

February 24, 2017



Addressing **Homelessness** in Metro Vancouver



INTRODUCTION

Metro Vancouver's economy is experiencing unprecedented growth, while rates of working poverty¹ and homelessness remain among Canada's highest. 60,000 households in the region currently spend more than half of their income on shelter.² An estimated 4,000 people in the region have an immediate need for housing³, and are currently living on the streets, in their cars, in homeless camps, parks and forests, or in a temporary shelter. Approximately 5 people become homeless within Metro Vancouver each week, based on recent trends of 6% annual growth in the regional homeless population⁴. The incidence of homelessness in Metro Vancouver has increased annually over the past 15 years, and has now reached a state of crisis. It is anticipated that Metro Vancouver's 2017 Homeless Count, set for March 7-8, will quantify an exponential increase in the numbers. The need for systemic improvements to effectively manage the crisis is urgent.

Homelessness is a symptom of other underlying problems. An estimated 80% of homeless people suffer a chronic health issue.⁵ 49% have an addiction and 34% suffer from mental illness.⁶ 31% of homeless people are of First Nations descent (whereas First Nations comprise 3% of the overall regional population).³ An estimated 40% of homeless people were previously in foster care, and 40% have previously been in the criminal justice system⁷. 70% of homeless people report past trauma or abuse.⁸

Homelessness is a region-wide problem, impacting all communities from downtown Vancouver to suburban and rural areas within Metro Vancouver. Homelessness impacts all residents, regardless of income status, who live and work beside people suffering on the streets, in tent cities, and in temporary shelters, or who, with 60,000 households in working poverty in the region⁹, may themselves be in a position of high vulnerability to becoming homeless. There is also a financial cost of homelessness to taxpayers, estimated \$55,000 annually per homeless person¹⁰ and over \$200M/year combined within the region. Local governments are expending extraordinary resources to deal with the rising homeless population and community impacts.

Homelessness in Metro Vancouver must also be approached as a provincial and national issue, recognizing that the region has become a catchment area for other parts of the country with fewer economic opportunities and potentially less access to services and shelter. Blocking pathways into homelessness means not only addressing its root causes within Metro Vancouver, but also across British Columbia and Canada through partnership and collaboration across jurisdictions.

The purpose of this Position Paper is to identify the contributing factors that have led to the current homelessness crisis within the Metro Vancouver region, supported by the available data collected through the leadership of the Regional Homelessness Task Force and a review of best practices. The paper has been structured using a Conceptual Framework as a foundation for the development of recommendations and actions that are focused on clear and effective strategies **to prevent homelessness, to serve people who are currently homeless, and to create pathways out of homelessness.**

1 Defined as spending more than 50% of income on shelter.

2 Working Poverty in Metro Vancouver, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (June 2016).

3 Based on 2016 income assistance cases that are no fixed address within Metro Vancouver.

4 Cascadia Strategy Consulting Partners; assuming 6% annual growth in the regional homeless population.

5 Fraser Health, Homelessness, and Housing (2016).

6 Based on 2016 income assistance cases that are no fixed address within Metro Vancouver.

7 Homeless and incarcerated: An epidemiological study from Canada (2014).

8 Ibid

9 Preliminary Evidence Review: Benefits of Supportive Housing Initiatives, Fraser Health (2015).

10 Cascadia Strategy Consulting Partners; based on Preliminary Evidence Review: Benefits of Supportive Housing Initiatives, Fraser Health (2015).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Based on an assessment of best practices along with data that has been gathered to define the magnitude of the problem, the following Guiding Principles have been established as the fundamental concepts that will frame the responses and solutions to homelessness in the Metro Vancouver region:

