



TOWARDS AN URBAN ABORIGINAL HOUSING AND WELLNESS STRATEGY FOR METRO VANCOUVER 2015-2020

About MVAEC

- Incorporated in 2009
- Currently has 23 member agencies representing a majority of Aboriginal groups
- Estimated 40,000 to 60,000 Indigenous people in Metro Vancouver
- Approximately 18,000 in Vancouver proper
- Our primary role is to strategically plan for services for our community (the urban Indigenous population)

Why the need for a Strategy?

- Significant growth of the urban Indigenous population in Metro Vancouver
- Historical influences continue to hinder many areas for all Indigenous people, regardless of residency
- Beyond Aboriginal housing agencies, little else is being done to address the needs of Indigenous people
- Despite challenges, there are many untapped opportunities
- Estimated that Indigenous people conservatively contribute about \$1.2B to the local economy for Metro Vancouver.

What does the Strategy Do?

- Provides a framework to initiate dialogue
- Opens a door for work to begin between governments and community agencies
- Considers and articulates many of the needs and challenges for urban Indigenous people
- States concrete targets
- Provides direction on both possible immediate actions and longer-term directions

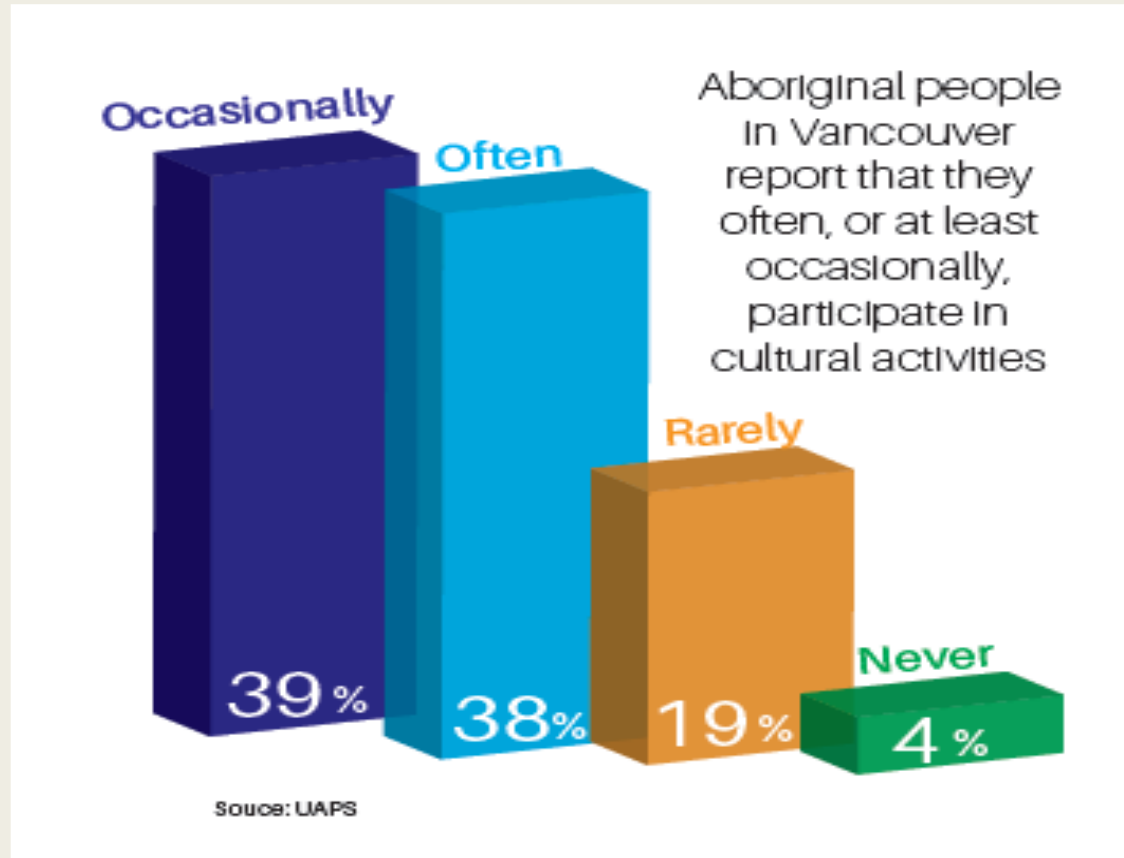
Who are we talking about?

- Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution defines Aboriginal people as Indian (First Nations), Metis and Inuit
- More recently, many groups have started to use Indigenous to replace the term Aboriginal.
- From MVAEC's base, we speak directly to the urban Indigenous population and keep an open door to work with on-reserve representatives and provincial or national organizations as well.

