

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

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**FOR  
IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE**

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## **County of Renfrew announces plans for warming centre**

The County of Renfrew, on behalf of the Warming Centre Committee, is pleased to announce that a warming centre will be established within in the City of Pembroke to assist the homeless and precariously housed during the 2024/25 winter season.

After discussions with local stakeholders, the Committee has made the decision to locate the Mesa Warming Centre at 156 John Street, within the Ontario Addictions Treatment Centre (OATC) Pembroke clinic location. It is anticipated that the Centre will open its doors by December 1. This effort is a continuation and further expansion of Mesa, the collaborate approach to compassionate care in the community, which was launched by the County of Renfrew and community partners in March 2024.

The Committee approved a business plan to operate the Centre up to 24 hours a day, seven days a week for a five-month period, with staffing by addictions and mental health personnel from Mackay Manor.

Funding for this project is through a municipal partnership with the County's portion coming from the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP), while the City of Pembroke is contributing \$110,000 and the Town of Petawawa and Township of Laurentian Valley are contributing \$20,000 each.

Each of the municipal partners has representation on the Warming Centre Committee with Renfrew County Warden Peter Emon serving as chair. The Committee is also comprised of a collaborative table of stakeholders, including Pembroke Regional Hospital, The Grind Pembroke, Pembroke and Area Community Taskforce (PACT), Upper Ottawa Valley detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police, Renfrew County and District Health Unit, Mackay Manor and Addictions Treatment Service.

"We are extremely happy that the community decision table has determined a location that offers a safe and secure opportunity for members of our community that are seeking shelter during the cold winter months," Warden Emon shared. "We are thankful for our new partners at the OATC for welcoming us and working with us in an expedient fashion to allow operations at their location this upcoming winter season."

The parameters of the operational agreement include the development of a policy outlining the social conduct and code of conduct for the users of the centre, a review of a Good Neighbour Policy, and an effective communications policy for information sharing amongst the partners.

This site provides integrated washroom facilities, along with amenities such as a kitchenette, cleaning facilities, storage facilities and program space within the warming centre footprint of approximately 232 square metres. This is a facility already fully engaged with supporting those individuals experiencing substance use disorder seeking improved health outcomes. Additionally, it is in very close proximity to last winter's site at the Pembroke Farmers' Market.

Those working within Mesa are aware that there are individuals requiring short-term, warming centre services from November 2024 to April 2025, with many of these individuals known to be experiencing profound addictions challenges and concurrent mental health disorders. It is difficult to estimate the overall demand for a warming centre this season, even though we know the overall number of individuals living rough in tents this past month has diminished greatly due to interventions of community agencies, the Mesa team and partner organizations.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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