

Northumberland County

MODERNIZING SHELTER SERVICES TO IMPROVE PATHWAYS OUT OF HOMELESSNESS

Community Engagement Initiative



Prepared by:



WHAT WE HEARD REPORT BACK

March 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
WHAT WE HEARD	4
COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW	7
BACKGROUND	7
COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES	10
<i>Table 1: Audiences Engaged</i>	11
<i>Table 2a: Engagement activities and participation – Listening</i>	12
<i>Table 2B: Engagement activities and participation - Engaging</i>	13
<i>Table 2c: Engagement activities and participation - Sharing</i>	14
<i>Table 3: Marketing and Communications Tactics and Reach</i>	14
<i>Image 1: Map of Door-knocking activity</i>	17
WHAT WE HEARD	18
PROJECT SUPPORT AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVED SERVICES FOR UNHOUSED RESIDENTS	18
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND IMPACT	20
OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT	21
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	23
SERVICE USER SESSIONS	24
RECOMMENDATIONS	26
CONCLUSION	28
APPENDIX A – IN-PERSON GROUP SESSIONS NOTES	30
APPENDIX B – VIRTUAL GROUP SESSIONS NOTES	35
APPENDIX C – PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION SUMMARY	39
APPENDIX D – PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY	45
APPENDIX E – SERVICE PROVIDER SESSION	47
APPENDIX F – TRANSITION HOUSE SERVICE USER SESSION SUMMARY	50
APPENDIX G – TRANSITION HOUSE LEADERSHIP INTERVIEWS	53
APPENDIX H – ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK	56

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Homelessness is one of Northumberland County's most pressing priorities. As the System Manager for Social Services in Northumberland, the County is 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, the County's approach is comprehensive.

Transition House Shelter is a registered charity located at 10 Chapel Street in the Town of Cobourg that has provided emergency shelter supports to people experiencing homelessness for approximately 20 years. This organization oversees operations of the sheltering system in Northumberland. The decision to relocate Transition House emergency shelter services from 10 Chapel Street, Cobourg to the nearby 310 Division Street, Cobourg is rooted in the need for a modernized approach to shelter services, and the need for a more suitable, facility for those experiencing homelessness.

There are currently 37 emergency shelter spaces in Cobourg: 22¹ spaces at Transition House and 15 motel spaces. In addition, there are 20 Warming Hub spaces available between November and April. The facility at 310 Division Street will enhance the emergency shelter system by centralizing supports to better address immediate need, with a total of 47 self-contained units – approximately 35 of which are planned to be used as emergency shelter spaces – along with space for a warming and cooling hub, and for community partners to offer supports onsite. Over the longer-term, services will evolve to include transitional housing accommodations, improving pathways out of homelessness.

The move to 310 Division Street builds upon the recommendations from a third-party review of the shelter system commissioned by the County in 2023. The most significant recommendations resulting from this review included relocation to an updated shelter facility, a minimum of 25 shelter spaces for adults, and the creation of supportive and transitional housing spaces. Until transitional housing spaces were available, more shelter spaces would be required.

¹ These numbers reflect an increase to the system since Summer 2023, in response to increased number of individuals living rough in the community. Prior to this, the capacity was 18 spaces at Transition House and 7 motel spaces.

Based on direction from County Council at a December 6th, 2023, meeting of Council, the County finalized the purchase of 310 Division Street for the purposes of a modernized shelter, and partnered with Transition House to coordinate robust community engagement. The purpose of community engagement during the planning phase for the new shelter was to gather feedback to help shape the positive integration of shelter services into the neighbourhood and the broader community. This engagement period was comprised of three distinct phases:

- Listening
- Engaging
- Sharing

Each phase included a series of engagement activities, including small group discussions and public Q&A sessions. These opportunities were vigorously promoted through a strategic communications campaign. Members of the public were also able to learn more through a dedicated web page, submit questions through an online Q&A portal, submit correspondence for response by staff or Council, and make delegations to Northumberland County Committee meetings. Each engagement opportunity was designed to gather valuable input from residents, stakeholders, community partners, and people with lived experience of homelessness.

Throughout this process, engagement activities generated participation from more than 435 people, with over 130 unique individuals directly engaged. Over 2,600 unique individuals became more informed about this initiative by accessing the dedicated web page nearly 3,800 times. And communications efforts between December 4, 2023 and February 23, 2024, improved awareness of this undertaking by reaching a conservative estimate of at least 40,000 people.

This report summarizes the input gathered through the engagement period of the planning process for 310 Division Street, Cobourg.

WHAT WE HEARD

- **Project support and opportunities for improved services for unhoused residents**

- Many participants expressed hope that 310 Division Street, through the work of Transition House, community partners, and the County, will improve shelter and housing supports, with greater dignity for neighbours in need.
 - Participants highlighted the opportunity for 310 Division Street to be a hub of enhanced services that could help people experiencing hardship find a path out of homelessness.
 - Service providers saw an opportunity to partner to offer services onsite, improving access for clients.
- **Community Safety and Impact**
 - Residents expressed apprehension about the connections between increased homelessness and risks to safety and security within the broader community.
 - While there was recognition of the need for enhanced homelessness services and supports for the community, and the anticipated benefits of planned services via 310 Division Street, participants voiced concerns about the suitability of the location for a homeless shelter in a densely-populated area.
 - Neighbours shared concerns about damage and drug paraphernalia on adjacent properties.
 - Neighbours shared that loitering and behavioural issues by individuals accessing services at Transition House's 10 Chapel Street location make people uncomfortable or afraid to be in the area, and there is concern that these issues will transition to Division Street, and potentially increase, following the relocation of shelter services.
 - Participants proposed solutions such as enhancing lighting and installing security cameras at 310 Division Street, enhanced staffing and staff training at the shelter to ensure appropriate levels of support for clients, engagement of professional security services, and community cleanups.
 - **Operations and Management**
 - Many participants had questions about facility management and proposed plans.
 - Many participants had questions about 310 Division Street operating as a 'low barrier' shelter and what that meant exactly in terms of rules and guidelines for Transition House clients.
 - Some participants suggested that the County retain ownership of the 310 Division Street property rather than enter into a Vendor Take Back mortgage

with Transition House, as a means of optimizing asset management and enhancing oversight and accountability measures.

- Many participants wondered about the length of stay and the support that Transition House clients would receive to transition out of homelessness.
- Participants highlighted the importance of learning from successful shelter practices elsewhere, and applying best practices at 310 Division Street.

- **Community Involvement**

- Participants expressed dissatisfaction and transparency concerns pertaining to the County's process for purchase of 310 Division Street for use as a shelter and sought information on community consultation processes for municipal real estate transactions.
- Participants wanted clarification on what the role of the County is on an ongoing basis pertaining to Transition House, what role the Town of Cobourg holds, and how the Cobourg Police Service informs and monitors safety concerns; an agreement between the County and Town was often recommended, similar to the agreement in place between Durham Region and the Town of Whitby for shelter services in that community.
- Participants expressed wanting to be better informed about how decisions about Transition House services are made, including interest in ongoing engagement to improve awareness and understanding.
- Participants wanted to know how they could be more involved with Transition House, including opportunities for donations, volunteerism, and collaborative problem-solving through Transition House's creation of a Community Liaison Community.

This report reflects the diverse perspectives and priorities of the community regarding the relocation to and modernization of shelter services at 310 Division Street, Cobourg. This feedback is meant to inform the planning and agreements for, and operations of, shelter services at this location, to support successful integration of the shelter within the neighbourhood and the broader community.

COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

Homelessness is a growing concern in Northumberland and across the province. This challenging reality results from a myriad of factors ranging from rising housing costs, limited rental options, inadequate social assistance rates, job loss and reduced work hours, to illness and personal crisis, and substance use, with the unprecedented intersection of a housing crisis, an opioid addiction crisis, and a global pandemic exacerbating impacts.

Homelessness is one of Northumberland County's most pressing priorities. As the System Manager for Social Services in Northumberland, the County is 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, the County's approach is comprehensive.

This approach is informed by the County's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan (2019-2029). In 2024, the County will enter year six of this plan, with a vision that "[b]y 2029, the Northumberland housing and homelessness system is responsive to the needs of all residents, providing safe, appropriate and affordable housing options within healthy and inclusive communities."²

Transition House Shelter is a key community partner in achieving this vision. As a registered charity operating at 10 Chapel Street in the Town of Cobourg for approximately 20 years, Transition House delivers emergency shelter services for people experiencing homelessness in Northumberland. In 2018, Transition House was the successful respondent to the County's public Request for Proposals (RFP) procurement process to continue providing emergency shelter services for Northumberland.³

Today, Transition House oversees operations of the current sheltering system including:

² Northumberland County Community & Social Services. (2019). Housing & Homelessness Plan 2019-2029. Northumberland County. <https://www.northumberland.ca/en/living-here/resources/Documents/Northumberland-HH-Plan-2019-2029.pdf>

³ Northumberland County Community & Social Services. (2018, June 28). County partners with Transition House to deliver modernized emergency shelter services. Northumberland County.

- An emergency shelter located at 10 Chapel Street, Cobourg, with current capacity for 22 individuals;
- A winter warming hub located at St. Peter’s Church, 240 College Street, Cobourg, with current capacity for 20 individuals;
- A motel overflow program, with current capacity for 15 individuals; and
- Ad hoc County-funded motel beds (as needed).
- A Family Diversion Program, supporting up to 4 families at one time, in motels, with further supports available to other families at risk with the aim of stabilization/diversion from the homelessness system..