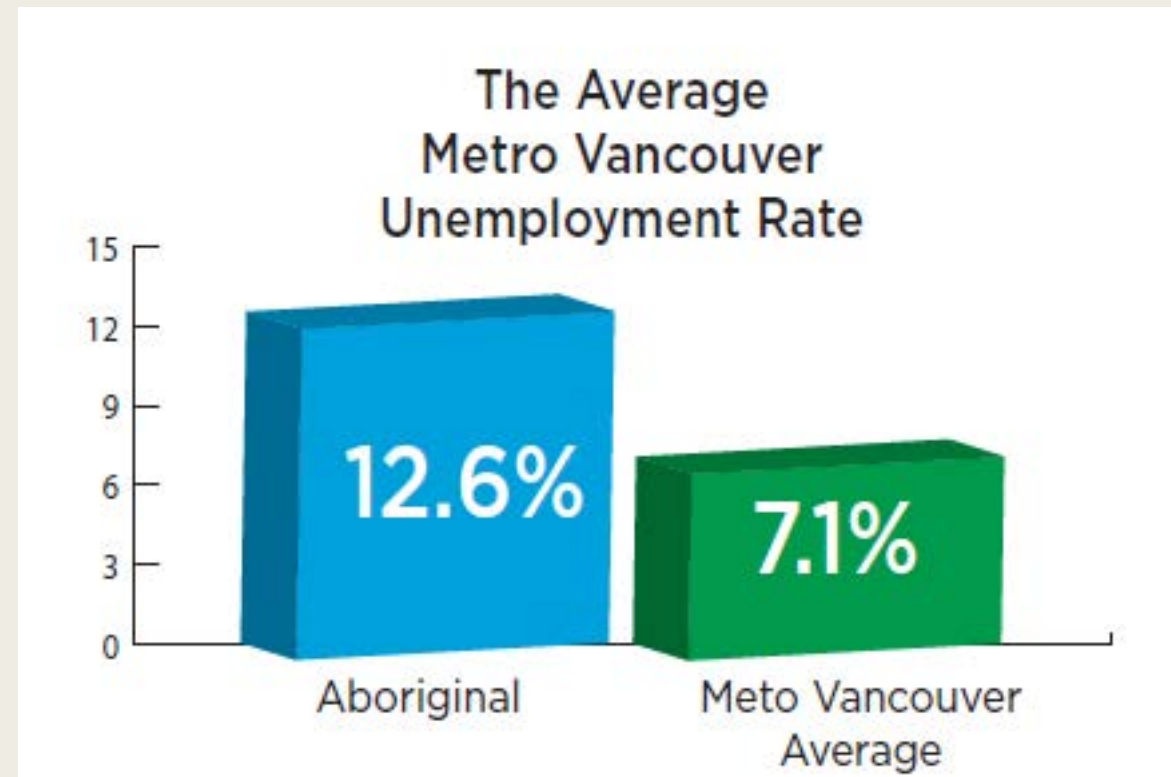
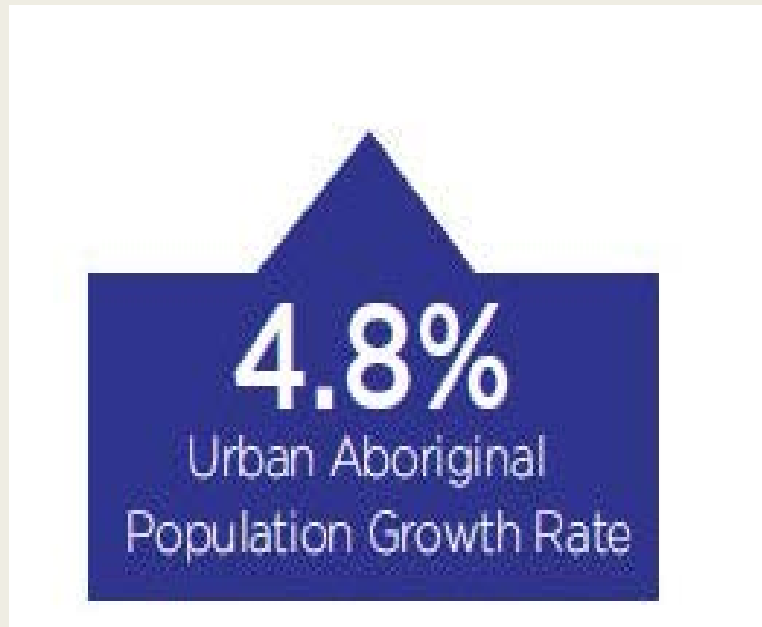
Demographics

