



CITY OF VANCOUVER

POLICY REPORT URBAN STRUCTURE

Report Date: May 6, 2005
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Meeting Date: May 24, 2005

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of the Housing Centre in consultation with the Directors of
Current Planning and Social Planning

SUBJECT: Draft Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council receive the draft Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside for information (Appendix A).
- B. THAT staff report back on the outcome of the public review of the draft Plan and bring the draft Plan forward for adoption by Council by July 2005.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services recommends approval of A and B.

COUNCIL POLICY

In 1989 Council adopted City-wide housing policy including the objective to encourage affordable housing among all residential neighbourhoods in Vancouver.

In July 1995 Council initiated the planning process for the East Downtown Housing Plan.

In July 1998 Council reaffirmed the following housing principles as part of a set of principles to provide general guidance to Downtown Eastside actions and planning:

- Housing for existing residents will be maintained and upgraded.
- Diversity of housing will be encouraged.

In July 1998 Council confirmed the following housing principles as part of a set of principles to guide the Program of Strategic Actions for the Downtown Eastside:

- Improve existing SROs and build replacement low-income housing; and
- Encourage a diversity of housing.

In October 2001 Council confirmed that its housing objectives for social housing in the city are to maintain and expand housing opportunities in Vancouver for low and modest income households with priority being given to families with children; seniors on fixed incomes or in need of support; SRO residents; and the mentally ill, physically disabled, and others at risk of homelessness;

In October 2003 Council enacted the SRA By-law as a tool to regulate the rate of change in SRO hotels, rooming houses and non-market developments in the downtown core.

In September 2003 Council reactivated the planning process for the Downtown Eastside Area Housing Plan and confirmed the following interim Downtown Eastside and relevant City-wide housing policies:

- Maintain and upgrade housing for existing residents;
- Improve existing SROs and build replacement low-income housing;
- Encourage a diversity of housing; and
- Encourage affordable housing among all residential neighbourhoods in Vancouver.

SUMMARY

In 2003, Council directed staff to reinitiate the planning process for the Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside. Staff have completed an updated draft plan which will be circulated for public review in the upcoming months. The draft Housing Plan identifies a framework of policies relating to all forms of housing in the area: SROs, social housing, supportive housing, market housing and special needs residential facilities (SNRFs), with the intent of contributing to a stable, healthy and revitalized Downtown Eastside.

PURPOSE

This report presents the draft Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside to Council for information prior to public discussion of the Plan. Staff will bring the draft Plan to Council for adoption in summer 2005.

BACKGROUND

In 1995, Council instructed that a Downtown Eastside Housing Plan (including Chinatown, Gastown, Strathcona, Thornton Park, Victory Square and the industrial areas) be initiated. The Plan was to respond to changing conditions in the Downtown Eastside which related directly to housing. At that time, condominiums and live-work units were starting to appear in unprecedented numbers in Gastown and Victory Square, and while SRO (single room occupancy) rooms were being lost, new social housing was being constructed in numbers to

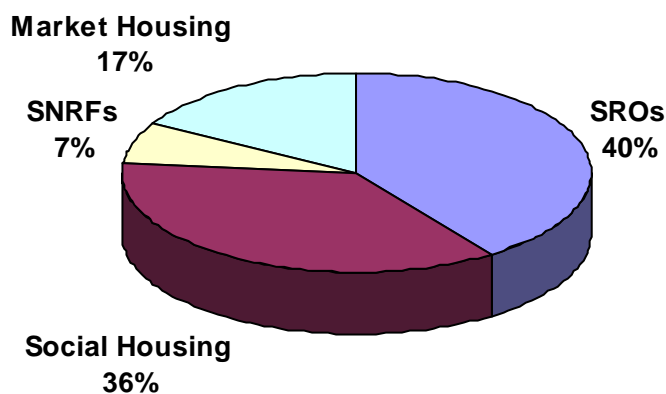
replace the lost SROs. A comprehensive public process was undertaken including over 40 public meetings.

In 1998, a Draft Housing Plan was completed by staff. The Council of the time received the Plan for information, but the Plan did not go forward for adoption. However, the City continued to work with senior governments and community partners to deliver 650 units of social housing. It also enacted the SRA By-law to help manage the rate of change of residential hotels and rooming houses.

In addition, energy was directed towards addressing challenges such as the open drug market, high rates of HIV transmission, substance abuse and overdoses, and economic disinvestment. Since that time, progress has been made on those fronts. The Framework for Action (Four Pillars Drug Strategy) has produced tangible results, including four new health facilities, the Supervised Injection Site and increased enforcement against the open drug trade. The three levels of government, working together under the Vancouver Agreement, have developed initiatives supporting revitalization, employment opportunities, housing and health. In 2004, the Vancouver Agreement approved the Economic Revitalization Strategy to stimulate the local economy in the Downtown Eastside and to provide employment opportunities for local residents. Programs targeted towards particular sub-areas have also been implemented, such as the Heritage Incentive Program and the Chinatown Vision.

There are currently 13,000 residential units in the Downtown Eastside. 10,000 of these are low-income housing, both social housing and SROs. This figure has remained constant for most of the area's history, although the proportion of SROs and social housing has changed over time. There are 900 beds in special needs residential facilities (SNRFs), most targeted toward seniors but also including treatment facilities and shelters. Self-contained market housing totals 2,100 units. These are condominiums, live-work units, rental apartments and ground-oriented houses and duplexes. The large majority of market housing is in Strathcona and Gastown, although market units exist in all sub-areas of the Downtown Eastside.

Housing Mix, 2003



In September 2003, Council re-activated the Housing Plan process. This reflected the successes achieved in other revitalization initiatives in the area and also current housing issues and challenges. SROs still provide approximately 50% of low-income housing units, and while they are protected by the SRA By-law (adopted in 2003), the stock is marginal, aging, and largely not rent-controlled. Historically, the loss of SROs has been matched by an equal gain in social housing. The disinvestment in social housing by senior governments, however, challenges the ability to replace SROs on a 1-for-1 basis as they are closed. An average of 80 SRO rooms is being lost each year while the completion of social housing from 2003 to 2008 is projected to average 60 per year (based on funding currently in place). Currently there is no reliable senior government funding for social housing, although there are two projects currently in process (Woodward's - 200 units, Lux Theatre site - 98 units). Market housing - condominiums, live-work and rental units - was built at a rate of 41 units per from 1998 to 2003, and there are over 600 units currently in the development process, so this rate is likely to increase. Major development sites in the downtown core, such as Downtown South, False Creek North, City Gate and International Village are approaching completion, and as build-out occurs, development opportunities for market housing may be sought out further east, in the Downtown Eastside area.

DISCUSSION

The Housing Plan is one element in the revitalization of the Downtown Eastside. Other complimentary initiatives are: the Vancouver Agreement, the Framework for Action (Four Pillars Drug Strategy), the Economic Revitalization Plan and Employment Strategy, emerging community plans for Chinatown and Victory Square, and the Heritage Incentive Program.

The 2005 Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside is based and builds on the 1998 Housing Plan. The Plan integrates contextual changes, such as the decline in funding for housing by senior governments, changes to the social assistance system, the broader development context in the city, and on-going impacts from mental illness, addictions and the drug trade. Looking at the historical trajectory, the Plan begins with the articulation of a vision, suggesting where the neighbourhood has come from, what current housing needs are, what the future housing mix could be, and what policy tools could be used to achieve this mix.

A Housing Vision

The Downtown Eastside has been a predominantly low-income community for well over a century. Originally settled primarily by resource workers and immigrants, the area has long provided the largest concentration of housing for low-income singles in the region. While the number of low-income people has remained constant over time, the character of the population has changed. The area has been affected by broader societal changes, such as reduced job opportunities for lower-skilled people, the de-institutionalization of those with mental health challenges, and increased levels of drug addiction, notably heroin and crack cocaine (and, increasingly, crystal meth). Outside of the Downtown Eastside, in the city and the region, housing affordable to low-income singles have been lost to redevelopment and rising property values.

The area is also home to an established family-oriented neighbourhood in Strathcona, which was once predominantly low-income but now has a mix of incomes. The western sub-areas - Victory Square and Gastown - have seen the development of market condos and live-work

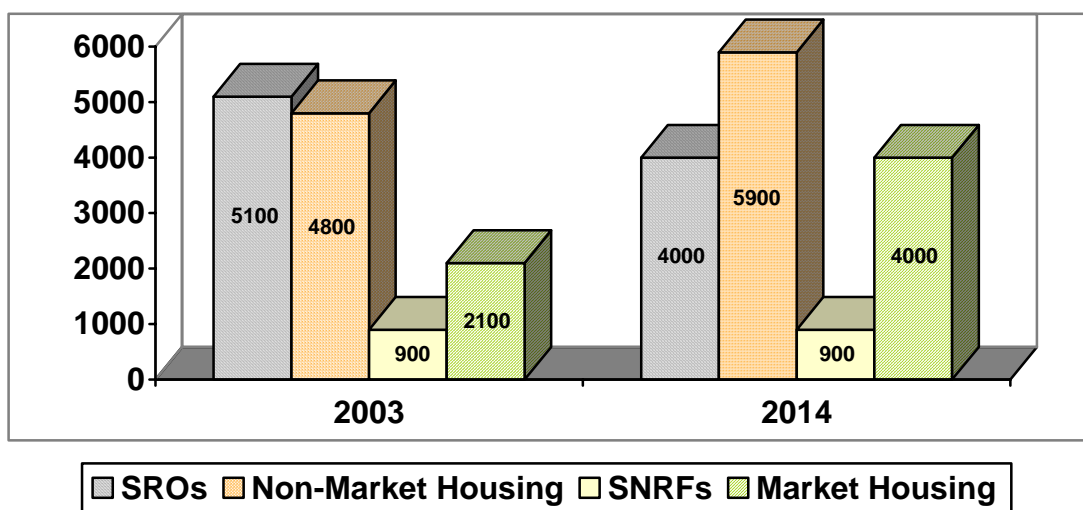
units which are attractive to younger middle-income households drawn by the amenities of downtown living.

The vision presented in the plan is that the Downtown Eastside remains the primary community for low-income singles in the city and region while new market housing is integrated into the area. Historically there have been 10,000 low-income units; this will continue to be the case in the long-term although the type of low-income housing will change. Over time, SROs will be replaced by social housing projects with self-contained income-tested units for singles. Supportive housing, which provides stability for residents by offering services that a proportion of the current population needs to remain independent, will play an increasing role in the future. Demand for market housing can be accommodated in the area, particularly in renovated heritage buildings in the Historic Areas. New market housing will not displace the low-income community, but rather will complement it by creating an inclusive mixed-income community that can support an economy that will provide goods, services and employment opportunities for local residents as well as serving the region. Both social housing and market housing will be found in all sub-areas.

Mix

The Housing Plan identifies a series of policies intended to achieve a certain housing mix over the next ten years and into the long term. 10,000 low-income units will be maintained, as mentioned, with SROs renovated or replaced by social housing over time. Market housing, currently numbering 2,100 units will see a near-doubling to 4,000 units by 2014. This is based on projections of market demand, current development proposals and the impact of planning programs such as the Chinatown Community Plan and the Heritage Incentive Program. To meet existing needs, there may be a small increase in the number of SNRF units with the intention of providing stability and appropriate care for local residents.

Possible Housing Mix, 2003-2014



Low-income housing needs should be met outside of the Downtown Eastside as well. In Vancouver, nearly 10% of all households pay over 50% of their income on rent and are in

serious risk of homelessness. The growth of housing for low-income singles and others has not kept up with the region's growth, and much has been lost to redevelopment. The Downtown Eastside should not be the only location for low-income people in the city and region. Future growth in low-income households, and particularly low-income singles, should be accommodated outside the area, elsewhere in the city, region and province.

The following provides a brief summary of the Plan's analysis and recommendations for particular housing types in the Downtown Eastside.

SROs

SROs are a key element in the housing spectrum. While inadequate in many ways, SRO rooms are the least expensive form of housing in the city outside of subsidized social housing. If the SRO stock was lost, it is very likely that homelessness would increase. Since 1970, 4,300 SRO units have been lost in the Downtown Eastside but these have been replaced with an equal number of social housing units for low-income singles. Currently there are no on-going Federal and Provincial Government programs funding replacement social housing for low-income singles. The shelter allowance under social assistance has not been increased since 1991; this makes the operation and maintenance of SROs increasingly difficult. This is compounded by the fact that the average SRO is over 90 years old and many are in need of restoration if not replacement.

The Plan recommends that senior governments be urged to re-initiate funding for appropriate social housing programs that can provide replacement units for SROs. SROs will be replaced on a minimum of 1-for-1 basis with social housing for low-income singles. To help maintain the stock until it can be replaced, the Housing Plan recommends continued use of the SRA By-law to control conversions and demolitions as well as developing an incentive program for SRO operators, possibly offering property tax exemption and grants for upgrades. To ensure that SROs remain viable and liveable, the enforcement capabilities of City and Vancouver Coast Health inspectors and the Coordinated Enforcement Team should be strengthened. Training opportunities for SRO operators should continue to be provided through the work of the Vancouver Agreement.

Social Housing

Social Housing has played an important role in meeting the housing needs of the low-income community in the Downtown Eastside. To date, 4,800 units of social housing have been created in the area, with a large emphasis on seniors and low-income singles housing (although 20% of units are for families). The senior government programs that have traditionally provided stable funding for SRO replacement units have been eliminated, challenging the ability to create appropriate and needed social housing. Current projects being developed, such as Woodward's and the Lux site, are exceptional one-offs. The Plan strongly urges the senior governments to re-establish stable funding programs for low-income housing.

The creation of replacement housing for SRO residents (larger self-contained units) is a key recommendation. Providing safe and secure housing for low-income residents is fundamental to the revitalization of the area. Emphasis is placed on the importance of the supportive element in housing. The lives of many residents can be stabilized and enhanced through the

integration of supports such as lifeskills training, housekeeping, home care and meal preparation.

Market Housing

Under the Plan, market housing may nearly double within ten years, accounting for between one-quarter and one-third of the total housing stock. The Housing Plan emphasizes heritage restoration through market housing and the creation of middle-income rental housing and live-work units to better diversify the social spectrum. Within 20 years, market housing may approach 40-50% of the total housing stock, depending on market conditions and City policy. The integration of market housing can support the revitalization of the area as new businesses and social enterprises emerge to cater to new and existing residents, creating job opportunities for local residents and stimulating the local economy.

Small Suites

Small suites are self-contained units (containing bathrooms and cooking facilities) that require a relaxation below the permitted 400 square feet limit and are produced as social housing or by the private sector. Their benefit is that they facilitate the creation of more units on less land at roughly 75% the cost of a traditional social housing unit. The housing plan supports the creation of small suites as SRO replacement housing as small as 320 square feet. Self-contained suites as small as 275 square feet may be permitted where certain conditions are met, such as good non-profit management, guaranteed rents at shelter allowance rates, and ample amenity space. Suites smaller than 275 square feet should be considered when renovating SROs, as these buildings offer limited flexibility to achieve larger units.

SNRFs (Special Needs Residential Facilities)

SNRFs are housing for people who are unable to direct their own care or live independently. They include projects for frail seniors; facilities for people requiring care or treatment for mental or physical disabilities, addictions, severe developmental disabilities or brain injuries; and emergency shelters and transition houses. It is recognized that there is a proportion of the population currently living in the Downtown Eastside who need the care SNRFs provide and therefore a modest amount of locally-serving facilities should be permitted. The plan recommends that the SNRF moratorium currently in place in the DEOD (Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District) be lifted and that SNRFs be permitted as a conditional use in the Historic Areas. The intention of permitting a reasonable increase in SNRFs is to meet existing local needs rather than allowing the Downtown Eastside to become a regional magnet for SNRF clients. SNRFs should also be built in communities throughout the city to meet needs where they exist so that people from outside the area do not have to come to the Downtown Eastside for care and treatment.

The Downtown Eastside is well-served for shelters, most of which are classified as SNRFs. Both the Housing Plan and the Homeless Action Plan recommend no net increase in shelter beds in the area; instead, shelter capacity should be increased outside the Downtown Eastside.

It is also recommended that the city-wide SNRF guidelines and definitions be revised. This would help clarify the difference between SNRFs and supportive housing and would assist in

ensuring city-wide needs are met where the demand exists. Further, it is likely that shelters would be removed from the SNRF category and be given their own use definition.

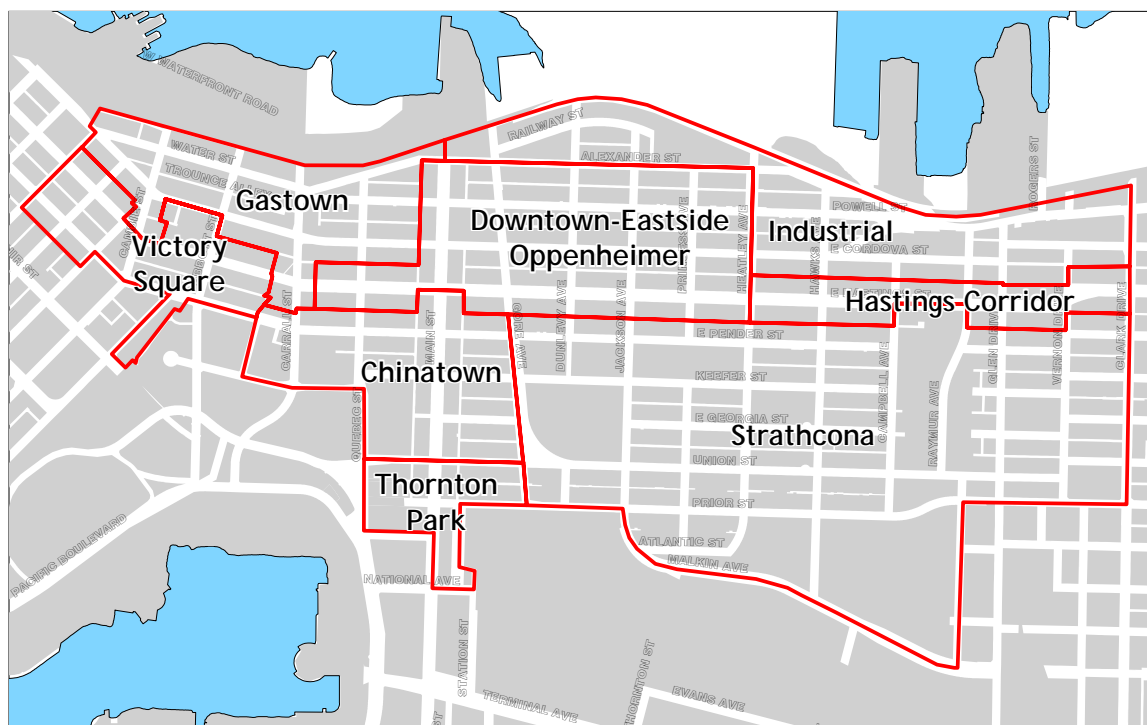
Sub-Areas

In the Plan, the Downtown Eastside is divided into eight sub-areas based on planning and zoning districts and policy recommendations are made for each (see Map 1).

Victory Square

Victory Square is the transition area between the Downtown core and the Downtown Eastside. It is a mixed-use retail, commercial, residential and institutional (mainly educational facilities) area characterized by a strong heritage character. The Housing Plan is closely connected with the concurrent draft Victory Square Plan. Market housing should support the revitalization of the area, with an emphasis on heritage renovation using the Heritage Incentive Program which is proposed be expanded to the entire sub-area. SROs will be replaced on a minimum 1-for-1 basis with better quality social housing for singles. The Woodward's redevelopment, which will contain 125 social housing units for low-income singles as well as 75 units for families, is a key component of the revitalization of the area.

Map 1: Downtown Eastside Sub-areas



Gastown and Chinatown

The Gastown and Chinatown Historic Areas together contain 1,700 SRO units. Given high land prices, small lots and heritage constraints, it is recognized that achieving 1-for-1 replacement of SROs will likely be difficult although efforts should be made to do so. Market housing is

encouraged to rehabilitate heritage buildings under the Heritage Incentive Program and generally revitalize the area. In Chinatown, particular emphasis is paid on encouraging market rental housing through the use of parking and built-form (height and density) relaxations.

DEOD (Downtown Eastside-Oppenheimer District)

The DEOD is the core of the low-income community. The existing zoning combined with limited market interest has historically supported the development of low-income housing in the area. The Plan recommends that it be confirmed that the DEOD can support at least 1-for-1 replacement of SROs within the sub-area and the Downtown Eastside (since it is recognized that 1-for-1 will be difficult to achieve in the Historic Areas). A review of the DEOD zoning will address the current 20% social housing requirement, densities and market housing. While the 1-for-1 replacement of SROs is the priority, there is also a role for market housing. An emphasis should be on rental housing and live-work units that can support a local economy and provide housing opportunities for local residents who move into employment but wish to remain in the area.

Thornton Park

Thornton Park's housing stock is entirely SROs. These 300 units will be replaced over time with social housing either within or adjacent to the sub-area (possibly in Southeast False Creek or the False Creek Flats). The first market condominium project in Thornton Park is currently under construction and more will likely follow as City Gate to the west is built out. It is recommended that the area grow as a mixed income neighbourhood containing condominiums, SROs, social housing and live-work units.

Strathcona

Strathcona is more of a traditional residential area of ground-oriented houses and duplexes, although it also contains two major social housing projects: Stamps Place and MacLean Park. Property values have increased substantially in the last five years. Maintaining affordability without increasing densities is a challenge, and increased densities would compromise the character of this historic neighbourhood. It is recommended that the Hastings Corridor sub-area to the north be developed as a mixed-use area with an affordable market and social housing element for lower-income people who would have historically lived in Strathcona.

Industrial Areas

Currently zoned M-1, the Hastings Corridor, between Heatley Avenue and Clark Drive, is an industrial 'let-go' area. The plan recommends that it be rezoned to mixed retail, commercial, industrial and residential uses at a medium-density scale. Incentives, such as on-site bonus and relaxations, should be provided to encourage the construction of SRO replacement social housing, traditional social housing and market residential developments.

The heavy industrial areas in the northeast of the Downtown Eastside remain industrial as they are important to the function of the city and provide local employment opportunities. Limited residential uses may be considered in the future if they are shown to improve the economics of industrial properties and do not conflict with existing uses.

Community Consultation

Initially, existing community bodies will be consulted on the draft Housing Plan. In the late spring and early summer, a series of meetings has been scheduled with low-income community organizations, BIAs, housing providers, the Historic Area Planning Committees, the Downtown Vancouver Association, and the Board of Trade. Additionally, an open house will be held in the "W" room with a broad invitation extended to the community and the city.

The Housing Plan establishes housing goals and objectives for the Downtown Eastside, such as the 1-for-1 replacement of SROs and the integration of market housing. A community engagement process should be established to monitor implementation of the plan.

In the medium term, a community-based advisory body should be established to monitor housing indicators and review development proposals and policy decisions relating to the Housing Plan. The advisory body will have membership from the entire Housing Plan area: the Historic Areas, Victory Square, the DEOD, Strathcona, Thornton Park, and the Industrial lands. In the longer term, this body may be integrated into (or be a sub-committee of) a larger community body with a larger mandate focusing not only on housing, but also economic revitalization, health, heritage, social services and more.

Next Steps

Staff will initiate the public review of the draft Housing Plan in the upcoming months. As feedback is received, it will be integrated into the Plan and a formal draft of the Plan will be submitted to Council for approval in July 2005 along with a report identifying staffing and budget requirements for implementation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

CONCLUSION

The draft Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside identifies a vision for the future of the area which provides security and support for low-income residents while also encouraging economic revitalization through the integration of market housing. This report presents Council with the draft Plan that will be taken out for public review over the next few months. Upon completion of the review, staff will integrate feedback received and return to Council in July for adoption of the draft Plan.

* * * * *

HOUSING PLAN FOR THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

**Downtown Eastside - Oppenheimer ♦ Victory Square ♦
Chinatown ♦ Gastown ♦ Strathcona ♦ Thornton Park
Hastings Corridor ♦ Industrial Lands**

Draft



May 16th, 2005

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PREFACE

A Vision for the Future of Housing in the Downtown Eastside

Throughout its history, the Downtown Eastside has been a predominantly low-income community with low-income singles as the largest component of its population. Originally settled by marginalized ethnic communities and a working-class population, the area continues to serve a valuable city and regional role providing a primary stock of affordable housing. Development has surged ahead throughout the city, particularly since the late 1980s, with the conversion of industrial lands such as False Creek into high-density residential areas.

At the same time, housing opportunities outside the Downtown Eastside for low-income individuals, either in the city or the suburbs, have been greatly reduced as housing prices climb and affordable rental opportunities are lost. Deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill and changes to the Province's welfare system have increased the demand for the most basic and lowest cost housing in the region, much of which is provided by the single room occupancy hotels in the Downtown Eastside. The result is a concentration of need and a gradual impoverishment of the area, and an erosion of its capacity to function as a viable low-income community.

This Housing Plan presents a vision for the future of housing in the Downtown Eastside. In this vision, the Downtown Eastside will remain the primary community for low-income singles in the city and the region (although not the only area with housing for low-income singles). It will, however, be a functional low-income community as the City's revitalization initiatives in the area reverse its decline. No loss of low-income housing stock and no displacement of residents are fundamental objectives of the Plan. Social housing, some of which will have supports, will replace SROs over time and provide housing that delivers security and independence for the low-income community. The integration of market housing (rental, owner-occupied and live-work) can help revitalize the area and diversify the social mix without compromising low-income housing objectives. Market projects can support business initiatives providing employment opportunities for local residents and also provide housing options for those with low-income who move into employment and wish to remain in the area.

Currently there are about 13,000 residential units in the area. Roughly 5,000 are SROs (single room occupancy hotels), 5,000 are social housing, 900 are SNRF (special needs residential facility) beds, and 2,100 are market condos, live-work units and houses. Under the Housing Plan, the number of units for low-income people will remain constant over time, yet the housing types will change. Many of the SROs are a century old, and the economics of running them are increasingly difficult. In time, most of the SROs will be replaced by social housing or renovated into self-contained units, and managed by non-profit societies or government. An appropriate amount of housing in the area will be supportive housing, offering services such as personal care, meal preparation, house keeping and life skills training either on-site or in the area.

The City will also work actively to secure housing opportunities for low-income singles outside of the Downtown Eastside, in both Vancouver and the region. The amount of market housing in and around the area has grown substantially in the last decade; future growth is anticipated and should be encouraged. This plan establishes policies to support the integration of market housing, with an emphasis on rental and live-work. The intention is not to have market development displace the low-income community, but rather to complement it by creating a mixed-income community that can support the provision of goods, services and employment opportunities for local residents of all incomes.

The Housing Plan

The Downtown Eastside is facing serious housing problems that need solutions. In 1995, the City initiated a planning process for this area that was to establish housing policies to deal with the full range of needs over the next 10 years. A Draft Housing Plan was completed in 1998, and was received by the Council of the time for information but did not go forward for adoption. Instead, the focus of attention was on addressing the impacts of substance abuse and illegal activity in the area. As the draft Housing Plan was prepared, these significant problems came to the forefront, including the HIV epidemic, high drug use and crime - issues which needed some attention before considering the Housing Plan.

The Program of Strategic Actions for the Downtown Eastside was adopted in 1998. The actions included reducing the impact of drug-related crime, reducing the incidence of problematic drug use, improving conditions on the street, and improving SROs while building new low-income housing. **A Framework for Action**, the Four Pillars approach for solving the city's drug problem, was adopted by Council in 2001, and notable progress has been made in addressing the impacts of the illegal drug trade and improving the health of drug users. In 2003, Council adopted the SRA By-law to manage the rate of change of the SRO stock. It also reactivated the Housing Plan process while concurrently directing staff to create a city-wide **Homeless Action Plan**. The current Housing Plan builds on the foundation created in 1998 by taking many of the conclusions from the earlier plan and incorporating policy and contextual changes that have taken place over the last five years.

The 1998 Housing Plan Process

From 1996 to 1998, City staff engaged in a comprehensive process to determine major housing issues and themes in the area. Twenty-six meetings were held with local groups and in SROs to understand and frame the many issues. In addition, displays of small suites (320 square feet or less) were set up at Four Corners Community Savings and they were viewed by hundreds of people. Housing trends and possible solutions were analysed. In early 1998, input was obtained from the broader community through discussion of the brochure "Housing Plan Issues". This brochure was distributed to all of the 15,000 households and businesses in the area as well as community organizations and interested groups and individuals. Seventeen meetings were held and the minutes

of these and earlier meetings are on file at City Hall. The discussions and analysis led to this updated draft Housing Plan.

The 2005 Housing Plan Process

There will be community consultation on the current draft Housing Plan in May and June 2005. This draft Housing Plan and the related policy report, **Draft Victory Square Concept Plan**, and the **Chinatown Vision** are available from City Hall for reference. The draft **Homeless Action Plan** was put out for public discussion in November and the results of this consultation will be presented to Council so that the Plan can be adopted in the spring. Following the discussions around the Housing Plan, revisions will be made to the draft Housing Plan, so that the recommendations can be considered by Council.

We welcome any comments you have on this draft Plan. Please contact us by letter, phone or fax (604-871-6488).

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For the purpose of this plan, the Housing Plan area is referred to as the ***Downtown Eastside***, which is the term used by the City and also by the Vancouver Agreement¹ to identify this planning area. The Downtown Eastside includes Victory Square, Gastown, Chinatown, Downtown Eastside-Oppenheimer, the industrial lands adjacent to the port and along Hastings Street, and Strathcona. These sub-areas are based on planning and zoning districts. They are not intended to reflect neighbourhood boundaries which are perceived differently by the diverse communities that live and work in this part of the city

¹ The Vancouver Agreement is a partnership between the three levels of government to support sustainable economic, social and community development with a first focus in the Downtown Eastside.

SUMMARY

FACTS

- Population (2001): 16,000
- Median Household Income (2001): \$12,100 (Vancouver: \$47,300)

Some of the key terms:

- ***Social housing*** is funded by government and managed by non-profit societies or government. Residents of many of these units are income-tested with rents being geared to income.
- ***SRO*** (Single Room Occupancy) units are small rooms, usually in privately owned and managed buildings, with shared bathrooms. Most of the buildings containing SROs were built before the First World War.
- ***SRA***s (Single Room Accommodation) include SROs, rooming houses and social housing units which are less than 320 square feet and whose conversion and demolition is regulated under the SRA Bylaw.
- ***SRO Replacement Housing*** is housing for low-income singles renting at shelter-allowance levels. Units are almost always self-contained, in that they have bathrooms and cooking facilities in the suite.
- ***Low-income housing*** includes SROs, social housing serving low-income households, and low-rent units secured in private buildings by long-term Housing Agreements.
- ***Supportive Housing*** is housing linked to support services and is often, but not always, funded by government. Services can include meals, housekeeping, personal care, lifeskills training and support, and other services. Supportive housing can be provided to individuals living in their own apartments/rooms in social housing projects or SROs and who receive supports on an individual basis, or to groups of people who have similar needs and who live in a building which has been designed to provide the common facilities and staff offices need by the particular population.
- ***Small Suites*** are self-contained units smaller than traditional social housing. In this Plan, they are between 275 and 400 square feet, and require approval by the Director of Planning.
- ***Special Needs Residential Facilities*** (SNRFs) are residential facilities for people who, because of illness, disability, age, an immediate crisis situation or other factors, are temporarily or permanently unable to live independently. SNRFs include facilities licensed under the Provincial Community Care Facilities Act for people who are unable to direct their own care. Provincially-licensed facilities include those providing “complex care” for seniors, those providing forms of professional care or treatment (e.g., management of medications) to people with mental illnesses, brain injuries, addictions, severe developmental disabilities or who are dying, and those which house minors in the care of the state. SNRFs also include some facilities which fall under other legislation (Federal Corrections Facilities), emergency shelters, and transition houses of various types.

- **Market housing** is privately-owned rental and owner-occupied housing including live-work. For the purpose of this Plan, the SROs, which are market housing, are treated as a separate category.
- **Owner-occupied housing** is developed by the private sector. It includes condos, houses and duplexes owned by the households living in them.
- **Moderate-rental units** include units in market housing, non-income tested social housing, and self-contained dwelling units in SRO buildings that rent at approximately \$500-\$800 / month for a studio or one bedroom.
- **Live-work** housing allows living and working in the same space. It is purpose-built to allow the two uses in the same space, but it is also possible to have one without the other (for example, a unit can contain only residential uses). It can be owner-occupied or market rental. Live-work is categorized as Commercial, Office, Artist or Industrial Live-work.

The Housing Plan Vision

There are currently approximately 13,000 residential units in the Downtown Eastside.

- 10,000 are low-income units split 50/50 between SROs and social housing.
- 2,100 are owner-occupied or rental market units including detached houses, duplexes, condominiums and live-work units.
- 900 are SNRF beds providing professional care and treatment for seniors and those with addictions and disabilities.

The intent of this Plan is to maintain 10,000 units of low-income housing in the Downtown Eastside, but to increase its quality over time. SROs are to be replaced with new self-contained social housing for singles, and supports will be provided in a portion of the units to give stability to residents. Market housing will be encouraged with an emphasis on rental and live-work units, and housing in renovated heritage buildings as well as owner-occupied dwellings. The total amount of market housing in the area is projected to almost double and account for approximately one-third of the total housing stock in the area (approximately 4,000 units) after 10 years.

INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Eastside is shared by diverse communities. Significant changes are taking place within and around the area. For example, condominium development is increasing overall and appearing in areas such as Thornton Park for the first time. Housing has been at the heart of debates about change, as who lives in the area is a primary determinant of its future. For low-income people, affordable housing is the cornerstone of the community's survival. For the increasing number of homeowners, market housing is part of a complete community that has retail services, safety and other characteristics more typical of other city neighbourhoods. For local merchants, a

mix of housing is important in supplying customers and creating the purchasing power required for commerce.

High demand for housing has led to development throughout Vancouver, and the region is currently at or near the peak of the housing cycle, due in part to historically low interest rates. The downtown core, areas of North False Creek and Downtown South have absorbed much of the demand, but as these areas are nearing capacity, there is increased development pressure eastwards into the Downtown Eastside.

There have also been fundamental changes to social housing policies at the senior government level, such as the cancellation of HOMES BC. The LIUS (Low Income Urban Singles) component of Homes BC funded new social housing for those living in SROs and rooming houses. To date, the 1-for-1 replacement of SROs has been achieved, but this is largely a result of a surge in social housing production prior to program cancellation. The enactment by the City of the SRA Conversion and Demolition By-law (discussed in Chapter 4, **The Future of SROs**) is helping manage the loss of existing units, but ultimately investment in new and renovated units is required to maintain the 1-for-1 replacement.

