

Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective (NSCC) Update

The purpose of this update is to clarify and offer additional information to aspects of the Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective project organization and our work with the planning department. This is not an exhaustive update or revisiting of all aspects of this project, but rather an opportunity to fill gaps in understanding as identified to NSCC by members of council and staff.

Please see delegation report discussed on December 19, 2022 by Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective ([see item 9.5 at this link](#)) for further details on this project.

Project at a Glance

NCSS is foundationally built on an ethos of care and commitment to the wellbeing of our community. The sleeping cabin village is an intentional community building effort that looks to provide not only housing, but a structure of care, support and empowerment to residents. The project has been co-created by Northumberland County residents who are both housed and unhoused.

NSCC is offering an emergency transitional solution to the local housing shortage. This is a stop-gap measure that we would like to introduce until more permanent affordable housing stock is introduced in our community. Sleeping cabin villages are intended as a low-cost alternative that is safer and more appropriate than a doorway, a bus shelter, or an encampment.

People with lived experience form the core of this initiative and as a group, we have formed relationships between individuals living unsheltered or unhoused, and we are committed to those relationships. In our collective commitment to the wellbeing of our community, we recognize that stable and secure housing is a first and necessary step. Housing with the structure of care and support we will be operationalizing in the village will ensure a model of flourishing unique to Northumberland County.

NSCC is asking for a licence to use part of a currently unused section of the former Memorial Arena parking lot, on Furnace St in Cobourg, in order to run a six-month pilot project providing transitional housing for Cobourg residents who have been chronically unhoused or unsheltered. Our organisational partner, Green Wood Coalition will be responsible for the insurance, finances and overall management of the site. The funding to begin the project is currently being raised through fundraising.

Update on the state of homelessness and supportive services in Cobourg

According to a recent statement by Lisa Horne, Director of Northumberland County Social Services, the number of people using the warming room has significantly increased this winter. Northumberland News (Jan 20, 2023) reported that: *the “2022-2023 warming room usage data is still being collected, but Horne noted there’s already an increase in visitors with an average of 10 people staying most of the night. There has also been an increase over last year in the number of people coming and going from the warming room, and a corresponding rise in incidents and discharges from the service.”* ‘Discharges from service’ refers to cases where an individual is not permitted to access the overnight warming room. It should be noted the warming room is an overnight warming space that does not allow users to sleep in beds, but rather take refuge from the cold from 8PM to 7AM.

During budget proceedings at this council, Cobourg Public Library CEO Tammy Robinson reported that as one of the Town’s public warming spaces, they have seen an increase in usage from those who have few other options to access daytime shelter and washrooms.

Cobourg’s Municipal Legislative Services & Enforcement has continued to issue Notices to Vacate at outdoor encampment locations through winter 2023.

Transition House, Northumberland County’s only safe and accessible emergency shelter for men and women over the age of 18, is facing staff shortages and organizational disruption with no current Executive Director in place at the time of writing this update. This dysfunction has created uncertainty in the community as to its ability to continue providing adequate services to those in need. Additionally, there are a limited number of beds available to residents.

We are in need of new solutions to meet the growing and complex needs individuals of all afflictions are facing in our community when it comes to adequate housing. We implore the municipality and the County to continue the important work of filling the gaps in the housing continuum.

Further Information on Project Organization

Engagement with the County

In fall 2023, NSCC met with members of staff from Northumberland County Social Services and Planning. At that time we asked if the County had any surplus land for affordable housing we could apply for and we were told that they were struggling to find land for their own housing projects.

As a result of this meeting, it was decided to approach the Town of Cobourg for a potential license for surplus land. NSCC is asking for a license agreement to use the Furnace Street/former Memorial Arena site as it has been previously identified as part of the town's land

inventory, and designated within that document suitable for emergency, transitional and/or affordable housing.

NSCC has confirmed with Northumberland County Social Services that a direct deposit for OW housing for each resident can be made to NSCC to help cover monthly costs (as is commonly done with private landlords).

We have maintained connection with Northumberland County and have a follow up meeting scheduled this month to further determine how NSCC and Northumberland County (as the Service Manager for Housing and Homelessness), might partner to best work alongside the chronically unhoused individuals this project aims to support.

