



## POLICY REPORT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Report Date: July 19, 2011  
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Meeting Date: July 26, 2011

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Managing Director of Social Development, in consultation with the  
Director of Planning

SUBJECT: Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

THAT Council approve the "Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021" and the "Housing and Homeless Strategy - 3 yr Action Plan 2012-2014", as a framework to respond to Council's priorities for addressing street homelessness and increasing the variety of affordable housing options within the City.

### ***GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy represents the culmination of significant research and public consultation on an issue of critical importance to the City of Vancouver's overall sustainability. All sectors of the housing continuum are addressed by this strategy with measurable targets to achieve. This will allow the City to focus its resources on the most effective way to achieve Council's priority of "a home for everyone".

The General Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

### ***CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

### ***COUNCIL POLICY***

Council priorities are to end street homelessness by 2015 and increase housing opportunities for low and moderate income households.

## ***SUMMARY***

On February 1<sup>st</sup> 2011, Council considered the draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy and directed staff to commence public & stakeholder engagement before reporting back in Summer 2011. Between April and mid-June 2011, staff worked to deliver the Talk Housing With Us public and stakeholder engagement program.

This report provides Council with a ten-year Housing & Homelessness Strategy which has been shaped by this engagement. This strategy provides priority directions for the City over the next ten years. In addition a three-year action plan provides a comprehensive road map for the City to help deliver solutions to the housing challenges we face.

## ***PURPOSE***

The report seeks Council approval of the attached ten-year Housing and Homelessness Strategy and three-year Action Plan that have been informed by staff from across the city, multiple stakeholders and members of the public through the Talk Housing With Us consultation program.

## ***BACKGROUND***

The City of Vancouver's core mission is "to create a great city of communities which cares about its people, its environment and the opportunities to live, work and prosper." Challenges with housing affordability and homelessness are significant barriers to achieving this mission. The City's ability to achieve its mission depends, in part, on achieving two priority goals:

1. To end street homelessness by 2015
2. To increase affordable housing choices for all Vancouverites

The foundation for the Housing & Homelessness Strategy is provided by past City policy and practice and by a broad range of research and analysis (available on the City's website at [www.vancouver.ca/housing](http://www.vancouver.ca/housing)). In addition, the City has considered input from our partners who have contributed to an improved understanding of the challenges we face and potential solutions (e.g. Streethome Foundation's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Vancouver.)

## ***DISCUSSION***

After presenting a draft Housing and Homelessness Strategy to Council on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, staff initiated, at Council's direction, a multi-pronged consultation entitled *Talk Housing With Us*.

On April 27<sup>th</sup> 2011, the consultation commenced with a large Stakeholder Workshop which included the following groups of stakeholders:

- Government partners (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Metro Vancouver, etc.)
- Non-profit housing and service providers
- Real Estate and Development Industry (Urban Development Institute, Real Estate Board, development companies)
- Financial Institutions
- Apartment Owners and Managers
- Community partners (e.g. Streethome Foundation, Vancouver Foundation, Tenants Resource and Advisory Centre, etc.)

- Academic Institutions

Staff followed on the large workshop with small focus groups to obtain further input and a deeper discussion on key issues discussed at the Stakeholder Workshop. Focus group sessions were held with a variety of partners including the key organizations working with the City to deliver the 14 sites supportive housing projects (BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, BC Non-Profit Housing Association and Streethome Foundation), the Urban Development Institute and the Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee.

The broad public component of *Talk Housing With Us* was launched with a designated public website on May 4<sup>th</sup>. The website allowed the public to learn about housing issues, find out about upcoming events, provide feedback on draft strategies and share their ideas on solutions to housing challenges. Other key components of this broad public consultation included:

- A Renter's Roundtable on May 25<sup>th</sup> to engage with and hear directly from the experience of renters in the City.
- A Housing Unconference on June 4<sup>th</sup> to draw on the creativity of Vancouver citizens in developing solutions to our housing challenges.
- Two community dialogues:
  - the first on June 8<sup>th</sup> on Co-op Housing,
  - the second on June 16<sup>th</sup> on Live-Work.

In total, 400 people were engaged in Talk Housing With Us events and 2,400 unique people visited the Talk Housing website.

Reports capturing all the elements of *Talk Housing With Us* can be found on the Talk Housing with Us website at [www.vancouver.ca/talkvancouver](http://www.vancouver.ca/talkvancouver) and at [www.vancouver.ca/housing](http://www.vancouver.ca/housing).

### The Housing and Homelessness Strategy:

The views and opinions heard during this public and stakeholder engagement were used to shape the Housing & Homelessness Strategy, attached as Appendix 1. Building on what the City has learnt from past practices and policies and what we heard during Talk Housing With Us, the Strategy focuses on three strategic directions:

1. Increase the supply of affordable housing
2. Encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods that enhances quality of life
3. Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability

The Strategy addresses the entire housing continuum with the City committed to improving choice and affordability for all residents and in all neighbourhoods across the city. The housing continuum consists of the range of housing options available to households of all income levels, from emergency shelters for people who are homeless to affordable home ownership options for key workers with moderate incomes.

The Strategy identifies priority actions for the City over the next ten years (2012-2021) and the Action Plan 2012-2014 identifies specific actions within the next three years. The Strategy includes targets and outcomes that will require not only City land and resources but also contributions from other partners. As part of our strategy, Social Development staff are

working to ensure our granting criteria and processes optimize the ability of our community partners to enable us reach our housing goals.

Housing Category	Category Includes	Housing Unit Targets	
		Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021	Housing & Homelessness 3 yr Action Plan 2012-2014
Non-Market Housing	Supportive & Social Housing	7,900 *	3,650 *
Market Rental Housing	Purpose Built and Secondary Market	11,000	3,675
Home-Ownership	Condos and Affordable Home Ownership	20,000	6,675
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>38,900</b>	<b>14,000</b>

\* 1,700 supported housing units are already funded and either under construction or planning activities are underway.

### *FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS*

The City cannot deliver the Housing & Homelessness Strategy alone. Funding for new non-market rental housing will be achieved through partnerships with the City, senior governments, the non-profit sector and the private sector.

The non-market housing unit target for the next three years (2012-2014) is 3,650 new units of supportive and social rental housing. 1,700 supported housing are already funded and either under construction or planning activities are underway. The City has made the following commitments toward achieving the remaining 1,950 units over the next three years (2012-2014):

- The proposed Draft Capital Plan for 2012-2014 (RTS #9261) includes \$42.4 million as the City's contribution of land and capital grants to enable approximately 1,150 new units of non-market rental housing. The delivery of these units will require funding from senior governments, non-profit partners and possibly the private sector for building construction; operational funding will require a commitment from senior levels of government or non-profit partners; and
- Accepting 100 new units of non-market rental housing as in-kind Community Amenity Contributions at Arbutus Centre (RTS #8947).

In addition, it is anticipated that a further 381 new units of non-market rental housing will be built over the next three years including:

- 105 additional units to be built using in-kind Community Amenity Contributions, and
- 276 units are planned to be provided by B.C. Housing.

This brings the projected total number of non-market rental housing units with an identified funding source to approximately 3,331.