At the other extreme, it is estimated that around one-third of the population is addicted to illicit drugs, and 20% of the residents suffer from mental illness. Twenty years ago this was not the case, but deinstitutionalization and cheap drugs have changed the Downtown Eastside from what was in many ways a home for the single working man (the population was and is predominantly male) to an area characterized by street disorder, an open drug trade, and a concentration of those with drug addictions and/or mentally illness who do not have access to appropriate housing.

THE FUTURE OF THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

The challenge is to transform a low-income community in serious distress into a viable and dynamic low-income community, and to balance the interests of those living in the Downtown Eastside. The proposed vision in the Housing Plan is one that promotes positive change by bringing security to the low-income community through a stable but improved supply of low-income housing while encouraging more market housing. Although indicators suggest that the area is recovering somewhat from the crisis related to the HIV epidemic, high crime and drug use which peaked in the late-1990s, new problems are evident, such as increased use of crystal meth, growing homelessness and barriers to accessing social assistance. It is important to consider that the Housing Plan is only one element in the revitalization of the area. The City, the Vancouver Agreement partners and the community are actively engaged in concurrent strategies focusing on economic revitalization and employment opportunities for local residents, and initiatives to address substance abuse, safety, the arts, and the public realm (streets and parks).

The rate at which change occurs is important to creating and maintaining healthy communities. The pace of development of new market and low-income housing should be similar. If there is a quick upswing in market development, extra efforts may be required on the low-income housing side. A balanced pace of development will help

ensure that newcomers are integrated into the communities. There will be ongoing monitoring of indicators of health, safety and liveability through the annual Downtown Eastside Community Monitoring Report, Vancouver Agreement evaluation mechanisms, and a strategy for community involvement and monitoring of housing issues is discussed in Chapter 10.

Low-Income Housing

The area's historic role has been to provide a home to low- and modest-income people and newcomers to Vancouver. The Plan proposes that change should not cause harm or displacement for those most vulnerable. It calls for securing the existing amount of housing for low-income people, gradually replacing that stock with better quality and better managed low-income housing. The strategies to achieve this include replacing the SROs with social housing, supportive housing and smaller suites (at about 80 units/year), securing and upgrading some SROs, and ensuring the remaining SROs are well managed and maintained. A proportion of the new and existing social housing will be linked to supports – such as personal care, meal preparation and lifeskills training – which will provide stability for residents.

The maintenance and management of the SROs must improve and over a dozen actions are proposed to do this, including both incentives and continued enforcement. The vacancy rate in SRO buildings has been falling and is currently about 10%. This is higher than conventional rental stock because the SRO stock includes buildings which rent on a less-than-monthly basis, are in poor condition, or are poorly managed. Vacant SRO units are concentrated in a few buildings, with nearly half of the vacant units in 10 of the area's 125 SRO buildings. The turnover or mobility rates for this area are similar to other inner-city neighbourhoods. The vacancy and mobility rates will continue to be monitored.

The main way of replacing the SROs with better quality homes is through social housing and possibly privately-initiated smaller suite projects where low-income or rental units are secured by a **Housing Agreement**². No new SROs would be built. While the plan permits smaller suites (to a minimum of 275 square feet), social housing will continue to provide the bulk of the new low-income stock, given the current economics of smaller suite development and other uncertainties. The construction of new social housing, however, is dependent on the re-establishment of housing programs by senior governments.

Market Housing

The current mix of market and low-income housing will change. There are currently 2,100 units of market housing (not including SROs), primarily in Gastown and Strathcona. Overall, it is expected that the market housing will increase by 100-120

² A Housing Agreement is a legal agreement by which a private developer commits to providing low-income and/or rental housing under specified terms and in return for some benefit.

units a year, which, when combined with projects currently in process and anticipated changes to policy, could result in a near-doubling of market housing (both rental and owner-occupied) after 10 years, at which time market housing could account for approximately one-third of the total housing stock in the Downtown Eastside. These figures are projections, not limits, and are based on estimates of the demand for market housing in this area. This level of demand could be absorbed primarily in upgraded heritage buildings or other renovated projects without displacing existing low-income housing or compromising the ability to build new social housing.

The plan proposes that market housing should be encouraged and can be successfully integrated into the area without leading to the displacement of the low-income community. Residents of market housing will supply additional income to support retail services needed by all area residents. It is likely that this housing will fill a particular market niche for more modest and affordable apartments including loft-style suites and purpose-built rental projects. This is consistent with City and Regional efforts to encourage housing close to work to create a liveable, safe, vibrant and less car-dependent downtown, and can help support heritage revitalization objectives. The proposed redevelopment of the Woodward's building is an example of the mixed community that is envisioned – it will provide a range of housing types (both non-market and market) serving a diversity of income levels, and will include services and activities that will appeal to both existing and new area residents.

Housing in Downtown Eastside Sub-Areas

The plan's principles of housing balance will manifest differently in each sub-area. Victory Square will evolve as a transition area to the Central Business District (see the Context Map on pg. 16). Gastown and Chinatown, where heritage and tourism are important, have opportunities for absorbing a large portion of the area's market housing development. Meeting the 1-for-1 replacement of low-income housing in these areas may be difficult, but they have historically housed a sizeable low-income population and every effort should be made to retain low-income housing in these sub-areas. The heart of the Downtown Eastside, the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District, will continue to house a higher portion of the low-income community due in part to lower land values and zoning that provides incentives for social housing. Strathcona is evolving as a mixed-income community based on special heritage and ethnic characteristics. The Hastings Corridor will be rezoned to a mixed-use area, and will see new housing with a low- and moderate-income focus, and Thornton Park could accommodate more work/live opportunities with an emphasis on affordability.

It should be noted that the boundaries of the planning area and sub-areas do not necessarily reflect neighbourhoods as experienced by residents, workers or visitors. They are planning/zoning districts which are meant to assist discussion so we can focus on the complex choices facing the communities.

The Downtown Eastside in the City and the Region

It is expected that the demand for low-income housing for singles within the region will increase by more than 20,000 units in the next 10 years. This plan proposes that new low-income housing for singles be built in this area to replace the SRO losses, and be developed in other areas of the city, region and province to accommodate most of the regional growth. The minimum commitment for new urban singles low-income housing throughout the city should be targeted at about 150-200 units a year. About 90-110 units should be in the Downtown Eastside, 30-40 in Downtown South and 30-50 in other areas in the city. The low-income housing associated with regional growth should be accommodated outside the downtown and the city.

Vancouver is made up of a variety of neighbourhoods that are inter-related and play different socio-economic roles in the city. While the Downtown Eastside is the primary low-income neighbourhood in the city, other neighbourhoods also provide affordable housing and services for those in need (there are 2,300 rooms in licensed rooming houses in the city but outside of the downtown core). Similarly, housing must be provided in home communities throughout the region and province for singles, those with mental health issues and those needing drug and alcohol treatment. The Downtown Eastside should not be the only place where people with problems or few resources can live and access needed services.

Other Initiatives in the Downtown Eastside

There is much that needs to be done to create healthier communities in the Downtown Eastside. Safety and public health can be improved through concerted efforts of governments, the private sector and the communities. The Vancouver Agreement was established to be a focal point for this type of coordinated action. Its initiatives include the development of a continuum of services for addicted people including a safe injection site, a health contact centre, lifeskills training and health clinics, and an Economic Revitalization Plan and Employment Strategy. There is also the increased coordination between the three levels of government on housing issues through the Vancouver Agreement.

The Downtown Eastside is an area of Vancouver that faces enormous changes and challenges. The Housing Plan is one of a number of City initiatives to develop partnerships to increase the health and safety in its communities. This plan calls for the combination of public and private actions to achieve more and better housing as part of building healthier communities.

1. CONTEXT

Population Highlights

- The overall population has remained stable at around 16,000 for several decades
- There has been notable growth in the 30-59 age groups, particularly between the ages of 40-49, since 1996.
- There are twice as many men as women in the 30-59 age groups

Broad Housing Issues

Since 1998, when the first Draft Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside, Chinatown, Gastown and Strathcona was written, important changes in the area have taken place: market housing within and adjacent to the area has increased, funding and construction of new social housing has been reduced, and policies have been implemented to protect SRO housing. Many of the issues identified in the earlier draft of this plan are still relevant:

- The population is characterized by much higher-than-average levels of mental illness, drug addiction, dual-diagnosis, and communicable disease (such as Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS), and a high proportion of residents are low income earners (67%);
- Condominiums and live-work units continue to be developed, particularly in Gastown, but also in Victory Square, Chinatown and Thornton Park. Between 1998 and 2003, an average of 40 market units were built per year (but there are currently over 600 units in the development process);
- A steady loss of SROs (at around 77 units per year between 1998 and 2003), with some conversions of SROs to tourist uses such as backpackers hotels/hostels and others lost to fires and life-safety closures;
- An increase in low-income social housing funded by senior governments, particularly HOMES BC, which was cancelled in 2001; and
- A small increase in the number of special needs residential facilities (SNRFs) for seniors.

Several factors speak to the timeliness of revisiting the draft Housing Plan. Some of the issues are the same, while others have changed due to economics or government policy, the changing impact of the illegal drug trade, and the closure of regional mental health facilities. Issues currently relating to housing in the Downtown Eastside are:

- Major residential projects around the Downtown Eastside – such as City Gate, International Village and North False Creek – are approaching completion. As the last major sites are built out, development interest may shift into the Downtown Eastside;

- The Woodward's building has been purchased by the City and will contain a mix of uses including at least 200 units of non-market housing, of which 125 will accommodate low-income singles.
- Commercial Live-work is being considered as a use in Victory Square, Gastown, Chinatown, and parts of Hastings Street;
- The SRA Bylaw, enacted in 2003, should moderate the loss of SROs in the area, yet the existing stock is aging and the economics of operating an SRO are increasingly challenging;
- Between 1998 and 2003, 145 units of social housing were built per year, but this level is not likely to be sustained as senior governments no longer provide stable funding for social housing targeted to those on low-incomes, especially low-income singles;
- Supportive housing projects such as the New Portland Hotel provide care for residents with substance abuse and/or mental health issues;
- Changes to welfare policy mean that fewer people are obtaining benefits³, which means that fewer have enough money to pay rent, resulting in increased homelessness in the Downtown Eastside and the rest of the city;
- People are being turned away from emergency shelters such as the Lookout in unprecedented numbers;
- The shelter allowance component of social assistance has not been increased since 1991 during which time the consumer price index⁴ has increased 27%; and,
- Some fear the 2010 Olympics could lead to the eviction of SRO residents as hotels are razed or illegally converted to tourist accommodation (the three levels of government and the Organizing Committee, however, are committed to the objective of non-displacement);

The Role of Government

Senior governments are primarily responsible for funding social and low-income housing. In 1993, the Federal Government, which had provided two-thirds of funding for social housing, withdrew from this role. While the Province has continued to provide for social housing, in 2001 the funds for new development were reduced, resulting in the cancellation of several projects in the Downtown Eastside. The emphasis for new social housing development has been on frail seniors while the priority in the Downtown Eastside is housing for low-income singles, many of whom are mentally ill and/or drug addicted.

The City plays a supportive role to senior governments and assists through land banking for social housing, providing land leases or grants for social housing projects, and through negotiations with developers to secure affordable housing. The City also

³ In 1998, there were 297,400 British Columbians on Welfare. In 2003, there were 180,700. (source: National Council of Welfare).

⁴ The Consumer Price Index (CPI) provides a broad measure of the cost of living in Vancouver. Through the monthly CPI, Statistics Canada tracks the retail price of a representative shopping basket of about 600 goods and services from an average household's expenditure: food, housing, transportation, furniture, clothing, and recreation.

manages a portfolio of five residences in the area with funding from senior governments. Another major role of the City is in the regulation of land use, with a notable recent example being the implementation of the SRA Conversion and Demolition By-Law.

Historically A Low-Income Community

The area has played an important role in Vancouver's history. It includes the original town site at Gastown, the old Downtown core, and important centres for the Chinese, Japanese, First Nations and other communities. The area has traditionally been home for many inner-city poor, including low-income seniors, seasonal workers and disadvantaged people. The types of disadvantages have changed over time, but consistently this area has been home to people with few resources. As the least affluent area in the city, it is welcoming to low-income people and provides the supports necessary for survival. Many residents feel that there is a good sense of community and that people watch out for one another.

The first residents settled in the area in the 1880s. They were workers from the Hastings Mill who lived in the Oppenheimer area, and Chinese Canadians, many of whom had laboured on the CPR, who settled at the south end of Carrall Street on the old shore of False Creek⁵. In the 1890s through the turn of the century, hotels and rooming houses – current-day SROs – were built in the Main and Hastings area to house sailors, workers from nearby factories, and seasonal resource workers⁶. The Victory Square area and Hastings Street were historically the centre of downtown, with important institutions such as the first courthouse, City Hall, banks, theatres and the Woodward's department store which opened in 1903.

The Downtown Eastside has been home to a diversity of ethnic communities for many years. A vibrant Chinese-Canadian community established itself in Chinatown, and many Japanese-Canadians lived in the Powell Street area prior to forced internment during the Second World War. Starting in the 1890s, people of Chinese, Japanese, eastern and southern European and Jewish origins settled into the residential neighbourhood of Strathcona, which came to be known as the 'home of the working man', or the East End⁷. In 1941, the area east of Main Street was nearly 40% Chinese or Japanese origin and had a much smaller proportion of people of British origin than the rest of the city. In 1981, the Strathcona area was 59% Chinese-Canadian. The area is characterized by a high degree of diversity today; the most common answer to the question of ethnic origin is 'Chinese,' and 9% of the population identify themselves as Aboriginal, four times the city average.

The Downtown Eastside has faced social challenges since it first became a neighbourhood. In the early 1900s, prostitution was concentrated along Dupont (now known as Pender) Street, and in 1907 it was relocated onto Shanghai Alley and Canton

⁵ Macdonald, Bruce. 1992. Vancouver: A Visual History. Talonbooks, Vancouver, B.C., p.22

⁶ Atkin, John. 1994. Strathcona: Vancouver's First Neighbourhood. Whitecap Books, Vancouver, p. 26.

⁷ Atkin, p. 1

Street in Chinatown⁸. Brothels, bookies, and alcohol were associated with the area in the early part of the 20th Century. By the 1950s, local government was making decisions about the future of the area that had serious consequences for the Downtown Eastside. Under the guise of urban renewal, the City purchased significant tracts of land and cleared them to prepare for redevelopment, and the large McLean Park and Raymur social housing projects were built. There was also systematic disinvestment; sidewalks and infrastructure were simply left to decay. Banks, aware of City policies, no longer approved loans for local homeowners. In the late 1960s, a freeway was proposed that would run along the blocks between Prior and Union, and along Carrall to the waterfront. The Georgia Viaducts were the start of this project and resulted in the demolition of Hogan's Alley, the heart of the African-Canadian community in the area. Local residents successfully rallied against the proposed freeway, and argued that wholesale renewal was not the solution to physical decay, and that the Downtown Eastside was a vibrant and functional low-income community⁹.

The number of low-income people in the area has remained about the same over time, but the nature of the community is changing, with many of the older resource-based workers being replaced by younger people, some with serious multiple problems. The area has been affected by broader societal changes such as the reduction of job opportunities for lower skilled people and the de-institutionalization of people with mental health issues. Where alcohol was once dominant, heroin, crack cocaine and chemicals like crystal meth now predominate among those with substance abuse issues. Levels of drug use remain high in the area, although recent initiatives under the Vancouver Agreement and the Four Pillars Drug Strategy are addressing prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction. The area has lost almost all of its city-serving retail activity through the closure of stores such as Woodward's. Where it was a functioning low-income community a couple of decades ago, it has become increasingly dysfunctional economically and socially.

Housing Today

In the last few years market housing and commercial development have increased in and near the area. Twenty-five years ago there was almost no condominium development within 15 blocks of Oppenheimer Park, in the heart of the Downtown Eastside, and the area was surrounded by industry and service-commercial business. Today there are condominium projects within 2 blocks of Oppenheimer Park, and there are nearly 500 condominium units currently under construction in the Downtown Eastside. The residential real estate market has strengthened, and significant market development is anticipated over the next decade as sites in the Downtown core get built out.

By 2001, 4,150 residential units had been built in north and east False Creek (including City Gate and International Village). More development is occurring in the Central Business District to the west, and if the Central Waterfront Lands are redeveloped by the

⁸ Macdonald, p. 31

⁹ Macdonald, p. 55

Vancouver Port Authority, they could accommodate 2,500 new residential units (see the Context Map below). By 2021 the number of housing units in the surrounding areas will increase by over 12,000 units, most of which will be condominiums. As shown in the context map on page 16, development is also likely in False Creek Flats, to the southeast, where live-work and industrial development may occur.

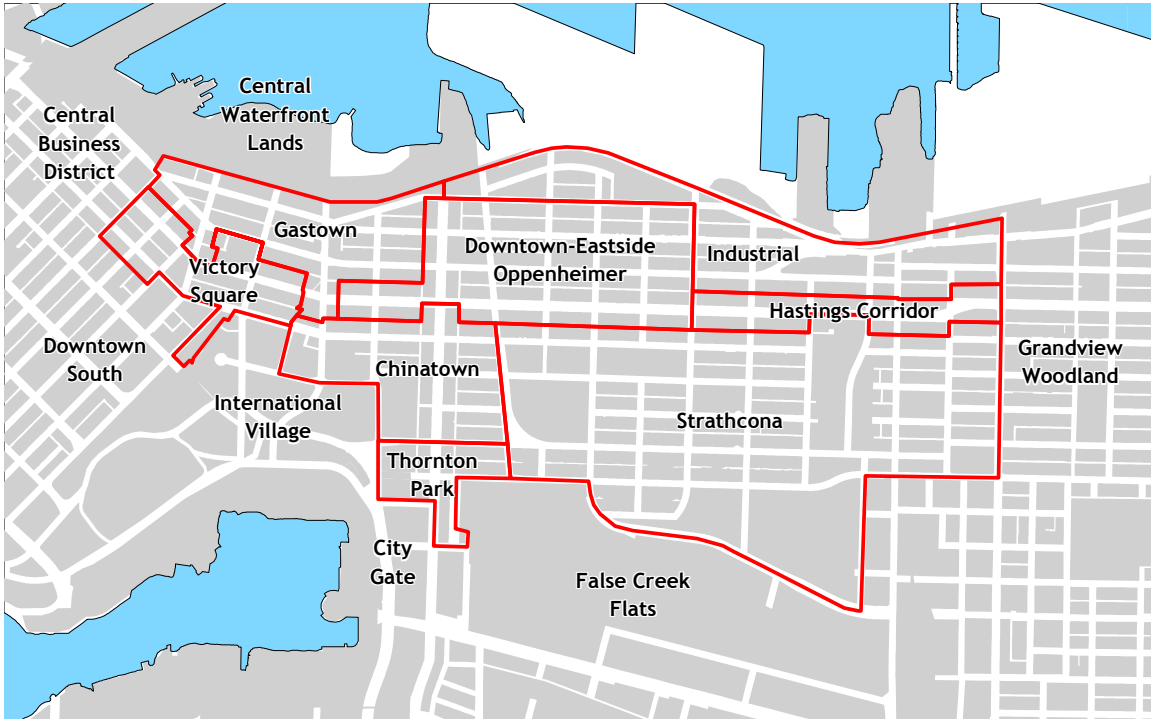
**Growth Projections 2001 – 2021
For Significant Nearby Development**

	No. of Units 2001	No. of Units 2021	Additional Units
Central Business District	1,732	3,600	1,868
False Creek North	3,380	10,100	6,720
City Gate	778	1,450	672
Central Waterfront Lands	0	2,550	2,550
TOTAL	5,890	17,700	11,810

This development will continue to increase the variety of residents and shops nearby and in some of the sub-areas. The development outside the area may have taken some development pressure off the Downtown Eastside itself. However, land values have increased significantly within most sub-areas, challenging the ability to preserve and generate low-income housing. With all the changes that are occurring in the area, there is a sense of urgency for the community and government to come to grips with its immediate- and long-term future. Homelessness will likely increase unless existing low-income housing is preserved or replaced as the existing low-income housing is the most affordable in the city and the region. Social dysfunction is likely to increase as well if the SROs are not replaced with social housing and supportive housing is not built in the Downtown Eastside and throughout the city and region.

Housing is critical because it affects health, family, economic opportunities and the stability of the communities. But housing is just one of the issues facing the area, and some of the problems -- including substance abuse, high incidence of mental illness and communicable disease, the lack of viable retail services -- are seriously undermining the community's social and economic viability. While the problems are significant, the communities have many strengths and a tradition of working with government and others to find solutions to local needs. Some achievements are the Carnegie Centre and Arts Trust, CRAB/Portside Park, improvements to the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Courtyard, Victory Square Park, and the Carrall Street Greenway, as well as the 4,800 units of social housing built over the last 40 years. Partnerships exist between the three levels of government (including the Vancouver Agreement), local communities, non-profits and the private sector to address the area's challenges. Revitalization is a City and Vancouver Agreement priority for the area.

Context Map

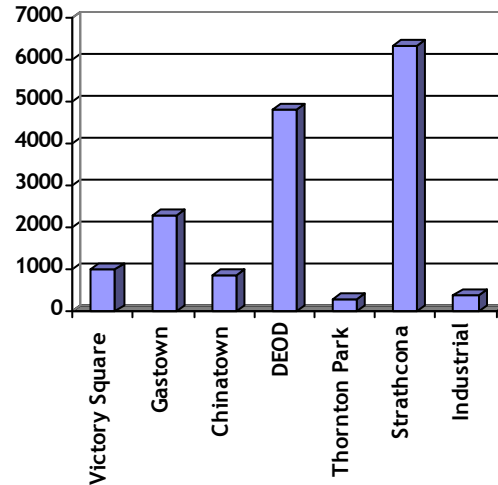


2. PORTRAIT OF THE PEOPLE IN THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

The Downtown Eastside has a population with a social profile unlike any other in Vancouver. This population of 16,000 has a unique set of housing needs and priorities. It is the intent of this Housing Plan to make policy recommendations that reflect the needs of the current population of the area while anticipating the area's future in the context of a changing city. The goal is to transform the area into a sustainable, inclusive and primarily low-income community with a healthy integration of income levels.

This area has historically had a demographic and economic profile notably different from the rest of the City. The population continues to be disproportionately male, older, ethnically diverse, lower-income, and with a more marginal health status.

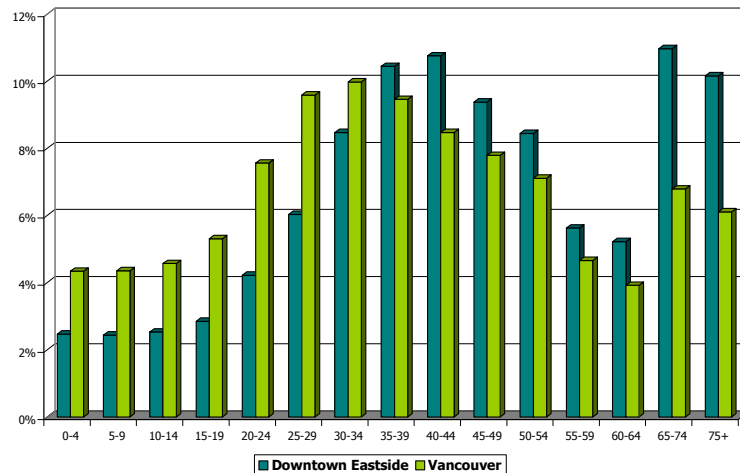
Population by Sub-Area, 2001



Age, Gender, Family Status and Ethnicity

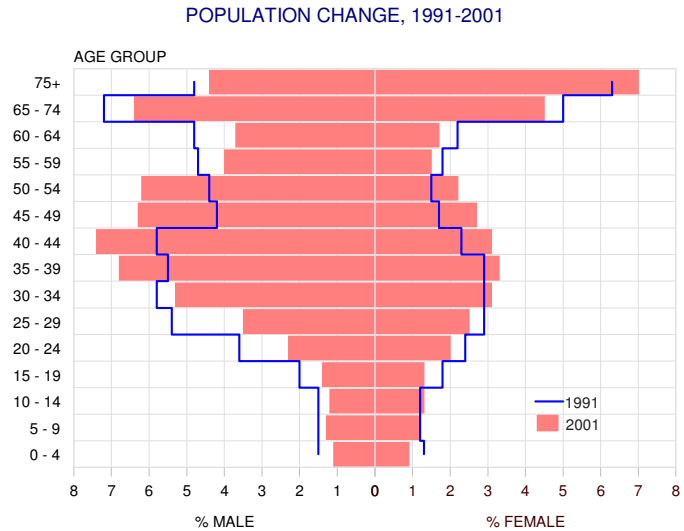
The population is older than the City-wide population. In 2001, one-third of the residents were over 55 years of age, whereas in Vancouver, only one-fifth were over 55. The large majority of the residents are in their later adult years, with the greatest concentration in the 40-44 cohort. With the exception of the Strathcona sub-area, there are few children and youth (less than 25 years

Age Distribution, 2001

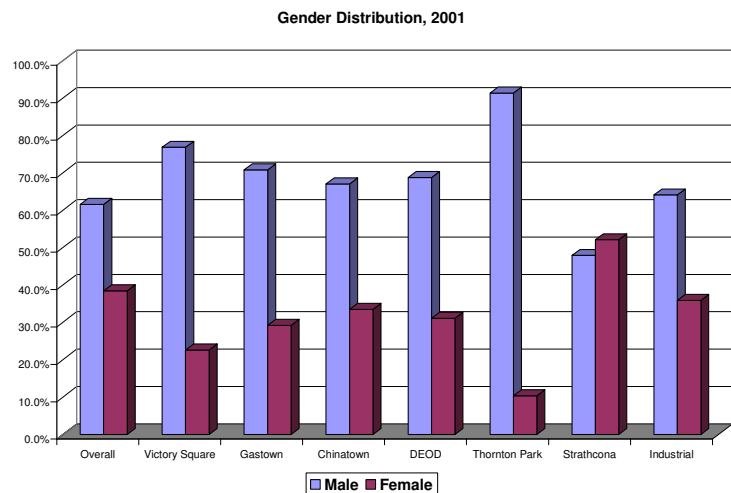


old). Together, they account for less than 15% of the population, whereas city-wide they are more than 25% of the population. Excluding Strathcona, they account for less than 9%. Some changes have occurred since 1991. Notably, there are about 1,500 more people in the 30-59 age cohorts, and about 500 fewer seniors. This is evident in the age pyramid below, which indicates how the population has aged since 1991 and also the degree to which males outnumber females.

61% of the residents are male, whereas in the City, the population is split almost perfectly 50/50 between men and women. This figure, however, varies significantly between Housing Plan sub-areas. In Gastown, Chinatown and the DEOD, the proportion of males is around 70%, and higher figures are seen in Victory Square (77%) and Thornton Park (91%). In Strathcona, however, women predominate slightly (52%).

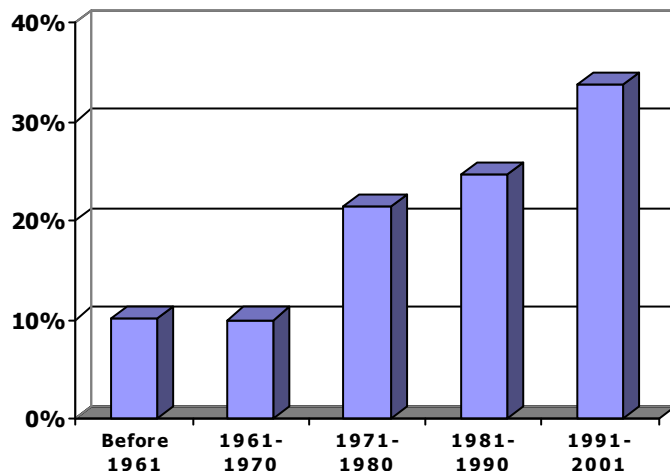


Most residents in the area are single (61%), and the majority of these live alone. While there are fewer families than elsewhere, a higher proportion of them are headed by either female single parents (24%) or male single parents (5%).



The residents are more ethnically diverse than the city as a whole. The most common response to the question of ethnic origin is *Chinese* (36%), followed by *Canadian* (14%), and *English* (11%). The Downtown Eastside also has a high proportion of Aboriginal residents - whereas 2% of the city's population identify themselves as having aboriginal origins, this figure is 9% in the Plan area, ranging from 22% and 23% in Thornton Park and Victory Square to 3% in Strathcona.

Immigrants By Year of Arrival in Canada



43%. The largest single sources for immigrants to the area are China (23%) and Viet Nam (5%). The Downtown Eastside has proportionally fewer immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan and India. 34% of all immigrants arrived between 1991 and 2001.

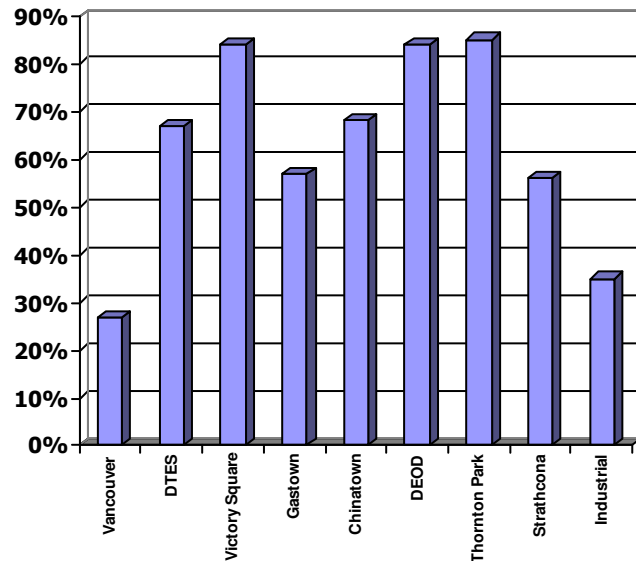
Incidence of Low Income

The percentage of low-income individuals and families living in the Downtown Eastside is significantly higher than in Vancouver as a whole. The 2001 Census reported that the incidence of low income in the area is 67%, as opposed to 27% for the rest of the city. Similarly, the percentage of families that are low income is higher (47%) than city-wide (21%). Vancouver's median household income (\$47,309) is almost four times greater than the median income in the Plan area (\$12,084). Disproportionately high income levels in the Industrial sub-area reflect the fact that of the few residents in the sub-area, the majority live in a market development, The Edge.

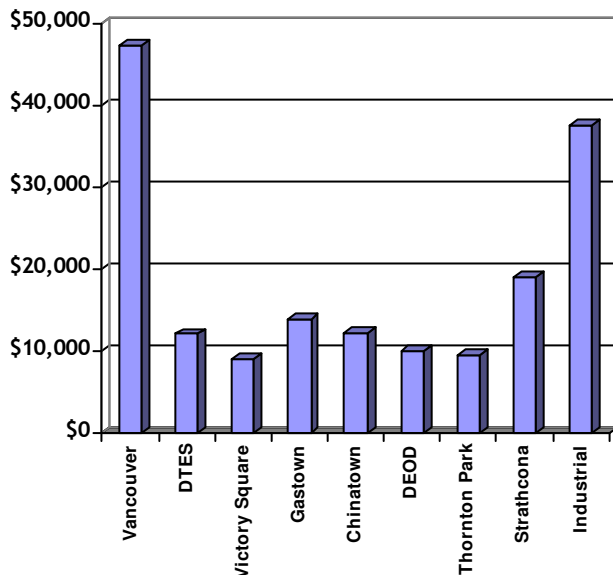
While the median income for women is higher than for men (\$12,058 vs. \$10,420), female SRO residents have a lower monthly income than males (\$639/month vs. \$660/month)¹⁰. Women in the 55-64 year cohort have the lowest incomes overall, in part because they are not yet eligible for pension benefits.

In April 2004, one third of the area's residents received social assistance. 69% of these were single men¹¹.

Incidence of Low Income, 2001



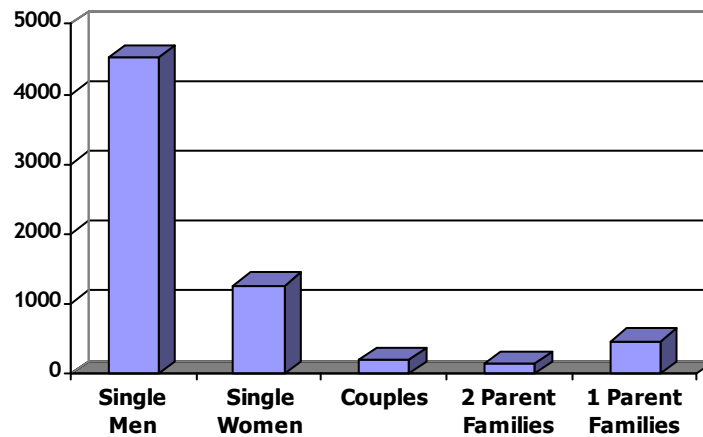
Median Household Income, 2001



¹⁰ Tenants Rights Action Coalition. 2000. Downtown Core Housing Project: A Community Self-Portrait.

¹¹ BC Ministry of Human Resources

Persons Receiving Social Assistance, 2004



Health Characteristics

The life expectancy of residents in the Downtown Eastside is lower than in Vancouver and in BC. Men's life expectancy of 66 years is 10 years less than the city average, and women's life expectancy of 78 years is 5 years less than average. There are an estimated 4,700 injection drug users living in the Downtown Eastside¹² and alcohol and drug use are leading causes of mortality in the neighbourhood. In 2001, the rate of death due to alcohol was 7 times the provincial average, and the rate of death from drug use was 13 times the provincial average. HIV-related deaths were 38 times the provincial average, and hepatitis-C related deaths were twice the average¹³. The incidence of HIV among female injection drug users is 40% higher than male injection drug users¹⁴.

As a result of deinstitutionalization since the 1980s, mental illness is also prevalent in the area, and is often found in conjunction with substance abuse in 'dual-diagnosed' individuals. The Strathcona Mental Health Team serves 20% of all mental health cases in the city (when the Downtown Eastside has 3% of the city population), and their number of referrals is increasing by an average of 77 new clients per month¹⁵. The Downtown Community and Pender Community Health Clinics also provide services in the Downtown Eastside, and have seen a considerable increase in mental illness in recent years. The typical client is described as male, unemployed, intelligent, young to middle-aged (tending towards 40-60 years), living in SROs or social housing, and having a history of depression, anxiety, and substance abuse¹⁶.