The current location of the emergency shelter at 10 Chapel Street, Cobourg houses 22 people in a 4-bedroom Victorian home, making it very challenging to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness with dignity and intention. The bunkbeds and cramped space create limitations for privacy, accessibility, culture/gender sensitivity, accommodation of relationships, and more. There is limited space for staff, and no dedicated space at all for programming and services.

The motel overflow program and the Winter Warming Hub service, both implemented in 2020, were a response to escalating community need, and have increased the capacity of the shelter system to provide supports. However, this model is costly and inefficient, straining financial and human resources of the shelter system to serve clients across multiple locations, with often insufficient levels of service at these locations to support the complex needs of clients.

In 2023, Northumberland County commissioned a third-party review of the sheltering system.⁴ The most significant recommendations resulting from this review included relocation of shelter services to a new facility that would enable modernization of services, including a minimum of 25 shelter spaces for adults, the creation of transitional housing spaces, and improved access to supports onsite. Until transitional housing spaces were available, more shelter spaces would be required.

The decision to relocate services to 310 Division Street was rooted in this need for a more suitable facility to meet the evolving requirements of those experiencing homelessness in Northumberland. The sale of this former retirement residence, which

⁴ Northumberland County Community & Social Services. (2023). County of Northumberland Homelessness Support System Review. Vink Consulting. <https://pub-northumberland.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=7721>

shares a property line with 10 Chapel Street, created an opportunity to modernize and improve shelter services significantly for the community. At the direction of County Council, in December 2023, the County purchased this vacant property for \$2.4M for the purpose of a new modernized shelter. The County then signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Transition House Shelter to relocate shelter services to this location and enter into a vendor take-back mortgage agreement.

Relocation of shelter services to 310 Division Street will enhance the compassionate delivery of services for people in need, improving pathways out of homelessness. Services will continue to be low-barrier, enabling individuals to access services wherever they are in their journey to life stabilization.

The new location will continue to be centrally located close to community services such as health care services and pharmacies, employment and counselling services, social services, children's aid, food options for groceries, and other general supports that are available to any member of the community. It will be a hub for short-term emergency shelter, with 24/7 staffing, access to onsite wrap-around services provided by community partners such as Northumberland Paramedics Community Paramedicine Program, Northumberland Hills Hospital Community Mental Health Services, and Northumberland County Community & Social Services, and it will include a warming/cooling drop-in centre. This service delivery model will improve cost effectiveness of overall shelter system operations by enabling the consolidation of shelter spaces onsite.

Based on direction from County Council at a December 6th, 2023, meeting of Council,⁵ the County finalized the purchase of 310 Division Street for the purposes of a modernized shelter and partnered with Transition House to coordinate robust community engagement. While residents are not notified in advance of pending real estate transactions because of the need for confidentiality to protect the municipality's negotiating position – ultimately for the benefit of taxpayers – the County and Transition House were committed to engaging the community as planning for the facility got underway. Transition House strives to be a good neighbour, and the goal of the

⁵ Northumberland County Council. (2023, December 6). The Corporation of the County of Northumberland Special County Council Meeting – Budget Deliberations – Revised Agenda. Northumberland County. <https://pub-northumberland.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=641a6b0c-24c1-40c3-ab65-1fc56add1165&Agenda=Merged&lang=English>

engagement phase was to seek feedback to help shape the positive integration of this modernized shelter within the neighborhood and the broader community.

COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The announcement of the 310 Division Street initiative sparked a widespread conversation across Northumberland County. The County and Transition House were committed to engaging in the conversation with community members with the goal of gathering concerns, ideas, and other input to inform the planning for and operations of 310 Division Street, striving to ensure that the new facility meets the needs of shelter residents and service users, as well as the neighbourhood and the broader community.

Northumberland County, Transition House and LURA Consulting developed an engagement plan that had three phases of engagement:

- 1. Listening**

Holding space to hear what residents, stakeholders, and clients have to say.

- 2. Engaging**

Responding to questions and concerns, and creating opportunity for meaningful dialogue.

- 3. Sharing**

Offering information to the community to ensure shared understanding of past, present, and future decision-making.

Each phase included a series of engagement activities, including small group discussions and public Q&A sessions. Each engagement opportunity was designed to gather valuable input from residents, stakeholders, community partners, and people with lived experience of homelessness. Over a 12-week period – from December 4, 2023 to February 23, 2024 – these opportunities were vigorously promoted through a strategic communications campaign.

The following is an overview of audiences engaged.

TABLE 1: AUDIENCES ENGAGED

Audience	Participant Groups
Service Users	Transition House clients and individuals living in encampments
Cobourg Residents	Neighbours within a two-block radius of 310 Chapel Street and residents/businesses in the broader Cobourg community
Service Provider Partners	Including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Northumberland Paramedics Community Paramedicine program• Northumberland Hills Hospital Community Mental Health Services• Salvation Army• The Help Centre• Cornerstone Family Violence Prevention Centre• Canadian Mental Health Association HKPR• Rebound Child and Youth Services• PARN
Northumberland Community	General public, including residents, businesses, local government and municipal staff.

Throughout this process, engagement activities generated participation from more than 435 people, with over 130 unique individuals directly engaged. Over 2,600 unique individuals became more informed about this initiative by accessing the dedicated web page nearly 3,800 times. And communications efforts between December 4, 2023, and February 23, 2024, improved awareness of this undertaking by reaching a conservative estimate of at least 40,000 people.

The following is an overview of engagement activities and participation.

TABLE 2A: ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION – LISTENING

LISTENING			
Activity	Date/Time	Location	Participants
Delegations to Committee and County Council	December 6 th , 2023/ March 6, 2024	Northumberland County – 555 Courthouse Road, Cobourg + Virtual Meeting	9 people/ 7 Delegations
In-Person Small Group Session 1	January 16 th , 2024, 12:30pm – 2:00pm	Northumberland County Boardroom – 600 William Street, Cobourg	24
In-Person Small Group Session 2	January 16 th , 2024, 5:30pm – 7:00pm	Northumberland County Boardroom – 600 William Street, Cobourg	17
Virtual Small Group Session 1	January 25 th , 2024, 6:00pm – 7:30pm	Virtual Zoom Meeting	26
Virtual Small Group Session 2	January 26 th , 2024, 10:00am – 11:00am	Virtual Zoom Meeting	21
Service User Session	February 13 th , 2024 9:30am – 11:30am	Transition House – 10 Chapel Street, Cobourg	25
Transition House Executive Director & Board Chair interviews	February 13 th , 2024	Questionnaire	2

TABLE 2B: ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION - ENGAGING

ENGAGING			
Activity	Date/Time	Location	Participants
Virtual Service Provider Partner Session	January 10 th , 2024 2:00pm-3:30pm	Virtual Zoom Meeting	17
Virtual Public Information and Q&A Session	February 6 th , 2024 6:00pm-7:30pm	Virtual Zoom Meeting	77
Presentation by Transition House to Cobourg Town Council	January 31, 2024	Victoria Hall – 55 King St. W, Cobourg + Virtual meeting	--
Meeting of Town of Cobourg and Northumberland County Senior Staff	February 14, 2024	Victoria Hall – 55 King St. W, Cobourg	6
Join in Northumberland Question & Answer Portal	December 4, 2024 – ongoing	Virtual platform	63 participants 71 submissions
E-mail Correspondence	December 4, 2024 - ongoing	Direct email correspondence	50

TABLE 2C: ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION - SHARING

SHARING			
Activity	Date/Time	Location	Participants
In-person Public Open House	February 12 th , 2024 6:00pm-7:30pm	Royal Canadian Legion Br.133	~75-100 attendees
Presentation to County Council	March 20, 2024 9:30 a.m.	555 Courthouse Road, Cobourg + Virtual Zoom Meeting	--

The County used a variety of methods to generate awareness about the 310 Division Street initiative and notify the community about engagement activities. The following is an overview of marketing and communications tactics and reach.