Social Service Partners

As part of our commitment to residents' wellbeing, we have made it a priority to engage agencies and organizations that support human services. This will facilitate residents having easy and supportive access to community services, as is critical to the housing first model. We have heard that although there is a great deal of support and interest in partnering with NSCC, it is difficult for those organizations to make commitments to a project organization that does not have a site, and therefore does not have a launch date.

That said, NSCC has received optimistic welcomes and most organizations we have connected with have agreed to come to site to offer services and await more information to solidify these intentions.

NSCC has received letters of support from the following organizations:

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Kawartha Pine Ridge Four County crisis manager
 Watton Employment (employment services)
 Fare Share Food Bank
 Green Wood Coalition (specializing in harm reduction, outreach support with navigating social services and health care systems, Red Path in community treatment programming and WrapAround training and facilitation)

Please see letters of support in Appendix A for further information.

We are working towards similar on site partnerships and have had meetings with the following organizations to begin to determine how best to work together with our residents, which will ultimately require more specificity of timeline to move forward:

Northumberland Hills Hospital (mental health and homelessness outreach services)
 Fourcast (addiction counseling)
 Help Centre (for affordable housing case management, Rentsmart courses, Tax courses)

Ontario Addiction Treatment Centre (for methadone treatment)

WrapAround

Our commitment to the care and wellbeing of residents will not rely solely on service partnership, but will also include an integrated care model opportunity known as WrapAround. As part of the services offered on site, residents will be offered WrapAround Facilitation.

The WrapAround facilitation process is a person driven, team based planning that develops an individualized plan drawing from personal strengths to develop strategies to address a person's needs/goals. This facilitation will enable the residents to work towards their goals and decide which other social services may be appropriate to utilize/access on site.

WrapAround initiatives have been used successfully within our community for families, children, seniors and individuals facing complex challenges. WrapAround Northumberland, the Ontario Health Team and Green Wood Coalition have all used this methodology of care to change lives within this community.

Through the facilitation process, the individual/family create a team and identify their individual strengths and challenges. The team works collaboratively to honour those strengths and develop an individualized plan and strategizes to effectively address the person's/family's individualized needs on a day to day basis creating opportunity for incremental success. Wrap Team members ensure formal supports are arranged and the service provider partnerships listed above will ensure we have service navigation pathways with formal and specialized services as needed.

An outcome of the Wrap is a plan which builds upon the foundation of the person's strengths and promotes empowerment. In this way, our goal is to put people back in charge of their lives so that they don't feel helpless and powerless. Rather, we teach and support them how to direct their own change process which often leads to hope that their life can be different. When this happens, things can start to change very quickly, as seen by the countless individuals in our communities, touched by the WrapAround process.

"Things have come so far and my life is better than I ever thought it could be. I feel hopeful about the future." - WrapAround Participant (Northumberland County)

Facilitators are officially trained in this supportive facilitation programming which includes understanding how to measure the success of a Wrap through a high fidelity common measurement tool. This tool was developed by WrapAround Canada in partnership with Dr. Michael Ungar, Director of the Resilience Research Centre at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. The logic model developed for this facilitation program shows clearly how intervention activities initiated by WrapAround facilitation can lead to short term (1-3 months) and intermediate outcomes (4-18 months).

WrapAround facilitation, while part of on-site planning, will not stop if the site is not in place, but rather will continue for as long as an individual is committed to the facilitation program. This continued commitment to an individual's success is an important component of this project's goals.

Sleeping Cabin Village Operational Policies

Sleeping cabin residents will be program participants rather than formal tenants, according to the Residential Tenancies Act, which includes exclusions for temporary, transitional housing that includes rehabilitative or therapeutic services. This means that participants will not have the legal rights of a tenant, nor access to the Landlord-Tenant Board, and will not sign a lease. Rather participants will be brought in through an intake process and may be removed from the program through a discharge process, rather than formal eviction proceedings.

Program participants will be selected based on referral from partner organizations, with final selection being approved by Green Wood Coalition leadership. Participants must be experiencing chronic homelessness within Northumberland County in order to apply.