¹² Vancouver Drug Use Epidemiology, July 2003. Vancouver Site Report for the Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use.

¹³ All death rate figures from CHASE Project Team, 2004. Community Health and Safety Evaluation (CHASE) 2003 Annual Report, Revised March 2004. Prepared for Vancouver Coastal Health.

¹⁴ Spittal et al. 2002. Risk Factors for Elevated HIV Incidence Rates Among Female Injection Drug Users in Vancouver. Canadian Medical Association Journal 166(7): 894-899.

¹⁵ A Social Profile and Assessment of the Social and Health Needs of Low-income Residents in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. 2004. City of Vancouver Social Planning.

¹⁶ Larcombe, A., 2003. Mental Health Counsellor Report. Downtown Community Health Clinic.

Housing Needs

It is important that housing in the area reflects these unique income, demographic and health characteristics. With a predominance of low-income singles, it is a priority to provide suitable housing and continue the replacement of SROs with higher-quality social housing targeted to the same population. Given the high proportion of the population that is low-income and receiving social assistance, long-term housing affordability is key. Supportive housing – providing a degree of care in social housing or SROs or in the area – is recognized by this plan as an important element in improving the overall health and function of the community. Supportive housing is found throughout the city and across the housing spectrum, from high-end market units to subsidized social housing. There should be housing in the Downtown Eastside that provides appropriate supports for the mentally ill and addicted, and for local seniors, and given low-incomes in the area, new supportive housing projects are likely to be provided through government funding. For those residents with addictions, mental illness and disabilities who cannot live independently, SNRFs can provide the needed care. While the majority of the population is male, a suitable amount of housing is necessary to meet the needs of women in the area, providing safety, support and services. Further, it is imperative that alternative housing options for low-income singles be developed elsewhere in the city and region so that the Downtown Eastside does not become the only neighbourhood with this form of housing and so that alternatives exist for those who do not wish to live in the Downtown Eastside.

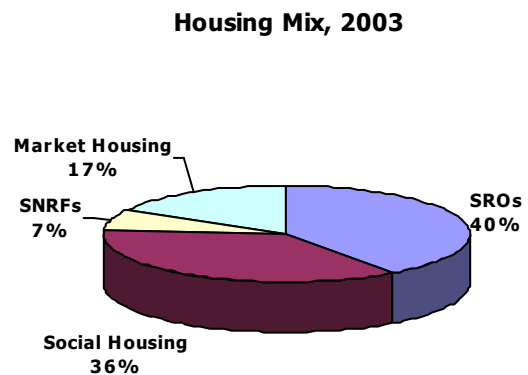
There is also an important need to accommodate market housing in the area. Long-term residents who are employed or move into employment should be able to find housing options in the area. It is therefore important to encourage affordable market rental housing close to downtown and the industrial areas, to provide accommodation for these moderate-income workers. The presence of market housing in the Plan area will also diversify and stimulate the local economy, as businesses and services will start up to meet the needs of new residents with disposable income. These new stores and services, which may be small businesses, non-profits or social enterprises, will provide employment opportunities for local residents and fill vacant storefronts, and contribute to the broader revitalization of the area.

Overall, this Plan seeks to meet and improve the housing needs of local residents while sensitively integrating new market housing into the area. The fundamental goal is revitalization and improved living conditions, and increased diversity of housing without displacing low-income residents or their community or compromising its city and regional role as the primary low-income neighbourhood.

3. HOUSING MIX

FACTS

- The amount of housing in the area for low-income people has increased by 500 units, or 5%, since 1991, due to the construction of new social housing.
- The stock of SROs is decreasing at a rate of about 1.5 % per year (an average of 77 units per year from the beginning of 1998 to the end of 2002).
- Social housing, funded by senior governments, has historically replaced many SROs. Recently, development pressures have been increasing, as shown through increasing land values, and funding for new low-income social housing has been significantly reduced. In 1993, the Federal Government, which had provided two-thirds of the funds for new social housing, stopped participating. In 2002, the Provincial Government cancelled the HOMES BC program and limited funding to new social housing projects targeted to frail seniors. Since 1991, 100 social housing units per year have been built in the area. 87 units per year have are for low-income singles. No new social housing has been completed in the Downtown Eastside since 2003.
- As of March, 2003, there were about 13,000 residential units in the Downtown Eastside:
 - 5,100 SRO units in hotels and rooming houses (5,700 in 1995)
 - 4,600 low-income social housing units (3,900 in 1995)
 - 900 special needs housing beds (750 in 1995)
 - 2,100 owner-occupied and market rental apartments and houses (1,300 in 1995)



EXISTING POLICY

- In 1989, after considering how major projects like False Creek North would affect low-income housing, Council resolved that the City adopt the broad objective of

- "maintaining, upgrading and increasing the existing stock of core-need housing in the Downtown."
- In 1989, in the context of a city-wide housing symposium, Council resolved to:
 - "Foster the social development of Vancouver as home to a wide variety of people with many different racial, ethnic, cultural backgrounds and social, economic lifestyles.
 - Facilitate the provision of a wide range of housing forms and shelter costs to meet the needs of existing and future Vancouver residents of all backgrounds and lifestyles.
 - Maintain and expand housing opportunities in Vancouver for low- and moderate-income households, with priority being given to Downtown lodging-house residents, elderly people on fixed and limited incomes, the physically and mentally disabled, and single-parent families with children.
 - Encourage the distribution of acceptable housing forms and affordable shelter costs equally among all residential neighbourhoods of Vancouver rather than concentrating them in a few areas."
 - In 1991, Council adopted a policy to ensure one-for-one replacement of Single Room Occupancy units in Downtown South.
 - In 1995, Council initiated the planning process for the East Downtown Housing Plan. After intensive consultation, a draft plan was released in 1998 but was not adopted by the Council at the time. Instead, attention was paid to addressing substance abuse, the drug trade and economic revitalization.
 - **The Program of Strategic Actions for the Downtown Eastside** was adopted in 1998 and provides broad directions for the revitalization of the Downtown Eastside. The actions include reducing the impact of drug-related crime and the incidence of problematic drug use, improving conditions on the street, and improving SROs while building new low-income housing.
 - The **Vancouver Agreement** is a partnership between the Federal, Provincial and City governments to develop and implement a coordinated strategy to promote and support sustainable economic, social and community development. The agreement was signed in March, 2000. The first focus of the Vancouver Agreement is Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and it includes initiatives in health and safety, economic capacity, problematic drug use, as well as housing. A key objective of the Vancouver Agreement is no net loss of low-income housing in the Downtown Eastside as part of the goal of improving the social well-being of residents.

- In 2001, the City committed to buying sufficient sites for below-market lease to Provincially-funded social housing programs to facilitate the creation of 300-400 new social housing units per year.
- In 2003, Council adopted the **SRA Conversion and Demolition By-law**, which requires that owners wishing to convert or demolish SRA (single room accommodation) units must receive a Council-approved SRA permit, and possibly pay a fee of up to \$5,000 per unit. This By-law is intended to regulate the future loss of SRAs.
- In 2003, Council approved funding and staffing to re-activate the Downtown Eastside Housing Plan process.

DISCUSSION

One of the key issues for the Housing Plan is what kind of community is envisioned for the future and what kind of housing should be encouraged to meet that vision. The chapters before this one have described the Downtown Eastside as a community with a low-income character. This has been the case historically, and under this plan, the area will remain predominantly low-income. The area is currently in distress, however, and the Plan outlines actions to improve the area's long-term viability as a low-income community. New market housing will be encouraged in the area and will be beneficial as it will stimulate the local economy and diversify the social spectrum. It will also provide opportunities for low-income residents who secure jobs to remain in the area in affordable rental housing. Replacing the stock of marginal housing (mainly the aging SROs) with secure, better-quality housing is an important step in the revitalization of the area.

This plan is part of an overall strategy to address the revitalization of the Downtown Eastside while ensuring that it continues to function as the primary neighbourhood for low-income singles in the City and region. There needs to be concerted efforts by government, the private sector and the community to address issues of housing, crime, addictions, health, safety, economic revitalization, public realm improvements, training and jobs.

There has been a variety of initiatives at all levels to address these issues in addition to the Strategic Actions and the Vancouver Agreement.

- The **Framework for Action** is a four pillar approach for solving the city's drug problem based on prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction. It was adopted by Council in 2001 and has resulted in many initiatives in the Downtown Eastside including the opening of North America's first safe injection site and four other health and treatment facilities.
- The **Downtown Eastside Economic Revitalization Plan and Employment Strategy** were created in 2003. They involve partnerships between levels of government and local economic development organizations. The strategy

provides a long-term vision for the area involving the creation of new businesses and social enterprises, and the creation of jobs and commercial services for local low-income residents.

- Other current revitalization initiatives include the **Heritage Incentive Program**, the **Chinatown Vision** and forthcoming community plan, the City purchase and redevelopment of the **Woodward's** building, and projects in the public realm such as the renovation of Victory Square Park and the Carrall Street Greenway.

Little stability can be achieved if people believe their housing and community are at risk. Provision of adequate and enduring shelter is essential to living in a productive or meaningful way. To successfully introduce more market housing, economic activity and heritage rehabilitation in the area, there must be assurances that this is not done at the expense of the low-income community and that low-income housing is replaced on a 1-for-1 basis. Under this plan the 10,000 low-income units currently in the area will be maintained in the long-term. This can be achieved as outlined in Sections 4, 5 and 7 of this plan by a combination of developing social housing and smaller suites, managing the conversion and demolition of SROs, and upgrading and improving the operation of the existing SROs. Housing with supports such as personal care, meal preparation, housekeeping and lifeskills training can help provide stability for some residents with needs who do not require the level of assistance associated with special needs residential facilities (SNRFs), but nonetheless can benefit from some degree of day-to-day care. (Supportive housing is discussed in Section 5: **Social Housing**).

The ability to physically accommodate enough social housing to replace existing SROs with low-income social housing is discussed in **Appendix A: Social Housing Capacity Analysis**. Self-contained replacement units are, by definition, larger than traditional SRO rooms (approximately 320 square feet versus 100-120 square feet). New social housing logically requires more land than the current stock of SROs. Calculations suggest 1-for-1 replacement would require approximately 70 sites with 100' frontages at 3.0 FSR. The analysis in Appendix A discusses the ability to acquire sufficient sites within social housing budgets and concludes that securing these sites presents an immediate challenge that should be met by the City and senior governments.

Without a policy of 1-for-1 replacement and comprehensive housing, health and social services, the already fragile lives of many residents would become more insecure and chaotic. This could lead to more neighbourhood impacts through increased homelessness, substance abuse, crime and erratic street behaviour. If housing stock is lost in this area, many low-income people would literally have no place to live, as there is little housing available elsewhere at social assistance-level rents. SROs are the last tier of housing before homelessness.

This area is not the only location for low-income people in the city, region and province, nor should it become so. There are 2,300 rooms in licensed rooming houses in Vancouver but outside the Downtown, and this stock needs to be maintained and replaced. Many rooming houses outside the downtown were converted or demolished in the 1970s and 1980s.

In Vancouver, 9.4% of all households (20,490) pay over 50% of their income on rent¹⁷. These households are at serious risk of homelessness. Mount Pleasant, the West End and Grandview-Woodlands all have high proportions of core-need households. In the region (CMA), there are 50,725 households paying 50% or more of their income on housing; 38% (19,270) of these are in Vancouver. Vancouver has the greatest number of such households, but other municipalities (specifically New Westminster, Burnaby, Richmond and North Vancouver City) have similar proportions.

The population of the region is expected to increase by almost 15 percent over the next 10 years, and a portion of the newcomers will have low-incomes. Areas outside the Downtown Eastside will need to accommodate all the expected demand for low-income singles housing from regional growth. This will be a challenge and a variety of actions are needed to encourage more low-income housing and services in other areas, including building more social housing with supports for those at risk of homelessness.

It has been suggested that not all existing SRO units need to be replaced to provide security to the low-income community due to vacancy rates which are currently around 10%. As discussed in Chapter 5 on SROs, however, there are a number of reasons for the rate to be different from that of conventional rental housing. It should also be noted that vacancy rates have fallen from around 14% in 1995.

Ensuring that low-cost housing is available is one way of making the low-income community secure. Other ingredients include community policing, low-cost food, clothing and other retail goods, appropriate services including treatment for substance abuse, training and entry job opportunities, health clinics, community centres (such as the Carnegie, programmed by and for the low-income community), good maintenance and positive use of sidewalks, lanes and other public spaces.

Many low-income people have expressed worries about how too much market housing could mean the loss of their community not only through loss of housing, but also through the loss or transformation of retail and social services for the low-income community, as well as use of the public space. The plan recommends the addition of market housing, but in an amount which should not jeopardize the low-income community. The rate of change is as important as the nature of the change, and both should be monitored along with changes to retail and services to make sure the changes are occurring at a rate that the communities can absorb.

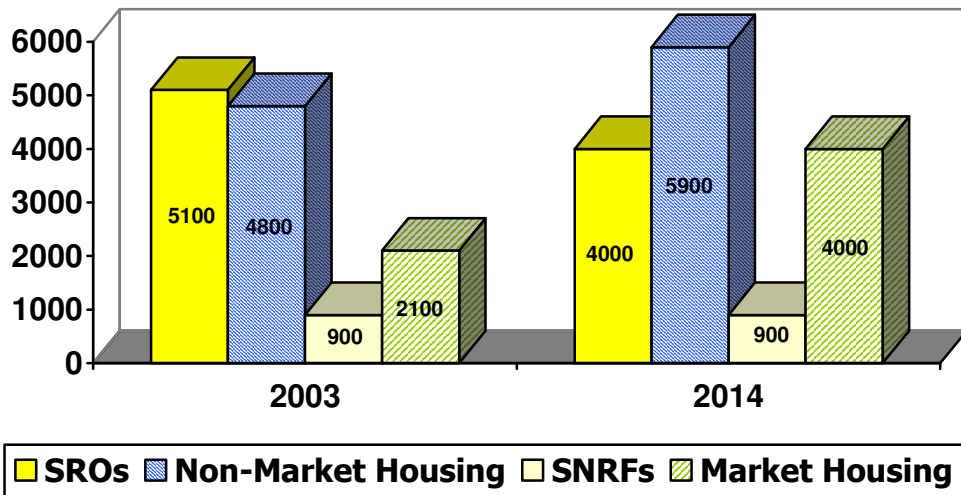
This plan recommends that more market housing be integrated into the area with the expectation that about 100-120 units a year will be built. This is the amount of demand estimated for this area over the next 20 years. The plan recommends supporting and accommodating this demand in restored heritage buildings using incentives and in other renovated properties. The market housing would be a mixture of owner-occupied condos, live-work units and rental. Condos will help meet the demand for owner-occupied units as the downtown core is built out, and will help support the revitalization of heritage buildings. Live-work will both provide new housing opportunities in the area

¹⁷ Core Need in Vancouver. 2005. City of Vancouver Housing Centre.

while also stimulating economic activity as part of the area’s broader revitalization. As land prices rise city-wide, it is increasingly important to encourage rental housing which can house moderate income workers employed in or near the central area. Bringing more market housing to the area will also increase the range of retail services available for all residents, and will help support local businesses.

To create a healthy community, efforts will be required to knit together the various groups and find ways of jointly solving housing and non-housing community problems. Initiatives like the Framework for Action (Four Pillars) and the Economic Revitalization Strategy are examples of initiatives that will do this. Chapter 10 of this plan discusses a community involvement strategy for housing issues in the Downtown Eastside.

Housing Mix, 2003-2014



ACTIONS

3.1 Replace old SROs on with low-income social housing on a 1-for-1 basis and facilitate the integration of market housing (expected to be about 100-120 units/year). This general principle applies to the overall area, but will be manifested differently in the sub-areas. (See Chapter 9: **Sub-Areas**).

3.2 Facilitate the provision of moderate-cost rental accommodation in market development, both through purpose-built rental buildings and condominiums which are purchased as investments. (See Chapter 6: **Market Housing**).

3.3 Take action to encourage more affordable housing especially for singles in other parts of the city, the region and the province by:

- Considering zoning and other changes which would encourage more affordable low-income singles housing and supportive housing throughout the city. An example is the recent policy work facilitating secondary suites in all single family areas.
- Ensuring that low-income housing is situated in other neighbourhoods by:
 - Actively considering the provision of low-income singles housing and complementary health care and social services outside the Downtown Eastside during city-wide and neighbourhood planning programs.
 - Developing a city-wide housing plan for low-income urban singles and supportive housing.
 - Considering the use of bonuses, housing agreements, and community amenity contributions to provide low-income singles housing when developing new area-wide or site-specific zoning, and allocating Development Cost Levies for low-income singles housing where appropriate.
 - Establishing a task force of elected officials from the three levels of government, the GVHC (Greater Vancouver Housing Corporation) and the GVRD (Greater Vancouver Regional District), and community and business leaders throughout the region to meet with other municipalities to encourage housing for low-income singles in their home communities.

3.4 Establish a review of Housing Plan Policies and indicators of community health, safety and liveability:

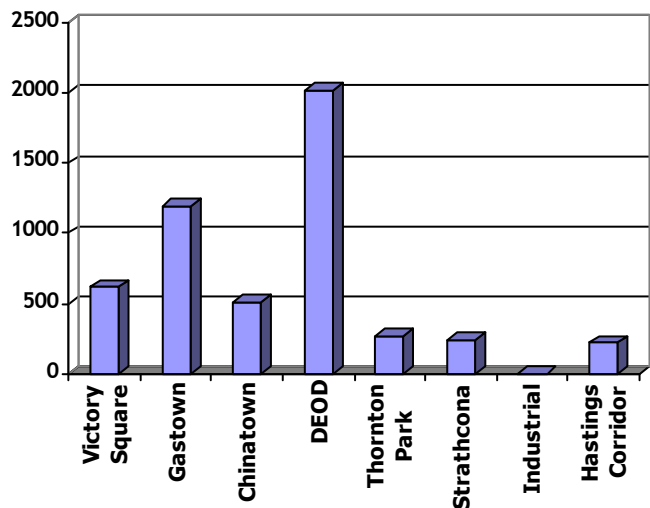
- Continue to monitor housing development and indicators of health, safety and liveability through the annual Downtown Eastside Monitoring Report.
- Establish a community-based public engagement program to review and provide feedback on Housing Plan policies and objectives, and to review development activity in the area with implications for housing. (See Chapter 10)

4. THE FUTURE OF SROs

FACTS

- SROs are residential hotels and rooming houses. Generally, SRO (single room occupancy) rooms are small (around 100 square feet), rented monthly and do not contain private bathrooms or cooking facilities. Some have been renovated to be self-contained.

SRO Units by Sub-Area, 2003



- SRA (single room accommodation), a term used in the City by-law (see box, page 32), is a broader definition. SRAs include units in SRO hotels and rooming houses, and also social housing units less than 320 square feet. All SRAs in the downtown core are subject to and listed in the SRA By-law.
- In March, 2003, there were 5,093 SRO units in 125 buildings in the Downtown Eastside. In 1998 there were 5,336 units. In 1970, there were 9,500 SRO units.
- The trend is for SRO housing to be reduced over time to closure, conversion and demolition. The average SRO is over 90 years old.
- In 2001, prior to the enactment of the SRA By-law, it was estimated by PriceWaterhouseCoopers that over 1,100 SRO rooms in the Downtown would be lost to conversion and demolition by 2015. The greatest number of losses was expected in Gastown (31%), the Central Business District (22%) and Thornton Park (16%). This study did not estimate how many units would be replaced. With the protection of the By-law, the losses are now regulated and will be considerably lower (if Council refuses applications).
- 24 buildings (19%) have liquor licenses (1,755 units or 34%).
- 53 buildings (42%) are on the City's Heritage Register.
- In 2003, just over one-quarter of the SRO stock rented for \$325 or less per month. Between 1998 and 2001, average SRO rents increased by 1.1%.

Between 2001 and 2003, they increased by 5.4%. The average rental rate in 2003 for SROs in the Downtown Eastside was \$350.

- A survey of SRO residents done in 1999 showed 83% are men, 57% are in the 25-44 age cohort, 56% receive BC Benefits and 16% receive Disability Benefits, 42% had previously lived in a different SRO, and the average length of time living in the area is just over six years.
- In the same survey, 90% of tenants said that they would prefer to live in a self-contained apartment if the alternative was available, and only 2% would opt for their current housing situation.
- 2001 Census data indicate that overall, 26% of the area's residents moved within the previous year. This is lower than the West End (29%), and similar to other inner city neighbourhoods such as Kitsilano (25%) and Mount Pleasant (25%), but greater than Vancouver as a whole (20%).

EXISTING POLICY

- The Standards of Maintenance By-law allows the City to inspect and require minimum liveability standards for SROs. The purpose of the by-law is to ensure adequate maintenance and management of SROs.
- In the Program of **Strategic Actions for the Downtown Eastside** (adopted in 1998), Council confirmed the policies that housing for low-income residents be protected, that SROs should be improved and that replacement low-income housing be built.
- In October, 2003, Council enacted the **SRA By-law** as a tool to regulate the rate of change in SRO hotels, rooming houses and non-market developments in the downtown core. (See the box on the SRA By-law below).
- In November, 2003, Council passed a motion urging the Provincial Government to rescind laws reducing Income Assistance benefits and imposing time limits. This was in part in response to concerns expressed by non-profits and owners of SROs that they would no longer be able to operate if their tenants lost the ability to pay rent or had their incomes reduced.
- The **Heritage Incentive Programs** for Gastown, Chinatown and the Hastings Corridor include a number of tools to promote the retention and upgrading of heritage buildings. The program includes property tax exemptions, bonus density and façade grants which enhance the economic viability of upgrading and maintaining heritage buildings in the area, a significant number of which are SROs. (See the box on the Heritage Incentive Program in the **Market Housing** chapter).

DISCUSSION

SROs and Homelessness

The main rationale for securing and improving the SROs in the short-term is to avoid homelessness. The reasons for homelessness are complex and numerous. Literature on the topic identifies factors such as poverty, unemployment, de-institutionalization, family breakdown, as well as the loss of affordable housing. Experience in other cities is that when SROs are lost, the number of people living on the streets increases. In eight other North American cities studied, homelessness increased when affordable housing stock was lost.

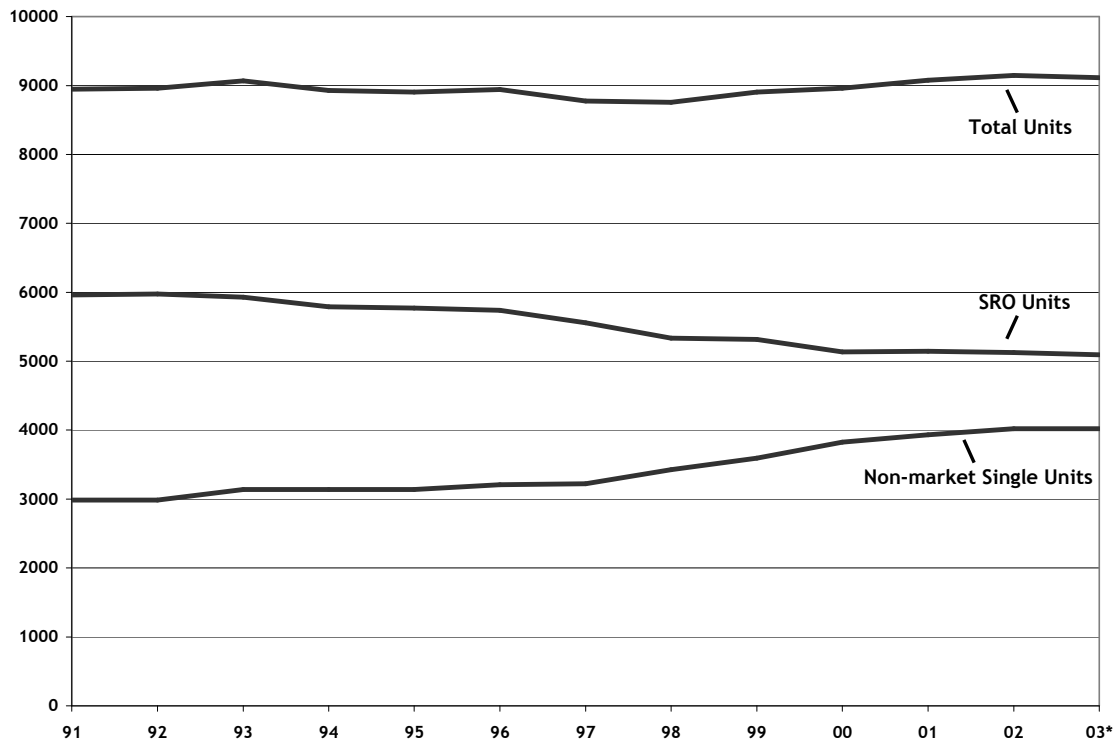
Homelessness is difficult to measure, but it is on the increase in Vancouver. In 2003, Housing Centre staff estimate that the number of shelterless living in Vancouver has doubled since 2001. A series of walkabouts between 2001 and 2003, combined with other information, suggest that at least 500 to 1,200 people sleep outside on any given night (depending on the season) in addition to 600 to 750 people sleeping in shelters. Data from emergency shelters also indicate a substantial increase in the number daily users and turn-aways when shelters reach capacity. In 2003, one of the major emergency shelter operators, the Lookout Emergency Shelter, served close to 3,800 people in Vancouver. This is almost 50% more than 1995. However, they had more than 5,000 turn-aways, which is 227% more than 1995.

The Current Stock of SROs

The existing SRO stock is important because it is the least expensive housing in the City and there is no readily available alternative. Since 1970 over 4,300 SRO units have been lost, an average of 132 units per year. In 1991, Council affirmed its one-for-one replacement policy for SROs in Downtown South. In the Downtown Eastside, Council's interim policies follow a similar strategy. Since 1991, 869 units have been lost, or around 70 per year. In this same time period, however, 1,034 units of non-market housing targeted at singles have been opened, resulting in a net gain of 165 units. Federal Government funding for new social housing ended in 1993 and the Province cancelled their HOMES BC program in 2002 which funded most of the housing built in the area during the 1990s. Historic levels of replacement cannot continue without re-establishing federal and provincial funding. Some projects have been able to proceed by combining sources of funding such as SCPI (the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative), Development Cost Levies and equity from non-profit societies. Such sources of funding, however, are limited and not always available.

The following chart indicates the degree to which low-income social housing has been able to replace SROs that have been lost. Between 1991 and 1996, there was a net loss, while from 1997 and 2001, there was a greater than 1-for-1 replacement of SROs as a result of a substantial increase in funding for new social housing. Since then, 1-for-1 replacement has been achieved as a result of reduced losses due to the SRA By-law (approved in October 2003) and the on-going construction of a more modest amount of new social housing.

Change in the Low-Income Stock in the Downtown Eastside, January 1991-March 2003



The SRA By-law

An owner wishing to convert or demolish single room accommodation (SRA) rooms must obtain a permit granted by Council. The application may be refused, or conditions, including a payment of \$5,000 per room, may be attached to the permit. Under this by-law, an owner wanting to convert or demolish designated SRA rooms (including rooming houses and social housing units less than 320 square feet) must apply for and obtain a permit. Council decides whether or not to grant the permit and may attach conditions to the permit, including the \$5,000 per room fee. It is acknowledged that the SRA stock is ageing and will continue to be lost over time, but the SRA Bylaw will serve to manage this rate of change over time.

Conditions in SROs

The average SRO hotel is over 90 years old, and most do not provide private bathrooms, and may not contain private cooking facilities. Today, bathrooms and kitchens are considered fundamental to standards of health, safety and independence for most people. During the public consultation held in 1998, many people expressed the view that no new SROs should be built and this draft plan incorporates that perspective. However, about 20% of the existing SRO residents found this form of housing most

appropriate for their needs. This can be accommodated in existing buildings which could be upgraded to extend their useable life.

It is important that the SRO stock is well maintained and managed, as it provides housing for long-term residents as well as newcomers and low-skilled and seasonal workers. The SROs provide housing for people who may move from out of town into the area until they settle in another neighbourhood or those who cycle in and out of the area depending on employment, health and family situations.

An ongoing concern is the impact of the drug trade on SROs. The Four Pillars provides a framework for dealing with the drug market and other aspects of drug use, but will be implemented over a period of time. The sites for buying and selling of drugs have changed – sometimes concentrated in the streets, in bars, or in other commercial businesses. Now some of the drug trade is occurring in SROs hotels and this has a detrimental effect on the housing stock.

Many SROs do provide decent, if very basic, housing and most are reasonably maintained. Disinvestment, however, is a growing problem, as the shelter component of social assistance has been frozen at \$325 a month since 1991. In 1997 the City established an Integrated Services Team (IST) to improve coordination and enforcement of City regulations and standards. The IST has been very effective in taking enforcement action against inadequately managed and maintained hotels. As a result, many of the most problematic hotels in the area have been subject to enforcement action and have been improved or closed down. Between 2000 and the end of 2002, thirteen SRO buildings faced enforcement actions resulting in license suspensions or closure. The majority of these actions were against pubs within SRO hotels, but five were against the residential portion of the building and were given temporary license suspensions or were closed down. One of the hotels has since changed management (Jubilee) and two remain closed (Evergreen and Harbourfront, with a total of 34 rooms).

Upgrading SROs

Incentives are needed to encourage owners to properly maintain low-income housing as they generally own older buildings and rents are limited to or are near shelter allowance levels. Currently the Ministry of Human Resources' shelter allowance for single people on social assistance is fixed at \$325 dollars per month, which is in many cases insufficient to provide proper building maintenance and adequate support. Social assistance rates have not increased since 1991, and the owners of SRO buildings are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain the aging SRO stock. The management and security of SROs is important because some of the tenants need extra attention. An increase in shelter allowance would assist owners in providing this extra attention. As well, support services should be made available to owners/operators of SROs. For example, through the Vancouver Agreement, the Silver/Avalon Hotel at 165 West Pender received support to tenants provided by Lookout Emergency Services Society and its operators participated in an SRO management course.

The Rooming House Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)

One method of upgrading SROs is through the Federal Government's Rooming House Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP). RRAP is beneficial in that it provides loans (forgivable under certain conditions) that allow housing owners to upgrade their units. While a degree of rent-control is a condition of the program, the rents are still significantly above shelter-allowance rates. More money should be allocated and the program should be modified to be more effective. Revisions could include priority for non-profit or local government ownership and management, priority for structural improvements that increase safety and liveability, financial contribution by owners, and community input into which buildings receive loan/grants. The rent issue also needs to be addressed. SRO buildings renovated under RRAP can charge market rates for studios. The maximum rent permitted under the program for SROs in 2004 was \$462, (based on the regional market apartment rents) which is too high compared to the average SRO rent of \$350, and the \$325 shelter allowance. This policy should be adjusted so that renovated SROs charge rents at or near shelter allowance rates.

It is also important that the SRO stock elsewhere in the region and province be retained or replaced. The Federal and Provincial Governments should provide incentives are provided to owners, operators and health authorities to ensure that this stock is preserved and continues to accommodate low-income singles.

Owners of heritage buildings with SROs have a further challenge of meeting the City's heritage objectives when making renovations. The Heritage Incentive Programs for Gastown, Chinatown and the Hastings Corridor offer benefits for owners of SROs wishing to upgrade their buildings. See Chapter 6: **Market Housing** for details on the Heritage Incentive Program. Raising the shelter allowance would also help those renovating heritage buildings.

A program similar to the Heritage Incentive Program should also be considered for non-heritage SROs. Although SROs are not considered optimum housing in the long term, incentives for owners to upgrade their buildings to maintain the stock until such time that they can be replaced should be considered. Incentives could include property tax relief and grants, which could help finance building upgrades and maintenance. In return, affordable rents would be secured through Housing Agreements.

This Plan recognizes that SROs do not provide optimal living conditions due to small unit sizes, lack of bathroom and cooking facilities, and building age. Further, renovations to SROs are expensive and rarely lead to full buildings upgrades, and the lifespan of renovated SROs is shorter than new construction. Replacement of 5,000 existing SRO units with better quality housing will take time, however, so it is important that SROs be made liveable until replacements can come on-line. It is recommended that greater emphasis be placed on achieving 1-for-1 replacement in the long term.

SRO Management and Maintenance

It is recommended that a balanced approach be taken to address SRO management and maintenance issues. This Plan recognizes that the economics of running an SRO given current shelter allowance rates is challenging, and recommends initiatives to provide support and training to operators and managers. At the same time, new enforcement tools are recommended to ensure that life safety, personal safety, maintenance and hygiene are not neglected or compromised.

The Economics of SROs

Operating SRO hotels can be challenging. Analysis of operating budgets for six non-profit and government-operated SROs and small suite social housing projects provides an indication of this. With tenants paying shelter allowance rents (\$325) and with 24-hour management, economics are marginal. Simply looking at operating costs and regular maintenance, none of the projects did little better than break even, and most cannot operate without subsidies.

Many private SROs, particularly larger ones, generate revenue from pubs, benefit from economies of scale, and often have lower operating costs than non-profit and government SROs. Further, private SROs generally charge higher rents (the average rent for an SRO room in the Downtown Eastside is \$350). The economics of smaller SROs, however, are more marginal as they generate less revenue and are often without the benefit of pubs or retail spaces. It is these smaller SRO that are more likely to face closure over time, particularly if they are in need of major upgrades to plumbing, electrical and elevators.

A partnership between all levels of government and non-profit housing societies should be formalized to develop and fund a training program for SRO operators. This can draw on the experiences gained by governments and non-profits in operating social housing and SROs. Short-term funding (3 years) for this initiative was secured through the Vancouver Agreement, but sustainable funding should be secured from Human Resources and Skills Development, Western Economic Diversification, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and BC Housing through the Vancouver Agreement. In this program, staff from the City, Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Housing, and experienced non-profit and private operators can provide advice, expertise and training on good SRO management techniques, including use of existing community services for troubled tenants, drawing on experience with existing housing operations. If successful completion of this program results in better management of SROs, completion of this program (or alternatively a certificate in hotel management) should be made a requirement for new business licences for SROs or as a condition of show cause compliance.

A broad range of enforcement tools are recommended to address health, safety and security in SRO hotels. These are detailed in the policy recommendations below, but include the development of a municipal ticketing system for violations of the Standards of Maintenance Bylaw, partnership with the Ministry of Human Resources to withhold

welfare cheques if rooms are deemed unliveable, and the ability to close down individual vacant rooms in bad condition.

