



Photo credit: Travis Lupick
Georgia Straight Sept 25, 2014

HOMELESSNESS & SRO UPDATE

Presentation to Council
April 11, 2017

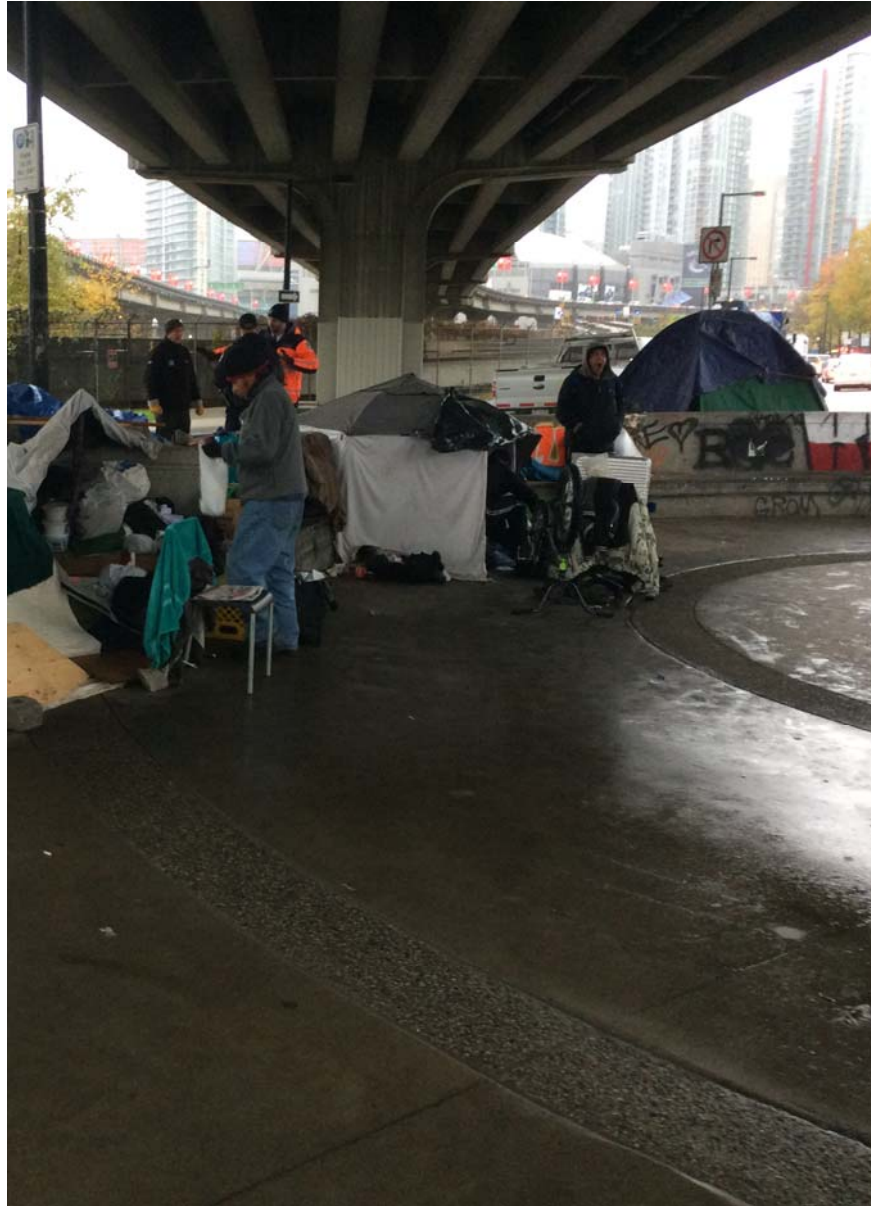
Agenda

1. Homelessness in Vancouver and the Metro Region

- Preliminary results: 2017 homeless count
- Regional Task Force on Homelessness
- Homelessness Services trends
- Shelters
- Warming Centres

2. Update on SROs

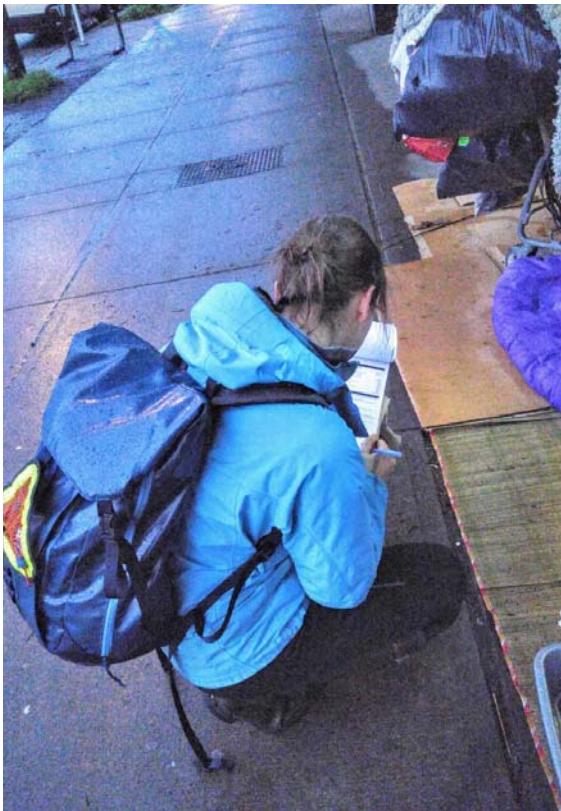
- Overview of the stock
- SRO Task Force
- Action Plan



Homelessness in Vancouver & the Metro Region

2017 Regional Homeless Count

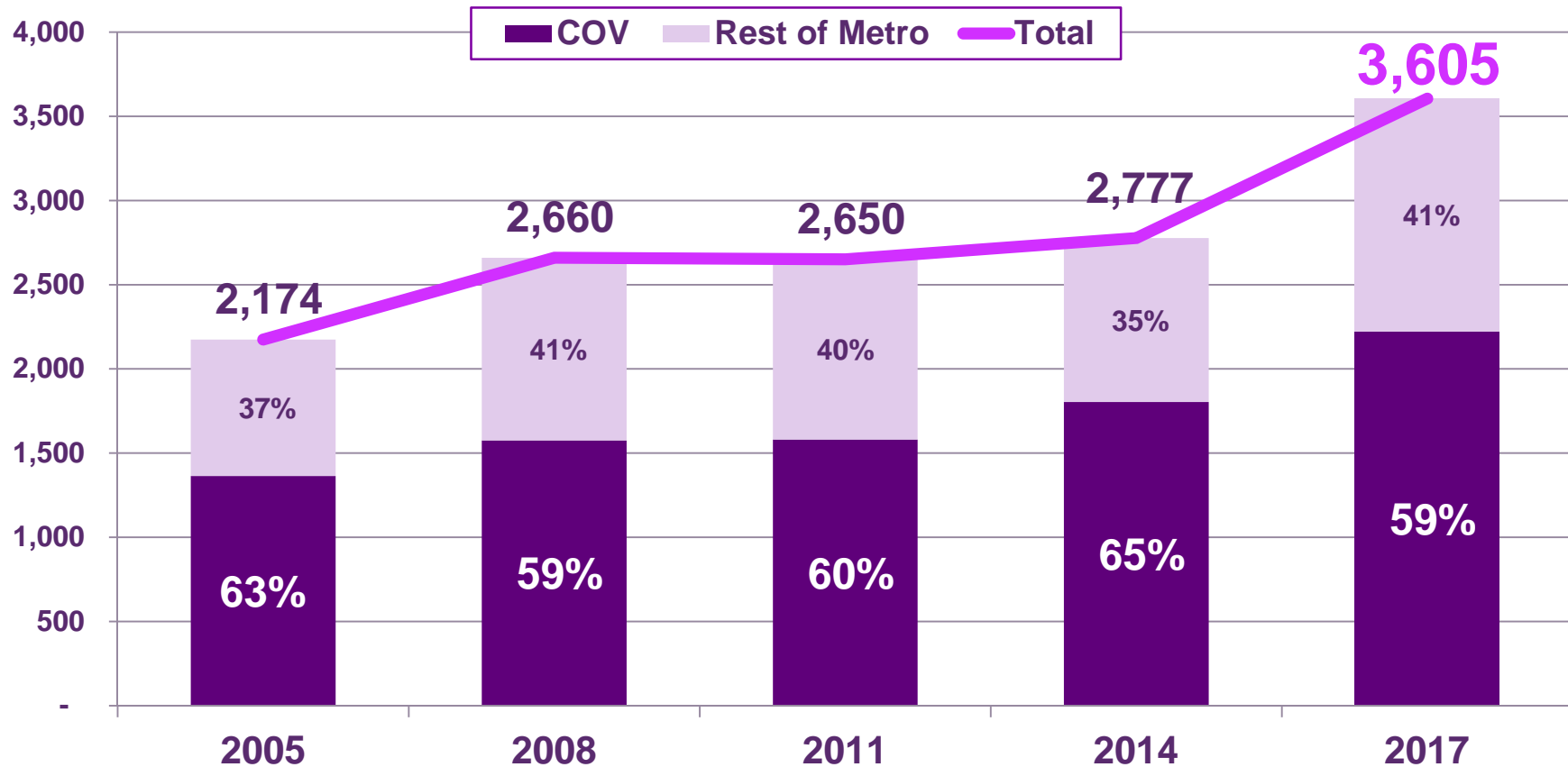
March 8, 2017



- 5th Metro Vancouver count
- Regional count done every three years since 2002
- “Point-in-time” snapshot of people who are experiencing homelessness.
- Provides a basic demographic profile and tracks trends over time.
- 3,605 people found homeless in the Metro region.

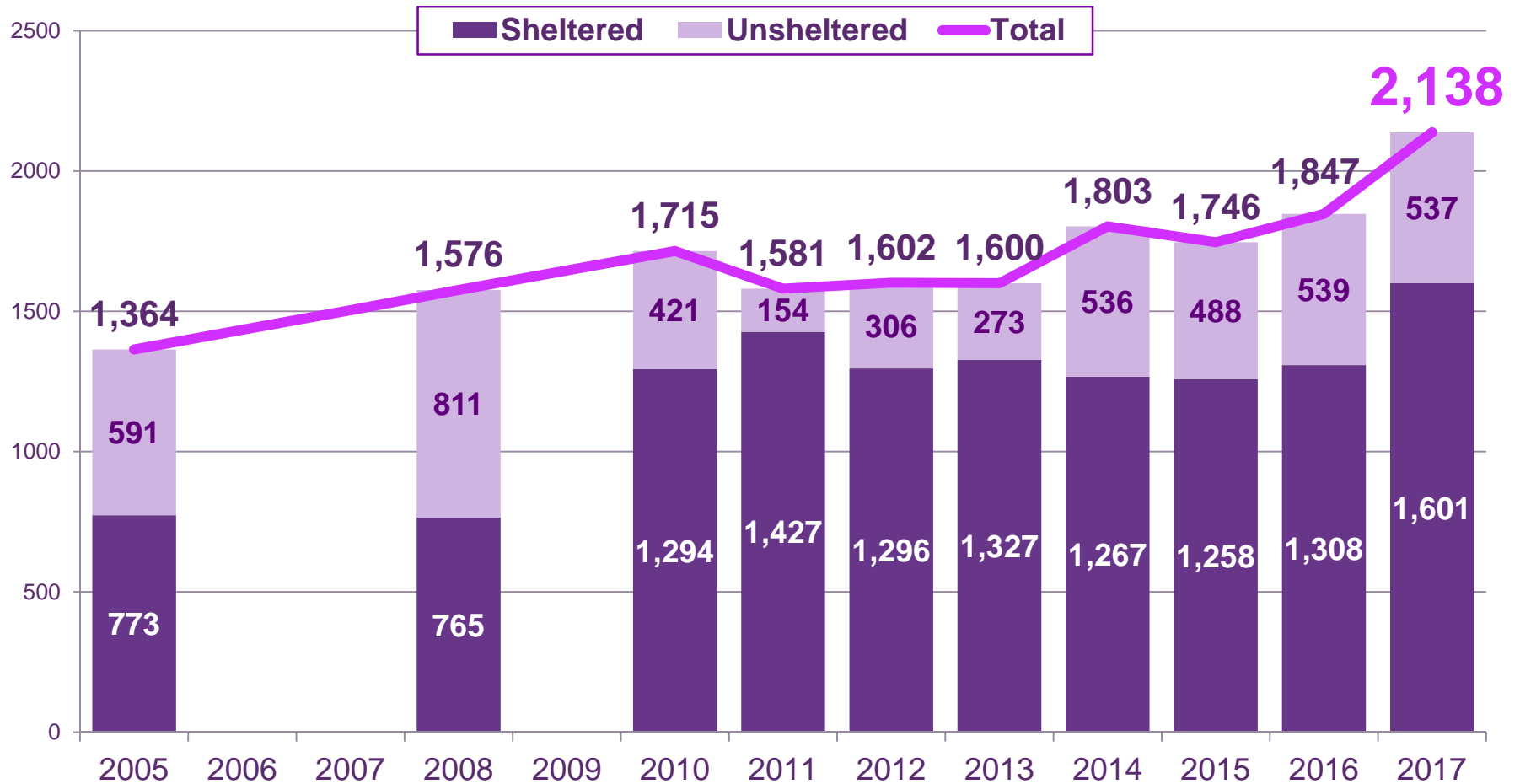
2017 Regional Homeless Count

2005-2017 (Preliminary Results)



2017 Regional Homeless Count: City of Vancouver

2005-2017 Trend (Preliminary Results)



2017 Regional Homeless Count

Changes by Sub-Region (Preliminary Results)

Sub-Region	2014	2017	2014-2017 Change	
			#	%
Delta/White Rock	19	46	27	142%
Langley	92	206	114	124%
Tri-Cities	55	107	52	95%
Richmond	38	70	32	84%
Ridge Meadows	84	134	50	60%
Surrey	403	602	199	49%
New Westminister	106	133	27	25%
Burnaby	58	69	11	19%
Vancouver	1,803	2,138	335	19%
North Shore	119	100	-19	-16%
Total	2,777	3,605	828	30%

2017 Regional Homeless Count

Demographics (Preliminary Results)

- **Indigenous/Aboriginal individuals continue to be overrepresented**
 - 34% (746) of respondents identified as Indigenous/Aboriginal – the highest reported share to date in the regional count
- **The homeless are getting older**
 - 5% (185) increase in those 55+ since 2014
- **Decrease in youth experiencing homelessness**
 - 16% (378) of respondents were under 25 years of age – a decrease from 20% (410) in 2014
- **Majority of homeless youth found in Vancouver**
 - 43% (163) in Vancouver, followed by 17% (63) in Surrey and 13% (50) in Langley



Metro Vancouver Regional Homelessness Task Force

Regional Task Force on Homelessness: November 2016

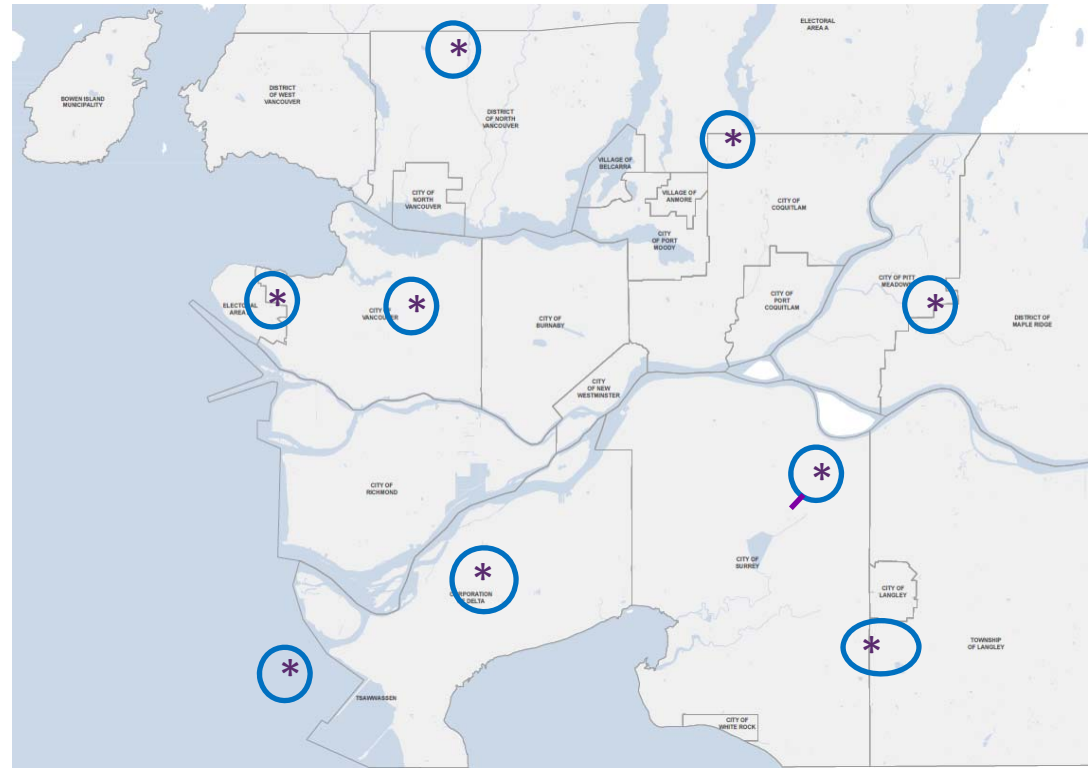


- Co-chaired by Mayor Gregor Robertson and Mayor Nicole Read
- A response to the growing homelessness crisis and the unprecedented surge in the number of homeless people living in camps and on the street across the region
- The Task Force released 12 recommendations for action on November 27th

www.metrovancouver.org/homelessness

Municipal Survey: Homelessness is a Regional Issue

- Homelessness is a growing concern
 - >70 encampments throughout the region
 - People living without access to basic services
 - Strain on municipal resources
-
- Need geographical distribution of shelters and social housing
 - Sustained and consistent funding needed



Regional Homelessness Task Force

Recommendations for Action – November 27, 2016

Preventing pathways into homeless:

1. Develop a poverty reduction strategy by end of 2017.
2. Expand home care for chronic health issues, mental illness and addictions.
3. Develop more programs for youth aging out of foster care
4. Programs to assist Aboriginal individuals and families in securing and maintaining housing
5. Discharge planning programs on release from incarceration
6. Increase the supply of rental housing that is affordable to households with incomes below \$30,000 per year (6,000 units by 2019)
7. Increase IA shelter component to reflect average market rents

Regional Task Force on Homelessness:

Recommendations for Action

Serving People who are Homeless:

8. Provide 3,000 additional transitional housing units by 2019.
9. Improve and expand accessible and timely information about available shelter services. Launch an online portal by 2019.

Fostering Pathways out of Homelessness:

10. Provide additional social housing units to eliminate the waitlist in the region by 2021.
11. Implement a coordinated access and assessment approach
12. Increase affordable rental housing supply



Vancouver Service Responses to Homelessness

Homelessness Services Program

- In 2007, Carnegie Outreach, a harm reduction program of the City of Vancouver (COV), partnered with BC Housing (BCH) to create the Homeless Outreach Program (HOP)
- This is the largest of 8 BCH HOP teams operating in Vancouver.
- Funding of the Carnegie team is shared equally between COV and BCH.
- 20 employees, provide income, housing and health supports to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.
- Housing workers connect with homeless individuals on the street and accept clients at the street front office.

Homeless Outreach Program (Carnegie Outreach)

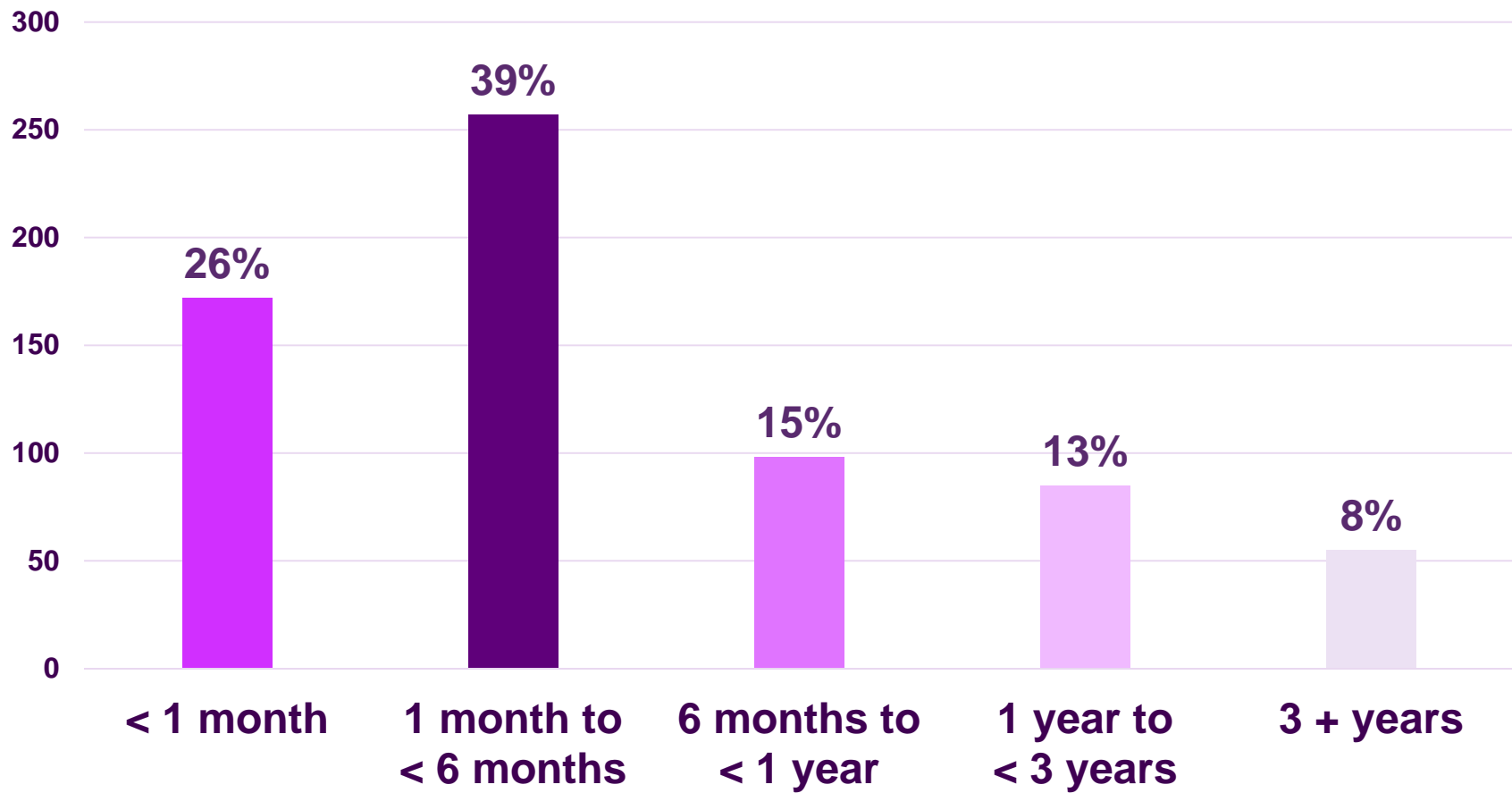
Client Load & Housing Stats

2016 Statistics		#
TOTAL Clients served		3,600
New Clients	Total New Clients	1,850
	Homeless New Clients	1,300
Data Entries / services offered		17,860
TOTAL Housing Units Secured		850
Housing Units Found		710
Housing Units Saved		140

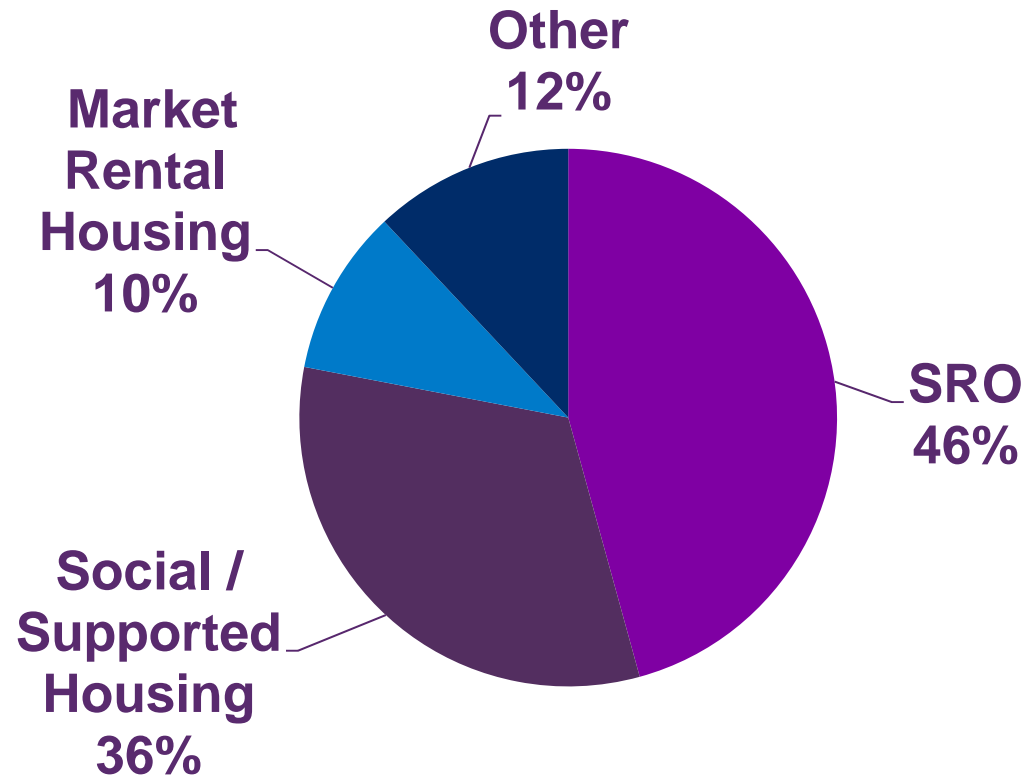
New Client Demographics (Carnegie Outreach, 2016)

Client Group	Number	Percentage
First Nations	592	32%
Non First Nations	1,087	59%
Unknown or refused	169	9%
Female	531	29%
Male	1,305	71%
Transgendered	7	<1%
Unknown or Refused	5	<1%

Duration of Homelessness (Carnegie Outreach, 2016)



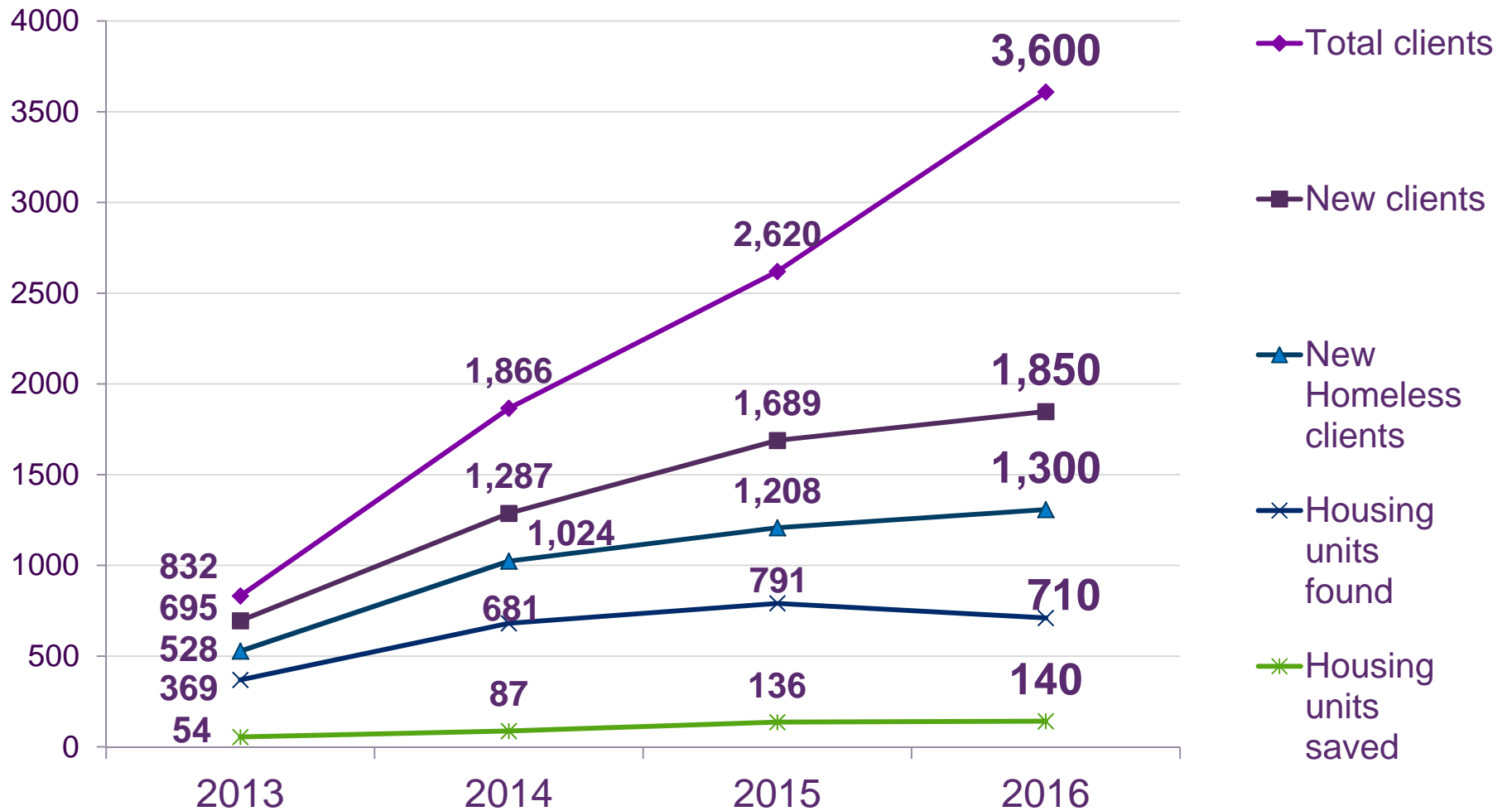
Type of Housing Secured (Carnegie Outreach, 2016)



851 total units

Client Load & Housing Units (Carnegie Outreach)

4 Year Trend





Shelters

Vancouver Shelter Availability

2016/2017 Winter Season

Shelter Type	Details	# Beds / Mats
Year-Round Shelters	Open all year	959
Temporary Winters Shelters (TWS)	5 winter months	195
Temporary Cold Weather Shelters (TCW)	January to March	116
Extreme Weather Response Mats (EWR)	Only during extreme weather conditions	170
TOTAL		1,440

17 Year Round Shelters

Shelter Provider	Target Demographic	Hours	# of beds
Catholic Charities Men's Shelter	Men, Line-up	4pm-8am	102
Lookout Society Al Mitchell Shelter	Co-ed	24/7	47
Lookout Society Yukon Shelter	Co-ed	24/7	71
RainCity Triage Shelter	Co-ed	24/7	28
Salvation Army Belkin House Shelter	Men / Women / Families	24/7	81
Salvation Army The Haven	Men	24/7	40
Salvation Army The Crosswalk	Men / Women, Line-up	9pm-8am	36
Salvation Army The Beacon	Men	24/7	60
412 Women's Emergency Shelter	Women, Line-up	6pm-9am	50
The Bloom Group Powell Place Shelter	Women / Families	24/7	52
The Bloom Group Springhouse Shelter	Women / Children	24/7	32
Vi Fineday Family Shelter	Women / Families	24/7	18
Covenant House	Youth	24/7	54
First United Church Shelter	Co-ed	24/7	60
Union Gospel Mission	Men, Line-up	5pm-8am	72
Aboriginal Shelter	Line-up	5pm-8am	100
PHS New Fountain	Line-up	7pm-9am	56
TOTAL			959

Temporary Winter Shelters (TWS)

- For 9 years the COV and BCH have collaborated to provide winter shelters in the coldest 5 months of the year
- BCH pays for operating costs
- COV provides some facilities (\$105,500 in 2016)
- The Homeless Outreach Program operates in the Temporary Winter Shelters to provide residents with housing services
- In 2016, there were 195 Winter Shelter beds provided through this arrangement

Temporary Winter Shelters (TWS)

Providers & Spaces

Shelter Provider	Hours	Target Demographic	# Beds / Mats
Salvation Army (134 E Cordova)	8pm-8am	Men & Women	40
Salvation Army (119 E Cordova)	24 hours	Men only	30
PHS (49 W Cordova)	9pm-9am	Men & Women	30
RainCity (1648 E 1 st)	24 hours	Men & Women	40
RainCity (1401 Hornby)	24 hours	Men & Women	40
Directions (1138 Burrard)	9pm - 6:30am	Male & Female Youth (19-24)	15
TOTAL			195

Extreme Weather Crisis & Risks to Homeless Population



- December was the coldest month in Vancouver in almost a decade.
- Average December temperature is a high of 6°C and a low of 1°C
- December 2016 average high was 1°C
- Low on December 17 was -9°C

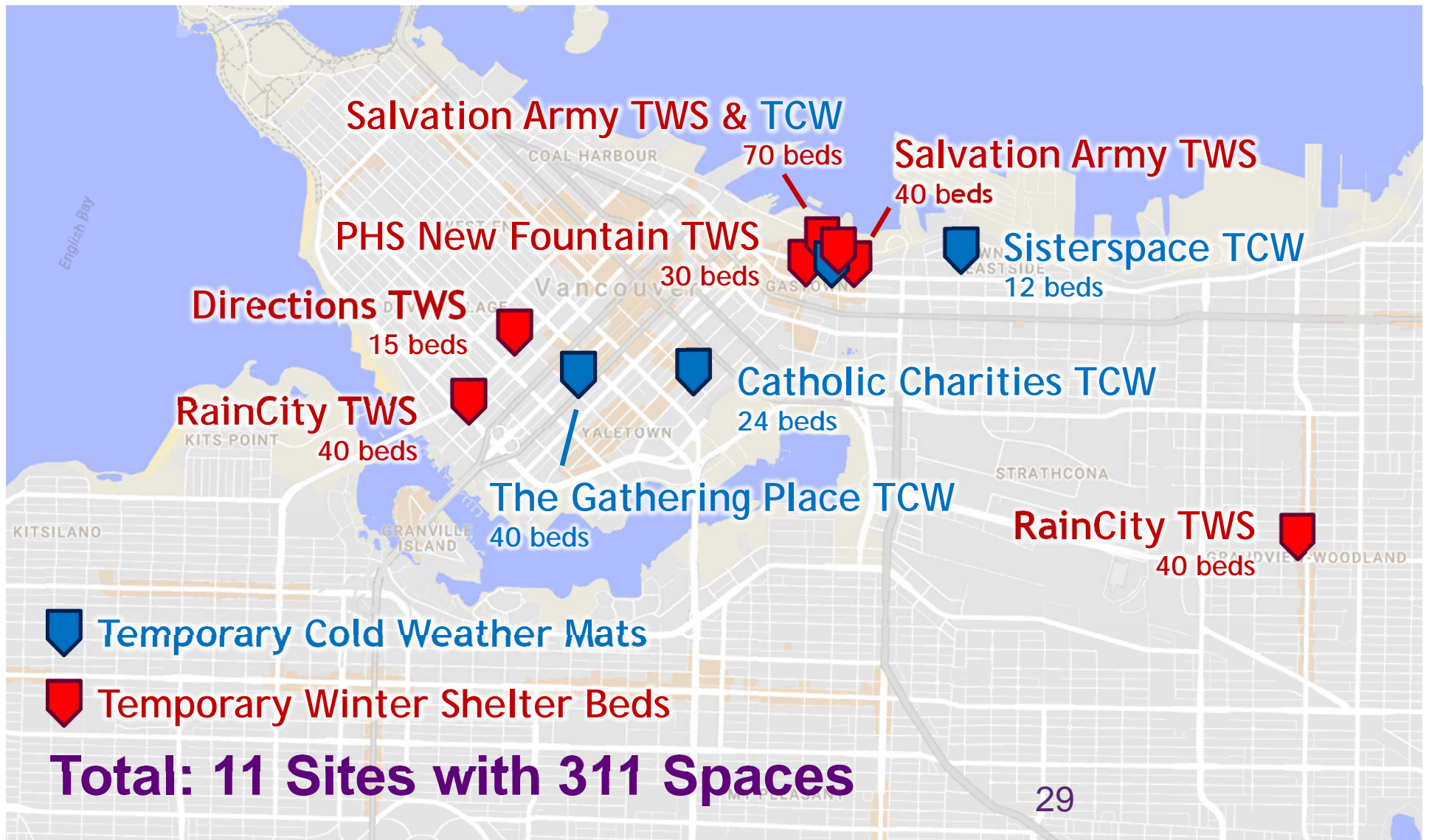
City of Vancouver Response

- By mid-December the potential weather-related danger to homeless residents was alarmingly evident
- COV collaborated with BCH to create an additional 116 Temporary Cold Weather Shelter (TCW) mats
- Stayed open until March 31, 2017
- TCW mats were *in addition to* 195 Temporary Winter Shelter (TWS) beds already in place
- Cost shared (50/50) with BCH

Temporary Cold Weather Shelter (TCW) Providers

Sites	# Beds / Mats
Catholic Charities	24
The Gathering Place	40
Sisterspace	12
Salvation Army	40
TOTAL	116

Temporary Winter Shelters (TWS) & Temporary Cold Weather Mats (TCW)



Existing Extreme Weather Response (EWR) Protocol

- Coordinated by the Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy (GVSS) under the auspices of BCH and in response to the Assistance to Shelter Act.
- EWR activated in response to temperatures at and below freezing and considering extremes of wind, rain, snow
- Mat spaces provided by faith and community groups as well as in COV facilities

Extreme Weather Response Shelters (EWR) Spaces

Site	Hours	# Beds / Mats
Directions (youth under 25 yrs)	10pm-7am	15
First Baptist Church	9:30pm-7am	25
Evelyne Saller Centre	11pm-7am	40
Salvation Army Belkin House	11pm-7:30am	20
Salvation Army Harbour Light	11:30pm	50
St. Mark's EWR	9:30pm	25
Union Gospel Mission (men)	9pm-6am	20
TOTAL		170

Mobilization of Warming Centres

- December 17, 2016 – COV engaged faith organizations and Board of Parks and Recreation partners to open warming centres to allow people to warm up overnight
- Intended to protect the health of homeless citizens who would otherwise be outside
- Relied on EWR alert as a signal to open Warming Centres

Faith Community Response



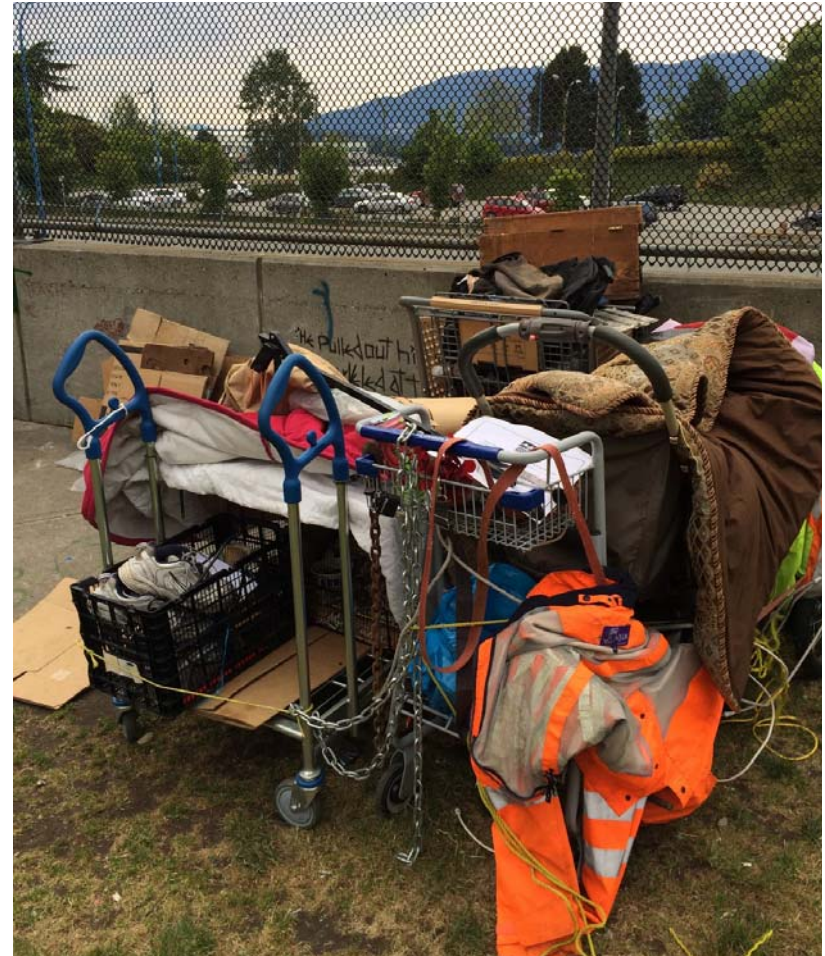
Khalsa Diwan Society



Al Jamia Masjid

Warming Centre Operations

- Pet, cart, and bike friendly
- Couples welcome
- Low barrier, no questions asked
- Operating hours: 9pm-8am or 11pm-7am
- Worked with the GVSS to communicate site operations
- Site openings aligned with the Extreme Weather Alerts



Warming Centres (to March 1, 2017)

Site	# Nights Open	Average # Visits *	Average # Sleepers
Creekside Community Centre	14	24	14
West End Community Centre	33	18	10
Britannia Community Centre	39	26	21
Sunset Community Centre	3	2	2
Kitsilano Community Centre	2	1	1
Carnegie Community Centre	12	55	25
Quality Inn Residence	5	14	10
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF PEOPLE PER NIGHT ACROSS ALL CENTRES		100	70

*with some repeat visits

Warming Centre Costs

Source	Amount
Community Services	\$26,445
Britannia	\$56,274
Security	\$33,445
Parks	\$19,968
EMO Office (VPD)	\$50,264
Total	\$186,396

Next Steps

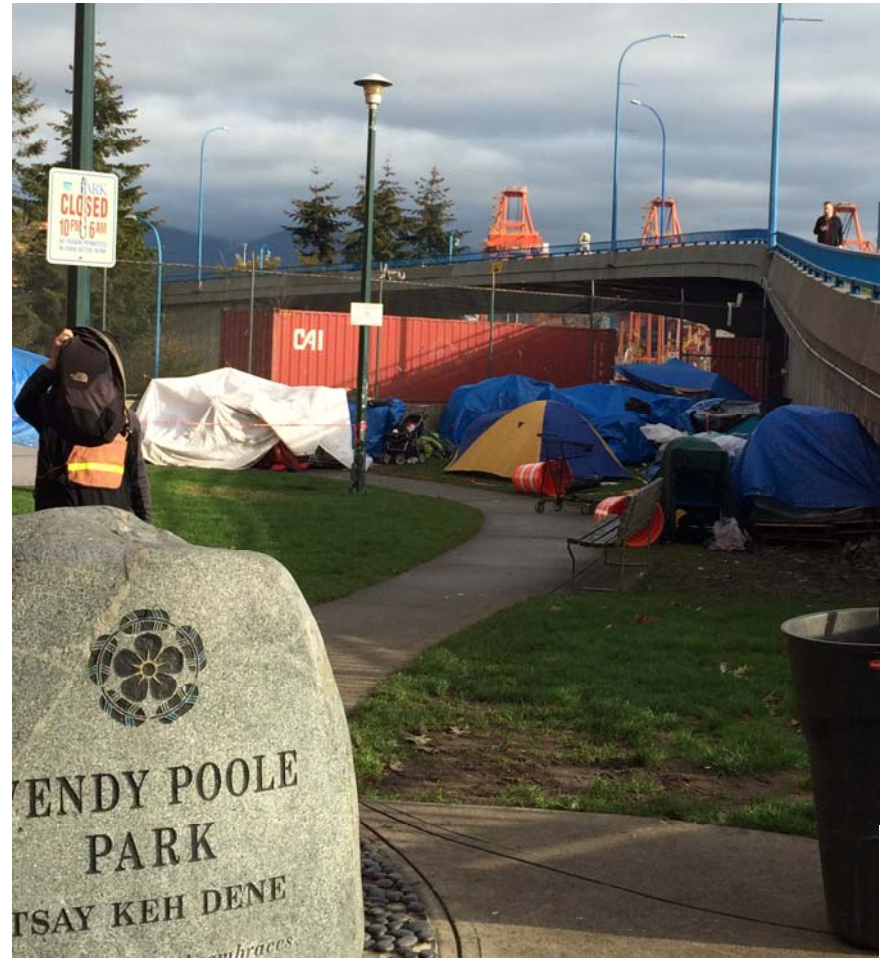
- In February and March of 2017 a comprehensive debrief was completed
- Debrief report, anticipated in May, will include lessons learned and contribute to a plan for 2017/ 2018 season and all future extreme cold weather events.
- Develop operational protocols, policies, staffing models and consistent data collection method
- Finalize operating budgets
- July report back on 2017/2018 winter shelter strategy (including warming centres)

Moving into Spring Winter Shelter Spaces Closing: Capacity & Dates

Shelter Type	Closing Date	# Beds / Mats
6 Temporary Winters Shelters	March 31	100
	By April 24	95
4 Temporary Cold Weather Shelters	March 31	116
TOTAL Winter Shelter Spaces Closing		311

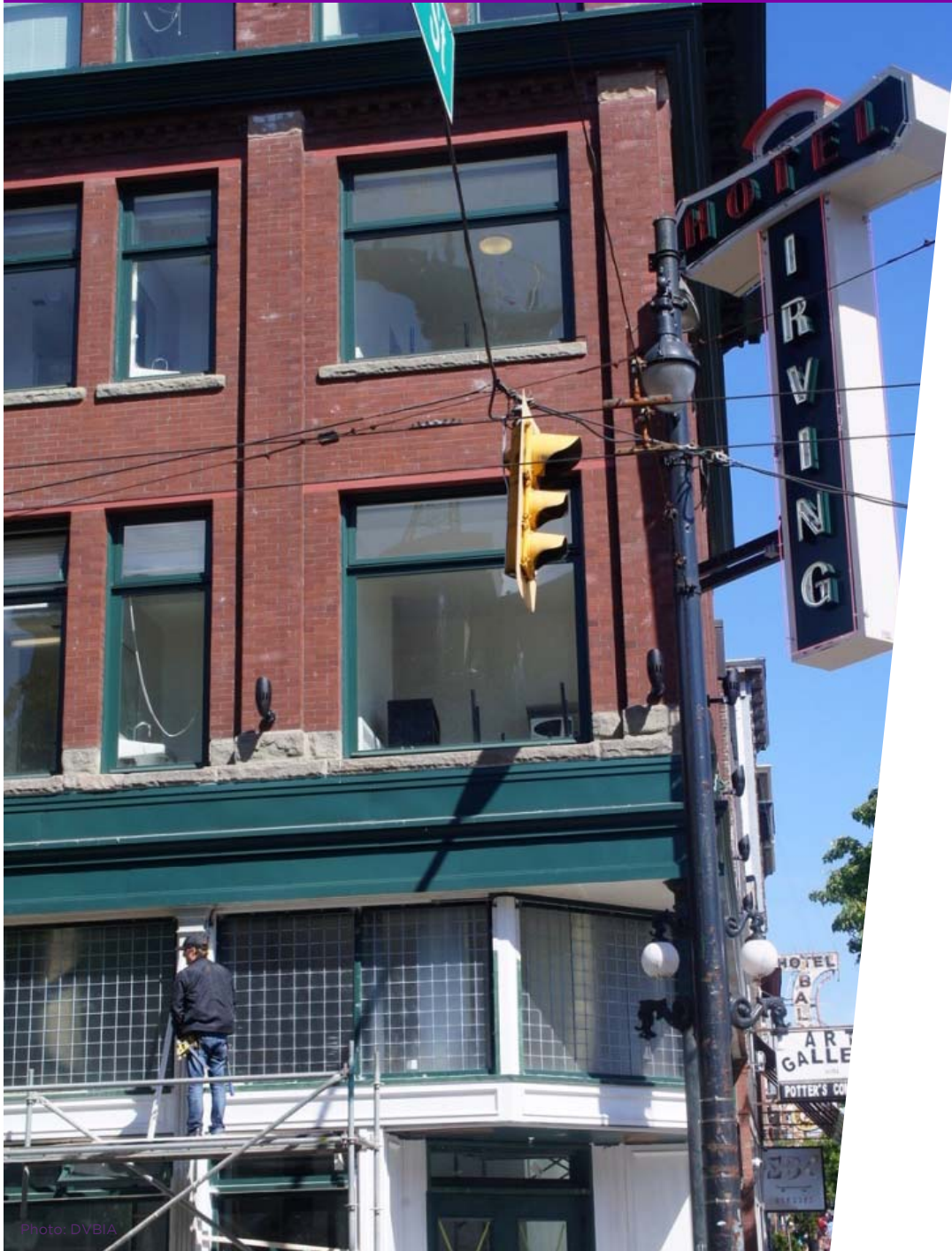
Ongoing Shelter Needs

- Permanent year-round shelter beds are full in both winter and summer
- Current capacity: 959
- Outreach in shelters enables us to offer housing, income and health supports
- More year-round shelters equates to more options for those sleeping in parks and on sidewalks



Number of Shelter Beds Needed in Vancouver

- Research is needed to determine the number and kind of shelters to support a variety of needs.
- **Based on current information:**
 - **Year round shelter beds available: 959**
 - **Keep winter shelters open year round: 316**
 - **Add 200 winter shelter beds to address EWR: 200**
 - **Total if new beds added: 1475**
 - **This approaches the number found in shelters in Vancouver this year but does not serve the remaining 500 or 600 people who are on the street.**



Update on SROs

Photo: DVBA

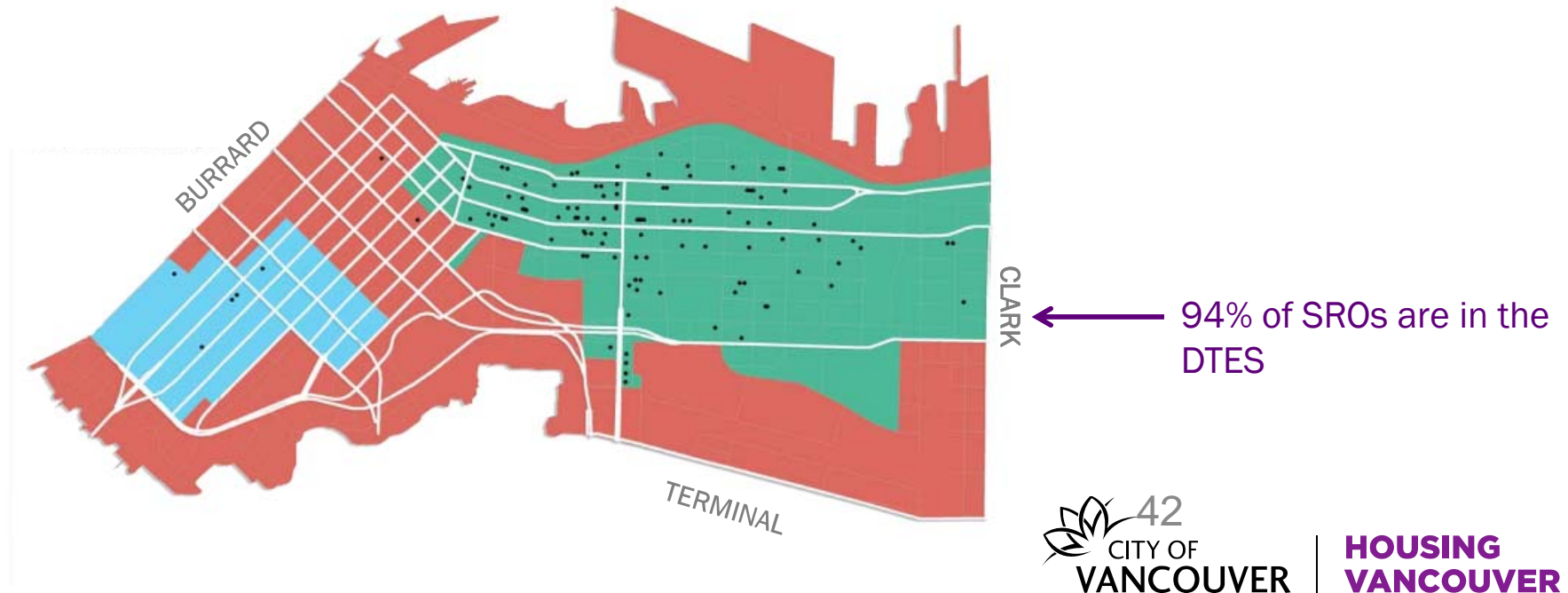
Total SRO Stock: SRA By-Law

Enacted in 2003 to slow rate of change in the low-income stock.

Broad category that includes:

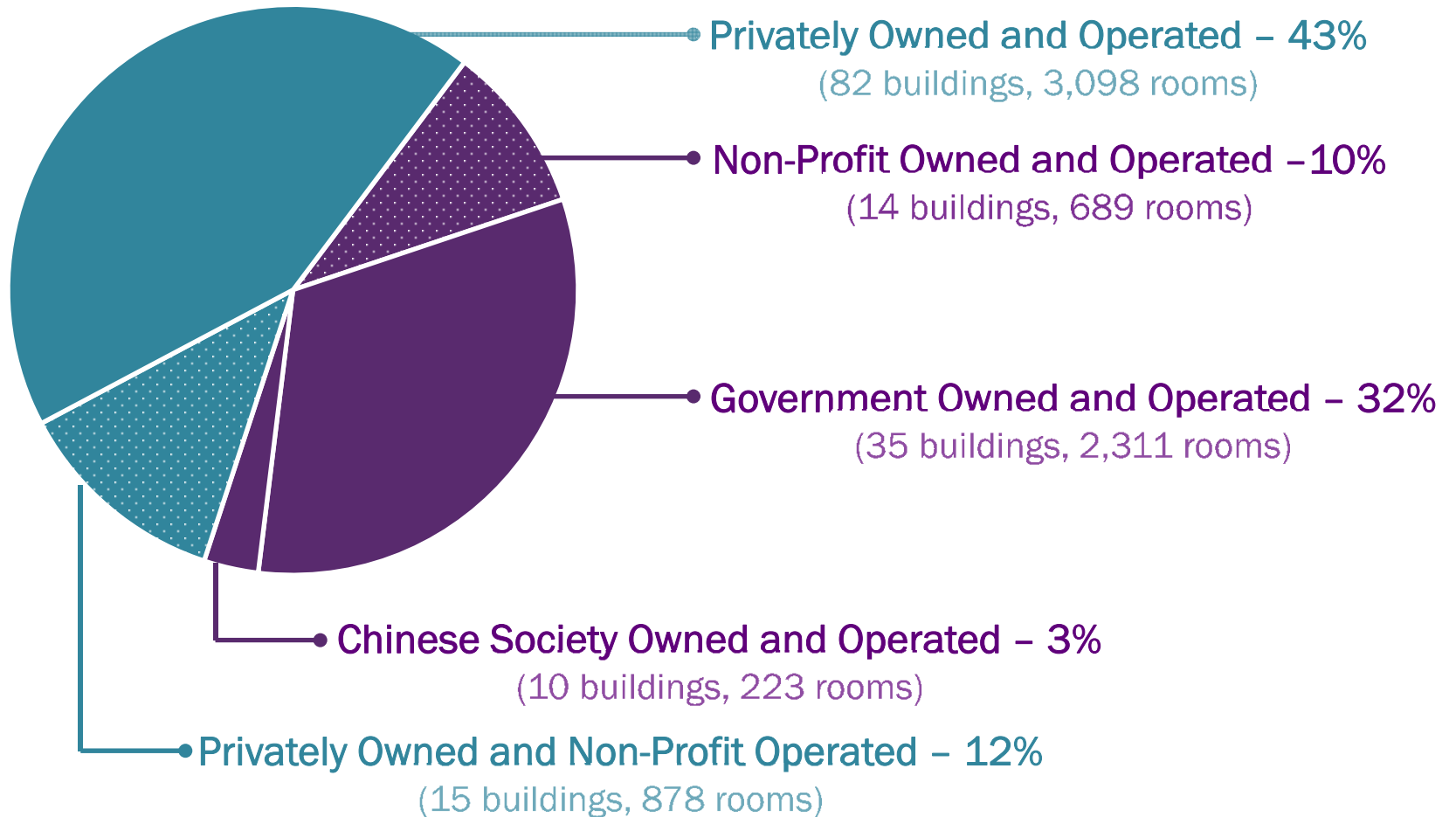
- Rooming houses and residential (SRO) hotels in the Downtown Core
- Non-market housing with rooms or self-contained units less than 320 ft².

The Downtown Core Boundaries:



Total SRO Stock

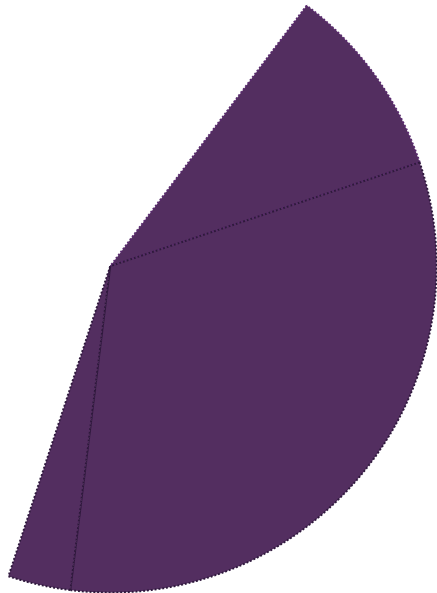
Total: 156 Buildings (7,199 rooms)



- Private SROs
- Non-Market SROs
- Non-Profit

Government and Non-Profit Owned SROs

45% of Total SRO Stock
59 Buildings (3,223 rooms)



- Significant investment over last 10 years -- BCH purchase of 24 buildings (1,500 rooms) and renovation of 13 of these buildings (900 rooms)
- COV in the process of replacing City-owned SRO stock, including Roddan, Central Alexander
- Ongoing subsidies keep rents affordable to those on income assistance (~\$375)
- Buildings well managed and operated, providing improved security and livability for tenants
- Vulnerable tenants connected to supports

Privately-Owned SROs

55% of Total SRO Stock
97 Buildings (3,976 rooms)



- Increasing financing pressures for owners – impossible to operate at \$375 without subsidy
- Increasing speculation and development interest in the stock
- Rising Rents – 32% increase since 2007 (avg. rents at ~\$500 in 2015)
- Shelter welfare rates frozen at \$375 since 2007
- Decreasing vacancy rate – decrease from 10% in 2005 to 4% in 2015
- Many vulnerable tenants without supports
- Lack of security and displacement of tenants - key driver of homelessness

Privately-Owned SROs: Building Breakdown

Three Building Groups



Privately-Owned SROs: Building Breakdown

Group 1: Low rents, many violations, many vulnerable tenants



- VIOLATIONS**
- 31 buildings (72%) with at least 1 violation
 - 12 buildings (28%) with 10 or more violations
 - 5 buildings (12%) with 20 or more violations
 - 8 at-risk buildings
- TENANTS**
- 38 buildings (88%) house medium/high needs tenants
- EXAMPLES** Lucky Lodge, Balmoral

Privately-Owned SROs: Building Breakdown

Group 2: Medium rents, some violations, some vulnerable tenants



- VIOLATIONS**
- 13 buildings (52%) with at least 1 violation
 - 4 buildings (16%) with 10 or more violations
 - 1 building with 20 or more violations
 - 1 at-risk building
- TENANTS**
- 18 buildings (52%) house medium/high needs tenants
- EXAMPLES** The Empress, Laurel Apartments

Privately-Owned SROs: Building Breakdown

Group 3: Higher rents, few violations, few vulnerable tenants



VIOLATIONS

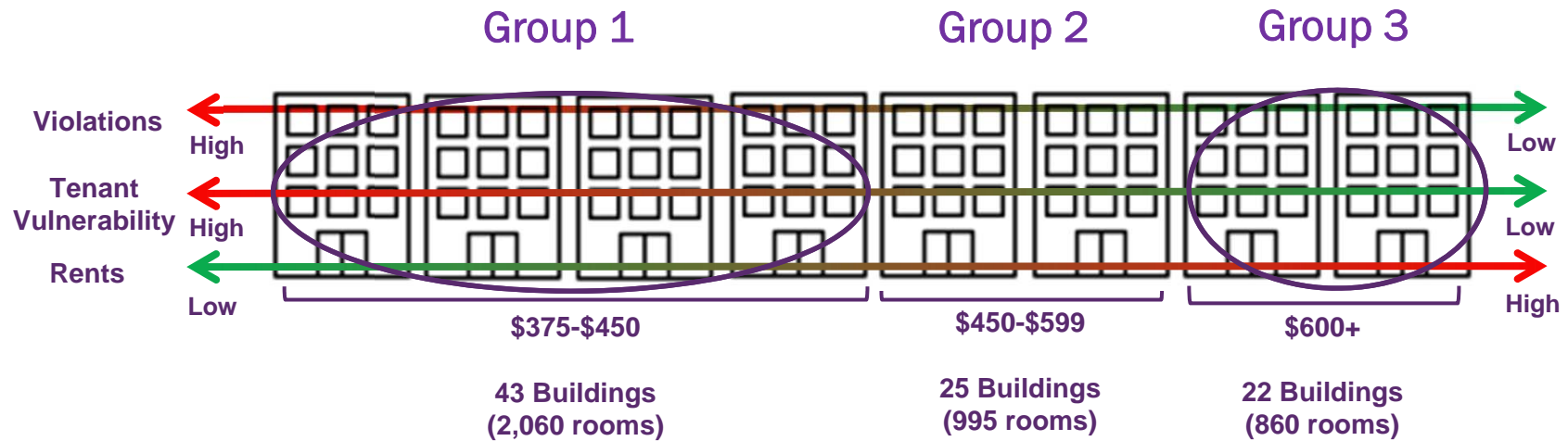
- 6 buildings (27%) with at least 1 violation
- 0 buildings (0%) with 10 or more violations
- 0 at-risk buildings

TENANTS

- 12 buildings (52%) house medium-needs tenants

EXAMPLES The Lotus, Alexander Residence

Privately-Owned SROs: Two Major Risks



Risk 1: Disinvestment



Risk 2: Loss of Affordability

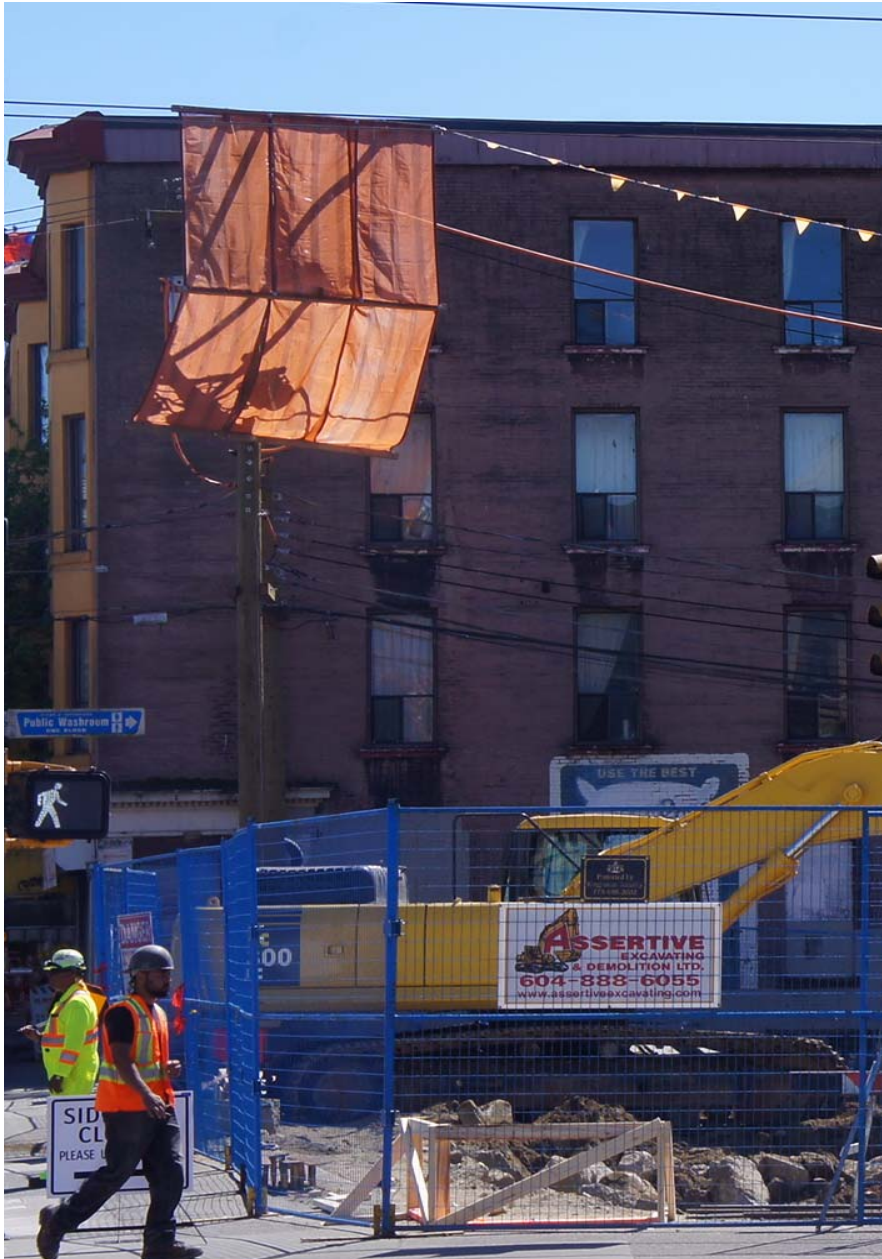


SRO Task Force: Overview



- 23 members (City, BC Housing, VanCity, SRO Collaborative, Residential Tenancy Branch, non-profits, SRO tenants, private sector)
- Brought together various perspectives to listen and discuss concerns and opportunities
- Developed recommendations that support improved condition/livability and supports while maintaining affordability
- Will inform implementation of City's new *Housing Vancouver* (once approved) and initiatives under the Development, Buildings, Licensing Department

SRO Task Force: Engagement Summary



3 Task Force Meetings

6 Engagement Sessions

- Advocates – 10 Participants
- SRO Tenants: ~45 participants
- Private SRO Owners/ Managers: ~40 participants
- SRO Tenants (Women) : ~ 25 participants
- SRO Tenants (Chinese Women) – 8 participants
- SRO Workers: ~16 participants

Total: 144 participants

SRO Task Force: Engagement Sessions

3 Key Questions:

- What do you see as the biggest challenges or concerns in SRO buildings?
- How do you deal with these?
- What actions can the City and other partners take to support you?



What We Heard: Challenges



- Inadequate government response
- Lack of tenant supports
- Poor building condition and maintenance
- Compromised safety and security
- Poor management practices
- Tenant/Landlord Conflict
- Loss of affordability
- Need for increased shelter rates above \$375
- Challenging SRO economics

What We Heard: Opportunities



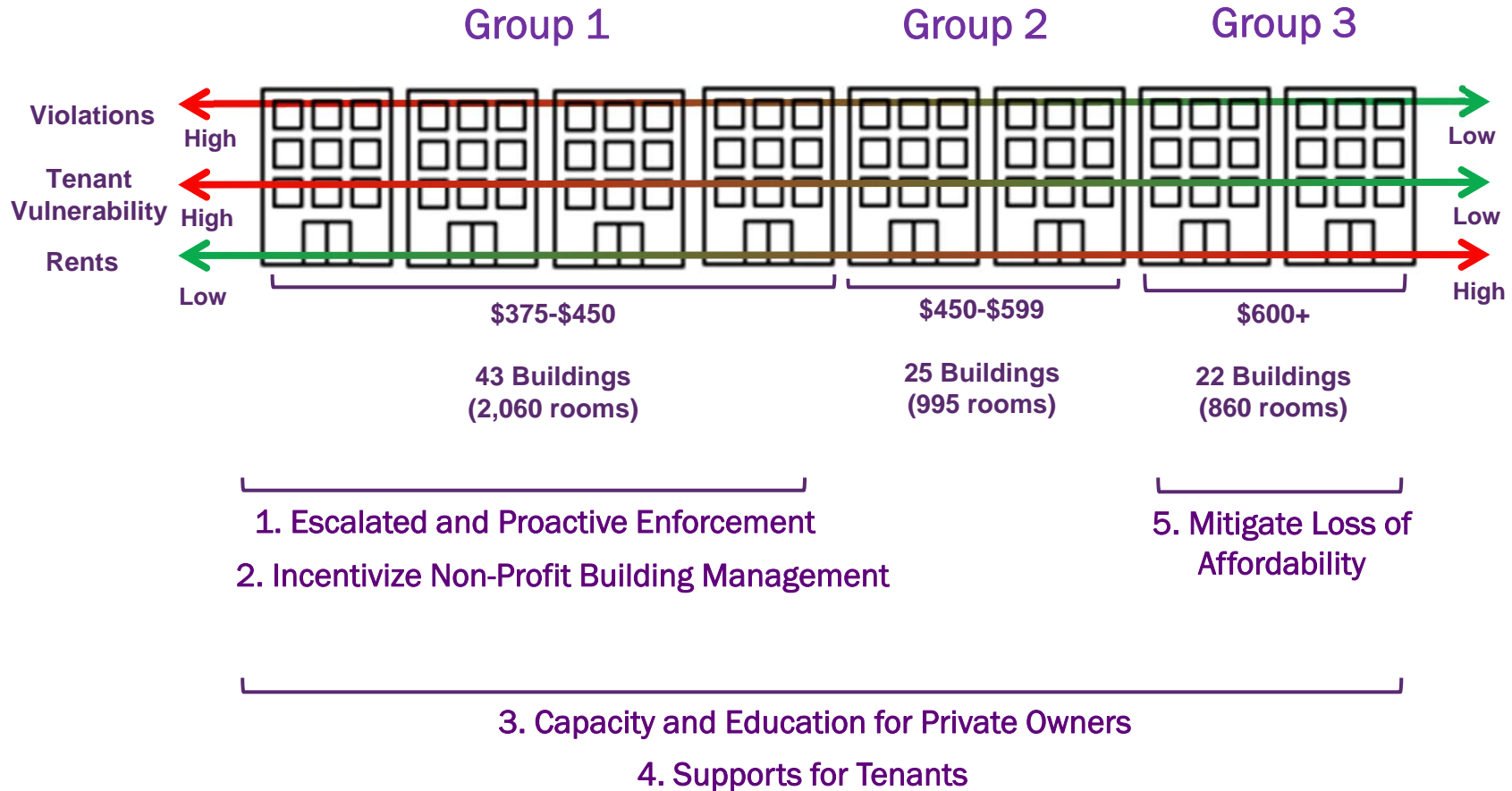
- Review and strengthen new and existing City enforcement tools
- Non-Profit Lease and Acquisition Strategy of Private SRO buildings
- SRO Management Training Program and Landlord Network
- Tenant advocacy and improved access to City documents
- Peer-based supports in private buildings
- Improved stakeholder collaboration, transparency and information sharing

SRO Action Plan: Principles



1. Tenant-Centered (Affordability, Condition, Supports)
2. Focus on Private Buildings
3. Targeted Strategies
4. Shared Responsibility

SRO Action Plan: Targeted Strategies



1. Escalated and Proactive Enforcement



Actions to Date:

- Escalated, proactive enforcement on problem premises
- At-risk building report
- Tactical Task Force
- SRO Collaborative

Near-Term Actions:

- Launch External At-Risk Building Group
- May introduce business license conditions related to building operations on SRA-designated properties
- Explore annual building permit for minor repairs in SRA-designated properties.
- Develop pool of qualified, trained workers to provide timely work in SROs

Bigger Moves :

- Launch legal/regulatory review of new and existing enforcement tools
- RPSD 2.0

2. Incentivize Non-Profit Management



Actions to Date:

- SRA Upgrade Grants (\$1.3 million approved to date)
- SRA By-Law Expedited Permitting Process for NPs
- Council approval of \$2 million to support non-profits purchasing or leasing private buildings.

Near-Term Actions:

- Increase SRA Upgrade grants from \$5,000/door to \$10,000/door.
- Develop loan fund in partnership with VanCity for owners to improve their buildings

Bigger Moves :

- Tailor program to access new Federal funding allocated to building rehabilitation.

3. Capacity and Education for Private SRO Owners:



Actions to Date:

- Launch of Working Group on Sustainable Private SRO Models

Near-Term Actions:

- Reinstate 2-Part SRO Management Training Program: Staff Training and SRO Landlord Network

Bigger Moves :

- Develop options to improve financial viability in Private SROs

4. Supports for Tenants



Actions to Date:

- Tenant Advocacy at First United
- RTB Services at 390 Main St.
- DTES Local Economic Development Strategy : the Lux, 312 Main, 501 Powell St.
- SRO Collaborative Tenant Overdose Response Organizer (TORO) Program

Near-Term Actions:

- Improve tenant access to City orders and inspections records
- Grow capacity of peer-based advocacy and tenant organizing in private SROs

Bigger Moves:

- Develop Citywide renter's advocacy network
- Partner with VCH to expand health supports in private SROs

5. Mitigate Further Loss of Affordability



Actions to Date:

- Single Room Accommodation (SRA) By-Law

Near-Term Actions:

- Explore increasing SRA-Bylaw replacement fee
- Impose Empty Homes Tax on vacant SRO buildings

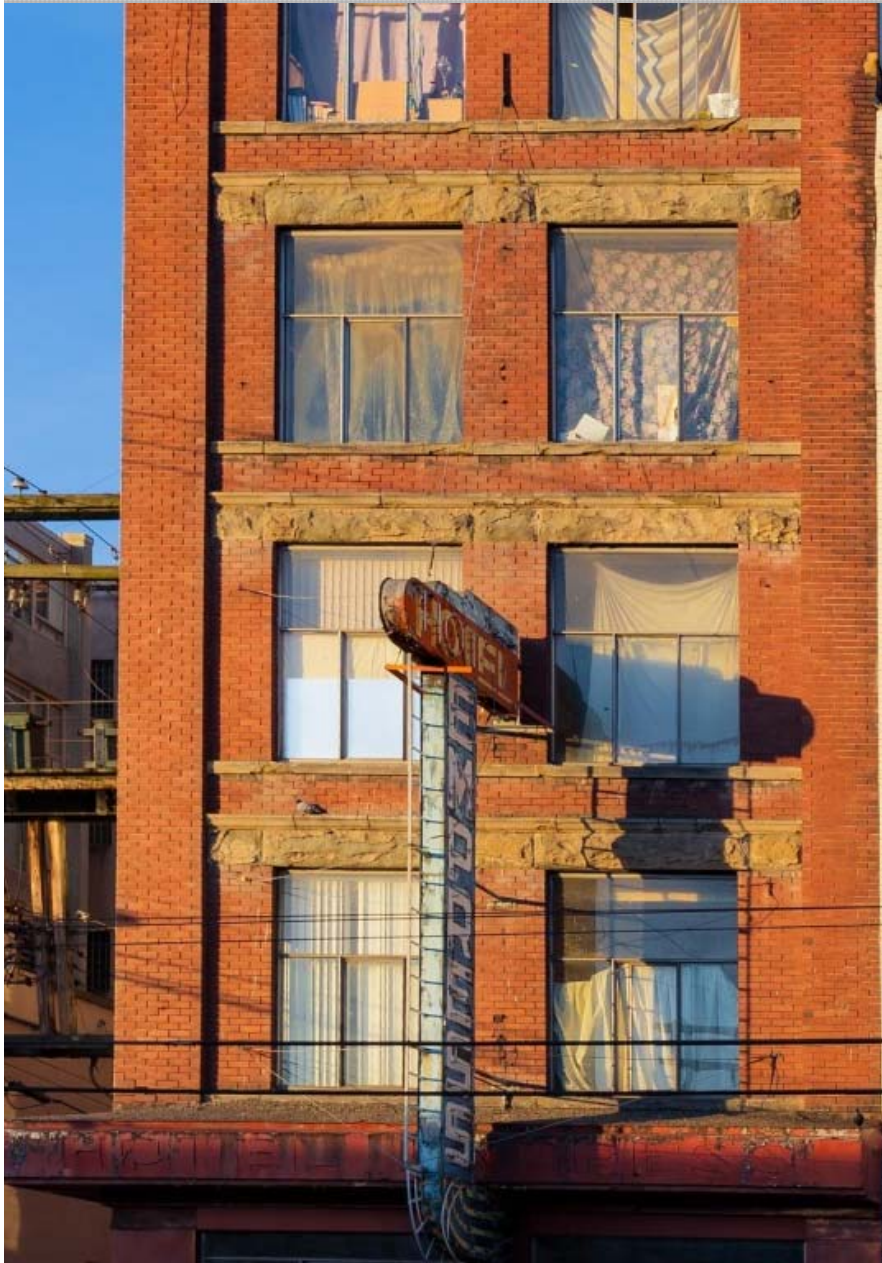
Bigger Moves:

- Develop interventions regarding changes of ownership in the private stock
- Partner with senior governments to increase affordability of improved stock through expanded rent subsidy program tied to affordability
- Develop different classes of buildings within SRA-Bylaw based on rents

SRO Action Plan

	Near-Term (3-6 months)	Medium Term (6 months- 1 year)	Long Term (1 -2 years)
Escalated and Proactive Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Launch External At-Risk Building Group 2. Introduce Business License Conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Legal/Regulatory Review of new and existing enforcement tools 9. Explore annual Building Permit 10. Explore pool of qualified contractors to do work in SROs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Implement new and revised enforcement tools 17. Property Standards Database 2.0
Capacity and Education for Private Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Reinstate SRO Management Training Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Develop options for improved financial viability in private SROs 	
Incentives for Non-Profit Building Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Increased SRA Upgrade grants from \$5,000 to \$10,000/door 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Loan Fund in Partnership with VanCity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Access to new federal funding for building rehabilitation
Supports for Tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Improve tenant access to City documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Connect to Citywide renter's advocacy network 14. Grow capacity of peer-based advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Partner with VCH to expand health supports
Mitigations for Loss of Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Increase SRA replacement fee 7. Impose empty homes tax on vacant SROs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Develop different classes of buildings within SRA-Bylaw 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Develop interventions around changes in ownership 21. Partner with senior government for expanded rent subsidy program

Next Steps on SROs



- Reconvene Task Force to review and finalize Action Plan
- Launch efforts to implement Action Plan
- Integrate additional new program/policy ideas into *Housing Vancouver*

Conclusion



- SROs are a last resort before homelessness
- Homelessness is increasing
- Regional approach needed to address crisis
- Need for coordinated strategies and approach
- Target key drivers of homelessness – lack of income, housing and supports