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2015 Report on Homelessness and Related Actions on SROs

Presentation to City Council

July 7, 2015





Overview of 2015 Homeless Count

Homeless Count 2015



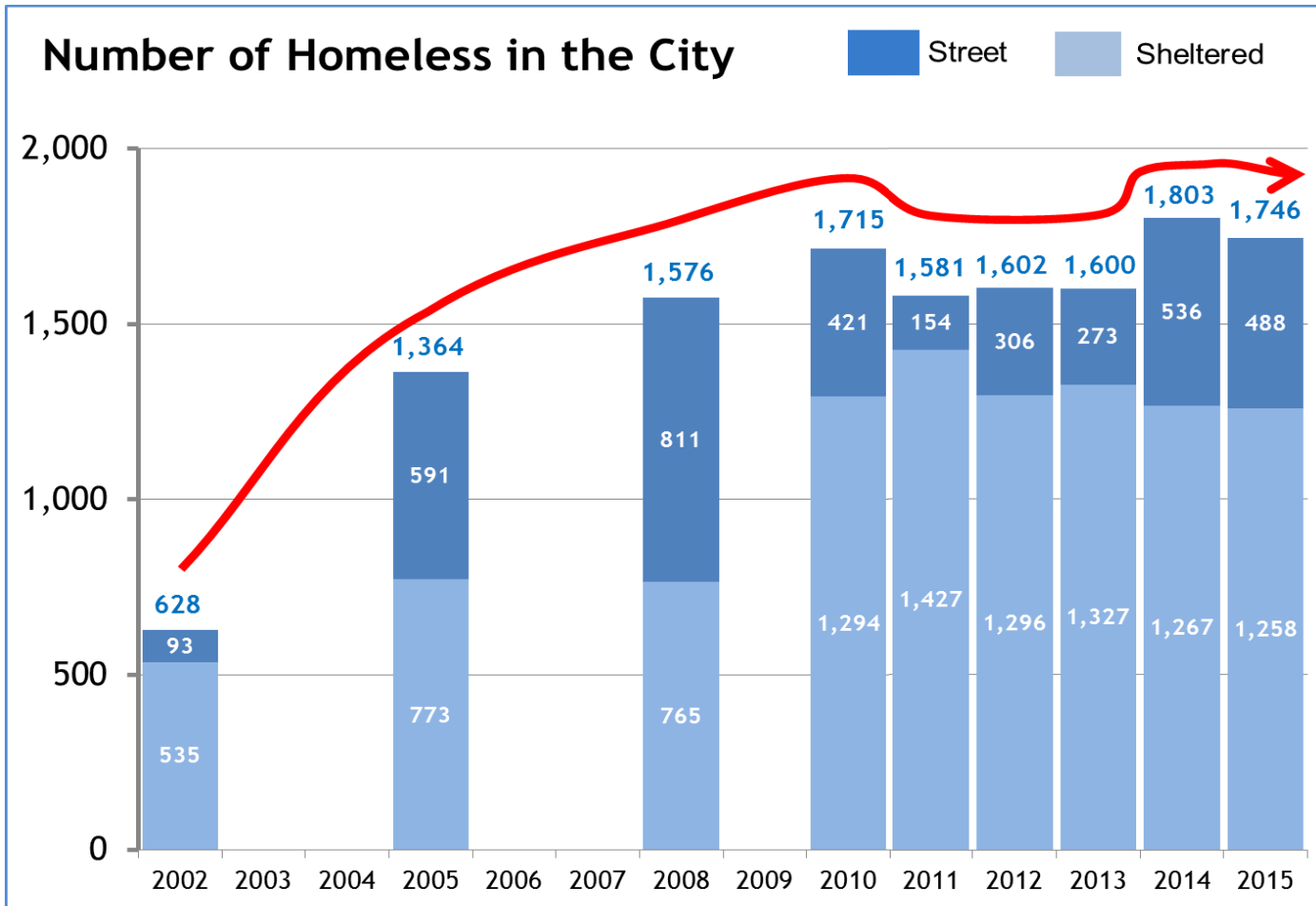
- Standard methodology
- Date: March 24, 2015
- 2014 Comparators:
 - Street Homeless Count 2014: 536
 - Sheltered Homeless Count 2014: 1,267
 - Total Homeless Count 2014: 1,803
- Projection in fall 2014 – possible to end street homelessness based on net incremental units since March count

