

Inn from the Cold, Blue Door mark milestones in delivering new housing options



Efforts to bring more transitional housing beds to northern York Region received a significant boost last week when the Federal and Provincial governments announced \$630,772 in joint funding to develop 18 transitional housing beds at Inn from the Cold's new build in Newmarket.

Work is currently underway on the Inn from the Cold project, which will have a total of 44 emergency and transitional housing beds spread over three floors, and provide support services.

“As part of the Government of Canada's broader efforts to respond to the housing crisis, investments are being made across the housing continuum to meet the needs of communities across Canada,” said the Federal and Provincial governments in a joint statement, announcing the contribution through the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI).

The COCHI is a bilateral agreement providing funding to “repair, regenerate and expand community housing so tenants can live in a home that is affordable, as well provide rental assistance to those living in social and affordable housing.”

The announcement was made at York Regional Headquarters by Graydon Smith, Ontario's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who said this kind of project shows what's possible through bilateral cooperation.

“With combined investments from our government, our Federal partners, and York Region, this is a strong example of what we can achieve when we work together to help people access safe shelter and the supports they need,” said Minister Smith in a statement.

Added Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy: “Everyone deserves a safe and stable place to call home. This investment for Inn from the Cold is an important step toward addressing homelessness and supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our community. By working with our federal and municipal partners, we are expanding access to emergency and transitional housing in Newmarket and helping to ensure residents have the supports they need to rebuild their lives.”

This was underscored by Newmarket Mayor John Taylor who said Inn from the Cold's housing hub was an “example of collaboration and community support” in the midst of a growing crisis.

The growth in demand was also touched upon by Regional Chair Eric Jolliffe.

“The Regional Municipality of York is continuing to see increased demand for affordable housing options, including emergency and transitional housing for individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Today's investment helps ensure we can continue responding to the growing needs in our communities and supporting residents who need it most.”

While Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas vetoed a transitional housing facility for men in Aurora last year, builds in Newmarket continue apace.

Blue Door, one of the non-profits that expressed interest in operating the proposed men's site, announced the redevelopment of their Kevin's Place facility in Newmarket is expected to be complete by October of this year.

The Kevin's Place project has seen Blue Door transform a 100-year-old home that was being used by the organization into a site with 14 three-storey stacked townhomes designed to deliver dignified, accessible, and affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness.

This redevelopment represents a defining moment for Blue Door as we expand from emergency response into long-term housing solutions, said Emmy Kelly, Chief Operating Officer at Blue Door. It demonstrates how communities can reimagine existing spaces to create homes that foster belonging, opportunity, and a stronger future for everyone.

The stacked townhouse model, they add, will meet accessibility standards to ensure residents with diverse needs can live with dignity and autonomy.

It's a move beyond temporary solutions towards meaningful investments in permanent, affordable housing that creates real opportunities for stability and independence.

A safe, dignified home changes everything, said Kelly. Kevin's Place will give individuals the stability and confidence to focus on their health, relationships, and goals, creating the foundation needed to move forward and fully participate in a thriving community.

By Brock Weir
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