



# GIANT MINE Oversight Board

Box 1602 . 5014-50th Avenue . Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P2  
Phone 867.675.0788 . Fax 867.675.0789 . Web [www.gmob.ca](http://www.gmob.ca)

Office of the Mayor  
Yellowknife City Hall  
Box 580  
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N4

Attention: Mayor Rebecca Alty

June 10, 2020

**Re: Giant Mine Oversight Board recommendations directed to the City of Yellowknife (2019)**

Thank you for your letter of May 29, 2020 in which you respond to recommendations directed to the City of Yellowknife in the Giant Mine Oversight Board 2019 Annual Report. I would like to thank Mr. Todd Slack for speaking with the Board during its June 1, 2020 meeting to discuss the City's perspective on the report recommendations and to enable the Board to further explain its intentions.

The Board's 2019 Annual Report included several recommendations (2019-3, 2019-7 and 2019-8) that were intended to support and enhance the City's engagement in the remediation process. As your letter and Mr. Todd's engagement with the Board demonstrated, it's clear that the Board was not as precise as it might have been regarding the context for the recommendations of concern to the City. The Board hopes that the following clarifications will help overcome this miscommunication.

**RECOMMENDATION 2019-3 Directed to: Mayor and Council, City of Yellowknife**

**GMOB recommends that the City of Yellowknife continue to improve its ability to fully engage in aspects of the Project affecting residents of Yellowknife.**

The recommendation noted that there were marked improvements in the City's engagement with the Giant Mine Remediation Project Team but in the Board's view the City needs to be more "proactive in making sure residents know more about the many implications of the (Giant Mine Remediation) Project." The Board acknowledges the marked improvement in the City's direct engagement with the Project Team over the past year and encourages the City to further develop and enhance that work. However, it is the Board's view that the City needs to consult more with its citizens to ensure that its discussions with the Project Team more fully reflect citizens' concerns, vision and objectives. The Board is not aware of any significant effort on the City's part to publicly inform residents regarding its engagement efforts with the Project Team, and to seek input and feedback on its progress, the interests it presents to the Project Team and the positions it may take during negotiations.

The Board agrees that the City is not a Project proponent and that the Project Team has responsibilities for ensuring that residents are aware of Project implications. However, the Board feels strongly that the City needs to be an informed advocate for its citizens' interests and does not agree that the "the onus for making residents aware of 'the many implications of the Project' rests with the Project itself." The City is not a bystander when it comes to ensuring that the Project achieves all the benefits possible for its residents and minimizes the negative effects. It can only do this if it is well informed, regarding residents' views and objectives.

The Board suggests that the City create a communications program that allows it to share Project-related processes, the decisions it has made and needs to make, and receive input from its citizens that will inform, enhance and support City direction. This could include communications tools and strategies such as scheduled online discussions, media information sessions, regular City updates that include room for public feedback, targeted community surveys and regular community newsletters specific to the Project.

All Parties to the Environmental Agreement, including the City, have received support from the Project to fully engage in all aspects of the Project. Both the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and the North Slave Metis Alliance include frequent and meaningful engagement with their constituents as an essential part of their work. Their constituents continue to have a direct impact on the positions these Parties take to the Project Team. Other residents of Yellowknife should have the same opportunity.

**RECOMMENDATION 2019-7 Directed to: Minister and Deputy Minister, CIRNAC; Minister and Deputy Minister, ENR; City of Yellowknife; YKDFN; NSMA.**

**As in 2016, 2017 and 2018, GMOB recommends that the federal, territorial, municipal and Indigenous governments work together and finally resolve off-site contamination issues. These issues include public health and environmental concerns, land use planning, safety measures to reduce potential exposure, and other remediation, management and planning concerns.**

The Board recognizes the progress being made by the GNWT, YKDFN and NSMA and went on to recommend that the City of Yellowknife "be involved in the development of a strategy and action plan to deal with issues that affect public confidence in residents health, safety and quality of life." Your letter states that the City is willing to participate, but has not been formally invited or involved to date. The Board is of the view that the City can take a more aggressive role on this issue given its responsibility for the wellbeing of its citizens and be a more effective advocate and catalyst for the resolution of off-site contamination legacy issues. It does not need to wait for an invitation.

**RECOMMENDATION 2019-8 Directed to: Minister and Deputy Minister, CIRNAC; Minister and Deputy Minister, ENR; City of Yellowknife; YKDFN; NSMA.**

**GMOB recommends that by 2025 the federal, territorial, municipal and Indigenous governments jointly develop and approve a land use plan for the Giant Mine site post-remediation. In addition to addressing post-remediation uses of the site, the land use plan should incorporate related aspects of the long-term care plan.**

GMOB stated in the notes to the recommendation that, "there was no consensus among the key parties, let alone the general public, regarding what the Giant Mine site should look like after the remediation is complete." The Board's intent is encourage all affected parties to engage in a comprehensive land use planning process as soon as possible. The Board welcomes the City's response to the recommendation

but again urges the City to be more proactive in moving the planning process forward. The citizens of Yellowknife will be the ones most affected by the Project and will be directly affected by the legacy. It is the City's responsibility to ensure that the planning process unfolds in the best interests of its citizens. As with the previous (and related) recommendation, the Board is of the view that the City can be a very effective advocate and catalyst for moving the planning process forward.

Finally, thank you again for your letter and the conversation with Mr. Slack. I hope our response assists in clarifying where the Board is coming from with regard to the recommendations directed to the City. I'd be pleased to discuss this further should you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kathleen Racher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "K" and a long, sweeping tail.

Dr. Kathleen Racher  
Chair, Giant Mine Oversight Board