



CITY OF VANCOUVER

POLICY REPORT
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Date: April 26, 2005
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Meeting Date: May 25, 2005

TO: Vancouver City Council

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

SUBJECT: Revised Homeless Action Plan

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve the revised Homeless Action Plan with priority for three strategic directions including:
- Reducing Barriers to Accessing Welfare by the Homeless (Actions 1-3);
 - Developing 3,200 Units of Supportive Housing (Actions 18, 27-29); and
 - Increasing Mental Health and Addiction Services (Actions 45-54).
- B. THAT the Mayor on behalf of Council, write to the Premier, Government of British Columbia and the appropriate Ministers urging the Province to implement actions identified in Appendix A, with priority to:
- Reducing Barriers to Accessing Welfare by the Homeless (Actions 1-3);
 - Developing 3,200 Units of Supportive Housing (Actions 18, 27-29); and
 - Increasing Mental Health and Addiction Services (Actions 45-54).

AND FURTHER advising that the City of Vancouver is willing to work in partnership with the Province to implement particularly Action 3, a pilot project to coordinate outreach to assist eligible homeless people to access BC Employment and Assistance benefits.

- C. THAT the Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to the Ministers responsible for Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Canada Mortgage and

Housing Corporation and Western Diversification urging the Federal Government implement actions identified in Appendix B, with priority to:

- Developing 3,200 Units of Supportive Housing (Actions 18, 27-29).
- D. THAT the Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to the Chief Executive Officer, Vancouver Coastal Health urging Vancouver Coastal Health to implement the actions identified in Appendix C with priority to:
- Developing 3,200 Units of Supportive Housing (Actions 27 - 29); and
 - Increasing Mental Health and Addiction Services (Actions 45-54).
- E. THAT the Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to the Chair, Greater Vancouver Regional District and Regional Mayors urging them to assist in implementing the Regional Homelessness Plan and to support the City's Homeless Action Plan.
- F. THAT the Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness supporting its implementation of Actions 79 - 84 relating to research, planning, regional capacity building and the need to address homelessness across the region through implementation of the Regional Homelessness Plan.
- G. THAT Council approve the creation of a regular full time Planner II position, Housing Centre, to implement actions in the Homeless Action Plan, the position level subject to a classification review by the General Manager of Human Resources. The estimated annual cost is \$79,500 (prorated for 2005 estimate is \$39,800 which includes salaries and fringe benefits) plus start-up costs of \$5,000. Source of funding for 2005 costs of \$44,800 is the 2005 Contingency Reserve. Funding for fiscal 2006 and future years to be added to the Housing Centre's operating budget without offset.
- H. THAT Council approve the funding of \$200,000 over two years for consultancies to complete this work from Homeless Action Plan, such as Action 22, a rental housing strategy; Action 68, eviction prevention strategies; and Action 69, expanded housing registry; funding of \$100,000 in 2005 to be provided from Contingency Reserve and \$100,000 be added to the Housing Centre's 2006 operating budget without offset.
- I. THAT the Director of the Housing Centre be requested to report back every two years on the progress on implementing the actions in the Homeless Action Plan.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The Homeless Action Plan has gone through an extensive review with the public and it is anticipated that it will greatly assist the City, other governments and the broader community to tackle the homeless situation. The majority of the plan implementation, however, is dependent on the level of Senior Government commitment as the underlying causes of

homelessness are within the jurisdiction of the Provincial and Federal governments. The City does not have the jurisdiction nor financial resources to change social assistance or increase incomes nor does it have the responsibility for mental health or addiction services - all of which are key to addressing the homeless problem. Of all levels of government, municipal government is least able to pay for these solutions because our primary source of revenue is limited to property taxes.

However, the City does have a role to play in addressing homelessness by collaborating with others. We can assist through our annual grants program; by helping community organizations to leverage funding from senior government; through the Housing Centre and its Tenant Assistance Program which provides support to those who need housing; and through purchasing and leasing sites to non-profit societies to develop social housing funded by senior governments.

For example, in the short term, the 2006-2008 Capital Plan submissions for two Action items - increasing the number of subsidized housing units and purchasing additional SRO rooms - both involve senior government funding. The total costs for projects suggested in this capital plan are estimated at \$80 million with \$20 million proposed to come from the City through funding from both capital plan and development cost levies. In general the recommendation to increase the number of subsidized housing units by 8,000 would require City funding of approximately \$10 million per year for the next ten years. The only funding sources come through the capital plan, development cost levies and community amenity contributions, and would be contingent on Senior Government funding for the majority of the costs. It should be noted that Capital Plan funding is limited because there are many competing demands for funds throughout the City, and there are limits on borrowing capacity.

This report outlines the City commitment of additional operating budget funding of \$144,800 (2005) and \$179,500 (2006) as City costs to support implementation of the plan.

The City Manager notes that the City supportive role in addressing homelessness will continue and expand by using resources identified specifically in recommendation G and H. Additional opportunities involve partnerships with the senior levels of government and these must be pursued.

Therefore, the City Manager RECOMMENDS approval of recommendations A through I.

COUNCIL POLICY

Council's housing priorities are low and modest income families with children, seniors, low-income singles living in downtown rooming houses and hotels, and those with mental or physical disabilities. The City has undertaken several initiatives to prevent homelessness, including development of new social housing and provision of community services.

SUMMARY and PURPOSE

In recognition of a worsening homelessness situation, City Council asked staff to prepare a Homeless Action Plan, which was received in draft form by Council in the fall 2004. The draft Plan was circulated for public comment and the revised Plan is attached. This report

recommends that the final Plan be approved with priority for three strategic directions including:

- Reducing Barriers to Accessing Welfare by the Homeless,
- Developing 3,200 Units of Supportive Housing and
- Increasing Health and Addiction Services.

This report also identifies how the Plan can be implemented.

BACKGROUND

On August 13, 2003 Council requested that a staff member be designated as the city's homeless policy co-ordinator to monitor homelessness and to recommend measures that are necessary to confront the problem.

On September 16, 2003 Council passed a comprehensive motion on housing and social diversity and inclusion and resolved that the City take action in a number of areas including the development of a homeless action plan for Vancouver.

On November 2, 2004 Council received the draft Homeless Action Plan and referred it for public review and report back with a revised final draft. The draft Plan proposed 86 recommendations focused on income, housing and support services, mirroring the 3 Ways to Home that are the foundation of the 2001 Regional Homelessness Plan. The Homeless Action Plan suggested that while homelessness has increased, it is a problem which is solvable, with collective will and adequate resources. City Council made two changes to the initial draft. The first related to Action 5 which recommended the Provincial Government help people transition to employment. The Council motion emphasized the importance of re-instating earnings exemptions for basic income assistance recipients and suggested the City assist the Province in doing this. The second change related to Action 23 on smaller suites which recommended support of smaller suites (below 320 s.f.). The Council motion replaced this action and reaffirmed the existing suite size policy for new construction, noting that smaller suites may be appropriate in renovated buildings.

DISCUSSION

1. Public Review Process

The draft Plan and accompanying City Council report were sent to over 300 people, organizations and government agencies. Staff attended meetings and/or made presentations with 14 groups.

Twenty six written submissions or e-mail messages were received and they are available at the City Clerk's office. Commentary was received from an array of interests. For example, feedback was received from business, (Vancouver Board of Trade, Downtown Vancouver Association, Tourism Vancouver); governments (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), Ministry of Human Resources, Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, Vancouver Coastal Health); the non-profit sector, (Coast, Triage, Carnegie, Tenants Rights Action Coalition, BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Working Committee on Poverty, National Council of Jewish Women of Canada), two City Council advisory groups (Planning Commission and Advisory Committee on Disability Issues), the

Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness and several Vancouver residents.

2. General feedback

There was overall support for the general directions of the plan. Several submissions appreciated the lead taken by the City and the comprehensiveness of the plan. For example, the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services noted the Plan's holistic approach in identifying root causes and interrelationships of factors contributing to homelessness. A private resident emphasized the importance of considering taxation, and particularly its effects on housing and land development. There was general agreement that all levels of government and the community need to take the homeless situation seriously and quickly move to implement the actions. For example, input from a Vancouver citizen suggested that it is a matter of priorities, noting that we spend more money on housing prisoners (*about \$155 - 250 per day*) than we are willing to spend on our homeless (*about \$20 - \$40 per day for supportive housing*). Tourism Vancouver noted that addressing homelessness is important to ensuring tourism remains a major economic generator for the region and job creator for its citizens. Several submissions recognized the need for decent incomes, housing and services to be available locally, not just in Vancouver, but in communities across BC and Canada, including in aboriginal communities. Some urged the City to move ahead even without the involvement of other levels of government (subcommittee of the Advisory Committee on Disabilities). Others, including private citizens, expressed concern that the City not take on functions that are the responsibility of other levels of government.

Several of the letters identified specific actions or areas which were particularly supported.

Many such as Coast Foundation agreed that jobs are key to reducing homelessness. The Carnegie Centre Community Association reported that many people are homeless because they cannot get jobs with decent wages and dignity. HRSDC noted that a comprehensive suite of interventions are needed, but it is difficult for clients to access employment services when basic needs are not met. A decent income was seen as essential and there was support for reducing the barriers to people accessing welfare by groups like the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness.

