

Hello, my name is Christian Gava

I would like to address the growing need for homeless shelters in Niagara and the challenges that come with them. In a perfect world, there would be no addiction, mental illness or catastrophic life events which leave a family or individual vulnerable. I understand the need for this type of development and would like to point out that not all circumstances are the same. I've read through communications from NRH and the Niagara Region regarding the development of a temporary homeless shelter planned for 851 Ontario Road. I live within walking distance of this address and can see it from my bedroom window. I represent all the new families in this old but flourishing community. Families that have made this location a home with convenience, safety and recreation in mind. It is one of the last affordable areas I can think of. This plan is putting a cart before the horse. Good intention with a clear lack of vision. A mistake that can still be avoided.

I have a map in front of me with a few key locations in Welland which include a Job Gym, addiction service center, hospital and police station with markers. These need to be within walking distance for vulnerable people. Root causes are not being taken into consideration. Split this plan into two separate shelters. One for families in need and another to combat drug addiction and mental health crisis. Problems will simply spread into a family and recreational area if all these vulnerable people are put into one singular shelter at the specified location. Even if temporary.

I need to know who is being placed in this shelter. Two years ago, I decided to purchase my house with safety, convenience and recreation in mind to start a family. The location appeared to fit my bill, far enough away from the ruckus. A homeless shelter will inevitably spread chaos and bring distress to this location many new families call home. The language used in NRH's communication clearly states that these 5 years are an initial term with opportunity to renew. The 2.8M budget adjustment on this "temporary" plan will create more problems than resolutions. My fear is that this shelter will become permanent out of pure necessity. Please re-consider the location of this development.

Thanks,

Christian Gava