TABLE 3: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS TACTICS AND REACH

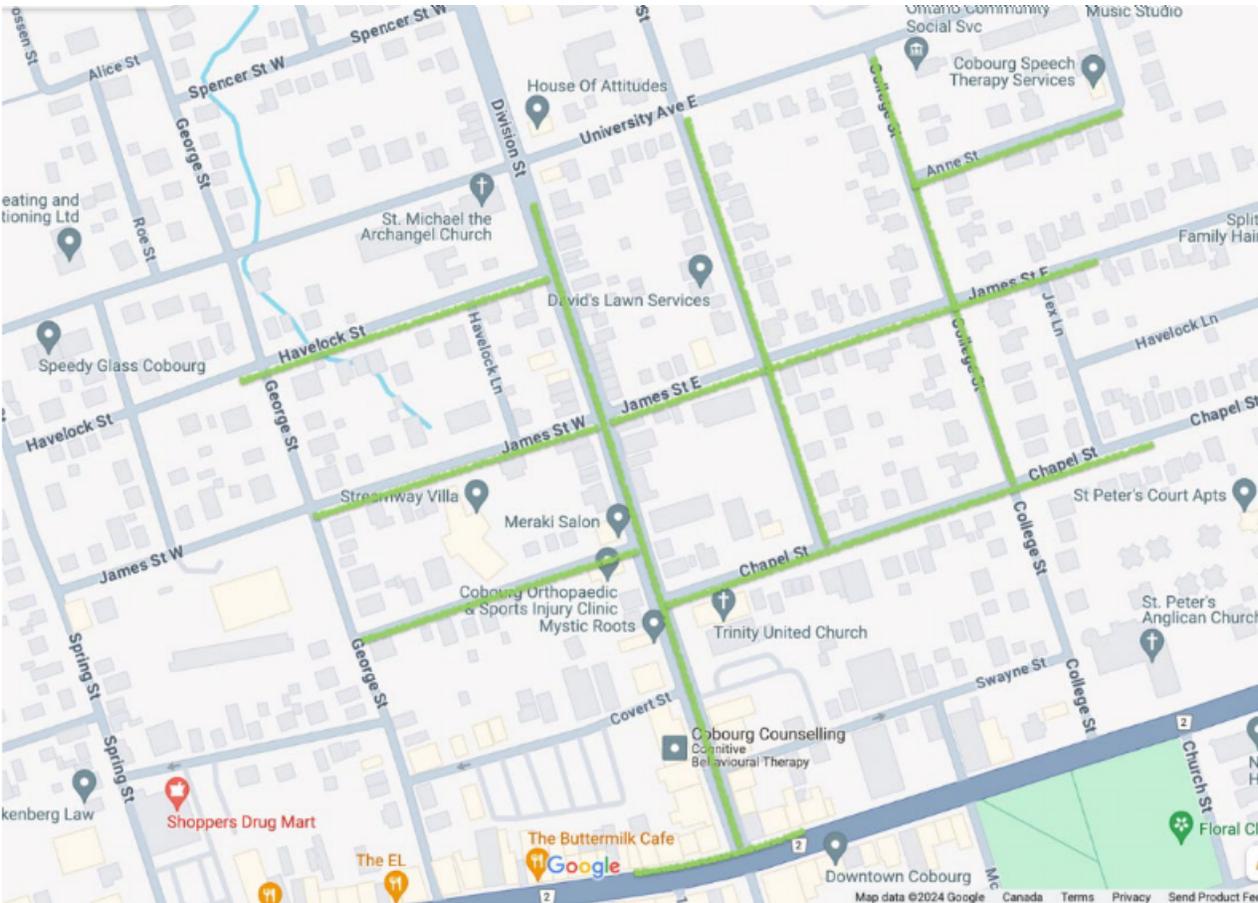
Tactic	Reach
Join In Northumberland project webpage	Information page about the 310 Division Street initiative, including engagement dates, regularly updated frequently asked questions, access to key documents, registration to receive update emails, and a platform to submit email comments and questions – generated 3,798 visits from 2,626 unique visitors during the identified period.
Postcard delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information postcards mailed out to approximately 10,000 households and businesses in the Town of Cobourg, advising of the initiative, dates, times and locations of engagement activities, and the Join In Northumberland website address for further details. Postcards were also shared via door-knocking in a 2-block vicinity of 310 Division Street as an additional measure to ensure that neighbours received this information and to encourage participation in the various engagement

	activities (see Image 1 on Page 17 for a map identifying streets where door-knocking occurred).
Handout, information boards, retractable banners	Approximately 150 handouts distributed at in-person engagement events, providing an overview of the modernization of shelter services through relocation to 310 Division Street and the anticipated benefits. Information signage and banners also created as visual aids for events.
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carousel campaign – 5 carousel Q&A ‘slide’ packages promoted through Facebook advertising, featuring information about homelessness in Northumberland, and the benefits of and plans for shelter services at 310 Division Street. Also 8 organic posts about the Join In Northumberland web page, information available, and engagement opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reach: 32,613 accounts ○ Engagement rate: 14% • 10 organic posts to X (Twitter). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impressions: 3,011 ○ Engagement rate: 3% • 5 organic posts to LinkedIn. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impressions: 2,176 ○ Engagement rate: 8%
News release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 180 views of media release on County website announcing the purchase of 310 Division Street, inviting the public to make delegations at the December 6, 2023, Special Meeting of Council, and promoting the Join In Northumberland project webpage as the source for upcoming information about community engagement activities. • Pick-up from 6 local media outlets generating 13 articles, including Northumberland News, Cobourg News Blog, Today’s Northumberland, KawarthaNOW, MyFM 93.3/Classic Rock 107.9/Brighton Oldies 100.9 radio, Consider This Northumberland radio program.
Media interviews/ responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 live interviews with, or written responses for, outlets including Today’s Northumberland, Northumberland News, KawarthaNOW, MyFM 93.3, Northumberland 89.7,

	<p>Consider This Northumberland radio program, Chex/Global Newswatch.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In total, 43 articles were written/stories aired by local media during the identified period. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Direct key message pick-up: 68% ○ Spokesperson quote included: 45% ○ Positive tone: 2%; Balanced tone: 86%; Negative tone: 12%
E-newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 notice to 37 Join In Northumberland 310 Division Street project page subscribers (open rate of 192%), 1 notice to 870 total Join In Northumberland subscribers (open rate of 74%), 1 notice to 81 Join In Northumberland 310 Division Street project page subscribers (88% open rate). • 1 newsletter to 1,049 Council News subscribers (open rate of 44%) • 6 Bi-weekly update newsletters to County Council for sharing at member municipality committee and council meetings.
Digital promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homepage banner at Northumberland.ca.

Image 1 is a map where green lines are used to identify streets where door-knocking occurred in a 2-block vicinity of 310 Division Street. (Alternative text: Lines indicate the streets of Division Street, Chapel Street, College Street, James Street, Anne Street, Buck Street, and Havelock Street.)

IMAGE 1: MAP OF DOOR-KNOCKING ACTIVITY



WHAT WE HEARD

This report summarizes feedback from residents, stakeholders, service provider partners, and service users pertaining to the 310 Division Street initiative throughout the Listening, Engaging, and Sharing phases of the engagement period, as part of planning for this facility. During engagement activities, facilitators stimulated robust dialogue and collected feedback, and several key themes emerged. The themes reflect the community's aspirations, concerns, and expectations regarding homeless shelter services. Participants shared thoughts related to:

- Enhancing shelter operations
- Providing improved services for people who are unhoused
- Enhancing safety and security in the neighbourhood around 310 Division Street and the broader Cobourg community
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities
- Fostering community involvement
- Preserving community charm
- Facilitating well-planned and executed implementation of services at 310 Division Street, and
- Prioritizing program evaluation and adaptation.

This report highlights the diverse perspectives shared to inform the path forward for meaningful collaboration, integration, and decision-making for 310 Division Street.

PROJECT SUPPORT AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVED SERVICES FOR UNHOUSED RESIDENTS

“By facilitating this relocation, we are actively restoring dignity to the lives of our service users. Rather than sharing accommodations with several others, individuals will have their own private space. Moreover, they will benefit from comprehensive wraparound support services available on-site. These services encompass a spectrum, ranging from income and employment assistance to life skills and employability training, and from mental health and addiction support to ID and tax clinics. Furthermore, the new facility will foster increased partnerships and collaborations among community agencies, all aimed at enhancing

the quality of our services.” ~ Ike Nwibe, Executive Director, Transition House Shelter

Modernization of Homelessness System Supports: There was widespread acknowledgment of the necessity to modernize shelter services and system supports to better address the evolving needs of people experiencing homelessness. The Transition House Board Chair reported that the biggest challenge is trying to meet expanding and increasingly complex community need within the scope of the Transition House mandate. The Executive Director of Transition House sees the move to 310 Division Street as having the potential to establish the Town of Cobourg and Northumberland County as exemplars where housing-first principles are truly realized.

Housing as a Human Right: Many stakeholders expressed strong support for 310 Division Street, viewing it as a vital step to further the principle of housing as a fundamental human right. The issue of demand for affordable housing outpacing supply was raised, with participants urging more rapid expansion of rent-geared-to-income housing as an important part of any solution to address homelessness. Also highlighted was the need for enhanced supports to help people successfully transition from homelessness to housing and maintain this housing.

Impact of Homelessness Across the County: Participants noted the growing impacts of homelessness, and in particular the impacts to the Town of Cobourg where there has been a notable increase in visible homelessness. Feedback emphasized the necessity for solutions to come from increased collaboration between the County and the Town of Cobourg, and the importance of addressing evolving housing and social service needs differently than in the past as the needs of clients increase in complexity, including mental health and addiction challenges. Recognizing that homelessness services are currently largely concentrated in Cobourg, participants also recommended enhancing homelessness services throughout Northumberland to ensure proper supports for the broader community.

Human Dignity: Participants recognized that 310 Division Street will provide people experiencing homelessness with improved privacy and dignity through self-contained units, and acknowledged the impact this will have on clients’ ability to feel safe and supported and achieve life stabilization. Many participants were pleased to learn that the new facility would accommodate couples as well as pets. There was optimism about

plans to increase mental health supports and services onsite for community members in need.

310 Division Street as a Service Hub: There is overall support from other service providers in the community for plans to relocate and modernized shelter services at 310 Division Street. Providers such as Northumberland Hills Hospital Community Mental Health Services, Northumberland Paramedics Community Paramedicine Program, Northumberland County Community & Social Services, Canadian Mental Health Association – Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge and others have expressed commitment to providing services onsite to further support clients with life stabilization and reintegration with the community. The Transition House executive director shared about some of the programs and services being explored for the new facility, including online training, apartment and employment searches, a food security program, a hot meal program, and social enterprise initiatives. Many participants, in providing feedback, acknowledged the opportunity for service-based partnerships at 310 Division Street and felt good about Transition House being able to provide a continuum of care.