There has also been a trend towards increasing the number of beds in existing SRO units, leading to cramped and unliveable conditions without sufficient room for possessions or privacy. The existing regulations require 50 square feet per bed, but until recently almost all buildings have had only one bed in the usual 100 square foot room. Staff report that 2-4 bunks per room are becoming more common and there are up to 8 bunks per room in some of the larger rooms. The effect of overcrowding and lack of privacy on health (from bedbugs to tuberculosis) and safety is a serious concern. Amendments to the regulations to discourage overcrowding are recommended in this Plan.

Vacancy Rates

The vacancy rate in SRO buildings fell from over 20% in the early 1970s to 10% by 2003. The vacancy rate for SROs is higher than conventional rental stock because this stock includes buildings in which some of the units are closed or rented on a less-than-monthly basis, are in poor condition, or are poorly managed and not even attractive to low-income singles on social assistance. Vacant SRO units tend to be concentrated in a few buildings. In 2003, 45% of the vacant units were in 8% of the buildings (10 of 125). Vacancy rates - based on the number of unoccupied units at a particular point in time - are different from turnover or mobility, which indicate the amount of movement within the stock or by residents. 2001 Census data show that the mobility rate of residents within this area is comparable or lower than other inner-City neighbourhoods. These rates will continue to be monitored and will be part of the five year plan review.

Many tenants need help with relocation when they have conflicts with management or other tenants, or when the building is closed or converted. The Province and the City jointly sponsored tenant relocation services in this area until 1997 when the Province withdrew funding. City staff from the Tenant Assistance Program (TAP) have provided emergency assistance, but this is insufficient. The Province needs to provide resources to organizations that assist tenants in resolving disputes and accessing the arbitration process through the Residential Tenancy Office. The Province should also re-initiate its relocation service especially given accessibility to social assistance has been restricted and made more difficult. The City provided matching funding to the Province and could consider doing it again.

Future Losses of SROs

The potential pressures on the stock are likely to increase if the area becomes more attractive for redevelopment or conversion to tourist uses (backpackers' hostels or budget hotels) especially in Gastown and Victory Square. A study for the City by PriceWaterhouseCoopers in 2003 estimates the conversion and demolition of SROs to the year 2015. Over half of the conversions and demolitions would be for hostels, over one-third for apartments and around 7% for budget hotels. It was estimated that 700

units in the Plan area could be lost to economically viable conversions and demolitions. An additional 466 to 666 units throughout the Downtown core could be lost to fires and health and safety closures by 2015. It should be noted that these estimations were made prior to the 2010 Olympics announcement, the recent increase in development activity in the downtown core, and the enactment of the SRA Conversion By-law. It appears that the SRA By-law has slowed conversions and that losses will not be as high as projected.

It is important that SROs should remain affordable for low-income residents as well. The last two years have seen a greater than 5% increase in SRO rents. If rents continue to increase at this rate in the absence of increases in the shelter allowance, they may cease to be viable and may no longer meet the housing needs of low-income singles.

ACTIONS

4.1 Urge the Provincial and Federal Governments to restore funding for the creation of new social housing for low-income singles to replace existing SROs.

4.2 Urge the Provincial and Federal Governments to restore funding for the purchase of SROs and their conversion into social housing for low-income singles.

4.3 Purchase one SRO per year in the Downtown Eastside and provide funding to upgrade to self-contained social housing units under non-profit or City management. Give special consideration to those on the Heritage Register, those in historic districts, and hotels with liquor licenses that can be closed or transferred.

4.4 Encourage most SROs to be replaced while maintaining current levels of housing in the Plan area targeted to low-income singles. In the longer term there will continue to be a role for some SROs to serve people who do not want a kitchen or larger space, do not want to live in government-subsidized housing or are newcomers.

4.5 Continue to implement the SRA By-law and monitor its impact on the rate of conversion/demolition of SRA units. Make adjustments where necessary to prevent excessive loss and achieve appropriate replacement.

4.6 Encourage the improvement of the maintenance and management of SROs:

4.6.1 Urge the Federal Government to increase funding and to revise the Rooming House Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) to be more effective in securing the SRO stock for low-income singles. A condition of RRAP funding should be that renovated units remain affordable to low-income tenants.

4.6.2 Work with training institutions and housing societies to develop courses and workshops on SRO management which could lead to good management certification.

4.6.3 Review the Standards of Maintenance By-law and enforcement procedures to determine how the standards in the hotels could be improved:

- use stiffer penalties and fines for non-complying landlords for failure to upkeep common areas and washrooms, and general building maintenance;
- establish a municipal ticketing system with fines to address specific By-law violations, with tickets issued by City and Fire Inspectors, and Police;
- work with MHR to prevent issuance of shelter allowance cheques to landlords for individual vacated rooms that are found to be unliveable;
- obtain the power for the City inspectors to close down individual rooms (this authority is currently available only to Health Inspectors at the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority);
- obtain the power for the City inspectors to post “Do Not Occupy” notices on vacated rooms until repairs are done; and
- require a hotel management certificate for new operators of SROs as a condition of receiving a business license and as a requirement for SROs reopening after closure from enforcement action.

4.6.4 Continue the targeting and joint response to problem hotels by the City’s Coordinated Enforcement Team.

4.6.5 Use Housing Agreements ensuring good management, rent limits, and security of SRO buildings in exchange for requests to change existing liquor licenses or as a condition of an SRA Permit.

4.6.6 Ensure that SRO owners know that alternative building by-law requirements are available when SRO buildings are upgraded and maintained as low-income housing. The Vancouver Building By-law permits fire and life safety relaxations in SROs and waives the requirement for a full seismic upgrade provided all floors and beams are substantially connected to the walls and ceilings.

4.6.7 Recommend that the Provincial Government raise the shelter allowance for tenants in hotels and non-profit housing that meet certain conditions. This would include 24-hour security with trained staff, well managed and maintained buildings and those under non-profit management. These conditions could be documented through a report-card system developed and implemented by the Province and municipal inspectors.

4.6.8 Encourage the Provincial Government to provide tools, incentives and support services to other municipalities to generate an absolute increase of low-

income singles housing in the region and province, and in the city of Vancouver outside of the Downtown.

4.7 Increase the minimum number of square feet per bed in the Standards of Maintenance By-law from 50 square feet to 80 square feet.

4.8 Encourage the Province to restore funding for organizations that assist tenants in resolving disputes and accessing the arbitration process through the Residential Tenancy Office.

4.9 When considering cultural or heritage bonuses and incentives in buildings with low-income housing, ensure that the low-income housing resource (quality or quantity) is not reduced and, if possible, enhanced.

4.10 Encourage participation in the Heritage Incentive Program by owners of SROs that are on the Heritage Register while ensuring the preservation or replacement of existing low-income housing.

4.11 Fund a feasibility study for developing an SRO Incentive Program where owners of non-heritage SROs can qualify for incentives such as property tax relief and façade grants to upgrade their buildings in exchange for entering into a Housing Agreement with the City. If such a program is viable, develop an implementation plan.

4.12 Explore new commercial uses at grade to improve the economic viability of SRO Hotels with the intention of maintaining them as low-income housing. Adjust the zoning schedules where appropriate to accommodate these uses and explore relaxations for parking and loading. If possible, ground floor uses should provide goods and services to meet the needs of low-income residents of the area.

4.13 Work with the Province to find ways to restore relocation and advocacy services which were cut when the Provincial Government cut funding, and confirm the City as a co-funder of these services.

4.14 Develop a program to help SRO owners fill their vacant rooms with low-income singles, and urge the Province and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority to participate in such a program by offering services to the prospective tenants.

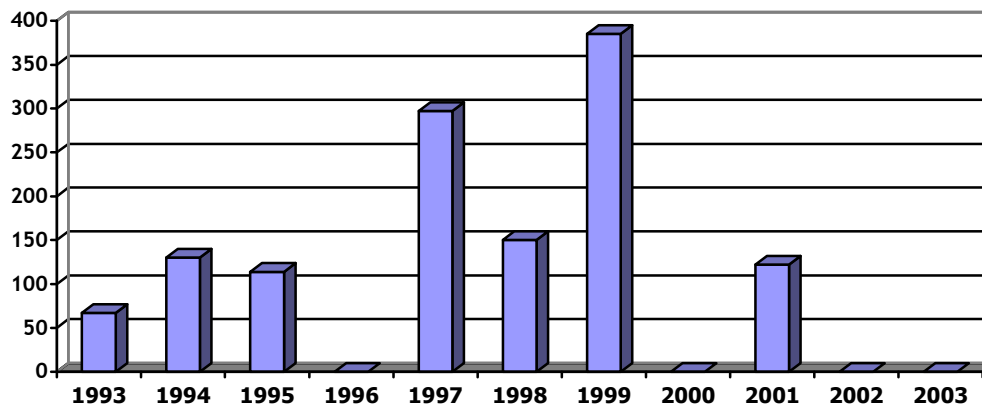
5. SOCIAL HOUSING

FACTS

Current Mix:

- Social Housing Units (2003):
 - seniors: 40% (1,958)
 - families: 17% (807)
 - other (mainly low-income singles): 43% (2,062)
- With funding primarily from the senior levels of government, about 4,800 social housing units, 4,600 of them low-income, have been built in this area. There are 21,000 social housing units throughout the city and 40,000 units throughout the region.
- The Federal Government was the major funder of social housing until 1993 when they stopped funding new social housing. After that, the Provincial Government provided the funding for most new social housing. The Province cancelled the HOMES BC program, which funded low-income social housing, in 2002. The Provincial government has identified vulnerable populations, especially the frail elderly and people with disabilities as their current social housing priorities.

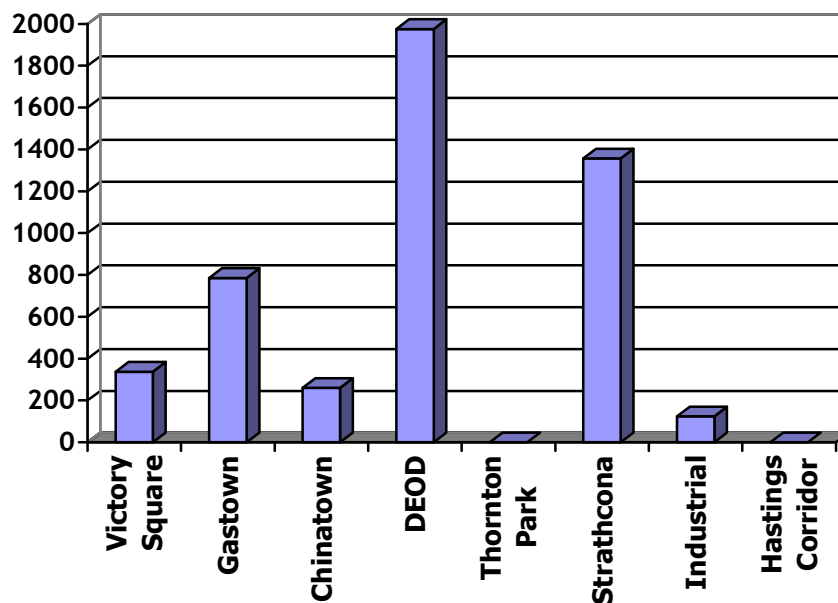
New Social Housing Units by Project Year



- An average of 94 units per year were funded in the area between 1998 and 2003. The Woodward's Building, purchased by the City in 2003 and currently being redeveloped, will contain a minimum of 200 social housing units, 125 of which will be targeted to low-income singles or couples and 75 to families.
- In the rest of Vancouver, outside the study area, 954 social housing units were funded between 1998 and 2003.

- Several SROs have been purchased and converted into social housing with management by non-profit agencies. In 1998 the Province, the City and the Vancouver Richmond Health Board purchased the Sunrise (52 units) and the Washington Hotels (91 units). In 2001, the PHS Community Services Society purchased the Pennsylvania Hotel which they intend to renovate and operate as social housing. In 2003, the City purchased the Stanley/New Fountain (103 units).

Social Housing Units by Sub-Area, 2003



- Supportive housing is housing linked to support services, and is often but not always funded by government. These services can include meals, housekeeping, personal care and lifeskills training, and are provided to individuals or groups of people with similar needs living in social housing, SROs or private housing of all kinds.
- There are over 400 units supported housing in SRO hotels and social housing projects funded mainly by Vancouver Coastal Health.
- There are approximately 60 units of supportive housing with an addiction-treatment focus funded by the Union Gospel Mission and the Salvation Army.
- Examples of supported hotels: the Hampton Hotel, the Sunrise, the Washington, Princess Rooms, the Silver/Avalon and the Jubilee Rooms

- Examples of supported apartments: the New Portland, Bridge Housing, Jim Green Residence, and Windchimes Apartments. A new supported apartment project is under construction at Hastings and Jackson (52 units)

EXISTING POLICY

- The City of Vancouver plays a number of roles in the provision of Social Housing:
 - Long-term leases of City-owned land for social housing at below-market rates and sometimes at no cost
 - Operation of 9 non-market housing projects (770 units) including 5 projects with 493 units in the Downtown Eastside
 - Capital grants to non-market housing projects from the Affordable Housing Fund and Development Cost Levies
 - Negotiations with developers to secure social housing including Housing Agreements.
- In the Downtown District Official Development Plan (which applies to Victory Square), density bonuses are available for the provision of low-cost housing secured with a Housing Agreement.
- The Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District (DEOD) Official Development Plan requires that all development over 1 FSR (floor space ratio – the proportion of built floor space to site area) have a minimum of 20% social housing (either units or square footage).
- Supportive housing projects, such as the New Portland, are defined as residential and not institutional uses.

DISCUSSION

Over 4,800 social housing units have been developed in the Downtown Eastside. The primary reason for this is that this has historically been a low-income area and social housing has replaced the SROs that have been lost over time. Most of the zoning in the area permits higher density residential development, land prices are mostly within social housing budgets (although land prices and construction costs are increasing), and the zoning in the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District (DEOD) Official Development Plan provides an incentive for social housing, and similar incentives are proposed in the draft Victory Square Concept Plan. There is concern that market development in and around the area could push up land values even faster, making it more difficult to develop social housing within the restricted budgets imposed by senior government programs (assuming such programs are available). The City has traditionally provided land for many social housing projects, and to do so will become increasingly expensive as land values rise. Land values in most Housing Plan sub-areas have risen in recent years as have construction costs city-wide.

Some existing residents cannot live independently without support services, in some cases because of behaviour relating to their mental health or substance use. Until recently, most housing programs have targeted people who can live independently, without extra support, and until 1997 only funded housing for seniors and families. Singles, especially those with other issues, were ineligible. It has become a priority, however, to develop supportive housing in both purpose-built social housing and existing SROs. This form of housing provides a range of supports such as meals, housekeeping and lifeskills training which help residents to live stable lives. See the discussion below on supportive housing.

The demand for additional affordable housing as a result of regional growth should be accommodated outside the Downtown Eastside. More social housing for low-income singles should be provided in other areas of the city, region and province. To encourage this, the Provincial Government should reinstate funding for all vulnerable populations along the lines of the LIUS (Low Income Urban Singles) and at-risk HOMES BC modules, and provide grants for advocacy and public education in affordable housing, community development, and research. The HOMES BC program also encouraged municipalities to use enabling tools, such as leasing land at below market value, to provide affordable housing. The City of Vancouver already does this by providing 60-year land leases for 75% of market value. In some instances the City has provided the land for free.

The draft Victory Square Concept Plan contains policies providing incentives for social housing in that sub-area, such as considering relaxations in density (from 3.0 FSR to 5.0 FSR) and height (from 70 ft. to 100 ft) for social housing (Note: FSR means Floor Space Ratio which is a measure of building density. It is the total floor space in a building divided by the site area). In the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District (DEOD), all developments above 1 FSR must include at least 20% social housing (units or floor area). As discussed in Chapter 10, the zoning in the DEOD, Hastings Corridor and Thornton Park should be amended to encourage more social housing.

New Social Housing Units in the Downtown Eastside 1998 - 2003				
Name	Address	Units	Completion	Sub-Area
Bruce Erickson Place	380 Main	35	1998	DEOD
Cordova House	368 E. Cordova	66	1998	DEOD
St. James Place	340 E. Cordova	27	1999	DEOD
Sunrise Hotel	101 E. Hastings	52	1999	DEOD
Washington Hotel	177 E. Hastings	84	1999	DEOD
The Oasis	40 E. Hastings	84	2000	DEOD
New Portland Hotel	20 W. Hastings	86	2000	Victory Square
J.C. Leman Building	27 W. Pender	98	2000	Victory Square
Regal Place Hotel	146 W. Hastings	40	2000	Victory Square
Tamura (New World)	396 Powell	101	2001	DEOD
Bridget Moran Place	668 Powell	61	2001	DEOD
Bridge Housing	100 E. Cordova	48	2001	Gastown
Somerville Place	377 Powell	31	2002	DEOD
Lore Krill Co-op	239 E. Georgia	97	2002	Chinatown
Lore Krill Co-op	65 W. Cordova	106	2002	Gastown

Maurice McElrea Place	361 Heatley	81	2002	DEOD
YWCA Crabtree Corner	533 E. Hastings	12	2003	DEOD
Total Units		1,109		

Supportive Housing

Supports funded by governments and non-profits help provide stability and independence to those living in social housing, SROs or in private housing. Neighbourhood services provide support to all residents of the area. Others are integrated into existing or purpose-built housing projects and provide a range of services to the buildings' residents, including meal preparation, personal care and lifeskills training. Under the Zoning By-law, supportive housing is considered a residential use.

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) is placing more emphasis on supportive housing rather than facilities or more intensive housing as the model to house people who need a degree of support to live stable lives, particularly those with mental disabilities and multiple disorders. Maximizing independence is a priority and supportive housing can better meet the needs of more people who do not need intensive forms of care such as SNRFs. VCH has a mandate to build supportive housing in the Downtown Eastside to serve local residents while also developing projects elsewhere in the city and, with the Fraser Health Authority, the region. The City needs to work with Coastal Health and BC Housing to identify priorities for projects and funding.

Social Housing for Particular Groups

The characteristics of the people living in the area are varied. This section addresses the needs of specific groups: seniors, families with children, artists, young people, aboriginal people, women and students. For additional discussion for housing for those requiring institutional levels of support, see the chapter on **SNRFs**.

Mentally Ill/Drug Addicted

Since the 1980s, the proportion of mentally ill and/or drug addicted residents in the Downtown Eastside has increased substantially. While precise numbers are hard to determine, it is estimated that one in five suffer from mental illness and one in three have drug addictions. It is not uncommon for residents to be both mentally ill and drug addicted, or 'dual-diagnosed.' The result is disorder on the streets and increased levels of crime relating to the drug trade. Many of those with mental illness and/or drug addictions live in private SROs as their behaviours are not generally tolerated in traditional social housing, yet private SROs do not have the capacity or resources to house these people properly.

There needs to be an appropriate amount of supportive housing in the Downtown Eastside to meet the needs of local residents facing mental illness and addictions. Importantly, there must also be supportive housing projects outside of the Downtown

Eastside so that such problems are not concentrated in the area and that it does not become 'Riverview West.'

Seniors

Statistics show that the population of the Downtown Eastside is an older population. In 2001, 32% of those living in the area were over 55 years of age. For the City as a whole, this figure is 22%. The population is not only older, but will continue to be older. Data presented in Section 2 (***Portrait of the People in the Downtown Eastside***) show that since 1991, there is an increased proportion of the population in older age cohorts. The Downtown Core Housing Project (2000) also showed that 45% of the SRO residents were over 45 years of age and 15% were over 55.

The majority of seniors in the area live independently, in private residences, SROs or in social housing. 40% (1,958) of the area's social housing units are targeted to seniors (seniors are defined in different ways, depending on the funding program).

As people age, they are more likely to require more care, either through home visits providing help or through on-site support and specialized facilities. Due to a higher number of people with disabilities and higher incidence of drug and alcohol addiction in the Downtown Eastside, older residents are likely to need supports earlier in life than elsewhere in the city.

Until recently, housing providing care and supports for seniors was defined in the Zoning By-law as an institutional use, a *Special Needs Residential Facility (SNRF) – Congregate Housing*. Because the development of all types of SNRFs was restricted in the DEOD and the Historic Areas, supportive housing for seniors was limited to a very small part of the Downtown Eastside. The By-law has been changed so that seniors supported housing is now a residential use (defined as *Seniors Supportive or Assisted Housing*). The result of this change to the By-law is that this use is now permitted in Victory Square, Strathcona, Gastown, Chinatown and the DEOD. It was previously limited to Victory Square and Strathcona. Facilities that are more intensive, offering professional nursing care, and institutional in nature will continue to be SNRFs.

Two developments offering supported housing for seniors have been built in the area in the last five years: the Chinese Mennonite Home (E. Pender – Strathcona – 66 beds) and the SUCCESS Seniors Care Home (Chinatown – 98 beds), with a total of 164 beds. These, along with the Villa Cathay Care Home (Strathcona - 188 beds) are defined as SNRFs. These will remain as SNRFs, their approved use, yet new projects with a similar program to the Chinese Mennonite Home could be now defined as *Seniors Supportive or Assisted Housing* (Success would likely still be a SNRF). The Chinese Mennonite Home on Dunlevy Avenue in Strathcona is a residential facility with an additional 32 units for seniors.

The relaxation of regulations on this form of housing should result in the construction of new developments under the Province's Independent Living BC program which provides subsidized housing with support services for low- and modest income seniors.

The City should continue to encourage the construction of seniors housing, whether independent, supported, or care in the Downtown Eastside to meet the needs of the population as it ages, enabling seniors to remain in their community as they age.

Women

Another group that has been identified with particular housing needs is women. According to the 2001 Census, 38% of the population in the Downtown Eastside is female and 19% of all families are headed by a single female parent.

While women have higher median incomes than men in the Downtown Eastside, data suggest lower-income women earn less. Women living in SROs earn an average of \$21 less per month than men in SROs (\$639 vs. \$640), therefore making it more difficult to find affordable housing. Further, women report greater difficulty accessing cooking facilities than men¹⁸.

According to the 2005 Homeless Count, 23% of the street homeless in the region are female. This population shows high rates of addictions, medical conditions, mental illness and physical disabilities. Transition houses and supportive housing can help provide stability and security for women moving from homelessness to long-term secure housing.

There are three social housing projects in the Downtown Eastside specifically for women:

- Mavis McMullen, 430 E. Cordova: 34 units (for women over 45 and women with children)
- Bridge Housing, 100 E. Cordova: 48 units (all singles)
- Crabtree Corner, 533 E. Hastings: 12 units (transitional housing for pregnant women and new mothers)

These 94 units account for 2% of the total social housing stock in the Plan area. An increased amount of social housing and transitional housing should be targeted to meeting the needs of women living in the area, particularly those at risk of homelessness, those with addictions and/or mental illness, and those working in the sex trade. This housing should be provided both inside Downtown Eastside and elsewhere in the city.

Families

In the Downtown Eastside, family housing is provided in market housing, mainly in Strathcona, and in social housing mainly in Downtown-Eastside/Oppenheimer and

¹⁸ A Social Profile and Assessment of the Social and Health Needs of Low-income Residents in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. 2004. City of Vancouver Social Planning.

Strathcona sub-areas. According to the 2001 Census, 62% of the 1,745 families in the area live in Strathcona, 17% live in the DEOD, and 10% live in Gastown. In 2002, the Lore Krill Co-op on Cordova Street in Gastown and Georgia Street in Chinatown added 52 units of family-oriented social housing.

One issue for new social housing has been how much housing should be targeted for singles and how much for families. Social housing in the area has a higher proportion of children than the area's population as a whole. There are fewer families on social housing waiting lists than singles, and the City's Tenant Assistance Group can usually find social housing for families in the study area. Elsewhere in the city, however, it is proving increasingly difficult to find available social housing for families.

In the public discussions, people saw a need for continuing to build social housing for a variety of groups, but the majority felt that greater priority should be placed on singles. This is consistent with the objectives of replacing the SROs with better quality accommodation and focusing on housing existing residents. Social housing for families, however, should continue to be supported where opportunities arise, for instance in the case of the Woodward's redevelopment which will include 75 units of family social housing.

Youth

15% of the population of the Plan area is under 25, according to the 2001 Census, and most live in families. 64% of the area's youth live in Strathcona. It is estimated that approximately 6% of SRO residents are less than 25.

A number of young people are engaged in street activity in the Downtown Eastside. Many live in hotels, and the recommendations in the chapter on SROs to improve the maintenance and management of hotels will address some of their concerns. Only a limited amount of social housing (about 10 projects out of 75) is available for young people under 45 in the area because earlier housing programs focused mainly on seniors and families. One project targeted specifically for youth has been built – Bantleman Court – 15 units. It is targeted toward youth who wish to change their street-oriented lifestyle. Covenant House at 326 E. Pender is a special needs residential facility (SNRF) targeted to street-involved youth willing to participate in their "Rites of Passage" program. It has 44 beds and houses people 45 years and under. It was initially intended as a project for youth who could live independently, but supports were added to create a stable environment and lifestyle for its tenants. It therefore was reclassified as a SNRF.

The characteristics and housing needs of the youth are diverse. While the emphasis should be placed on creating social housing projects for youth outside of the Downtown Eastside, housing with fewer barriers for youth already in the area should be provided.

First Nations

The area is home to many First Nations people. In the 2001 Census, 9% of the population identified themselves as Aboriginal origin. The 2000 Downtown Core Housing Project found that approximately 15% of SRO residents were First Nations. Aboriginal people are over-represented in the Downtown Eastside and in the injection drug user community, and have been found to be more likely to be infected with HIV and Hepatitis C than others in the drug-using population¹⁹.

34% of the street homeless in the region are Aboriginal, according to the 2005 Homeless Count²⁰.

Currently the area has one social housing project targeted to First Nations, the J.C. Leman Building at 27 West Pender containing 98 apartments and sponsored by Vancouver Native Housing Society, with support provided to the residents by the Vancouver Native Health Society. This is 2% of the total low-income social housing stock. There needs to be more Aboriginal-targeted and/or run SRO replacement projects to better reflect the proportion of the population which is of Aboriginal origin.

Artists

There are currently 245 artist live-work units in six buildings in the Downtown Eastside. 190 units are in the Industrial area, 43 are in Strathcona and 12 are in Gastown. The majority of these are market units, but a number have been secured as social housing.

Artist Live-work Studios		
Area	Buildings	Units
Industrial	4	190
Strathcona	1	43
Gastown	1	12

Artists, many of whom are low-income, have difficulty finding affordable places to live and work. One innovative project for artists is in the Industrial area. The Edge, at 275 Alexander, contains 150 artist live-work studios. Through the rezoning agreement the City acquired 30 units which are leased to a co-op and targeted to low- and moderate income artists, renting for either \$325 or \$575 per month.

Many artists are living in illegal accommodation, particularly in the Victory Square area, where there are about 60-75 units. The artists are predominately young and male. If the accommodation is legalized or if revitalization occurs, rents may increase and many of the artists may be displaced.

¹⁹ Vancouver Drug Use Epidemiology, July 2003. Vancouver Site Report for the Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use.

²⁰ Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC). 2005.

POLICIES/ACTIONS

5.1 Encourage the Provincial Government and the Federal Government to re-initiate their programs for the construction and operation of social housing targeted to low-income urban singles for the Downtown Eastside, other areas in the city, and throughout the province, and to commit additional funds for singles housing in the region and province.

5.2 Re-establish the City/Province partnership to enable at least one new social housing project, or a minimum of 100 units, per year to be developed in this area.

5.3 The City should purchase at least one site a year for the development of new social housing and consider making the sites available to the Province or Federal Government for 60 year leases at a nominal pre-paid rent.

5.4 Facilitate access to social housing for existing residents by:

- Giving priority to existing residents for new social housing on City-owned land by including this requirement in the lease arrangements between the City and the non-profit society. The City should recommend that BC Housing develop a similar requirement for social housing projects on non-City land.
- Working with the non-profit societies and the Province to ensure that existing residents are given priority in existing social housing. This could be done, for example, by creating and sharing of a community registry for Downtown Eastside housing, and by creating a local housing office overseen by a collective of non-profits.
- Working with the Province to provide funding to enable more “hard-to-house” people to maintain their tenancies by increasing training for housing staff to deal with problem behaviours and/or increasing supports provided by community agencies in this area and elsewhere in the city and region.

5.5 Seek support from the Greater Vancouver Regional District, Union of British Columbia Municipalities, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (e.g., National Housing Policy Options Team), business and community organizations, as well as national, and provincial housing organizations, in urging the Federal and Provincial Governments to return to a social housing program focused on local priorities including supportive housing for the mentally ill and drug addicted, and housing for low-income singles.

5.6 Consider increased funding from the Capital Plan for housing and prioritize low-income urban singles projects both in this area and elsewhere in the city.

5.7 Initiate a low-income singles social housing project within two years in the city but outside the area, and one per year thereafter.

5.8 Enhance the existing registry for social housing and link it to the local list for the Downtown Eastside discussed in 5.4.

5.9 Support building 90% of future social housing projects for singles and 10% for families in the Downtown Eastside to reflect the area population and the role of the Downtown Eastside in the city, and to achieve 1-for-1 replacement of SROs.

5.10 Encourage the Provincial Government to provide dedicated and stable funding for services to support individuals and families in at least 3,200 additional social housing and rent supplement units city-wide. These services should be used to support people who are homeless, (including chronically homeless), and people with mental health issues, addictions, HIV/AIDS, brain/head injuries, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder, or multiple challenges, in permanent housing.

5.11 Work with the Ministry of Health and the Coastal Health Authority to identify what proportion of these supportive housing units should be in the Downtown Eastside to provide stability to local residents with addictions, physical disabilities and/or mental health disorders.

5.12 Encourage the Provincial Government to provide a range in type and intensity of supports to meet the diversity of needs of local residents in the Downtown Eastside. A proportion should be the intensive ACT (assertive community treatment) approach to move homeless persons from the streets and shelters into permanent housing with appropriate supports (see the draft **Homeless Action Plan**).

5.13 Encourage the creation of additional supportive housing projects outside the Downtown Eastside targeted to people with addictions, physical disabilities and/or mental health disorders who would likely live in the Plan area.

5.14 Create more opportunities for the development of supported housing in partnership with senior governments (e.g. acquire sites, provide reduced cost or free land, raise money through the capital plan, ensure zoning is compatible, help address NIMBY issues, and show leadership).

5.15 Ensure that various forms of housing are built to meet the needs of First Nations people and women living in the Downtown Eastside.

5.16 Locate social housing for youth mainly outside the area, with some limited housing within the Downtown Eastside targeted to youth in the area. Work with the Ministry of Human Resources to encourage appropriate forms of housing for underage youth (16-19 years) outside the Downtown Eastside and discourage youth in difficulty from coming into the area.

6. MARKET HOUSING

FACTS

- There are currently 1,300 units of owner-occupied market housing in the Downtown Eastside. These include condominiums, live-work units, and ground-oriented single family dwellings and duplexes.
- There are 800 units of market rental housing which are in unstratified buildings, privately rented houses, live-work units or apartments, or which rent at market rates in social housing projects.
- While SROs are technically market housing (the large majority are privately owned) they are discussed separately in Chapter 4 because of their unique character and the role they play in the Downtown Eastside and the city.
- 41 units of market housing were built per year between 1998 and 2003. 117 units of market housing were built per year between 1993 and 1998.
- As of July 2004, there were over 600 market units under construction or in the development process over 8 sites. 556 were condo units.
- There were 305 existing live-work units and 118 live-work units under construction.

EXISTING POLICY

- Market housing is permitted throughout the area, but restricted in the industrial areas where only artist live-work is permitted and then to a maximum of 1 FSR in renovated buildings.
- In the Downtown-Eastside Oppenheimer District (DEOD), market housing, including live-work, is limited by the requirement that all development above 1 FSR have 20% of its units or floor area as social housing.
- It is proposed that Commercial Live-work be permitted in Victory Square, Gastown, Chinatown and the Hastings Street portion of the DEOD. This issue will be discussed as a forthcoming report in Summer 2005.

DISCUSSION

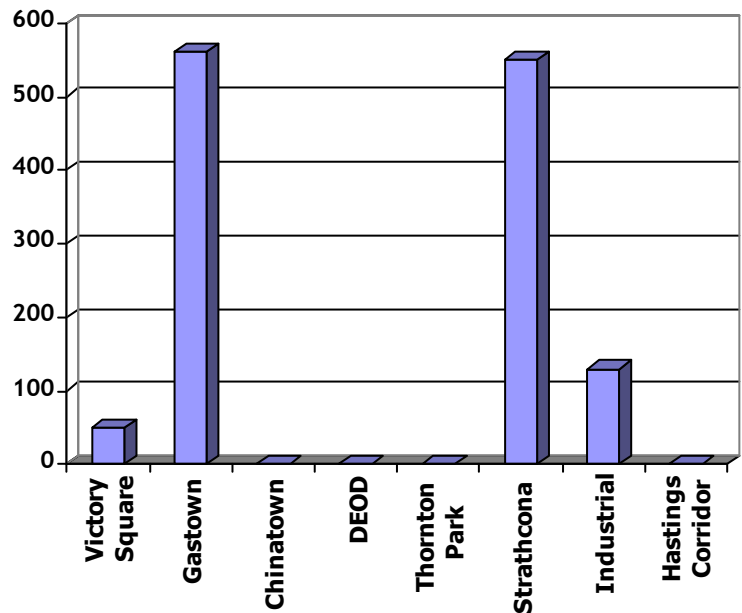
The area is becoming increasingly attractive for market housing development with 900 new units built since 1989. There are currently an additional 616 units being developed in Victory Square (160), Gastown (118), Chinatown (279), and Thornton Park (59).

Strathcona has had an important history as a neighbourhood of affordable owner-occupied and rental housing. Recent investment in the area has helped revitalize the area, but at the same time has caused housing prices to rise substantially and changing Strathcona's role in the Downtown Eastside and the city.

The success of integrating market development into what has traditionally been an almost entirely low-income rental neighbourhood depends, in large part, on maintaining or replacing the stock of low-income housing. This plan addresses low-income housing policies in the chapters on SROs, Social Housing, and Smaller Suites, as well as in the discussion on each sub-area. The vision for this plan is to maintain existing levels of low-income housing while encouraging market housing, with an emphasis on rental units, both apartments and live-work.

Of the existing owner-occupied market units, the majority are in Strathcona (550 units, or 42%) and Gastown (520 units, or 43%). Strathcona's market stock is primarily ground-oriented single-family houses and duplexes, while Gastown is characterized by loft-style condos and live-work units. In 1998, Over 80% of all the new units (400 of 500 units) in the area were in eight buildings in Gastown. While additional units have been built in Gastown, there have been increases in Victory Square and the Industrial area (live-work only), and for the first time, there is currently construction of new market units in Chinatown and Thornton Park.