The sleeping cabin residents will be active participants in the governance of the sleeping cabin village through a leadership team of made up of 4 elected residents. These 4 residents will participate in bi-weekly meetings with residents and program staff, as well as monthly meetings with NSCC steering committee leadership. The village meetings will allow community members to resolve issues as they arise and to discuss each person's roles and responsibilities as needed. A paid project manager may provide facilitation scaffolding if required.

The following basic rules will apply to the village community:

1. I will not commit violence.
2. I will not persist in disruptive behaviour.
3. I respect each person's property and the property of the village—I will not steal or damage property.
4. I will contribute to the operation and maintenance of the village and attend bi-weekly village meetings.
5. I will treat others with respect regardless of beliefs, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and background.
6. I will be a positive member of this community and surrounding neighborhood making it a safe, secure and pleasant place to live.

Sleeping Cabins: A more sustainable option for residents & community

A sleeping cabin village is an alternative to both survival camping and encampments which ensure the vital connection of community and intentional support structures of care. As articulated, the vision for this project is more than just housing, but rather is intentional

community building with opportunities for targeted support programming aimed to improve lives of people currently living unsheltered, in a variety of ways.

As a relatively new concept, we appreciate that there are questions about the longer-term viability of a sleeping cabin community. First, it should be acknowledged that long-term affordable housing solutions are critically needed within this community. Sleeping cabins are intended to be an urgent response to emergency housing needs and not a replacement for long-term affordable housing. Each type of shelter plays a distinct and critical role within the housing continuum.

For as long as sleeping cabins are needed as a sheltering option, the following requirements must be met to sustain the operation:

- Ongoing site costs (funding will be primarily through OW housing benefits from each resident, community donation and fundraising)
- Site maintenance (e.g., cleaning, yard maintenance, snow removal, garbage) – this work will be completed by residents
- Program administration, including staff resourcing of site manager
- Coordination of services, as needed based on resident requirements, such as WrapAround.
- Seeking of a permanent site

NCSS will remain committed to this project's success at every stage. Our team of citizen experts will continue to ensure operational sustainability when we have a site, and will continue to strategize and knit our collective assets to meet challenges as they arise, for as long as homelessness is an issue in our community.

Superior Court of Justice Decision on Encampments

As explained in the Municipal Clerk's memo, a recent decision from the Ontario Superior Court of Justice prohibits bylaw from evicting people experiencing homelessness from encampments if they are not provided with appropriate and accessible shelter space. Given the large number of people who are currently unsheltered in Northumberland County (78), with only 18 beds available at Transition House and given that 85% of these folks are currently residing in Cobourg, this could become an issue that greatly affects our Town. NSCC is offering an opportunity for not only our unsheltered neighbours but the whole Cobourg community to allow 12 people to safely access supportive housing rather than an encampment in a public park or elsewhere.

Sleeping Cabin Villages are NOT an Encampment

- *In an encampment anyone can move in:* NSCC residents are selected for their willingness to contribute to the village as a positive community member. Each resident is paying to live there. The success of the management of the Village by the residents is essential for their survival.

- *Encampments do not necessarily have rules to adhere to:* The Village will have rules and regulations to be followed by residents. Not following these rules could result in a person being discharged from the program (see Sleeping Cabin Operational Policies).
- *The numbers of people living in an encampment can rapidly increase the longer the site exists:* At NSCC there will be one person per cabin and we will not allow others to set up tents or stay in the other trailers on site. The Village will be gated with security cameras in place. Guests will be signed in and out.
- *Encampments often do not have a governance structure in place:* The village will be overseen by NSCC volunteers/staff and Green Wood Coalition staff to ensure the success and positive cooperation of those who live there as well as with their surrounding neighbours.
- *Encampments often do not have social and health services on site:* A key component to NSCC's program will be the delivery of WrapAround Facilitation and other social service partners on site visits to help residents achieve their goals and move onto other housing when it becomes available (see Social Service Partners and WrapAround).
- *Fire can be a risk in encampments due to lack of heating, outdoor cooking and spacing of tents:* NSCC will be abiding by all fire regulations and cabins will be 10 feet apart. Each cabin will have a fire alarm, fire extinguisher and carbon monoxide alarm. Each cabin is heated and has electricity. Outdoor cooking and fires will not be allowed. Emergency vehicle access will be provided through an emergency access 6m gate.
- *Encampments do not often have washrooms and garbage/recycling and waste can accumulate and become a visible eye sore and health hazard:* A trailer of washrooms and showers will be provided and garbage/recycling will be stored in an enclosed area with weekly pick up.