- 1,400,685 Indigenous people in Canada, 40-60,000 in Metro Vancouver
- An estimated 56% live in urban centers
- Between 2006-11, the Canadian indigenous population grew by 232,385 people or 20.1% compared to 5.2% for the non-Indigenous population
- There are 11 different First Nations within Metro Vancouver
- A mosaic of Indigenous groups from across the country live here

Factors: Cultural



Factors: Economic



Factors: Social

Aboriginal children are
12x more likely than their non-
Aboriginal counterparts
TO BE IN CARE

~550 Aboriginal
youth aging out of
care in BC
every year, in need of
homes and support.

The average
total household
income for Aboriginal
people in Metro
Vancouver is almost
\$ 14,500 less
than the Metro
Vancouver average

Factors: Shelter

Though Aboriginal people only comprise 2% of Metro Vancouver's total population, **31% of homeless individuals identify as Aboriginal.**




Aboriginal households in Metro Vancouver are more likely (40%) to spend 30% or more of their household income on shelter than the average (33%).

Factors: Shelter



44% of Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Residents own their home.



However, Aboriginal people in Metro Vancouver are 21% less likely to own their home than the average.

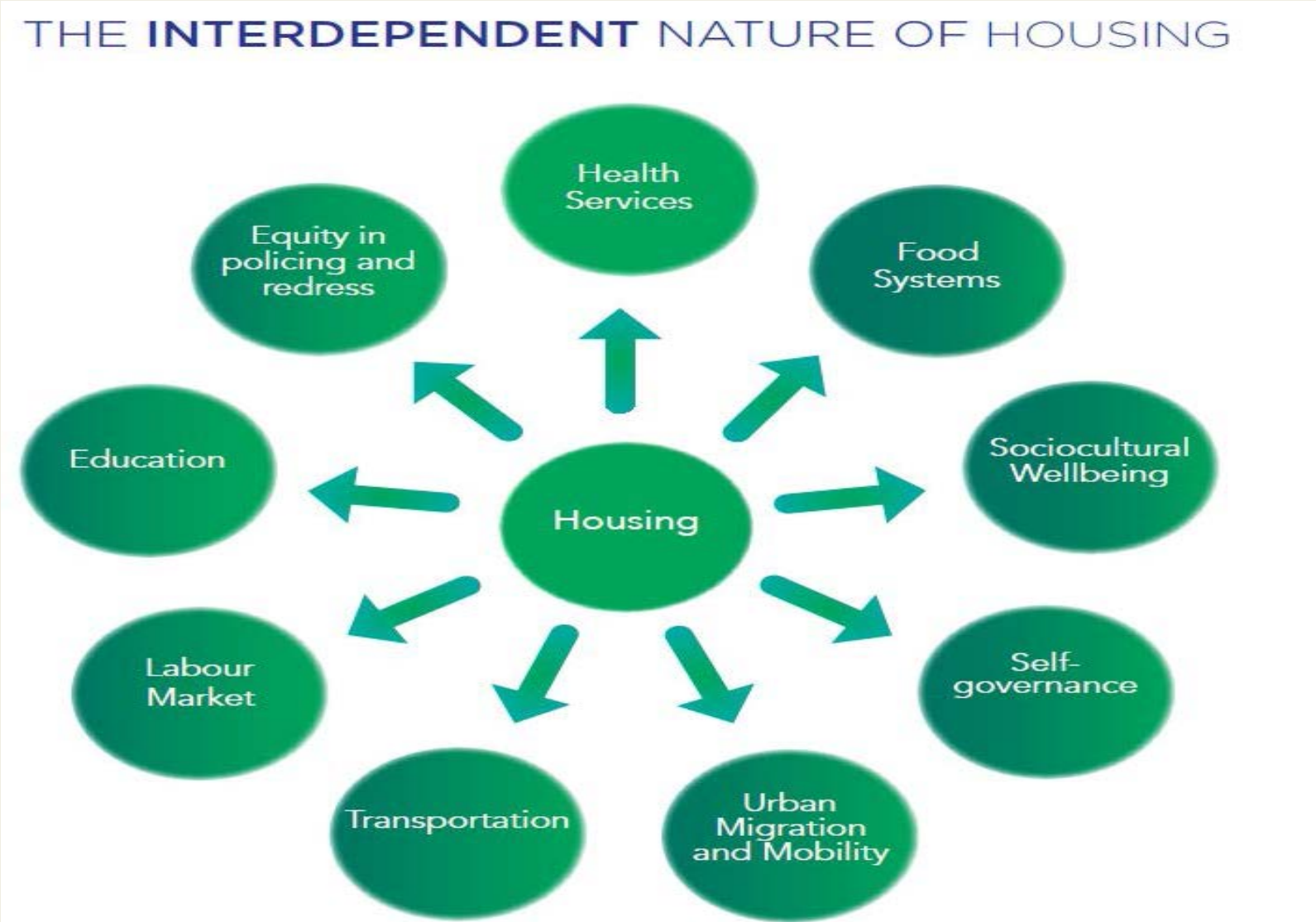
Paige's Story

Directly connected to many of the TRC recommendations to eliminate the over-representation of children in care, and to provide more health and wellness supports to families in need, Paige's Story also highlights the inadequate, unsafe and poor housing options available to many urban Aboriginal peoples, in particular youth. The report notes that over just a few years, Paige moved more than 50 times – living in homeless shelters, safe houses, youth detox centres, couch surfing, foster homes, and a number of Single Room Occupancy hotels in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.²⁴ Sadly, there are too many "Paiges" in Metro Vancouver and collectively, municipalities and senior governments need to respond to the Representative's call to action and ensure that all urban Aboriginal youth have affordable, safe, and secure housing options.

A Call To Action

- First Nations governments are not responsible for off-reserve housing
- Federal/Provincial/Municipal/Indigenous governments must all share in the response
- Housing and homelessness is a true measure of reconciliation
- A stable home opens a door wide open for huge socio-economic growth when Indigenous people can then participate fully in the BC and Canadian economy
- The benefits far outweigh the costs, as health outcomes improve, cultural identities are strengthened, families heal and can care for young ones, education outcomes increase, and everyone enjoys this new way of being.

The Inter-dependent Nature of Housing



Indigenous Housing

» Vancouver Native Housing Society

» Lu'ma Native Housing Society

» Kekinow Native Housing Society

» Helping Spirit Lodge Society

» Aboriginal Mother's Centre

» Circle of Eagles Lodge Society

