

Question from Citizen

How is homeless/addiction assistance distributed throughout Northumberland County? It would appear that Cobourg has been assigned with the task of addressing the majority of these concerns which ultimately will have a negative outcome on our downtown businesses as well as impending safety concerns. Please give EXACT numbers of shelter spaces being offered in Brighton, Port Hope and the rest of the County and the type of services and supports these towns are providing in this respect. As Cobourg taxpayers we must have answers to these questions.

An un-named person in the County gave this reply which partially answers the questions:

Date: January 28, 2024 at 9:35:01 PM EST

Good evening

Thank you very much for following up with an email this Friday, and sincere apologies for the delay in responding. It appears that while a response to your initial inquiry was drafted, it was for some reason not sent (an oversight on our part). We are striving to get back to people in a timely manner, so apologies that you have been waiting for an extended period.

Homelessness is certainly a growing concern in our community – and across the province. As the service manager in Northumberland for the housing and homelessness systems, this is one of the County's most pressing priorities. We are using all available resources to address this issue. From enhancing shelter spaces and investing in street outreach services to implementing rent supplement programs and building rent-geared-to-income housing, our approach is comprehensive.

In more rural contexts like Northumberland, front-line support services for individuals experiencing homelessness, such as shelters, tend to be located in more densely populated areas – as is the case with Transition House shelter being located in the Town of Cobourg, Northumberland's most highly-populated community. This ensures that shelters are located close to a high congregation of services – services such as health care and pharmacies, employment and counselling services, social services, children's aid, food options such as food banks and grocery stores, and other general supports that are available to any member of the community.

Transition House Shelter is the **only** emergency shelter service in Northumberland for both men and women over the age of 18, and has been in operation for approximately 20 years. It is an independent organization run by a Board of Directors. Northumberland County is Transition House's primary funding partner. To that end, all communities contribute to services rendered, via resident property taxes.

With the location of the current Transition House Shelter at 10 Chapel Street, Cobourg no longer meeting the needs of people experiencing homelessness, the vacancy of nearby 310 Division Street created an opportunity to modernize shelter services. 310 Division Street will help address our community's urgent need for housing and shelter, with shelter spaces for approximately 35 people to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, along with warming

(winter) and cooling (summer) services, as of spring 2024.

This site was selected because it immediately addresses several requirements to support people experiencing homelessness, at risk of becoming homeless, and other vulnerabilities:

- It is centrally located, enabling people to access services and actively engage with the community.
- It is already zoned to fit the intended use.
- It has a good foundation to improve quickly for occupancy:
 - Toilets, showers and hygiene-related requirements.
 - Allows for retrofitting to align with varied types of housing, such as supportive, transitional, accessible.
 - Has a mix of multipurpose and living space that will allow for safe shelter and housing options, with onsite services to support people in meeting their life stabilization goals.
- It offers space for people to sleep and space for services such as health, employment, and food security.

In the short term, 310 Division Street will help address our community's immediate needs. Longer term, it has the potential to also offer transitional housing that supports people, creates a sense of belonging, and meets individual needs, offering additional pathways out of homelessness.

In 2023, Northumberland County invested over \$500,000 in the homelessness system, the majority of which went towards emergency shelter services. Beyond homelessness services, Northumberland County also invested \$23 Million in housing capital initiatives, such as the Elgin Park Affordable Housing Redevelopment in Cobourg, the King Street East affordable housing complex in Colborne, and a house in Campbellford that will ultimately be used for supportive housing. \$10 Million was also invested in annual housing supports such as rent supplements for residents in need across Northumberland.

All of these initiatives are improving access to shelter and affordable housing, reducing the risks of homelessness in our community.

Thank you,
County of Northumberland