Owner-Occupied Units, 2003



More housing near the downtown core is consistent with City and Regional policies to create liveable, vibrant, less-car dependent neighbourhoods. The market demand will continue to grow, encouraged by nearby residential and commercial development in False Creek North, Downtown South, International Village, City Gate, and the False Creek Flats. In False Creek North, International Village and City Gate, there will be over 17,000 apartments and townhouses at build-out, around 15% of which will be non-market. The last few empty sites in these areas are either being developed or are in the development planning process. When complete, development pressure will likely shift eastwards into the Downtown Eastside, where properties values are low compared with the downtown core.

Market housing can take different forms. It can be owner-occupied or privately-owned and rented single family homes, duplexes or condominiums. It can also be purpose-built rental housing, with or without rent restrictions. Live-work units can also be owner-occupied, privately rented or purpose-built rental. The intent of this plan is to support a variety of forms of market housing in the Downtown Eastside. Heritage incentives will encourage the rehabilitation of heritage buildings for market projects and additional incentives are proposed to facilitate the creation of market rental housing. A spectrum of market housing types (e.g., market rental, live-work and condominiums) is a key component of the vision for this area.

The Heritage Incentive Program

In June, 2003, a five year program was approved to support the rehabilitation of heritage buildings in Gastown and Chinatown. This program was subsequently applied to Hastings Street between Cambie and Heatley and in Victory Square.

The Heritage Incentive Program provides a series of incentives to owners of heritage buildings to assist in restoration by helping to pay for the shortfall costs and to compensate the owners for maintaining the area's low scale and "sawtooth" development pattern. These incentives include:

- Façade grants up to \$50,000, cost shared 50/50 with the City
- Property tax exemption for up to ten years, and
- Transferable bonus density and residual density for smaller buildings.

Each incentive package must receive Council approval, and is available to private and non-profit property owners. Buildings that have received approval are: 24-38 Water Street, 5 West Pender and 55 East Cordova. More are in the application process.

Condominiums

In terms of market units, the demand in the Downtown Eastside will be for loft-style housing in heritage buildings and medium-rise condominiums. Renovating heritage buildings into market residential units has been made more viable since the introduction of the **Heritage Incentive Program**, and encouraging such renovation will directly assist the revitalization of the area without competing for land better suited for social housing projects. Market housing in the area will be attractive to people looking for an affordable alternative to what is available in the nearby major projects, which offer better views and a higher level of amenities.

Forecasting Future Demand for Market Condo Housing

In 2003, the City retained PriceWaterhouseCoopers to provide short- and long-term forecasts for new market-oriented condo developments in the Downtown Eastside. The consultant used a methodology based on population growth and the historical ratio of demand in the Plan area compared with the Downtown/West End of Vancouver. It was concluded that as development opportunities decrease elsewhere (as the Downtown reaches 'build-out'), condo starts could increase from the current average of just less than 80 per year (since 1991) to 100-120 units per year.

Most market development will occur in Gastown, Chinatown and Victory Square. The City has introduced the Heritage Incentive Program to Gastown, Chinatown and parts of Victory Square that will encourage the renovation and upgrading of heritage buildings, some of which are likely to become market condos, live-work units, or rental properties. The Koret Lofts at 55 E. Cordova is a live-work development that took advantage of the Heritage Revitalization Program to engage in heritage restoration and upgrading.

The City is also engaging in a strategy to encourage market housing in Chinatown. This is further discussed in the "Sub-Areas: Chinatown" chapter.

Demand for market housing and housing prices are rising. In 1997, sales prices in the newly-completed Van Horne and Carrall Station developments ranged from \$70,000 to \$225,000, and these units did not sell quickly and were ultimately sold at reduced prices. In 2003, the 255 units in The Taylor, at 550 Taylor Street in Chinatown, sold out within a short period at much higher prices. The Left Bank condo development, at 919 Main, is currently selling units ranging from \$155,000 to \$375,000 (the Left Bank is the first condo development in the Thornton Park sub-area).

There are a number of City initiatives in the Downtown Eastside which should improve conditions in the area and make it more attractive for market housing. These include the Framework for Action (Four Pillars) addiction strategy, the Economic Revitalization Strategy, the Heritage Incentive Program, and improvements to the public realm, such as the Carrall Greenway.

Market Rental

Increasing the number of market rental units in the Downtown Eastside is an objective of this plan. As regional growth continues, housing costs will increase across the city and affordable rental units are becoming more scarce. Low- and middle-income earners whose incomes have not kept pace with the inflation of housing costs cannot easily afford home ownership or market rents are therefore a housing priority. In the Downtown Eastside, increasing the number of self-contained rental units will help to create a more even income spectrum, providing opportunities for those who are not able to afford condominium units and do not qualify for social housing. There is concern that the creation of condos on one hand and social housing for low-income singles now living

in the area on the other can lead to polarization of the population. Market rental housing would expand opportunities for the middle tier of income levels in the area as will mixed-income social housing. Rental housing can provide opportunities for those who find jobs through employment programs and move off social assistance yet want to remain living in the Downtown Eastside.

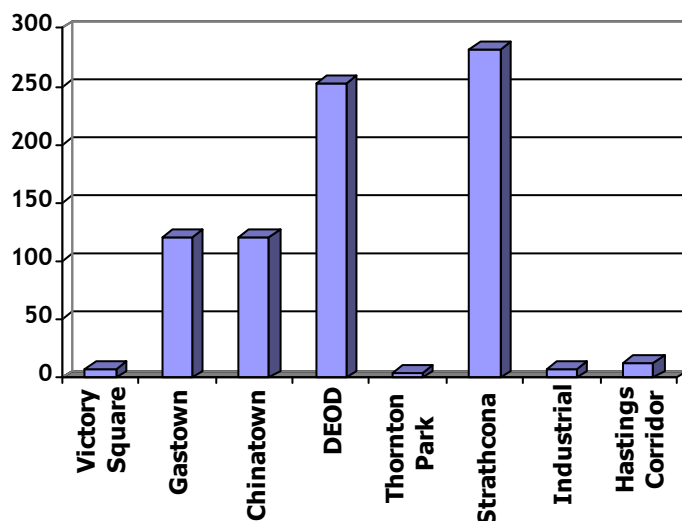
According to City statistics and data from the 2001 Census, there are about 800 units of self-contained market rental currently in the area (with rents from \$450-\$700 per month). In 1998, there were approximately 700 rental units. Despite the loss of some rental units in Strathcona, this net gain is a result of new rental units within non-market housing developments such as the Lore Krill Co-ops, units rented in condo developments, and purpose-built rental developments, such as The Malkin Building at 55 Water Street. There are also rental units located in the houses and duplexes in Strathcona.

Over the next three years rental will grow to between 1,000 and 1,100 units, mainly in the new market developments. Most will be condominiums that are purchased as investments and rented out. It is estimated that about 40% of the condos built in the area are likely to be rented, which is similar to the rate for the City as a whole. This will provide housing for moderate-income wage earners

but does not provide the long-term security that secured rental housing would provide.

Some have suggested that bonusing or public funds be used to provide moderate rental housing. Historically, the market created moderate rental housing without subsidy, yet the current strength of the real estate market is encouraging developers to build owner-occupied condos. This plan proposes that the City offer some relaxations for new developments, in areas such as parking, unit size, height and density, in exchange for a Housing Agreement that guarantees the units are rental. The bigger challenge, however, is to provide the housing that is affordable to low-income residents of the area's SROs and requires subsidies to be viable. This is particularly challenging in the context of limited public dollars.

Market Rental Units, 2003



Live-work

Live-work allows for both living and working in the same unit, and the owner can have one or both uses in the unit at one time, and move between uses without a development permit. Since 1993, over 300 units of live-work have been built in the Downtown Eastside. The majority of them are restricted to artists and located in the Industrial area where they are less problematic in terms of adjacency to residential uses. There is one Commercial Live-work project under construction – the Koret Lofts in Gastown, with 118 units.

The City is currently evaluating amendments to the zoning in Victory Square, Chinatown, Gastown, and on Hastings Street in the DEOD to encourage Commercial Live-work developments. Commercial live-work would allow the flexible use of a unit for housing and small business or social enterprise, and any combination of these uses. Allowing commercial live-work opportunities is expected to support revitalization efforts by providing more choices for existing and new residents who want to start their own businesses. It also supports the City's objectives for heritage conservation and sustainable urban development. As proposed, Commercial Live-work would be treated as a residential use, so that it would not allow more market housing than is currently permitted under current zoning. In the DEOD, for example, a Live-work project greater than 1.0 FSR will have to provide the 20% social housing required under the current zoning.

A public process to discuss this initiative is taking place concurrently with this Housing Plan, and all by-law changes relating to live-work in the area will be subject to the policy directions identified in this Plan.

Strata-Titled SROs

There has been some discussion about the possibility of strata-titling SROs. The intention would be to provide low-income individuals the opportunity to gain equity and have stewardship over their housing. The City has done some analysis, however, and there are several challenges facing this proposal. A significant hurdle is cost. The City has firsthand experience with purchasing and renovating SROs, and the cost of purchasing a room in an SRO that conforms with the Building Code is beyond the means of people on social assistance, particularly when maintenance, taxes and utilities are factored in.

The Granville Hotel, for example, was purchased by the City and renovated so that the units were self-contained and the building met current life safety requirements (although it does not fully comply with today's building code as it applies to new buildings). The estimated cost of each room, including land, building and renovations, is \$70,000. Given current interest rates, the mortgage alone would be over \$500 per month, and maintenance fees, utilities and management fees would have to be added. The current shelter allowance under social assistance, however, is \$325.

It is also an issue that people on social assistance are not able to acquire equity. If a proposal to strata-title SROs comes forward, the City will be willing to explore it. It is important, however, that the target population is the same as those who currently live in SROs. In all likelihood, an SRA permit would be required as well.

Purpose-built and renovated small rental units, around 275 to 400 square feet are discussed in the “Small Suites” chapter.

Student Housing

There has been some concern that students may seek accommodation in the area and put further pressure on the SRO stock by outbidding low-income residents. The Vancouver Film School, Vancouver Community College and the UBC Architecture Studio are all in Victory Square, while the British Columbia Institute of Technology, Simon Fraser University Harbour Centre and numerous English as a second language schools are just west of the area in the Central Business District. Further, it is confirmed that Simon Fraser University’s performing arts program will locate in the redeveloped Woodward’s building. Specific housing for students may be required because of the increase in education institutions within the Downtown Eastside and nearby.

	Current Units	Possible Units
	2003	2014
Owner Occupied	1,300	2,600
Moderate Rental	800	1,400
TOTAL	2,100	3,900

ACTIONS

6.1 Focus market residential development in heritage buildings rather than on vacant sites by encouraging developers to use incentives such as the Heritage Incentive Program.

6.2 Encourage the development of market rental units using incentives such as parking, units size, density and height relaxations, and secure their rental status through Housing Agreements for a minimum of 20 years.

6.3 Evaluate zoning amendments to permit Commercial Live-work in Victory Square, Gastown, Chinatown and the Hastings Street portion of the DEOD, and ensure that these amendments do not compromise the ability to achieve 1-for-1 replacement of SROs with social housing for low-income singles.

6.4 Consider encouraging purpose-built student housing, particularly if additional educational institutions are established or expanded in or near the area. This could

prevent competition from students over the existing stock of SROs or other affordable housing in the area.

7. SMALLER SUITES

FACTS

- It would take more than 50 years to replace all existing SROs with traditional social housing, if social housing continued to be built at the 1998-2003 rate of 94 units per year. Currently there is no stable senior government funding for new social housing for low-income SRO residents.
- Most traditional social housing units for singles in the Downtown Eastside are 400-500 square feet in size, including bathroom and kitchen, and were developed for singles 55 years of age and older.
- Most SROs have shared bathrooms and are about 100 square feet, with some as small as 80 square feet. Most are privately owned and operated, with rents between \$325 and \$375 per month. The average SRO rent in the Downtown Eastside in 2003 was \$345. Rents are not controlled.
- Sleeping units contain a bed but no cooking facilities or private bathroom.
- Housekeeping units contain a bed and cooking facilities but no private bathroom.

EXISTING POLICY

- The Zoning and Development By-law currently sets the minimum size for self-contained dwelling units at 400 square feet, relaxable to 320 square feet. In January 1993, Council supported the concept of smaller apartments city-wide and asked for design guidelines. The discussion was in relation to changing the minimum size to about 275 square feet. No further Council action has been taken, pending the outcome of this draft plan.
- There are 9 buildings with fully self-contained dwelling units (living/sleeping area, kitchen and 3-piece bathroom) between 275 and 320 square feet within the downtown.
 - Within the plan area:
 - **Maria Gomez** (590 Alexander), with suites about 275 square feet
 - **Covenant House** (326 W. Pender), with suites about 310 square feet
 - **New Portland** (20 W. Hastings), with suites about 275-340 square feet
 - **Central Residence** (42 E. Cordova), with suites about 275 square feet
 - Outside the area there are **Jubilee House**, 508 Helmcken; **Sunset Towers**, 1655 Barclay & 1650 Haro; **Nicholson Tower**, 1155 Nelson; and the **Concert (VLC)** rental building at 600 Drake.

- About twenty percent of the existing social housing units in the area are sleeping or housekeeping rooms (see definitions in Facts in the Summary) smaller than 275 square feet. Most were built during the 1970s and 1980s. Examples are:
 - Oppenheimer Lodge, 450 East Cordova, with 170 square feet units containing cooking facilities, toilet and hand basin, (147 units)
 - Roddan Lodge, 124 Dunlevy, with 200 square feet units with cooking facilities, shower and toilet, (156 units)
 - Veterans Manor, 320 Alexander, with 200 square feet units, containing toilet and hand basin, (134 units)
 - Hugh Bird Residence, 420 East Cordova, with 250 square feet sleeping rooms, (64 units)

DISCUSSION

Small suites are units that are between 320 and 400 square feet, and require special permission from the Director of Planning to construct. Smaller units may result from renovations of existing SRO hotels, such as the Granville Hotel and the Central Residence, but currently the minimum size for new construction is 320 square feet.

As part of the 1998 Housing Plan process, public consultation was carried out by the City and the Carnegie Action Project on micro-suites (180 to 275 square feet) and small suites. The majority of people preferred suites larger than 245 square feet. There was limited support for 180 square foot units and somewhat more for 245 square foot units.

The Community Directions Housing Plan from 2001 advocates a 320 square foot minimum, relaxable to 275 square foot. All projects less than 320 square feet would have to meet certain criteria, such as bathrooms and cooking facilities, amenity space, and non-profit ownership or operation.

Support for smaller suites comes from a desire to replace SROs with better quality housing while stretching available funds to provide better housing sooner for more people. If built by the private sector and secured by Housing Agreements, it is also a way to ensure that some of the housing is available with rents at about shelter allowance levels (\$325 per month). This is an advantage over the existing SROs which are not rent controlled. 75% of SRO units have rents higher than \$325 (in 1998, this figure was around 50%).

No single type of replacement housing will meet the needs of all people living in the SROs. Their characteristics vary considerably. Smaller units can work for people who live simple or solitary lives, those who do not have the skills or interest in anything more than simple meal preparation, students, and those who are in transition from job or family changes. Smaller units probably do not work for seniors, people with physical disabilities or those who want to socialize extensively in their home.

Small Suite Economics

Analysis shows that subsidies are needed to build any new low-income housing whether developed through social housing programs or the private sector. This is because the rents residents can afford (\$325-400/month) are not enough to cover the construction costs and operating expenses. The argument in support of building small suites is that they can deliver more units due to lower construction costs and can deliver more units per site (one-third to one-half more). To build a 320 square foot unit costs \$130,000; a traditional one-bedroom social housing unit costs \$160,000. The cost of buying and renovating SROs can range substantially depending on the size of the building, the degree of upgrading and the intended lifespan. SROs renovated into small self-contained units can range from \$70,000 to \$170,000 per unit, and are generally between 150 to 250 square feet.

The table below shows how many units of different sizes could be produced using the amount of subsidy that is needed to produce 100 units of traditional social housing.

Possible Units		
Type	Size (Square Feet)	Number
Traditional Social Housing	500	100
Small Suites	320	125
Renovated SROs	150-250	95-225

It is unlikely that there would be large production of smaller suites by the private sector in the near future because 100% market rental projects are not currently economically viable, as market rents are insufficient to cover mortgage and operating costs. Smaller suites for low-income people would require subsidies, as discussed above and in the section on Strata-titled SROs in the Market Housing chapter. It would help if shelter allowances were higher to pay higher rents. Higher shelter allowances could be targeted to buildings which are well managed and where there is an agreement to keep rents to the shelter allowance rate. SRO replacement buildings will have expected lifespans of 60-100 years, plus. To ensure that this stock can accommodate changes in need over the duration, it is important that they contain the basics of a full bathroom and a small kitchen.

Liveability

Long-term liveability is a major concern with smaller units. Residents and the social agencies serving them indicated that the following aspects are important: a private bathroom, a full-sized fridge, separate sinks (bathroom and kitchen), space for a table and for people to visit, and adequate amenity space in the building. Consistent with the perspective of many residents and community organizations, this draft Plan recommends that SRO replacement housing units should contain both private bathrooms and cooking facilities. A private bathroom is important for health reasons and basic privacy. A small kitchen allows the resident to prepare snacks and inexpensive meals.

Management

There are also questions about how many smaller units can be managed adequately within a single project. BC Housing staff have noted that concerns increase when there are more than about 100 units in a building under a single management structure. However, City-managed Roddan Lodge and Oppenheimer Lodges have 156 units and 147 units respectively. The Concert (VLC) project at 600 Drake has 191 units. The optimum size for a project can be determined with an understanding of the operating budget/staffing levels, the social environment, and past experience.

Future Small Suite Projects

Opposition to smaller units reflect concerns that they would be unliveable, especially for long-term housing. Also, there are concerns that they will become the standard for low-income housing and no more traditional-sized social housing will be built. This concern can be addressed by continuing to build traditional-sized social housing and adopting a policy that smaller units (320 to 400 square feet) would only comprise a portion of the SRO replacement stock. That portion should be around 30% and be reviewed as more experience is gained with small units.

The Zoning and Development By-law sets guidelines for the minimum suite size for new construction. The current minimum is 320 square feet. This Plan proposes that relaxations to 275 be considered if it is determined that this can help yield more replacement units and improve the economics of social housing or private sector projects. This plan recommends that a framework be established to review small suite proposals to ensure that certain criteria are met prior to approval of any relaxations below 320 square feet, and that a review of completed projects be undertaken to assess their strengths and weaknesses.

The City can use additional regulatory tools to facilitate the creation of small suites, particularly by the private sector. Parking requirements should be adjusted to appropriate levels for the housing program, and height and density relaxations can be considered if they improve project economics and affordability. Housing Agreements that ensure affordability can be used to secure affordable rents in exchange for any relaxations given by the City.

Finally, the City can adopt an advocacy role with other levels of government and through the Vancouver Agreement. For example, the City can advocate for an increase in the shelter allowance for those living in small suites meeting certain requirements, such as non-profit management or good management and maintenance, to improve the viability of developing and operating small suites.

ACTIONS

7.1 Gradually replace SROs with a range of better quality housing, including traditional-sized social housing, small suites and renovated SROs. (Small suites are under 400 square feet).

7.2 Amend by-laws to permit suite sizes to be relaxable to 275 square feet for new construction if the design and location of the unit provides satisfactory living accommodation, having regard for the type of occupancy proposed. Develop guidelines for reviewing proposals such as:

- a maximum of about 200 small units under a single management structure
- maximizing the number of units at shelter allowance levels
- assurances of good management e.g. non-profit management, good security and trained staff
- shelter allowance units secured by a housing agreement for a significant length of time
- linkages to supports such as home care and onsite house-keeping
- ample amenity space
- provision of basic furniture, with emphasis on built-ins and adequate fixtures and appliances

7.3 Following the small suite post occupancy evaluation, review if small suites should be about 30% of the SRO replacement stock.

7.4 Amend by-laws to ensure that new units contain bathrooms and cooking facilities.

7.5 Review the Parking By-law to ensure standards are appropriate for small suites targeted to low-income singles.

7.6 Recommend that the Provincial Government raise the shelter allowance for tenants living in new buildings with small suites that meet certain conditions. This would include a specific number of units renting at the shelter allowance rate, 24-hour security with trained staff, well managed and maintained buildings or those under non-profit management.

7.7 Consider grants or property tax relief for small suites secured by a Housing Agreement for developments accommodating low-income singles and couples.

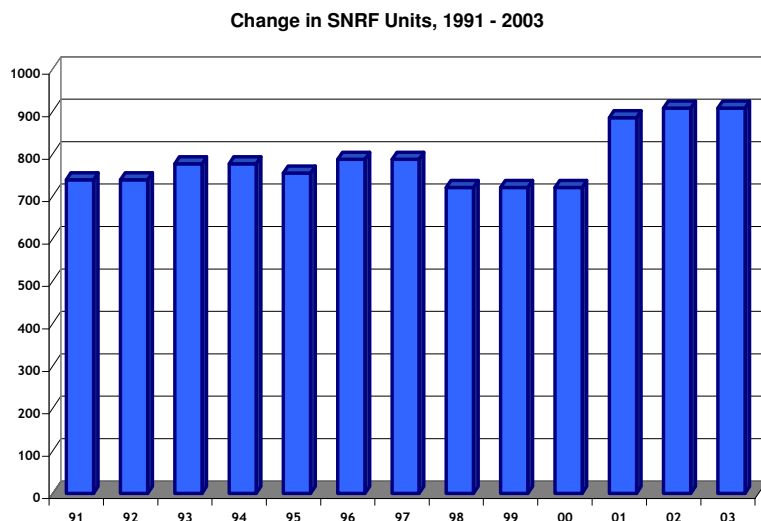
8. SPECIAL NEEDS RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

FACTS

- Special Needs Residential Facilities (SNRFs) are residential facilities for people who, by reason of illness, disability, age, an immediate crisis situation or other factors, are temporarily or permanently unable to live independently. SNRFs include facilities licensed under the Provincial Community Care Facilities Act for people who are unable to direct their own care. Provincially-licensed facilities include those providing “complex care” for seniors; facilities which provide professional care or treatment (e.g., delivery of medication) to people with mental illnesses, brain injuries, addictions, severe developmental disabilities, or are dying; and residential facilities which house minors in the care of the state. SNRFs also include some facilities which fall under other legislation (Federal Corrections facilities), and emergency shelters and transition houses of various types.

- In March 2003, there were 908 SNRF beds in 15 residential facilities in the Downtown Eastside.

- The size of SNRFs in the Downtown Eastside varies from 6 beds (May Gutteridge and Powell Place) to 122 beds (Central City Lodge).



- The 15 existing SNRFs in the Downtown Eastside are located as follows: Victory Square – 3, Gastown – 2, Chinatown – 1, DEOD – 4, Strathcona – 3, Industrial – 2.
- Some new projects for seniors that previously would have been defined as SNRFs would now be classified as Seniors Supportive or Assisted Housing, a residential use added to the Zoning and Development By-law in 2004. There are three existing projects in the area that function as Seniors Supportive and Assisted Housing.
- In March 2003, there were 4,800 SNRF beds in the rest of the city.

EXISTING POLICY

- There are 15 SNRFs (Special Needs Residential Facilities) throughout the area, many of which pre-date current zoning and guidelines. SNRFs are not currently permitted uses in Gastown (HA-2), Chinatown (HA-1 and HA-1A), Thornton Park (FC-1 and M-1), Hastings Corridor (M-1) or the Industrial area (M-2). Under the Zoning and Development By-law, emergency shelters may be defined as Social Service Centres rather than SNRFs.
- No increase in SNRFs is permitted in Downtown Eastside-Oppenheimer (DEOD). Council guidelines indicate that SNRFs should be 200 m (656 feet) apart in predominantly residential areas. This is about two blocks apart in the Downtown Eastside.
- Supportive housing projects, such as the New Portland and the Sunrise Hotel, are defined as residential uses, and are not subject to the same guidelines and restrictions as SNRFs. Supportive housing is intended for people who are able to live more independently but benefit from the stability provided by a certain degree of on-site support.
- Until recently, housing providing care and supports for seniors was defined in the Zoning By-law as an institutional use, a Special Needs Residential Facility (SNRF) – Congregate Housing, and was restricted to a very small part of the Downtown Eastside. The By-law has been changed so that seniors supported housing is now a residential use (defined as *Seniors Supportive or Assisted Housing*). Three projects (Villa Cathay Care Home and the two Chinese Mennonite projects) accounting for almost one-third of existing SNRF beds in the Downtown Eastside would likely fall under this new use definition if they were built today. The result of this change to the By-law is that this use is now permitted in Victory Square, Strathcona, Gastown, Chinatown and the DEOD. It was previously limited to Victory Square and Strathcona. Facilities that are more intensive, offering professional nursing care, and are institutional in nature will continue to be identified as SNRFs.
- Since 2001, temporary emergency shelter beds have been provided from November to April through Greater Vancouver's Cold Wet Weather Strategy. The funding for this program is primarily from the Federal Government's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), a three year program providing capital and other funding for services and shelter for the Homeless.
- The City is engaging in a review of SNRF definitions, criteria and guidelines. This review will better clarify the difference between SNRFs and supportive housing, and possibly create a new use category for shelters.

DISCUSSION

Many people with mental illness, addictions, or other issues live independently in SROs or in other kinds of housing. There are also people who live in supportive housing in social housing, private hotels or private housing; this is discussed in the **Social Housing** chapter. In other situations people who, for a variety of reasons, cannot direct their own care live in SNRFs where staff provide personal support, care and/or supervision. SNRFs can be differentiated from supportive housing by the intensity of care provided for residents and the degree of independence residents have.

The needs in the community are large. As discussed in Chapter 2: **Portrait of the People in the Downtown Eastside** and in the discussion of Supportive Housing in Chapter 5: **Social Housing**, a large number of residents face addiction and related illnesses, and mental health issues. The Vancouver Coast Health Authority has reported an increase in the number of people with multiple diagnoses - mental illness, drug/alcohol problems, brain injuries, HIV+/AIDS. It is estimated that 60-80% of those with mental health disorders also have addiction disorders. It is important to locate SNRFs within the Downtown Eastside to serve existing residents in their own community. It is better for the community if people receive the support they need, rather than go without and live without proper care, with behaviours that spill into the streets and public areas, impacting neighbours and the community.

SNRFs, offering care to people with disabilities, addictions and/or mental illness who cannot live independently are at one end of a spectrum of housing that can meet the needs of residents in the Downtown Eastside. The large majority of housing will be traditional social housing and market units, rental or owner occupied. Some social housing will be supplemented with supports, as discussed earlier, to provide stability for residents with moderate needs who, with some support, can live more independently. For those who face larger challenges, SNRFs provide a more appropriate residential model. Currently there is a moratorium in place in the DEOD against the development of additional SNRFs. This Plan recommends that this moratorium be lifted as SNRFs should be considered an appropriate response to certain housing needs and can provide needed care for people currently living in the area. It also recommends that SNRFs be added to the HA-1/1A and HA-2 zoning schedules as a conditional use.

It is important these SNRFs focus on local needs and not become regional in scope. With the Downtown Eastside now home to more mentally ill and drug addicted than the area can sustain over the long term, it is important that services be provided for those in the area now that need them, but that appropriate housing be built elsewhere for this population. The service provided in the Downtown Eastside should be mobile and temporary so that over the next couple of decades, the services can be relocated to support housing being developed in other communities. Otherwise, the Downtown Eastside is at risk of becoming a permanently institutionalized community.

The challenge is to find a balance between meeting the needs of people in the area and the possible negative consequences of over-concentration of housing for people with special needs. Providing care and support for the existing residents improves their lives

and can reduce neighbourhood impacts. The area, however cannot solve the problems of people with special needs from other parts of the city, region, province or country.

The Four Pillars

Some needs in the area are urgent. The rate of death from alcohol, drug use, HIV-related diseases and hepatitis C for residents in the Downtown Eastside is many times higher than the provincial average²¹. City and the Vancouver Coastal Health have identified, as a priority, treatment facilities for people who want to be free of their alcohol and drug habit. There is also a need for well-managed housing for people with substance abuse problems.

The Framework for Action identifies the Four Pillars strategy of prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement as the means to address substance abuse in Vancouver. SNRFs, shelters and supportive housing are essential to provide stability and treatment for people actively involved in problematic drug use and a key component of the prevention, harm reduction and treatment pillars.

A strong partnership between BC Housing, Coastal Health, the Ministry of Health, the City of Vancouver and Human Resources and Skills Development are fundamental for the provision of housing that responds to substance abuse.

Shelters and the Homeless Action Plan

Shelters are generally defined as SNRFs, although in some cases they are Social Services. As part of the review of SNRF definitions and guidelines recommended in this Plan, it is important to clarify when shelters are defined as which use. There are 6 shelters defined as SNRFs in the Plan area: The Lookout, The Haven, Union Gospel Mission, Harbour Light, The Crosswalk and Triage. Together they operate 189 beds.

There is currently insufficient shelter capacity in Vancouver to accommodate people who are homeless. For example, the Lookout Aid Society, which operates the Lookout Shelter at 346 Alexander, reported 6,000 turnaways in 2002/3. The **Homeless Action Plan**, however, suggests only a modest increase in the number of shelter beds, and instead recommends focusing resources on addressing the root causes of homelessness: inadequate income, inadequate housing, mental illness and addiction. In the short-term there needs to be some increase in the number of shelter beds for people living on the streets, but in the long term, the emphasis should be on legislative reform to social assistance, employment services, the development of supportive and transitional housing, and expanded health services. As a large proportion of the city's shelters are in the Downtown Eastside, it is recommended that the shorter-term expansion of shelter service be outside the area. To date, Lookout has opened two shelters outside of the area: one on Yukon at 5th Avenue, and one on the North Shore.

²¹ Death rate vs. city average (2001): alcohol – 7 times; drug use – 13 times; HIV/AIDS – 38 times; hepatitis C – 2 times. Source: CHASE Project Team, 2004.

Future SNRF and Shelter Projects

The Ministry of Health and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority is placing more emphasis on supportive housing, rather than SNRFs, as the model to house people with special needs, particularly those with mental disabilities and multiple disorders. As a consequence, there may be only a limited expansion of SNRFs with the focus on meeting the particular needs of existing residents. This plan recommends zoning amendments to the DEOD and HA areas to allow for the development of new SNRF projects for local residents if there is a determined need. SNRFs will be a conditional use, not an outright use.

Some elements of the SNRF definitions and guidelines should be reviewed, not for the Downtown Eastside alone, but as they apply city-wide. For instance, the distance guidelines, developed in 1983, focus on single-family areas and are not tailored to higher density, multi-use areas. It may be that as density goes up, the distance guideline should go down. New definitions should also differentiate between less intensive supportive housing projects and SNRFs. Further, as mentioned above, clarity is needed on when a shelter is a SNRF or a Social Service.

ACTIONS

8.1 Encourage the Provincial Government to provide housing, rent supplements, facilities and treatment for people in need of support, including those with special needs in other parts of the city, region and province so that they can be served in their home communities.

8.2 Initiate a review of city-wide SNRF zoning definitions and guidelines, including distance requirements (particularly for higher density areas) to ensure that the land use policies reflect community needs and objectives, particularly in the context of the Four Pillars drug strategy and the health initiatives of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and the Ministry of Health.

8.3 Recognizing that SNRFs are an important part of the housing continuum, remove the moratorium on SNRFs in the DEOD and add SNRFs as a conditional use in the HA-1, HA-1A and HA-2 zoning schedules.

8.4 Ensure that all SNRF projects in the Downtown Eastside are targeted to meeting the needs of local residents rather than attracting clients from elsewhere in the city and region.

8.5 Work with Vancouver Coastal Health to develop a supportive housing and special needs strategy for the Downtown Eastside.

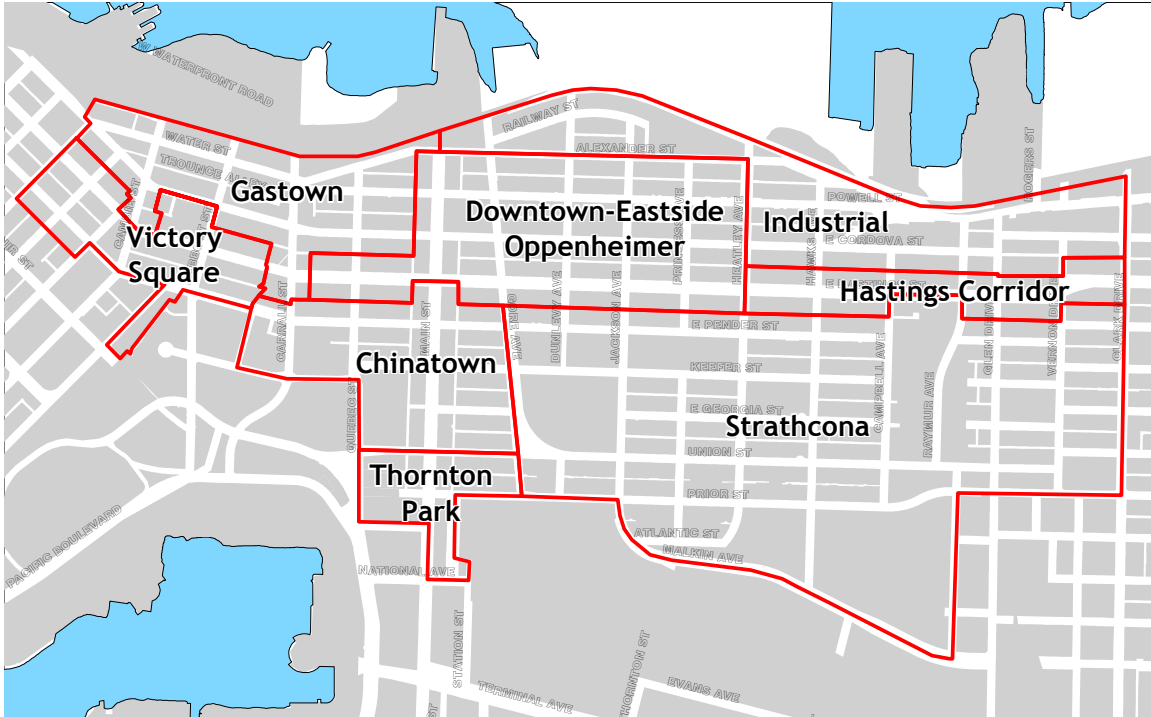
8.6 Increase shelter capacity outside of the Downtown Eastside with the intent of providing shelter for people who are homeless, while focusing resources on addressing

the root causes of homelessness, such as inadequate housing, income and services as recommended in the draft **Homeless Action Plan**. Any shelter expansion in the Downtown Eastside should be linked to housing and services, and targeted to underserved groups such as Aboriginals and others.