The remaining 319 units of the target of 3,650 non-market rental housing units currently have no identified funding source. However, with the announcement of the \$1.4 billion Federal / Provincial / Territorial 2011-2014 housing framework announced on July 5, 2011, it is anticipated that a portion of this commitment will flow to Vancouver and be available to lever these residual units.

In order to achieve the City's ten-year target of 7,900 new units of non-market rental housing, an additional 4,250 units will need to be provided between 2015 and 2021. Our success in providing these units will again depend on our partnerships and creativity in leveraging city assets to achieve these goals. The City's contribution to enable these units will be articulated in future capital planning cycles.

The financial implications of each initiative toward meeting the targets and outcomes in the Housing and Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan will be brought forward to Council as a distinct report or in some cases as part of the annual capital or operating plans.

#### ***PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS***

Increasing the capacity of the City to impact housing supply and affordability may require additional resources. Although no specific additional costs are identified at this time, it is anticipated that the upcoming operating budget discussions will assess any additional requirements within the context the City's priorities.

#### ***ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS***

Vancouver has an advanced building code, assuring that new additions to our housing continuum will meet stringent environmental standards. However, other environmental implications of our housing challenges are significant. The lack of housing that is affordable to people with low and moderate incomes in the City increases the likelihood that our workforce will live in less expensive suburbs and commute to work. Compact, mixed income & mixed tenure communities provide opportunities to walk to work or use sustainable modes of transportation. As part of our economic development plan, the Greenest City targets focus on increasing green jobs. Housing diversity and affordability are vital ingredients in developing a vibrant and green economy.

#### ***SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

Homelessness has serious negative social implications. It involves severe human suffering and represents a waste of human potential. Homelessness is expensive for our health and social service system, focusing limited resources in a reactive way that could otherwise be targeted for more proactive social objectives. Homelessness impacts Vancouver neighbourhoods, and negatively impacts the quality of life of all Vancouver citizens. The lack of affordable housing also has significant social implications and limits our ability to create diverse and sustainable communities.

*CONCLUSION*

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021 identifies the priority actions for the City in the next ten years needed to address the challenges faced across the housing continuum. The three-year Action Plan 2012-2014 focuses on the most immediate phase of detailed activities needed to effect change and improvement.

\* \* \* \* \*

# Vancouver's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

2012-2021

A home for  
everyone



# A home for everyone

## **Vancouver's Housing and Homelessness Strategy**

**2012-2021**

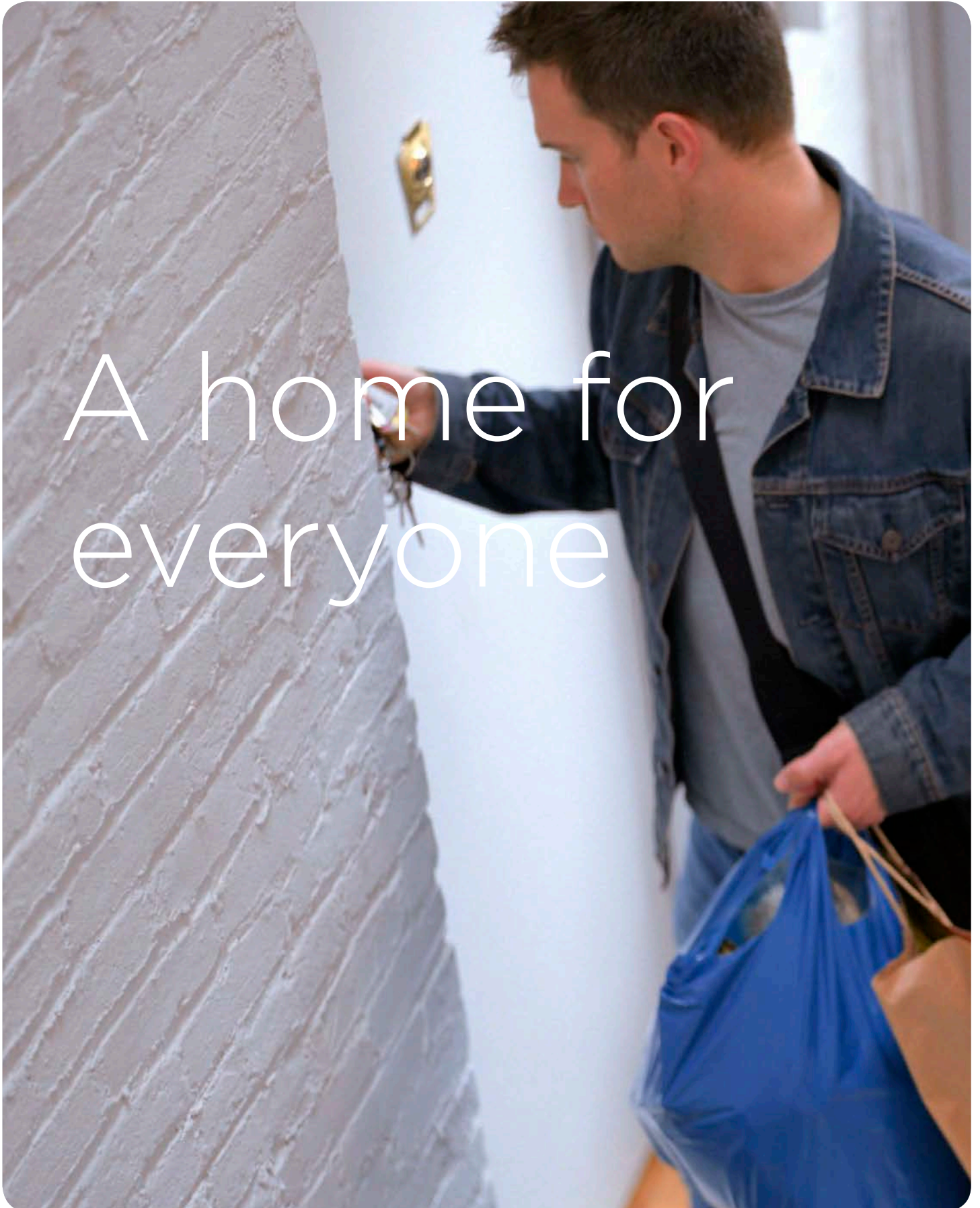
Prepared by Context Ltd. June 2011

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Thank-you to Mayor and Council, City staff from Social Development, Planning, Development Services and Communications, as well as everyone who participated in the Talk Housing With Us public engagement activities.



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# A home for everyone

# 1.0 Introduction

## Vancouver's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

Vancouver is a growing and diverse city with significant housing challenges. Providing a range of housing options is critical to the social and economic health of the City. The Housing and Homelessness Strategy describes the City's overall direction for housing, including what we need and how we will achieve it over the next ten years. It identifies the different kinds of housing necessary to meet the needs of our citizens, as well as ways to improve and better preserve the housing we currently have.

The goals of the strategy are to end street homelessness and provide more affordable housing choices for all Vancouverites. This includes housing that is accessible, affordable and suitable for all income levels, seniors, families and residents challenged by disability. Modest market and rental housing is key to the economic development of the City.