There was strong support for building new social housing. Vancouver Coastal Health is in agreement with the goal of providing approximately 3,200 supportive housing units and is interested in partnering with the City and others to implement this. The Vancouver Board of Trade also supported the recommendation to provide housing for the homeless more evenly across the city and in proximity to the services needed. The City Council Advisory Committee on Disability Issues supported land banking by the City to ensure that sufficient subsidized housing is built.

There was also feedback supporting the expansion of services for people with mental health and addictions. The Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee emphasized the need for expanded services and noted that it has funded several projects which do this. Vancouver Coastal Health concurs that an expansion of ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) services is needed as well as more supportive and transitional housing throughout the City. Vancouver Coastal Health also noted that they are reviewing the best way to meet the needs of

individuals from the point they enter substance withdrawal management, including the role of supportive housing.

Several submissions noted the importance of the partnerships in addressing homelessness. The Vancouver Board of Trade emphasized the need for governments to work cooperatively to solve the problem and noted that the Vancouver Agreement has identified housing/homelessness as one of its top priorities. A number of organizations indicated a willingness to work with the City and others on reducing homelessness. This was mentioned by the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Vancouver Coastal Health, the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, the Ministry of Human Resources, Greater Vancouver Regional Homelessness Steering Committee, Coast Foundation Society, and Downtown Vancouver Association.

The Ministry of Human Resources responded with general comments, as well as comments specifically on the action recommending the City to work with MHR on a pilot project to coordinate outreach to people who are street homeless to assist eligible people to access BC Employment and Assistance benefits (Action 3). The Ministry indicated a willingness to work with the City and review community data and determine the most appropriate approach to move forward with this type of strategy. This will be important given other input from organizations such as the Carnegie Centre Community Association and Vancouver Coastal Health which agreed with the plan's priority to reduce the barriers to obtaining welfare and to improve welfare benefits.

3. Revisions to the plan text

In all, over forty revisions were made to the text of the Plan. Most of these are amplification or clarification of the discussion. For example, the description of the addictions and mental health services, many of which are provided by Vancouver Coastal Health, has been expanded.

Some changes were made to reflect recent initiatives, changes in current conditions, government policy or programs since the draft Plan was developed.

For example, preliminary data from the March 2005 regional homeless survey shows a doubling in the count of the number of street homeless and those staying in shelters in the region - from about 1,000 in 2002 to about 2,100. There has been a similar doubling within the city from about 600 to about 1,300. These latter numbers differ from those developed by City staff in 2004 as there were differences in methods and timing, and because the City's figures included only the street homeless. (The City estimated in 2004 there were between 500 - 1,200 street homeless on any one night, depending on the season.) However, the regional survey's data for the street homeless in the city does indicate there has been a significant increase since staff reported last year.

Also, late last year the Province established the Premiers Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions and increased both year-round and cold wet weather shelter bed capacity, and in December 2004 announced funding for close to two hundred supportive housing units in Vancouver. In addition, the text was modified to reflect changes to the welfare program reflecting that persons seeking refugee status who do not have a work permit are now exempt from the requirement to conduct a three-week work search.

In February 2005 the Federal Government issued its budget in which it committed to review the Employment Insurance program. There was no mention of the expected \$1.5 billion for housing, though it was for 5 years of funding and hopefully will be allocated in upcoming federal budgets.

Other changes were made to include new information and new perspectives. For example, the Refugee Housing Task Group of the Working Group on Poverty made several points about the need to consider refugee claimants as part of the homeless in Vancouver. The Advisory Committee on Disability Issues provided similar input based on its members' experiences. The Plan text was modified accordingly.

Additions were made to identify possible roles for business. These include informing governments of their support for the policy changes recommended in this Plan; providing training and jobs for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, possibly using some of the government sponsored programs; and supporting non-profit agencies that provide services to homeless people - by providing donations or encouraging employees to volunteer.

Finally an addition was made reflecting what many people, including those who are homeless, said during the Plan review about how those of us who live, work, or play in Vancouver can be involved with homelessness on a personal level. We can reach out and connect with homeless people as individuals. This can be as simple as starting with a friendly hello to homeless people on our streets.

4. Revisions to the Actions

The revised Plan contains several changes (noted in italics) to the actions. These are:

Action 5 on earnings exemptions for people on welfare

This action has been reworded to reflect Council's motion on November 2, 2004 which further emphasized earnings exemptions and suggested a City role.

Revised wording

"The Provincial Government to provide financial support, incentives and assistance to help people transition to employment. Specific measures should include a graduated approach to earnings exemptions, transition-to-work assistance (including medical coverage), and financial support (e.g. clothing, glasses, dentures and bus passes) to help people become employable. *The City to work with the Provincial Government to reinstate an exempt portion of earnings for basic income assistance recipients.*

Action 18 on subsidized housing

Revised wording

"The Federal and Provincial governments to provide increased funding for subsidized housing nationally and provincially, and for the City provide sufficient funding to create at least 8,000 more subsidized housing units over the next 10 years. This will include:

- *4,200* ~~4300~~ permanent new social housing units for people who can live independently;

- 3,200 supportive housing units (about half of these could be provided through the use of rent supplements and support in private rental units - see Action 27); and
- 600 ~~500~~ transitional housing units (see Action 30)."

This change was made to reflect input from the Refugee Housing Task Group of the Working Group on Poverty who pointed out the need for transitional housing for refugee claimants. (The same numerical change was made to Action 30 on transitional housing.) Previously the needs of this group had been incorporated into the general need for additional social housing.

The City's contribution to partnerships which develop subsidized housing is primarily through land leasing at reduced or nominal rates. The funds for City purchase could come from the City's Capital Plan and/or City-wide or neighbourhood Development Cost Levies.

A submission has been made by the Housing Centre to the 2006-2008 Capital Plan to purchase ten sites for housing those at risk of homelessness, to be developed in partnership with BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. This proposal is subject to the review and recommendations of the Capital Plan Staff Review Group and approval of Council together with all other Capital Plan submissions.

The total costs for projects requested in this capital plan are estimated at \$80 million with \$20 million to be provided by the City through both the capital plan and development cost levies.

The recommendation for an additional 8,000 housing units depends on the availability of Senior Government funding. It is estimated that approximately \$10 million per year from the City over the next ten years would be required to meet this objective.

Action 21 - SRO Purchase

This action recommends that the City of Vancouver purchase at least one SRO per year. It has been modified to add "subject to available funding, and in partnership with senior governments" as follows:

"The City of Vancouver to purchase at least one SRO per year, subject to available funding, and in partnership with senior governments, to upgrade the building so that, where feasible, each room includes a private bathroom and cooking facilities, and engage a non-profit housing society to manage the building."

Like new development of subsidized housing, the funds for City purchase could come from the City's Capital Plan and/or City-wide or Downtown South Development Cost Levies.

A submission has been made by the Housing Centre to the 2006-2008 Capital Plan to purchase 50 SRO rooms annually over the next three years (or one SRO per year), in partnership with the Provincial and Federal governments. This proposal is subject to the review and recommendations of the Capital Plan Staff Review Group and approval of Council together with all other Capital Plan submissions. The Homeless Action Plan notes that a variety of factors would be considered in the purchase, such as building condition, cost, heritage, elevators, location, etc.

The total estimated cost of this proposal is \$15 million, with \$10 million to be provided from Senior Governments and other sources, while the remaining \$5 million to be provided from the Capital Plan and Development Cost Levies.

Action 23 - Smaller suites

Revised wording

“The consideration of whether or not the City of Vancouver reaffirms its existing policy of allowing a minimum suite size of 400 sq. ft., relaxable to 320 sq. ft. for all new construction to be determined through the Downtown Eastside Housing Plan deliberations.”

There was feedback from two groups on this issue. BC Non-Profit Housing Association said that they might support the idea of smaller suites of less than 320 sq. ft. but only when such accommodation includes generous common spaces for tenants to use at any time, along with appropriate social or recreational programs on-site. The Carnegie Centre Community Association is against reducing suite size, as residents need space to spread out their work and to invite friends into.

The Downtown Eastside Housing Plan contains more detailed information about this topic which would be important to consider before coming to a final conclusion. It will be presented to Council shortly.

Action 33 on shelter capacity

This action initially recommended that the Provincial Government modestly expand the shelter system in the short-term, until systemic changes are in place for social assistance and housing. In late 2004 the Ministry of Human Resources funded an additional 50 year-round shelter beds in the City of Vancouver. These beds were immediately fully utilized, underscoring that the barriers to welfare and the inadequate supply of supportive housing have led to an increase of homeless people throughout the year.

There is a Regional Shelter Plan underway, which will examine the need for expanded shelters, in the context of needs for housing. This should provide guidance on possible shelter expansion in the City of Vancouver over the longer-term. The original action in this Plan has been modified to reflect the recent shelter additions and the need to monitor and potentially make only modest increases in permanent shelter capacity in the short-term. This could occur prior to completion of the Regional Shelter Plan and before fundamental changes are made to social assistance and housing.