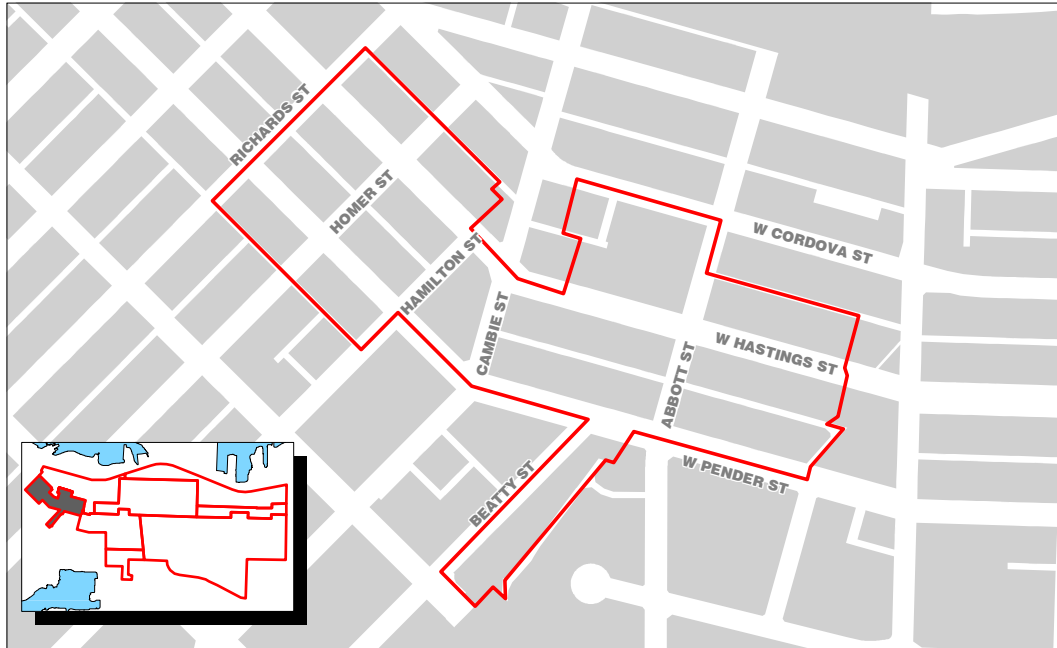
9. SUB-AREAS

For the purpose of this plan, the study area is divided into eight sub-areas which are based on planning and zoning districts. They are not intended to reflect neighbourhood boundaries which are perceived differently by the diverse communities that live and work in this part of the city.

Downtown Eastside – Sub Areas

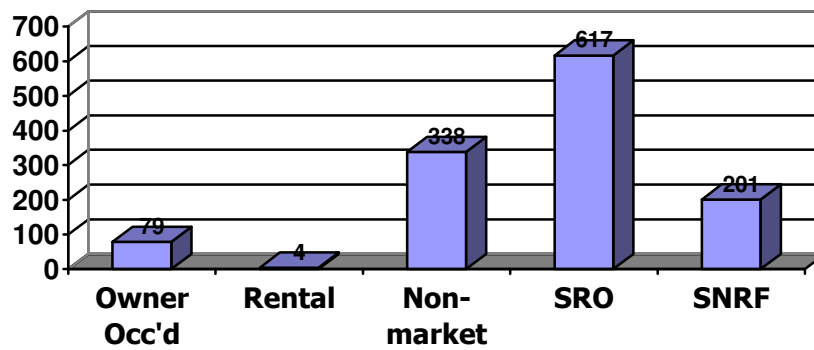


Sub Areas - Victory Square



FACTS

Victory Square Housing Mix, March 2003



	1998	2003
Owner-Occupied	85	79
Rental	38	4
Non-Market Housing	114	338
SRO	591	617
SNRF	122	201

- There are 3 condominium market projects in process:
 - 33 West Pender, 58 units
 - 522 Beatty, 38 units
 - 540 Beatty, 64 units
- 3 non-market housing projects have been completed since 1998:
 - New Portland Hotel, 20 West Hastings, 86 units for low-income singles
 - J.C. Leman Building, 27 West Pender, 96 units for low-income Aboriginal persons
 - Regal Place, 146 West Hastings, 40 units for low-income singles
- There is 1 non-market housing project in process:
 - Woodward's, 101 West Hastings, 200 units (125 for low-income singles)
- There are 15 SRO hotels and 18 buildings on the SRA Register²². 1 SRO is currently closed (Empress Rooms).
- There are 3 SNRF projects:
 - Central City Lodge, 415 West Pender, 122 bed care facility
 - Covenant House, 326 West Pender, 44 beds for street-involved youth
 - Crosswalk Shelter, 108 West Hastings, 35 bed shelter (likely to be closed)

EXISTING POLICY

- In December 1991, the Central Area Plan was adopted with the objective of ensuring "Victory Square's permitted density, height, and uses will help to retain existing heritage buildings and character rather than encourage major new office development."
- In March 1993, City Council asked that a Concept Plan be prepared for the Victory Square area. In 1995 a draft Concept Plan was issued, followed by public discussion. Housing issues were identified that affected a larger area. It was decided to initiate the Downtown Eastside Housing Plan and coordinate the revisions to the draft Victory Square Plan with this plan.

²² The SRA register includes not only SRO hotels, but also rooming houses and social housing with units less than 320 square feet. See Chapter 3 on SROs.

- When the Housing Plan was put on hold in 1998, so too was the Victory Square Plan. The Victory Square plan is being revised concurrently with this Plan. The Victory Square Plan identifies policies relating to the retention of levels of low-income housing in the area, heritage preservation and urban design.
- The Heritage Incentive Program has been approved for Hastings Street east of Cambie and is being proposed for the remainder of Victory Square. Economic analysis is underway to assess its effectiveness in saving heritage buildings and its impact on the low-income housing stock. The Program offers a series of incentives – property tax exemptions, façade grants, and bonus density – to encourage owners to upgrade buildings on the City’s Heritage Register.

DISCUSSION

Victory Square is a transition area between the Downtown Eastside and the downtown core, and this is evident in the mix of land uses – retail, social housing, SROs, condominiums, offices and educational institutions. Buildings are typically older – with many on the Heritage Register – and generally contain retail spaces on the ground floor and commercial or housing upstairs. There are a number of boarded-up storefronts, indicative of a more vibrant past. This is particularly evident east of Cambie Street where the closed former Woodward’s building has very negatively impacted the local economy. Although there has been little recent redevelopment, there has been an increase in arts-related and educational activities within upgraded buildings. Institutions like the Vancouver Film School, the Architectural Institute of BC, and various English as a second language schools have added to the presence established by Vancouver Community College and the nearby SFU and BCIT campuses. There has also been an increase in condo development on Beatty Street, where there are 79 existing units and 102 units being developed. There is one other condo development in process on West Pender across from International Village.

The Woodward’s Building

The former Woodward’s Department store sits at the corner of Abbott and Hastings. Once an important source of employment and goods and services for the community and the city, the store was closed in 1993. The derelict building has had a negative impact on the local economy and image of the area around it. Several proposals for the building have been proposed in the past, including a purely market condo development and a mixed social housing/market project, neither of which went forward.

It was purchased by the City from the Province in May 2003 after sitting vacant for a decade. Westbank Projects/Peterson Investment Group was selected by the City in September 2004 to redevelop the building. The project will contain a mix of residential, commercial and institutional uses, and the Province has committed to fund a minimum of 200 units of social housing either on-site or close by. Of these units, 125 will be targeted to core-need low-income singles as replacements for SRO units. The balance will be for families at core-need and low-end of market rents.

The draft Victory Square Concept Plan seeks to balance objectives of low-income and market housing, sensitive urban design, business revitalization, preservation of the area's heritage character, and encouraging arts and culture. The area is one of transition from the Central Business District, and the Plan seeks to encourage residential development by focusing on the area's scale, character and heritage buildings and emphasizing reuse and infill. The challenge is to find ways to meet both the low-income housing objectives and other objectives.

Height and density bonuses are recommended to encourage the development of new social housing in the area. This will help improve the economics of social housing projects and encourage the redevelopment of vacant or underdeveloped sites for this use. Market housing development will be ideally located in rehabilitated heritage buildings. Such projects will benefit from the financial incentives offered through the City's **Heritage Incentive Program**, which offers property tax exemption, bonus density and façade grants (see Chapter 6: Market Housing), and capitalize on the attractiveness and marketability of loft-style condos.

Live-work style units have long been a part of Victory Square, although historically many of them have been illegal. Zoning amendments to support commercial live-work in Victory Square and elsewhere are discussed in the chapter on Market Housing and are considered appropriate to the area. Such a use reflects the mixed-use character of Victory Square and the transition from the Central Business District to more intensively residential areas further east. It is also recommended that the City facilitate the development of 25 rent-secured artist live-work units to replace informal studios currently in the area.

Careful monitoring of development in the area is important and is recommended as a broad integral part of the implementation of the Housing Plan.

The Housing Plan policy recommendations identified below mirror those contained in the draft Victory Square Concept Plan.

ACTIONS

9.1.1 As a minimum, replace 620 existing SRO units (December 2003) on a 1-for-1 basis with non-market housing for low-income singles.

9.1.2 Provide height and density relaxations for the creation of non-market housing. The current maximum FSR for residential is 3.0. This should be relaxed to a maximum of 5.0 for social housing projects, and the height limit relaxed to 100'.

9.1.3 Use the Heritage Incentive Programs to encourage renovation and upgrading of heritage buildings for residential uses.

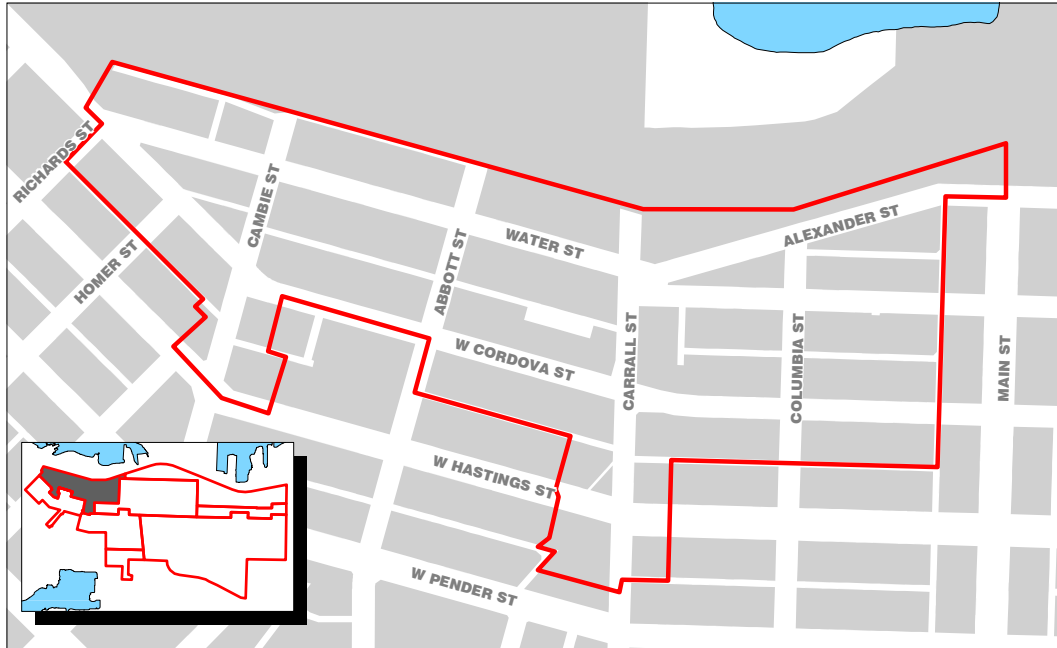
9.1.4 Encourage commercial live-work residential development and facilitate the creation of 25 rent-secured artist live-work units.

9.1.5 Secure funding for low-income housing from Development Cost Levies (DCLs) applied to new construction in Victory Square or elsewhere in the city if applicable.

9.1.6 See draft *Victory Square Concept Plan*, March 2005.

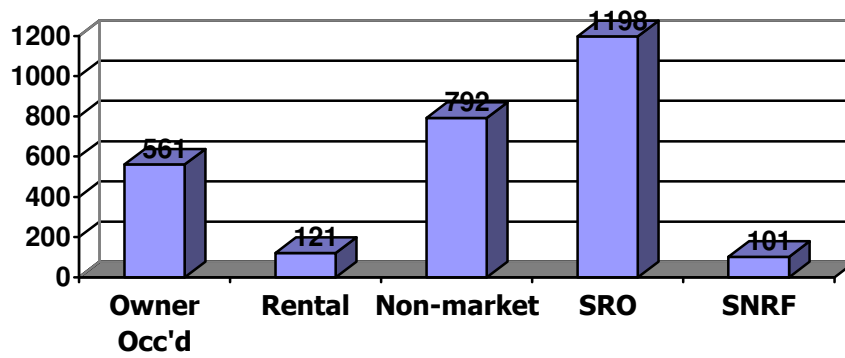
Possible Unit Mix		
	March 2003	2014
Owner-Occupied	100	400
Rental	100	100
Total Market Housing	100	500
SROs	600	300
Low-income Social Housing	300	600
Total Low-income Housing	900	900

Sub Areas - Gastown



FACTS

Gastown Housing Mix, March 2003



	1998	2003
Owner-Occupied	465	561
Rental	107	121
Non-Market Housing	638	792
SRO	1,277	1,198
SNRF	37	86

- There have been 3 market developments built since 1998:
 - 55 Alexander, 38 condos
 - 55 Water, 60 commercial live-work units
 - 310 Water, 22 condos
- There is two market projects in construction:
 - Koret, 55 East Cordova, 118 commercial live-work units
 - 33 Water, 58 units (2nd phase of 55 Water)
- 2 non-market housing projects have been completed since 1998:
 - Bridge Housing, 100 East Cordova, 48 units
 - Lore Krill Co-op, 65 West Cordova, 106 units
- 1 non-market housing project is in process:
 - Pennsylvania Hotel, 412 Carrall, 43 units
- There 24 SRO hotels and 32 buildings on the SRA Register. 3 SROs are currently closed.
- There is 1 SNRF project:
 - Vancouver Harbour Light shelter and treatment facility, 119 East Cordova, 86 beds
- There is on other shelter, a Social Service Facility:
 - The Haven shelter, 128 East Cordova, 15 beds

EXISTING POLICY

- Gastown is a Provincially-designated heritage area. It is the old Granville Townsite from which the City of Vancouver developed. The HA-2 zoning recognizes the area's historical importance and ensures the maintenance of Gastown's "turn of the century" historical and architectural character. No parking spaces are required if a heritage building is being converted to residential use in an HA area.
- Gastown was the first area eligible for the Heritage Incentive Program, which has since been extended to Chinatown and the Hastings Corridor between Cambie and Heatley. The Program offers a series of incentives – property tax

exemptions, façade grants, and transferable bonus density – to encourage owners to upgrade buildings on the City’s Heritage Register (see Chapter 6: Market Housing for more details).

DISCUSSION

Gastown has multiple roles in the city: heritage, tourism, housing, entertainment. Its heritage designation means that special approval is required for exterior alteration or demolition. It can be costly to retain and upgrade heritage buildings (which is why the City introduced the Heritage Incentive Program in the sub-area). Gastown is a key tourist destination in Vancouver, particularly since it is close to the cruise ship terminal. It is also a regional entertainment centre with a large number of nightclubs and licensed liquor seats. Given the multiple objectives and its heritage status and small-lot character, low-income housing objectives may be more difficult to achieve. Further, the renovation of SROs to small suites inevitably results in a reduction in the number of units as small suites are larger than SRO rooms.

Gastown saw a boom in market condo development in the late-1990s. Of the 561 existing market units in the area, 373 were built from 1996 to 1998. Most of this development has been in new or renovated buildings with a variety of sizes and layouts. Much of the emphasis has been on loft-style living. Live-work developments are also permitted in Gastown. Two live-work projects exist, containing a total of 72 units, and a third with an additional 118 units is currently under construction.

It is expected that the demand for loft and heritage character housing will continue to grow, whether for housing alone or live-work. Few sites are available for new construction, so future residential growth is expected to be in renovated buildings, some of which will qualify for the Heritage Incentive Program. There has been some interest in SRO conversions to tourist hotels due to the area’s tourist activities, but any conversion of a building on the SRA Register requires an SRA Permit and Council approval. New market housing will be strata-title, primarily serving middle-income homeowners. In the 1990s, prices were more moderate, with units selling for around \$200/square foot. As areas elsewhere in the downtown have been built-out, however, prices have increased to around \$400/square foot. It is likely that up to 30%-40% of these condos will subsequently be rented, following the pattern in the rest of the city. This will provide market rental housing affordable to middle-income households but not affordable to the low-income residents of the area.

ACTIONS

9.2.1 Replace the stock of low-income housing with better quality housing. Recognize that while 1-for-1 replacement is a goal, given heritage and other objectives and land prices, the replacement of 1,200 SRO units within this sub-area is unlikely.

9.2.2 Encourage market housing in restored heritage buildings and encourage participation in the Heritage Incentive Program

9.2.3 Recognize housing objectives when implementing heritage policies, and vice-versa.

9.2.4 Amend the zoning to permit on-site density and height relaxations for low-income housing both for new development and for rehabilitation of existing buildings.

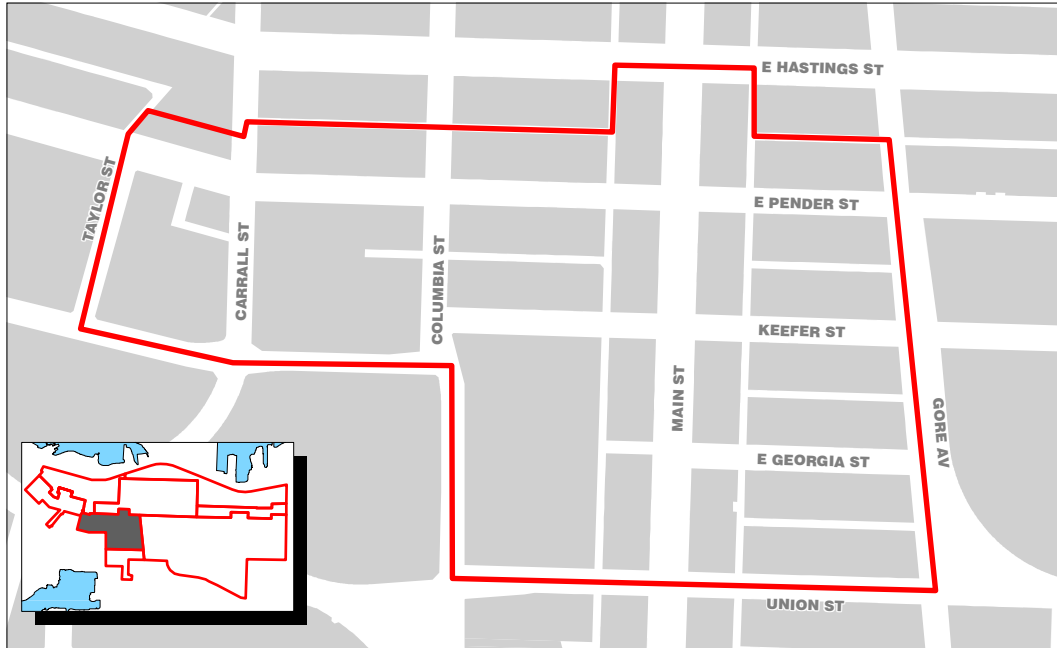
9.2.5 Encourage the social housing that is provided in Gastown to be located in renovated heritage buildings as well as on vacant sites.

9.2.6 Ensure that the Heritage Incentive Program supports and is applicable to the renovation and preservation of low-income housing, especially SROs, and the creation of new social housing in heritage buildings.

Possible Unit Mix		
	March 2003	2014
Owner-Occupied	500	900
Rental	100	300
Total Market Housing	600	1,200
SROs	1,200	1,000
Low-income Social Housing	800	900
Total Low-income Housing	2,000	1,900

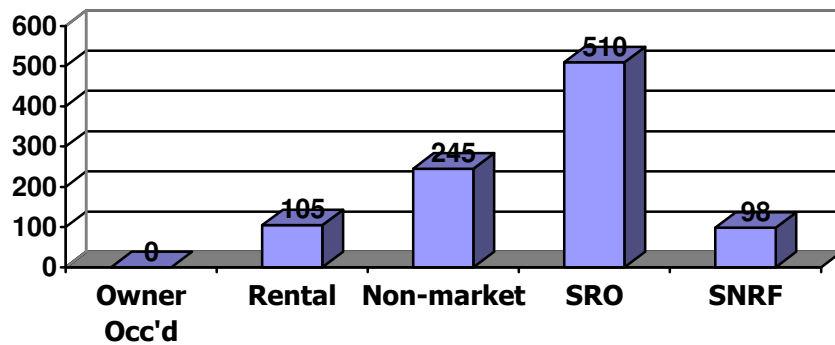
(Note: numbers are rounded to the nearest 100)

Sub Areas - Chinatown



FACTS

Chinatown Housing Mix, March 2003



	1998	2003
Owner-Occupied	0	0
Rental	126	105
Non-Market Housing	120	245
SRO	518	510
SNRF	0	98

- 2 non-market housing projects have been built in Chinatown since 1998: the Chinese Benevolent Association at 32 West Pender (44 units) and the Lore Krill Co-op at 239 East Georgia (97 units).
- 10 of the 11 SRO buildings are on the Heritage Register.
- 1 SNRF has been built in Chinatown: SUCCESS, a 98 bed senior's care facility at 555 Carrall Street. It was built in 2001.

EXISTING POLICY

- Almost half of Chinatown is a Provincially-designated heritage area. The distinctive HA-1 zoning coincides with the Provincial designation. It encourages the preservation and rehabilitation of the significant early buildings of Chinatown, while recognizing that the specialty-goods market and related activities make the district an asset to the city that needs to be encouraged. The HA-1A zoning allows more flexibility, provided new buildings are compatible with the district's heritage character. No parking spaces are required if a heritage building is being converted to residential use in an HA area.
- In 2002, Council adopted the Chinatown Vision, a revitalization strategy for the area.
- In 2003, Council extended the Heritage Incentive Program from Gastown into Chinatown. This program offers property tax exemption, façade grants, and bonus density to support the rehabilitation of heritage buildings.
- In 2005, Council approved the development of a Chinatown Community Plan. This plan will follow the recommendations of the Housing Plan encouraging the replacement of SROs with social housing and encouraging market housing, including market rental housing.

DISCUSSION

Vancouver's Chinatown is one the last remaining significantly-sized historic Chinatowns in North America. It is a distinctive market providing Chinese goods and services, as well as an important tourist destination.

Much of Chinatown was developed with housing above shops. The housing was mainly for single Chinese immigrant men. Over time many of these spaces were converted to offices, storage, society uses or left empty. Almost all the current housing in the area is either SRO units or social housing.

One of the objectives that emerged from a 1994 zoning review was to encourage more housing by providing a supportive regulatory framework. As a result of this review a new zoning schedule, HA-1A, was enacted for sites where less heritage protection was warranted. Guidelines were also approved for both HA-1 and HA-1A. This provides more redevelopment potential, although this potential may not be realized immediately because there are many family-held small lots and assembly for redevelopment is difficult.

In 2002, Council approved the **Chinatown Vision** after a comprehensive public process by the City and the Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee. The Vision proposes an economic development strategy for the area that focuses on heritage preservation, recognition of the area's history, public realm improvements, an increased sense of security, improved transportation and linkages to other neighbourhoods, and a diversified retail mix. The Vision also identifies four key directions for housing in the area:

- Encourage Market Housing
- Improve living conditions in the existing hotels
- Encourage affordable rental housing
- Explore possibilities of housing in the upper floors of buildings with commercial storefronts

There are currently no market condo units and only a limited number of rental units in the area. There is, however, some capacity to develop more housing. The number of vacant or underdeveloped sites is limited, and the zoning is quite restrictive in favour of heritage preservation, but many existing buildings have the potential to be renovated into housing. In 2004, architect consultants explored the possibility of renovating existing buildings with retail storefronts into residential developments, while respecting their heritage character, scale, and retail function. The City is currently working on a strategy to encourage property owners to develop residential units by taking advantage of the financial incentives offered under the Heritage Incentive Program. This initiative will likely result in the creation of hundreds of units of housing, and will lead to the preservation of heritage buildings and stimulate economic revitalization in the area. It is likely that many of these new units will be rented, particularly in buildings owned by family associations wishing to retain ownership of their buildings.

In early 2005, Council approved the development of a Chinatown Community Plan, a 2.5 year program. Based on the directions identified in the Chinatown Vision, the Plan will address heritage restoration, public realm and transportation improvements, community development and housing issues. In terms of housing, the intent is to encourage residential densification, provide incentives to create affordable market rental housing,

and replace existing SRO units with better quality social housing and improve living conditions in existing hotels.

There are over 500 SRO units in the area. Chapter 4 on the **Future of SROs** provides a series of policy recommendations to encourage the upgrading and better maintenance and management of SROs. Over the long term, the SROs should be replaced by better-quality non-market housing with self-contained units targeted to low-income singles. Including non-market housing, the existing low-income housing stock totals almost 800 units. Given that renovating SROs into self-contained units results in a net loss of units (as the new units are generally larger), that there are limited vacant or redevelopable sites in the sub-area, and that land prices are high, achieving the 1-for-1 replacement of existing SRO units within the sub-area will be difficult.

POLICIES/ACTIONS

9.3.1 Replace the stock of low-income housing with better quality housing. Recognize that, while 1-for-1 replacement is a goal, given heritage and other objectives, ownership patterns and land prices, the replacement of 500 SRO units within Chinatown is unlikely.

9.3.2 Encourage market housing in restored heritage buildings and encourage participation in the Heritage Incentive Program.

9.3.3 Encourage SROs to be retained and converted to social housing.

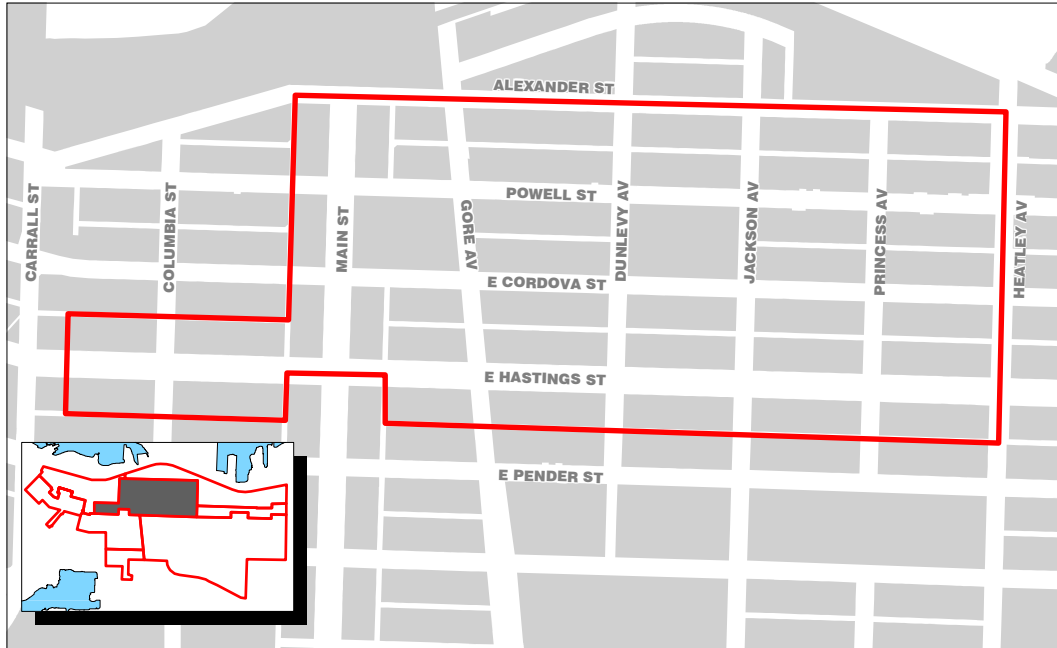
9.3.4 Recognize housing objectives when implementing heritage policies in Chinatown, and vice-versa.

9.3.5 Provide incentives such as parking and height relaxations for developments which include rental housing and/or achieve heritage objectives.

9.3.6 Amend the zoning to permit on-site height and density bonuses for provision of low-income housing both for new development and for the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

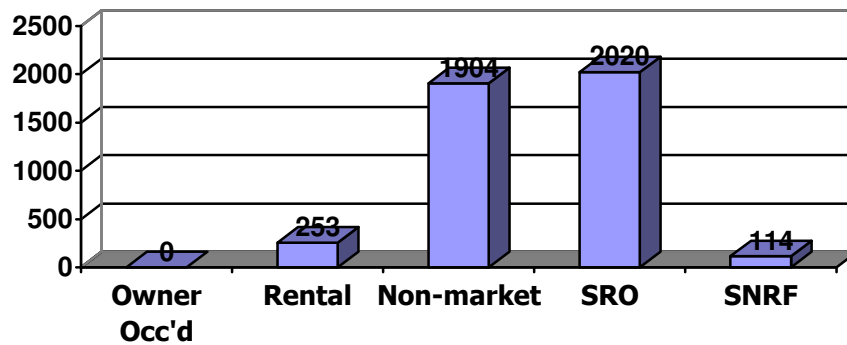
Possible Unit Mix		
	March 2003	2014
Owner-Occupied	0	400
Rental	100	300
Total Market Housing	100	700
SROs	500	300
Low-income Social Housing	250	300
Total Low-income Housing	750	600

Sub Areas - Downtown-Eastside Oppenheimer



FACTS

DEOD Housing Mix, March 2003



	1998	2003
Owner-Occupied	0	0
Rental	226	253
Non-Market Housing	1,428	1,904
SRO	2,299	2,020
SNRF	301	114

- 8 non-market projects containing 476 units have been completed since 1998. Examples include the Sunrise Hotel, the Washington Hotel, the Oasis and Maurice McElrea Place.
- There are 57 SROs and 68 buildings on the SRA Register in the area. 4 SROs have converted to Social Housing (Sunrise, Washington, Sakura-so and New World).
- There are 4 SNRFs containing a total of 114 beds
 - Victory House, 353 E. Cordova, 47 beds
 - Union Gospel Mission, 616 E. Cordova, 25 beds
 - Powell Place, 329 Powell, 36 beds
 - May Gutteridge, 333 Powell, 6 beds
- There is no owner-occupied market housing.

EXISTING POLICY

- The DEOD (Downtown Eastside-Oppenheimer) Official Development Plan contains the following housing goals:
 - Retain existing and provide new affordable housing for the population of the Downtown-Eastside Oppenheimer area;
 - Upgrade the quality of existing housing stock to City standards; and
 - Increase the proportion of self-contained dwelling units through rehabilitation and new construction.
- The zoning is structured to encourage the provision of social housing and was developed out of the 1983 Downtown-Eastside Oppenheimer Policy Plan. The housing goals in this plan were to retain and provide new affordable housing for the residents of the Downtown Eastside, to upgrade the existing housing stock, and to encourage self-contained dwelling units. Under the DEOD zoning, new development with densities above 1 FSR must contain at least 20 percent social housing. In practice, this has resulted in buildings with 100% social housing in the residential portion. The maximum permitted density is 2.5 FSR, except in the

Main and Hastings Streets area of the DEOD, where the maximum density is 5.0 FSR, although residential must not exceed 3.0 FSR.

DISCUSSION

The DEOD is the heart of the Downtown Eastside low-income community. It consists of a mix of SROs and social housing, as well as commercial and industrial development. The DEOD zoning was adopted in 1982 to preserve and improve low-income housing, and to ensure the area would remain a low-income community. Although the zoning permits a mix of 20% social housing and 80% market housing, the new housing has been predominately social housing. This is due to the low level of market interest in the area to date and the structure of social housing programs which, over the past two decades, have been directed at the development of buildings that are 100% social housing. The zoning has served the community well in that social housing has been economically feasible and as SROs were lost, they have been replaced with better quality social housing.

The intent of the Housing Plan is for the DEOD to continue to be a predominately low-income area, emphasizing social housing. There is concern that as the surrounding areas such as North False Creek, International Village and the Port lands build out, the DEOD could become more attractive for projects with mainly market housing. There have been several inquiries and some instability in land prices. Increasing land prices, at the same time, would make the development of social housing more difficult to fund and expensive to build.

Evaluation of the DEOD zoning, now twenty years old, needs to be undertaken to confirm that the area can maintain its role the core neighbourhood for low-income singles and ensure that at least 1-for-1 replacement of SROs is possible. Zoning controls have historically limited purely market housing development in the area, but as developable land becomes scarce elsewhere in the Downtown core, the DEOD may begin to redevelop in a way that compromises the ability to achieve 1-for-1 replacement of SROs in spite of the restrictions in place. If land values get to a point where market development is attractive despite having to incorporate a 20% social housing component, it is unlikely that 1-for-1 replacement of the existing 2,000 SRO units will be possible in the DEOD. Moreover, given that sites are scarce and expensive in the historic areas west of the DEOD (Chinatown and Gastown), it is likely that the area will have to accommodate more than 2,000 social housing units in the long term in order to achieve 1-for-1 in the Downtown Eastside.

Analysis of the DEOD could consider the following:

- Whether the status quo 20% requirement is sufficient to ensure at least 1-for-1 replacement of SROs in the area.
- Whether the social housing requirement could be met on non-adjacent sites.

- How densities can be adjusted to help achieve low-income housing goals and if on-site height and density bonuses are appropriate.
- How much market housing should be integrated into the area (including market rental, owner-occupied, live-work, and also mixed-income social housing) without compromising the ability to achieve at least 1-for-1 replacement of SROs with the intent of creating a social mix and assisting the revitalization of the area.

The Main and Hastings Streets area of the DEOD (Sub-area 1) already permits 5 FSR but with the restriction of residential to 3 FSR. It is recommended that in this sub-area the residential restriction be removed with the proviso that, to further the social housing objective, the portion over 3 FSR be 100 % social housing. However, there is a retail continuity requirement for part of this strip which means that not all of a building would be housing. The typical achievable residential density would be on the order of 4.5 FSR. The liveability of social housing projects at close to 5.0 FSR has been demonstrated in adjacent sub-areas with Pendera (133 W. Pender), Solheim Place (243 Union Street), and the J.C. Lemman Building (27 W. Pender).