Total new capacity for Homeless since March 2014



Category	Sites	Change Since March 12, 2014 Homeless Count	
		Net New/incremental Units	Impact on Housing for Homeless
MOU Supportive Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1134 Burrard 111 Princess 2465 Fraser 	383	301
Non-MOU Supportive/Non-Market Housing Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kingsway Continental Taylor Manor 	66	41
Interim Housing Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3475 E Hastings (former Ramada) 395 Kingsway (former Biltmore) 1335 Howe Street (former Quality Inn) 1060 Howe 	199	149
Winter Shelter Beds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 900 Pacific 1647 E Pender Salvation Army Winter Shelter 	35 (Beds)	35 (Beds)
BC Housing SRO P3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project wide capacity change due to renovations 	-68	-68
Total New Capacity		615	458

Street and Sheltered Homeless 2002-2015



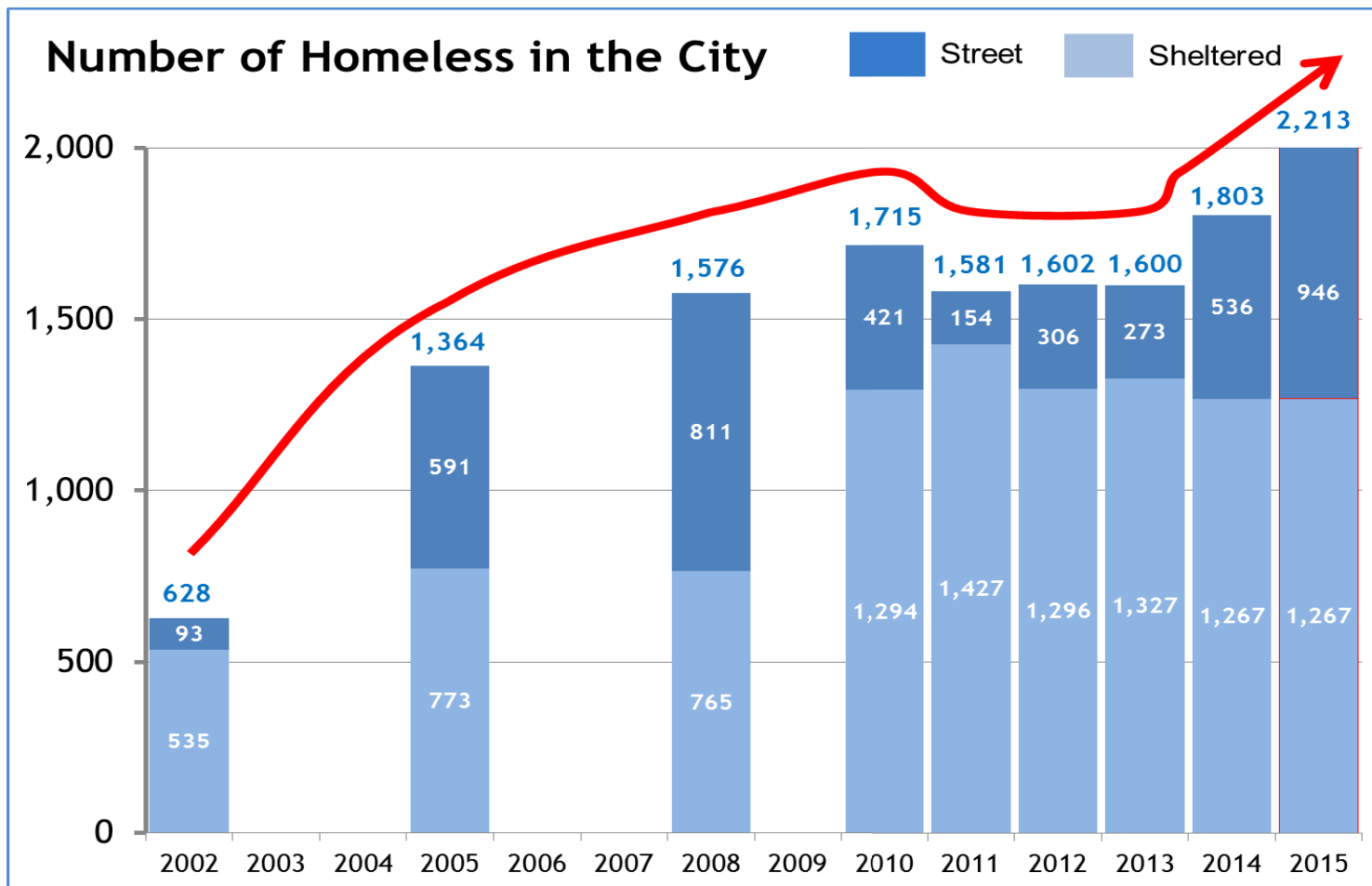
2015 Results:

- Street homeless reduced by 48
- Total homeless individuals reduced by 57

Drivers of Homelessness: More Work Ahead



Estimated 2015 Homeless without 458 added Units



Continued Drivers of Homelessness: Public Sector



- Poverty, severe and untreated mental health and addictions
 - Welfare rates remain unchanged for last 7 years
 - New challenges with online enrollment for social assistance for those most vulnerable
 - In spite of increased homelessness, number of welfare recipients remained constant
 - Continued need for treatment for many living without adequate support for mental health and addictions
- Public Sector institutions:
 - Prisons and hospitals continuing to discharge to street and shelters
 - Youth aging out of foster care; youth leaving foster care
 - 41 youth in care aged out in Vancouver/Richmond between April & September 2013, 22% on Income Assistance

Continued Drivers of Homelessness: Loss of Low Income Housing



- Vancouver's rental housing 2014 vacancy rate @ 0.5% (including both condo and purpose built rental stock) (CMHC)
- BC Housing wait-list for social housing: 4,000 in Vancouver; 9,500 across Metro Vancouver

DTES particularly affected:

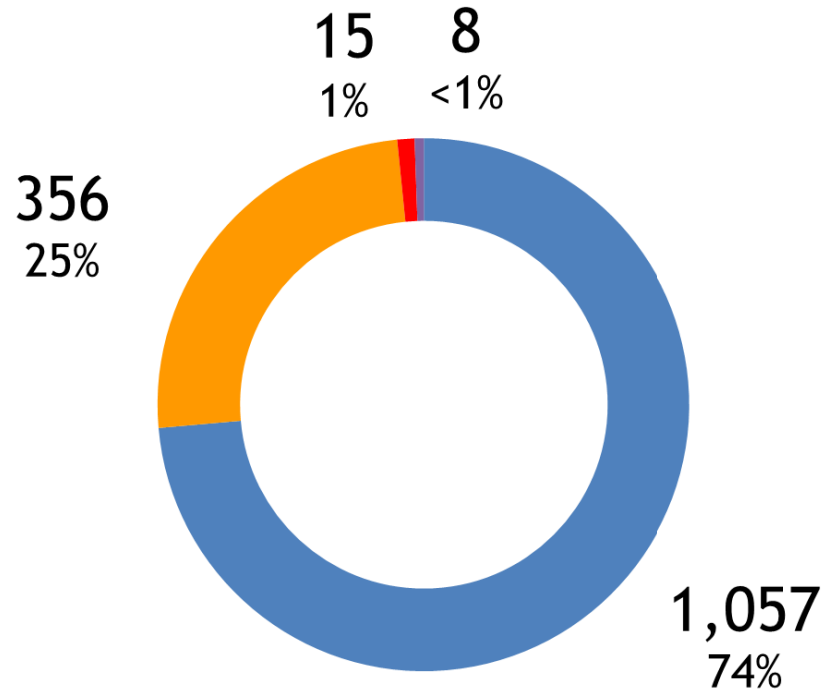
- Rental vacancy rates continue to fall
- SRO vacancy rate (private SRO's): 14% in 1992; 5% in 2013
- Rents continue to rise faster than incomes
 - Private SRO rents: 60% at welfare rate in 2007; 24% at welfare rate in 2013
 - BCH and non-profit SROs – lower rents, very low turnover (less than 3% per annum)
 - Availability of ~300 affordable (to those on welfare) private SRO rooms lost in 2014
 - Some due to renovations and repairs requiring tenant relocation