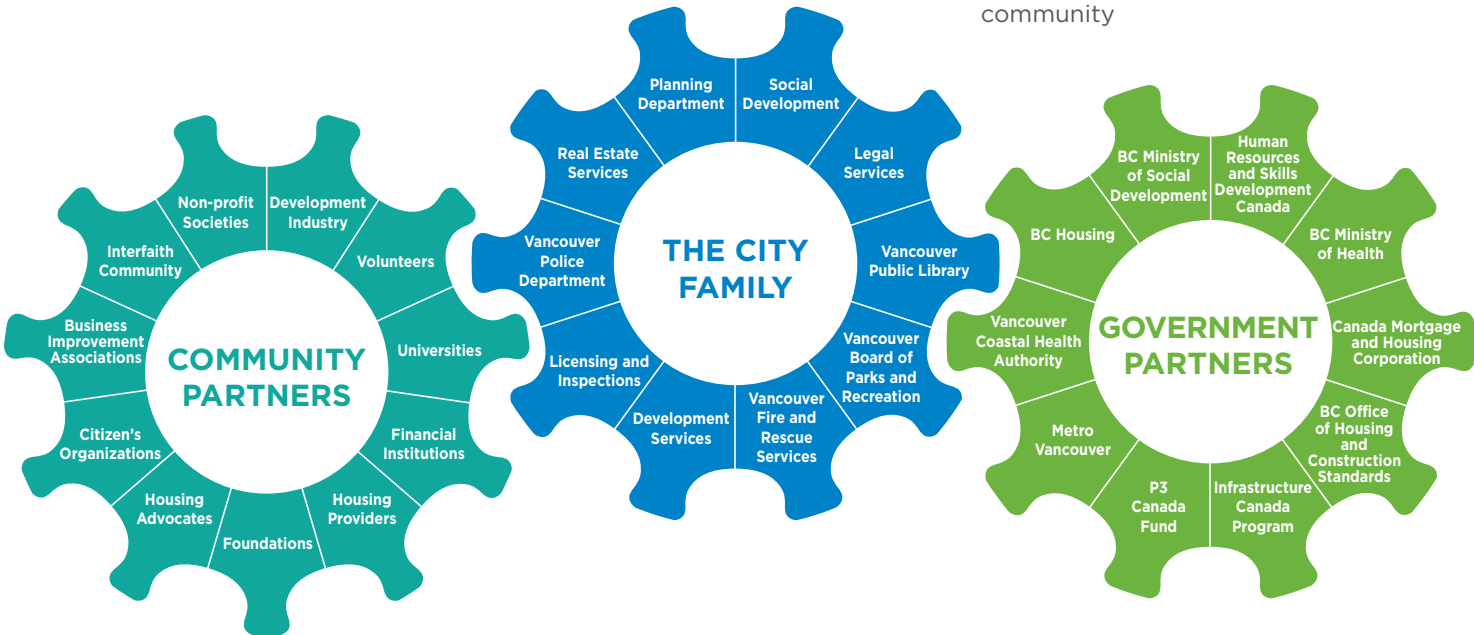
The strategic directions in this document address all points along the Housing Continuum. The Housing Continuum consists of the range of housing options available to households of all income levels, extending from emergency shelter and housing for the homeless through to affordable rental housing and homeownership. In the context of these challenges, the City is committed to policies and actions to improve housing affordability and diversity at all points along the continuum. The strategy will set priorities for capital projects, and direct housing programs, services and decisions.

The City of Vancouver's mission is to create a city of communities which cares about its people, its environment and the opportunities to live, work and prosper. Challenges with housing affordability and increasing homelessness pose significant barriers to achieving this mission.

### Success depends on the support of all our partners

Success cannot be achieved alone. It requires:

- Commitment from all levels of government
- Support and cooperation of stakeholders and partners
- Widespread support from the community



## 2.0 Executive Summary

### Vancouver's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021

#### A home for everyone

#### Mission

Create a city of communities which cares about its people, its environment and the opportunities to live, work and prosper

#### Goals

- End street homelessness by 2015
- Increase affordable housing choices for all Vancouverites



#### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

##### Increase the supply of affordable housing

###### Priority Actions:

1. Optimize the City's use of land, capital grants, incentives, and other resources to lever and support housing partnerships
2. Refine and develop new zoning approaches, development tools and rental incentives
3. Pursue a new business model to enhance affordable housing delivery



#### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

##### Encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods that enhances quality of life

###### Priority Actions:

1. Protect the existing rental stock by:
  - maintaining and exploring opportunities to improve the Rate of Change regulations and SRA Bylaw
  - providing incentives for upgrades
  - improving property and tenancy management practices
2. Target low barrier shelter, supportive housing and social housing:
  - in neighbourhoods with significant homeless populations and limited capacity, and;
  - to specific populations (e.g. youth, urban Aboriginal, mentally ill, women, etc.)
3. Use financial and regulatory tools to encourage a variety of housing types and tenures that meet the needs of diverse households



#### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

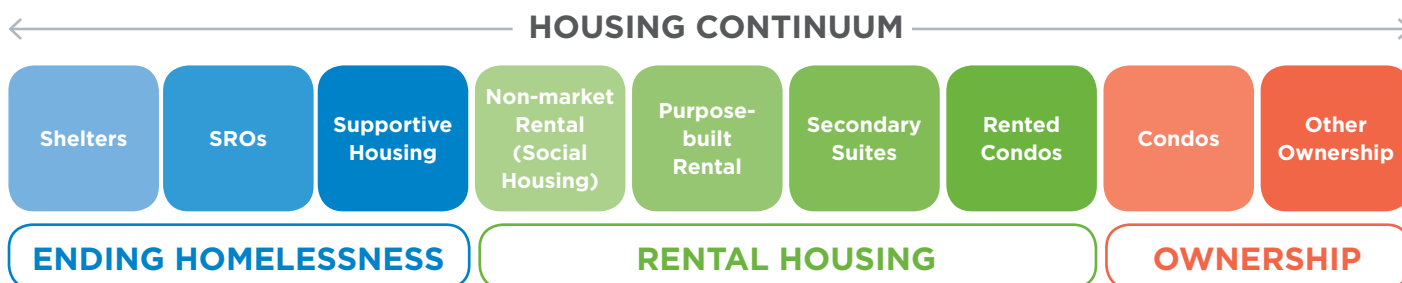
##### Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability

###### Priority Actions:

1. Enhance support to renters
2. Strengthen the focus of the Urban Health Initiative on homelessness, with an emphasis on improving health, safety, food security, employment, and social supports
3. Demonstrate leadership in research and innovation to create improved housing options for our diverse population
4. Focus our efforts with partners on preventing and eliminating homelessness

## 3.0 The Challenge

The Housing Continuum consists of the range of housing options available to households of all income levels, extending from emergency shelter and housing for the homeless through to affordable rental housing and homeownership.