Plans for Community Engagement

NSCC continues to engage with the community through communications in both traditional media and social media forums. We are planning to engage directly with the existing neighbours surrounding the arena, however we are waiting to confirm we have authorization to use the site so that we have as much information from the Town as possible in order to answer questions to the best of our ability. A community information meeting will be arranged in the late first, early second quarter to share further project details with and answer questions from the community.

To date we have over 800 followers on Facebook and have fundraised \$29,791.89 for this initiative.

Engagement with Cobourg Police Services and Cobourg Fire Department

We continue to meet with both the Cobourg Police Services and Cobourg Fire Department to hear their concerns and we are working with them to align with their strategic goals for the community. We are applying for the Cobourg Police Services Community Innovation Fund, looking for ways CPS can support our project from a budgetary perspective and how we can help achieve their strategic goals for community safety and wellbeing.

Working with the Planning Department

Since our last meeting with the council our timeline of events with staff can be documented as follows. Also listed are professionals who have agreed to help us meet the planning requirements.

Timeline of events:

Preconsultation meeting held on January 11, 2023

DRAFT pre-consultation comments provided to NSCC February 1, 2023

- Note they are in “draft” form until Council approval is received for use of these lands—a required next step is approval from Council for use of municipal lands at 206 Furnace St. **(In other words, NSCC is not yet authorized to submit an application.)**

The DRAFT pre-consultation check-list identified the following submissions required to be provided with an application.

- Functional Servicing Report prepared by a qualified engineer
- Architectural Site Plan prepared by a qualified architect/designer
- Architectural Elevation Drawings by a qualified architect/designer a
- Lighting Illumination (Photometric) Plan by a qualified electrical/lighting consultant
- Electrical Site Plan by a qualified electrical consultant
- Noise Study by a qualified consultant is required to ensure the proximity to the existing railway main line and neighbouring industrial uses would not negatively impact the proposed emergency care establishment use,

NSCC Professionals:

We have numerous professionals from the local community who are prepared to support these through check-list requirements:

- Dobri Engineering
- Meg Herod, Planner
- BG Roberts Electric
- Gilmer's Home Hardware and Henderson Construction for cabin building/design
- Green Wood Coalition Lawyers

Appendix A: Letters of support from community social service providers



Canadian Mental Health Association
Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge

2023 01 16

To: Jenni Frenke
Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective

Dear Jenni,

I am writing in support of your Sleeping Cabin initiative for Northumberland County. At CMHA HKPR we recognize the significance of such an undertaking, and the importance of providing a safe place to spend the night for the most vulnerable in our community. As you discussed with my colleague Kelly, I would like to confirm that CMHA HKPR through our Four County Crisis program will offer regularly scheduled visits to your site where our worker will meet with residents seeking crisis supports or connection with other services in the community. At this point, we are able to arrange fortnightly visits and are happy to meet with residents and other members of your team to provide advice and guidance. Please continue to coordinate with Kelly to arrange the most effective time to schedule these visits.

I wish you all the best on this very important effort.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Cadence
Program Manager

Administration Office
(also Ontario Telemedicine/ Early Psychosis Intervention Services)

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City of Kawartha Lakes
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Fax: (705) 328-2456

Email: info@cmhahkpr.ca
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Ontario

Central East Local Health Integration Network



United Way
City of Kawartha Lakes
Change starts here.
ckl-unitedway.ca



United Way
Peterborough & District

ACCREDITATION CANADA
AGRÉMENT CANADA

For bequests, our legal name is:
CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
HALIBURTON, KAWARTHA, PINE RIDGE BRANCH

Charitable Registration No. # 10686 3889

Northumberland Fare Share Food Bank
Bldg 19, 700 D'Arcy Street
Cobourg ON K9A 5T3
January 27, 2023



Re: Commitment to Support Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective

To Whom It May Concern,

Per discussions with the leadership of Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective, the Board of Directors of Northumberland Fare Share Food Bank has undertaken to provide necessary food support for residents of the sleeping cabins.