General Trends: Homelessness



- Shelters continue to be over-capacity with daily turn-aways
- Downtown BIA reported increase in street youth in the Downtown South
- 2014/2015 changes in Federally funded and regionally allocated Homeless Partnering Strategy (HPS) resulted in interruption, transition and termination of homeless services
- Unmet need for rent supplements and harder to find supply in tight rental market
- Unsheltered homeless, and particularly street homeless with complex needs present significant challenge for health support services

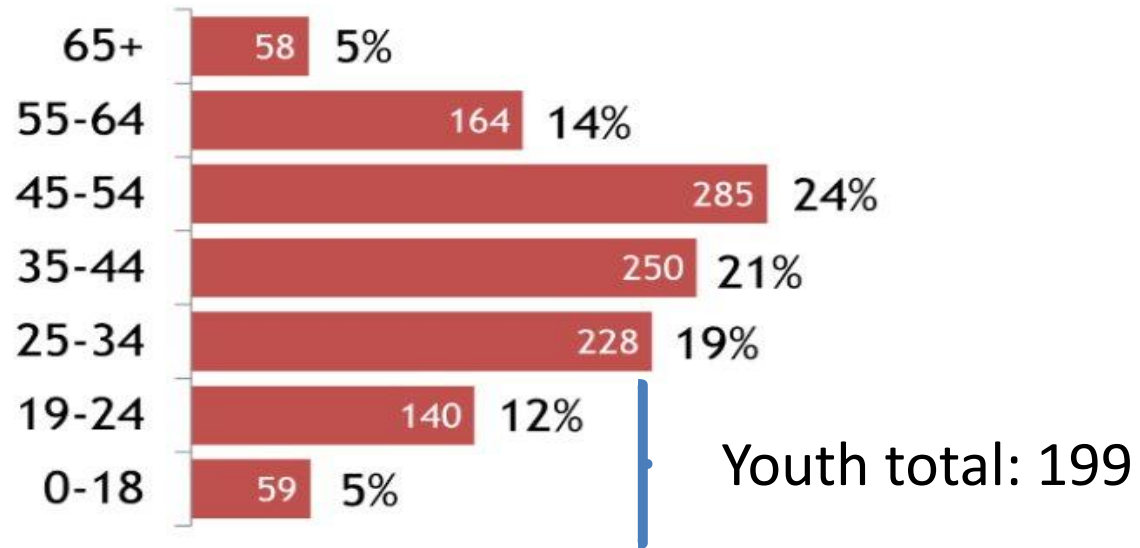
Key Findings: Gender



Total respondents: 1,436

■ Male ■ Female ■ Transgender ■ Other

Key Findings: Age



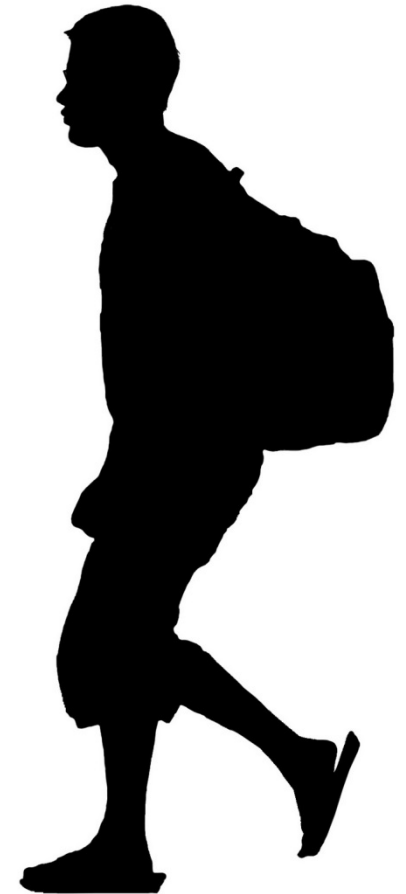