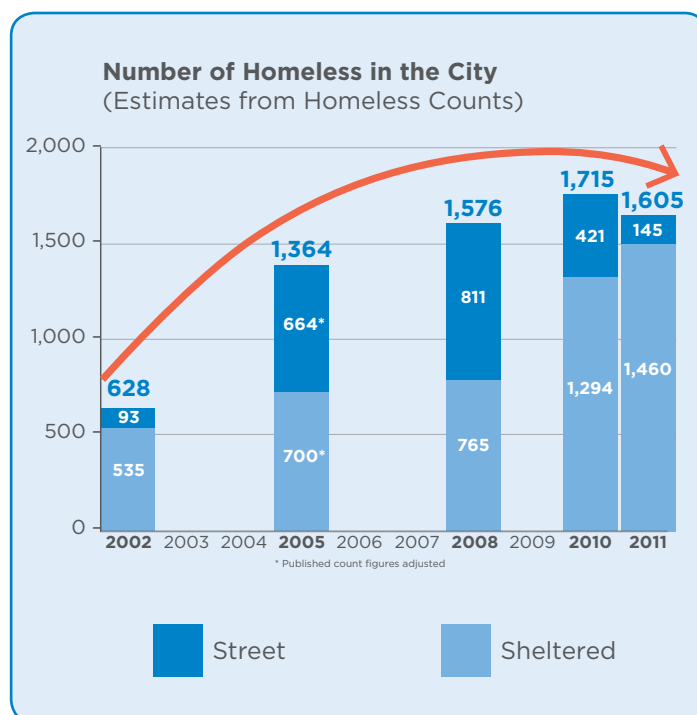
The City of Vancouver faces significant challenges at all points along the housing continuum.

In the context of these challenges, the City is committed to policies and actions to improve housing affordability and diversity at all points along the continuum.

### 3.1 Homelessness Challenges



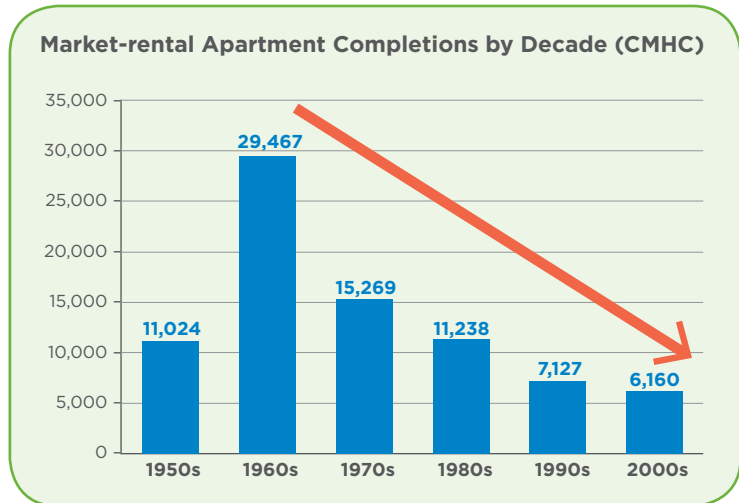
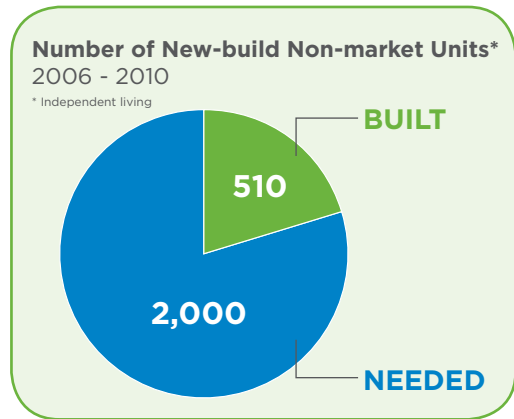
- Although stabilized in the last 2 years, homelessness has increased nearly three-fold in the last 10 years.
- Inadequate SRO hotels form a key part of the lowest income housing stock, but rooms are being lost to conversions and rent increases.
- There are a significant number of supportive housing units in development, but this supply will not entirely address the need and will take several years to complete.
- Gaps in the health care and social safety systems contribute to the problem. The majority of homeless have mental health and addiction issues.



### 3.2 Rental Housing Challenges



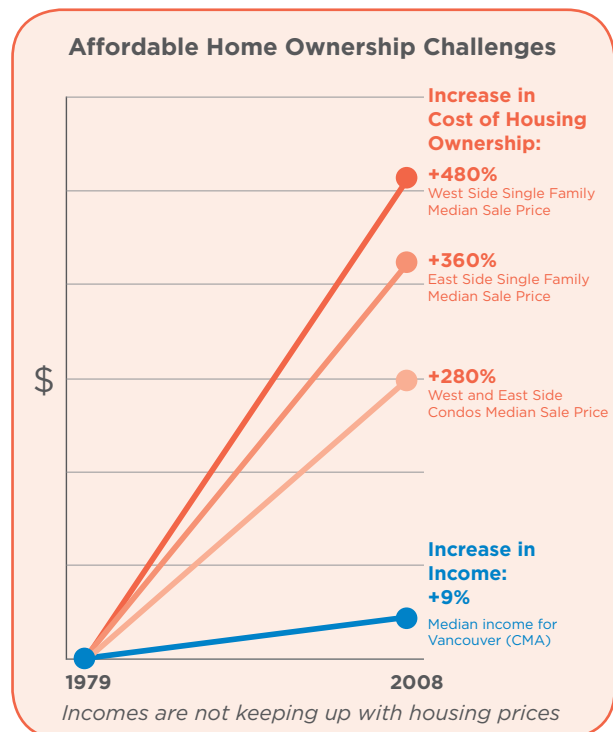
- New social housing supply has decreased in recent decades.
- There are very low vacancy rates in the market rental stock, with limited new supply in recent decades.
- Economic analysis of new purpose-built rental housing supply indicates that significant new supply by the private market is unlikely without incentives.
- Primary source of new supply is the secondary market, including secondary suites (which are usually affordable), and rented condominiums, which tend to have higher rents and have limited security of tenure.



### 3.3 Home Ownership Challenges



- Vancouver has the highest house prices in Canada.
- The vast majority of renter households have incomes far below those required to purchase even a modest eastside condominium.
- The gap is widening — since the late 1970s, real household incomes increased by 9% while house prices increased by 280% for an eastside condo.



## 4.0 Making Progress

### 4.1 What we have done (2009 - 2011)

The City has already made significant progress toward achieving its goals to address homelessness and affordability challenges.

In working to end homelessness by 2015, the City has:

- Increased shelter capacity during winter months through the Mayor's Homeless Emergency Action Team (HEAT) and Winter Response low-barrier shelter initiative, and partnership with BC Housing and community partners. This has resulted in an 82% reduction in street homelessness since 2008.
- Funded the renovation of 200 units (Bosman Residence and Dunsmuir House) to provide capacity to reduce street homelessness and allow people to stabilize pending the completion of permanent supportive housing resources.
- Secured capital funding from the Province of BC for 1500 supportive housing units on 14 City-owned sites; four of these sites opened in the first half of 2011 with 390 units now occupied. The remaining units will be open by the end of 2013.
- Mobilized the community and established key partnerships with Vancouver Coastal Health, Business Improvement Associations, the Interfaith community and local churches to work on ending street homelessness and providing better support to the homeless.
- Launched the Urban Health Initiative in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health, focusing on a number of important initiatives targeting homelessness such as providing primary care in low-barrier shelters, addressing problem hoarding, Mental Health 101 training for frontline staff, and implementing food security initiatives.

