



County and Transition House partner on new facility to modernize shelter services and address community need

Cobourg, ON – December 4, 2023 – Northumberland County Council will review a staff report on Wednesday, December 6, regarding final arrangements in the purchase of a 47-bedroom complex at 310 Division Street, Cobourg, to help address the urgent local need for housing and shelter services.

Operators of the former Cobourg Retirement Residence announced earlier this year that the facility would be closing its doors. The vacant property came to the attention of County staff in early November, who brought a report to a closed session of County Council on November 15. In the report, staff proposed purchasing the property on behalf of Transition House Shelter and entering into a mortgage agreement with Transition House. In accordance with Municipal Act provisions for Closed Sessions, the purchase of the facility was completed with approval from County Council through a confidential report so as not to interfere with commercial negotiations.

The County and Transition House are continuing discussions on the partnership and specific purchase terms. The goal is to ultimately relocate shelter operations to this nearby, more modern facility, and close the current 10 Chapel Street location.

Council will review final details on the acquisition of the property in Closed Session on December 6th, before moving to Open Session for a presentation by staff on plans and next steps.

“County Council recognizes the need to rapidly expand new shelter, supportive, transitional, and affordable housing opportunities for vulnerable and low-income residents,” states Warden Mandy Martin. “With homelessness a rising concern across Canada, we are seeing the increasing impacts in Northumberland, with more people living rough in their cars, in parks and forested areas, individually or in encampments. The County is looking at all possibilities, all real estate ventures, to increase options across the entire housing spectrum. The speed with which we have moved on this opportunity demonstrates our resolute commitment to creating necessary change that meets pressing community need and addresses widespread community concerns.”

Transition House is Northumberland’s only emergency shelter for adults experiencing homelessness. With escalating demand for services, staff have increasingly been grappling with the limitations of the current century-home facility. The shelter has just four rooms, each

equipped with bunk beds, and can accommodate a maximum of 22 individuals. Staff can further accommodate up to seven individuals through arrangements with local motels, as an overflow measure.

The purchase of 310 Division Street will enable Transition House to consolidate operations to a single site, ensuring consistent wrap-around services for all clients. With 47 units and shared kitchen amenities, the vision is for a multi-purpose facility. Approximately 35 emergency shelter spaces will address immediate need and, over the longer-term, transitional housing accommodations and other services will create pathways out of homelessness. This plan builds upon the recommendations from a third-party review of the shelter system commissioned by the County earlier this year. The review recommended a minimum of 25 shelter spaces for adults, in addition to the creation of supportive and transitional housing spaces.

“There are many circumstances that can push people into crisis without a place to call home,” states Rev. Neil Ellis, Board Chair for Transition House Shelter. “We know that housing is essential to a person’s inherent dignity and well-being, and to building sustainable and inclusive communities. The steps the County is taking – with investment in improved shelter facilities, with the construction of affordable housing units at Elgin Park and Ontario Street in Cobourg – are truly walking the talk. Transition House is gratified to partner on this new shelter service model for our community. As winter takes hold, this hub will create more options for people to come in out of the cold. Transition House looks forward to welcoming them to this safe, warm space.”

The County and Transition House will be hosting community information and engagement sessions for residents in the coming weeks. Residents will be invited to share their feedback, ask questions, and provide input that will help positively shape the integration of this new hub within the broader community. Details on date, time, and location will be shared as they become available.

Community members are also invited to attend the meeting of County Council this **Wednesday, December 6, 2023** in Council Chambers, at 555 Courthouse Road, Cobourg, which has been scheduled for review of the draft 2024-2026 Northumberland County Budget. As part of this meeting, Council will enter Closed Session to review final details on the acquisition of 310 Division Street. In Open Session, staff will deliver a presentation on plans and next steps for this property. The Budget meeting begins at 9:30 a.m.. The staff presentation on 310 Division Street will begin at 3:00 p.m.

To make a delegation at this County Council meeting, please contact the County Clerk at matherm@northumberland.ca prior to 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 6th. Delegations are permitted to attend in-person or virtually.

Visit Northumberland.ca/ShelterModernization for more information about 310 Division Street and to subscribe for updates.

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For more information:

Kate Campbell

Director, Communications

Northumberland County

Phone: 905-372-3329 ext. 2335

Email: campbellk@northumberland.ca

Web: northumberland.ca

About Northumberland County

Located on the traditional territory of the Mississauga, Northumberland County is a thriving community just one hour east of Toronto along Highway 401, with easy access to urban centres to the north, east and west. As the upper tier level of municipal government for the region, Northumberland County's vision is to bring together people, partnerships and possibilities for a strong and vibrant Northumberland. Our community includes seven distinct yet complementary municipalities, with County Council comprised of the Mayors of each of these member municipalities:

- Township of Alnwick/Haldimand
- Municipality of Brighton
- Town of Cobourg
- Township of Cramahe
- Township of Hamilton
- Municipality of Port Hope
- Municipality of Trent Hills

About Transition House Shelter

Transition House is Northumberland's only safe, accessible emergency shelter for men and women over the age of 18. Transition House provides safe, dignified and supportive temporary housing, life skills and transitional support services to clients from Cobourg, Port Hope, Alnwick/Haldimand, Cramahe, Trent Hills, Brighton, Hamilton Township, and Alderville First Nation.