Mitigation of emergencies: There was optimism regarding the potential for modernized shelter services at 310 Division Street to reduce calls to first responders, thereby alleviating associated costs, strain on services, disruption in neighbourhoods, and improving community safety.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND IMPACT

“I really understand the value of a place like Transition House. I commend them for doing the work for our community. The reality is that I’m afraid – of the drugs, and the violence, and the damage to property. I’d like to find a way for them to continue to do their work, and for myself and other neighbours to feel good about it, and not afraid.” ~ Small Group Session Participant

Concerns for Surrounding Properties: While there was recognition of the need for enhanced homelessness services and supports for the community, and the anticipated benefits of planned services via 310 Division Street, participants voiced concerns about the suitability of the location for a homeless shelter in a densely-populated area. Specifically, there were concerns about the planned increase in people with often complex needs being served at this location, and the related possibility for surrounding

properties to face privacy, trespass and crime issues. A business in the vicinity of the shelter's current 10 Chapel Street location expressed challenges with garbage, excrement, and vandalism on their property, which they associated with clients of Transition House. Participants shared concerns that such activity may increase in the area with the relocation of services to 310 Division Street.

Safety Concerns: Participants who live and work close to Transition House's 10 Chapel Street location expressed concerns about walking close to the house at night due to witnessed behaviours of individuals in the vicinity and underscored the need for robust security measures and property standards as part of the transition to 310 Division Street. Safety concerns shared by participants included disorderly behavior, crime, loitering, trespass, and open drug use, causing discomfort, intimidation, or fear.

One resident shared that she frequently had to clean up needles and drug paraphernalia from her property. There is a perception of increased "neighbourhood chaos" stemming from Transition House, and a perception that clients with high needs are not being adequately supported. Requests were made for a "code of conduct" for 310 Division Street clients, along with assurances to the community related to safety and security.

Security Measures: Measures such as increasing lighting, security, outdoor cameras, and community cleanups were suggested to address some of the safety concerns relating to the shelter. Several participants also recommended engaging professional security services to improve onsite safety, as well as consideration of mobile security services in the vicinity of the shelter. Additionally, participants recommended enhanced staffing levels and staff training at the shelter to ensure appropriate levels of support for clients.

OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

"The Board of Directors is committed to strong leadership and establishing Transition House as a best practice provider of emergency shelter services as well as a good neighbour within the community. In addition to growing our own organizational governance and management capacity during these challenging times, we are also actively engaged in developing our role as a partner within the larger homelessness system." ~ **Meaghan Macdonald, Board Chair, Transition House Shelter**

Addressing Evolving Homelessness Needs: Participants emphasized that current strategies must be adapted to address the evolving shelter and life stabilization needs of people experiencing homelessness in Cobourg and the broader Northumberland community. There is the feeling that funding and services have not kept pace with the changing needs of the community – in particular access to and proper levels of support for people experiencing addiction and mental health challenges.

Practical Challenges: Questions were raised around practical challenges for 310 Division Street such as parking, designated smoking areas, waste management, and emergency vehicle ingress and egress. Participants wanted to ensure that all these elements were being considered and strategies factored into operational plans.

Funding: Questions were raised about funding sustainability and financial transparency. Participants questioned how Transition House would manage the perceived increase in operating costs given the increased size of the shelter and the number of clients served. Concerns were expressed about the reliance on County funding and the potential increases to property tax. It was recommended that Transition House emphasize, through their communication channels, how people can donate to the work of the shelter, decreasing reliance on government sources of funding. Participants also wanted to ensure that Transition House has enough funding to recruit and retain qualified, quality staff.

Access and Admission: Concerns were raised about plans to make 310 Division Street a ‘low barrier’ shelter, consistent with current operations at Transition House’s 10 Chapel Street location. There was some misunderstanding that ‘low barrier’ meant ‘no rules’ or that use of substances would be permitted onsite. While participants expressed appreciation for clarified definitions/learning this was not the case, concerns remained that 310 Division Street services may be insufficient to meet the needs of high acuity clients, which could create challenges for the surrounding community. There was also concern that sheltering clients with a diverse scope of needs would make the journey to life stabilization more difficult for individuals with fewer complex conditions.

Jurisdiction and Responsibility: There were questions from participants about roles and responsibilities, particularly those of the Town of Cobourg, Northumberland County, Transition House Shelter, police and other emergency services. An observation frequently shared was that the division of responsibilities appeared to be creating gaps in response, with a lack of clarity to the public about who to contact for support and

issue resolution. Participants shared concerns about police responsiveness to nuisance-related calls such as property trespass and public disorderly conduct in the area of the homeless shelter, creating safety concerns. Some residents shared concerns around the downloading of fiscal responsibility for subsidized housing from the federal and provincial governments to municipal governments who have limited capacity for revenue generation beyond property taxes, and how this has contributed to crises in affordable housing.

Property Management: Neighbours spoke about the importance of Transition House maintaining the shelter property in good condition. . Also raised was a concern about the risk of devaluation of property in proximity to the shelter. Pertaining more broadly to the state of homelessness in the community, business owners expressed concerned about losing traffic to their establishments because of a perception that people are reticent to come downtown.

Best Practices, Success Measures and Oversight: Participants highlighted the importance of Northumberland County, Transition House, and homelessness system partners staying apprised of best practices for homelessness systems and shelter management, learning from successful shelter practices elsewhere, and applying best practices at 310 Division Street. There were questions as to how success of shelter operations was assessed, and an interest in understanding success measures. Some participants suggested that the County retain ownership of the 310 Division Street property rather than enter into a Vendor Take Back mortgage with Transition House, as a means of optimizing asset management and enhancing oversight and accountability measures.

Legal Agreement: Participants proposed a legally binding agreement between Northumberland County and the Town of Cobourg to ensure clear roles and defined commitment from all stakeholders for successful delivery of emergency shelter services.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

“I want to know how I can help? How can I be involved? How do I support the work of Transition House, and contribute to their success? They are the ones doing the work to help out our neighbours, and I want to stand with them.” ~ Small Group Session Participant

Transparency and Accountability: Participants expressed concerns about the lack of engagement with stakeholders prior to the purchase of 310 Division Street. The importance of transparency through open, consistent communication going forward was emphasized.

Community Engagement: Requests were made for continued engagement and relationship-building between Transition House and neighbourhood residents and businesses. Many participants recommended Transition House establish a Community Liaison Committee to address evolving concerns and to foster a collaborative approach to supporting clients and to problem-solving.

Information Sharing to Foster Understanding: Participants suggested that they would like a better understanding of the supports offered and the approach taken by Transition House. It surfaced that increasing efforts to provide education and information for the public would help to foster understanding and empathy. For example, many participants were unfamiliar with the concept of “wrap-around supports”, so were not clear on the benefits of this approach being presented as an improvement of service for 310 Division Street. Both neighbours and Transition House clients suggested using storytelling to humanize the experience of homelessness in Northumberland – Transition House immediately actioned this feedback, with a recent social media campaign featuring the journeys and aspirations of clients, and intends to continue this work.

Volunteerism: Participants requested opportunities to volunteer and offer services to Transition House. Participants shared that integrating neighbours with Transition House as volunteers would help to foster successful integration of Transition House into the neighbourhood and community. The Transition House Board welcomes community involvement as an opportunity to build relationships and productively address concerns.

SERVICE USER SESSIONS

A group of Transition House clients, Warming Hub clients, and encampment residents participated in a facilitated session as part of engagement activities. This was designed as a session exclusively for people with lived experience to provide their feedback and advice to Transition House on proposed plans and programs for 310 Division Street.

Service users were asked to share their experiences, needs, and concerns regarding the proposed relocation of services. The goals included understanding current support systems accessed by service users, gathering feedback on the move to 310 Division Street, collecting ideas for programming and support services at the new facility, and emphasizing the importance of service user input in the transition process. The following is a summary of feedback shared.

How participants self-identified

“I didn’t have no rental agreement with my mom, she was my mom! And when she died, I had 30 days to get out. The house sold so quick. I wasn’t in the will or nothing – she didn’t even have a will. I had nothing.” ~ Transition House Service User

Participants shared deeply personal stories of work injuries, family breakdown and deaths, pathways leading to homelessness, struggles with addiction, mental health issues, and experiences of trauma due to lack of affordable housing and employment opportunities. Despite these challenges, there was a shared aspiration among participants to gain independence through housing, stable employment, lasting sobriety, and often to reconnect with estranged friends and family.

Services Being Accessed: Participants highlighted a range of existing community services and organizations they currently connect with, including mental health supports, addiction recovery programs, employment assistance, and shelter services. However, gaps in services were identified, including the need for enhanced legal services, harm reduction programs, substance detox, improved street outreach, enhanced employment supports, and connection with the community.

Community Services at 310 Division Street: Participants expressed optimism about the support they would be able to access at the new facility, emphasizing the importance of personal space and suggesting various social and community activities such as creative workshops, meditation sessions, educational workshops, and group sports.

Feedback on Transition House: Residents appreciated the supportive environment provided by Transition House staff and valued services such as cooking courses and assistance with gaining independence. The supportive and caring staff was mentioned by most participants. However, concerns were raised about the rigidity of certain policies, as well as requirements in place for becoming an employee.

General Questions and Concerns: Participants sought clarification on the availability of planned services, operational details, opening dates, length of stay, safety and security measures for clients, and visitor policies. Additionally, there were requests for a community job board to support access to employment.