Street homelessness has decreased 82% since 2008



Official Groundbreaking at 215 West 2nd Avenue in Vancouver - June 27, 2011

To increase affordable housing choices for all Vancouverites, the City has:

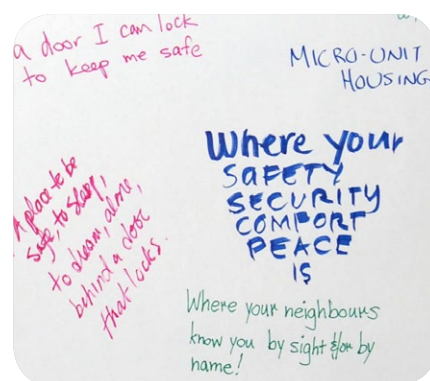
- Developed the Short-Term Incentives for Rental (STIR) program which responds to the market rental shortage with incentives for the development of new market rental housing. Incentives include: waiving of development cost levies on rental units, reducing parking requirements, using discretion to determine unit size, increasing density and expediting permit processing. As of July 1, 2011, there are 1,100 rental units in the pipeline, of which 500 have been approved.
- Through new zoning policies, the City enabled the development of 750 new secondary suites and laneway housing units between 2009 and July 1, 2011. Single family housing with secondary suites is permitted in all residential areas in the city. To facilitate the creation of more secondary suites, zoning changes were approved to enable full-size basements and more livable basement suites in all single-family areas. As well, laneway housing was introduced in most single-family areas.
- Used a model similar to inclusionary zoning to support the Cambie Corridor Plan which requires 20% affordable market rental housing units on sites targeted for rental housing (creating the capacity of 2,900 rental units) or an increased allocation of affordable rental units on large and strategic sites.

## 4.2 What we learned from the public and our partners

The City has been making progress toward achieving our goals but success requires input, collaboration and partnership. To strengthen our strategy, in the spring of 2011 we conducted the **Talk Housing With Us Engagement Program**. The program provided an opportunity for housing stakeholders, experts and interested community members to present ideas, seek advice, and engage one another to find solutions to the challenges of housing affordability and homelessness.

What we heard and learned is captured below.

- Low-barrier shelters (such as the HEAT shelters) have been very effective at helping people come inside and as points of entry to the housing continuum. However, the uncertainty around opening and closure procedures for seasonal shelters each year creates challenges for everyone involved. More stability is needed in the Winter Response program.
- Location is extremely important to solutions to homelessness — people are more likely to come inside and be successful inside when shelter and supportive housing is provided in the neighbourhood they call home.
- Basic services can have a profound impact — nutritious food and primary health care encourage people to come inside, improve people’s health and well-being and make low-barrier shelter and housing environments more manageable.
- The City’s Rate of Change regulations (protection of rental stock) are effective at preventing loss of secure rental housing. However, the City needs to consider incentives to encourage repair and maintenance as the stock ages. Without Rate of Change regulations, 14,200 units of rental housing could be at risk by 2019.
- The Short-Term Incentives for Rental (STIR) program has been successful at encouraging purpose-built and market rental housing supply, but there is room for improvement. STIR projects are most successful when they fit with the neighbourhood context. STIR has enabled observations about which incentives, locations, and construction types are most successful. There is an interest in developing small projects, but these developers may require technical assistance in project development and development approvals.
- Minor changes to existing city policies and regulations can have significant impacts. (For example, zoning changes that encourage livable basements in single family houses have increased the supply of secondary suites).
- Broadening partnerships to include new sectors and organizations is a key to success.
- The City needs to pursue opportunities with new partners to increase the affordable housing supply with or without senior government funding.
- Renters face significant challenges finding and keeping affordable and adequate rental housing. Some renters are struggling to access the advice and support they need to understand and maintain their rights.
- Continued leadership from Mayor and Council is key to success.



Scrawl Wall at Housing Unconference Event: “What does home mean to you?”

### Developing the Strategy

A wide range of citizens and key stakeholders participated in the development of this strategy. In the spring of 2011, over 400 people participated in the Talk Housing With Us engagement process, including a Stakeholder Workshop, Stakeholder Meetings, a Renters Roundtable, and an Unconference event.

In addition over 2,400 people visited the Talk Housing With Us Discussion Forums and 165 people discussed issues, posted questions, generated ideas and learned about housing and homelessness through fact sheets, links and videos.



## 5.0 Strategic Directions

To ensure the City and its partners sustain the progress we have made to achieve our goals, we have identified three strategic directions with corresponding priority actions:



### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

#### Increase the supply of affordable housing

##### Priority Actions:

1. Optimize the City's use of land, capital grants, incentives, and other resources to lever and support housing partnerships
2. Refine and develop new zoning approaches, development tools and rental incentives
3. Pursue a new business model to enhance affordable housing delivery



### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

#### Encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods that enhances quality of life

##### Priority Actions:

1. Protect the existing rental stock by:
  - maintaining and exploring opportunities to improve the Rate of Change regulations and SRA Bylaw
  - providing incentives for upgrades
  - improving property and tenancy management practices
2. Target low barrier shelter, supportive housing and social housing:
  - in neighbourhoods with significant homeless populations and limited capacity, and;
  - to specific populations (e.g. youth, urban Aboriginal, mentally ill, women, etc.)
3. Use financial and regulatory tools to encourage a variety of housing types and tenures that meet the needs of diverse households

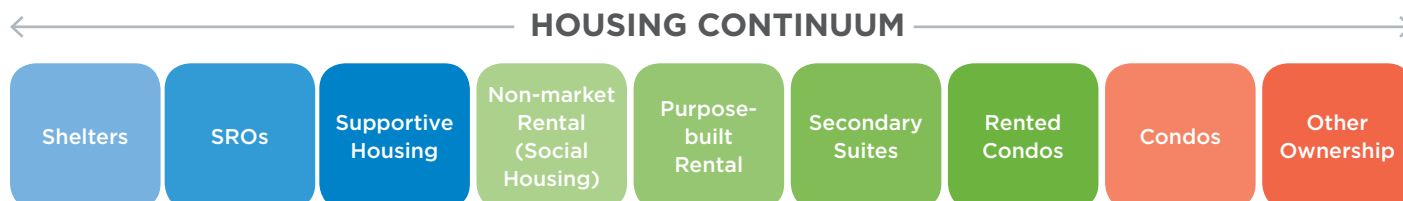


### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

#### Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability

##### Priority Actions:

1. Enhance support to renters
2. Strengthen the focus of the Urban Health Initiative on homelessness, with an emphasis on improving health, safety, food security, employment, and social supports
3. Demonstrate leadership in research and innovation to create improved housing options for our diverse population
4. Focus our efforts with partners on preventing and eliminating homelessness



The strategic directions address the entire housing continuum and are designed to meet the housing needs of all Vancouverites. An overview of what each strategic direction is designed to achieve, together with a picture of success and priority actions are described in the following sections.

