



Region of Waterloo



November 14, 2023

Hello Neighbours,

The number of people currently experiencing homelessness in Waterloo Region is unprecedented. Like most communities across Canada, we are in a housing crisis.

In response to urgent needs and after an exhaustive search for space, the Region will be opening an emergency shelter at 104 Stirling Avenue South, in the former Edith MacIntosh Child Care Centre in Kitchener. The site will begin operating on Thursday, November 30, 2023.

As you may recall, the property was previously used as an emergency shelter from June 28 to September 28, 2022 until the King Street shelter (at 1668 King St E.) was opened.

The site experienced some challenges at that time, which will be significantly mitigated by a number of important changes, including:

### **Reduced capacity**

The site has the projected capacity of 26 to 30 men, with the potential for an additional five spaces during periods of inclement weather. Previous capacity was 55.

### **Space guarantee with a new service provider and model**

The Region has been working with a new service provider, Services and Housing In the Province (SHIP), which is an experienced service provider with over 30 years of sector experience and will operate this site.

SHIP has been operating an emergency shelter at 84 Frederick Street and has had significant success. They have also operated without incident over the last year.

SHIP guarantees space for participants for 30 days. This eliminates the daily search for shelter, line-ups and unwanted visits for space. Intake of new participants is based on referral through the FirstConnect call centre. Storage is provided for some belongings.



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## **Daytime case planning**



SHIP assists participants with employment, income and housing support during the day. A housing plan outlining steps to secure permanent housing is created with each participant as a mandatory outcome.

## **Transition to 24/7**

Following a period of transition for SHIP to hire its full complement of staff, it will operate 24/7 with SHIP staff and Regionally-funded security services. The site will offer overnight shelter spaces and housing support services will be offered at the site during the day.

## **No substance use permitted on-site**

While SHIP supports a harm reduction approach to addiction, substance use is not permitted inside the facility or on the property. Participants requiring addiction support will be referred to appropriate harm reduction programs such as Sanguen Health Centre and the Safe Consumption and Treatment Site (CTS) at 150 Duke Street.

## **Expanded security services and sweeps for sharps**

Both the hours of security and perimeter of patrol have expanded to a broader area of the Cameron Heights Collegiate Institute (CHCI) property and surrounding area. The Region is collaborating with the Working to Improve Neighbourhood Safety (WINS) program to perform continuous sweeps of the school property.

If you have questions or would like more information, please reach out to Region of Waterloo Housing Services:

- Visit the Engage Waterloo Region Edith MacIntosh site <https://www.engagewr.ca/edith-macintosh>
- Email [housing@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:housing@regionofwaterloo.ca)
- Call 519-575-4400, ext. 5008

Or SHIP:

- Call 548-288-4206, ext. 4040
- Visit SHIP at: [www.shipshey.ca](http://www.shipshey.ca)

Thank you very much for your understanding as we address this challenging issue together in our community.

Region of Waterloo Housing Services and SHIP