Total respondents: 1,184

 Percentage of people in that age group

Key Findings: Youth (24 and Under): Stats from 2015 Count



Gender	Total Youth	Total Homeless
Male	94 (65%)	1,057 (74%)
Female	42 (29%)	356 (25%)
Transgender	6 (4%)	15 (1%)
Other	2 (1%)	8 (1%)
Aboriginal Identity	51 (36%)	342 (32%)
Income		
No Income	50 (34%)	150 (14%)
Income assistance	39 (27%)	403 (37%)
Working	37 (26%)	229 (21%)
Health		
Addiction	63 (44%)	632 (58%)
Mental Illness	56 (39%)	459 (42%)



Key Findings: Aboriginal Identity

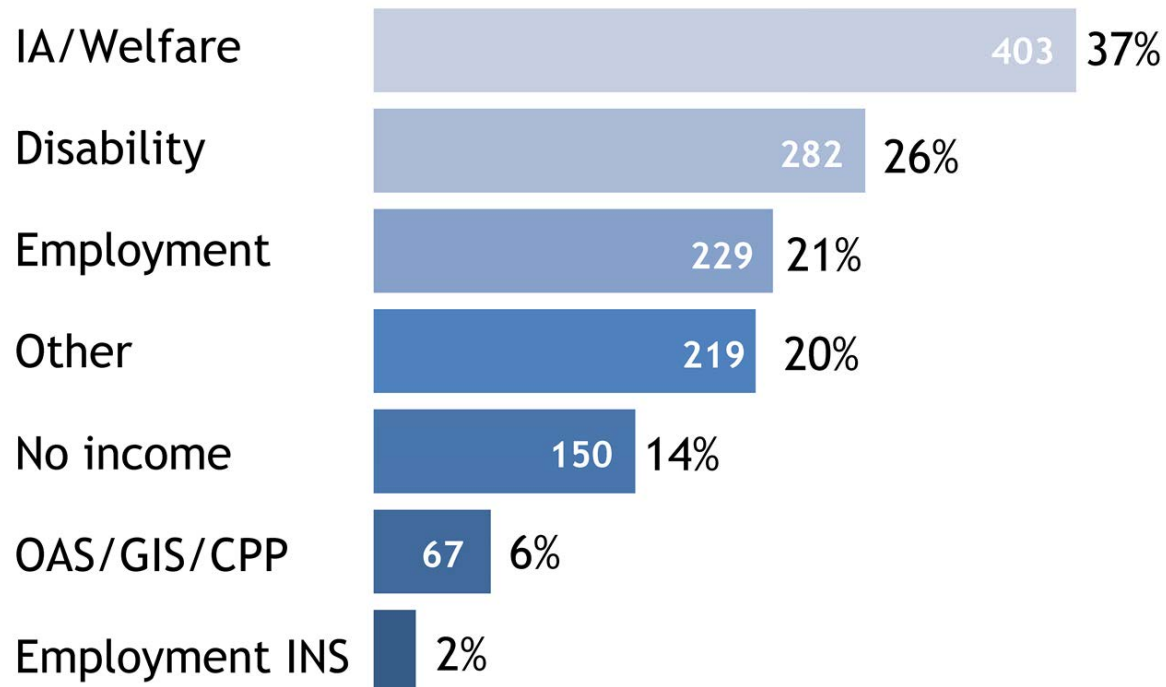


Total respondents: 1,073

■ Aboriginal ■ Not Aboriginal

Persons of Aboriginal identity are over-represented among the city's homeless population (32%), compared to the Vancouver population (2.5%)