Revised wording

The Provincial Government and/or non-profit societies to *monitor and possibly* modestly expand the shelter system in the short-term, until systemic changes are in place for social assistance and housing, with priority for areas outside the Downtown Eastside. Any shelter expansion within the Downtown Eastside should be based on demonstrated demand, linked to services and housing, and targeted to underserved groups.

Action 41 on cold/wet weather beds

This action originally recommended the Provincial Government modestly expand the provision of cold/wet weather shelter beds, as a short-term action until systemic changes are in place

for social assistance and housing. There should be very little need for cold/wet beds if the rest of the income, housing and support systems are working.

In late 2004 the Ministry of Human Resources funded an additional 56 cold/wet weather beds in the City of Vancouver. Like the permanent shelter beds, these were immediately fully utilized, emphasizing people's inability to access welfare or other means of stable income. Action 41 has been modified to reflect the need to monitor the use of cold/wet weather beds, noting that further increases may be warranted if the fundamental changes to income supports are not made.

Revised wording

"The Provincial Government to *monitor and possibly* modestly expand the provision of cold/wet weather beds, as a short-term action until systemic changes are in place for social assistance and housing, with priority outside the Downtown core and for groups that are underserved, such as Aboriginal people and other homeless people who are most likely to be sleeping outside."

Action 44 on tent cities

This has been revised to strengthen the non-support of tent cities, and instead emphasize support for more housing and a modest increase in shelters.

Revised wording

"The City of Vancouver to not support proposals for 'tent cities' and instead to encourage more housing and a modest increase in shelters. Proposals for tent cities should only be considered in the future from non-profit societies as a last emergency response when other emergency capacity cannot be provided."

Replacing

"The City of Vancouver to consider proposals by non-profit societies for 'tent cities' only as a last emergency response when other emergency capacity cannot be provided."

This change is a result of feedback from a number of groups that tent cities are not an appropriate response in Vancouver and that the wording was ambiguous. For example, BC Non-Profit Housing Association stated that they did not agree that tent cities should ever be considered, due to the danger that such accommodation might therefore become acceptable as a permanent option.

Action 79 on data collection in shelters

Information is needed about the use of the shelter system for planning purposes. This includes the number of people who use emergency shelters and transition houses, their characteristics, frequency of admissions, length of stay, and the services they require. The Federal Government is developing the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS). The initial Plan called on all levels of government and community agencies to support HIFIS, but it is now not clear whether the system will be able to produce comprehensive locally relevant data. The action has been modified to add that another system should be developed, if HIFIS cannot provide the needed information.

Revised wording

All levels of government and community agencies to support the development and implementation of HIFIS (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System) to obtain information about the number and characteristics of people who use emergency shelters (including transition houses and safe houses) and people who are turned away from these facilities. *If HIFIS cannot provide comprehensive locally relevant data, another system should be developed.*

A similar addition has been made to Action 80 which relates providing support to shelters so they can participate in a data collection system.

5. Practicing Democracy: A Legislative Theatre Project

On February 15, 2005 City Council requested a report back of the recommendations put forward through Practicing Democracy related to homelessness.

One related to the feasibility of creating a Homeless and Sex Trade Worker Advocate position. In reviewing this suggestion, it is clear there are two possible functions - one related to advocacy on homelessness in relation to the sex trade, and the other related to advocacy on sex trade issues more generally. While there is some correlation between the sex trade and homelessness, there is not a lot of overlap - i.e. not all sex trade workers are homeless, nor do all the homeless work in the sex trade. Advocacy positions for the two issues would require different skill sets and are best separated. The advocacy on homelessness will be reported back to Council as part of the report back by the Director of the Housing Centre on the Tenant Assistance Program later this year. The advocacy related to sex trade issues will be dealt with separately as per Council's request to the City Manager.

Consideration has also been given to a number of specific housing/homeless recommendations made through Practicing Democracy. Appendix D identifies the specific recommendations and where they are addressed in the Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION

The first step toward implementation is for Council to approve the revised Homeless Action Plan. A special meeting of City Council will be held on May 25, 2005 to hear delegations, following which the Plan can be considered for approval.

The Plan is comprehensive and contains 86 actions. However it contains three strategic directions which should be giving priority in the Plan implementation:

- Reducing Barriers to Accessing Welfare by the Homeless (Actions 1-3);
- Developing 3,200 Units of Supportive Housing (Actions 18, 27-29); and
- Increasing Mental Health and Addiction Services (Actions 45-54).

As noted in the October 19, 2004 Council report on the initial draft of the Plan, the City will be most effective in addressing homelessness by working in partnership with others. The Plan identifies a number of actions that are focussed within City boundaries, but emphasizes that homelessness is a regional, provincial and national problem that we cannot solve alone. We need to work with other municipalities in the region. And we need to work with the Provincial and the Federal governments, as the underlying causes of homelessness are within

their jurisdiction, rather than the City's. It is encouraging that there is already a strong base of partnerships to build on through arrangements such as the Vancouver Agreement and the Regional Homelessness Plan.

Without support and funding from the Provincial and Federal Governments, and Vancouver Coastal Health, it will be impossible to implement this plan or solve homelessness. We need funding from the Federal and Provincial Governments for subsidized and particularly supportive housing. We need the Provincial Government to provide income security to those without income, and we need the Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to fund services to reduce and prevent homelessness.

Seventy-two recommendations relate to responsibilities of the Provincial Government and it is recommended that the Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to the Premier and the appropriate Ministers urging implementation of these actions. These are identified in Appendix A. The Ministries would include: Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services; Children and Family Development; Human Resources; Health Services; Mental Health and Addiction Services; Public Safety and Solicitor General. One of the three strategic directions relates to reducing the barriers to accessing welfare by the homeless. Although this is a provincial issue, the City can assist by partnering with the Ministry of Human Resources in a pilot project to coordinate outreach to assist eligible homeless people to access BC Employment and Assistance benefits (Action 3). The Ministry has indicated a willingness to meet with the City to determine the most appropriate approach to move forward and it is recommended that the Mayor respond positively to this and emphasize the City's willingness to move quickly to help implement this action. It is estimated that over three quarters of those who are street homeless are not on welfare and do not have sufficient funds to pay rent and move inside. If the street homeless who are not on welfare were able to obtain benefits, this one action could significantly reduce the number of homeless on the streets in Vancouver.

It is also recommended that the Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to the Federal Government urging their attention to the twenty-four actions related to its jurisdiction as identified in Appendix B. Federal involvement is critical to the second strategic direction - developing 3,200 units of supportive housing. It was disappointing that Budget 2005 did not include the expected \$1.5 billion funding for subsidized housing. For homelessness to be reduced, it is critical to establish an ongoing housing program that can deliver housing within a cohesive framework. It is suggested this need be highlighted in the Mayor's letter.

Implementing the Plan will also require working with Vancouver Coastal Health and it is recommended that the Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to that agency about the relevant actions which are identified in Appendix C. The Plan's third strategic direction - Increasing Mental Health and Addiction Services (Actions 45-54) - relates closely to the responsibilities of the Vancouver Coastal Health, which will likely need additional resources through senior governments to adequately implement the Plan's actions. Funds from the Provincial Government will be required both by Vancouver Coastal Health and other health regions, such as Fraser Health, to deal with the regional homeless who often drift into Vancouver due to lack of services elsewhere.

It is also recommended that the Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to the Chair of the Greater Vancouver Regional District and Regional Mayors urging them to assist in implementing the Regional Homelessness Plan and to support the City's Homeless Action Plan. A similar recommendation is that the Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to the Greater Vancouver

Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness supporting its implementation of Actions 79 - 84 relating to research, planning, regional capacity building and the need to address homelessness across the region through implementation of the Regional Homelessness Plan.

There are a number of actions where the City can take the lead, in addition to those where the City can encourage others to take the lead. There are twenty-six actions where the City is directly involved, and many others where the City is indirectly involved, for example in our involvement with the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness. These are identified in Appendix E. To help implement the Plan, it is recommended that a permanent Planner II position be created in the Housing Centre. The Homeless Action Plan was identified as part of the March 17, 2005 Council considerations of the 2005 Operating Budget. The funding requirement was identified as \$200,000 for 2005 and an additional \$200,000 for 2006. For 2005, this Plan was included in a number of initiatives recommended to be funded through Contingency Reserve. Each initiative was to report back for final approval. The estimated annual cost for the Planner II is \$79,500 (to be prorated for 2005) plus start-up costs of \$5,000. It is recommended that the source of funding for fiscal 2005, estimated to be \$44,800, be the 2005 Contingency Reserve. Funding for fiscal 2006 and future years to be added to the Housing Centre's operating budget without offset.

There will also be a need to use consultants to assist in implementing some of the actions. For example Action 22 calls for the City to develop a cohesive rental housing strategy to both encourage the private sector to create more rental housing and preserve the existing stock of rental housing. Consultant expertise will be required to research some aspects of the rental market such as the nature of the rented condo market. Action 68 on eviction prevention and Action 69 on an expanded housing registry will also require assistance from consultants. The specific terms of reference and consultancies will be reported back to Council, in accordance with City policy governing such contracts. It is recommended that \$100,000 be approved for consultants from the 2005 Contingency Reserve and \$100,000 be added to the Housing Centre's 2006 operating budget without offset.

