



September 9th, 2024

Presentation to City of Whitehorse Council re: property crime and theft

Good evening, Mayor & Council,

My name is Joel Gaetz and I am here tonight representing the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and our membership.

Thank you for taking the time to hear us tonight. I am here to address an urgent issue that is severely impacting our community: the recent surge in theft and property related crimes.

As you all know, overall crime, theft and property damage have increased over the past few years. I'd like to present a few [crime statistics](#) that were released on August 13 by the Whitehorse RCMP. I've also calculated the percentage of increase, year over year, so that it's easy to visibly see how bad these are:

Crime Stats	April 1- June 30		Percentage Increase
	2023	2024	
Break & Enter	56	72	28.6%
Theft under \$5,000	123	144	17.1%
Vehicle Thefts	28	45	60.7%
Thefts from Motor Vehicles	37	77	108.1%
Bicycle Thefts	13	34	161.5%

The business community wishes to stress that this issue is of the utmost importance. It is affecting their very ability to stay in business. And just as important- the physical and psychological safety of staff and workers. Many employees feel threatened and are reluctant to confront shoplifters due to the fear of conflict or violence. This is especially concerning for those most vulnerable such as young workers and women.

Where is the government's response? Where is the justice system? Where is the law and order that we expect our governments to provide?

Offenders are not only more brazen than they were in the past but seem to be operating with a disturbing level of organization and intent. Previously, thefts were conducted with some level of discretion, today's shoplifters are blatant and unconcerned about being caught. We



are now seeing regular armed robberies in this community. This has left many business owners feeling helpless, as there is minimal legal recourse available to them.

This level of crime affects everyone. From our local economy to tourists and visitors who witness blatant shoplifting, and are exposed to open drug and alcohol use on the streets.

While this is a systemic issue that also requires changes to our justice system and law enforcement, we call on the Municipal Government to step up to the table, and work with other governments and stakeholders to actively find solutions that will fix this problem that the business community feels they have been facing on their own.

I have attached a list of 28 businesses who have all been severely impacted by crime in the last year, some of these businesses are us here tonight. As I read these names, please keep in mind this is not a full list, and there are many more out there.

*** read list of businesses***

As we enter into the upcoming election season, we want to remind those running, at all levels of government, that the public is watching. It's time to get our priorities in order, and start working on solutions that can only be found and implemented by working together. The Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and the local business community are here letting you know this urgently needs to be addressed and that we are committed to finding solutions for the benefit of our economy and our community as a whole.

Thank you,

Joel Gaetz, Chair
Safety, Maintenance & Parking Subcommittee
Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce



List of businesses that have been severely impacted by crime:

- North of Ordinary
- Angelina's Toy Boutique
- Due North Maternity and Baby
- Yukon Refillery
- The Spruce Box
- North End Gallery
- The Franchise
- Yukon Pump
- All West Glass
- Virsa Indian Cuisine
- Triniti Technology
- Shoppers Drug Mart
- The Paper Trail
- Renuva
- Road Dog Music
- Farm & Social Bowl Bar
- Kita Sushi
- Pickapeppa
- Well Read Books
- Coast Mountain Sports
- Smashed YXY Food Truck
- Paradise Alley
- Bliss Salon
- Murdoch's Gem Shop
- Yukon Built
- The Fruit Stand
- Arts Underground
- Teamsters