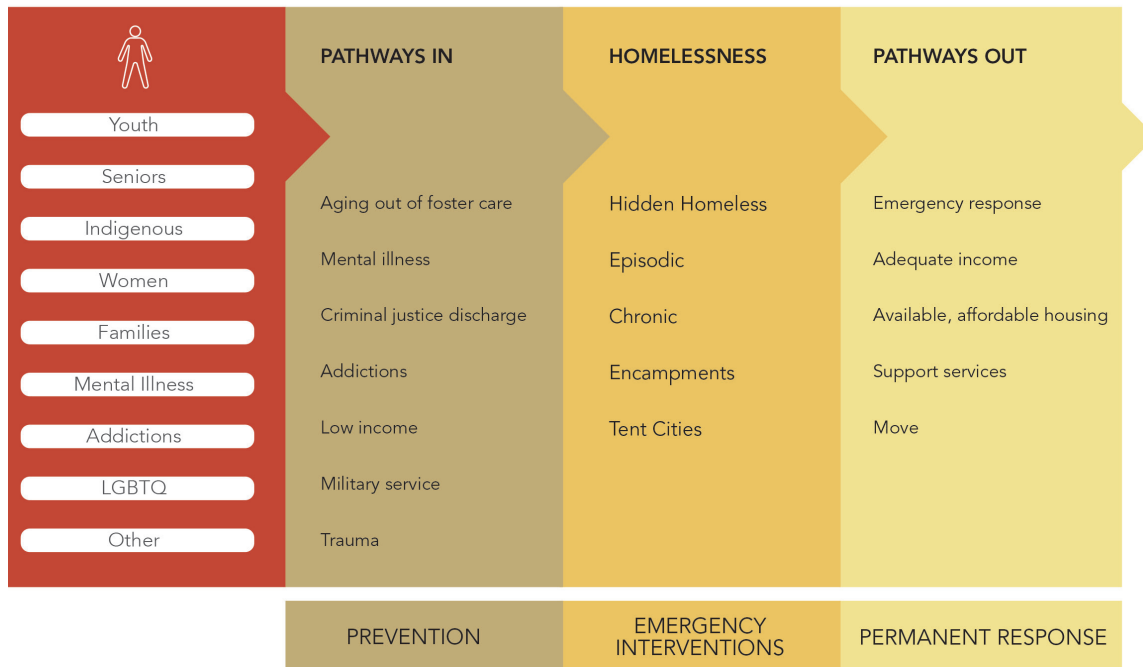
1. **Homelessness in Metro Vancouver is a crisis**, and requires immediate action from all levels of government to prevent people from becoming homeless, serve people who are currently homeless, and provide pathways out of homelessness.
2. **Homelessness is a symptom** of many different underlying causes: family breakdowns, mental health and addiction, chronic health problems, unemployment, past incarceration, etc. Addressing homelessness doesn't necessarily address its root cause.
3. **Ending homelessness requires a systems-based approach**, with coordination across many government and non-government agencies, combining different actions simultaneously to address the root causes of homelessness.
4. **Homelessness is not just an urban issue**, it's also a growing issue in suburban and rural areas of Metro Vancouver, and must be addressed using a region-wide approach.
5. **Preventing homelessness is easier than reversing homelessness**, and delivers better outcomes for residents and more value for taxpayer money over the long-term compared to helping someone after they've become homeless.
6. **Homelessness is related to affordability**, and has been worsened by rising costs within the region in relation to income, **but is not just about affordability**.
7. **Homelessness in Metro Vancouver is a national issue**, with the region serving as a catchment area for homeless people drawn to economic opportunities and access to services within our region.
8. **Access to coordinated and targeted health care is key**, and the provision of wrap-around health services to those who are vulnerable to homelessness must underlie responses.
9. **Addressing homelessness requires careful tailoring of responses and services to reflect the needs of different population groups** (e.g. youths, seniors, First Nations, women, unemployed, people suffering health issues, addiction, etc.).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Homelessness is a complex topic. Creating a mental model that visually represents the lenses through which to consider the issue both helps to provide a common language for and defines the scope for analysis and action. The Conceptual Framework shown below serves as a foundation for addressing homelessness in the Metro Vancouver region. It identifies three basic

components of the homeless continuum - those that consider pathways in, those that consider the experience of being homeless, and those that consider pathways out. In addition, across the entire continuum is the recognition of the wide range of population groups that move through the homeless experience in different ways.

Regional Homelessness Conceptual Framework



Once there is a recognition and understanding of the three different stages of homelessness, as pictured in the Conceptual Framework above, it becomes easier to begin to define specific actions and recommendations that will make meaningful progress in reducing homelessness and its associated societal impacts. Actions can be captured within three distinct avenues:

- Preventing Pathways Into Homelessness.** Addressing the systems and structures that allow homelessness to occur and providing early intervention. Causes include low income / poverty; the housing crisis; substance misuse; family breakdown; mental health; history of incarceration; chronic physical health problems. Prevention of homelessness is the optimal solution, through reducing the risks, early intervention, and treatment of an underlying condition.

- Serving the Homeless.** Helping those who are currently homeless which includes the hidden homeless; episodic experiences; chronically homeless; and those who take shelter in encampments. Emergency interventions through the provision of appropriate and timely services is the optimal solution.
- Creating Pathways Out of Homelessness.** Creating programs and services that can ensure a transition to effective resettlement. Success is contingent upon permanent responses that include not only housing, but also additional community supports and services.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