The Plan has a 10 year timeframe and it is recommended that Council receive a report back every two years on the progress in implementing the actions. There will likely be various opportunities for the City to raise homelessness issues and staff will report back when appropriate. For example the World Urban Forum that will be held in Vancouver in 2006.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As noted, most of the recommended initiatives in the draft Plan fall within areas of Federal and Provincial jurisdiction, and, with their broader range of taxation tools, it should be a priority for them to bring the appropriate funding to the table.

This report identifies two calls on the 2005 Contingency Reserve, as identified in the March 17, 2005 City Council considerations on the 2005 Operating Budget. First is the creation of a permanent Planner II position. The estimated annual cost is \$79,500 plus start-up costs of \$5,000, prorated for 2005 estimated to be \$44,800 (includes salary & fringe benefits pro-rated for 6 months for \$39,800, plus \$5,000 one time start up costs). The 2005 Contingency Reserve is the source of funding for fiscal 2005. Beginning in 2006 it is recommended that the permanent Planner II position be funded by increasing the Housing Centre's operating budget without offset by \$79,500, the estimated annual cost of salaries and fringe benefits.

The second call on the 2005 Contingency Reserve is for \$100,000 for consultancies to assist in implementing the Homeless Action Plan. It is further recommended that \$100,000 on a one time basis be approved for the Housing Centre's 2006 operating budget without offset for consultants to finish this work.

The full financial implications of the Homelessness Action Plan are difficult to estimate given the dependence of Senior Government funding and that many of the action items are "opportunistic". Should the Capital Plan Staff Review Group and Council approve the proposed proposals related to action items 18 and 21 in the 2006-2008 Capital Plan, the total required funding over three years is estimated at \$80 million with \$20 million to be provided from the City.

As was noted in the November report to Council on the draft Homelessness Action Plan, most of the recommended initiatives fall within areas of Federal and Provincial jurisdiction and as such City funding should not be seen as a substitute for senior government action.

Identification of where and how the City might be involved (e.g. specific land purchases for supportive housing or SRO purchases) will be reported to Council for consideration as opportunities arise. These will be fully evaluated in the first report back on the Homeless Action Plan in two years time.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

This report recommends the addition of a Planner II in the Housing Centre to manage the implementation of the Plan.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Homelessness involves human suffering and wasted lives. It goes against the values of Vancouver citizens who want to live and work in a community where basic human needs are met. This Plan provides actions which will significantly reduce homelessness.

CONCLUSION

Homelessness is a problem which is solvable, but will involve the efforts of many people in all parts of our society. The Plan, revised with government and community input, provides a comprehensive picture of what the City and others can do, assuming there is the collective will and resources to tackle the issue.

* * * * *

Appendix A

Actions Related to the Province of British Columbia

1. The Provincial Government to revise eligibility criteria and the applications process for BC Employment and Assistance to ensure that people in need have access to benefits. This includes providing immediate access on a temporary basis pending proof of eligibility.
2. The Ministry of Human Resources (MHR) to provide additional outreach to help adults and youth with multiple challenges apply for benefits.
3. The City of Vancouver to work with MHR on a pilot project to coordinate outreach to people who are street homeless to assist eligible people to access BC Employment and Assistance benefits. This could include enhancing the City's Tenant Assistance Program to help connect people who are street homeless to an MHR outreach worker.
4. The Provincial Government to increase support benefits available through the BC Employment and Assistance program to at least reflect cost of living increases since 1991 (e.g. increase rates for single adults from \$185 to \$230/month).
5. The Provincial Government to provide financial support, incentives and assistance to help people transition to employment. Specific measures should include a graduated approach to earnings exemptions, transition-to-work assistance (including medical coverage), and financial support (e.g. clothing, glasses, dentures and bus passes) to help people become employable. The City to work with the Provincial Government to reinstate an exempt portion of earnings for basic income assistance recipients.
6. The Provincial Government to work with the Federal Government to increase subsidies for childcare and increase the number of spaces within the childcare system to accommodate more children from families with low incomes.
7. The Provincial Government to raise the shelter component of income assistance to at least reflect cost of living increases since 1991 (e.g. increase shelter component for single adults from \$325 to \$400/month).
8. The Provincial Government to raise the amount of assistance available through the Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters (SAFER) program to reflect cost of living increases since 1989 (e.g. increase the maximum rent levels from \$520 to \$730/month).
9. The Provincial Government to increase the minimum wage so that people who are employed can afford housing in Greater Vancouver without paying more than 30% of their income on rent.
10. The Provincial Government to eliminate the \$6 training wage rate.
11. The Provincial Government to monitor the minimum wage and update it on an annual basis to ensure that it keeps pace with increases in the cost of living.
15. All levels of government to continue to support the Vancouver Agreement Employment Strategy (VAES) Case Coordination Service initiative to provide pre and post employment supports to at least 450 long-term unemployed MHR clients in the Downtown Eastside over three years. This initiative will include providing clients with one-to-one support to help them obtain and retain employment.
16. All levels of government to support and enhance employment assistance services and training programs specifically to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including women, youth, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, and people who are most challenged, to become employment-ready and obtain employment. The programs should provide assistance and support to help homeless

- people transition to a level of employment that is consistent with their goals, strengths, and abilities and “where they are at”. Approaches should include:
- Low threshold employment training based on the life styles and actual circumstances of street people;
 - Mentoring (e.g. teaming up homeless people with others who are working), street outreach and peer employment; and
 - Fostering self-employment opportunities and the development of small businesses and other community economic development initiatives (e.g. bike repair shops, crafts etc.).
17. All levels of government to develop new approaches to provide whatever support and assistance is necessary to help an individual obtain and maintain employment. This includes:
- Developing an assessment tool to determine what supports are needed for the individual to obtain and maintain employment;
 - Helping to address fundamental issues such as housing, food, health, dental care, childcare, self-esteem and mental health, substance use, skills training, work experience, and education;
 - Ensuring that individuals have the tools needed to find employment, including access to telephones, computers, bus passes, and clean and appropriate clothing for job interviews; and
 - Ensuring that people with criminal backgrounds receive the support they need to overcome employment barriers.
- Examples of approaches include providing case management and encouraging all employment assistance and training programs to develop a plan to address the basic needs of their clients.
18. The Federal and Provincial governments to provide increased funding for subsidized housing nationally and provincially, and to provide sufficient funding to create at least 8,000 more subsidized housing units in the city over the next 10 years. This should include:
- 4,200 permanent new social housing units for people who can live independently;
 - 3,200 supportive housing units (about half of these could be provided through the use of rent supplements and support in private rental units – (see Action 27)); and
 - 600 transitional housing units (see Action 30).
19. The City of Vancouver to create more opportunities for the development of subsidized housing throughout the City by: working with senior governments and acquiring sites, providing land at reduced prices, raising money through the capital plan and developer contributions, density bonusing, ensuring that zoning is compatible and supports the development of affordable and social housing and facilitating inclusiveness (e.g. by working to address NIMBY issues, showing leadership and public education).
20. The Federal and Provincial governments to provide funding for the City and non-profit housing providers to acquire existing housing stock, including SROs, where appropriate and feasible.
21. The City of Vancouver to purchase at least one SRO per year, subject to available funding, and in partnership with senior governments, to upgrade the building so that, where feasible, each room includes a private bathroom and cooking facilities, and engage a non-profit housing society to manage the building.
27. 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.¹ These services should be used to support people who are homeless (including chronically homeless) and people with mental health issues, addictions, concurrent disorders, HIV/AIDS, brain/head injuries, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder, or multiple challenges, in permanent housing. It is estimated that at least 600 of these individuals will require an intensive level of support such as is provided through Assertive Community Treatment (see Action 46).
28. The Provincial Government to provide sufficient housing subsidies so that once an individual is housed in a supportive unit, they can remain in their housing regardless of whether or not they are continuing to receive services, and regardless of the level of support they are receiving.
 29. The City to work with Vancouver Coastal Health and the Provincial Government to develop a strategy to locate supportive and transitional housing throughout the city.
 30. The Provincial Government to provide dedicated and stable funding for services to support individuals and families in at least 600 additional units of transitional housing. These units should be for youth, women and children fleeing abuse, people with addictions, refugee claimants and people with multiple challenges who require a safe, supportive environment for a limited period of time to address the issues that led to homelessness and the critical issues necessary to maintain permanent housing. A portion of these units should be culturally appropriate for Aboriginal people.
 31. The Provincial Government to provide additional resources to transition houses so they can serve:
 - Women with and without children with a wide range of needs, including mental health issues, addictions to drugs and/or alcohol, and medical conditions;
 - Women with children, including teenage sons;
 - Single fathers with children;
 - People who are trans-gendered; and
 - Seniors who have been abused.
 32. All levels of government to support completion of the Regional Shelter Plan and other planning initiatives as a basis for the longer-term development of new shelters. It is anticipated that these plans will address the needs of adults, youth, families, women with and without children fleeing abuse, Aboriginal people, and individuals with special needs, and the linkages to housing.
 33. The Provincial Government and/or non-profit societies to modestly expand the shelter system in the short-term, until systemic changes are in place for social assistance and housing, with priority for areas outside the Downtown Eastside. Any shelter expansion within the Downtown Eastside should be based on demonstrated demand, linked to services and housing, and targeted to underserved groups.
 34. The Provincial Government to provide resources for at least 20 additional emergency care beds for individuals who experience a mental health crisis and can provide appropriate mental health assessment, treatment and relocation services.
 35. The Provincial Government to take the lead, in conjunction with the Vancouver Agreement, to develop a strategy to provide emergency accommodation for youth who are using substances and underage youth, including youth going through detox. The strategy should address the range of resources that may be needed to accommodate youth of different ages, and address different needs due to the type of drug being used and the length of time youth have lived on the street.