Encampment Residents' Concerns: Encampment residents expressed concerns about over-surveillance at the encampment, enforcement of curfews at Transition House, and what was perceived as harsh disciplinary actions. Suggestions included increased mental health services, access to harm reduction programs, many calls for detox programs, and 24/7 warming hubs during colder months.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback received through the community engagement phase of planning for 310 Division Street, it is recommended that the County and Transition House address the following actions according to their respective areas of accountability:

1. **Modernization of Shelter Services:** Implement plans for modernizing shelter services and homelessness supports at 310 Division Street to better address evolving community need. This includes progressive shelter services ranging from 24/7 drop-in space to private shelter accommodations to – eventually – transitional housing, and collaborative partnerships with service providers for onsite wrap-around supports. Engage with communities of practice and shelter networks on an ongoing basis to stay abreast of and adopt best practices, and investigate and invest in innovative approaches to programming and service delivery, including creative activities, educational workshops, and social enterprise. Examine options for ownership of the 310 Division Street property to confirm optimal asset management and accountability structures are embedded in the final agreement between the County and Transition House.
2. **Enhanced Community Services:** Advocate to other levels of government for expansion of mental health and addiction services for Northumberland. In collaboration with the Homelessness Leadership Table, contribute to community partnerships to expand such supports for people experiencing homelessness, including referral pathways to the six-month addiction treatment pilot program being implemented by Northumberland County and health system providers in

2024. Assess opportunities to continue expanding homelessness services in other Northumberland communities to help people stay close to their networks and support structures while resolving their homelessness. Devise a protocol/system response to support people facing service restrictions at the emergency shelter, and others for whom emergency shelter is not suitable.

3. **Transitional and Affordable Housing:** Expedite Transition House plans for transitional housing at 310 Division Street to help people successfully transition from homelessness to housing and maintain this housing. Continue with rapid expansion of affordable housing to mitigate pressure on the homelessness system, building on the purchase of 123 King Street East in Colborne and the construction of Elgin Park in Cobourg by advancing plans for 473 Ontario Street in Cobourg and the purchase of property for additional builds. Continue implementing housing subsidies for individuals experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness in Northumberland.
4. **Community Safety and Well-Being:** Implement measures to address safety concerns in the vicinity of the shelter. This may include increasing lighting, fencing, and security cameras at 310 Division Street, consideration for location of outdoor programming spaces to support security of the building and neighbourhood impacts, exploring the engagement of professional security services for the property, and supporting neighbourhood clean-up initiatives, including partnership with PARN for safe removal of any drug paraphernalia.
5. **Operational Management:** Enhance shelter service operations through diversification of funding sources and public annual reporting for financial transparency. Assess staffing ratios against best practices to ensure the effective and sustainable operation of 310 Division Street, and review staff training plans to ensure alignment with the complex and evolving needs of clients served. Continue to reinforce good governance structures to ensure organizational stability, including clear operational protocols and contingency plans to mitigate organizational risk. Communicate how practical challenges of parking, waste management, and emergency vehicle ingress/egress at 310 Division Street will be addressed as part of operating plans. Ensure building maintenance meets Town property standards bylaw.

6. **Community Engagement and Accountability:** Establish a Community Liaison Committee to enhance transparent communication, facilitate relationship-building with neighbours and stakeholders, and foster a collaborative approach to supporting clients and resolving community concerns.
7. **Awareness and Education through Information Sharing:** Leverage a variety of channels for a consistent communications program designed to educate the public about homelessness in Northumberland and the local system of partners and services, and to foster awareness, understanding and empathy towards unhoused individuals and the challenges they face. Humanize Transition House clients through storytelling and provide ongoing opportunities for community members to volunteer, offer services, and otherwise engage with the shelter and its clients.
8. **Addressing Service User Needs:** Respond to the needs of service users by addressing identified gaps through partnership, such as the need for enhanced legal services, improved access to primary care, and greater employment supports, improving pathways out of homelessness.
9. **Legal Agreement and Commitment:** Establish a legally-binding agreement(s) between the County, the Town of Cobourg, and/or Transition House Shelter to clarify roles and responsibilities for successful delivery of emergency shelter services.

CONCLUSION

Community engagement activities enabled the County and Transition House to capture diverse perspectives, aspirations, and concerns regarding the modernization of shelter services at 310 Division Street. Valuable insight was gained by listening to residents, stakeholders, community partners, and service users, and the feedback gathered will inform the path forward for meaningful collaboration, integration, and decision-making.

Modernization of the shelter system is imperative to addressing the ongoing and increasing impacts of homelessness within the community. Enhancing safety and security measures and addressing operational concerns identified through this process will support improved integration within the neighbourhood, and fostering ongoing community engagement – particularly through the creation of a Community Liaison

Committee – will help to build positive relationships for enhanced collaboration and problem-solving.

By integrating the input gathered into decision-making processes, the County and Transition House will continue to contribute to a more inclusive, supportive, and resilient community for all residents of Northumberland.

APPENDIX A – IN-PERSON GROUP SESSIONS NOTES

Two In-Person Small Group Sessions were held on January 16, 2024, as follows:

Activity	Date/Time	Location	Number of Participants
In-Person Small Group Session 1	January 16, 2024, 12:30pm – 2:00pm	Northumberland County Boardroom – 600 William Street, Cobourg	24
In-Person Small Group Session 2	January 16, 2024, 5:30pm – 7:00pm	Northumberland County Boardroom – 600 William Street, Cobourg	17

Feedback from both group discussions is summarized below and is organized by discussion questions.

Discussion Question 1: What are your concerns regarding the 310 Division Street move?

- Participants shared concerns including:
 - Maintaining cleanliness and aesthetics of the property:
 - Desire expressed to see the shelter facility maintained in good condition as part of the surrounding neighborhood and community.
 - Concerns about possible decreases in tourism to the downtown, and negative impacts on the travel/tourism/economy/industry.
 - The sense of safety and well-being for residents of the neighborhood and of Cobourg:
 - Methods to improve safety at 310 Division Street, such as lighting, security, cleanliness, etc.
 - Crime (including examples of shootings, theft, trespassing, and breaking and entering in downtown Cobourg).
 - Security in the neighborhood, including concerns about police responsiveness.

- Open drug-use in public spaces, especially in-front of children and youth, and discovery and clean-up of drug paraphernalia.
 - Increasing experience of fear/anxiety, especially among older adults and youth, to leave the house and enjoy public spaces in a safe and comfortable way.
- Necessary resources, funding, and supports to ensure success of 310 Division Street:
 - Adequate funding, and whether proper funding exists to support operational and management plans and strategies.
 - The facilitation and implementation of back-up plans if known funding and resources become inadequate.
 - Ensuring success with a small budget.
 - Ways to increase budget and ensure adaptive operational management to continue to address client needs and community concerns.
- Operational management and planning:
 - Approaches to homelessness, addiction, mental health no longer sufficient/not working well – need to be significantly improved.
 - Perceived failure of current shelter strategies, and concerns about no back-up plans.
 - Need for engagement with shelter clients outside of the immediate property, in areas of proximity.
 - The process for resident selection/admission to 310 Division Street.
 - Strategies to manage the needs of clients on different paths or at different stages in their life stabilization journey, including balancing different demographic needs, health needs, family needs, etc.
 - The specific roles and responsibilities of each party involved in the emergency shelter system (i.e: Northumberland County, Transition House Shelter, the Town of Cobourg, Cobourg Police Service, other emergency services).
 - Suggestion of a legally-binding agreement such as the agreement between Durham Region and Town of Whitby.
- Best practices and learning from successful facilities:

- Best practices for shelters, transitional housing, and support services and whether they will be applied at 310 Division Street.
- The property location and appearance:
 - The central location (on a main roads) may negatively impact the feel and impressions of Cobourg, especially from visitors.
 - Smoking and loitering in the front of the building.
 - The current backyard space being underused.
 - Cornerstone Family Violence Prevention Centre was pointed to as a facility successfully integrated into the community. The look and feel of the front main entrance being clean, well-lit and without loitering was particularly highlighted.
- Respect and regulation of rules:
 - Individuals staying at 310 Division Street may not follow the facility's rules, and the expectation of being a good neighbour.
 - Mutual respect between Transition House residents and the community.
- Clients of Transition House and other unhoused individuals:
 - Supports in place for community members who need help, but these supports being refused.
 - Unhoused people, such as those living in current encampments, may not have access to Transition House due to barriers in the admissions process (such as drug use, or previous history in the shelter), leaving the issue of encampments unresolved.
 - The ways in which the encampment distracts from the necessary supports and needs surrounding Transition House.
 - People from outside of the community being attracted to the community to access services, further straining infrastructure and services.
- Community engagement:
 - Perceived lack of commitment to the community by Transition House (balancing the needs of clients with the neighbourhood in which the shelter is situated).
 - Lack of community engagement pertaining to the site selected for relocation of shelter services.
 - Ensuring community needs are heard and met on an ongoing basis.

Discussion Question 2: What are the ways you see Transition House as a community asset?

- Community members value Transition House for:
 - Fulfilling the communities' responsibilities to community members who are out on the street.
 - The sense of action – working to respond to a direct need.
 - The reassurance in knowing supports are available for community members in need.
 - Providing opportunities for education on issues of homelessness, existing resources, Transition House's role and responsibilities.
 - The potential to create space for those who need help to access services, and foster hopefulness during this time of crisis.

Discussion Question 3: What will help to make 310 Division St a part of the community?

