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Date January 15, 2025 **Report No.** 2025-35
To Chair and Members
Social Services Committee
From Mary Musson, Senior Director
Community Services and Social Development

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item
Item For Consideration

2.0 Topic Update Report on 1387 Colborne Street East (Plaza Motel) [Financial Impact: None]

3.0 Recommendation

- A. THAT Report 2025-35, Update Report on 1387 Colborne Street East (Plaza Motel) BE RECEIVED; and
- B. THAT the City Clerk BE DIRECTED to forward a copy of the final resolution and staff report to the County of Brant.

4.0 Executive Summary

The address of 1387 Colborne Street East, also known as the Plaza Motel, is a property in the County of Brant with a lengthy history of involvement with County of Brant Property Standards and Enforcement Services.

The current owner has owned the property since September of 2016 and the property has been the subject of several property standards orders and

complaints. A review of the County of Brant's Enforcement database indicates forty-six (46) calls for service at the Plaza Motel since April 2017.

Since September of 2020, County of Brant Enforcement Services has responded to several property standards complaints at the Plaza Motel including, but not limited to: rat infestation; raw sewage leak; broken furnace; overflowing dumpster; disconnection of natural gas and electricity; water in the basement; derelict vehicles; and piles of trash and debris. City of Brantford Housing and Homelessness Services staff and contracted service delivery partners have attended at the motel on several occasions since 2020 with the same outcome of motel residents declining housing stability services.

On July 10, 2024, GrandBridge Energy disconnected the electrical supply to the motel for non-payment. The Electrical Safety Authority imposed a "do not reconnect" order as electrical work has reportedly been performed without the necessary permits.

Since July 2024, City of Brantford Housing and Homelessness Services staff, specifically the encampment outreach Community Initiative Coordinator (CIC), attended the Plaza Motel twice weekly over the course of months to assist impacted tenants in finding alternate housing. The precarious housing situation created at the Plaza Motel over a period of many years led to challenges in providing housing stability services including the reluctance of the impacted households to engage with services. The effort for rapport building to develop trust was lengthy taking approximately two months before most residents were willing to accept housing stability supports and services.

Staff were able to successfully engage with and find more suitable housing for five of the eight residents at the Plaza Motel.

5.0 Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the outreach efforts to tenants residing at 1387 Colborne Street East, also known as the Plaza Motel.

6.0 Background

The City of Brantford is the designated Service Manager for Housing and Homelessness in the City of Brantford and the County of Brant. Most housing stability services are contracted to be delivered by third party service providers while the City of Brantford as the Service Manager is responsible for system coordination and oversight. These contracted services include the Emergency

Shelter Intake and Housing Resource Centre, currently contracted to SOAR Community Services, and emergency shelter spaces within the system which is currently contracted to four separate providers: Nova Vita, Inc., Rosewood House, Inc., The Salvation Army Brantford Booth, and SOAR Community Services.

The address of 1387 Colborne Street East, also known as the Plaza Motel, is a property in the County of Brant with a lengthy history of involvement with County of Brant Property Standards and Enforcement Services. The current owner has owned the property since September of 2016 and the property has been the subject of several property standards orders and complaints. A review of the County of Brant's Enforcement database indicates forty-six (46) calls for service at the Plaza Motel since April 2017.

In September of 2020, the power and natural gas supply to the Plaza Motel was disconnected for non-payment as well as concerns with the supply of natural gas within the building. A Property Standards Order was issued advising the owner to initiate repairs and to restore and maintain the utilities to all rental occupied units. The Property Standards Order was not appealed nor complied with, and County Enforcement Services subsequently executed the Order. The power and natural gas supply to the building was restored on or about November 2, 2020. The cost of the utilities was added to taxes as provided for under the Building Code Act.

In September 2020, City of Brantford housing outreach staff attempted to work with tenants to discuss alternative housing options. Services were declined.