¹ It is expected that about half of these units would be provided through rent subsidies in private rental buildings.

36. The Provincial Government to work with shelters to find ways to accommodate and provide a safe place for different people who have different needs, including:
 - Families (including couples, two-parent families and women with sons over the age of 13);
 - People working shifts;
 - People who are trans-gendered;
 - People with pets;
 - Older adults/seniors;
 - Aboriginal people;
 - People from different cultural backgrounds; and
 - People with drug addictions, developmental disabilities, or those who are medically frail.
37. The Provincial Government to work with shelters to provide safe and secure storage space or lockers for people who use shelters, where they can store their belongings, including their shopping carts.
38. The Provincial Government to work with Translink, shelters and transition houses to provide bus tickets and taxis for people who might need transportation assistance to access a shelter or transition house.
39. The Provincial Government (MHR) to increase flexibility of the cold/wet weather strategy to be able to accommodate individuals from October 1st to May 31st if weather or other conditions make this appropriate.
40. The Provincial Government to provide multi-year funding for cold/wet weather beds.
41. The Provincial Government to modestly expand the provision of cold/wet weather beds, as a short-term action until systemic changes are in place for social assistance and housing, with priority outside the Downtown core and for groups that are underserved, such as Aboriginal people and other homeless people who are most likely to be sleeping outside.
43. The Provincial Government to provide funds to increase outreach to ensure people have access to cold/wet weather and extreme weather beds as necessary.
45. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to introduce expanded outreach service as part of the Early Psychosis Intervention program for street youth throughout Vancouver to identify street youth with an early psychosis as early as possible and link them with appropriate housing.
46. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to increase the capacity within the mental health (and/or addictions) system to provide Assertive Community Treatment based on the model of service delivery set out in the BC Mental Health Reform Best Practices for Assertive Community Treatment report, to treat at least 700 more clients who are homeless, and to provide an intensive form of case management to at least 1700 more people who are homeless or at risk, including those who have a mental illness, concurrent disorder, or other health issues, including substance use, a brain/head injury or FASD. The goal is to ensure that individuals obtain and maintain stable housing.
47. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to ensure that people with a mental illness have access to the most recent generation of anti-psychotic drugs, as appropriate.

48. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to ensure there are enough mental health workers in all the Community Health Centres/Clinics to provide mental health services to people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness. Mental health workers who have experience working with youth should also be placed at Youth Integrated Service Delivery centres now under development.
49. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide more acute care psychiatric beds in Vancouver and conduct research to determine exactly what is required. Until the research is completed, funding for at least 40 more beds is needed immediately to ensure that people in crisis have access to beds and that patients are not discharged prematurely.
50. The Vancouver Police Department together with the Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health, and community agencies, to determine the need for more Car 87s and appropriate hours of services.
51. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to ensure that there are mental health services and treatment facilities throughout the City, including the Downtown Eastside, with staff who are fully trained to serve for individuals who have a concurrent disorder.
52. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide funding to create a mental health clinic aligned with a hospital, as an alternative to the hospital emergency department, that would be open 24/7 and would:
 - Help people who are having a severe mental health crisis and may be suicidal; and
 - Provide an assessment, identify the mental health and medical issues, and ensure that the individual receives the appropriate services.
53. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide funding so that services can be provided connected to housing in all areas of Vancouver so that people with mental health issues can live outside the Downtown Eastside, if they wish, and provide resources and support to enable individuals to return to their home community or another community outside Vancouver where they will feel safe, if they wish.
54. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health continue to provide adequate resources to the Riverview redesign project.
55. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide funding to create sobering facilities in the downtown core for adults and youth that include at least 20 mats. There should also be 8 secured rooms for clients who need protection from themselves and need to be isolated from others. Services should include providing safe, short-term, medically supported shelter for adults and youth for the purpose of sobering for up to 24 hours. Stabilization services should also be provided to accommodate individuals who are using crystal meth. Assessments, stabilization supports, and referral to health, social services, housing or treatment services should also be provided, as requested.
56. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide funding for a range of detox options for youth (under 19 years of age) including at least 15 more detox beds outside the Downtown Eastside.
57. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide funding for at least 10 more support recovery beds for residential treatment in a structured program where youth (under 19 years of age) can remain for up to 3 months, and at least 30-50 more longer term supportive recovery beds where youth (ages 15-24) can remain following residential treatment (e.g. 3 to 6 months). In addition, provide assertive

- case management services to clients leaving the program to provide support and help to obtain and maintain housing.
58. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to consider establishing a long-term (minimum of six months) treatment centre for youth (ages 15-24) with severe addiction problems, to be located outside the City. The goal would be to consider programs, skill development, job training and linkages back to housing, family (where appropriate) and the community in addition to addiction treatment, to prepare individuals for return to the community.
 59. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide funding for at least one more detox facility specifically for women and increase the number of detox beds for men. As there is no consensus, Vancouver Coastal Health needs to work with stakeholders to determine the exact number of beds and nature of the detox facilities.
 60. The Provincial Government, Vancouver Coastal Health and the City of Vancouver to design an appropriate regulatory structure to ensure that supportive recovery homes operate according to an agreed set of standards. These homes need to be able to accommodate a range of programs and treatment options, including individuals participating in a methadone program and individuals who are taking prescribed psychiatric medication.
 61. The Provincial Government to expand the capacity of the dental clinic at the Sunrise Hotel and provide more dental clinics throughout Vancouver to provide a full range of dental care, including preventive care, targeted to people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness.
 62. The Provincial Government to expand the capacity of Community Health Centres to serve more people who are homeless or at risk, for example by:
 - Being open longer hours;
 - Increasing health care staff; and
 - Training staff to help provide a welcoming environment for people who are homeless.
 63. The Provincial Government to encourage more physicians to work on an outreach basis and meet with people who are homeless.
 64. The Provincial Government to fund adequate convalescent health care services to individuals who are homeless or in unstable housing.
 65. The Provincial Government to determine the need for a patient record database system that adheres to strict patient confidentiality and is readily usable to health care providers to ensure that health-care providers can access a patient's medical records and, with client consent, provide proper service to their patients.
 66. The Provincial Government to change the Residential Tenancy Act and regulations to:
 - Limit annual rent increases to either the Consumer Price Index or a reasonable percentage but not both;
 - Ensure that tenants are not evicted for cosmetic renovations;
 - Permit arbitrators to extend the time for tenants to pay the rent under reasonable circumstances;
 - Provide adequate access to the Residential Tenancy Office for Vancouver tenants by re-opening the office in Vancouver and providing extended hours of operation to accommodate people who work during the day; and
 - Provide additional resources to organizations that assist tenants in resolving disputes and accessing the arbitration process.

67. The Provincial Government to reinstate funding for legal aid services so that tenants can obtain legal representation for arbitration hearings.
68. The City of Vancouver and Provincial Government to fund programs to prevent an eviction, including:
 - Mediation services;
 - Rent assistance and rent bank programs;
 - Support to landlords with tenants whose behaviours might otherwise result in an eviction; and
 - One-to-one assistance to work with individual tenants to avoid an eviction.
69. The City of Vancouver to work in partnership with BC Housing, BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Co-operative Housing Federation of BC, the GVHC, and other interested parties, to provide a comprehensive housing registry to help applicants obtain both private and social housing. This registry could include:
 - Serving as an access point for the social housing registry operated as a partnership by BC Housing, the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC, and other community partners which provide housing;
 - Working with BC Housing to ensure that social housing units designed for people with physical disabilities are available for the intended target population;
 - Helping people locate and access private rental housing (this could include providing incentives for landlords to participate);
 - Providing financial assistance to help clients obtain housing (e.g. damage deposits and assistance with moving expenses);
 - Working to overcome other barriers to accessing housing (e.g. discrimination, landlord references, and other barriers); and
 - Providing case management to ensure access to support services as necessary.
70. The City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, hospitals, and Corrections departments in the Provincial and Federal governments to work together to ensure effective discharge planning before an individual is discharged so that when these individuals are discharged from institutions (e.g. hospitals and jails) they will be linked to appropriate housing and support services.
71. The Provincial Government to work with other partners as appropriate to ensure the provision of a full range of services to help prevent homelessness. In addition to income assistance, housing, mental health and addiction services, additional services should include:
 - Life skills and employment training;
 - Family mediation;
 - Counselling;
 - Childcare, parent support and parent education;
 - Homemaking support;
 - Early childhood development and intervention programs;
 - In-school early prevention programs; and
 - Settlement services for people who are new to Vancouver.
72. The Provincial Government to work with other partners as appropriate to ensure that people who are homeless or at risk are able to make full use of services to help prevent homelessness. Options for improving access include:

- 24-hour access and one-stop information and referral services; such as the BC 211 Initiative being developed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland;²
 - Working towards the co-location of services (where appropriate and feasible);
 - Ensuring that services are in physically accessible buildings;
 - Providing user-friendly information in different languages and in different forms (e.g. verbal, written and electronic), recognizing that not everyone has access to the internet;
 - Providing bus tickets and making use of van services (e.g. Safe Ride);
 - Providing child-minding services for parents with young children so they can get to appointments/interviews;
 - Respecting and accommodating individuals with different cultural backgrounds;
 - Helping people to obtain the necessary ID (either new ID or replacement); and
 - One-on-one advocacy for services.
73. The Provincial Government and other levels of government as appropriate to provide funding for more street outreach services that are available 24/7 and improve coordination among outreach programs and linkages to services.
74. The Provincial Government to provide funding for more outreach services outside Vancouver's downtown core.
75. The Provincial Government to provide funding for more drop-in centres to be fully accessible, open 24/7, with a sufficient level of staffing, and able to accommodate pets.
76. The Provincial Government to provide funding for more drop-in centres outside the Vancouver downtown core.
77. The Provincial Government to work with other partners as appropriate to consider the development of additional drop-in centres targeted to specific populations (e.g. women [including those in the sex trade], youth, sexual minorities, people with mental health issues, people using substances, seniors and others), who may not feel safe in drop-in centres that are open to everyone.
78. The Provincial Government to work with other partners as appropriate to find ways to increase linkages between drop-in centres and services, for example by ensuring that drop-in staff workers have the necessary expertise and training to work with individuals with a wide range of special needs, and who are knowledgeable about the services needed, what services are available, and how to access these services.
79. All levels of government and community agencies to support the development and implementation of HIFIS (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System) to obtain information about the number and characteristics of people who use emergency shelters (including transition houses and safe houses) and people who are turned away from these facilities. If HIFIS cannot provide comprehensive locally relevant data, another system should be developed.
80. The Federal and Provincial Government to provide sufficient support to all Lower Mainland emergency shelters so they can participate in HIFIS or an improved data collection system.
85. The Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness, the Provincial Government, the Federal Government, and GVRD municipalities to implement the Regional Homeless Plan.

² The 211 number would provide a single point of access for community, health, government and social services.

86. The City to work with the Federal Government, the Provincial Government, Vancouver Coastal Health, the community, service providers, and business to develop an implementation strategy for the Homeless Action Plan.

Appendix B

Actions Related to the Government of Canada

6. The Provincial Government to work with the Federal Government to increase subsidies for childcare and increase the number of spaces within the childcare system to accommodate more children from families with low incomes.
13. The Federal Government to expand eligibility criteria for Employment Insurance benefits.
14. The Federal Government to ensure that individuals receive their Employment Insurance benefits within 2 weeks from the time they are eligible.
15. All levels of government to continue to support the Vancouver Agreement Employment Strategy (VAES) Case Coordination Service initiative to provide pre and post employment supports to at least 450 long-term unemployed MHR clients in the Downtown Eastside over three years. This initiative will include providing clients with one-to-one support to help them obtain and retain employment.
16. All levels of government to support and enhance employment assistance services and training programs specifically to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including women, youth, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, and people who are most challenged, to become employment-ready and obtain employment. The programs should provide assistance and support to help homeless people transition to a level of employment that is consistent with their goals, strengths, and abilities and “where they are at”. Approaches should include:
 - Low threshold employment training based on the life styles and actual circumstances of street people;
 - Mentoring (e.g. teaming up homeless people with others who are working), street outreach and peer employment; and
 - Fostering self-employment opportunities and the development of small businesses and other community economic development initiatives (e.g. bike repair shops, crafts etc.)
17. All levels of government to develop new approaches to provide whatever support and assistance is necessary to help an individual obtain and maintain employment. This includes:
 - Developing an assessment tool to determine what supports are needed for the individual to obtain and maintain employment;
 - Helping to address fundamental issues such as housing, food, health, dental care, childcare, self-esteem and mental health, substance use, skills training, work experience, and education;
 - Ensuring that individuals have the tools needed to find employment, including access to telephones, computers, bus passes, and clean and appropriate clothing for job interviews; and
 - Ensuring that people with criminal backgrounds receive the support they need to overcome employment barriers.

- Examples of approaches include providing case management and encouraging all employment assistance and training programs to develop a plan to address the basic needs of their clients.
18. The Federal and Provincial governments to provide increased funding for subsidized housing nationally and provincially, and to provide sufficient funding to create at least 8,000 more subsidized housing units in the city over the next 10 years. This should include:
 - 4,200 permanent new social housing units for people who can live independently;
 - 3,200 supportive housing units (about half of these could be provided through the use of rent supplements and support in private rental units - see Action 27); and
 - 600 transitional housing units (see Action 30).
 19. The City of Vancouver to create more opportunities for the development of subsidized housing throughout the City by: working with senior governments and acquiring sites, providing land at reduced prices, raising money through the capital plan and developer contributions, density bonusing, ensuring that zoning is compatible and supports the development of affordable and social housing and facilitating inclusiveness (e.g. by working to address NIMBY issues, showing leadership and public education).
 20. The Federal and Provincial governments to provide funding for the City and non-profit housing providers to acquire existing housing stock, including SROs, where appropriate and feasible.
 21. The City of Vancouver to purchase at least one SRO per year, subject to available funding, and in partnership with senior governments, to upgrade the building so that, where feasible, each room includes a private bathroom and cooking facilities, and engage a non-profit housing society to manage the building.
 24. The Federal Government to maintain and expand the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) for rooming houses, hotels and rental apartment units and to establish a maximum rent that is appropriate for Vancouver's SROs.
 25. The Federal Government to implement changes to the tax system as recommended by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to encourage the private sector to build more rental housing.³ Specific measures should include:
 - Providing rebates to fully offset landlord GST expenses;
 - Allowing small rental investors to qualify for the small business deduction;
 - Restoring Capital Cost Allowance pooling provisions to encourage capital re-investment in new rental projects; and
 - Enabling the creation of a Labour Sponsored Investment Fund specifically for affordable housing⁴.
 32. All levels of government to support completion of the Regional Shelter Plan and other planning initiatives as a basis for the longer-term development of new shelters. It is anticipated that these plans will address the needs of adults, youth, families, women with and without children fleeing abuse, Aboriginal people, and individuals with special needs, and the linkages to housing.

³ Federation of Canadian Municipalities, *A National Affordable Housing Strategy*, October 11, 2000.

⁴ Under existing legislation, the Labour Sponsored Investment Fund (LSIF) offers small individual investors a combined federal/provincial one-time tax credit of 30% of an investment up to \$5,000 each year. To initiate a LSIF specifically for affordable housing would require a regulatory amendment to add affordable housing mortgages as a qualifying investment. Invested funds could be used to provide construction financing, long-term mortgage financing on affordable housing projects, and assistance in the acquisition of existing properties in partnership with non-profit sponsors (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, *A National Affordable Housing Strategy*, October 11, 2000).

35. The Provincial Government to take the lead, in conjunction with the Vancouver Agreement, to develop a strategy to provide emergency accommodation for youth who are using substances and underage youth, including youth going through detox. The strategy should address the range of resources that may be needed to accommodate youth of different ages, and address different needs due to the type of drug being used and the length of time youth have lived on the street.
70. The City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, hospitals, and Corrections departments in the Provincial and Federal governments to work together to ensure effective discharge planning before an individual is discharged so that when these individuals are discharged from institutions (e.g. hospitals and jails) they will be linked to appropriate housing & support services.
71. The Provincial Government to work with other partners as appropriate to ensure the provision of a full range of services to help prevent homelessness. In addition to income assistance, housing, mental health and addiction services, additional services should include:
 - Life skills and employment training;
 - Family mediation;
 - Counselling;
 - Childcare, parent support and parent education;
 - Homemaking support;
 - Early childhood development and intervention programs;
 - In-school early prevention programs; and
 - Settlement services for people who are new to Vancouver.
72. The Provincial Government to work with other partners as appropriate to ensure that people who are homeless or at risk are able to make full use of services to help prevent homelessness. Options for improving access include:
 - 24-hour access and one-stop information and referral services; such as the BC 211 Initiative being developed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland; ⁵
 - Working towards the co-location of services (where appropriate and feasible);
 - Ensuring that services are in physically accessible buildings;
 - Providing user-friendly information in different languages and in different forms (e.g. verbal, written and electronic),, recognizing that not everyone has access to the internet;
 - Providing bus tickets and making use of van services (e.g. Safe Ride);
 - Providing child-minding services for parents with young children so they can get to appointments/interviews;
 - Respecting and accommodating individuals with different cultural backgrounds;
 - Helping people to obtain the necessary ID (either new ID or replacement); and
 - One-on-one advocacy for services.
73. The Provincial Government and other levels of government as appropriate to provide funding for more street outreach services that are available 24/7 and improve coordination among outreach programs and linkages to services.
77. The Provincial Government to work with other partners as appropriate to consider the development of additional drop-in centres targeted to specific populations (e.g.