## 5.1 Strategic Direction 1: Increase the supply of affordable housing

### Increasing the supply of affordable housing will:

- Help reduce the significant number of homeless people on the street and in shelters
- Address the insufficient supply of rental housing, particularly that which is affordable to low and modest income households
- Help renters find housing. Incomes required for homeownership are out of reach for majority of renter households in Vancouver. The vast majority of renter households have incomes far below those required to purchase even a modest eastside condominium



### The picture of success by 2021:

- Ensure shelter capacity to meet the needs of street homeless
- Enable 2,900 new supportive housing units
  - Phase 1: 1,700 units (funded and delivered 2011–2013)
  - Phase 2: 450 units (funded 2012–2014)
  - Phase 3: 750 units (funded 2015–2021)
- Enable 5,000 additional new social housing units (includes 1,000 units of SRO replacement with self-contained social housing)
- Enable 11,000 new market rental housing units
  - 5,000 purpose-built rental
  - 6,000 secondary market (e.g. suites, laneway housing)
- Enable 20,000 market ownership units



### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1 PRIORITY ACTIONS:

1. Optimize the City's use of land, capital grants, incentives, and other resources to lever and support housing partnerships
2. Refine and develop new zoning approaches, development tools and rental incentives
3. Pursue a new business model to enhance delivery of affordable housing

## 5.2 Strategic Direction 2: Encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods that enhances quality of life

### Encouraging a housing mix to enhance quality of life and choice in all neighbourhoods will:

- Increase the availability of well-maintained and suitable housing types and tenures for a diverse population (e.g. two, three and four bedroom units for families, supportive housing, accessible housing, seniors) across all neighbourhoods

### The picture of success by 2021:

- high quality, well-maintained housing stock
- a complete mix of housing in each of the City's neighbourhoods



### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2 PRIORITY ACTIONS

1. Protect the existing rental stock by:
  - maintaining and exploring opportunities to improve the Rate of Change regulations and SRA Bylaw
  - providing incentives for upgrades
  - improving property and tenancy management practices
2. Target low barrier shelter, supportive housing and social housing:
  - in neighbourhoods with significant homeless populations and limited capacity, and;
  - to specific populations (e.g. youth, urban Aboriginal, mentally ill, women etc.)
3. Use financial and regulatory tools to encourage a variety of housing types and tenures that meet the needs of diverse households

## 5.3 Strategic Direction 3: Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability

### Providing strong leadership and supporting partners to enhance housing stability will:

- Improve understanding of the importance of housing stability
- Help identify risks and overcome barriers to housing stability

### The picture of success by 2021:

- Vancouver's citizens will have the support they need to access and maintain stable housing

Partnerships are essential in meeting our goals to end homelessness and to increase housing options for all Vancouverites



### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3 PRIORITY ACTIONS

1. Enhance support to renters
2. Strengthen the focus of the Urban Health Initiative on homelessness, with an emphasis on improving health, safety, food security, employment, and social supports
3. Demonstrate leadership in research and innovation to create improved housing options for our diverse population
4. Focus our efforts with partners on preventing and eliminating homelessness

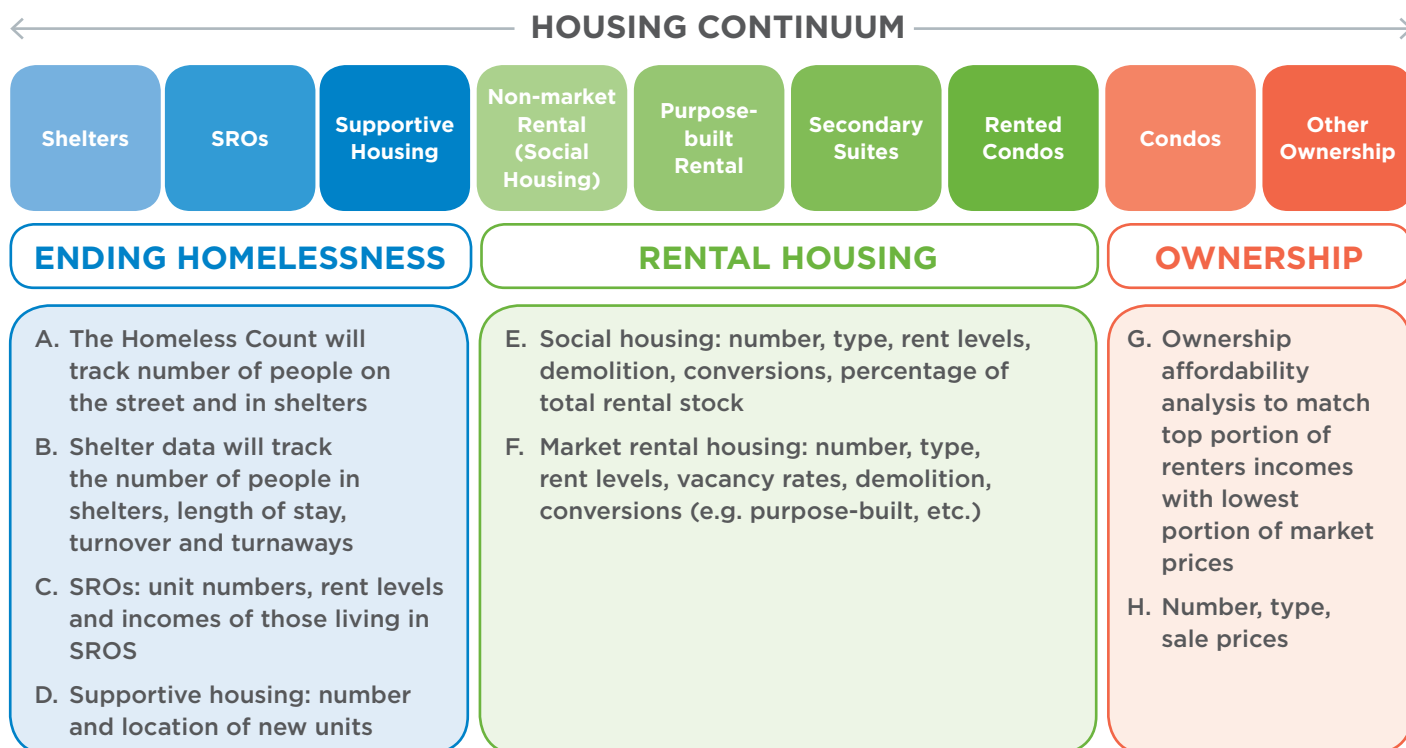
## 6.0 Implementation and Performance

### Implementing the Strategy

The Strategy will be achieved through a series of Action Plans corresponding with the City's capital plan cycle to aid with effective implementation.

### Measuring Our Performance

A Housing and Homelessness Strategy report card will be presented annually to Council to track our progress towards achieving the strategy goals. Baseline indicators will be established to measure and evaluate our progress which will help fine tune priority actions or shift the focus as necessary.





## Glossary



**Affordable housing** can be provided by the City, government, non-profit, community and for-profit partners and it can be found or developed along the whole housing continuum including SROs, market rental and affordable home ownership. The degree of housing affordability results from the relationship between the cost of housing and household income. It is not a static concept as housing costs and incomes change over time.