In chapter 8 on SNRFs, it is recommended that the moratorium on SNRFs be lifted in the DEOD.

ACTIONS

9.4.1 Initiate a review of the Downtown-Eastside Oppenheimer District Official Development Plan to ensure the ability of the zoning to secure at least 1-for-1 replacement of at least 2,000 existing SRO units with housing for low-income singles with the capacity to make up the shortfall in 1-for-1 replacement elsewhere in the city. Amend the ODP, if necessary, to reflect the conclusions of the review.

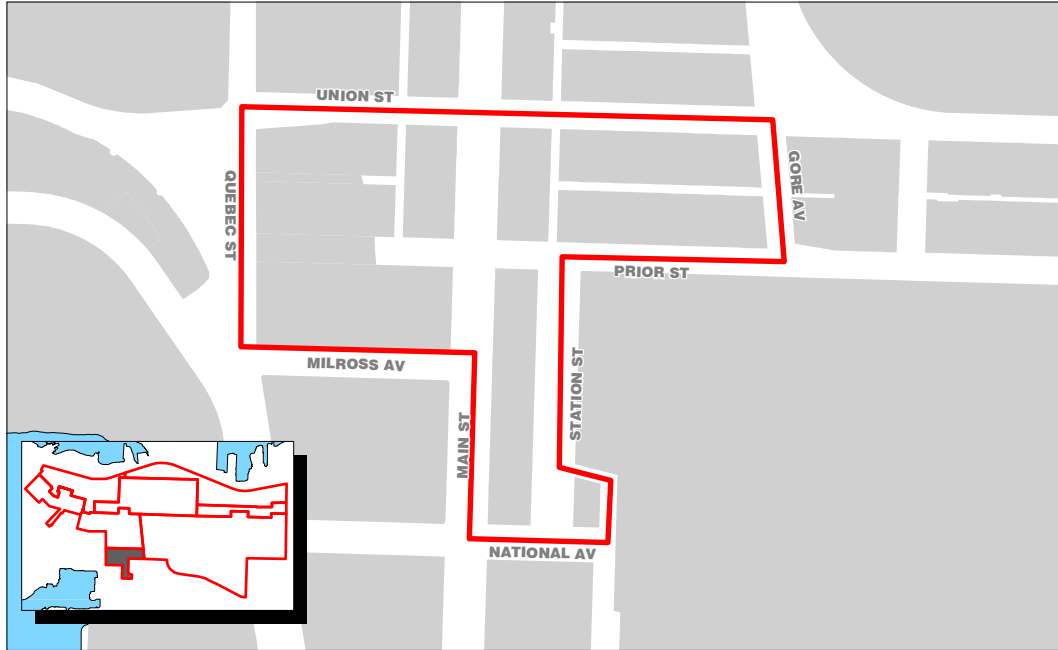
9.4.2 Amend the Zoning and Development By-law to remove the residential restriction up to 5 FSR in the Main and Hastings Streets area of the DEOD with the requirement that the portion over 3 FSR be 100% social housing (the first 3 FSR has to adhere to the existing 20% requirement).

9.4.3 Encourage participation in the Heritage Incentive Program for properties on Hastings Street, particularly those with affordable housing or SROs.

Possible Unit Mix		
	March 2003	2014
Owner-Occupied	0	0/?*
Rental	300	300
Total Market Housing	300	300
SROs	2,000	1,600
Low-income Social Housing	1,900	2,600
Total Low-income Housing	3,900	4,200

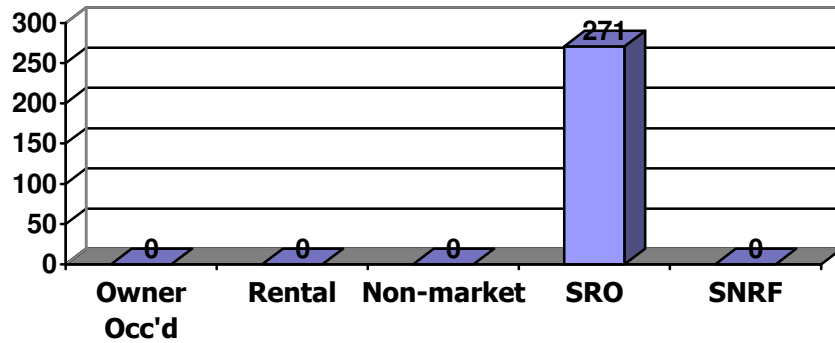
*This figure will vary depending on the outcome of the review of the DEOD zoning.

Sub Areas - Thornton Park



FACTS

Thornton Park Housing Mix, March 2003



	1998	2003
Owner-Occupied	0	0
Rental	0	0
Non-Market Housing	0	0
SRO	277	271
SNRF	0	0

- There are 5 SRO buildings and 6 buildings on the SRA Register
- There is 1 condo development under construction containing 59 units

EXISTING POLICY

- The area is comprised of three zones: FC-1, M-1 and CD-1.

DISCUSSION

This area is adjacent to the City Gate development which will eventually see development of about 1,000 to 1,200 market and 176 family social housing apartments in a mix of high-and medium-rise buildings. In City Gate, 617 market units and all 176 social housing units have been built to date. 167 units, all market, will be built on the former Greyhound site adjacent to the viaducts on Quebec Street.

The False Creek Flats Structure Plan, adopted in 2001 focuses primarily on the industrial role and the future urban design of the land west of the Thornton Park sub-area. This is primarily a city-serving light industrial area, the western portion of which was rezoned in 1999 to support high-tech uses. The Structure Plan does include Main Street, but indicates that it should remain in its current state as a mixed use residential and commercial area.

The predominant form of housing in the sub-area is SRO hotels. There are currently five SROs containing 271 units and a backpacker's hostel with 39 units on the SRA Register. There is one site owned by the City being retained for social housing (1005 Station Street), and one market condo project under construction (The Left Bank, 919 Station Street, 59 units), the first of its kind in the sub-area. The presence of several vacant sites suggest that there is opportunity for new housing construction, either non-market or market.

Earlier work indicates that this area may be appropriate as a pilot area for live-work of all kinds, including artist live-work, with an emphasis on modest and lower-income housing. New zoning should be developed which reflects this intent. Opportunities for affordable market rental housing should also be considered.

Replacing the SROs with self-contained social housing may be difficult. Heights may have to be increased or sites found along Main Street to the south, e.g., in the newly approved Southeast False Creek ODP or in the False Creek Flats to the east (an area subject to a planning study that is getting underway).

ACTIONS

9.5.1 Examine opportunities for the growth of a modest income neighbourhood with a variety of housing forms including live-work, market condominiums, SROs and social housing.

9.5.2 Amend existing zoning or develop new zoning which provides incentives for affordable rental housing, including live-work.

9.5.3 Consider the inclusion of low-income artist live-work units in future zoning for Thornton Park which would be in addition to the 1-for-1 replacement of existing low-income housing.

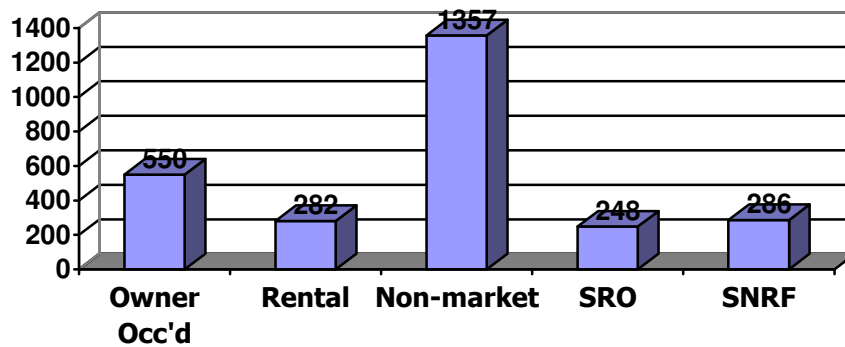
Possible Unit Mix		
	March 2003	2014
Owner-Occupied	0	100
Rental	0	100
Total Market Housing	0	200
SROs	300	100
Low-income Social Housing	0	200
Total Low-income Housing	300	300

Sub Areas - Strathcona



FACTS

Strathcona Housing Mix, March 2003



	1998	2003
Owner-Occupied	558	550
Rental	290	282
Non-Market Housing	1,372	1,357
SRO	257	248
SNRF	220	286

- There are 3 SNRFS:
 - Villa Cathay Care Home, 970 Union, 188 beds
 - Chinese Mennonite, 333 East Pender, 66 beds
 - Chinese Mennonite Church Seniors Residence, 485 Dunlevy, 32 beds
- There are 17 SRO buildings and 19 buildings on the SRA Register. The SROs are small, with an average of 15 rooms per building.
- There are 24 social housing projects. 56% of the units are targeted to seniors, 38% to families.

EXISTING POLICY

- In June 1992 Council adopted the following as part of the Strathcona Local Area Planning Initiatives:
 - To maintain affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households;
 - To provide housing for a variety of household types, with an emphasis on family housing; and
 - To achieve a balance of social and market housing through the development of new mixed-income housing that is in keeping with the scale and character of the neighbourhood.

DISCUSSION

A local area planning process was undertaken in Strathcona from 1989 to 1992 producing the Strathcona Policies, adopted by Council in 1992. Housing was one of the major topics and this draft plan does not revise the policies adopted during that process as they are consistent with overall Housing Plan directions.

The major policies and strategies are:

- In the old Strathcona and Kiwassa areas, allow moderate increases in housing capacity with zoning that reinforces the existing residential character and provides some small incentives for social housing. (The RT-3 zoning was amended to implement this.)

- In Kiwassa, east of the BNR tracks, increase housing capacity by supporting site-specific residential rezoning applications. (There have been no applications to date.)

The issue of the changing community profile and social fabric (including gentrification²³) was raised in discussion with the community. Since the 1998 draft of the Housing Plan, the Strathcona neighbourhood has shown signs of increased gentrification. In the late 1990s, single family houses, duplexes and rowhouses could be considered affordable to people of moderate means, either as owner-occupied or rental. Currently, houses and duplexes on the market in the area sell for more than \$400,000. Strathcona's heritage housing stock, neighbourhood feel, relative affordability and proximity to the Downtown have made the area attractive to home-buyers who previously would have considered purchasing homes in places like Kitsilano, Mount Pleasant and Grandview.

The major tool for encouraging low-income housing is on-site density bonusing for social housing in the old Strathcona and Kiwassa areas in the RT-3 zone. The other tool is to encourage mixed-income and family housing in site-specific applications in the industrial area east of the BNR tracks. It is unlikely these sites will develop within the next ten years, but if owners do initiate a rezoning, mixed-income and family housing would be encouraged. Most of the future housing changes in Strathcona will be smaller-scale renovations and infill developments. It is expected that some of the existing moderate rental housing will change to owner-occupied and a modest amount of social housing will be built through density bonusing.

The Hastings Corridor sub-area, north of Strathcona, is currently an M-1 industrial area. This plan recommends that it be rezoned to allow mixed-use commercial, industrial and residential uses. The new zoning will offer bonuses for the creation of affordable market housing with secured rents. This will provide an opportunity to achieve affordable housing options that have historically been found in Strathcona. This recommendation is elaborated in the next section on the Hastings Corridor.

It is likely that over the longer-term more family housing will be developed in Strathcona compared to other sub-areas, which is appropriate given Strathcona's existing schools, daycares, parks and community centres.

ACTIONS

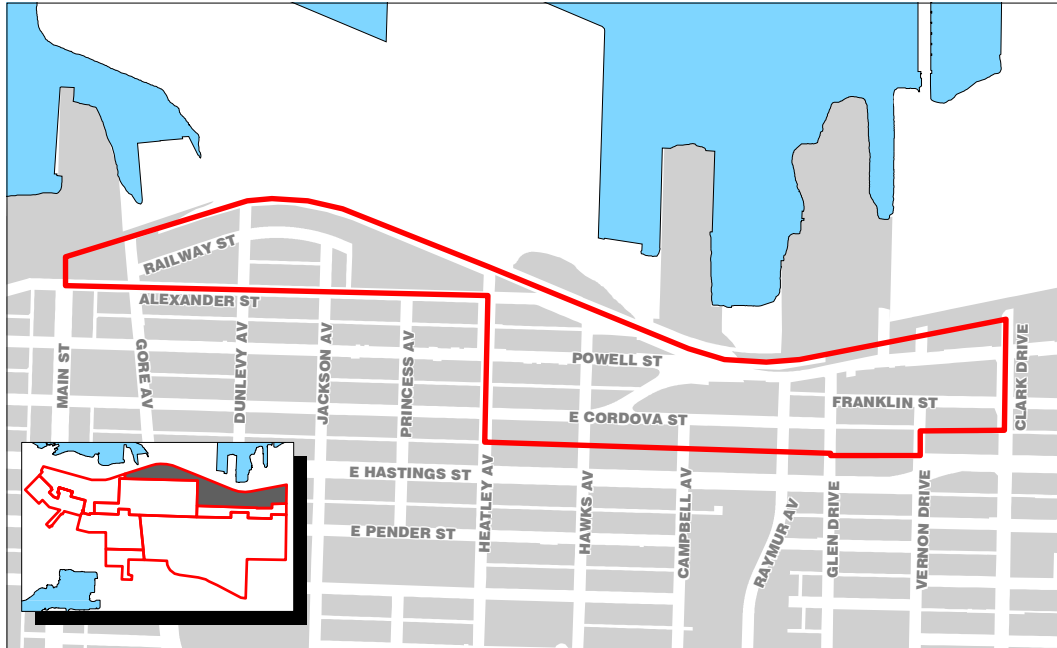
9.6.1 No changes from the Strathcona Policies as they are consistent with overall Housing Plan directions. The RT-3 zoning has been implemented as recommended. In the event that site-specific rezoning applications are made for the industrial area east of the BNR tracks, mixed-income and family housing will be encouraged.

²³ Gentrification is typically defined as the process where higher-income earners move into lower-income inner-city neighbourhoods, forcing up property values and ultimately displacing existing residents.

Possible Unit Mix		
	March 2003	2014
Owner-Occupied	600	600
Rental	300	300
Total Market Housing	900	900
SROs	200	100
Low-income Social Housing	1,400	1,500
Total Low-income Housing	1,600	1,600

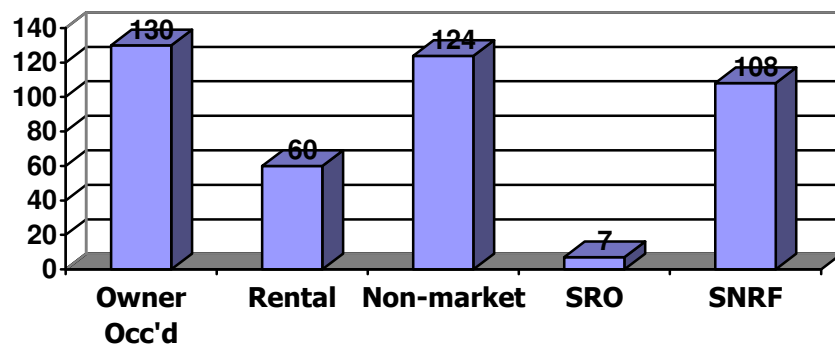
(Note: numbers are rounded to the nearest 100.)

Sub Areas - Industrial



FACTS

Industrial Housing Mix, March 2003



	1998	2003
Owner-Occupied	0	130
Rental	0	60
Non-Market Housing	94	124
SRO	24	7
SNRF	28	108

- This sub-area has 1 SNRF, a shelter (Triage)
- There is 1 small SRO, the Kenworth rooms, with 7 units
- In 1999, the City acquired 30 units in the Edge artist live-work development to be rented to low-income artists as social housing. The remaining 120 units in The Edge are market live-work.
- There are a total of 124 social housing units in 2 social housing projects and the Edge.

EXISTING POLICY

- The industrial sub-area is zoned M-2, an industrial zone that permits uses that are generally incompatible with residential areas.
- The Industrial Lands Strategy was adopted by Council March 14, 1995 to guide City decisions on industrial land. The objective of the Strategy is to "retain most of the City's existing industrial land base for industry and service business to meet the needs of port/river related industry, and city-serving and city-oriented industries".
- The Industrial Lands Strategy confirms the retention of all of this sub-area as industrial.
- The only form of housing permitted in the Industrial sub-area is Artist live-work (Class B), a conditional use which is only allowed in renovated buildings to a maximum of 1 FSR. Activities such as welding, woodworking, spray painting, ceramics firing and film processing can take place in these buildings, and as a consequence these buildings have to be constructed to a higher code than residential.

DISCUSSION

Housing in the Area

There are two non-market projects in the Industrial sub-area immediately adjacent to the DEOD sub-area, both of which are targeted to individuals with mental disabilities. The Windchimes Apartments provides 27 studio apartments and are operated in conjunction with a 28 bed shelter classified as a SNRF. The Jim Green Residence at 415 Alexander contains 67 1-bedroom units. Both projects are the result of site-specific rezonings to CD-1. This plan does not support future rezonings for housing in the Industrial area.

The Zoning and Development By-law was amended in 1987 to encourage the provision of affordable and appropriate artist 'live-work' studios. Artist studios and associated residential units are permitted in industrial districts as conditional approval uses and limited to an FSR of 1.0. An artist studio is permitted to have an associated integrated dwelling unit, creating a live-work studio. On March 28, 1995, Council adopted policies to encourage the provision of legal, safe, functional and affordable artist live-work studios but also to discourage the displacement of industrial and business service uses in industrial districts. Artist studios in industrial areas are restricted to rentals in existing buildings and to those involving industrial production processes or the amplification of sound.

There are two live-work projects reflected in the table showing housing projections. The Edge at 289 Alexander was part of a rezoning resulting in 150 live-work studios. Thirty of the units were acquired by the City and serve low- and moderate-income artists with rents of \$325 to \$530. The other 120 units are market strata-title units. An additional 10 market units were added to this development in 2002. Two more projects, at 303 Railway and 329 Railway together provide 60 market rental artist live-work studios.

An Industrial Future

In July 1990, Council approved a policy that most industrial lands be retained for industrial use pending completion of an Industrial Lands Review. In the early 1990s, the City examined the future of the industrial lands in the Industrial sub-area. The study determined that the areas are generally unsuitable for residential development due to the nearby 24-hour port-related activities, the numerous impacts to residential liveability, the lack of amenities and the safety concerns of the area. The study noted that part of the area around Railway Street may be marginally suitable for residential use. In September 1994 Council re-designated the areas to be retained for industrial use and confirmed that any future land use review should be guided by the policies of the city-wide Industrial Land Strategy.

The area remains an important city-serving industrial area and should remain as such in the long-term. Industrial vacancy rates are low, but the majority of buildings are 1 or 2 storeys, far below the maximum allowable FSR of 5.0. The Economic Revitalization Strategy recognizes that increasing densities in the area will increase local employment

opportunities and encourage revitalization in the area. Housing may be used strategically to increase industrial densities. Further, such mixed use developments could increase the capacity for both market and social housing in the Housing Plan area.

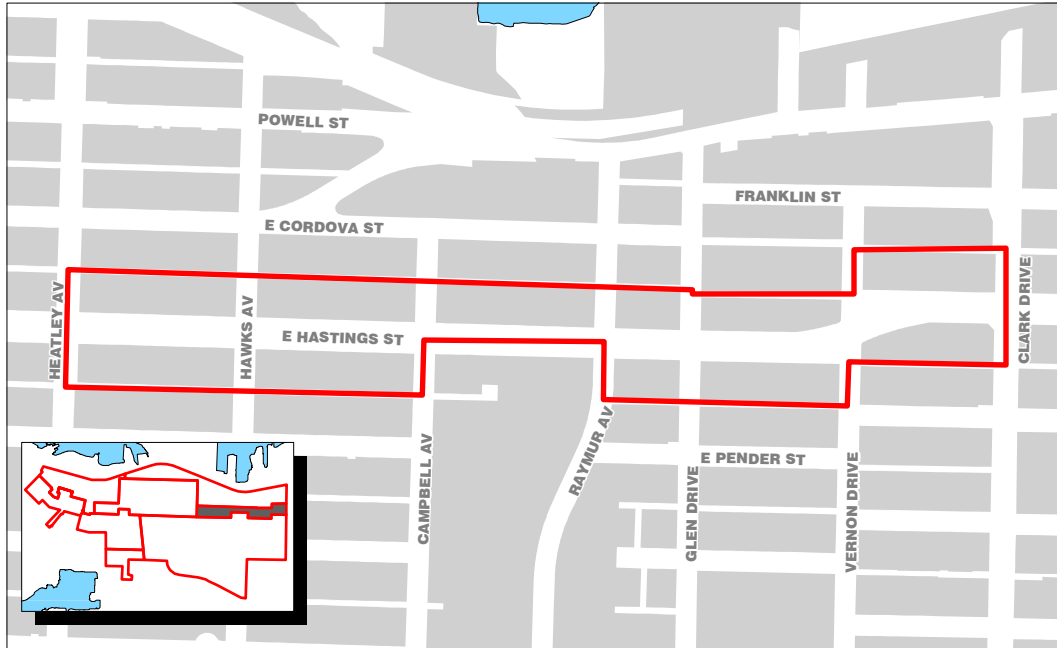
ACTIONS

9.7.1 Area to be retained as industrial use. However, should mixed-use industrial and residential developments be explored in the future, market and social housing potential should both be evaluated as an incentive to enhance the area’s industrial viability.

Possible Unit Mix		
	March 2003	2014
Owner-Occupied	100	100
Rental	100	100
Total Market Housing	200	200
SROs	<100	<100
Low-income Social Housing	100	100
Total Low-income Housing	100	100

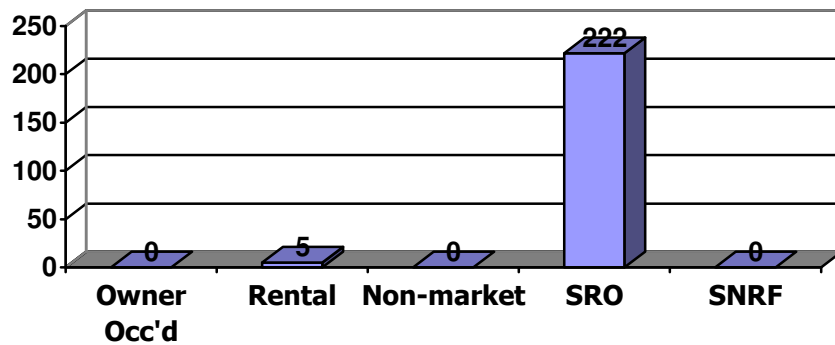
(Note: numbers are rounded to the nearest 100; <100 means less than 100 units.)

Sub Areas - Hastings Corridor



FACTS

Hastings Corridor Housing Mix, March 2003



	1998	2003
Owner-Occupied	0	0
Rental	0	5
Non-Market Housing	0	0
SRO	245	222
SNRF	0	0

- There are 6 SRO hotels and 7 buildings on the SRA Register

EXISTING POLICY

- This section of Hastings Street is zoned M-1 industrial. In 1990, as part of a city-wide review of industrial areas, Council decided that this is a "let-go" area, meaning that the area should be reviewed for alternative land uses, including residential.
- In June 1992, as part of the Strathcona Area Planning process, Council directed staff to report back on rezoning the area from industrial to mixed use (residential above grade, commercial and light industrial) and on the development cost levy that would be appropriate. No action has been taken, pending the outcome of this plan.

DISCUSSION

In the last few years there have been an increasing number of enquiries to build housing on the Hastings corridor. In 2002, the M-1 let-go area on Hastings Street to the east of this sub-area (outside of the Downtown Eastside) was rezoned to MC-1/MC-2. This zoning supports mixed use development, permitting light industrial, commercial and residential uses. MC-2 zoning is more restrictive regarding residential uses and has been applied on the north side of Hastings adjacent to the M-2 industrial area.

This sub-area will play an important role in realizing housing objectives identified in this Plan. Analysis suggests that achieving 1-for-1 replacement of SROs in the historic areas in the western portion of the Downtown Eastside will be difficult due to high land costs, few sites, limited zoning capacity, and the fact that replacement housing for SROs requires twice the land area than does an SRO (due to larger unit size). SRO replacement housing should be made a priority in the Hastings Corridor. Also, rising property values in Strathcona have reduced affordable market rental opportunities that were traditionally associated with that neighbourhood. Consequently, this plan supports rezoning of the Hastings Corridor to allow residential uses with a strong emphasis on achieving affordable housing objectives (social housing and market rental).

A medium-density mixed-use zoning, with commercial and retail uses at grade and residential above, is recommended. Market housing is permitted, but height and density

bonuses and relaxations and use restrictions (such as the social housing requirement currently in the DEOD) should be applied. These should encourage the development of SRO replacement housing and rent-secured market rental projects targeted to singles or couples. Additionally, the City should acquire sites for future social housing projects with an emphasis on SRO replacement units. Some family housing may be built on the south side of the sub-area adjacent to Strathcona to provide affordable rental housing that has been lost in that sub-area.

ACTIONS

9.8.1 Initiate a rezoning to allow a medium-density mixed-use zone allowing commercial, retail, light industrial and residential uses, with an emphasis on SRO replacement and affordable rental projects. Consideration should be given to issues of liveability adjacent to heavy industry to the north and to the impact on the RT-3 residential areas to the south. Ensure that appropriate public amenities are incorporated into the rezoning analysis.

9.8.2 Re-affirm the following 1992 Strathcona Plan policies which are consistent with the Housing Plan objectives:

- New housing development should emphasize affordability.
- Maintain affordable housing for low-to-moderate-income households.
- There should be opportunities for a variety of new housing types with a balanced market, non-market mix.
- Careful design must be used to deal with traffic and industrial adjacencies (as was done successfully in buildings further west on Hastings such as Shon Yee Place and Jenny Pentland Place).
- Further examination is needed of community facilities, infrastructure and services necessary to ensure liveability.

Possible Unit Mix		
	March 2003	2013
Owner-Occupied	0	200
Rental	<100	200
Total Market Housing	<100	400
SROs	200	200
Low-income Social Housing	0	400
Total Low-income Housing	200	600

(Note: numbers are rounded to the nearest 100. <100 means less than 100 units.)

10. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FACTS

- At the city-wide level, the Vancouver City Planning Commission assists City Council in an advisory capacity regarding issues affecting long-range planning of the City including development, governance, transportation, and the public realm. The Commission consists of 12 appointed members of the public, 2 Councillors, 1 member of the Park Board and 1 member from the School Board
- There are two civic advisory bodies that work exclusively in the Downtown Eastside: the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee (GHAPC) and the Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee (CHAPC). These committees review zoning and development proposals in each respective historic area (HA-1/1A and HA-2) and provide feedback to the Director of Planning with the intent of preserving the heritage character of the areas.

EXISTING POLICY

- The City of Vancouver mission statement identifies as an objective: "To create good government through public participation, internal improvement, and constructive external relations."
- In October 1998, Council adopted the Guiding Principles for Public Involvement which outline key themes for engaging the public in civic policy-making. Principles address the importance of inclusiveness, the use of clear language and good communication, the identification of the scope and goals of any process, and the proper resourcing of the process.

DISCUSSION

The Housing Plan establishes goals and objectives for the future housing mix in the Downtown Eastside, such as the 1-for-1 replacement of SROs and the integration of market housing. A community engagement process should be established for monitoring the implementation of this Housing Plan.

In the short term, staff will meet with existing community organizations and bodies, such as the Chinatown Revitalization Committee, the Carnegie Board, the two Heritage Area Planning Committees, the Strathcona Revitalization Committee, the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association and other groups with an interest in housing and development in the Downtown Eastside. Staff will provide presentations on various housing-related indicators, such as the loss of SROs, construction of social housing and new market projects. Commentary from community groups will be shared with Council on an ongoing basis. In addition, staff will provide periodic monitoring reports on the implementation of the housing plan and various housing indicators for the Downtown Eastside.

In the medium term, it is recommended that staff explore the development of a community-based advisory body to assist in the implementation of the Housing Plan. This body would review development proposals and policy decisions in light of the housing goals set out in this plan and provide feedback to applicants, City staff and the Development Permit Board. This proposed advisory committee can help monitor and balance different objectives. For example, the City is offering incentives through the Heritage Incentive Program and other initiatives to encourage revitalization activity in the area. The committee will monitor and review such programs and developments to ensure that they are not working counter to objectives identified in this plan, particularly in cases where special permissions are awarded (bonuses and incentives), and will provide advice to the Director of Planning.

The structure of the committee will need to be defined through the public consultation. Its membership should reflect the diversity of existing Downtown Eastside residents, business and community organizations and should include representatives from all major sub-areas. This Plan recommends that staff draft a terms of reference to establish the committee, its membership and mandate, and that the committee be reviewed after one year of operation to confirm its effectiveness in assisting the implementation of Housing Plan goals.

In the longer term, this advisory committee may evolve or be integrated into (or be a sub-set of) a community body with a larger mandate, focusing not only on housing, but also on economic revitalization, social services, health issues, heritage, and more. Housing is a key component of the community, but only one of many, and all would benefit from comprehensive oversight. Existing bodies such as the Heritage Area Planning Committees and new structures evolving out of initiatives such as the Economic Revitalization Strategy may function well if integrated into a broad community advisory body. The feasibility of creating a community advisory body with a review mandate that encompasses all the dimensions in the Downtown Eastside should be explored.

ACTIONS

10.1 In the short term, engage with existing community organizations and bodies to provide ongoing consultation on the implementation of the Housing Plan. Provide regular monitoring reports on housing indicators every two or three years.

10.2 In the medium term, develop a terms of reference and establish a community-based advisory body on the implementation of Housing Plan policies. This body will review development proposals and policy initiatives with potential housing implications in the Downtown Eastside.

10.3 In the longer term, explore the integration of various advisory bodies in the Downtown Eastside with the intention of providing comprehensive and holistic community input on housing, economic revitalization, heritage, social service, public realm and health issues.

11. CONCLUSIONS

This plan provides short-term housing strategies as well as directions for the next 10 years. It is based on the belief that a healthier community can develop with an improved and stable low-income housing stock, and a mixture of incomes, housing tenures and household types. At the moment the area is facing some severe challenges, particularly from substance abuse and its associated crime, communicable diseases, and a large proportion of the housing stock (predominantly SROs and rooming houses) that is marginal and aging. There is also the anticipation of development pressure as the downtown core builds out. The Plan identifies a series of policies that seek to improve and secure the housing conditions of low-income residents while identifying opportunities to sensitively accommodate new market housing opportunities in a changing city.

The Housing Plan is one element in a holistic strategy to revitalize the area; a strategy that advocates revitalization without displacement of the area's people or problems to other communities, and a strategy that balances housing, revitalization, heritage and social objectives. The plan takes place at the same time as others that deal with the social, health and economic challenges in the area. These initiatives include the Framework for Action (Four Pillars), the Economic Revitalization Strategy, Heritage Incentives, the Chinatown Vision, and improvements to the public realm. They include actions by all three levels of government working under the Vancouver Agreement to foster economic development, develop employment opportunities, improve health and safety, and ensure that there is no net loss of low-income housing in the area.

As discussed in Chapter 1, housing development and indicators of community health, safety and liveability will continue to be monitored once a year through the **Downtown Eastside Monitoring Report** and progress on the housing mix will be reported to Council every two years. The City is also currently working on an initiative to report on development activity in the area on a monthly basis. Chapter 10 defines a community engagement process with on-going monitoring of development and housing-related indicators in the Downtown Eastside.

It is expected that low-income housing will be provided by social housing, with the possibility that some will be provided by privately-initiated smaller suites projects with units secured by Housing Agreements. It is imperative, therefore, that senior governments re-engage in funding the creation of new low-income social housing, as discussed in chapter 5.

There are two inter-related questions regarding low-income housing. The first question is how much of the low-income housing geared to singles should be developed in this area compared to other areas in the city and region, and the second is at what rate SROs should be replaced by new low-income singles housing within this area.

In the late 1990s, the commitment to urban singles within the city had been about 150-200 units per year. This included social housing allocations from the Province and the public/private partnerships of the City such as VanCity Place and The Edge. About 120-130 of these units were located in the Downtown Eastside. Downtown South (where

there is a Council policy of 1-for-1 replacement) received about 30-40 units per year and the rest of the city, about 10-30 units per year. It is recommended that this overall production level of 150-200 units per year be re-instated. Again, funding from senior governments need to be restored to meet these targets which are limited to maintaining and not increasing the stock.

The prime responsibility for low-income housing lies with senior governments. The City has a role to assist but has limited funds. The cost to the City of making land available to develop 150-200 units per year would be about \$3 million and could be used to provide a site or sites for social housing, either at a discount or for free. A typical site in the Downtown Eastside is valued at about \$1,500,000 today. This Plan also recommends that the City purchase and upgrade one SRO in the area each year. The cost will vary depending on the size, condition, and location of the SRO.

The City has several ways of obtaining funds for housing. These include the Capital Plan, Development Levies (in Downtown South and potentially both city-wide and Victory Square), and Community Amenity Contributions negotiated through rezonings. There may also be funds required as a condition of development approval from major projects, such as the Trade and Convention Centre or the Port Lands redevelopment. The use of these funds is to be determined by the City, in consultation with the community, for housing and recreation. There may also be opportunities for linking density bonusing to funding for specific low-income housing projects. Given these various sources, maintaining the target of 150-200 units a year for low-income singles city-wide, is an achievable goal for the future as long as senior government funding to develop social housing is available. It should be endorsed by both the City and the Province.

As discussed in Section 1, the 1-for-1 replacement is fundamental to successfully achieving both the market housing and securing the future of the low-income community. Building more new low-income projects in this area allows the conversion or demolition of more SROs, which are socially and economically obsolete and an undesirable form of housing. New projects in this area would enable more aggressive enforcement which could result in SRO closures. The SRA By-law is currently serving to slow conversions, but it is important that alternatives to SRO living be developed in the area.