⁵ The 211 number would provide a single point of access for community, health, government and social services.

- women [including those in the sex trade], youth, sexual minorities, people with mental health issues, people using substances, seniors and others), who may not feel safe in drop-in centres that are open to everyone.
78. The Provincial Government to work with other partners as appropriate to find ways to increase linkages between drop-in centres and services, for example by ensuring that drop-in staff workers have the necessary expertise and training to work with individuals with a wide range of special needs, and who are knowledgeable about the services needed, what services are available, and how to access these services.
 79. All levels of government and community agencies to support the development and implementation of HIFIS (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System) to obtain information about the number and characteristics of people who use emergency shelters (including transition houses and safe houses) and people turned away from these facilities. If HIFIS cannot provide comprehensive locally relevant data, another system should be developed.
 80. The Federal and Provincial Government to provide sufficient support to all Lower Mainland emergency shelters so they can participate in HIFIS or an improved data collection system.
 85. The Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness, the Provincial Government, the Federal Government, and GVRD municipalities to implement the Regional Homeless Plan.
 86. The City to work with the Federal Government, the Provincial Government, Vancouver Coastal Health, the community, service providers, and business to develop an implementation strategy for the Homeless Action Plan.

Appendix C

Actions Related to Vancouver Coastal Health

27. 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.⁶ These services should be used to support people who are homeless (including chronically homeless) and people with mental health issues, addictions, concurrent disorders, HIV/AIDS, brain/head injuries, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder, or multiple challenges, in permanent housing. It is estimated that at least 600 of these individuals will require an intensive level of support such as is provided through Assertive Community Treatment (see Action 46).
28. The Provincial Government to provide sufficient housing subsidies so that once an individual is housed in a supportive unit, they can remain in their housing regardless of whether or not they are continuing to receive services, and regardless of the level of support they are receiving.
29. The City to work with Vancouver Coastal Health and the Provincial Government to develop a strategy to locate supportive and transitional housing throughout the city.
45. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to introduce expanded outreach service as part of the Early Psychosis Intervention program for street youth throughout Vancouver to identify street youth with an early psychosis as early as possible and link them with appropriate housing.
46. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to increase the capacity within the mental health (and/or addictions) system to provide Assertive Community Treatment based on the model of service delivery set out in the BC Mental Health Reform Best Practices for Assertive Community Treatment report, to treat at least 700 more clients who are homeless, and to provide an intensive form of case management to at least 1700 more people who are homeless or at risk, including those who have a mental illness, concurrent disorder, or other health issue, including substance use, a brain/head injury or FASD. The goal is to ensure that individuals obtain and maintain stable housing.
47. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to ensure that people with a mental illness have access to the most recent generation of anti-psychotic drugs, as appropriate.
48. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to ensure there are enough mental health workers in all the Community Health Centres/Clinics to provide mental health services to people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness. Mental health workers who have experience working with youth should also be placed at Youth Integrated Service Delivery centres now under development.
49. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide more acute care psychiatric beds in Vancouver and conduct research to determine exactly what is required. Until the research is completed, funding for at least 40 more beds is needed immediately to ensure that people in crisis have access to beds and that patients are not discharged prematurely.

⁶ It is expected that about half of these units would be provided through rent subsidies in private rental buildings.

50. The Vancouver Police Department together with the Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health, and community agencies, to determine the need for more Car 87s and appropriate hours of services.
51. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to ensure that there are mental health services and treatment facilities throughout the City, including the Downtown Eastside, with staff who are fully trained to serve for individuals who have a concurrent disorder.
52. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide funding to create a mental health clinic aligned with a hospital, as an alternative to the hospital emergency department, that would be open 24/7 and would:
 - Help people who are having a severe mental health crisis and may be suicidal; and
 - Provide an assessment, identify the mental health and medical issues, and ensure that the individual receives the appropriate services.
53. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide funding so that services can be provided connected to housing in all areas of Vancouver so that people with mental health issues can live outside the Downtown Eastside, if they wish, and provide resources and support to enable individuals to return to their home community or another community outside Vancouver where they will feel safe, if they wish.
54. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health continue to provide adequate resources to the Riverview redesign project.
55. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide funding to create sobering facilities in the downtown core for adults and youth that include at least 20 mats. There should also be 8 secured rooms for clients who need protection from themselves and need to be isolated from others. Services should include providing safe, short-term, medically supported shelter for adults and youth for the purpose of sobering for up to 24 hours. Stabilization services should also be provided to accommodate individuals who are using crystal meth. Assessments, stabilization supports, and referral to health, social services, housing or treatment services should also be provided, as requested.
56. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide funding for a range of detox options for youth (under 19 years of age) including at least 15 more detox beds outside the Downtown Eastside.
57. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide funding for at least 10 more support recovery beds for residential treatment in a structured program where youth (under 19 years of age) can remain for up to 3 months, and at least 30-50 more longer term supportive recovery beds where youth (ages 15-24) can remain following residential treatment (e.g. 3 to 6 months). In addition, provide assertive case management services to clients leaving the program to provide support and help to obtain and maintain housing.
58. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to consider establishing a long-term (minimum of six months) treatment centre for youth (ages 15-24) with severe addiction problems, to be located outside the City. The goal would be to consider programs, skill development, job training and linkages back to housing, family (where appropriate) and the community in addition to addiction treatment, to prepare individuals for return to the community.
59. The Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health to provide funding for at least one more detox facility specifically for women and increase the number of detox

- beds for men. As there is not consensus, Vancouver Coastal Health needs to work with stakeholders to determine the exact number of beds and nature of the detox facilities.
60. The Provincial Government, Vancouver Coastal Health and the City of Vancouver to design an appropriate regulatory structure to ensure that supportive recovery homes operate according to an agreed set of standards. These homes need to be able to accommodate a range of programs and treatment options, including individuals participating in a methadone program and individuals who are taking prescribed psychiatric medication.
70. The City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, hospitals, and Corrections departments in the provincial and Federal governments to work together to ensure effective discharge planning before an individual is discharged so that when these individuals are discharged from institutions (e.g. hospitals and jails) they will be linked to appropriate housing & support services.

Practicing Democracy Recommendations and Homeless Action Plan Responses		
PRACTICING DEMOCRACY		Homeless Action Plan
ID	Recommendations	Action
1	Provide shelter options for those who need to be housed separately (e.g. Women), and for those who would benefit from mixed housing (e.g. Couples and families)	Actions 18, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 36
2	Community housing	Action 18
3	Provide Co-ed shelters that permit couples to stay together; splitting couples up makes each individual more vulnerable	Actions 32 and 36
4	Create City-funded women's shelters to replace provincially funded centres recently de-funded	Recommended that the City not take on the provincial responsibility of funding shelters. See also Actions 31, 32, and 34
5	Provide housing specifically for pregnant women and low-income single mothers and children, including job training and transition to independent housing	Actions 16, 17, 18, 30, 31, 71, 72 and 77
6	Create more co-op housing and public co-housing (residents develop ownership interest through contribution via welfare or pension), emphasizing mixed generational living e.g. UK and Europe, all ages living together in council housing, US program where seniors and university students share accommodation.	Action 18
8	Mandate shelters to offer more flexible hours of operation	Actions 31, 32 and 36
9	Create and maintain a housing registry that will help link single mothers with seniors and others who are isolated - combining skills and resources can afford both better living accommodations and support	Action 69
10	Up to date information on shelters and services should be available 24 hours per day through drop-in centers or information kiosks; new services need more publicity, as many in attendance reported learning of new resources through a third party, often too late to help the individual in crisis	Action 72
11	Drop-in centers stay open 24 hours per day; a place for homeless to access information on what services are available in emergency situations	Action 75
12	Staff drop-in centers with volunteer residents experienced in homelessness	Actions 75, 77 and 78
13	24 hour kiosk, preferably staffed, or minimally with access to computer, with up to date information on shelter and support services available throughout the city, and on individual rights	Actions 75, 76 and 78

14	Reinstate/expand Carnegie program involving street workers handing out information in DTES	On March 17, 2005 Council approved contribution of the Carnegie Outreach program for 2005 to 2007
19	Use community centers and neighbourhood houses as emergency shelter in the evening and night-time hours	Actions 39 and 42
20	Collaborate with churches that offer emergency shelter and support to synchronize efforts across the city	Actions 39 and 42
32	Relax zoning regulations to permit single family homes, e.g. oversized "Vancouver Specials", to be divided and rented out as single rooms	Action 22
33	Create phased housing plan for individuals who need support in basic living skills as well as shelter - well intentioned for accommodations have been trashed and abused in the past (e.g. VanCity Place for Youth). Supervision and life skills support, as well as involvement in development, construction or renovation of shelter (e.g. Habitat for Humanity) can create commitment from residents to protect shelter, treat it and self with respect. Consider the experience of Covenant House and its Rights of Passage Programme for youth, and NOW Canada in Kelowna, which provides a graduated living program for sexually abused women	Actions 27, 45 and 46
34	Create more affordable housing units - build on city-owned land	Actions 18, 19 and 20
43	Lobby BC Government to provide rent subsidies geared according to income - allows freedom of choice to individual regarding where to live, rather than a forced choice to live in a particular building or part of town (examples include programs in Europe)	Actions 7, 8, 27 and 28
153	(Urban Bush Dwellers) On-site visitations by outreach workers, street nurses, provide on-site medical assistance	Actions 63, 73 and 74
154	(Urban Bush Dwellers) Recognition and better service of marginalized at hospitals and clinics; treat with respect and dignity	Actions 51 and 62
155	(Urban Bush Dwellers) Provide and support advocacy to assist marginalized to find their way through bureaucratic hoops, such as income assistance applications	Actions 1, 2 and 3
156	(Urban Bush Dwellers) Train volunteers to deal with marginalized individuals, assist with skill development	Actions 42, 72 and 78

APPENDIX E

Actions Related to City of Vancouver

Action 3

The City of Vancouver to work with MHR on a pilot project to coordinate outreach to people who are street homeless to assist eligible people to access BC Employment and Assistance Benefits. This could include enhancing the City's Tenant Assistance Program to help connect people who are street homeless to an MHR outreach worker.