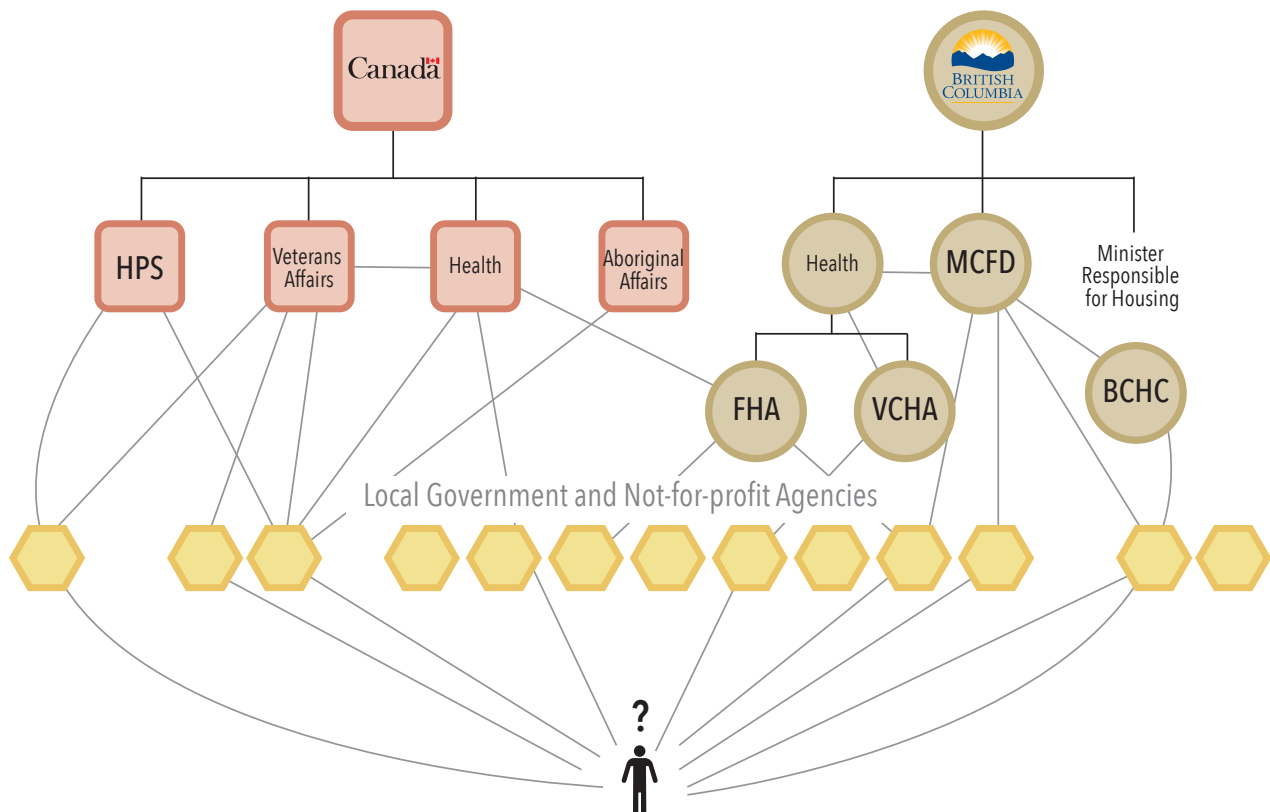
Many agencies have roles and responsibilities in addressing homelessness.

The Provincial Government provides support through a wide range of ministries and agencies which includes the Ministry of Children & Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Innovation, Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Health and the Minister Responsible for Housing (BC Housing). Two Provincial Health Authorities exist within Metro Vancouver – the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and the Fraser Health Authority – who, as agencies of the Province, also play a key role in providing services to vulnerable and homeless populations.

The Federal Government provides national support through the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Families, Children, and Social Development, Services Canada, Ministry of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and the Ministry of Health. The Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) is a program that delivers funding annually to directly serve the homeless population through partnerships with a variety

of agencies and local non-profits. As a 'Community Entity', Metro Vancouver Regional District provides the administrative support for HPS program delivery in the Metro Vancouver region. Local governments also play a critical role in responding to homeless populations within their communities by partnering in community programs (such as cold weather shelters), supporting assisted housing and delivering affordable housing initiatives. In addition, local governments are on the front line responding to people at risk and those occupying homeless camps in their communities. Extraordinary resources are being expended by municipal staff on a daily basis trying to keep up with an ever increasing homeless population and the associated community impacts.

Beyond the various federal and provincial government ministries and agencies that have legislative responsibility for delivering programs and services are the many non-profit and community-based organizations that exist throughout the region. These organizations also provide critical services, programs and advocacy on behalf of people in need.



UNDERSTANDING THE DATA

Much of the research into homelessness points to the crucial role of data in identifying gaps, determining solutions, and measuring progress. Successful systems approaches to homelessness are characterized by a reliance on gathering data to support strategic and evidence-based planning, and on the use of the evidence gathered to set standards of practice for integrated service delivery.

While there currently exists an incomplete array of relevant and harmonized data in the Metro Vancouver region, the available data as presented below depict some of the key gaps being experienced in the Metro Vancouver region related to preventing homelessness, serving people who are currently homeless, and creating pathways out of homelessness. From this data emerge some key learnings that play an important role in determining what the needs are, and link to proposed actions and recommendations.