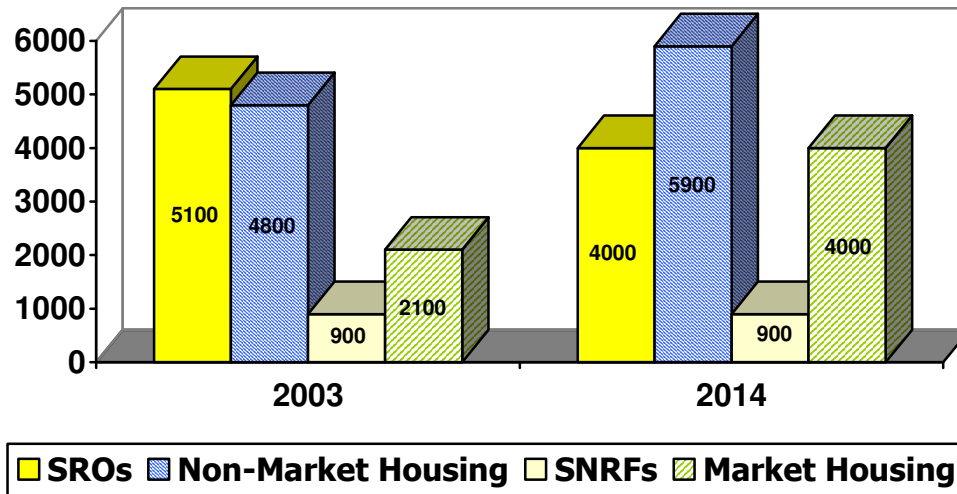
It is recommended that the goals for social housing serving low-income singles be about 90-110 units a year for this area, 30-40 for Downtown South and 30-50 for other areas in the city. This is the equivalent of 1-2 projects per year in the Downtown Eastside. The projected development of social housing and SRO loss is shown on the chart below.

The plan envisions more market and replacement social housing in the area in the next 10 years, and the Downtown Eastside is likely to see increased development activity in general. More market housing should be encourage, in particular home ownership and rental housing affordable to middle incomes.

The plan recommends that a community advisory committee be formed to provide input on the implementation of the Housing Plan, and to give feedback on development proposals in light of community interests. This body's mandate could be expanded to

address other issues in the Downtown Eastside, or it could be integrated with existing structures. The creation of this body is discussed in chapter 10.

Housing Mix, 2003-2014



In summary, the plan calls for the 1-for-1 replacement of SROs with low-income housing and maintaining a total of 10,000 units of housing affordable to low-income singles and families, both in the short-term and the long term, and the integration of market housing with a mix of rental units, live-work and condos. The plan provides a balance amongst the diverse interests and envisions an area in which the various communities can continue to co-exist but with an increased sense of security, health and togetherness. The plan also recommends regular monitoring and community engagement to keep a close watch on the attainment of these objectives.

POLICIES/ACTIONS

11.1 Maintain the historical level of 150-200 units per year for social housing for singles within the City of Vancouver. Encourage the Province to re-commit to this goal, and that the Federal Government re-establish its funding for new low-income social housing.

11.2 Of the singles social housing within the city, target 90-110 units for the Downtown Eastside, 30-40 units for Downtown South and 30-50 units for other areas of the city.

11.3 Over the first five years, encourage the development of 5-10 social housing projects and 5 SRO purchases/renovations. City funds should assist financially to meet these targets through partnerships and considering using all possible funding sources including Capital Plan, Development Cost Levies, Community Amenity Contributions, major project contributions and density bonusing. The City's share could be on the order of \$3 million per year.

11.4 Implement a program to issue a monthly public report on developments in the Downtown Eastside.

12. IMPLEMENTATION

#	ACTION	WHEN	WHO
MIX			
3.1	Replace old SROs on with low-income social housing on a 1-for-1 basis and facilitate the integration of market housing (expected to be about 100-120 units/year). This general principle applies to the overall area, but will be manifested differently in the sub-areas.	On-going	Housing, Planning
3.2	Facilitate the provision of moderate-cost rental accommodation in market development, both through purpose-built rental buildings and condominiums which are purchased as investments.	On-going	Housing, Planning
3.3	<p>Take action to encourage more affordable housing especially for singles in other parts of the city, the region and the province by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering zoning and other changes which would encourage more affordable low-income singles housing and supportive housing throughout the city. An example is the recent policy work facilitating secondary suites in all single family areas. • Ensuring that low-income housing is situated in other neighbourhoods by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Actively considering the provision of low-income singles housing and complementary health care and social services outside the Downtown Eastside during city-wide and neighbourhood planning programs. ○ Developing a city-wide housing plan for low-income urban singles and supportive housing. ○ Considering the use of bonuses, housing agreements, and community amenity contributions to provide low-income singles housing when developing new area-wide or site-specific zoning, and allocating 	On-going	Housing, Planning, Vancouver Agreement, Council, GVRD

	<p>Development Cost Levies for low-income singles housing where appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishing a task force of elected officials from the three levels of government, the GVHC (Greater Vancouver Housing Corporation) and the GVRD (Greater Vancouver Regional District), and community and business leaders throughout the region to meet with other municipalities to encourage housing for low-income singles in their home communities. 		
3.4	<p>Establish a review of Housing Plan Policies and indicators of community health, safety and liveability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor housing development and indicators of health, safety and liveability through the annual Downtown Eastside Monitoring Report. • Establish a community-based public engagement program to review and provide feedback on Housing Plan policies and objectives, and to review development activity in the area with implications for housing. 	Fall 2005	Housing, Planning
THE FUTURE OF SROs			
4.1	Urge the Provincial and Federal Governments to restore funding for the creation of new social housing for low-income singles to replace existing SROs.	On-going	Vancouver Agreement, Council
4.2	Urge the Provincial and Federal Governments to restore funding for the purchase of SROs and their conversion into social housing for low-income singles.	On-going	Vancouver Agreement, Council
4.3	Purchase one SRO per year in the Downtown Eastside and provide funding to upgrade to self-contained social housing units under non-profit or City management. Give special consideration to those on the Heritage Register, those in historic districts, and hotels with liquor licenses that can be closed or transferred.	On-going	Housing, Planning, Real Estate
4.4	Encourage most SROs to be replaced while maintaining current levels of housing in the Plan area targeted to low-income singles. In the longer term there will continue	On-going	Housing, Planning

	to be a role for some SROs to serve people who do not want a kitchen or larger space, do not want to live in government-subsidized housing or are newcomers.		
4.5	Continue to implement the SRA By-law and monitor its impact on the rate of conversion/demolition of SRA units. Make adjustments where necessary to prevent excessive loss and achieve appropriate replacement.	On-going	Housing, Planning
4.6	Encourage the improvement of the maintenance and management of SROs by:		
4.6.1	Urge the Federal Government to increase funding and to revise the Rooming House Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) to be more effective in securing the SRO stock for low-income singles. A condition of RRAP funding should be that renovated units remain affordable to low-income tenants.	Fall 2005	Housing
4.6.2	Work with training institutions and housing societies to develop courses and workshops on SRO management which could lead to good management certification.	Fall 2005	Housing, Vancouver Agreement
4.6.3	<p>Review the Standards of Maintenance By-law and enforcement procedures to determine how the standards in the hotels could be improved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use stiffer penalties and fines for non-complying landlords for failure to upkeep common areas and washrooms, and general building maintenance; • establish a municipal ticketing system with fines to address specific By-law violations, with tickets issued by City and Fire Inspectors, and Police; • work with MHR to prevent issuance of shelter allowance cheques to landlords for individual vacated rooms that are found to be unliveable; • obtain the power for the City inspectors to close down individual rooms 	Fall 2005- Spring 2006	Housing, Licence and Inspections, Vancouver Agreement

	<p>(this authority is currently available only to Health Inspectors at the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obtain the power for the City inspectors to post “Do Not Occupy” notices on vacated rooms until repairs are done; and • require a hotel management certificate for new operators of SROs as a condition of receiving a business license and as a requirement for SROs reopening after closure from enforcement action. 		
4.6.4	Continue the targeting and joint response to problem hotels by the City’s Coordinated Enforcement Team.	On-going	Housing, Planning, Licence and Inspections, CET
4.6.5	Use Housing Agreements ensuring good management, rent limits, and security of SRO buildings in exchange for requests to change existing liquor licenses or as a condition of an SRA Permit.	On-going	Housing
4.6.6	Ensure that SRO owners know that alternative building by-law requirements are available when SRO buildings are upgraded and maintained as low-income housing. The Vancouver Building By-law permits fire and life safety relaxations in SROs and waives the requirement for a full seismic upgrade provided all floors and beams are substantially connected to the walls and ceilings.	On-going	Housing, Planning, Chief Building Official
4.6.7	Recommend that the Provincial Government raise the shelter allowance for tenants in hotels and non-profit housing that meet certain conditions. This would include 24-hour security with trained staff, well managed and maintained buildings and those under non-profit management. These conditions could be documented through a report-card system developed and implemented by the Province and municipal inspectors.	On-going	Housing, Vancouver Agreement
4.6.8	Encourage the Provincial Government to provide tools, incentives and support	Fall 2005	Housing,

	services to other municipalities to generate an absolute increase of low-income singles housing in the region and province, and in the city of Vancouver outside of the Downtown.		Vancouver Agreement
4.7	Increase the minimum number of square feet per bed in the Standards of Maintenance By-law from 50 square feet to 80 square feet.	Fall 2005	Housing, Planning, Licence and Inspections
4.8	Encourage the Province to restore funding for organizations that assist tenants in resolving disputes and accessing the arbitration process through the Residential Tenancy Office.	Fall 2005	Housing, Vancouver Agreement
4.9	When considering cultural or heritage bonuses and incentives in buildings with low-income housing, ensure that the low-income housing resource (quality or quantity) is not reduced and, if possible, enhanced.	On-going	Housing, Planning, Heritage
4.10	Encourage participation in the Heritage Incentive Program by owners of SROs that are on the Heritage Register while ensuring the preservation or replacement of existing low-income housing.	On-going	Housing, Planning, Heritage
4.11	Fund a feasibility study for developing an SRO Incentive Program where owners of non-heritage SROs can qualify for incentives such as property tax relief and façade grants to upgrade their buildings in exchange for entering into a Housing Agreement with the City. If such a program is viable, develop an implementation plan.	Fall 2005	Housing, Planning
4.12	Explore new commercial uses at grade to improve the economic viability of SRO Hotels with the intention of maintaining them as low-income housing. Adjust the zoning schedules where appropriate to accommodate these uses and explore relaxations for parking and loading. If possible, ground floor uses should provide goods and services to meet the needs of low-income residents of the area.	Fall 2005	Housing, Planning
4.13	Work with the Province to find ways to restore relocation and advocacy services which were cut when the Provincial Government cut funding, and confirm the City as	Fall 2005	Vancouver Agreement

	a co-funder of these services.		
4.14	Develop a program to help SRO owners fill their vacant rooms with low-income singles, and urge the Province and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority to participate in such a program by offering services to the prospective tenants.	Fall 2005 – Spring 2006	Housing, Planning
SOCIAL HOUSING			
5.1	Encourage the Provincial Government and the Federal Government to re-initiate their programs for the construction and operation of social housing targeted to low-income urban singles for the Downtown Eastside, other areas in the city, and throughout the province, and to commit additional funds for singles housing in the region and province.	On-going	Vancouver Agreement, Council
5.2	Re-establish the City/Province partnership to enable at least one new social housing project, or a minimum of 100 units, per year to be developed in this area.	On-going	Housing, Vancouver Agreement
5.3	The City should purchase at least one site a year for the development of new social housing and consider making the sites available to the Province or Federal Government for 60 year leases at a nominal pre-paid rent.	On-going	Housing, Real Estate
5.4	Facilitate access to social housing for existing residents by:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving priority to existing residents for new social housing on City-owned land by including this requirement in the lease arrangements between the City and the non-profit society. The City should recommend that BC Housing develop a similar requirement for social housing projects on non-City land. 	Fall 2005	Housing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the non-profit societies and the Province to ensure that existing residents are given priority in existing social housing. This could be done, for example, by creating and sharing of a community registry for Downtown Eastside housing, and by creating a local housing office overseen by a collective of non-profits. 	Fall 2005 – Spring 2006	Housing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the Province to provide funding to enable more “hard-to-house” people to maintain their tenancies by increasing training for housing staff to deal with problem behaviours and/or increasing supports provided by community agencies in this area and elsewhere in the city and region. 	Spring 2006	Housing, Social Planning
5.5	Seek support from the Greater Vancouver Regional District, Union of British Columbia Municipalities, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (e.g., National Housing Policy Options Team), business and community organizations, as well as national, and provincial housing organizations, in urging the Federal and Provincial Governments to return to a social housing program focused on local priorities including supportive housing for the mentally ill and drug addicted, and housing for low-income singles.	Fall 2005 – Spring 2006	Housing, Vancouver Agreement, Council, FCM
5.6	Consider increased funding from the Capital Plan for housing and prioritize low-income urban singles projects both in this area and elsewhere in the city.	On-going	Housing, Council
5.7	Initiate a low-income singles social housing project within two years in the city but outside the area, and one per year thereafter.	On-going	Housing, Real Estate
5.8	Enhance the existing registry for social housing and link it to the local list for the Downtown Eastside discussed in 5.4.	Fall 2005 – Spring 2006	Housing
5.9	Support building 90% of future social housing projects for singles and 10% for families in the Downtown Eastside to reflect the area population and the role of the Downtown Eastside in the city, and to achieve 1-for-1 replacement of SROs.	On-going	Housing
5.10	Encourage the Provincial Government to provide dedicated and stable funding for services to support individuals and families in at least 3,200 additional social housing and rent supplement units city-wide. These services should be used to support people who are homeless, (including chronically homeless), and people with mental health issues, addictions, HIV/AIDS, brain/head injuries, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder, or multiple challenges, in permanent housing.	Fall 2005	Housing, Vancouver Agreement, Council

5.11	Work with the Ministry of Health and the Coastal Health Authority to identify what proportion of these supportive housing units should be in the Downtown Eastside to provide stability to local residents with addictions, physical disabilities and/or mental health disorders.	Fall - Winter 2005	Housing, Social Planning, VCH, MOH
5.12	Encourage the Provincial Government to provide a range in type and intensity of supports to meet the diversity of needs of local residents in the Downtown Eastside. A proportion should be the intensive ACT (assertive community treatment) approach to move homeless persons from the streets and shelters into permanent housing with appropriate supports.	Fall 2005	Housing, Council
5.13	Encourage the creation of additional supportive housing projects outside the Downtown Eastside targeted to people with addictions, physical disabilities and/or mental health disorders who would likely live in the Plan area.	On-going	Housing, Social Planning, Planning
5.14	Create more opportunities for the development of supported housing in partnership with senior governments (e.g. acquire sites, provide reduced cost or free land, raise money through the capital plan, ensure zoning is compatible, help address NIMBY issues, and show leadership).	On-going	Housing, Social Planning, Planning, Real Estate, Council, Vancouver Agreement
5.15	Ensure that various forms of housing are built to meet the needs of First Nations people and women living in the Downtown Eastside.	On-going	Housing
5.16	Locate social housing for youth mainly outside the area, with some limited housing within the Downtown Eastside targeted to youth in the area. Work with the Ministry of Human Resources to encourage appropriate forms of housing for underage youth (16-19 years) outside the Downtown Eastside and discourage youth in difficulty from coming into the area.	Fall 2005	Housing, Social Planning, Planning

MARKET HOUSING

6.1	Focus market residential development in heritage buildings rather than on vacant sites by encouraging developers to use incentives such as the Heritage Incentive Program.	On-going	Planning
6.2	Encourage the development of market rental units using incentives such as parking, units size, density and height relaxations, and secure their rental status through Housing Agreements for a minimum of 20 years.	On-going	Planning, Housing
6.3	Evaluate zoning amendments to permit Commercial Live-work in Victory Square, Gastown, Chinatown and the Hastings Street portion of the DEOD, and ensure that these amendments do not compromise the ability to achieve 1-for-1 replacement of SROs with social housing for low-income singles.	Summer 2005	Planning, Housing
6.4	Consider encouraging purpose-built student housing, particularly if additional educational institutions are established or expanded in or near the area. This could prevent competition from students over the existing stock of SROs or other affordable housing in the area.	Summer - Fall 2005	Planning, Housing
SMALLER SUITES			
7.1	Gradually replace SROs with a range of better quality housing, including traditional-sized social housing, small suites and renovated SROs. (Small suites are under 400 square feet).	On-going	Housing, Planning
7.2	Amend by-laws to permit suite sizes to be relaxable to 275 square feet for new construction if the design and location of the unit provides satisfactory living accommodation, having regard for the type of occupancy proposed. Develop guidelines for reviewing proposals such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a maximum of about 200 small units under a single management structure • maximizing the number of units at shelter allowance levels • assurances of good management e.g. non-profit management, good security and trained staff 	Fall 2005	Housing, Planning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shelter allowance units secured by a housing agreement for a significant length of time • linkages to supports such as home care and onsite house-keeping • ample amenity space • provision of basic furniture, with emphasis on built-ins and adequate fixtures and appliances 		
7.3	Following the small suite post occupancy evaluation, review if small suites should be about 30% of the SRO replacement stock.	Following the construction of small suite projects	Housing, Planning
7.4	Amend by-laws to ensure that new units contain bathrooms and cooking facilities.	Fall 2005	Housing, Planning
7.5	Review the Parking By-law to ensure standards are appropriate for small suites targeted to low-income singles.	Fall 2005	Housing, Planning, Engineering
7.6	Recommend that the Provincial Government raise the shelter allowance for tenants living in new buildings with small suites that meet certain conditions. This would include a specific number of units renting at the shelter allowance rate, 24-hour security with trained staff, well managed and maintained buildings or those under non-profit management.	Fall 2005	Housing, Council, Vancouver Agreement
7.7	Consider grants or property tax relief for small suites secured by a Housing Agreement for developments accommodating low-income singles and couples.	Spring 2006	Housing
SPECIAL NEEDS RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES			
8.1	Encourage the Provincial Government to provide housing, rent supplements, facilities and treatment for people in need of support, including those with special needs in other parts of the city, region and province so that they can be served in their home communities.	Fall 2005	Housing, Council, Vancouver Agreement
8.2	Initiate a review of city-wide SNRF zoning definitions and guidelines, including	Fall 2005	Housing, Planning,

	distance requirements (particularly for higher density areas) to ensure that the land use policies reflect community needs and objectives, particularly in the context of the Four Pillars drug strategy and the health initiatives of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and the Ministry of Health.		Social Planning
8.3	Recognizing that SNRFs are an important part of the housing continuum, remove the moratorium on SNRFs in the DEOD and add SNRFs as a conditional use in the HA-1, HA-1A and HA-2 zoning schedules.	Fall 2005	Housing, Planning, Social Planning
8.4	Ensure that all SNRF projects in the Downtown Eastside are targeted to meeting the needs of local residents rather than attracting clients from elsewhere in the city and region.	On-going	Housing, Planning, Social Planning
8.5	Work with Vancouver Coastal Health to develop a supportive housing and special needs strategy for the Downtown Eastside.	Fall 2005 – Spring 2006	Housing, Planning, Social Planning
8.6	Increase shelter capacity outside of the Downtown Eastside with the intent of providing shelter for people who are homeless, while focusing resources on addressing the root causes of homelessness, such as inadequate housing, income and services as recommended in the Homeless Action Plan. Any shelter expansion in the Downtown Eastside should be linked to housing and services, and targeted to underserved groups such as Aboriginals and others.	Fall – Winter 2005	Housing, Planning, Social Planning
SUB-AREAS: VICTORY SQUARE			
9.1.1	As a minimum, replace 620 existing SRO units (December 2003) on a 1-for-1 basis with non-market housing for low-income singles.	On-going	Housing, Planning
9.1.2	Provide height and density relaxations for the creation of non-market housing. The current maximum FSR for residential is 3.0. This should be relaxed to a maximum of 5.0 for social housing projects, and the height limit relaxed to 100’.	Fall 2005	Planning, Housing
9.1.3	Use the Heritage Incentive Programs to encourage renovation and upgrading of heritage buildings for residential uses.	On-going	Housing, Planning, Heritage

9.1.4	Encourage commercial live-work residential development and facilitate the creation of 25 rent-secured artist live-work units.	On-going	Housing, Planning
9.1.5	Secure funding for low-income housing from Development Cost Levies (DCLs) applied to new construction in Victory Square or elsewhere in the city if applicable.	On-going	Housing, Planning
9.1.6	See draft <i>Victory Square Concept Plan</i> , March 2005.		
SUB-AREAS: GASTOWN			
9.2.1	Replace the stock of low-income housing with better quality housing. Recognize that while 1-for-1 replacement is a goal, given heritage and other objectives and land prices, the replacement of 1,200 SRO units within this sub-area is unlikely.	On-going	Housing, Planning
9.2.2	Encourage market housing in restored heritage buildings and encourage participation in the Heritage Incentive Program.	On-going	Housing, Planning, Heritage
9.2.3	Recognize housing objectives when implementing heritage policies, and vice-versa.	On-going	Housing, Planning, Heritage
9.2.4	Amend the zoning to permit on-site density and height relaxations for low-income housing both for new development and for rehabilitation of existing buildings.	Fall 2005	Housing, Planning
9.2.5	Encourage the social housing that is provided in Gastown to be located in renovated heritage buildings as well as on vacant sites.	On-going	Housing, Planning, Heritage
9.2.6	Ensure that the Heritage Incentive Program supports and is applicable to the renovation and preservation of low-income housing, especially SROs, and the creation of new social housing in heritage buildings.	On-going	Housing, Planning, Heritage
SUB-AREAS: CHINATOWN			
9.3.1	Replace the stock of low-income housing with better quality housing. Recognize that, while 1-for-1 replacement is a goal, given heritage and other objectives, ownership	On-going	Housing, Planning

	patterns and land prices, the replacement of 500 SRO units within Chinatown is unlikely.		
9.3.2	Encourage market housing in restored heritage buildings and encourage participation in the Heritage Incentive Program	On-going	Housing, Planning, Heritage
9.3.3	Encourage SROs to be retained and converted to social housing.	On-going	Housing, Planning, Heritage
9.3.4	Recognize housing objectives when implementing heritage policies in Chinatown, and vice-versa.	Fall 2005 – Spring 2006	Housing, Planning, Engineering
9.3.5	Provide incentives such as parking and height relaxations for developments which include rental housing and/or achieve heritage objectives.	Fall 2005 – Spring 2006	Housing, Planning
9.3.6	Amend the zoning to permit on-site height and density bonuses for provision of low-income housing both for new development and for the rehabilitation of existing buildings.	Fall 2005 – Spring 2006	Housing, Planning
SUB-AREAS: DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE-OPPENHEIMER			
9.4.1	Initiate a review of the Downtown-Eastside Oppenheimer District Official Development Plan to ensure the ability of the zoning to secure at least 1-for-1 replacement of at least 2,000 existing SRO units with housing for low-income singles with the capacity to make up the shortfall in 1-for-1 replacement elsewhere in the city. Amend the ODP, if necessary, to reflect the conclusions of the review.	Fall 2005 – Fall 2006	Housing, Planning, Social Planning
9.4.2	Amend the Zoning and Development By-law to remove the residential restriction up to 5 FSR in the Main and Hastings Streets area of the DEOD with the requirement that the portion over 3 FSR be 100% social housing (the first 3 FSR has to adhere to the existing 20% requirement).	Fall 2005	Housing, Planning
9.4.3	Encourage participation in the Heritage Incentive Program for properties on Hastings Street, particularly those with affordable housing or SROs.	On-going	Housing, Planning, Heritage

SUB-AREAS: THORNTON PARK			
9.5.1	Examine opportunities for the growth of a modest income neighbourhood with a variety of housing forms including live-work, market condominiums, SROs and social housing.	Summer – Fall 2006	Housing, Planning
9.5.2	Amend existing zoning or develop new zoning which provides incentives for affordable rental housing, including live-work.	Summer – Fall 2006	Housing, Planning
9.5.3	Consider the inclusion of low-income artist live-work units in future zoning for Thornton Park which would be in addition to the 1-for-1 replacement of existing low-income housing.	Summer – Fall 2006	Housing, Planning
SUB-AREAS: STRATHCONA			
9.6.1	No changes from the Strathcona Policies as they are consistent with overall Housing Plan directions. The RT-3 zoning has been implemented as recommended. In the event that site-specific rezoning applications are made for the industrial area east of the BNR tracks, mixed-income and family housing will be encouraged.		
SUB-AREAS: INDUSTRIAL			
9.7.1	Area to be retained as industrial use. However, should mixed-use industrial and residential developments be explored in the future, market and social housing potential should both be evaluated as an incentive to enhance the area's industrial viability.		
SUB-AREAS: HASTINGS CORRIDOR			
9.8.1	Initiate a rezoning to allow a medium-density mixed-use zone allowing commercial, retail, light industrial and residential uses, with an emphasis on SRO replacement and affordable rental projects. Consideration should be given to issues of liveability adjacent to heavy industry to the north and to the impact on the RT-3 residential areas to the south. Ensure that appropriate public amenities are incorporated into the rezoning analysis.	Winter 2005 – Summer 2006	Housing, Planning

9.8.2	<p>Re-affirm the following 1992 Strathcona Plan policies which are consistent with the Housing Plan objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New housing development should emphasize affordability. • Maintain affordable housing for low-to-moderate-income households. • There should be opportunities for a variety of new housing types with a balanced market, non-market mix. • Careful design must be used to deal with traffic and industrial adjacencies (as was done successfully in buildings further west on Hastings such as Shon Yee Place and Jenny Pentland Place). • Further examination is needed of community facilities, infrastructure and services necessary to ensure liveability. 	Fall 2005	Housing, Planning
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT			
10.1	In the short term, engage with existing community organizations and bodies to provide ongoing consultation on the implementation of the Housing Plan. Provide regular monitoring reports on housing indicators every two or three years.	2005	Housing, Planning
10.2	In the medium term, develop a terms of reference and establish a community-based advisory body on the implementation of Housing Plan policies. This body will review development proposals and policy initiatives with potential housing implications in the Downtown Eastside.	Spring 2006	Housing, Planning
10.3	In the longer term, explore the integration of various advisory bodies in the Downtown Eastside with the intention of providing comprehensive and holistic community input on housing, economic revitalization, heritage, social service, public realm and health issues.	2006 - 2007	Housing, Planning
CONCLUSIONS			
11.1	Maintain the historical level of 150-200 units per year for social housing for singles within the City of Vancouver. Encourage the Province to re-commit to this goal, and	On-going	Housing, Planning, Council,

	that the Federal Government re-establish its funding for new low-income social housing.		Vancouver Agreement
11.2	Of the singles social housing within the city, target 90-110 units for the Downtown Eastside, 30-40 units for Downtown South and 30-50 units for other areas of the city.	To 2009	Housing, Planning, Council, Real Estate
11.3	Over the first five years, encourage the development of 5-10 social housing projects and 5 SRO purchases/renovations. City funds should assist financially to meet these targets through partnerships and considering using all possible funding sources including Capital Plan, Development Cost Levies, Community Amenity Contributions, major project contributions and density bonusing. The City's share could be on the order of \$3 million per year.	To 2009	Housing, Planning, Council, Real Estate
11.4	Implement a program to issue a monthly public report on developments in the Downtown Eastside.	Fall 2005	Housing, Planning

APPENDIX A: SOCIAL HOUSING CAPACITY ANALYSIS

In 2004 staff initiated an analysis of housing capacity in the Downtown Eastside with the intention of confirming the ability to achieve the 1-for-1 replacement of approximately 5,000 SRO units currently in the area with new self-contained social housing units. This would require approximately 70 sites with 100' frontages at 3.0 FSR. There was no timeframe given; this was simply a capacity analysis based on current/anticipated zoning densities and 2004 land values from the BC Assessment Authority (BCAA).

Methodology

The analysis began by removing all parcels that were considered unlikely to redevelop. These included utilities, schools, parks, heritage buildings and existing non-market housing, as well as all sites in RT-3, I-2, M-2 and CD-1 zoned areas. Sites with less than 50' frontages were also removed from consideration as they are generally uneconomic for redevelopment as social housing.

Using BCAA assessed values, parcels were selected that fell below a benchmark dollar value per square foot buildable given current densities or, in the case of Victory Square and the Hastings Corridor, the densities proposed in this plan. The densities used were:

FSR	
DD	4.5
DEOD	2.5
DEOD - sub 1	4.5
FC-1	2.5
HA-1	2.5
HA-1A	3.0
HA-2	2.5
M-1	2.5

The benchmark cost per square foot buildable was \$35 per square foot. Sites whose 2004 assessed value (land and improvements) resulted in a development that cost less than \$35 per square foot to build were considered candidates for development as social housing.

Analysis and Discussion

Initial analysis suggested that if all redevelopable sites were developed into social housing a total of 9,500 units at 500 square feet per unit could be built. The largest capacity exists in the DEOD, Victory Square and Hastings Corridor sub-areas. It was evident that little capacity was available in Gastown and Chinatown due to high land costs, heritage constraints and small lot development. Sites for only 500 units were identified in the Historic Areas.

What this analysis suggests is that while there are a number of potential redevelopment sites that are within social housing budgets, there is not an over-abundance of suitable sites. The policy objective is to replace 5,000 existing units with social housing in the area. The ability to do so is dependent on a number of assumptions:

- That sufficient sites are actually available to the market. Some of the sites may be long-term investments or important assets to their owners. Others may be unsuitable for development due to environment conditions (e.g., soil contamination). Further, if multiple parcels must be consolidated into a single site and there are different owners, the inability to acquire one parcel may compromise a much larger single site.
- That demand for developing other housing forms is passive. Yet as development opportunities diminish in the downtown core and elsewhere in the city, pressure will come to bear on the area and sites will be purchased for market developments, both condo and live/work.
- That governments or non-profits have the resources to purchase sufficient sites in a timely fashion. The simple cost of acquiring sufficient land for 5,000 units at 500 square feet per unit and \$35 per square foot buildable is \$87,500,000.

There are other important observations to note:

- It is clear that some sub-areas are not likely to see 1-for-1 replacement within their boundaries unless the City is willing to pay higher prices for the land, or strong incentives are put in place to support social housing. Chinatown, for example, is heavily constrained by heritage buildings and high land values. The same is true for Gastown, which only has opportunities on the periphery adjacent to the DEOD. The figure for the M-1 area reflects the bullet below.
- The greatest amount of capacity is in the DEOD, where existing zoning and conditions in the area have kept land prices down. Fractured ownership will provide a hurdle of some sites (11 identified sites have 4 or more owners).
- The M-1 along Hastings Corridor is clearly an important opportunity, and the pending rezoning to mixed-use residential can provide significant capacity for new social housing development, particularly if incentives are in place. There are questions there, however, about industrial adjacencies. The Hastings Corridor east of Heatley borders the heavy industrial M-2 zone, and it is therefore like that a number of the sites on the north side of Hastings will be inappropriate for residential uses. There are 40 sites on the north side with a total buildable of roughly 750,000 square feet resulting in the possible capacity of 1,500 units. It is a safe assumption that one-half of these sites would be unsuitable for residential uses, reducing the total capacity by 750 units.

Conclusions

It is difficult to assume that because there is a hypothetical capacity of 9,000 units in the Downtown Eastside, the 1-for-1 replacement of SROs is possible. The reality of securing sufficient sites is dependent on:

- the ability of government or non-profits to buy land;
- sites available to the market (e.g., owner willingness to sell, additionally challenging on sites with multiple owners) and in reasonable environmental condition; and
- a relative absence of competing interests in the land driving up land costs (e.g., developers of market housing).

The data do suggest that there will be a redistribution of low-income units as there simply are limited sites available for social housing in some sub-areas unless government or non-profits are willing to pay more than \$35 per square foot buildable. The capacity figures are also based on implied zoning changes, notably the rezoning of the M-1 area to a schedule that supports 2.5 FSR residential and the social housing bonusing provisions in Victory Square.

APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY DIRECTIONS DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE DRAFT HOUSING PLAN

In 2001, Community Directions created a draft Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside. The following table compares the measures identified in the Community Directions Plan with the policy recommendations in the City's Housing Plan.

COMMUNITY DIRECTIONS HOUSING PLAN	HOUSING PLAN FOR THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE
MEASURE #1: ENSURING THAT THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE REMAINS ACCESSIBLE TO LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS INTO THE FUTURE	
A) New Housing – A housing program with replacement and renovation targets that maintain a low-income housing stock at historical levels of at least 10,000 units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan area to maintain at least 10,000 low-income units • Advocates for re-establishing funding by senior governments for social housing targeted to low-income singles • Confirms 1-for-1 replacement of SROs with social housing in the Downtown Eastside • Continued purchase of sites for social housing by the City
B) Renovation and Ownership – Increase the number of non-profit owned and operated hotels by establishing an SRO purchase program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the purchase of one SRO per year and transfer management to non-profit or government • Encourages senior governments to engage in SRO purchase
MEASURE #2 CONVERSION AND DEMOLITION CONTROL BY-LAW FOR RESIDENTIAL HOTELS	
The City enact a Residential Hotel Demolition and Conversion Control By-law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City adopted the SRA Conversion and Demolition By-law in 2003
MEASURE #3: "AS WOODWARD'S GOES, SO GOES THE NEIGHBOURHOOD"	
Any revitalization program designed for the Downtown Eastside must consider securing the Woodward's building for affordable housing and community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Woodward's Building was purchased from the Province in 2003 and is currently being redeveloped. It will contain 200 social housing units, community-oriented

	services, retail and educational uses
MEASURE #4 ZONING FOR COMMUNITY GOALS	
A reaffirmation by the City that the DEOD be maintained. However, future affordable housing must continue to be distributed throughout the Downtown Eastside, not just the DEOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports a revision of the DEOD to ensure a minimum 1-for-1 replacement of SROs with social housing • Supports low-income housing in all sub-areas with the exception of the Industrial Sub-area where residential uses are not supported
MEASURE #5: LAND TRUST-BUILDING EQUITY	
That a revolving fund be established in order to assist non-profits in the acquisition of property that is going to be held in trust for affordable housing projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defers to work underway through the Economic Revitalization Strategy that may develop a housing element • Continued support of non-profits functioning like community development corporations
That a pilot project be established wherein a number of existing housing projects in the Downtown Eastside situated on City, Provincial or Federal land be transferred into a land trust to demonstrate the ability of a land trust to build equity that can help finance future projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City to continue using current structures, such as the Property Endowment Fund and the Affordable Housing Fund, to support the construction of social housing
MEASURE #6: STANDARDS OF MAINTENANCE	
That the community, local and provincial governments work together to bring standards of management to the residential hotels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened enforcement tools coupled with SRO incentives to encourage upgrading and maintenance
MEASURE #7: LIVEABLE REPLACEMENT UNITS	
Maintain dwelling unit size standards (320 square feet relaxable to 275 square feet), and commitment by the City to relax this only when test criteria are met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for relaxations to 275 square feet if established conditions are met.
MEASURE #8: RENT STABILIZATION FOR RESIDENTIAL HOTELS	
Ensure effective application of the existing rent protection legislation to the residential hotels through vigorous public education and test cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for increases to the shelter allowance • Advocate for greater rent controls as a condition of RRAP