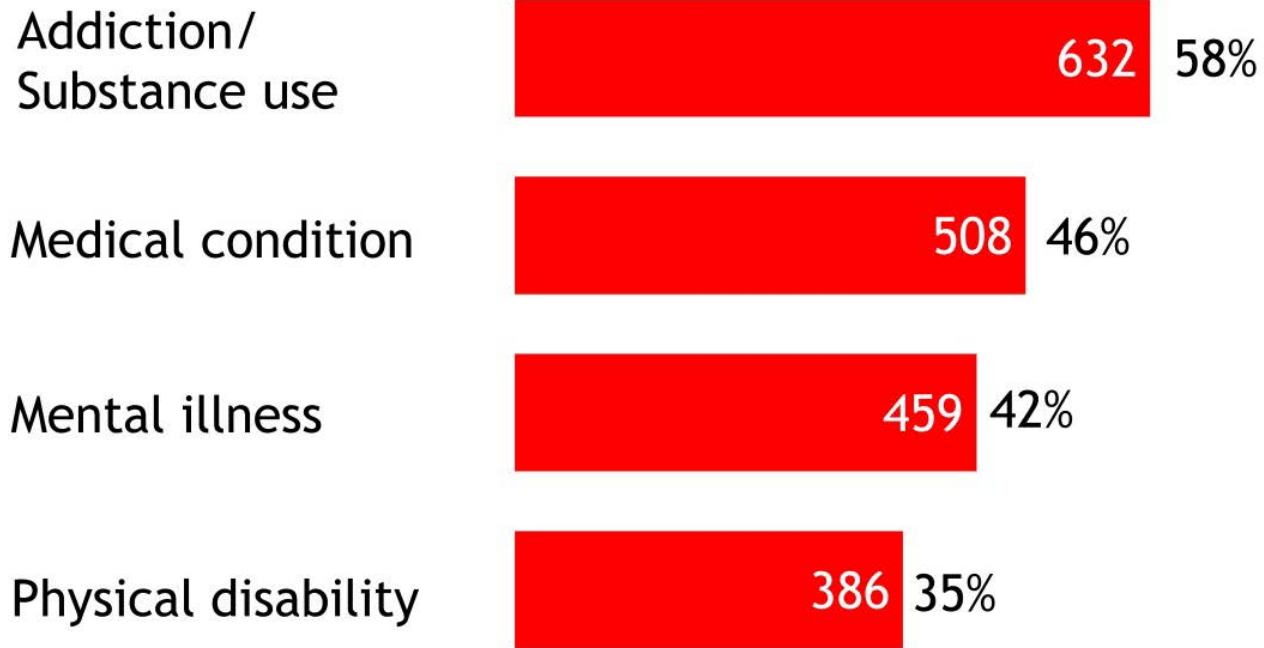
Key Findings Income



Total respondents: 1,091

01 Number of people % Percentage of people in that age group

Key Findings: Health Conditions



Total respondents: 1,093

01 Number of people % Percentage of people in that age group

Key Findings: Homeless from elsewhere



49 of those counted (less than 5%) were from outside Vancouver

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Metro Vancouver	7	20%	3	21%	10	20%
Rest of BC	10	29%	1	7%	11	22%
Alberta	7	20%	0	0%	7	14%
Ontario	8	23%	4	29%	12	24%
Saskatchewan	0	0%	1	7%	1	2%
Outside Canada	1	3%	1	7%	2	4%
Unknown	2	6%	4	29%	6	12%
Total respondents	35		14		49	



Key Steps to Sustaining Housing for Most Vulnerable: Overview of Proposed SRA By-law Amendments

Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Hotels



- Maintaining SROs key focus to ensure affordability over next decade
- They remain the lowest cost housing in the city
- SRO buildings in Vancouver are very old and in poor repair
 - Government and Non-profit operated SROs are in better repair and more affordable

