

MOTION

11. Call for the ABC Plan for an Accountable, Bold and Comprehensive Poverty Reduction Plan for British Columbia

At the Regular Council meeting on December 4, 2018, Vancouver City Council referred the following Motion to the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on December 5, 2018, in order to hear from speakers.

SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Swanson and Councillor Boyle

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver's website states that: "Poverty is a barrier to prosperity, not an alternative to it";
2. Vancouver has the second highest gap in income between rich and poor of Canadian cities¹, vast visible poverty in the Downtown Eastside, and more than 10% of the working-age population are people who are working poor². Poverty disproportionately affects certain communities in Vancouver, often as the result of historical dispossession, systemic racism and inequality;
3. Median personal income in Vancouver is 8 per cent lower than for Canada overall, despite its escalating cost of living. 44% of people in Vancouver, more than 250,000 people, live in families with incomes less than the living wage;
4. Many impacts of poverty are experienced at the local level, and local residents pay for poverty in increased health care costs, higher crime, higher demand for community, social and charitable services, lack of school readiness, reduced school success, and lower economic productivity;
5. The poorest people in Vancouver are those on welfare or unable to get on welfare. There is an insufficient number of social housing and shelter-rate units to meet the growing need. Vancouver is seeing increasing numbers of homeless people, with a very low vacancy rate, and welfare rates that do not provide enough money to cover food and shelter. As a result, the city spends millions of dollars trying to help people who are homeless and mitigate against the worst impacts of the housing crisis on our most vulnerable residents;
6. A long overdue increase in income and disability assistance rates, targeted measures to address the number of women and child living in poverty, rent control (including vacancy control), and legislated targets and timelines, would help ensure that government money spent to reduce poverty would benefit those most marginalized;

¹ "Prosperity for all through a Healthy Communities Approach: Vancouver's Recommendations to the Federal Government's National Poverty Reduction Strategy, July 2017." p 3.

² Source: statistics Canada, 2012. Cited in www.policyalternatives.ca/van-working-poverty

7. A poverty reduction plan will save lives and money as it is a social and economic investment in our province;
8. The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition is a broad-based network of over 400 organizations including community and non-profit groups, faith groups, health organizations, indigenous organizations, businesses, labour organizations, and social policy groups;
9. The Coalition has renewed its call for a strong poverty reduction plan for British Columbia by launching the ABC Plan, which outlines an accountable, bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan to prevent and reduce poverty in British Columbia.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council support the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition's ABC Plan for an accountable, bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan for British Columbia as set out on the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition website:
<https://www.abcplan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Policy-Brief.pdf>.
- B. THAT Council advocate to the Provincial Government to develop and implement a provincial poverty reduction strategy that includes the measures within the Accountable, Bold and Comprehensive Poverty Reduction Plan for British Columbia before February 2019, with the commitment that Council will work with the Provincial Government in implementing this plan.

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