Since September of 2020, County of Brant Enforcement Services has responded to several property standards complaints at the Plaza Motel including, but not limited to: rat infestation; raw sewage leak; broken furnace; overflowing dumpster; disconnection of natural gas and electricity; water in the basement; derelict vehicles; and piles of trash and debris.

City of Brantford Housing and Homelessness Services staff and contracted service delivery partners have attended at the motel on several occasions since 2020 with the same outcome of motel residents declining services.

7.0 Corporate Policy Context

City of Brantford Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Theme 6 (b): invest in a long-term strategy and plan to manage the homelessness crisis, inclusive of the

related issues of mental health and addiction issues and safety and security concerns.

[County of Brant Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023](#), Strategic Priority 5, Healthy, Safe, and Engaged Citizens

[Brantford-Brant Housing Stability Plan \(2014-2024\)](#)

8.0 Input From Other Sources

County of Brant – Enforcement Services

9.0 Analysis

9.1 Enforcement Services

The owner of 1387 Colborne Street East, operating as the Plaza Motel, has been embroiled in a long-standing landlord and tenant dispute since the fall of 2020.

On July 10, 2024, GrandBridge Energy disconnected the electrical supply to the motel for non-payment. The Electrical Safety Authority imposed a “do not reconnect” order as electrical work has reportedly been performed without the necessary permits.

As the cold weather season approached and the Electrical Safety Authority’s “do not reconnect order,” deteriorating living conditions, non-compliance with the Property Standards By-law, Fire Code, Building Code and on-going landlord and tenant dispute, the County intended to not perform any repairs and proceeded to encourage the relocation of residents for their own safety and security.

Since September of 2024, County of Brant staff from Enforcement Services had made multiple weekly visits to the site and spoken directly with the current tenants to inform them that the County would not be initiating repairs, that each tenant needed to make arrangements to vacate the site, and that water services will be shut off upon the arrival of colder weather to prevent pipes from bursting.

County of Brant Building, By-law, and Fire currently have matters before the courts.

9.2 Housing Outreach Services

The City of Brantford Coordinated Access System provides a variety of housing stability services for residents of the City of Brantford and the County of Brant who are experiencing precarious housing situations and/or are at risk of becoming homeless. The service delivery of this community support is contracted out to SOAR Community Services and can be accessed by citizens via telephone and in-person through the [Housing Resource Centre \(HRC\)](#).

Information regarding services available at the HRC have been consistently provided to households residing at the Plaza Motel. Due to the lack of engagement by tenants with available supports, and the concerns for the wellbeing of tenants residing at the Plaza Motel, City of Brantford staff attended the Plaza Motel alongside County of Brant Bylaw staff.

Before July 2024, City of Brantford staff attended the Plaza Motel twice alongside County of Brant Bylaw staff due to concerns pertaining to one motel room having mold and water damage. Both times, the individual staying in this motel room declined services and did not engage with staff, citing a distrust for agencies and community services.

Since July 2024, City of Brantford staff, specifically the encampment outreach Community Initiative Coordinator (CIC), attended the Plaza Motel twice weekly over the course of months to assist impacted tenants in finding alternate housing. These visits were typically on Wednesdays and Fridays for approximately 2 hours each visit. Total staff time conducting this outreach was approximately 72 hours of direct staff time, and approximately 18 hours of indirect staff time case conferencing, problem solving and attending joint meetings with County Bylaw. Housing stability services that were offered to motel residents were:

- Access to emergency shelters;
- Quotes for long-term stays at other motels;
- Connection to services such as Community Paramedics, the Housing Resource Centre and Ontario Works;
- Obtaining identification with assistance through Grand River Community Health Centre (GRCHC);
- completing taxes through the Senior's Resource Centre; and
- transportation to these services.