The SRO Stock



Open Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Downtown Core*

	Buildings	Rooms	% of Total
Non-Profit/Government Owned & Operated	46	2,469	35%
Traditional Private Owners	75	2,903	41%
Privately Owned & Non-Profit Operated	17	1,087	15%
New Investor Owners	17	589	8%
Total	155	7,048	

*Data Sources: 2013 Low Income Housing Survey and the City of Vancouver Non-Market Database

SROs: COV Actions to protect the SRO Stock



- 2003: Single Room Accommodation By-law enacted to slow rate of change in the stock and prevent conversion to tourist hostels/ hotels
- 2007 and 2009: SRA By-law amended:
 - ✓ increased conditional \$5,000 per room fee to \$15,000
 - ✓ Required the history of the building be considered for all applications
 - ✓ Required owner/operator to maintain a standardized registration form for every unit
 - ✓ prohibit nightly rentals (previously permitted in 10% of rooms)

SROs: COV Actions to protect the SRO Stock



- 2011: Housing and Homelessness Strategy - sets target to replace 1,000 SRO rooms with self-contained social housing
- 2012: SRO Task Force struck to identify ways to improve living conditions for SRO tenants
- 2013: Rental Properties Standards (RPS) Database – tool to motivate owners & landlords to maintain their properties vancouver.ca/saferental
- 2014: Standards of Maintenance By-law amended to expedite City undertaking repairs at owners expense for continued non compliance
- 2014: DTES Plan and SRO Strategy – focused on improving building condition, support to tenants while maintaining affordability

Current SRA By-law



SRA Permit required if:

- Loss of rooms
- Material change to a room (addition of new fixtures, bathroom or cooking facilities)

Refuse

Approve

**No
Conditions**

Conditions may include any of the following:

- Tenant Relocation Plan
- Housing Agreement (secure rents)
- Section 219 Covenant (secure tenure)
- Heritage Revitalization Agreement
- \$15,000/room

SROs:

Improve Building Condition and Prevent Tenant Displacement



The Challenge:

- Minor renovations currently do not require an SRA permit
- Minor repairs can result in displacement of tenants
- Tenant Relocation Plans are not a requirement of a Building or Trades permits

Proposed SRA By-law amendment

- require an SRA permit for “minor repairs” that will result in the displacement of a tenant
- Require a Tenant Relocation Plan as a condition of the permit

SROs:

Permanent Loss SRA Designated Rooms



The Challenge:

- Increasing investment interest in the stock
- Current \$15k amount for a converted/demolished room not sufficient to replace room

Proposed SRA By-law amendment

- Increases fee for permanent removal of room from SRA by-law from \$15,000 to \$125,000
 - Manage rate of change
 - Closer to real cost of unit replacement
- The money will be deposited into a reserve fund (current practice) to provide replacement housing for any rooms that are removed from SRA By-law designation

Proposed SRA By-law Amendment



SRA Permit required if:

- Material change to a room (addition of new fixtures, bathroom or cooking facilities)
- Loss of room(s)
- **Minor repairs that result in tenant displacement**

Refuse

Approve

No
Conditions

Conditions may include any of the following:

- Tenant Relocation Plan
- Housing Agreement (secure affordability)
- Section 219 Covenant (secure tenure)
- Heritage Revitalization Agreement
- **\$125,000/room if permanently removed from SRA by-law**

Proposed SRA By-law Amendment - TRP by SRA permit type



Tenant Relocation Plan Requirements by SRA Permit Type Where Tenants will be Displaced

Minor repairs



Tenant Relocation Plan:

- Comparable or better accommodation
- Re-location and moving expenses
- First right of refusal to renovated room at tenant contribution to rent paid prior to renovation

Room demolished/converted but remain SRA designated OR removed from SRA By-law but replacement housing provided



Tenant Relocation Plan:

- Comparable or better accommodation
- Re-location and moving expenses
- First right of refusal and staff will work with owner to optimize affordability in replacement housing

Room permanently removed from SRA By-law designation



Tenant Relocation Plan:

- Comparable or better accommodation
- Re-location and moving expenses

SROs:

Special program targeted at private owners



Improving Conditions and Maintaining Affordability in SRA rooms

The Challenge:

- Stock aging and in need of repair
- Represents ~5000 rooms for low income tenants
- City unable to provide grants to private owners

Proposed Action

- Explore partnership program with VanCity and others to identify options for the establishment of a grant/loan fund to support the upgrading of the privately owned SRO stock
- Report back on options to allocate up to \$2m from the 2015 – 2018 Capital Plan to leverage additional funding and expertise to secure and upgrade the stock and maintain affordability

SROs:

Special program targeted at private owners



Maintaining Affordability

The Challenge:

- Higher tenant turnover in SRAs than rest of rental stock
- Rent increases necessary to support building upgrades
- Rent increases not affordable to tenants on Income Assistance

Proposed Action

- Recommend amendments to the Residential Tenancy Act to that would tie annual rent increases to the room rather than the tenant
 - ensure that rent would only increase once per year in accordance with the approved annual provincial rent increase and not with every tenant move

SROs: Support for Complex Tenants



The Challenge

- City and academic partner research done in the development of the DTES Plan indicated that at least two-thirds of people who are homeless and 4,000 SRO tenants require some level of support to live independently.
- Approximately 2,100 SRO tenants currently require additional support (The Hotel Study, Honer et al. 2013)

Proposed Actions:

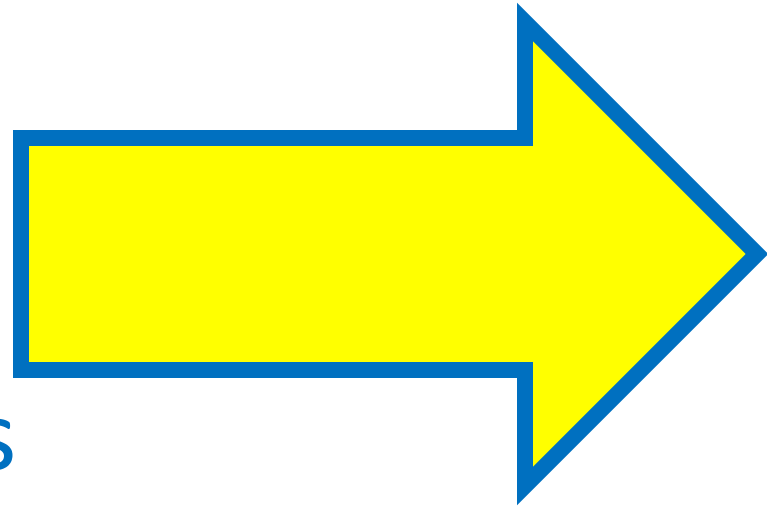
- Request Province expand supports to tenants struggling with mental health and addictions living in private SROs
- Continue working with Providence and VCH to strengthen community supports for SRO tenants and people with no fixed address discharged from hospitals



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Looking Ahead:
What Works
New Opportunities



Build on What Works - Increase Supply of Affordable Housing



- New Supply of Social and Supported housing to enable replacement of SRO stock and provide permanent housing options for street and shelter homeless
- Increase number of rent supplements available through Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program
- Work with other municipalities in the region to share information and best practice to enable more housing to be built across the region

Focus on New Opportunities



- Secure interim & permanent affordable housing options, and shelter spaces for the 1,800 street and shelter homeless
- Pilot program with VCH and BCH to create more capacity for homeless people in existing supportive housing by providing permanent move-on affordable housing choices for those needing less support
- Develop targeted housing, shelter and interim options for populations at risk of homelessness:
 - Youth transitioning out of foster care or at risk
 - Individuals of Aboriginal descent
 - Women who have experience violence or are at risk
 - People leaving correctional or health care systems

Build on What Works - Provide Necessary Income and Supports



- Improve pathways out of homeless using Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) to identify appropriate housing & support needs and create flow in existing supported housing.
- Increase welfare rates to reflect increased operating costs and rents



Any Questions?