- To make 310 Division St part of the community, participants feel there is a need to:
 - Create opportunities for community partnership.
 - Involve the local businesses to help ensure a thriving downtown business area.
 - Improve opportunities for community communications and engagement, including:
 - Creation of a Community Liaison Committee, including voting membership on the Transition House Board.
 - Improved use of a variety of communications platforms to increase access to information about homelessness and Transition House services amongst the public.
 - Improve relations between the community and the shelter through ongoing community engagement sessions.
 - The preparation of a legally-binding agreement between Northumberland County and the Town of Cobourg as a proactive approach to ensure commitment by all stakeholders for successful shelter services:
 - Allow for continuity of processes regardless of turnover within all partner organizations, going forwards.

- Ensure accountability.
- An annual review process that includes feedback from stakeholders, emergency services, the Town of Cobourg, Northumberland County, residents and businesses, and service users.
- Educate and inform the public in a way that fosters true understanding of the 310 Division Street initiative – what it will look like, the services available, and the people accessing it. A few suggestions of types of information include:
 - Humanizing the clients of Transition House through storytelling
 - The definitions of short-term shelter, wrap-around services, and better understanding the admissions process, supports, and approach of Transition House.
 - Education and disposal methods for drug paraphernalia.
 - Receiving continued information on project updates, plans, services, etc.
- Integrate addiction rehabilitation services as well as employment training, to allow people to regain a place in the community in an active way.
- Create opportunities to foster empathy amongst the public.
- Maintain the outside of the property as well as privacy for both Transition House clients and the community.
- Improved plans to mitigate trespass and drug use by Transition House clients on other people’s private property.
- Accept new members onto the Transition House board to allow for community/neighborhood representation.
- Create of a ‘Code of Conduct’ for Transition House clients emphasizing how to be a good neighbour.

Discussion Question 4: How would you like to be involved?

- Participants expressed interest in ensuring the facility is a success and participating in any way possible, with transparent communications, access to information, and an annual review of the service agreement that stakeholders can be involved in suggested as helpful steps.
- The creation of a Community Safety Council like police services was suggested.

APPENDIX B – VIRTUAL GROUP SESSIONS NOTES

Two Virtual Group Sessions were held on January 25 and 26, 2024, as follows:

Activity	Date/Time	Location	Number of Participants
Virtual Small Group Session 1	January 25, 2024, 6:00pm – 7:30pm	Virtual Zoom Meeting	26
Virtual Small Group Session 2	January 26, 2024, 10:00am – 11:00am	Virtual Zoom Meeting	21

Feedback from both group discussions is summarized below and is organized by discussion questions.

Discussion Question 1: What are your concerns regarding the 310 Division Street move?

- Participants expressed concerns regarding:
 - Open drug and alcohol use onsite.
 - Lack of information
 - Interested in receiving and having access to more information related to plans for 310 Division Street (i.e. room layout, programs, services, operational aspects, etc.)
 - Lack of transparency in decision-making and processes that led to purchase of facility and decision to relocate shelter services.
 - The broader impacts of shelter services on the immediate neighborhood and surrounding community.
 - The impact of those attracted to the neighborhood, who decline Transition House Services, face service restrictions, or otherwise do not engage with Transition House.
 - Lack of adequate supports for those struggling with mental health issues, and or those living with addiction.

- Safety: What safety/security measures will be in place to ensure community safety?
 - Sense that many community members feel unsafe going into downtown Cobourg - especially impacting the senior population.
 - Sense that downtown is becoming unusable due to safety concerns causing discomfort, fear.
 - Community members experiencing traumatic events, crime, harassment - supports for area residents if dealing with loitering, littering, thefts, open drug usage, breaking and entering, trespass, disorderly conduct.
 - Security of houses and property.
 - Interest in seeing greater presence of police and by-law officers in the vicinity, ensuring enforcement of bylaws and rules.
- Prosperity of downtown businesses - Feedback that many businesses are struggling due to the lack of people visiting downtown as a result of safety concerns.
- Historical instability of Transition House management structure and perceived ineffectiveness in improving client condition/improving state of homelessness in the community, contributing to destabilization of surrounding neighbourhood.
 - Fear this will translate to the new location at 310 Division Street, and potentially worsen, especially if plans are not established to mitigate current challenges.
- Lack of productive interaction with the community – sense that Transition House must consider and address the needs of the entire community, including both clients and residents of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Current encampment site – fear that plans for 310 Division Street will both exacerbate encampments by attracting people to the community to access services, and also that issues such as disorderly conduct, waste, and instability associated with current encampments will carry over to the vicinity of the shelter as people continue to transition from encampments to shelter services.
- Funding and finances
 - Interest in understanding how 310 Division Street be financed and how costs will be managed.

- Desire for financial plans to be made public.
- Climate change and its future impacts on homelessness in the community and the demand for shelter services.
- Perceived lack of upkeep around the exterior of the 10 Chapel Street shelter, and impacts to neighbourhood charm.
- Consideration for the living situation and experience of all those in the neighborhood.
- The different needs of individuals seeking supports and residence at Transition House.
 - How can certain client demographics thrive in environments alongside those on different paths – such as those recovering from drug and alcohol addiction alongside those with active addiction?
 - Serving the needs of all groups/people.
- The lack of empathy and respect in the community towards those who are struggling, and the need for this to improve to create an inclusive and supportive community.
- Sense of lack of acknowledgement from the County regarding the negative consequences of shelter services, particularly on those living/working in the vicinity.

Discussion Question 2: What are the ways you see Transition House as a community asset?

- Satisfying a need for emergency and transitional housing.
- Supplying the necessary facilities needed to meet the growing homelessness crisis in the community, as across Ontario.
- Having and providing appropriate space and services that can foster recovery/life stabilization.
- New facility has much more potential to help individuals in need.

Discussion Question 3: What will help to make 310 Divisions Street a part of the community?

- Formation of community partnerships.
- Opportunity to create services/social enterprise and opportunities for rehabilitation and integration into the community through skill learning or work.

- Working with clients on how to be a good neighbour – respectful behaviors, community etiquette, safety.
- Creating a Community Liaison Committee - greater involvement of community in decision-making.
- Increased mental health supports, including engagement with different/additional facilities – recognition that this is not an issue Transition House can address/resolve alone.
Increased information sharing and communications across all sectors within the community, providing individuals with more information, context and history.
 - Taking responsibility/accountability for things that have not worked in the past, and showing plans on how these things will improve.
 - Helping people to fully understand the new intentions, so they can feel hopeful and supportive.
 - Show people why the current location for shelter services at 10 Chapel Street is not accessible/no longer appropriate to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- Figuring out and planning how Transition House can work and partner with other organizations to create broader impacts.
- Increased integration of Transition House with community members through relationship-building.

Discussion Question 4: How would you like to be involved?

- Increased engagement

APPENDIX C – PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION SUMMARY

A virtual Public Information Session was held on February 6, 2024, as follows:

Activity	Date/Time	Location	Number of Participants
Public Information Session	February 6 th , 2024 6:00pm-7:30pm	Virtual Zoom Meeting	77

Questions and answers from the Public Information Session are summarized below.

- Will Transition House bring in an influx of clients from outside of Cobourg or Northumberland?
 - Can capacity meet this demand?
 - Will people from outside the region qualify for shelter support?
 - **Answer:**
 - The majority of the individuals on the By-Name List of people experiencing homelessness in Northumberland were previously housed in Northumberland prior to becoming homeless.
 - While people are not denied services based on community of origin, Transition House primarily serves residents from across Northumberland County and does diversion work to find suitable services for those from outside of the community.
 - Transition House is staffed 24/7
 - 80% of the beds at Transition House are consistently in use.
 - Part of current planning for 310 Division Street includes decisions on how many staff will be required during both the day and nighttime shifts to ensure clients are properly supported, and staff feel well equipped.
- What does a day in the life of a client at Transition House look like?
 - **Answer:**
 - This depends on the individual and their current capacity based on their journey to life stabilization. For example, some clients are working, while others are currently unemployed.

- Case management for all clients includes:
 - Goal setting and action planning.
 - Assistance with life skills, finances, employment, and housing.
 - Connections to community services – income assistance, health/mental health, addictions, employment and housing supports, food banks and community meals, ID and tax clinics.
- What is the training required by shelter staff?
 - **Answer:**
 - All shelter workers receive training in areas such as Shelter/Respite Standards, First Aid/CPR, Overdose Prevention and Recognition and Naloxone Administration, Mental Health First Aid, Trauma-Informed Care, Conflict Prevention and Intervention, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and other vital skills. Training plans are regularly assessed to ensure adjustments as required.
- How will safety be improved around the facility and in the neighborhood?
 - **Answer:**
 - Enhanced lighting, cameras, and a security system will be added at 310 Division Street.
 - Currently exploring addition of professional security services onsite.
 - Also looking at the integration of by-laws, emergency response, Community Liaison Committee to increase sense of safety in the neighbourhood.
 - Community members are encouraged to contact the police where they have crime, safety, security concerns.
- What does low barrier mean?
 - **Answer:**
 - It means the removal of barriers that prevent people from accessing shelter services. For example: removing income requirements, sobriety requirements, gendered sleeping arrangements, building features that limit accessibility for people with disabilities.
 - Relocation to 310 Division Street will enable the removal of barriers to accommodation at 10 Chapel Street such as:

- Inability to accommodate couples and inability to accommodate pets, physical accessibility barriers, lack of privacy, limited opportunity to provide wrap-around support onsite.
- What mental health and addiction supports are available:
 - **Answer:**
 - Transition House staff have basic training to identify needs of new clients and support mental wellness, however the emergency shelter is not a mental health or addictions rehabilitation facility.
 - Staff seek community resources and supports to connect clients to, as needed.
 - Clients will have the private space at 310 Division Street to meet with service providers such as mental health and addictions counsellors in support of their journey to life stabilization.
- What is the vision of the new space? In terms of floorplans and layout/design?
 - **Answer:**
 - The vision, although still under development, is to somewhat model the housing spectrum.
 - The ground floor will likely be open.
 - Used for 24/7 warming and cooling center.
 - Somewhere to go for those who need it, with opportunity to connect them to further services and intake.
 - Computer room for client use.
 - Second floor will be for client rooms and shelter services. Still determining configurations of rooms.
 - Third floor will likely be largely office spaces for staff.
 - Fourth floor is currently being looked at for longer term plans for transitional housing – will not be immediately operational upon opening.
 - Consideration of progressive response – as clients progress in the journey to life stabilization, they move upward in the building physically.

