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May 17, 2023

Barrie City Council,

We are writing you today to express the support of the Barrie Chamber of Commerce for the package of initiatives Council has introduced to address the homelessness crisis in Barrie. We share Council's desire to address homelessness to ensure people get the supports and services they need to find permanent supportive housing.

In particular, the Chamber would like to see more emphasis on rehabilitation and counselling for Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinic from the Province of Ontario for more beds and hours of operation or the funding of similar organization that provides long-term counselling and treatment. We believe this will have a noticeable and positive impact in our community.

Aggressive panhandling has become a major concern on all major intersections, city streets and highway 400 ramps. Education on why panhandling hurts and does not improve the situation in the long term is needed to discourage residents and visitors from contributing in this way. Alternatively encouraging people to donate to the many agencies within the city here to support our vulnerable population would be a much better way to assist.

The Chamber has been working to address the shortage of skilled workers for entry level positions in our community and we believe there is a real opportunity to request Simcoe County to invest in transitioning people from unemployed to employment through training and supports. This would have a long-term impact on our labour supply.

In closing we commend Council for taking these bold steps to attempt to address the homelessness crisis in our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Markle", written over a light grey background.

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**Paul Markle**  
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