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Restart funding awarded for city's pitch

Cornwall to receive almost \$2M for multi-use, multi-rez project

Social services relief funding from the province of close to \$2 million that'll support multi-residential housing in the region is a welcome announcement. MPP Jim McDonnell said the city will receive \$1,886,455 to develop a mixed-use, multi-residential building to provide longer-term housing solutions.

"We're certainly excited by this and looking forward to expanding the social-housing portfolio across our geographic region," Mellissa Morgan, manager of the social and housing services department, told the Standard-freeholder on Monday morning.

The funding was announced as part of the Ontario government's providing municipalities and Indigenous community partners with over \$241 million. The province said the money will help protect those most vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless.

"Our government is investing in important projects like this (and) we're working hand-in-hand with our partners to make sure they have the tools and flexibility they need to keep people safe," McDonnell said.

The government said funding will be delivered through the Social Services Relief Fund, and will go towards protecting and supporting homeless shelter staff and residents, creating or renovating over 1,500 housing units, expanding rent support programs, and creating longer-term housing solutions.

In the news release, Steve Clark, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, said "we know that our municipal and Indigenous partners are facing extraordinary challenges, which is why these significant investments are so important. . . (the) investments are helping to build longer term solutions as well as meeting ongoing, immediate needs related to COVID-19."

The Social Services Relief Fund is part of up to \$4 billion being provided to municipalities under the federal-provincial Safe Restart Agreement.

As for what the tangible result of the announced funding for Cornwall and area will be, Morgan said it's early in the process and more information won't be available until further discussions with the province. She said it's Phase 2 of the social services relief funding, and that a business case was submitted – for a new, affordable housing build – in order for service managers to qualify.

Late last month in Cornwall, city council heard there is a continued need for more affordable housing in the region, with the area including SDG currently having 1,713 units. The presentation discussed findings of the Housing Revitalization Study and was delivered by a representative of Colliers International, and it included recommending over 700 new units between 2021-31.

The study was presented to SDG council a week ago.

"The (just announced provincial funding) supports the study (presented recently to councils)," Morgan said. "Getting approved for funding will support the increase of social housing units in the area."

Morgan said the next step would likely be a communications protocol that will outline what the actual build project will entail.

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