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## MEMORANDUM

COM-C 12-2020

**Subject:** Welland City Council correspondence re: shelter program solution  
**Date:** May 12, 2020  
**To:** Public Health and Social Services Committee  
**From:** Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

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Further to the request in the attached correspondence (Appendix 1), please be advised that Niagara Region staff have been, and are continuing, to explore options that would bring all or a portion of shelter beds back to the Welland community.

As you are aware, Niagara Region has once more awarded a shelter provision contract with The Hope Centre in Welland, for the next three years, to provide emergency shelter supports to Welland residents. The Hope Centre is committed to making shelter stays for Welland residents as seamless as possible, with transportation provided for clients between The Hope Centre and shelter operations, and all services being provided at The Hope Centre are accessible for those in need. Due to the limited availability of appropriate physical assets in that community, current provision of emergency shelter units involves an asset in Niagara Falls. It is also important to note that the demand for shelter supports in Welland crosses a number of demographics (e.g. approximately 15% families (including young children), 45% single men and 40% single women) and so this too must be considered when selecting an asset for a diverse population with often very different shelter needs. That all being said, Niagara Region staff and local agencies are continuing to explore options and have engaged in dialogue with an alternative property owner in the Welland community. We are committed to keep both Niagara Region and the Welland community apprised of our efforts.

It is also important to note, consistent with best practice in our commitment to 'end chronic homelessness' (and our work in Built for Zero), staff are ensuring that Welland, as well as all communities in Niagara, have access to transitional and supportive housing in the communities in which people wish to live (71 units in Welland and a further 57 in south Niagara), assertive outreach (recently awarded contract to Gateway located in Welland and Port Cares in South Niagara) and prevention services (Hope Centre and Port Cares). Additionally, continued dialogue is encouraged about access to affordable housing as this is considered to be one of the most impactful contributions to preventing and responding to homelessness (NRH opened 12 new affordable housing units in Welland in November 2019).

In light of the above, and further to the recommendations of experts such as Iain DeJong, staff are committed to ensure that all discussions regarding emergency shelter include equally, access to the resources that support Niagara's commitment to end chronic homelessness.

Respectfully submitted and signed by:

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Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE  
Commissioner