Specifically, most potential residents of the Sleeping Cabins are already our Neighbours (our term for "clients"), and those who are not will be encouraged to register with the Food Bank for food support.

Additionally, the Food Bank commits to providing food supplies that will be used in common by the residents such as basic spices, condiments and core food items to the best of our ability.

Should transportation be an issue, the Food Bank will work together with the Sleeping Cabins leadership to ensure that the food can be delivered appropriately.

More broadly, the Board of the Northumberland Fare Share Food Bank supports the goals of the Sleeping Cabin Collective. Our parallel organizations are partners in seeking to support the vulnerable populations in our County.

Kind regards,

Harry Meester
Director
Lead - Partnerships and Marketing
Northumberland Fare Share Food Bank
905-518-3177

GREEN WOOD COALITION

February 3rd, 2023

Dear Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective,

I am writing to express my support of the sleeping cabin village. Green Wood Coalition (GWC) provides shoulder- to-shoulder support that allows people to reach their full potential through community-based initiatives.

As the Outreach Coordinator at GWC, I am able to provide on-site assistance to help empower the residents to achieve their personal goals. Examples may include: help in navigating the social service, income support, and health care systems by providing individualized information and support. Green Wood outreach workers are trained facilitators in both WrapAround and The RedPath Recovery programs. We will also be able to provide personal harm reduction supplies on-site for those who need it.

We walk alongside many of your potential residents and as such already have a pre-existing relationship and a level of established trust with folks. The sleeping cabin village will allow us to continue these relationships with more ease as we will not have to struggle to search for folks outside or in the shelter system to make that connection. I wish you all the best in your project and I look forward to seeing the success of NSCC.

Sincerely,

Nicole Whitmore
Outreach Coordinator
Green Wood Coalition

4 Centennial Drive, Port Hope, Ontario L1A 4C5
Registered Canadian Charity: 835935263RR0001
www.greenwoodcoalition.com

January 10, 2023

Jenni Frenke
Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective
jennifrenke@hotmail.com

Good Afternoon Jenni,

Quality career services not only enhance individuals' employability, educational and labour market outcomes; but also improve their overall mental health and wellbeing. Watton Employment Services responds to the needs of the unemployed and underemployed by providing employment programs, services and support to address and overcome some of the barriers to entering the labour market.

By building networks in the community with local businesses/employers and other service providers, we provide the comprehensive services an individual will need to find and keep a job. By working together to connect people with opportunities, we are giving more individuals a chance to succeed and gain some independence and autonomy. We are committed to improving the lives of residents by providing the following:

- A welcoming resource centre that comprises of a job board, computer access, printer/photocopier/fax machine, employment and post-secondary school resource library, labour market information, etc.;
- Job search and skills development workshops, i.e., Rockin' Resume, Ace the Interview, Customer Service Excellence, Time Management, Transferrable Skills, Personality Dimensions, etc.;
- Training, networking, and placement opportunities;
- Career counselling with one-on-one supports to work on a personal plan towards long-term, sustainable employment;
- Apprenticeship and skilled trades information.

When community members have access to meaningful job opportunities and employment supports, it can often be a pivotal point for them. We will be able to provide residents with a range of quality professional services available to jobseekers to help them find suitable employment, training and educational opportunities. Employment is one component in the broader set of strategies to end homelessness through collaboration and coordination over a number of sectors.

We will be pleased to assist you and your residents by providing a presentation introducing our services to your clients in a group setting on-site, if suitable space is available. As an Employment Ontario service provider, we are more than happy to provide on-going employment services at no charge.

Thank you for reaching out to us about our services. We look forward to working with you to assist your residents with their employment services' needs.

Sincerely,



Greg Watton, Managing Director