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**Subject:** Urgent: Opposition to the Development of 310 Division St. into a Low Barrier Shelter  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 17, 2024 6:37:47 AM

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**CAUTION:** External E-Mail

Dear Council, MP and MPP,

I hope this email finds you well. As a resident of Northumberland County, I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed development of 310 Division St. into a low barrier shelter.

My concerns are rooted in the lack of community involvement in the decision-making process. It is undemocratic that leaders from outlying communities are making decisions for Cobourg without the active participation of its residents. Furthermore, there is no clear plan addressing the budget required for Cobourg to handle the anticipated increase in crime and violence associated with a larger shelter. Additional resources will undoubtedly be needed by the Police, Fire, and EMS, and the absence of input from key figures such as Cobourg's Mayor, who seems to be being silenced by the County, the Police Chief, Fire Chief, and Bylaw Department is conspicuous and worrisome.

While the rhetoric surrounding 35 rooms housing the same number of individuals as the current shelter system may sound promising, the reality is that transitioning from a 4-bedroom home to a 45-room facility could result in a swift increase to 140 people. Placing those with addiction and mental health issues in the heart of the town, alongside individuals genuinely trying to reintegrate into society, poses a significant risk and threatens to further divide our community.

I challenge the assertion that the low barrier shelter model is needed without the provision of supporting data. How many couples, pet owners, or members of the LGBTQ community in Cobourg require this service? We demand transparency and ask that you explore alternative models adopted by communities like London, Ontario, which effectively segments their homeless population. Whitby in Durham Region serves as another example, where community concerns led to collaboration with the Region to establish a well-defined code of conduct for shelter users, ensuring security for the neighborhood, and comprehensive budgets reflective of the intended business nature.

Our request is simple: eliminate the low barrier shelter model and explore proven alternatives from other communities. It is alarming that the voices of over 1000 constituents, as expressed through an online petition, are being ignored. We demand action from our elected officials (appointed in your case), and it is disconcerting that the mandate appears to supersede the concerns of the community.

Sincerely,

Laurel Burkmar  