- Are those facing severe addiction and substance issues placed in the same areas as those who are not?
 - **Answer:**
 - Shelter space is not defined by demographic and types of supports required, however who goes into what room, and when, is decided on an on-going basis by management, with a vision for progressive response along the housing spectrum within the facility.
 - Staff are aware of the needs of the various clients being served, and try to reduce anxiety, stress, and negative interactions wherever possible.
 - Staff work to reduce tension and stresses when possible and increase the dignity and privacy of individuals to create better and healthier outcomes.
- How long can an individual stay at Transition House?
 - **Answer:**
 - The standard intake right now is 90 days.
 - If an individual is doing well, making good progress, and getting good feedback, there is some flexibility for length of stay.
 - The goal is to see individuals succeed, and thus extensions are granted where necessary/applicable.
- Will clients need to move rooms every night, or do they keep their spaces?
 - **Answer:**
 - Transition House anticipates that clients will generally have a consistent room.
 - Weekly clean-outs will occur, and whether individuals stay in the current room or enter a new one after the clean-out is still being decided on an operation level.
- How will people find out about spaces/availability, and occupancy changes at 310 Division Street?
 - **Answer:**
 - Individuals can enter the shelter and ask, or call.
 - If no rooms are available, space may be available in the drop-in centre and individuals will be invited to attend this space until a shelter room becomes available.

- What accessibility features will exist in the building?
 - **Answer:**
 - Currently looking at modifications to the front of the building to create a ramp, to improve accessibility.
 - The building has an elevator to each floor.
 - The building used to be a long-term care home; thus, it is fit with many accessibility features already.
- How will the shelter address the growing needs of the community that are likely to occur?
 - **Answer:**
 - Transition House serves all of Northumberland County – they continuously monitor the needs of the community and anticipate being able to meet these needs, including occupancy capacity.
 - Transition House also works with community partners as part of the broader homelessness system to ensure that trends are being reviewed, and emerging needs are planned for.
- Will Transition House have a member of Town Council sitting on its board?
 - **Answer:**
 - Town Council has not requested a seat on the Board, to date.
 - Should a request come forward, the Board will discuss this as part of its process for addressing correspondence.
- How does Transition House envision paying back the mortgage for 310 Division Street?
 - **Answer:**
 - Transition House plans to sell the 10 Chapel Street building to help fund the mortgage for the new facility.
 - The Board also plans to embark on fundraising work to engage the community in supporting operations.
 - Would like to use funding from the County to support operational costs, and donations/fundraising from the community to expand operational services.

- How can people help? In terms of funding and volunteering?
 - **Answer:**
 - Financial contributions can be made, with more information on how to donate available through the Transition House website at THShelter.ca .
 - Transition House will be assessing establishment of a Community Liaison Committee as another opportunity for people to become involved and for the shelter to build relationships with the community.
 - The Board of Directors periodically seeks new members with the skills to support good governance.
- How is reporting done?
 - **Answer:**
 - Reporting is done on a quarterly basis to the County – reporting on all programs.
 - Every admission is recorded, with intake completed using appropriate forms, and this is updated every 3 weeks.
- What are the eligibility requirements? And is this available anywhere for the public to view?
 - **Answer:**
 - While people are not denied services based on community of origin, Transition House primarily serves residents from across Northumberland County and does diversion work to find suitable services for those from outside of the community.
 - Ideally Transition House is in place to serve Northumberland residents but will not turn down anyone in need.
 - Appropriate work is done to direct people to the right services – whenever Transition House is able to meet the needs of an individual, they will.
 - Intake happens on a case-by-case basis.

APPENDIX D – PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

An in-person Public Open House was held on February 12, 2024, as follows:

Activity	Date/Time	Location	Number of Participants
Public Open House	February 12 th , 2024 6:00pm-7:30pm	Royal Canadian Legion Br.133	~75-100 attendees

Feedback received at the Open House is summarized below.

Resident Support:

- Accessibility and marketing to those requiring services:
 - Is it reaching those in need of it?
 - How are unhoused people able to access information about services and availability?
- How are different family types being accommodated through these new services?
 - For instance, people with children and single parents.
- Concerns about the safety of vulnerable groups of people at the shelter.
 - How are people with different cognitive and mobility issues being supported?
 - How are people with drug addictions and mental health issues being supported?
- Concerns about the treatment of residents: How is the dignity of residents being maintained?
- Are the homeless population at encampments being engaged in planning for 310 Division Street?
- How long can residents stay at Transition House?
- Are residents supported after their stay?
 - What happens if residents face service restrictions?
- Many requests for clarification on the specific types of programs and services that are going to be provided at 310 Division Street.

- Concerns about the degree of meaningful and long-term impact of 310 Division; some feel the focus should be on improving overall housing availability and affordability within Northumberland County.

Impact on the Neighborhood:

- Worries about surveillance and security of the area.
- Concerns regarding the impact on children at neighboring schools.
- Questions and concerns about the management of the property.
 - Who is responsible for the property's maintenance and cleaning – especially related to drug paraphernalia and pet waste?

Encampment residents expressed concerns regarding:

- Oversurveillance and aggressive policing of unhoused populations.
- Issues with the enforcement of a curfew.
- Decision-making authorities and disciplinary actions they may levy (e.g. being kicked out for drug use or violating curfews).
- Suggestions included:
 - Advocate to Council to provide better support for residents
 - Larger emphasis on mental health services
 - Having a communication/message board displaying support services
 - Having staff on-call for mental health or drug-addiction crises
 - Access to harm reduction programs
 - Access to a 24/7 warming hub in the colder months

Positive Feedback:

- Many participants expressed gratitude and support for the improvements being made.
- Three participants specifically noted this was a much needed and long-awaited change.
- Majority of people were looking to be informed and were impressed by the “positive representation of collective community efforts”.

APPENDIX E – SERVICE PROVIDER SESSION

Service providers from across Northumberland County were invited to discuss the 310 Division Street facility as follows

Activity	Date/Time	Location	Number of Participants
Service Provider Session	January 10 th , 2024 2:00pm-3:30pm	Virtual Zoom Meeting	17

Attendees discussed the 310 Division Street facility, how they would be involved, and preparations for the Public Open House event. Feedback from that discussion is summarized below.

Meeting Attendees (Organizations)

- Canadian Mental Health Association Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge (CMHA HKPR)
- Northumberland Paramedics Community Paramedicine Program
- Cornerstone Family Violence Prevention Centre
- The Help Centre
- PARN
- Rebound Child & Youth Services
- The Salvation Army
- Transition House Shelter
- Northumberland Hills Hospital Community Mental Health Services

What are the opportunities for 310 Division Street?

- Increased capacity to support individuals in need
- Attention to the dignity of unhoused neighbours
 - Privacy
 - Space for couples
 - Pets welcome
 - Quiet spaces
- Downtown location means better access to jobs/housing/services

- Services can be co located at 310 Division street
- New location allows for proactive planning and partnership development
 - More collaborative service provision
 - Scheduled and reliable services
- More space for resident privacy, especially for health and counselling services
 - Assessment space
 - Treatment space
 - Administration space
- Space for pet food bank and veterinary care
- Greater neighbourhood involvement
 - Community cleanups
 - Volunteer engagement
 - Peer learning

What are the areas of concern for 310 Division Street?

- Is it enough? What else can be done
 - Service limitations
 - Space limitations
- Emergency services accessibility
 - Egress plans
- How much is the public narrative affecting the opportunities for success?
- How do we provide comprehensive pet care?
- How can we level up and retain staff?
- How do we separate the encampment debate from the provision of shelter services?
- How can service providers work together on initiatives like community clean-ups?

What are important themes to address at the Public Open House?

- Homelessness System
- Substance Use
- Community Safety
- Housing
- Mental Health

What needs to be addressed at the Public Open House?

- How are we doing things differently?
 - Modernizing shelter services
 - Limitations of services
- What is the experience of those experiencing homelessness?
- A shelter is more than just a bed
 - Housing is a human right
- How are plans for 310 Division Street separate from the issue of encampments
 - How are they connected
- What is success
 - Metrics
 - Report back
 - Community needs
- How can people get involved
 - Volunteer stories
 - Volunteer opportunities
 - Communication re: Transition House needs
- What services will be involved
- What services can the community access
 - PARN for community clean-ups

APPENDIX F – TRANSITION HOUSE SERVICE USER SESSION SUMMARY

An in-person meeting was held with shelter clients, Warming Hub clients, and encampment residents at Transition House on February 13, 2024.

Activity	Date/Time	Location	Number of Participants
Transition House Service User Session	February 13 th , 2024 9:30am – 11:30am	Transition House – 10 Chapel St Location	25

Feedback received during this session is summarized below.

About You:

Many participants of this session shared traumatic life experiences related to homelessness due to lack of affordable housing and access to employment. They spoke of their experiences and struggles with sobriety, drug-use, recovery, eviction, chronic pain, and mental health issues. Most of the participants express their dreams of gaining independence through their shared goals of finding housing and employment, as well as maintaining sobriety.

Services being used:

- Community Care services
- Mental Health
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Narcotics Anonymous
- cocaine Anonymous
- Ontario Disability Support Program
- Forecast
- Transition House Shelter
- Warming Hub
- Northumberland Hills Hospital Community Mental Health Services clinic

- Canadian Mental Health Association therapy services
- Watton's Employment services
- The Wind Program
- The Help Center
- Clothing donations

Services that are missing or gaps in existing services:

- Legal services
- Harm reduction
 - Safe supply
 - Safe use space
- Medical detox
- Improved street outreach
- Community connectedness
- Rehabilitation services
- Improved addiction services
- Virtual meetings with a doctor
- Shared car service – for better connectedness and mobility
- Educational programs
- Career building assistance

Social and community services and programming at 310 Division:

- Participants indicated they would feel better supported with the personal space provided
- Some said they would enjoy the possibility of having a private room
- Suggestions for social and community activities include:
 - Creative and artistic lessons
 - Meditation
 - Educational and academic workshops
 - Games room
 - Group sports and gym sessions
 - Festivals

Feedback for shelter services:

Things enjoyed:

- The staff
- Restful space for sleep and to receive shelter from the cold
- Pet-friendliness
- Kindness and the thankfulness from clients
- Services such as cooking courses, teaching residents how to make better food
- Receiving help with gaining independence and being able to care for oneself

Things wished to be changed:

- The rigidity of the late/curfew policy
- Strict requirements for becoming an employee

General questions and concerns:

- Access and availability of services
- Details and additional information about operation and management
- Opening dates
- The length of stay
- Safety and security of residents through screening
- Availability for visitors
- Request for a community job board – support and access to employment

APPENDIX G – TRANSITION HOUSE LEADERSHIP INTERVIEWS

Both the Executive Director and the Board Chair of Transition House were interviewed via questionnaire regarding the modernization of shelter services at 310 Division Street. Transcripts below.

Activity	Date/Time	Location	Number of Participants
Transition House Leadership Interviews		Transition House Chapel St Location	2

Transition House Board Chair

What do you see as Transition House’s strength as a community service provider?

As a community service provider, Transition House’s strength is a strong, dedicated team of staff and volunteers who are committed to providing safe, dignified, and supportive temporary housing in Northumberland County.

What are the challenges ahead for Transition House?

Our community, just like rural communities across Canada, is facing an unprecedented housing crisis. As one component of the emergency shelter system, the biggest challenge for our organization is trying to meet growing and expanding community need within the scope of our mandate. We must work as part of a coordinated system to provide service that meets the diverse needs of those facing homelessness and housing insecurity.

How will the Board of Directors be involved (what is the commitment of the Board)?

The Board of Directors is committed to strong leadership and establishing Transition House as a best practice provider of emergency shelter services as well as a good neighbour within the community. In addition to growing our own organizational governance and management capacity during these challenging times, we are also actively engaged in developing our role as a partner within the larger homelessness system.

What does the Board need from the community?

The Board needs the community to understand that we need their support to achieve our goals in this challenging environment. We want and need their thoughtful and respectful feedback. We also need their understanding that change sometimes takes a bit of time. We ask for their patience as we adapt to the current environment we are facing, knowing we are committed to our role as a good neighbour and member of our local community.

Transition House Executive Director

Can you share a little bit about your background, and what brought you to Transition house, and Cobourg?

I possess over 15 years of experience in the development sector, equipped with a diverse skill set and educational background spanning human resource management, local economic development, and international development. Throughout my career, I have actively engaged in a range of development initiatives at both local and global scales. Before relocating to Cobourg, I contributed to several housing and homeless shelter programs in Toronto, fulfilling roles in frontline service delivery, case management, and management positions.

What are the opportunities that you see for Transition House in the move to 310 Division Street?

The transition to 310 Division Street presents immense opportunities for the community, service users, and Transition House. This move holds the potential to establish the Town of Cobourg and Northumberland County as exemplars where Housing First principles are truly realized. By facilitating this relocation, we are actively restoring dignity to the lives of our service users. Rather than sharing accommodations with several others, individuals will have their own private space. Moreover, they will benefit from comprehensive wraparound support services available onsite. These services encompass a spectrum, ranging from income and employment assistance to life skills and employment training, and from mental health and addiction support to ID and tax clinics. Furthermore, the new facility will foster increased partnerships and collaborations among community agencies, all aimed at enhancing the quality of our services.

Given some of the ideas and feedback that have been shared, can you share some of your ideas on the programming and services that will be offered at 310 Division Street?

We intend to create a resource center where service users can access online training, participate in apartment searches, and seek employment opportunities. Additionally, we are in the process of implementing a food security program that will provide service users with one hot meal per day, prepared by a professional chef in accordance with the Canada Food Guide. This initiative aims to enhance the physical health of our service users. Furthermore, we are developing the "Green Pathways Initiative," which will offer service users and community members the opportunity to volunteer in environmental sustainability projects through community service activities.

What are ways that you would like to see the community engage in and with Transition House going forward?

I envision Transition House as an indispensable asset to the community, providing vital programs and services to support individuals facing homelessness and housing insecurity. The sense of community I've experienced thus far has been heartening, highlighting the unity among community members. My aspiration is for a future where homeless individuals are fully embraced as valued members of the broader community, free from unwarranted stigma solely because they reside in a shelter.

APPENDIX H – ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

Additional feedback has been received from members of the public and local organizations via emails, letters, and delegations to committee and County Council, and is summarized as follows:

- **Questions and deliberations from Northumberland County Council at the December 6, 2023, meeting of Council regarding plans for 310 Division Street:**
 - Parking.
 - Jurisdictional boundaries/scope for shelter services and first responder service calls between Northumberland County and the Town of Cobourg, and funding for anticipated increase in Town of Cobourg first responder service calls to 310 Division Street.
 - Possibility of transition to 310 Division Street reducing need for first responder calls compared to today's counts, and by extension, related costs.
 - Impact of homelessness across Northumberland and the responsibility of the entire community to address this versus solely the Town of Cobourg:
- **Feedback gathered from community members through 71 emails, 50 letters, and 7 delegations (9 people) regarding plans for 310 Division Street.**
 - **Project support and opportunities for improved services for unhoused residents**
 - Support for 310 Division Street as a furthering of the principle of housing as a human right.
 - Recognition that many shelter users are trying their best to cope with the challenges in their life, and that this ability to cope should not be held to the same standard as the coping skills of someone with more financial resources, better health, better support personal networks in place.
 - Support for the need to modernize the shelter and support system, creating a more compassionate and inclusive society.
 - Recognition that 310 Division Street will provide clients with a crucial sense of dignity and safety and help restore their sense of autonomy, and that more space per resident will help will this

compared to the relatively crowded conditions at the current 10 Chapel Street location.

- Overall support from other service providers in the community for the modernization of shelter services at 310 Division Street given the anticipated benefits to service delivery at this location.

- **Community Safety and Impact**

- Concerns about suitability of the location for an emergency shelter given high-density area of the community.
- Transition House's past change to a low-barrier support model resulting in a perceived increase of "neighbourhood chaos" and a perception that clients with high needs are not being adequately supported.
- Concern about the risk of devaluation of properties surrounding 310 Division Street.
- Noted increases in disorderly conduct and crime (vandalism, public urination and defecation, intimidation and assault, theft, open drug use, and dumping of waste including drug paraphernalia) around Transition House's current 10 Chapel Street location causing disruption for neighbours and making some people uncomfortable or afraid to be in the area.
 - Concern that these issues will transition to Division Street, and potentially increase, following the relocation of shelter services.
 - Concerns about Transition House's ability to mitigate such behaviour by its clients.
- Concerns around the larger crisis in affordable housing and downloading of fiscal responsibility for supportive housing from the federal and provincial governments to municipal governments who have limited revenue generation capacity – mainly the property tax base. Advocacy is recommended.
- Highlighting the demand for housing supports outpacing the supply, and the exhaustion of support staff in trying to do more with less.

- The evolving housing and support needs of the community and the importance of new strategies to address these needs, including greater availability of addiction and mental health services.
 - Privacy and theft concerns; concerns related to 310 Division Street clients being able to see into neighbouring properties from the upper floors.
 - Concerns about police responsiveness to nuisance-related calls such as property trespass and public disorderly conduct in the area of the homeless shelter, creating safety concerns.
 - Requests for assurances related to safety, security, and surveillance.
- **Operations and Management**
- Recommendation that 310 Division be used to house low-income seniors or other populations instead of Transition House’s current client base.
 - Suggestion that the County should retain ownership of 310 Division Street rather than enter into a Vendor Take Back mortgage with Transition House, as a means of optimizing asset management and enhancing oversight and accountability measures.
 - Concerns about lack of parking at and around 310 Division Street.
 - Concerns about Transition House’s ability to maintain 310 Division Street in a presentable state of repair/related impacts to community charm.
 - Questions about how Transition House will manage the perceived increase in operating costs given the increased size of 310 Division Street and the number of clients intended to be served. Concerns were expressed about the reliance on County funding and the potential increases to property tax.
 - Questions about staff training to ensure proper supports for clients with complex needs; concerns about shortages and turnover of qualified shelter staff.
 - Request for a ‘code of conduct’ for 310 Division Street clients, created in consultation with neighbouring residents and business owners.

