know) whereas pamphlets are a more straightforward and pointed way to offer information about services in Yellowknife. In conversation with NWT Tourism, they indicated they have also requested that the VIC allow for the displaying of pamphlets. We understand organizing the coordination and display of pamphlets may add pressures to an already busy VIC staff, but we believe the benefits of adding pamphlets is worth the added coordination and upkeep tasks. The most immediate benefit is signalling a willingness to respond and adapt to input from tourism-based businesses.

Although it seems like a small detail to address, it is our concern that this one issue is indicative of the larger decision-making paradigm enacted by the current operators of the VIC (currently the City of Yellowknife). Related to this the YK Chamber Board of Directors intends to respond to a Request for Proposals to run the VIC when the city tenders it and we have formed a committee to address our desire to make this bid. To support our internal strategic planning, we request an update on the plan for transferring the operations of the VIC from the City to an interested organization.

Thank you,

Melissa Syer, Executive Director  
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce

Adrian Bell, President  
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce

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<sup>1</sup> Yellowknife Tourism Strategy Workshop hosted by the City of Yellowknife and InterVISTAS Consulting