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February 3, 2025

### **Statement from Mayor Jeff Leal**

Today, I used Strong Mayor powers at Brock Mission's request to help expedite their 52-unit transitional housing project at 738 Chemong Road. When there are opportunities to address our critical need for housing, I will do whatever is within my authority as Mayor to support those projects moving forward for the benefit of our community.

I directed City staff to prepare two bylaws for City Council to consider at a Special General Committee meeting on Monday February 24. The first will amend the City's Zoning bylaw to facilitate this project, and the second will exempt it from site plan requirements. Using Strong Mayor powers, these bylaws will require 4 out of 11 votes to pass.

Strong Mayor powers were given to the City of Peterborough by the Province in October 2023. I believe that these powers are meant to be used in very specific circumstances - for planning matters that advance important housing developments. This project meets that criteria. Not only will Brock Mission contribute 52 units towards the City of Peterborough's housing target of 4,700 homes by 2031, but these units will also provide critical supportive housing to help people in our community transition away from homelessness. The team at Brock Mission has made it clear to me that expediting their project will save them time and money and will put them in an ideal position to compete for funding opportunities from the provincial and federal government.

Adding 52 units of transitional housing, run by a capable and trusted provider in Brock Mission, is a crucial next step for our community's response to homelessness. The City of Peterborough is already more than doubling our funding toward homelessness prevention programs to increase support and enhance services in 2025. Our community supports 127 shelter and drop-in centre beds provided in partnership with community agencies, offering among the highest per-capita provision of shelter beds in the Province. We have made a significant investment in the 50 units offered in the Modular Bridge Housing Community, and recently we learned that Peterborough will be the recipient of a Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub.



But it's not enough. We have heard from our community partners that some individuals who enter the shelter system or who currently live in the Modular Bridge Housing Community are ready to move to the next level – supportive housing. They no longer need 24/7 supports, but they aren't ready to live fully on their own. But there are no available transitional housing units in our community, so these individuals are forced to stay where they are, occupying beds that could otherwise go to people who need them. Brock Mission's project will add 52 units of transitional housing for our community, and in the process will open up 52 spots in our shelter system.

As the recent report from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) shows, homelessness across the province has increased by 25% since 2022. Municipalities are not equipped to address homelessness and its related health care, mental health, addiction, and housing issues. Our ability as municipalities to fund these services out of property tax revenue, which is based on property assessment rather than ability to pay, is limited.

Municipalities don't have the resources to build supportive housing ourselves, but using Strong Mayor powers to expedite the approval of this project is something that is within our control.

Brock Mission's project has already been endorsed in principle by this Council through our decision to provide them with \$250,000 to cover some of the initial costs associated with getting their project off the ground. The proposed location on Chemong Road is in one of our Strategic Growth Areas, which our Official Plan has designated for intensification.

Brock Mission's experience and reputation in our community is well known, and they have clearly signalled to me that they will operate in a way that has minimal impact on the surrounding neighbourhood. The residents will be individuals who have been in a shelter for some time and are ready to take the next step.

This project is critically important for the future health and wellbeing of our community. I ask my Council colleagues for their support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Leal", written over a horizontal line.

Jeff Leal  
Mayor  
City of Peterborough