Preventing Pathways into Homelessness

1. **Poverty reduction is an important means to reducing homelessness.** Many people in the Metro Vancouver region are struggling with poverty. People living in poverty are vulnerable to becoming homeless.
 - a. Over 60,000 households in the region spend more than half their income on shelter¹¹
 - b. 100,086 people were assisted by Food Banks in BC in 2016, growing at 3% annually¹²
 - c. 12.9% of Metro Vancouver persons were low income in 2014¹³
 - d. 64,243 people in Metro Vancouver received income assistance in 2016¹⁴
 - e. BC is the last province in Canada to have a commitment to a poverty reduction plan
2. **Health care support and services are critical for reducing homelessness.** Health issues, including addiction and mental illness, are prevalent amongst the homeless. People with underlying health conditions are vulnerable to becoming homeless.
 - a. An estimated 80% of homeless people suffer a chronic health issue (45% suffer two or more health conditions concurrently)¹⁵
 - b. 44% of sheltered and 55% of unsheltered homeless have an addiction (2014)¹⁶
 - c. 33% of sheltered and 36% of unsheltered homeless suffer mental illness (2014)¹⁰
 - d. 30% of sheltered and 27% of unsheltered homeless have a physical disability (2014)¹⁰
3. **Policies and programs to enhance transition out of foster care can prevent a key pathway into homelessness for youth.** Many youth aging out of the child welfare system cannot manage to support themselves independently. Youth aging out of foster care are vulnerable to becoming homeless.
 - a. In 2015, 1,024 young people aged out of care¹⁷
 - b. 40% of homeless youth have been part of the child welfare system^{18 19}
4. **Ongoing efforts to build a stronger social safety net for First Nations populations can reduce the link between indigenous peoples and homelessness.** People of First Nations descent can experience multiple antecedents to homelessness, including familial dysfunction, substance use, health issues, community violence, and are particularly vulnerable to becoming homeless.
 - c. An estimated 31% of homeless people are of First Nations descent (whereas First Nations comprise 3% of the overall regional population)²⁰
 - d. 43% of young people aging out of care in 2014 were of First Nations descent²¹

11 Working Poverty in Metro Vancouver, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (June 2016).

12 Canada Without Poverty (2016).

13 Statistics Canada

14 BC Ministry of Social Development and Innovation (2016).

15 Fraser Health, Homelessness, and Housing (2016).

16 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count 2014

17 MCFD in Fostering Change. ND (2015).

18 Homeless and incarcerated: An epidemiological study from Canada (2014).

19 Opportunities in Transition, An Economic Analysis of Investing in Youth Aging Out of Foster Care, SFU School of Public Policy (2016).

20 Based on 2016 income assistance cases that are no fixed address within Metro Vancouver.

21 MCFD in Fostering Change. ND (2015).

5. **Policies and programs to enhance transition out of incarceration can prevent a known pathway into homelessness.** Transitioning from incarceration back into society can leave people without necessary supports, particularly for those who have experienced other antecedents of homelessness. People who have been discharged from the criminal justice system are vulnerable to becoming homeless. Ensuring that people discharged from prison have access to safe affordable housing reduces recidivism rates.
 - a. An estimated 40% of homeless people have previously been incarcerated²²
 - b. A pilot initiative in the Fraser Valley showed that 94% of participants provided with either subsidized or market housing on release from a correctional centre remained housed²³
 - c. Post-incarceration homeless people tend to have higher rates of mental illness, addictions, and are more likely to have previously been in foster care²⁴
6. **It is critical that an adequate supply of affordable rental housing be available to meet the demand of those at risk of homelessness.** The number of rental housing units that are affordable to households with incomes below \$30,000 per year (50% of regional median income) is declining in the Metro Vancouver region, making it difficult to access affordable rental housing. (HDB 4.7)
 - a. The shelter component of Income assistance has not increased in 9 years while average market rent has increased every year since 2010²⁵
 - b. In 2011 there were over 62,000 households in the region considered at economic risk of homelessness, being in core need and spending at least half their income on shelter. (HDB 3.3)

Serving People who are Homeless:

1. **A consistent reduction in the total number of unsheltered and emergency sheltered persons is an indication of a well-functioning and adequately resourced homeless-serving system.** However, there is increasing street homelessness in most Metro Vancouver municipalities, the trend in sheltered and unsheltered homeless continues to rise, and many municipalities have homeless encampments. Sufficient space in shelters can only be ensured by having adequate numbers of transitional housing to move others into.
 - a. An estimated 4,000 people in the region have an immediate need for housing²⁶
 - b. 2,777 people were counted as homeless in Vancouver in 2014²⁷, however the homeless count does not reflect all homeless people in the region
 - c. The City of Vancouver counted 1,847 homeless people in 2016²⁸
 - d. Unsheltered homeless is increasing an estimated 26% annually since 2011 and 9% since 2002 (i.e. accelerating growth of unsheltered homelessness)²⁹
 - e. 957 unsheltered homeless counted within Metro Vancouver in 2014³⁰
 - f. 539 unsheltered homeless counted in the City of Vancouver in 2016³¹
 - g. Approximately 5 people become homeless within Metro Vancouver each week³²
 - h. Estimated 6% increase annually in sheltered/ unsheltered homelessness since 2011³³

²² Homeless and incarcerated: An epidemiological study from Canada (2014); decreased from study findings for conservatism.

