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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Affordable Housing Group Praises Local Area Municipalities

The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network (NPRN) is pleased to see local area municipalities taking an active role in addressing affordable housing. Last night, Port Colborne city council passed a motion to create an affordable housing strategy, while St. Catharines is creating a task force to develop their plan with targets and timelines. Both join the Town of Fort Erie which began drafting an affordable housing action plan late last year.

"We are pleased to see the steps taken at both councils last night and hope to see other municipalities join the effort," says Glen Walker, chair of NPRN.

The Cost of Living Report produced by NPRN annually indicates housing or shelter costs to be the top expense for Niagara region families. This has led NPRN's Affordable Housing Group to look at the factors that affect affordable housing in Niagara, particularly for those who are living on a low income.

"We are strongly encouraging local municipalities to create their own affordable housing action plans to identify specific needs, while evaluating a variety of affordable housing solutions within the context of that particular community," adds Walker. NPRN has created a list of recommendations for municipalities which are looking for a place to start, which include acknowledging housing is a human right and that municipal government has a role to play in the gradual realization of this right for all community members. It also emphasizes connection to and alignment with housing plans at other levels of government.

While the federal and provincial governments are working on policy changes that impact housing, there is work to be done locally. The issue is becoming more complex which is why it is necessary for municipalities to investigate what their role is. With Niagara's mix of urban and rural communities, there will likely be a range of solutions that will work in some and not others.

For the complete list of affordable housing plan recommendations visit www.wipeoutpoverty.ca.

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The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network is a collective of over 30 agencies and individuals working to wipe out poverty in Niagara through education, collaboration, and advocacy to address poverty's root causes.

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