» The Vancouver Aboriginal
Friendship Centre

» Urban Native Youth Association

» Cwenengitel Aboriginal
Society Centre

Housing Options

- Given diverse demographics and significant complex needs:
 - *A variety of housing approaches, models and forms are required*
 - *Government and Indigenous housing providers must go beyond simply building units*
 - *Building strong and cohesive communities is seen as a direction that needs to be taken*

Options (continued)

- MVAEC believes that all urban Indigenous Housing projects must:
 - *Be owned and managed by urban Indigenous Housing and service organizations, or in some cases, through a partnership;*
 - *Be culturally relevant and consider other aspects of health and wellness;*
 - *Reflect local needs; and*
 - *Be affordable.*

Developing Social Housing

- Land or sites provided by municipalities
- Land or sites redeveloped on existing non-profit sites
- Partnerships with senior levels of government (i.e. land, capital dollars, financing, health supports, etc.)
- Funding contributions from private foundations such as Streetohome

Developing Social Housing

- As part of a mixed-use project achieved through a negotiated Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) or inclusionary zoning requirement
- Social Purpose Real Estate (SPRE) initiatives
- Other innovative partnerships between non-profit agencies, private sector agencies and government

Long-term Recommendations

There are two objectives that provide high-level direction for priority areas of housing governance, development, and implementation:

- Strengthen housing leadership and capacity
- Increase access and diversify housing options

Stronger Housing Leadership Capacity

- Improve agency collaboration
- Ensure Aboriginal representation at all levels of decision-making
- Explore funding options
- Refine and adapt municipal policies
- Develop a long-term urban Aboriginal housing strategy

Increase Access & Diversify Housing

- Address the needs of diverse demographics
- Integrate health and wellness
- Meet immediate social housing need
- Maintain and improve existing housing stock
- Build culturally relevant housing
- Diversify new housing stock

Immediate Action Recommendations

- Support MVAEC's leadership and capacity through a secured core funding contributions
- Invite Aboriginal housing organizations to the table
- Fill the data gaps
- Find funding
- Create an immediate action plan to construct 1500 new social housing units across Metro Vancouver by 2020
- Launch the planning process for a 10 year regional housing strategy for Metro Vancouver

A needed role for MVAEC

- MVAEC provides increased reach into the urban Indigenous population
- To date, much of its funding can be described more as retail transactions versus strategic investments
- This Housing and Wellness Strategy is a prime example for how MVAEC can lead community processes that produce quality advice with concrete targets
- MVAEC needs to be supported more strategically in order to monitor better and respond to emerging issues and trends