

Correctional Redevelopment

Summer and new growth

JULY 2009

Welcome to our third Correctional Redevelopment newsletter.



Correctional reform began in January 2007, with the introduction of the Correctional Redevelopment Strategic Plan. In this newsletter we look back at 2008, our second year in correctional redevelopment. We also update you on work in progress in 2009, still guided by the Strategic Plan, the compass that keeps us on the right trail.

We are moving forward with Yukoners to create a correctional system that is more responsive to the needs of victims,

offenders, families and communities. A number of actions from the Strategic Plan have been implemented and each change brings us closer to meeting our two goals: to fundamentally change the correctional system; and to significantly improve programs.

In this newsletter, as in previous editions, we profile people involved in various ways in correctional redevelopment. This edition includes interviews with Bonnie Harpe (Probation Officer, Adult Probation Services, Department of Justice) and Rosemary Rowlands (Director, CYFN Justice Programs).

And, finally: it's summer! On the trails around our communities, the work of winter is done and we are beginning to see new life and growth. So it is with correctional redevelopment. We are seeing the results of the groundwork begun in 2007 and 2008. We are encouraged by the changes and are ready for the challenges ahead. In this season of new growth, we look forward to working with you and moving forward together on that trail.

Above: Transitional Women's Living Unit under construction, 2009.

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Correctional Redevelopment Strategic Plan

2008 highlights and 2009 progress and plans

"What have you done recently and where are you with changing the correctional system"?

This newsletter highlights the work undertaken in 2008 and underway in 2009 to meet our commitments in the Strategic Plan.

While the Department of Justice is responsible for correctional redevelopment, it is assisted by the information, advice and support provided by representatives of First Nations, non-government organizations and other Yukon government departments.

Whitehorse Correctional Centre (WCC) Interim Space Plan

Renovations to WCC were completed in the 2008/2009 fiscal year to meet the immediate need to improve living conditions for both female and male inmates, program space and working conditions. The changes also helped prepare WCC staff for the transition to a new approach to supervising inmates and program delivery, as set out in the WCC Supervision and Program Model (see also "Interim Space Plan Implementation").

New Correctional Centre

The development of a new correctional centre remains on track, with December 2011 as the move-in/completion date (see New Correctional Centre: Update).

Training and Workshops

The fundamental changes being made to the correctional system require extensive staff training and support for staff and managers.

Some examples of training offered to date are: Correctional Officer Basic Training, First Nations Awareness Training; Tactical Communication and Response Training; Earned Remission Training; Training with the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society of Yukon on issues relating to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder; and training on investigative skills and processes. Training on planning for "direct supervision" has also been provided to prepare staff for the approach to inmate supervision that is the basis of the WCC Supervision and Program Model.

Staff Recruitment and Retention Strategy

Work has been completed on a substantive staff recruitment and retention strategy for WCC. Next

steps include the establishment of a working group to set priorities and develop an implementation plan. Work on the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Strategy will follow implementation of the Staff Recruitment and Retention Strategy.

WCC Supervision and Program Model

The model was finalized in 2008 following extensive development and review by the Program and Services Advisory Committee, a Working Group on Female Offenders, the Corrections Oversight Committee, and others. Designed to work together, the several components in the model provide a new and integrated approach to inmate supervision and program development and delivery.

What is the Correctional Redevelopment Strategic Plan?

The Strategic Plan identifies the major initiatives that need to be undertaken to fundamentally change the correctional system and significantly improve programs.

These initiatives affect every aspect of the correctional system: philosophy, facilities, operations, assessment and integrated offender management, supervision, programs for offenders and for victims, programs in the correctional centre and in the community; staff recruitment, training and support; information systems; legislation and policies; etc. These separate initiatives are linked and, together, they will bring about change to the correctional system.

