

January 12, 2022

Dear Neighbour:

Today the Province of Ontario is announcing a capital grant of \$8.5M to House of Friendship, through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to help us purchase 190 Weber Street North (formerly Comfort Inn) to operate our ShelterCare service, an innovative model (www.sheltercare.ca) that is helping men who are homeless in our community become healthier and housed.

After a long and thorough search, this is incredible news as it goes a long way to providing the much-needed location stability for ShelterCare for the foreseeable future. At this location, we will provide temporary accommodation for 100 men with 24/7 care and staffing, and wrap-around housing and medical supports onsite.

With nearly 1,100 individuals experiencing homelessness in Waterloo Region, creative solutions like ShelterCare play a critical role in the range of supports needed to address this community crisis.

Through this ShelterCare model, House of Friendship will provide temporary accommodation to men who are homeless including:

- a safe and warm place to stay 24/7;
- onsite health care to address their physical, addiction and mental health needs;
- supports to address the factors that resulted in homelessness (like childhood trauma);
- tools and resources they need to find and maintain permanent housing;
- 24 hour on-site staff supports.

It will still be several months before we begin operating out of this location while we complete renovations and improvements to ready the facility and the property. As details are finalized and we get closer to knowing move-in timing, we will reach out to you again with an update. We will also be sharing updates as available at www.houseoffriendship.org/shelterupdates.

We imagine you might have several questions so we have created the attached Frequently Asked Questions document that we hope you will find helpful. You can also learn more about who House of Friendship is, our breadth of services, and our 83-year history of serving this Region, at www.houseoffriendship.org.

We have seen incredible progress with this model in serving individuals who have faced a very difficult journey in life and need significant support. We also know that the move of this type of housing to your neighbourhood may cause concern. We are committed to being good neighbours, and are here to listen and create solutions together. If you'd like to speak to a House of Friendship team member,

please reach out to Gail Martin, House of Friendship Communications, at 519-742-8327 x 132 or GailM@houseoffriendship.org, who will be able to direct your inquiry to the appropriate person.

In partnership with your community leaders, together we are committed to continuing to serve these vulnerable community members and helping to end the cycle of homelessness:

- **Ward 5 Councillor Jen Vasic:** “Residents in ward 5 have welcomed and rallied around people in need before and I have no doubt we’re ready to do it once more. Thank you to House of Friendship for working with the City of Waterloo again, so that people in our community have a safe place to stay on their path to finding more permanent housing.”
- **Mayor of Waterloo Dave Jaworsky:** “Homelessness is an urgent issue affecting over 1000 people in our region. House of Friendship's innovative, compassionate, and proven ShelterCare model helps people get back on their feet and into permanent housing. Investments from the Province, the Region, and others aid in this major step forward. We will all need to work together to help John Neufeld and the team, make this as successful as possible.”
- **Regional Chair Karen Redman:** “At the Region of Waterloo, we believe our community thrives when everyone has a place to call home. Through this new location, our community will have more supports for people experiencing homelessness to become healthier and housed.”

Thank you in advance for helping create a community where everyone can belong and thrive. We hope that you will join us in believing that as a community we are all stronger when we do it together.

Sincerely,



John Neufeld
Executive Director, House of Friendship

Attached: Frequently Asked Questions