²³ Metro Vancouver Best Practices in Addressing Homelessness, January, 2017

²⁴ Homeless and incarcerated: An epidemiological study from Canada (2014)

²⁵ No Vacancy: Affordability & Homelessness in Vancouver (2016).

²⁶ Based on 2016 income assistance cases that are no fixed address within Metro Vancouver.

²⁷ Metro Vancouver 2014 Homeless Count.

²⁸ No Vacancy: Affordability & Homelessness in Vancouver (2016).

²⁹ Cascadia Strategy Consulting Partners based on Metro Vancouver Homeless Count Trends 2002-2014.

³⁰ Metro Vancouver 2014 Homeless Count.

³¹ City of Vancouver (2016).

³² Cascadia Strategy Consulting Partners; assuming 6% annual growth in the regional homeless population.

³³ Cascadia Strategy Consulting Partners based on Metro Vancouver Homeless Count Trends 2002-2014.

- i. 70 encampments with up to four persons reported within Metro Vancouver³⁴
- j. 15 encampments with more than four people across 9 municipalities (3 in Vancouver, 2-3 in Township of Langley, 2 in Maple Ridge, 2 in North Vancouver, 2 in Delta, 1 in Surrey, 1 in Burnaby, 1 in Coquitlam, 1 in City of Langley)³⁵

2. **Ensuring that those who are homeless are satisfied with the services and supports received reflects that the lived experience of being homeless is being appropriately addressed.**

While shelters do not provide a solution to homelessness, they must nevertheless offer a safe and dignified experience for guests. Regular shelters are full daily. Extreme weather shelters are over-capacity, particularly the suburban municipalities. Ensuring appropriate, accessible and timely communication about available services can alleviate the suffering.

- a. BC Housing reports shelter occupancy is estimated at 97% in Metro Vancouver^{36 37}
- b. While men comprise the majority of shelter users, the number of women accessing shelters has increased from 28% in 2012 to 32% in 2016³⁸
- c. On a cold night in January 2017 (January 11), extreme weather shelters in Coquitlam, Langley, Maple Ridge, Surrey, White Rock, and North Vancouver exceeded 100% capacity³⁹

3. **The focus on providing remedial services and supports is more costly than putting in place long-term solutions.**

There is a significant financial cost to municipalities related to such services as homeless outreach staff, drop-in centres, shelters, food banks, and others. Connecting homeless individuals with housing and ongoing support services produces significant cost savings through the reduced need for emergency and other trauma-related services. Implementing sustainable, long-term solutions to homelessness is more cost-effective than allowing it to continue.

- a. The cost of homelessness to taxpayers is estimated \$55,000 annually per homeless person⁴⁰ and over \$200M/year combined within the region⁴¹
- b. The cost of homelessness to Canadians is estimated at \$7 billion annually, according to the 2013 report *The State of Homelessness in Canada*. The estimate is based on the cost of reacting to homelessness instead of addressing the root causes of it and taking a proactive approach.
- c. Simon Fraser University study estimated it costs \$55,000 per person per year to leave someone homeless in British Columbia versus a housing and support cost of \$37,000

34 RAAC Survey (2016).

35 Ibid

36 No Vacancy: Affordability & Homelessness in Vancouver, Executive Summary (2016).

37 BC Housing. (2011-2016). *Homelessness Services System (HSS)*, snapshot as of April 12, 2016. These numbers may also include additional mats emergency shelter providers make available in their facilities that are not unfunded by BC Housing. The rates include permanent, year-round shelters that provide data to BC Housing. The rates also exclude mats from Extreme Weather Response, Homeless Emergency Action Team, and Temporary Winter shelters.

38 BC Housing. (2011-2016). *Homelessness Services System (HSS)*, snapshot as of April 12, 2016.

39 BC Housing (2017).

40 Preliminary Evidence Review: Benefits of Supportive Housing Initiatives, Fraser Health (2015).

41 Cascadia Strategy Consulting Partners; based on Preliminary Evidence Review: Benefits of Supportive Housing Initiatives, Fraser Health (2015).

Creating Pathways out of Homelessness:

1. **Ending homelessness requires a shift in focus from reactive to proactive measures.** This includes ensuring that an adequate supply of supportive and transitional housing is available. However, the social housing waitlist in Metro Vancouver is increasing.