**Emergency Shelters** are temporary accommodation for the homeless; they prevent people from becoming street homeless.

**Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Housing** is the most affordable form of rental housing provided by the market. In Vancouver, the stock of SROs was built in the early 1900s to provide transitional housing largely for men working in the resource industries. A typical SRO unit is one room of about 10 x 10 feet with shared bathrooms and minimal or no cooking facilities. Over the last 20 years, a significant portion of SROs in the city have been bought and are operated by government or a non-profit partner.

**Supportive Housing** is non-market housing (see next definition) that, in addition to rental subsidy to make the housing affordable, also includes ongoing and targeted support services to residents who cannot live independently due to health problems and or other disability. This housing type can be provided in congregate settings or in scattered apartments. Typical support services include mental health and or other health supports, life skills training and meal preparation.

**Social Housing/Non-Market Housing** is housing for low and moderate income singles and families, usually subsidized through a variety of mechanisms, including senior government support. The current model in Vancouver is a self-contained unit, with private bathroom and kitchen, owned or operated by government or a non-profit. The rents vary to enable a mix of incomes and can range from the value of the shelter component of Income Assistance to 30% of tenant's income including market rents.

**Secure Market Rental / Purpose Built Rental Housing** are apartments and/or buildings that are built with the intent to be rented in the private market. Through regulation, they cannot be separated and sold as separate stratas.

**Secondary Suites** are typically additional units within the structure of a principal single family residence, and are often basement apartments or lock-off suites in townhouses / apartments.

**Rented Condominiums** are investor-owned condominium (strata) units rented on the private market.

**Condominiums** are buildings in which units of property are owned individually, while the common property is owned jointly by all of the owners.

**Other Ownership** refers primarily to single family dwellings and row house forms that are not owned as strata properties (i.e. condominiums).





# Vancouver's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

*A home for everyone*

3 Year Action Plan  
2012-2014



## Introduction:

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy describes the City's overall direction for housing over the next 10 years. The strategy will be implemented through a series of Action Plans corresponding to the City's capital Plan cycle. This document is the first 3 Year Action Plan (2012 – 2014).

### Vancouver's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021

#### A home for everyone

##### Mission

Create a city of communities which cares about its people, its environment and the opportunities to live, work and prosper

##### Goals

- End street homelessness by 2015
- Increase affordable housing choices for all Vancouverites



##### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

Increase the supply of affordable housing



##### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

Encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods that enhances quality of life



##### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability

## Strategic Direction 1: Increase the supply of affordable housing

**Priority Actions:** Optimize the City’s use of land, capital grants, incentives and other resources to lever and support housing partnerships

Supporting Actions	Outcomes in next 3 years	Potential Partners <sup>1</sup>	Housing Continuum
Expedite completion and occupancy of all 14 supportive housing sites across city and ensure they house local homeless.	1,700 units of supportive housing. Continued decrease in street and sheltered homeless individuals on annual count.	BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), Non-profit partners, Community partners, StreetoHome, BC Non-profit Housing Association (BCNPHA)	Street Shelters Supportive Housing
Explore opportunities with City land, resources & capital projects plus lever resources & identify opportunities with all levels of government to increase housing supply and diversity.	450 units of supportive housing. 1500 units of social housing. Permanent Shelter Strategy, developed in partnership with BC Housing, including 160 winter response or equivalent beds. Use of RFEOI methodology on targeted city land holdings to engage partners & developers. Lever development opportunities through city and other public sector partner facility developments to enable affordable housing units. Senior level steering committee with strategic plan to maximize opportunities & mitigate risks, and lever partnerships & resources at the federal, provincial and regional level. Work with partners (e.g. Rental Housing Supply Coalition) to lever opportunities for federal/provincial tax incentives.	BC Housing, VCH, Non-profit partners (e.g. SUCCESS, YWCA), StreetoHome, developers, CMHC, P3 Canada, Infrastructure Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada , Corrections Canada, BC Housing, Ministry of Health and Health Authorities, Ministry of Children and Families, Ministry of Solicitor General, Metro Vancouver, UDI, Faith-based partners, First Nations & Urban Aboriginal partners	Shelters Supportive Housing Social Housing Purpose Built Rental Affordable Home Ownership

<sup>1</sup> This is not a comprehensive list of partners but an indication of the partners the City looks forward to working with.

## Strategic Direction 1: Increase the supply of affordable housing

### Priority Actions: Refine & develop new zoning approaches, development tools and rental incentives

Supporting Actions	Outcomes in next 3 years	Potential Partners <sup>2</sup>	Housing Continuum
Enhance on-going rental incentive program building on lessons from STIR.	Continue to achieve secure purpose built rental housing. Focus on assisting smaller projects.	Developers, Non-profit partners, Community partners, UDI	Purpose Built Rental
Expand and amend planning and regulatory framework to expedite and enhance supply of affordable housing units, including a focus on low density residential neighbourhoods.	Focus Affordable Housing in New Neighbourhoods Policy (20% policy) to prioritize clear title to land at no cost or units. Integrate delivery of affordable housing units into community and City-wide plans <sup>3</sup> . Expand zones/ housing types for secondary suites and laneway housing. Deliver Neighbourhood Housing Affordability Program <sup>4</sup> to permit re-zonings and increase supply, diversity and affordability.	Developers, Non-profit partners, Community partners, UDI, BC Housing, Home Owners, Greater Vancouver Home Builders Association (GVHBA), Co-op Housing Federation (CHF)	Supportive Housing Social Housing Purpose Built Rental

<sup>2</sup> This is not a comprehensive list of partners but an indication of the partners the City looks forward to working with.

<sup>3</sup> Subject to the commencement of these plans being approved by Council.

<sup>4</sup> Building on lessons from the Housing Demonstration Program.

## Strategic Direction 1: Increase the supply of affordable housing

### Priority Actions: Pursue a new business model to improve affordable housing delivery

Supporting Actions	Outcomes in next 3 years	Potential Partners <sup>5</sup>	Housing Continuum
Establish specialist inter-disciplinary team to optimize the City's housing delivery process, including leverage of PEF & other City assets.	Enhance the focus and coherence of the development process to increase capacity for delivery for City and City/Partner housing projects. Prioritize affordable housing in the development process.	BC Housing, Industry experts, Developers, Non-profit partners, Financial Institutions (e.g. VanCity)	Shelters Supportive Housing Social Housing Purpose Built Rental Affordable Home Ownership

<sup>5</sup> This is not a comprehensive list of partners but an indication of the partners the City looks forward to working with.