The Strategic Plan was approved by the Yukon Government and Yukon First Nation Chiefs at the Yukon Forum in December 2006. It is based on the Corrections Action Plan (CAP) that had also been approved by the Government and Chiefs at the Yukon Forum in April 2006.

The CAP provided recommendations for changing the correctional system and the Strategic Plan provides the direction for change, called "correctional redevelopment."

The CAP was developed following the Corrections Consultation in 2005, co-chaired by the Yukon Government and the Council of Yukon First Nations, with the involvement of Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council.

In 2009 the model was introduced to WCC staff through workshops. It will be phased in beginning this year, monitored closely and revised as required in future years.

Comprehensive Risk Needs Assessment Tools

One of the primary concerns in correctional redevelopment has been determining which assessment tools are valid and reliable for working with Yukon offenders, particularly First Nations offenders. Beginning in 2008 and continuing into 2009, four assessment tools are being piloted with Community Wellness Court clients. Further work includes more literature review, modification and monitoring of tools, and information collection over the next five years to help evaluate purported risk factors in the commonly used assessment tools.

Integrated Offender Management Model

In 2008, developmental work continued on an offender management model that will involve WCC, Adult Probation Services, and ultimately, community-based resources. The focus is on offenders who are supervised in the correctional centre and in the community (i.e., probation or conditional sentence). Operating guidelines and a work plan have been developed; the principles in the WCC Supervision and Program Model have been adopted. Next steps include completion of the developmental work and preparation of a model for review by the Programs and Services Advisory Committee and the Oversight Committee.

Victims of Crime Conference

The Department of Justice hosted a Victims of Crime conference in Whitehorse, March 4–6, 2008. The



Architect's rendering of an aerial view of the new correctional centre.

conference focused on services to victims and was designed primarily for service providers. It also served as a starting point for discussions that would inform the development of a Victim Services Strategy.

Victims of Crime Strategy

In 2008, research was undertaken and the Victims of Crime Conference was held in preparation to develop a Victim Services Strategy. In 2009, drafts were prepared and reviewed with the Programs and Services Advisory Committee and various organizations and agencies. By May 2009, a draft Victims of Crime Strategy, co-sponsored by the Department of Justice and the Women's Directorate, had been prepared and reviewed with the Committee. The Strategy was recently reviewed by the Oversight Committee and is being finalized. Work is underway on an implementation work plan. One of the items in the strategy is provision for legislation on victims of crime.

Corrections Act Consultation

The *Corrections Act* Consultation began in January 2008 and concluded in January 2009 with the preparation of a new *Corrections Act* and Regulations (see *Towards a New Corrections Act and Regulations: Update*). The *Act* was

introduced in the Legislative Assembly by the Hon. Marian C. Horne, Minister of Justice, on March 24, 2009. The *Act* is anticipated to be proclaimed in fall 2009.

Justice Policies review

Work to be undertaken includes reviewing and revising all policies that are affected by the new *Corrections Act* and Regulations, including Adult Probation Services and WCC policies.

Community capacity-building plans

In 2008 and continuing into 2009, Department of Justice staff tested aspects of different models by working directly with the following communities at their request, through the following processes: Carcross/Tagish First Nation (worked through the Northern Strategy Trust project); First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun (worked through an intergovernmental accord); and Ross River Dena Council (worked through the capacity-building round table led by the Department of Economic Development). Based on the outcome of the work with these communities, a strategy is being developed with different approaches to meet the varied needs of communities in Yukon over time.

Electronic offender management information system

The electronic offender management information system will be included in the new court registry information system replacement. Several models were reviewed and one has been proposed for adoption. Over the next two years, key elements in this project are expected to be completion of testing, installation of the new system, and development and implementation of training.

Correctional Redevelopment newsletter

The first newsletter was distributed in fall 2007 at the Healing in Corrections Conference. In spring 2008, the second newsletter was issued and distributed to First Nations governments, non-government organizations and others at meetings during the *Corrections Act* consultation and was e-mailed throughout 2008 to individuals and organizations. This is the third newsletter.