- a. Over the past five years the number of households in Metro Vancouver waiting for social housing increased by 22%, from 8,587 in 2011 to 10,496 in 2016⁴²
- b. Municipalities with the longest waitlists are the City of Vancouver (4,152), followed by Surrey (1,688), Burnaby (1,239) and Richmond (657)⁴³
- c. In Metro Vancouver, from 2012-2016 there has been a steady increase in applications by people with disabilities (8% growth), singles (2% growth), and families (3% growth)⁴⁴
- d. The waitlist for senior households in the region has increased by nearly 50% over the past five years, from 2,373 in 2011 to 3,617 in 2016⁴⁵

2. **Coordinated access and assessment approaches offer an important support to ensure housing stability.** Housing alone is not enough. For people who face a complex series of mental health and concurrent disorders, tertiary level service, including through Integrated Case Management approaches, can help housing stability outcomes. Utilizing a coordinated access and assessment system can help people access appropriate housing services more quickly and with better accuracy, and can improve coordination amongst agencies while reducing redundancies.

- a. Fraser Health caseload capacity is 80-100 clients per team

3. **Without sufficient affordable housing options, there is no pathway out of homelessness. There is little housing capacity to absorb people leaving homelessness.** In order to be effective, rental assistance programs require access to vacant affordable rental housing units. Insufficient numbers of purpose-built rental units are available in Metro Vancouver. The social housing waitlist is increasing despite increased rent supplements and assistance.

Few rental units exist that are affordable for low income households.

- a. Of the 107,867 purpose built rental apartments in Metro Vancouver, the vacancy rate was 0.7%, the lowest it has been in the past 8 years⁴⁶
- b. The vacancy rate of 0.7% for 2016 is below the ten year average of 1.3% for the region (2006 - 2016)⁴⁷
- c. The number of apartment units in Metro Vancouver that rent for \$750 or less fell from 33,831 in 2007 to 14,733 in 2011, a decrease of 56.5% (19,098 units)⁴⁸
- d. Median apartment rents increased from \$800 to \$1,127 per month in Metro Vancouver for the period from 2006 to 2016 (10 years), an increase of 41% (an average of 4.1% per year over ten years)⁴⁹
- e. The number of people receiving rent supplements (e.g. through Homeless Outreach Program [HOP], the Homeless Prevention Program [HPP] and other rent supplements) has more than doubled from 607 in 2011 to 1517 in 2016⁵⁰

42 MV Housing Data Book (2016).

43 Ibid

44 No Vacancy: Affordability & Homelessness in Vancouver (2016).

45 Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book (2016).

46 Ibid

47 Ibid

48 Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book (2016).

49 Ibid

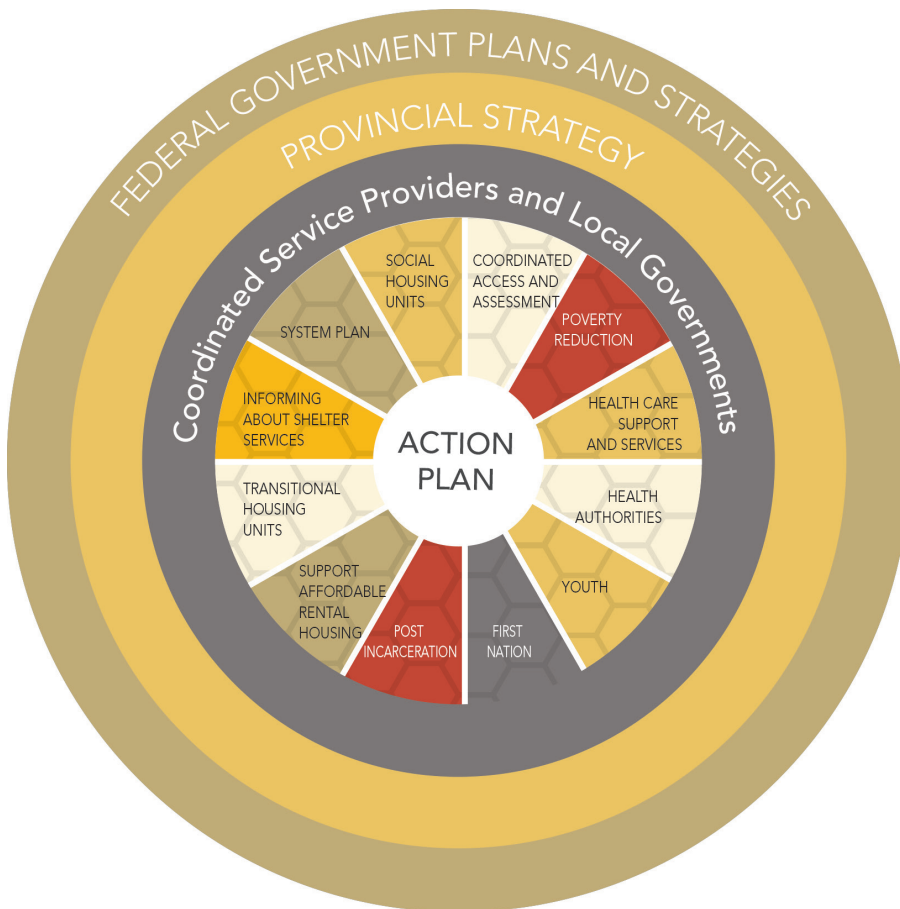
50 No Vacancy: Affordability & Homelessness in Vancouver (2016).