Action 12

Pending changes to the minimum wage, the City of Vancouver to evaluate the implications of establishing a living wage policy that requires each contractor with the City to pay its employees providing services under such a contract wages that are equal to or greater than a living wage.

Action 15

All levels of government to continue to support the Vancouver Agreement Employment Strategy (VAES) Case Coordination Service initiative to provide pre and post employment supports to at least 450 long-term unemployed MHR clients in the Downtown Eastside over three years. This initiative will include providing clients with one-to-one support to help them obtain and retain employment.

Action 16

All levels of government to support and enhance employment assistance services and training programs specifically to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including women, youth, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, and people who are most challenged, to become employment-ready and obtain employment. The programs should provide assistance and support to help homeless people transition to a level of employment that is consistent with their goals, strengths, and abilities and "where they are at".

Approaches should include:

- Low threshold employment training based on the life styles and actual circumstances of street people;
- Mentoring (e.g. teaming up homeless people with others who are working), street outreach and peer employment; and
- Fostering self-employment opportunities and the development of small businesses and other community economic development initiatives (e.g. bike repair shops, crafts, etc.)

Action 17

All levels of government to develop new approaches to provide whatever support and assistance is necessary to help an individual obtain and maintain employment. This includes:

- Developing an assessment tool to determine what supports are needed for the individual to obtain and maintain employment;
- Helping to address fundamental issues such as housing, food, health, dental care, childcare, self-esteem and mental health, substance use, skills training, work experience, and education;
- Ensuring that individuals have the tools needed to find employment, including access to telephones, computers, bus passes, and clean and appropriate clothing for job interviews, and

- Ensuring that people with criminal backgrounds receive the support they need to overcome employment barriers.

Examples of approaches include providing case management and encouraging all employment assistance and training programs to develop a plan to address the basic needs of their clients.

Action 19

The City of Vancouver to create more opportunities for the development of subsidized housing throughout the City by: working with senior governments and acquiring sites, providing land at reduced prices, raising money through the capital plan and developer contributions, density bonusing, ensuring that zoning is compatible and supports the development of affordable and social housing and facilitating inclusiveness, (e.g. by working to address NIMBY issues, showing leadership and public education).

Action 21

The City of Vancouver to purchase at least one SRO per year, subject to available funding, and in partnership with senior governments, to upgrade the building so that, where feasible, each room includes a private bathroom and cooking facilities, and engage a non-profit housing society to manage the building.

Action 22

The City of Vancouver to develop a cohesive rental housing strategy that includes recommendations to:

- Encourage the private sector to create more rental housing (e.g. through zoning for higher density in appropriate areas and density bonusing); and
- Preserve the existing stock of rental housing.

Action 23

The consideration of whether or not the City of Vancouver reaffirms its existing policy of allowing a minimum suite size of 400 sq. ft., relaxable to 320 sq. ft. for all new construction to be determined through the Downtown Eastside Housing Plan deliberations.

Action 26

The City of Vancouver to continue to monitor rent increases in SROs every two years and to report back to Council, with recommendations as appropriate. This could include recommendations as to whether additional measures are necessary to improve access to the Province's rental arbitration system or to regulate rents.

Action 29

The City to work with Vancouver Coastal Health and the Provincial Government to develop a strategy to locate supportive and transitional housing throughout the city.

Action 32

All levels of government to support completion of the Regional Shelter Plan and other planning initiatives as a basis for the longer-term development of new shelters. It is anticipated that these plans will address the needs of adults, youth, families, women with and without children fleeing abuse, Aboriginal people, and individuals with special needs, and the linkages to housing.

Action 35

The Provincial Government to take the lead, in conjunction with the Vancouver Agreement, to develop a strategy to provide emergency accommodation for youth who are using substances and underage youth, including youth going through detox. The strategy should address the range of resources that may be needed to accommodate youth of different ages, and address different needs due to the type of drug being used and the length of time youth have lived on the street.

Action 42

The City of Vancouver to expand the network of organizations that might have the capacity to address the need for emergency accommodation in extreme weather.

Action 44

The City of Vancouver to not support proposals for “tent cities” and instead to encourage more housing and a modest increase in shelters. Proposals for tent cities should only be considered in the future from non-profit societies as a last emergency response when other emergency capacity cannot be provided.

Action 50

The Vancouver Police Department together with the Provincial Government and Vancouver Coastal Health, and community agencies, to determine the need for more Car 87s and appropriate hours of services.

Action 60

The Provincial Government, Vancouver Coastal Health and the City of Vancouver to design an appropriate regulatory structure to ensure that supportive recovery homes operate according to an agreed set of standards. These homes need to be able to accommodate a range of programs and treatment options, including individuals participating in a methadone program and individuals who are taking prescribed psychiatric medication.

Action 68

The City of Vancouver and Provincial Government to fund programs to prevent evictions, including:

- Mediation services;
- Rent assistance and rent bank programs;
- Support to landlords with tenants whose behaviours might otherwise result in an eviction; and
- One-to-one assistance to work with individual tenants to avoid an eviction.

Action 69

The City of Vancouver to work in partnership with BC Housing, BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Co-operative Housing Federation of BC, the GVRD, and other interested parties, to provide a comprehensive housing registry to help applicants obtain both private and social housing. This registry could include:

- Serving as an access point for the social housing registry operated as a partnership by BC Housing, the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC, and other community partners which provide housing;
- Working with BC Housing to ensure that social housing units designed for people with physical disabilities are available for the intended target population;

- Helping people locate and access private rental housing (this could include providing incentives for landlords to participate);
- Providing financial assistance to help clients obtain housing (e.g. damage deposits and assistance with moving expenses);
- Working to overcome other barriers to accessing housing (e.g. discrimination, landlord references, and other barriers); and
- Providing case management to ensure access to support services as necessary.

Action 70

The City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, the hospitals and the Provincial and Federal Corrections departments to work together to ensure effective discharge planning before an individual is discharged so that when these individuals are discharged from institutions (e.g. hospitals and jails) they will be linked to appropriate housing and support services.

Action 71

The Provincial Government to work with other partners as appropriate to ensure the provision of a full range of services to help prevent homelessness. In addition to income assistance, housing, mental health and addiction services, additional services should include:

- Lifeskills and employment training;
- Family mediation;
- Counselling;
- Childcare, parent support and parent education;
- Homemaking support;
- Early childhood development and intervention programs;
- In-school early prevention programs; and
- Settlement services for people who are new to Vancouver.

Action 72

The Provincial Government to work with other partners as appropriate to ensure that people who are homeless or at risk are able to make full use of services to help prevent homelessness. Options for improving access include:

- 24-hour access and one-stop information and referral services, such as the BC 211 Initiative being developed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland (the 211 number would provide a single point of access for community, health, government and social services);
- Working towards the co-location of services (where appropriate and feasible);
- Ensuring that services are in physically accessible buildings;
- Providing user-friendly information in different languages and in different forms (e.g. verbal, written and electronic), recognizing that not everyone has access to the internet;
- Providing bus tickets and making use of van services (e.g. Safe Ride);
- Providing child-minding services for parents with young children so they can get to appointments/interviews;
- Respecting and accommodating individuals with different cultural backgrounds;
- Helping people to obtain the necessary ID (either new ID or replacement); and
- One-on-one advocacy for services.

Action 73

The Provincial Government and other levels of government as appropriate to provide funding for more street outreach services that are available 24/7 and improve coordination among outreach programs and linkages to services.

Action 77

The Provincial Government to work with other partners as appropriate to consider the development of additional drop-in centres targeted to specific populations (e.g. women [including those in the sex trade], youth, sexual minorities, people with mental health issues, people using substances, senior and others), who may not feel safe in drop-in centres that are open to everyone.

Action 79

All levels of Government and community agencies to support the development and implementation of HIFIS (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System) to obtain information about the number and characteristics of people who use emergency shelters (including transition houses and safe houses) and people who are turned away from these facilities. If HIFIS cannot provide comprehensive locally relevant data, another system should be developed.

Action 86

The City to work with the Federal Government, the Provincial Government, Vancouver Coastal health, the community, service providers, and business to develop an implementation strategy for the Homeless Action Plan.