Correctional Redevelopment Strategic Plan Update

In March 2008 the Correctional Redevelopment Strategic Plan – First Year in Review – was released. This document reviewed work undertaken and work in progress to implement the Strategic Plan. In June 2009 work is underway to complete the Second Year in Review, which will cover the period January 2008 to March 31, 2009; the document will be widely distributed and available on the Correctional Redevelopment website. (See “How to contact us” on page 8.)

New Correctional Centre: Update

In spring 2008 the planning phase of this project was completed, including the preparation of a Facility Program Document. In 2008, the Facility Program was developed following a series of meetings, vision sessions and focus groups with WCC staff, non-government organizations and First Nations representatives.

A specific focus group with First Nation Elders was held to obtain their views during this phase. The completion of the Schematic Design report followed in June 2008. These reports provided the foundation for a submission to the Yukon Government Management Board. In July 2008 the project received approval to proceed to the Implementation Phase, confirming the scope, schedule and budget.

As of May 2009, the Design Development stage was complete. The project is budgeted at \$67,000,000. The Construction Management and fast-tracked design methods have allowed compression of the schedule to permit an occupancy date of December 2011. While design continues, specific components have been advanced in the schedule to allow issuance of the sequential tender packages.

The final construction details will be completed in the fall of 2009; at that time, the final fixed price will be determined to reflect the values of all trade package tenders.

Yukon Asset Construction Agreements

In February 2009, the Yukon Government signed a group of Yukon Asset Construction Agreements (YACAs) with the Kwanlin Dün First

Nation. One of these was a YACA for the Yukon Corrections Infrastructure project.

Transitional Women's Living Unit

Planning and construction for the Transitional Women's Living Unit began in 2008. The unit will accommodate low- and medium-security female inmates until the new correctional centre is completed. The facility will then be converted to treatment and program space for Health and Social Services.

The design is complete and the foundation in place. Construction started in June 2009 (*see photo, page 1*), with completion anticipated in late fall 2009. Planning for staffing and operation of the facility is in progress.

Interim Space Plan Implementation

The Interim Space Plan is a set of renovations to the current WCC that takes steps towards creating a safer, more secure and healthy environment for staff and inmates until the new correctional centre is completed in 2011.

Interim space renovations began at WCC in April 2008 and were substantially completed in the fall of 2008. The renovations were carried out in phases to allow for coordination of ongoing use and occupancy of the facility.

Given the age of the existing correctional centre, ongoing maintenance and planned changes such as these are necessary to improve opportunities for programming and supervision at the centre. The Interim Space Plan provided the

opportunity to reconfigure the living areas for new beds and additional tables for meals in the units. This also creates a more suitable environment for staff to begin direct supervision training in preparation for a new style of facility.

Female inmates have more space, more washroom facilities, improved supervision, and easier access to programming and recreational opportunities. The changes have increased space options for inmate programming and created more

suitable space for First Nations programs.

The Healing Room, although small in size, is an important step toward addressing the unique needs of the First Nations population at WCC.

PROFILE: Bonnie Harpe

Probation solutions not simple for First Nations

Bonnie Harpe is no ordinary trainee.

The former Chairperson (2003) of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council brings a wealth of experience into her position as a probation officer trainee, a position she earned after qualifying for it through the First Nations Training Corps.

Bonnie wasn't a shoe-in for the position, as her hiring was subject to the routine Yukon government hiring process.

"It was tough, the interview process. I had to do a written and a verbal interview. I received a call that I was the successful candidate and I got it."

Bonnie has been at the position since November 5, 2007. Her training position lasts for two years – until the same date this year.

She has spent the past year and half completing a variety of jobs from learning the Canadian Criminal Code to managing a growing case load.

"I dissected the Criminal Code section by section from the beginning of the process for an offender right through to the end of his or her sentence."

The other part of Bonnie's training has been spent observing cases in the courtroom, performing bail interviews with offenders at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and completing pre-sentence reports for the court.

Nearly 75 per cent of the clients on probation are of First Nation descent. How to bring culturally-relevant aspects to their probation conditions and management is always a challenge and a concern.

"I recognize that the majority of offenders we are dealing with are aboriginal. I see the non-aboriginal staff members that we have working here, working with the aboriginal staff, strategizing on ways to help."



We strategize on a daily basis on how we are going to meet the specific needs of each offender.

Bonnie said she has seen good things coming out of Probation Services in her short time in the job.

"We have a bunch of dedicated people in this office who recognize that each offender has different needs and we strategize on a daily basis on how we are going to meet the specific needs of each offender."

PROFILE: Rosemary Rowlands

Rosemary Rowlands is cognizant of the redevelopment occurring within the Yukon justice system.

And as Director of Justice for the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN), she wants to ensure that CYFN continues to play a part in the process.

A big part of her role is to promote relationship-building between the Department of Justice and the Yukon First Nations that are members of CYFN, she says.

"I've had the benefit of being here all my life and being in the field long enough to know that the relationships need to be improved continuously. They are something that have to be worked on all the time. In the past year, I have worked on improving those relationships."

Rowlands knows about relationship building in Yukon. Her ancestry is a mix of Kaska and "the Mayflower on my father's side" and she has worked for First Nations government since 1989.

This includes writing proposals for the Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) as an administrative assistant that ultimately led to a position as a crime prevention coordinator for KDFN.

Rowlands was offered the Justice director position with CYFN last year.

CYFN Justice has historically worked with citizens by helping them through the court process. A program to help First Nations people adjust to incarceration was in place and is currently being evaluated, she said.

"We had involvement in the correctional centre but that's going through a transition now. We aren't exactly sure how that's going to look, but in the next few months, we'll have a good idea."

The communication that occurred between CYFN and Yukon government through the *Corrections Act* consultation process is an excellent foundation for strong relations at the correctional centre for years to come, she said.

But legislation is only as strong as the people that are implementing it, Rowlands was quick to point out.

"Legislation is not what's going to make or break it, it's going to be what we do now – this is where we are focusing our energy."

And that includes pulling together First Nations communities so they stay involved with the opportunities available for participating in the correctional system.

"We want to honour the effort that was put forward to ensure public safety and to work together to promote the healing, the reintegration back into society, within the communities and throughout the whole justice system. That's our ultimate goal."



The WCC Interim Space Plan has been an important component of the Correctional Redevelopment Strategic Plan and an essential step in preparing for transition to the new correctional centre.

Toward a new Corrections Act and Regulations: Update

The preparation of a new *Corrections Act* and Regulations began with Yukon-wide public consultation from January 2008 to January 2009, on the themes that could be reflected in a new *Act* and Regulations. The consultation was conducted by a Project Team representing the Department of Justice (Yukon Government) and the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN).

The Project Team's work was overseen by the Legislative and Administrative Advisory Committee, chaired by the Department of Justice with representatives from CYFN and the Kaska Tribal Council.

Replacement of the *Corrections Act* was one of the recommendations in the Corrections Action Plan (CAP); and the Strategic Plan identified public consultation for this new legislation as an initiative to be undertaken. The current *Act* and Regulations were reviewed because they did not reflect the direction that correctional redevelopment is taking in Yukon and because they had not remained current with developments in correctional practices or legislation.

The consultation was conducted to ask for comments on six key themes that could be reflected in a new *Corrections Act* and Regulations:

New *Corrections Act*: Highlights

- 1) There is a new section on guiding principles in the *Act*. The principles are based on the values coming out of the *Corrections Act* consultation.
- 2) A new provision in the *Act* creates the position of Director of Inspections and Standards. This person will have duties and powers surrounding the administrative law functions of the new *Act* and Regulations.
- 3) There are new provisions in the *Act* and Regulations surrounding the ability for the Yukon Government to enter into agreements with First Nations over a broad range of programs and services for corrections.
- 4) A provision in the *Act* was inserted at the request of the First Nations members of the Legislative Advisory Committee working group (overseeing the consultation) to indicate that nothing in the *Act* shall in any way affect any provision of a self-government agreement.
- 5) The *Act* includes provisions governing the duties and powers of corrections staff, similar to current legislation in other jurisdictions.
- 6) A new program integration section in the *Act* puts Yukon at the leading edge of corrections legislation in the country.
- 7) There are also provisions in the *Act* such as search and seizure sections and inmate communications monitoring sections that are modern and reflect current best practice and the current common law.
- 8) There is a section in the *Act* authorizing urinalysis that formally allows the collecting of urine samples. This puts Yukon in line with other jurisdictions and within the common law on this issue.
- 9) The *Act* establishes an updated and modern discipline process with adequate appeal provisions and sufficient natural justice elements. This was of particular interest to the Ombudsman.
- 10) Independent hearing adjudicators are authorized and will be used during discipline hearings for major offences as prescribed in the *Act* and Regulations.
- 11) The *Act* authorizes an alternate dispute resolution mechanism for the disciplinary process that will incorporate restorative justice principles; this mechanism is unique in Canada.
- 12) An earned remission system is authorized under the *Act* and Regulations.
- 13) The *Act* provides for the establishment of a Community Advisory Board or boards.

- community involvement;
- First Nations involvement in corrections;
- correctional services;
- offender accountability, security, motivation and healing;
- client-focused programming; and
- partnerships with community resources.

Following the first phase of the *Corrections Act* Consultation (January 2008–July 2008), a Progress Report was released and a draft *Act* and Regulations were prepared for review and feedback at a workshop with First Nations representatives in October 2008.

Additional consultation meetings were held with individual First Nations upon request, and the draft legislation was revised as required. The new *Act* was passed during the spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly and is expected to be proclaimed in fall/winter 2009.

Pilot Program: A Correctional Officer Training Program for Women

Is a career as a Correctional Officer the right choice for you?

Twenty-one women had the opportunity to find out, when they participated in the Correctional Officer Career Exploration Training Program for Women. Those enrolled came from Watson Lake (1 participant); Dawson (8 participants) and Whitehorse (12 participants).

Of the women who took the program, applied and were interviewed for Correctional Officer positions, as of June 17, 2009, six had been hired, while one declined the offer.

The program was designed for women interested in exploring the possibility of becoming a Correctional Officer and working in Whitehorse at the correctional centre. It was designed to help participants answer three basic questions:

- What is a career in corrections about and what does a Correctional Officer do?
- Is the job right for me?
- How do I get started?

The program offered an opportunity to learn, discuss, and have questions answered about the changing correctional system. It helped participants explore the dynamics of working in a correctional environment, the role of the Correctional Officer, and how the training and skills learned as a Correctional Officer can be applied in other careers.

The first week of the program was delivered in Whitehorse at Yukon College. All of the participants attended the first-week sessions together. At the end of the first week, the Dawson participants returned to Dawson. The second and third weeks of the program were delivered in both Whitehorse and Dawson City, via video link between Yukon College (Whitehorse) and the Dawson Community campus.

The program was funded by Advanced Education through the Community Training Fund and was delivered by Yukon College, in partnership with the Department of Justice. The guest speakers, presenters and instructors brought a variety of experiences and expertise and included Elders, consultants, and Yukon Government and Yukon College staff.

Participants, guest speakers, presenters and instructors were asked to provide their recommendations for improving the program for delivery in the future. Their feedback will be compiled and presented to Advanced Education, the Department of Justice, and Yukon College.

For information about this pilot program, please contact us.

How to contact us

The Corrections Action Plan Implementation Office is part of the Department of Justice. You can contact us in the following ways:

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