A HOLISTIC SYSTEMS APPROACH

It is clear that the current system of fractured governance that has multiple ministries and agencies working in silos, each within their narrow scope of authority, has not been efficient nor effective in slowing down or reducing the growth of the homeless population. Consequently, not only is the homeless population growing at a rapid rate, but there is also an increasing health care crisis for people at risk, including those populations identified in the Conceptual Framework (eg., youth, seniors, indigenous, women and families).

There are critical interdependences between federal and provincial government ministries, agencies, local governments, and community organizations. As people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless move through this system, each with a different path based on their unique circumstance, achieving positive outcomes requires “wraparound care” from all groups working in coordination.

The many agencies involved in addressing homelessness must work together in a system-wide approach to help prevent homelessness for the 60,000 households in working poverty in the region⁵¹, serve the region’s 3,000-4,000 homeless population⁵², and expedite the transition out of homelessness for the 10,500 people in the region waiting for social housing.⁵³



51 (Working Poverty in Metro Vancouver, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (June 2016).)

52 Modelled based on 2014 regional homelessness count as the min, and the # of people on income assistance with No Fixed Address as the max

53 BC Housing

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through understanding the data and examining where the gaps exist within the regional homelessness continuum, emerge important findings that help us to identify where substantive and coordinated action needs to occur. The most important finding is that addressing homelessness in an effective and sustainable way requires a strategic, comprehensive and coordinated approach that is developed through a holistic governance model and an action plan that allows for alignment between a shared set of priorities built upon the leadership of the Provincial and Federal Governments working together with local governments, agencies and community groups to address the issues of homelessness. Clear, harmonized and accountable metrics for measuring success are an important component of any such action plan.

The incidence of homelessness in Metro Vancouver has reached a state of crisis that we cannot afford to ignore. The need for systemic improvements to effectively manage the crisis is urgent. To this end, the **Proposed Action Plan to Address Homelessness** (Appendix 1) provides twelve coordinated actions and associated metrics / targets for moving forward **to prevent homelessness, to serve people who are currently homeless, and to create pathways out of homelessness.**



PROPOSED ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

As informed by the data and the resultant understanding of the needs / gaps, the following twelve actions along with associated metrics / targets are proposed as key steps in the Metro Vancouver region to prevent homelessness, to serve people who are currently homeless, and to create pathways out of homelessness:

Preventing Pathways Into Homelessness

- 1. The development and implementation of comprehensive federal and provincial poverty reduction strategies, with alignment between both.**

Poverty reduction is an important means to reducing homelessness.

Develop a multi-ministerial provincial poverty reduction strategy by the end of 2017 (note: BC is the only province or territory in Canada that has not adopted a poverty reduction plan)⁵⁴
- 2. The improvement and expansion of home care for chronic health issues, mental illness and addictions.**

Health care support and services are critical for reducing homelessness.

Increase dedicated funding for home care, mental health, and addictions care within Metro Vancouver by \$1B beyond planned increases by 2027⁵⁵
- 3. The establishment of transitional supported-living programs for youth aging out of foster care / child welfare system.**

Policies and programs to enhance transition out of foster care can prevent a key pathway into homelessness for youth.

Decrease the rate of youth recently in care who experience homelessness from an estimated 45% to 0% by 2027⁵⁶
- 4. The expansion of programs to meet the need for holistic and culturally safe support services to assist Aboriginal individuals and families in securing and maintaining housing.**

Ongoing efforts to build a stronger social safety net for First Nations populations can reduce the link between indigenous peoples and homelessness.

Decrease the difference between the percentage of First Nations within the homeless population (currently 31%) compared to the general population (currently 3%)⁵⁷
- 5. The establishment of discharge planning programs to ensure subsidized or market housing on release from incarceration.**

Policies and programs to enhance transition out of incarceration can prevent a pathway into homelessness.

Develop a joint federal and provincial strategy on improving and expanding discharge planning programs to ensure subsidized or market housing on release from incarceration by the end of 2017

⁵⁴ Long Overdue, Why BC Needs a Poverty Reduction Plan (January 2017).

⁵⁵ Note: the Federal Government has proposed \$11.5B in targeted investment on home care and mental health by 2027 nation-wide.

⁵⁶ Aged Out, Worried About Homelessness (February 2017).
⁵⁷ Fraser Health, Homelessness, and Housing (2016).

