

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Council commits additional funding to shelter system

Midhurst/June 28, 2022 – Today at County Council, Councillors recognized the need to provide additional support with the transition for homeless individuals out of the emergency motel shelter model. County Council committed to provide support during the transition through an additional funding envelope of up to \$800,000 to augment the recent allocation of \$400,000 flowed through the County from the provincial pandemic Social Service Relief Funding (SSRF5) envelope and already committed to the shelter operators in the temporary motel shelter model in the City of Barrie. This additional allocation brings the County’s commitment to this transitional period to \$1.2 million, with a further contribution of \$400,000 from the City of Barrie, totalling \$1.6 million between the contributors.

As there are more individuals than can be accommodated within shelter capacity within the city, staff will immediately continue ongoing planning with shelter operators, partners and the City of Barrie to identify appropriate solutions for increased temporary shelter solutions for homeless residents. Recently, County Council also discussed at length long-term options to support homeless individuals towards more permanent housing solutions and these more permanent options continue to be explored.

The temporary emergency motel shelter model program began in March 2020 and was a direct response to the needs of homeless individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic as shelters reduced their capacity or closed due to health and safety requirements. The temporary program was fully funded by both the provincial and federal government with funding streams supporting activities to transition from the temporary program in line with the province’s *Re-Opening of Ontario Act*. In 2022, the average cost for the motel model was \$850,000 per month (including motel costs, staffing, and program expenses) to run the program at the Barrie motel location, housing as many as 140 to 175 individuals nightly. Earlier this week the motel program was temporarily extended to July 15 (from June 30) to permit additional time for planning.

“The additional funding committed to earlier today will go a long way towards ensuring our vulnerable population remains safe and continues to be able to access the supports they need during this transitional period,” said Warden George Cornell. “It is important to us as a Council to keep all of our residents as safe and healthy as possible and that is why today, we agreed to extend funding through the County’s Social Services Reserve Fund to maintain the level of support that is required as we transition supports away from the emergency motels shelter model.”

About the Simcoe County Shelter System

The County’s role in leading, managing and funding homelessness prevention services and related supports involves strategic partnerships with local agencies broader community stakeholders and enables responsiveness to the unique needs of local communities. For more information on the County’s homelessness prevention strategy, visit simcoe.ca/findshelter.

About the County of Simcoe

The County of Simcoe is composed of sixteen member municipalities and provides crucial public services to County residents in addition to providing paramedic and social services to the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia. Visit our website at simcoe.ca.

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