

Wellington County Council
74 Woolwich Street
Guelph, ON N1H 3T9

Re: Continuum of Care Project – A Call to Reconsider

Dear Members of Wellington County Council,

We are writing to express our deep disappointment and concern over Wellington County Council's recent decision to abandon the Continuum of Care project; an initiative that had been in development for more than eight years and had already seen both public investment and community engagement.

Many of us, as long-time residents and seniors in Wellington County, participated in consultations, meetings, and planning sessions, offering our time and input to help bring the Continuum of Care to life. It is disheartening that the project was discontinued, and the earmarked funds reallocated without any further consultation with the community.

The Continuum of Care project represented a much-needed solution to an acute housing challenge for seniors in our area. Seniors in Wellington County, who have spent decades contributing to their communities and paying taxes, are now in need of housing options that reflect our current stage of life. The plan addressed real and pressing needs: secure, accessible, and appropriate housing that supports aging in place and community connectivity.

There exists a broad spectrum of housing needs among seniors:

- Many of us occupy homes that are no longer suitable or necessary for our lifestyles. We are ready and willing to downsize, which would also free up housing for younger families — if only there were adequate alternatives available.
- Others face financial constraints and require affordable housing options tailored to seniors.
- There is a distinct lack of purpose-built rental housing and multi-family developments such as low- and mid-rise apartments or condominiums that allow for aging in place within our existing communities.

The Continuum of Care model provided a promising approach by addressing these diverse needs. It offered a model where those who can pay do so, and those who need assistance supported — a fair and balanced system that works in other communities and could work here too.

We are particularly concerned by the missed opportunity to develop County-owned land for this project at a time when we are facing a clear housing crisis. Failure to utilize this land appropriately is not only disappointing but, in our view, unacceptable. Leaving the land vacant is not a solution.

While we recognize and appreciate that Council made efforts to seek support from provincial and federal governments, we remain unclear about the extent of those efforts and the specific outcomes. We believe more could — and should — have been done. Other funding sources and partnerships

may still be available and worth pursuing, especially with a new Prime Minister who has identified housing as a key priority for his government. Delivery models involving non-profit housing providers, public-private partnerships, or others could also be explored.

As Councillors have asserted: your work as representatives of our community should be held to an expectation of excellence. Reallocating funds originally earmarked for the Continuum of Care to member municipalities without clear purpose falls short of this standard and, frankly, feels like passing the buck. If the County cannot advance the Continuum of Care, how will the Townships make a meaningful impact on housing supply with fewer resources, fewer staff, and further constrained finances?

Looking ahead, we urge you to reconsider. When your own time comes to seek appropriate housing in later life, you may regret not advancing this project when the opportunity was in your hands.

Our request is simple yet vital:

- Re-open and champion the Continuum of Care project.
- Engage the community once again in planning and moving it forward.
- Know that we are ready to support you — with our expertise, time, and connections — to bring this vision to life.

The need is urgent. The opportunity remains. Now is the time to roll up our sleeves and build a housing system that works for all. Let us work together to ensure that Wellington County remains a place where residents can live with dignity at every stage of life.

Sincerely,

Continuum of Care Advocacy Group

Joanne Weiler, Chair

Brenda Chamberlain

Colleen Roberts

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