## Strategic Direction 2: Encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods that enhances quality of life

### Priority Actions: Protect the existing rental stock by:

- maintaining and exploring opportunities to improve the Rate of Change regulations and SRA Bylaw
- providing incentives for upgrades
- improving property & tenancy management practices

Supporting Actions	Outcomes in next 3 years	Potential Partners <sup>6</sup>	Housing Continuum
Protect, update and enhance existing SRO, supportive, social, and purpose built rental housing.	Successful P3 Canada proposal for renovation and maintenance of housing projects. Enhanced Rate of Change and SRA Bylaw regulations building on lessons from implementation & rental housing market analysis. Support partners to develop incentives for upgrading existing rental stock (e.g. align with green retrofit programs).	UDI, BC Apartment Owners & Managers (BCAOMA), Non-profit partners, Community partners, CHF	SRO Supportive Housing Social Housing Purpose Built Rental
Enhance cross- sectoral strategy for standards of maintenance in SRO, Supportive & Social Housing, Purpose Built Rental.	Focused strategy on two priority issues: hoarding and bedbugs. SRO Task Force to improve standards. Continue City Integrated enforcement action on SROs. Identify partner funding for extension of SRO Pilot project.	VCH, BC Housing, Non-profit partners, SRO landlords, Supportive & Social Housing landlords, Community partners, BCAOMA	SRO Supportive Housing Social Housing Purpose Built Rental

<sup>6</sup> This is not a comprehensive list of partners but an indication of the partners the City looks forward to working with.

## Strategic Direction 2: Encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods that enhances quality of life

**Priority Actions:** Target low barrier shelter, supportive and social housing:  
 - in neighbourhoods with significant homeless populations and limited capacity  
 - to specific populations in need

Supporting Actions	Outcomes in next 3 years	Potential Partners <sup>7</sup>	Housing Continuum
Map the homeless to their chosen locality and ensure shelters/supportive/social housing are located in these neighbourhoods.	New capacity in 5 neighbourhoods with limited capacity. Well located low-barrier shelter services for underserved groups (youth, women, urban aboriginal people).	BC Housing, VCH, Non-profit partners, StreetoHome, Community partners, Business Improvement Associations (BIAs), Faith-based partners, First Nations & Urban Aboriginal partners	Street Shelter Supportive Housing Social Housing
<b>Priority Actions:</b> Use financial and regulatory tools to encourage a variety of housing types and tenures that meet the needs of diverse households			
Ensure housing needs of our diverse population are considered through city-wide and neighbourhood planning processes.	New guidelines for High Density Housing for Families to assist with supply of family units. DTES LAP actions to expedite DTES Housing Plan. Public engagement strategy to enhance understanding and support for Housing & Homelessness Strategy implementation.	Developers, Non-profit partners, BC Housing, Community partners, UDI, BCNPHA, Faith-based partners, First Nations & Urban Aboriginal partners, Tenants Resource Advisory Centre (TRAC), GVHBA	Shelters Supportive Housing Social Housing Purpose Built Rental Affordable Home Ownership

<sup>7</sup> This is not a comprehensive list of partners but an indication of the partners the City looks forward to working with.

## Strategic Direction 3: Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability

### Priority Actions: Enhance support to renters

Supporting Actions	Outcomes in next 3 years	Potential Partners <sup>8</sup>	Housing Continuum
Work with partners to support renters.	Rent Bank established by partners to prevent evictions due to short-term financial crisis. Taskforce on renters rights and support. Increased outreach to renters via website & events.	BC Residential Tenancy Branch, Metro Vancouver, Non-profit partners, Financial Institutions (e.g. VanCity), Community partners, BC Housing, BCNPHA, TRAC, BCAOMA	SRO Supportive Housing Social Housing Purpose Built Rental
Continue with the provision of outreach services to facilitate access to housing.	More individuals assisted by Carnegie Outreach and Tenant Assistance Program.	Community partners, BC Housing, VCH, Non-profit partners, Faith based partners, First Nations & Urban Aboriginal partners, SRO Landlords	Street Shelter SRO Supportive Housing Social Housing

### Priority Actions: Strengthen the focus of our Urban Health Initiative on homelessness with an emphasis on improving health, safety, food security, employment & social supports

Work with partners to establish standards for food provision/nutrition in shelters & supportive housing.	Improved food security, health and stability for those staying in shelters and supportive housing.	BC Housing, VCH, Non-profit & Community partners, StreetoHome	Shelters Supportive Housing
Work with partners to improve information and services for renters/tenants.	Wider reach of information e.g. standards of maintenance, hoarding. Link new city sites/investments to employment & skills development.	BC Housing, VCH, Non-profit partners, StreetoHome, VEDC, Universities & Colleges, Developers, Builders, UDI, BCNPHA,	SRO Supportive Housing Social Housing Purpose Built Rental

<sup>8</sup> This is not a comprehensive list of partners but an indication of the partners the City looks forward to working with.



## Strategic Direction 3: Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability

		TRAC, BCAOMA	
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### Priority Actions: Demonstrate leadership in research and innovation to create improved housing options for our diverse population

Supporting Actions	Outcomes in next 3 years	Potential Partners <sup>9</sup>	Housing Continuum
Work with partners to improve coordination & quality of existing services for the homeless and specific populations.	Support for partners working with specific populations (e.g. youth, urban aboriginal, women). City is participant in Provincial Youth Homelessness Strategy. Improved & shared knowledge about value & key elements of low-barrier housing approach between partners.	BC Housing, Non-profit partners, StreetoHome, VCH, Provincial Ministries, Community partners, Faith-based partners, BCNPHA	Shelter SRO Supportive Housing
Policy & research on innovative models of affordable housing.	New City policy enabling partners to support housing models that address the gap created by lack of funds from other levels of government (e.g. affordable home-ownership, non-profit coops). Integration of learnings from the At Home Chez-Soi project. Provision of grants to engage & support partners and the community e.g. Homeless Action Week grants, small & medium sized grants and large capital grants.	Non-profit partners, Developers, Community Partners, StreetoHome, BCNPHA, BC Housing, VCH, Mental Health Commission of Canada, CHF, Financial Institutions, Academic Institutions	Street Shelter SRO Supportive Housing Social Housing, Purpose Built Rental Affordable Homeownership

<sup>9</sup> This is not a comprehensive list of partners but an indication of the partners the City looks forward to working with.

## Strategic Direction 3: Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability

Priority Actions: Focus our efforts with partners on preventing and eliminating homelessness

Supporting Actions	Outcomes	Potential Partners <sup>10</sup>	Housing Continuum
Establish cross-sectoral Homelessness Task Force to advise City on policies & practices towards ending street homelessness and addressing low income and poverty issues.	Homelessness Task Force with representation from key partners and strategies focused on key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- release of young adults from MCFD system of foster care</li> <li>- incarcerated individuals coming from provincial and federal prisons and remand centres</li> <li>- legislative changes in provincial income policy</li> <li>- Expansion of earning exemptions for people who are transitioning out of homelessness</li> </ul>	BC Housing, Provincial Government, Federal Government, VCH, StreetoHome, Non-profit & Community partners, BIAs, Faith-based partners, BCNPHA	Street Shelter SRO Supportive Housing
Continue to track people moving through the housing continuum (for the phase 1 supportive housing units and other City investments).	Improved understanding about how people move through the housing continuum and the needs of specific populations. A healthy tenant mix in new buildings balanced with a positive impact on numbers of homeless.	BC Housing, VCH, Non-profit partners, Community partners, StreetoHome, BCNPHA	Street Shelter SRO Supportive Housing

<sup>10</sup> This is not a comprehensive list of partners but an indication of the partners the City looks forward to working with.