The Community Initiative Coordinator (CIC) also offered housing case management to residents who accepted stability services and provided system navigation for appropriate programs and services based on the household's needs, such as referrals to the Live Well Adult Program, Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB), transitional housing, and affidavit assistance for individuals to become active on the Service Manager's Centralized Waitlist for community (rent geared to income) housing. The CIC also offered referrals to the food bank, YMCA Immigration Supports, and to GRCHC for medical and Indigenous Peer Support Workers support.

9.3 Outcomes

Staff were able to successfully engage with and find more suitable housing for five of the eight residents at the Plaza Motel.

The five individuals who were open to working with staff signed Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) consents for Coordinated Access, allowing the CIC to discuss these cases during the weekly City of Brantford Encampment Network (COBEN) meetings. At this table, COBEN partners helped brainstorm ideas and problem solve across services and sectors allowing for the coordination of services and supports for the residents.

One individual transitioned to the Live Well Brantford-Brant Adult Program at 5 Marlene Avenue, a supportive housing program operated by the City; one individual who has significant medical needs was transitioned to the two-year transitional housing program at Lucy Marco Place in order to receive ongoing medical care by GRCHC while an assigned Housing Stability Worker (HSW) will continue to provide case management supports; and two households (one couple and one individual) are pending approval for the COHB.

Of the remaining three individuals (two households) who did not accept services, City of Brantford staff have been advised that one individual has moved back to Toronto to live with family. City of Brantford staff also tried to assist a couple and worked on providing connections to Community Paramedics, GRCHC Indigenous Peer Support Workers, and Brantford Native Housing.

9.4 Challenges

The precarious housing situation created at the Plaza Motel over a period of many years led to specific challenges including the reluctance of the impacted households to engage with services in a timely fashion. Many households faced barriers in engaging with services including a lack of transportation. The tenants'

reluctance to vacate the premises to appropriate alternative accommodations despite being advised that the building is no longer viable for human habitation was also a challenge for staff to navigate.

County of Brant Bylaw alerted the City of Brantford Housing and Homelessness Services Department in January 2024 about concerns at the Plaza Motel via a complaint from the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) that residents were living in poor conditions and rooms without heat. City of Brantford Community Initiatives Coordinators (CIC) attended the site to offer support as many residents did not have means to communicate with or attend at the Housing Resource Centre.

When City of Brantford staff re-attended the Plaza Motel in July 2024, residents were in a heightened state and would video/audio record staff while at the Plaza Motel. Lack of trust for services and supports was a significant barrier resulting in staff being unable to connect with residents to offer housing support, however staff continued to attend the location twice weekly in an effort to build rapport and develop trust with the impacted households. City of Brantford staff also attended in conjunction with Community Paramedics who offered snacks, clothing, medical supplies, and wound care support to households.

The efforts for rapport building to develop trust was lengthy taking approximately two months before most residents were willing to accept housing supports and services. Once staff successfully assisted an individual in applying for Ontario Works social assistance, and successfully found supportive housing for an individual at 5 Marlene Avenue, additional Plaza Motel residents became receptive to receiving housing stability services.

10.0 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications with this report.

11.0 Climate and Environmental Implications

There are no direct climate or environmental implications with this report.

12.0 Conclusion

The address of 1387 Colborne Street East, also known as the Plaza Motel, is a property in the County of Brant with a lengthy history of involvement with County of Brant Property Standards and Enforcement Services. The current owner has owned the property since September of 2016 and the property has been the subject of several property standards orders and complaints.

The precarious housing situation created at the Plaza Motel over a period of many years led to specific challenges including the reluctance of the impacted households to engage with services in a timely fashion. The efforts for rapport building to develop trust was lengthy taking approximately two months before most residents were willing to accept housing supports and services. Staff were eventually able to successfully engage with and find more suitable housing for five of the eight residents at the Plaza Motel.



Mary Musson, Senior Director
Community Services and Social Development

Prepared By:

Katarina Knezovic
Manager of Housing Stability

Attachments (if applicable): N/A

Copy to: N/A

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In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required yes no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk yes no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? yes no