6. **An increase in the supply of rental housing that is affordable to households with incomes below \$30,000 per year.**

It is critical that an adequate supply of affordable rental housing be available to meet the demand of those at risk of homelessness.

6,000 additional rental units⁵⁸ affordable to households with incomes below \$30,000 per year⁵⁹ within the region by 2019. 60,000 additional rental units affordable to households with incomes below \$30,000 per year⁶⁰ units by 2027.⁶¹

7. **An increase in the shelter component of income assistance to reflect average market rents.**

An immediate review of the shortcomings in the shelter maximum component of income assistance of \$375⁶² for a single-unit rental apartment within Metro Vancouver, as well as a review of the number and time-limited nature of rental supplements, in order to reflect the increased cost of rents in Metro Vancouver since the rates were set on June 1, 2007⁶³

Serving the Homeless

8. **The provision of additional transitional housing units to meet the need.**

A well-functioning and adequately resourced homeless-serving system is reflected in a consistent reduction in the total number of unsheltered persons. Sufficient space in shelters can only be ensured by having adequate numbers of transitional housing to move others into.

1,000 additional units of transitional housing each year in 2017, 2018 and 2019, for a total of 3,000 new transitional (i.e. short-term) housing units⁶⁴ within the region by 2019.

9. **The improvement and expansion of appropriate, accessible and timely communication and information about available shelter services.**

Ensuring that those who are homeless are satisfied with the services and supports received reflects that the lived experience of being homeless is being appropriately addressed.

Launch an online portal and access points to report on availability of shelters and transitional housing by 2019. Ensure all existing shelters have access to the portal upon launch.

⁵⁸ There are currently an estimated 15,000 rental units affordable with 30% of median household income for households earning 50% or less of the regions median household; estimated based on the Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book (2016, with 2011 estimates).

⁵⁹ Adjusted for inflation in target year.

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ Based on the existing number of households in working poverty within Metro Vancouver spending more than half of their income on shelter.

⁶² BC Income Assistance Rate Table (February 2017).

⁶³ Note: to avoid net-neutral shifting of the income assistance rate support to shelter from other costs of living.

⁶⁴ Based on the 2017 conservative estimate of homeless within Metro Vancouver.

Fostering Pathways out of Homelessness

10. The provision of additional social housing units to eliminate the waitlist in the region.

Ending homelessness requires a shift in focus from reactive to proactive measures. This includes ensuring that an adequate supply of supportive and transitional housing is available.

Eliminate, by 2021, the BC Housing waitlist in the Metro Vancouver region (from an estimated 10,500⁶⁵)

11. The implementation of a coordinated access and assessment approach in which all agencies adopt a standardized approach, and information and data is centralized and harmonized.

Coordinated access and assessment approaches offer an important support to ensure housing stability

Develop a provincial strategy on access, assessment approach, and data standardization by the end of 2017.

Develop and implement a balanced scoreboard (or “dashboard”) to track key homelessness metrics publicly by 2019

12. An increase in the affordable rental housing supply, including through supporting retention of existing affordable rental units, as well as through supporting the construction of new units.

Without sufficient affordable housing options, there is no pathway out of homelessness.













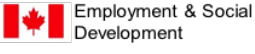




Retention of existing affordable rental housing supply (estimated at 15,000 rental dwellings within Metro Vancouver)⁶⁶ in addition to the 6,000 additional rental dwellings proposed by 2019 (note: affordable dwellings have declined within Metro Vancouver at an estimated rate of -8% per year since 2007)⁶⁷

⁶⁵ BC Housing via the City of Vancouver (2016).

⁶⁶ Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book (2016, with 2011 estimates).

⁶⁷ Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book (2016, with 2011 and 2007 estimates).

AGENCIES INVOLVED IN ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS IN METRO VANCOUVER⁶⁸

<p>Health Care</p> <p>80% of homeless have a chronic health issue (45% have >1)</p>			 <p>Community Groups</p>
<p>Child Care</p> <p>40% of youth homeless were in the foster care system</p>			 <p>Community Services from Regional Municipalities</p> <p>Community Groups</p>
<p>First Nations</p> <p>31% of homeless are First Nation (3% of population)</p>			 <p>Community Groups</p>
<p>Justice</p> <p>40% of homeless were in the criminal/justice system</p>			 <p>Other municipal police agencies in Delta, West Vancouver, New Westminster, Port Moody</p>
<p>Income Assistance</p> <p>64,000 people in the region rely on income assistance</p>			
<p>Housing</p> <p>10,500 people in the region waiting for supported housing</p>		<p>Minister Responsible for Housing</p> 	 <p>Community Groups</p>

68 Notes: not an exhaustive list of agencies and community groups; illustrative for discussion purposes; statistics in the figure above are specific to homelessness in Metro Vancouver



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SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION